



The Diplomatic Envoy

FOUR MEXICAN JOURNALISTS KILLED IN FIRST FOUR WEEKS OF 2022

Elsie Tierney
Staff Writer

A recent uptick of violence against journalists in Mexico has helped solidify its status as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, reports The Guardian. The January 31 murder of Roberto Toledo, a videographer for the news website Monitor Michoacan, was the final straw that sparked protests across the country from journalists, advocating for more protection, adds The New York Times.

Toledo's murder was the fourth murder of a media worker in 2022. On January 10, reporter Jose Luis Gamboa was stabbed to death. Two other journalists, photographer Margarito Martinez and broadcast reporter and news anchor Lourdes Maldonado Lopez, were both shot dead in Tijuana

on January 17 and January 23 respectively, reports Al Jazeera. Their deaths add to the total of 32 media workers murdered since December of 2018, and at least 145 from 2000-2021.

"We've seen what's very likely the most violent month in terms of violence against journalists in a decade," Jan-Albert Hootsen, the Mexico representative for the Committee to Protect Journalists told Al Jazeera.

Hootsen added that the current trend of violence against journalists began in 2006, when the Mexican government declared war on organized crime and deployed military personnel. This action led to a rapid increase in violence around the country, particularly against the journalists reporting on the conflict.

Each of the journalists who were murdered in the month of January were re-



Families and communities hold a vigil for a murdered journalist. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

porting on a controversial topic. Martinez was a photographer who documented crime scenes. Gamboa was the director of the news site Inforegio in Veracruz, which Al Jazeera notes is a notably violent and corrupt region. Toledo had been working on several sensitive subjects at the time of his death, including stories about three Indigenous communities working towards gaining self-governing status, organized crime and illegal logging, and corruption in local government.

99 percent of crimes against journalists are not prosecuted, and 90 percent

of murders of journalists and rights defenders remain unsolved, Al Jazeera adds. Furthermore, journalists have limited protection before crimes are committed. Manuel Ayala, a freelance journalist who covers missing persons, human trafficking, migration, and organized crime in Tijuana, has never been threatened on the job; however, he's received warnings from local police in the areas he's reporting on and has also had sources tell him to stop investigating certain stories.

"Our bosses do not protect us. We protect ourselves," Ayala told

Al Jazeera, also noting that Tijuana journalists are in constant communication regarding where they're going and what they are risking.

The Mexican government is known for their lack of journalistic protection measures, reports The New York Times. Specifically, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador who regularly calls out and attacks specific journalists and commentators in a morning news segment called, "Who's Who in Lies of the Week," in which he points out what he considers to be specific lies told in the media.

"You've got a president that speaks about the press, grades it or discredits it, but at the same time not a lot is being done to prevent these kinds of atrocities," said Leopoldo Maldonado, regional director of the media advocacy group Article 19,

to The New York Times. "The discrediting by the president is seen by others as permission to attack."

A federally funded program known as "el mecanismo," or the mechanism, seeks to protect journalists by offering services ranging from carrying a panic button at all times, to providing security cameras to be installed in one's home, or even providing bodyguards. However, Lopez had been in this program for months when he was killed and while Martinez was in the process of being enrolled into the program, he was not protected at the time of his death, Hootsen told Al Jazeera. However, with continued displays of activism coming from academics and journalists speaking out, Hootsen said, "That's where I get my optimism from."

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NORTH KOREA TESTS LONG-RANGE MISSILE

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On January 30, North Korea launched what is thought to be the country's longest-range missile tested since 2017, according to BBC News. states that the missile launched at a high trajectory with the apparent goal to avoid their neighbor's territorial space, reaching a maximum altitude of 2,000 kilometers and traveling 800 kilometers. The 2017 tests included two intermediate-range ballistic missiles launched over Japan and three intercontinental ballistic missiles with the potential to reach the United States. BBC News states that the United Nations bans ballistic and nuclear weapons tests and has placed strict sanctions on North

Korea, which has continued its testing regardless.

In an emergency meeting of South Korea's National Security Council, President Moon Jae-in explained that the tests appeared to be a step by North Korea to end its "self-imposed moratorium on testing its longest-range intercontinental ballistic missiles," says Reuters. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has stated that he no longer follows the moratorium, which was established in 2018 by then-U.S. President Donald Trump. Kim's regime implied that they may resume tests due to the U.S. and its allies failing to end their "hostile policies" towards the country.

NBC News reports that the official Korean Central News Agency described the test as



North Korean President Kim Jong Un poses in front of a military aircraft. Courtesy of Robert Sullivan (Flickr)

an attempt to verify the Hwasong-12 missile's accuracy. North Korea's recent series of launch tests are considered an attempt to acquire relief from sanctions or to be recognized as a legitimate nuclear state. Lecturer Dr. Daniel Pinkston told BBC News that North Korea's nuclear actions are an attempt to signal to various powers and potential foreign buyers that their program is growing more serious. Pinkston also ex-

plained that the missile tests provide a signal of strength for North Korea's domestic audience. The Associated Press further states that Kim has shown no willingness to surrender North Korea's nuclear arsenal, despite the country's struggles under UN sanctions. Professor Kim Dong Yup, a former South Korean naval commander, explained that the country's main goal is "not to attack but to defend themselves," states BBC News.

The tests are the first to follow the sanctions imposed by the Biden administration on North Korea after missile launches earlier in January, reports NBC News. U.S. President Joe Biden has struggled to convince the country to surrender its nuclear arsenal since he took office in January 2021. The New York Times states that Kim rejected the administration's offers for dialogue, advising his government to prepare for 'long-term confrontation' against the U.S.

North Korea began interacting with China, its primary trading partner, in January for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. On February 4, Kim congratulated Chinese President Xi Jinping on the Beijing Winter Olympics, calling it a "great victory won by

socialist China" in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, states Al Jazeera. He further described the relations between North Korea and China as "invincible strategic relations that can never be broken by anything." Both China and Russia blocked the United States' proposal to place sanctions on five North Koreans as a result of missile launches in a UN Security Council meeting on January 20, Al Jazeera further reports.

According to France 24, Cheong Seong-chang of the Center for North Korea Studies in Sejong stated that this celebratory message implies that China should not be concerned about any North Korean missile tests throughout the Olympics. The Associated Press reports, however, that experts suggest once the Olympics are over, North Korea could increase its weapons demonstrations to further pressure the Biden administration.

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YEMEN WAR INTENSIFIES AS DRONES FIRE ON UAE

Hamzah Khan
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On January 17, a drone attack on the UAE by Ansarullah, also known as Houthis, in Yemen marked the first time Yemeni forces were able to strike targets in the UAE, a notable escalation in the Yemen War, reports The Associated Press. The Associated Press further reports that this attack was followed by subsequent strikes on strategic facilities in the UAE, including during the visit of Israeli President Isaac Herzog, on January 31. The U.S. military also fired interceptor missiles during this exchange in a rare direct involvement, reports ABC News. Ansarullah have previously launched rockets into Saudi Arabia as well, reports The Washington Post. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have recently intensified their airstrikes in Yemen, launching a devastating bombing campaign beginning on January 22 on the Yemeni

capital of Sana'a. According to The Guardian, Saudi forces struck a prison, killing at least 80 people and wounding over 200. They also struck a telecommunications tower, causing an internet blackout in much of the country. As of February 8, Emirati-backed militias have halted Ansarullah forces advancing in the strategic province of Marib, the only stronghold in Northern Yemen controlled by the internationally-recognized, Saudi-backed government, reports Reuters. These recent setbacks contributed to Ansarullah's decision to attack the UAE as a deterrent against the state's support of the pro-government militias, reports BBC News. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, the Yemen War began in 2014 after the Ansarullah movement overthrew the Saudi-backed government of President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi. Hadi was installed as president and backed by the Gulf mon-

archies in 2011 after widespread protests during the Arab Spring, ultimately leading to the ousting of longtime dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh. In 2014, widespread discontent towards Hadi's government sparked a rebellion in Northern Yemen led by the Houthis, an influential Shia minority in Yemen, which became known as Ansarullah. According to the Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies, Hadi was an incredibly unpopular leader whom many viewed as a continuation of the former dictator Saleh, under whom he had served as vice president. In 2015, Saudi Arabia, along with a broad coalition of various Arab countries including the UAE, began a military campaign in Yemen focused on returning Hadi to power, while Iran later began to support Ansarullah. Human Rights Watch has accused the Saudi-led coalition of war crimes for deliberately targeting civilians by bombing

"hospitals, school buses, markets, mosques, farms, bridges, factories, and detention centers." The Saudi coalition has at times allied with jihadist Sunni militias in Southern Yemen, including AQAP, the vehemently anti-Houthi al-Qaeda branch in Yemen, according to the International Crisis Group. Despite promising to bring an end to the war in Yemen, President Biden has continued to oversee arms sales to the Saudis, according to Business Insider. VOA News reports that the Biden administration is planning to increase military support for the Saudis in response to the recent drone strikes. He is also reportedly considering redesignating the Houthis a terrorist organization, a move that former president Trump had taken and Biden reversed, reports The Intercept. Designating the Houthis as terrorists would significantly impair the ability of human rights organizations to provide aid to the Yemeni people, which is why Biden initially re-

versed Trump's policy. By artificially prolonging the war through arming the Saudis, millions of Yemenis may be condemned to living under conditions described by the UN as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Contact Hamzah at hamzah.khan@student.shu.edu

billions in arms sales to the Saudis and Emiratis, providing them with state-of-the-art military equipment and fighter jets, according to Al Jazeera. The U.S. also provides intelligence and logistical support for coalition operations in Yemen, reports The Guardian. Despite promising to bring an end to the war in Yemen, President Biden has continued to oversee arms sales to the Saudis, according to Business Insider. VOA News reports that the Biden administration is planning to increase military support for the Saudis in response to the recent drone strikes. He is also reportedly considering redesignating the Houthis a terrorist organization, a move that former president Trump had taken and Biden reversed, reports The Intercept. Designating the Houthis as terrorists would significantly impair the ability of human rights organizations to provide aid to the Yemeni people, which is why Biden initially re-

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80-YEAR-OLD ITALIAN PRESIDENT ELECTED TO SECOND TERM

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Leading up to Italy's presidential election, President Sergio Mattarella had plans that did not involve serving a second term. The 80-year-old president made this known, posting images of a packed up presidential palace and making sure to be spotted on house hunting excursions. But after a week of struggles in Parliament to elect his replacement, Mattarella was asked

to stay, and accepted. The announcement of Mattarella's return came after significant debate and numerous failed rounds of voting in Parliament. The Guardian reports that eight rounds of voting took place before Mattarella was elected. The voting struggles came after many failed backroom negotiations between party members, and even an amendment to Italy's voting threshold, reports The New York Times. When it became clear to Italy's voting

members of Parliament that no party had the votes to obtain the before-needed supermajority, the threshold was lowered to a simple majority. Even after this, it took several days for the electors to select someone, turning against candidates even from their own parties. The job is a mostly ceremonial role, according to BBC News. However, in times of crisis, the president takes on much more impactful duties, including selecting key government actors like the prime

minister and vetoing mandates. Instability in Italy has led many elected officials to recognize the importance of having a consistent and predictable leader in place to maintain the status quo. Italy's political stability is shaking as a response to the events of the past several years. Currently battling their fourth wave of COVID-19, Politico reports that the nation is facing significant pressure to protect its economic growth and recovery, as well as complying with the European Union's post-pandemic investment fund. Another issue lies in the fact that no party has a clear majority in Italy's parliament, a reality exemplified by Parliament's struggles in producing a new president.

Current Prime Minister Mario Draghi expressed interest in the presidential position, but even members of his own party did not support his bid as they could not see another suitable candidate for prime minister if Draghi was elected. Dra-

ghi will now continue his tenure as Prime Minister, serving on what delegate Dino Latini calls "a winning team," adds Politico. Many political leaders have thanked the president for remaining in his position, acknowledging that a crisis that has been carefully avoided for the time being. Reuters reports that Italian leaders believe that Mattarella's reelection will help stabilize the Italian economy, as it avoids a radical change to the country's political system. However, it has exposed deep rifts within Italy's Democratic party, causing some disruption to the country's political norm. This is not the first time that Italy has struggled to elect a new president. Al Jazeera reports that a very similar situation occurred during the presidential election of 2013, when members of Parliament went to then-president Giorgio Napolitano requesting that he continue serving as president, as they could not come to a voting de-

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Struggles in Italy's Parliament to elect a new president caused President Mattarella to accept a second term in office. Courtesy of Trump White House Archived (Flickr)

HONDURAS SWEARS IN FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT

Catherine Anderson
Staff Writer

After losing elections in 2013 and 2017, Xiomara Castro has officially been inaugurated as Honduras's first female president, reports CNN. Castro first rose to political prominence in 2009, when she led a march through the nation's capital demanding that her husband, former President Manuel Zelaya, be reinstated as president following a military coup. Castro, a self-proclaimed democratic socialist brings an end to 12 years of right wing leadership, BBC News adds. At her inauguration, she emphasized that she seeks to "refund" the nation on "citizen values," The New York Times reports. A member of the Libre party, which was founded in 2009 by her husband following the military coup, Castro's campaign was based largely on her promises to alleviate poverty, battle corrup-

tion, and decriminalize abortion in instances of rape, fetal impairment, and to save the life of the mother, CNN continues. Despite winning 51 percent of the vote and the most votes of any presidential candidate in the country's history, Castro faces much animosity and division, both domestically and internationally. Even before officially taking office, Castro was met with a crisis in her own party when she backed centrist Luis Redonda to be the head of congress rather than a fellow Libre party member, BBC News continues. The Washington Post reports that this led the Libre party picking its own congressional head in protest, and for several weeks, two legislative bodies ran simultaneously, both claiming to be legitimate. The dispute has since been resolved, but it remains an important reminder of the deep issues within the Honduran government.



Newly-elected President Castro faces national and international crises as she begins her term. Courtesy of Héctor Emilio Gonzalez (Unsplash)

seems to have ruffled the diplomatic feathers of the United States, as she has stated a desire to strengthen Honduras's diplomatic ties with China, rather than maintain its current relationship with Taiwan. While this does not align with the United States' interests, Castro could still be essential to relations between the U.S. and Central America.

The relationship between the U.S. and Honduras had been strained due to the controversy surrounding Castro's predecessor, Juan Orlando Hernandez, who has been accused of corruption and linked to drug trafficking in U.S. courts, according to Reuters. Though he denies these claims, his administration remains shrouded in controversy. Castro, however, is seen as a figure who could act to aid the interest of the United States. CNN adds that the Biden administration sees Castro as an important potential ally, partly due to the strained nature of

its relationship with other Central American nations, and partly because of Castro's emphasis on solving issues such as poverty and corruption. If Castro can successfully attack the root causes of poverty, it may help to deter the flow of migrants out of Honduras, an issue of great importance to the United States. Despite the promise of potential diplomatic relations and much of the change that Castro represents, the fact remains that Honduras is one of Central America's most conservative countries. After 12 years under a virtual dictatorship, Castro is likely to face much opposition both within her own borders and internationally to achieve her lofty goals, added The New York Times. While the kind of change she hopes to enact could benefit Hondurans and Americans alike, it will likely be an uphill battle. As demonstrated by the dispute over a congressio-

nal head, Castro faces division not just from strong opposition, but within her own party. If she is to be successful, she must overcome this division, and while many world leaders such as Kamala Harris certainly believes in her leadership potential, there are clearly many obstacles in her path. The world must wait and see if Castro is up to the challenge.

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MYANMAR MARKS ONE YEAR SINCE MILITARY TAKEOVER

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February 1 marked one year since Myanmar's military staged a coup to oust democratically elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, less than a decade after its transition into a democratic nation. The U.N. Security Council released a statement regarding the one-year anniversary, calling for those still detained to be released, including the country's former president Win Myint, reports U.S. News. Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize winner and long-time supporter of democracy, remains detained as well.

have been enormous; public services are failing, and more than 14 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2022." The coup has claimed the lives of about 1,500 civilians since its start, leaving roughly 11,800 detained and 300,000 displaced, Reuters explains. The junta has become known for its use of deadly force; many of the murders committed are considered crimes against humanity under international law, and have been primarily targeted towards ethnic minorities in Myanmar including the Kachin, Shan, and Rohingya. At the beginning of the coup, the Junta warned citizens against protesting on the state-run MRTV channel, airing a message telling citizens to "learn from the tragedy of earlier ugly deaths that you can be in danger of getting shot to the head and back," reports Human Rights Watch. A day after the announcement, over 150 peo-

ple were brutally killed. The junta's effort to gain control of the nation has faced a significant amount of civilian resistance, with hundreds of thousands of civilians joining the Civil Disobedience Movement, an anti-coup campaign. Myanmar's public healthcare system has virtually shut down due to the coup, with doctors refusing to recognize the regime's leadership. One doctor told BBC News that "For as long as the military junta stays in power I will not return to work... I do not want to recognize their authority in any way." Civil disobedience has also affected many of the country's transportation routes and its banking system.

Poverty rates within the nation are expected to triple in 2022. The United Nations estimates that the number of people living below the poverty line in the country could double to 46.3 percent, while urban poverty is expected to triple to 37.2 percent, Reuters reports. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 83 percent of households have experienced a drop in income, exacerbated by the military coup, Al Jazeera explains. As healthcare workers and public health staff continue to join the Civil Disobedience Movement, COVID-19 rates continue to grow, aided by extreme poverty in combination with a lack of access to vaccines and other health-related items. The Global Climate Risk Index identifies Myanmar as a country highly at risk from the climate crisis, but with the military junta still in power, sustainability efforts and climate resilience developments have been paused. The Director of Myanmar's Centre for Responsible Business told Al Jazeera that, "development partners seem frozen since the coup, and private sector investors instinctively now view Myanmar as high risk and look to al-

ternatives in Southeast Asia, even though climate investments there may have as many problems in practice as Myanmar." Junta officials were barred from attending the COP26 Summit in Glasgow due to international protests over their rule, leaving Myanmar without a representative, Al Jazeera continues. A senior representative of an armed group in Myanmar stated that, "because of the coup and political crisis, it has become more difficult to address environmental challenges. For one, more and more international investors and partners have withdrawn from Burma... the Burmese military leader will rely on natural resources to resolve their financial problems. Not only this junta but also successive regimes in the previous State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) era."

"We are still living in a dark era," said Myanmar citizen Htoo Aun to France 24. Though Junta generals have stated that elections will be held in 2023, the continuation of violent massacres on innocent citizens and a year full of political turmoil leave no definite way of knowing when the coup will end.

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TENSIONS ESCALATE BETWEEN UKRAINE AND RUSSIA: THE LATEST UPDATES

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Staff Writer

In its most recent move to counter Russian military buildup near the Ukrainian borders, the United States has pledged to end support for Nord Stream 2, a German-controlled gas pipeline project connecting Russia and Germany, stressing U.S.-German unity if Russia invades Ukraine, Reuters reports. The declaration came during a joint U.S.-German press conference on Monday, February 7. However, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz did not directly confirm that a Russian invasion would trigger a shutdown of the decade-old, \$11 billion project, nor did he mention the pipeline by name during his day-long visit to the White House, Reuters continues. Instead, when asked about using the pipeline project to respond to Russian aggression, Scholz pledged to respond with “necessary sanctions” and “far-reaching measures” in the event of an invasion,

confirmed transcripts from the White House. The bilateral conference follows a stream of criticism over Scholz’s failure to respond to Russian aggression as vehemently as other Western allies. Andriy Melnyk, the Ukrainian ambassador to Germany, commented that “this unwillingness of Germany to act preventatively and not to put the Kremlin under extreme pressure is nothing else [than] pure appeasement politics,” says The Washington Post. Heightened tensions between Russia, Ukraine, and the West come eight years after Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula in southern Ukraine and backed separatists in the eastern Donbas region. Russian-backed rebel groups have exerted control over the territory since 2014, and at least 14,000 people have been killed since the takeover. Russia has accused the Ukrainian government of failing to implement the Minsk Agreement, a Russo-Ukrainian deal to end the war in the east.

Russia-Ukraine relations have also been complicated by the eastward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance to include 14 new countries, including several post-Soviet states. Reuters reports that NATO threatening encroachment towards Russian borders is perceived to be a betrayal of Western promises in the early 90s, which NATO denies. In 2008, Ukraine began the process to join NATO, though plans were briefly shelved following the election of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich in 2010 and resumed following the start of the Russo-Ukrainian war. In December 2021, Russia put forward its conditions for de-escalation, including that NATO deny membership to ex-Soviet countries, roll back the deployment of troops and weapons in central and eastern Europe, institute a ban on U.S. and Russian forces from border areas, and halt NATO military drills near Russian borders, reports Al Jazeera. The U.S. and NATO,

however, have consistently told Russia there will be no concessions on Moscow’s main demands. New threats of Russian sanctions follow reports by U.S. intelligence analysts that Russia’s military buildup at the Ukrainian border has amassed to 70 percent of the capacity needed to launch a full-scale invasion. While Russia has denied plans to attack, it has been projected that as many as 50,000 civilians and up to 25,000 Ukrainian soldiers could be killed if the invasion occurs. According to The Associated Press, Biden warned Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky of a “distinct possibility” that Russia could take military action against Ukraine in February. The suggestion led to a clash during a meeting at the United Nations, where Russian Ambassador Vasily Nebenzya accused the U.S. of “provoking escalation” through false charges. Nebenzya also accused the West of bringing “pure Nazis” to power on Russia’s borders and “making heroes out of those people who fought on the side of Hitler,” says The Washington Post. His comments followed remarks from U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield that Russia was “attempting, without any factual basis, to paint Ukraine and Western countries as the aggressors to fabricate a pretext for attack.” She reminded the council of “the pattern of aggression we’ve seen from Russia again and again,” including its 2008 invasion of Georgia and 2014 annexation of Crimea. According to Al Jazeera, however, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has expressed doubts over U.S. intelligence reports, saying that “Different capitals have different scenarios, but Ukraine is ready for any development. Today, Ukraine has a strong army, unprecedented international support, and Ukrainians’ faith in their country. This enemy should be afraid of us.” Over the past week, efforts to deescalate tensions have mounted, but

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U.S. PROSECUTORS CHARGE BELARUSIAN OFFICIALS WITH AIRCRAFT PIRACY FOR DIVERTING PLANE

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On January 20, prosecutors from the United States charged four Belarusian officials with aircraft piracy after diverting a flight to the Belarusian capital Minsk to arrest opposition journalist Raman Pratasevich, according to Reuters. The flight, Ryanair Flight FR4978, and its subsequent detention,

which occurred on May 23, 2021, was originally scheduled to fly from Athens to Vilnius, reports the Associated Press. Instead, Belarusian flight controllers told the pilots to land in Minsk because of a bomb threat made against the plane. Leonid Mikalovich Churo, the Director-General of Belaironavigatsia—Belarus’ state-owned air navigation service—personally delivered the informa-

tion about the bomb threat to the Minsk air traffic control, telling them to divert the plane, says Radio Free Europe. The BBC reports that the officials did wait until the plane had entered Belarusian airspace so that they had the authority to order its landing in Minsk. The Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Michael Driscoll, said that the event set a dangerous precedent as “[t]he next pilot who gets a distress call from a tower may doubt the authenticity of the emergency – which puts lives at risk”. Pratasevich was arrested when the plane landed. The plane and luggage on board were then checked while the passengers were made to wait in the terminal before the flight was cleared to continue to Vilnius. Pratasevich’s Russian girlfriend, Sofia

Sapega, was also taken off the flight—Reuters reports that they were moved to house arrest after their detention. Raman Pratasevich left Belarus in 2019, according to NPR. In November 2020, he was listed as a terrorist for allegedly inciting riots by the Belarusian authorities as a result of his involvement in the leadership of Nexta, a popular messaging app, says Reuters. After the August 2020 presidential election in which President Alexander Lukashenko claimed victory, the app was instrumental in organizing mass demonstrations against him, reports Radio Free Europe. These demonstrations were based on the belief from both the Belarusian opposition and the consensus in the West that the election was illegitimate. Damian Williams,

the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, stated that the grounding of the plane “not only violated international norms and U.S. criminal law but also potentially endangered the lives of four U.S. citizens and scores of other innocent passengers on board,” reports The New York Times. According to the Associated Press, U.S. officials claimed they had jurisdiction to bring suit because the flight carried U.S. citizens, and the actions of the Belarusian air traffic officials violated sections of federal law. The U.S. alleges that the deputy director-general Oleg Kazuychits then called for air traffic control authorities to disguise the matter by falsifying reports. Two other officers were also charged, but their full names remain unknown. The men remain at large, but the U.S.

prosecutors want to bring them to face trial, the results of which range from “a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison... to life in prison,” says Radio Free Europe. The Associated Press reports that EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has equated the incident to a “hijacking”. Lithuania and Ukraine have both changed their airplanes’ flight paths to avoid Belarusian airspace. Russia, however, has stated that Belarus acted with bomb threat protocol.

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EU officials are contesting the legality of Belarus’ actions. Courtesy of Portuguese Gravity (Unsplash)

CANADIAN TRUCKERS SHUT DOWN OTTAWA WITH VACCINE PROTESTS

Anna Thibodeau
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A convoy of big rigs protesting COVID-19 vaccine mandates arrived in Ottawa, on January 29 after a weeklong drive across Canada. Called the Freedom Convoy, the group of truckers is protesting measures recently announced by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau requiring vaccines for Canadian truckers crossing the U.S.-Canada border and mandatory quarantine periods for unvaccinated truckers returning to Canada, reports BBC News. The Freedom Convoy started as a cross-country drive from Western Canada to Ottawa, Canada’s capitol city, and gained both followers and publicity as it moved east across the country. The convoy’s original demand was to reverse the vaccine mandate for truckers crossing the border, but protesters quickly began demanding an end

to all vaccine mandates within Canada. The actions of protestors have escalated along with their demands, with protestors openly committing offensive acts. These include accounts of protestors defacing the National War Memorial, dancing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, honking their horns through the night, flying swastika-covered confederate and Canadian flags, using racist and hateful speech, harassing Ottawa residents for wearing masks, egging homes, ignoring mask mandates, disrespecting a statue of Terry Fox—a cancer patient and researcher widely considered a Canadian hero—and harassing and assaulting a local soup kitchen to give them meals, as reported by The Washington Post, CNN, and The Associated Press. These actions have been widely condemned by Trudeau and other Canadian officials. CNN reports that

crowd management has cost local police as much as \$800,000. Police have set up a hotline for hate crimes, and businesses in the area have had to remain closed for multiple days, continues The Washington Post. The Freedom Convoy has devolved from its original focus into an anti-Trudeau protest, yet Prime Minister Trudeau has adamantly stated that he remains unintimidated by these demonstrations. The Freedom Convoy initially gained support from Canadian conservative politicians as well as right wing figures from outside Canada, including Joe Rogan, Donald Trump Jr., and Russel Brand. Conservatives initially saw the protest as a “symbol of the fatigue and division” that the pandemic has caused, BBC News continues. However, many conservatives who originally supported the convoy now condemn the protesters’ behavior, as the purpose and credibility of

the protests have begun to spiral. The escalation has also led local police to worry that the protest was attracting far-right extremists. Organizers of the Freedom Convoy emphasized that extremists are not welcome, but according to The Washington Post, many of the protest’s leaders have been linked to far-right groups. In addition to protests in downtown Ottawa, countless trucks and cars blocked the Coutts border crossing between Canada and Montana, immobilizing traffic in both directions, according to CNN. Protesters also arrived in four other major Canadian cities for the second weekend of the protest, says NPR. However, local police quickly dispersed these groups. Online, protesters raised almost \$10 million Canadian, or \$7.8 million USD, using the popular crowd fund site GoFundMe, The Associated Press continues. After suspend-

ing the fundraiser, however, GoFundMe permanently cut off funding due to the unlawful activity exhibited by the protestors violating its terms of service. GoFundMe issued refunds to all who donated, however protestors have since moved their efforts to another crowdfunding site, reports NPR. NPR adds that the protest, it appears that many of the demonstrators are not connected to the trucking industry in any way. The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) does not support the convoy, estimating that 85 to 90 percent of cross border truckers are already vaccinated. Further, The Washington Post explains that even if Canadian mandates are dropped, U.S. mandates would cause unvaccinated truckers to still be barred from entering the country. However, the CTA also acknowledges that the mandates could remove up to 16,000 driv-

ers from cross-border routes, a heavy price for a country dealing with supply chain issues, inflation, labor shortages, and bad weather, says BBC News. Cross-border truckers are a significant aspect of the Canadian economy. The Associated Press reports that evidence from law enforcement agencies shows that the protests have become an occupation, with the city declaring a state of emergency in order to get additional aid and supplies from the Canadian government. NPR stated that people found attempting to bring supplies to protesters can be arrested, and the organizers of the Freedom Convoy are facing a class-action lawsuit for the continuous honking. It is unclear how much longer the protests will persist.

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AFGHAN OPIUM TRADE THREATENS U.S. WAR ON DRUGS

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Concerns regarding the impact on Afghanistan’s opium trade have been largely elusive from global conversations since the Taliban reclaimed control of Afghanistan last August, despite its prominence as a multi-billion dollar industry. Reuters reports the United States government has spent more than \$8 billion in an unsuccessful effort to eradicate it. After their takeover last year, Taliban leaders quickly announced their intention to end the opium trade in Afghanistan. Spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid decreed that “Afghanistan will not be a country of cultivation of opium anymore,” declaring that the Taliban would attempt to “eradicate the production of narcotics” in the largely rural, mountainous nation. As the Taliban previously banned the growth of poppies in 2000 for religious reasons, The European Foundation for South Asian Studies

argues that their claims should be given consideration. However, international experts and even the Taliban themselves seem to doubt the veracity of these claims. Given the Taliban’s known lack of asset control and financial instability, the economic viability of enforcing such a ban has been in question. BBC News reports that the Taliban’s 10 percent taxation rate on opium farming and further taxation of heroin laboratories and narcotics smugglers provides a significant source of income for the terror group. While exact monetary estimates of opium revenue for the terror group vary, U.S. Commander General John Nicholson asserts that the drug trade may account for as much as 60 percent of the Taliban’s annual revenue. Furthermore, the Taliban face a fierce opponent in banning opium production - the Afghan people. The Brookings

Institute notes that prior attempts by the Taliban in 2000 to ban opium cultivation in the hopes of gaining international legitimacy proved both wildly unpopular and unsuccessful. In one of the world’s poorest countries, the estimated \$1.5 billion industry of opium

ban to reconsider their strict stance. The Taliban ultimately reversed the ban in 2001 amid this national outcry, an unusual deviation for the regime that some scholars believe was intended to strengthen the country’s political force in preparation for a coming war



Afghan drugs are flooding European drug markets. Courtesy of Wanman uthmaniyah (Unsplash)

opium cultivation as Afghanistan and its economy further deteriorate. Prior attempts by the West and surrounding nations to diminish the narcotics trade through force have largely failed, indicating that a renewed effort to eradicate drugs may prove similarly unsuccessful. Experts argue that, from an economic perspective, it will be difficult to permanently reduce the country’s drug trade because Afghanistan lacks the necessary resources to diversify and properly industrialize rural areas. Until the government can provide a better alternative to opioid production for impoverished peasants who depend on the trade for their livelihood, opium cultivation will likely continue. Politico continues that experts fear increased production of opium will have drastic effects on the European drug market, which receives 95 percent of its heroin, and a growing percentage of its

methamphetamine, from Afghanistan. Jeremy Hunt, the chair of the British House of Commons health committee, argues that the surge in heroin availability across Europe “would be the most unintended consequences” stemming from last year’s Afghan withdrawal, and would be disastrous for the UK’s already burgeoning drug crisis.

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AFRICAN NATIONS PUSH BACK AGAINST OMICRON TRAVEL BANS

Chimdi Chukwukere
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Several African nations are pushing back against what they call a discriminatory imposition of travel bans on countries in Southern Africa following the emergence of the Omicron COVID-19 variant. The protests come amidst the fact that despite cases of the new variant being discovered in several countries, including Israel, Hong Kong, The United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and The Czech Republic, travel bans have only been placed against countries in Africa, reports CNN. On Sunday, November 28, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa released a statement condemning the flurry of travel bans that have been placed on South Africa and that were triggered by the fact that scientists first detected the Omicron variant in South Africa. He called on countries that have placed these bans to “urgently reverse their decisions,” according to reports from Al Jazeera. “The prohibition of

travel is not informed by science,” said the South African President in his first broadcast since the variant was reported. “The only thing the prohibition on travel will do is to further damage the economies of the affected countries and undermine their ability to respond to, and recover from, the pandemic,” he added, further noting that “these restrictions are unjustified and unfairly discriminate against our country and our southern African sister countries.” Ramaphosa is not the only African leader who has pushed back on the bans. Speaking through a Facebook post on Sunday, Malawi’s President Lazarus Chakwera called for anti-COVID measures to be based on science, “not Afrophobia.” “We are all concerned about the new Covid variant and owe South Africa’s scientists our thanks for identifying it before anyone else did,” Malawi’s President Lazarus Chakwera said in a Facebook post on Sunday. “But the unilateral travel bans now imposed on (Southern

African Development Community) countries by the UK, EU, U.S., Australia, and others are uncalled for. Covid measures must be based on science, not Afrophobia.” The UK was the first country to place travel bans on South Africa following the discovery of the Omicron variant. Since then, several other countries across the world have followed suit with bans on travel from other African countries. The Nigerian paper, Business Day, reported that the West African country is the latest to be added to UK’s red list. On November 30, Canada ramped up its travel bans on additional African countries, adding Nigeria, Malawi, and Egypt to its list after having already imposed travel bans on seven Southern African countries. The countries include South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Eswatini, reports Canadian news agency, Toronto Star. U.S. President Joe Biden described the news of the Omicron variant

as a big concern. Acting on what he calls the need for the United States to be more “cautious,” President Biden placed travel restrictions on South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini, Mozambique, and Malawi, CNN reports. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), only 77 million Africans have been fully vaccinated in a continent with a population exceeding one billion. Critics of the travel bans have blamed wealthier nations for hoarding massive amounts of vaccines that could have been provided to African nations to help prevent the new variant. Speaking to CNN, Dr. Ayoade Alakija, co-chair of the African Union Africa Vaccine Delivery Alliance, noted that with many significant regions of the world still unvaccinated, it was only a matter of time before new variants emerged. According to Reuters, EU spokesman Eric Mamer announced that European Union states have also agreed to introduce

temporary restrictions on all travel into the EU from southern Africa, specifically from Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Japan, Brazil, Thailand, Singapore, Turkey, Egypt, Rwanda, Dubai, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, and Angola are also among those imposing restrictions on flights and travelers from southern African nations in light of the new variant. The Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) hit back at South Africa’s Department of Health for what it calls a “hurried” announcement of the discovery of the variant that threatens to hurt the country’s tourism industry at a time when the industry was in the process of recovering, reports South African local news agency, IOL. “We are feeling the ripple effects thereof on the ground as ordinary South Africans who have already had to endure unacceptable hardships,” said TBCSA CEO Tshifhiwa Tshihengwa in a statement. “The tourism

and hospitality sector continue to bear the brunt of the country’s reputational damage with each variant discovery and inevitable lockdowns stemming from the spread of Covid-19.” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus registered his displeasure over the travel bans, noting that countries should not be punished for reporting updates and that travel bans make it difficult for the organization to keep up with new developments. Speaking during his briefing on Wednesday per CNN, he stated, “It’s deeply concerning to me that those countries are now being penalized by others for doing the right thing. We call on all countries to take rational, proportional risk reduction measures in keeping with international health regulations.”

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GROWING THREAT OF RUSSIAN INVASION IN UKRAINE RAISES GRAVE CONCERNS IN WASHINGTON AND EUROPE

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This past week, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveled to Europe to meet with partners and adversaries to discuss the growing threat of a Russian invasion of Ukraine. According to the Military Times, Russia has built up nearly 120,000 troops as well as conventional military equipment along its border with Ukraine and Belarus, signaling a potential invasion in the coming weeks. Although Russia began building up its forces late last year, American and NATO officials warn that Russian President Vladimir Putin may decide to give the “go ahead” at any moment. During a press conference this week, CNN reports that President Biden expects Russia may soon “move in” and begin its process

of territorial acquisition. According to the Associated Press, Secretary Blinken asserted “an unshakable U.S. commitment to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity” but has yet to define the limits of such commitment. Given Ukraine’s lack of NATO membership, the United States and its European allies have no treaty obligation to defend Ukraine with their conventional forces. The possibility of Ukraine’s acceptance into NATO is one significant reason for Vladimir Putin’s aggressive posture in the region. During the Soviet and early post-Soviet years, Ukraine was directly under the political, military, and economic control of Moscow. This changed in 2014 when pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich was ousted from the presi-

dency due to massive protests throughout Ukraine. In recent years, Kiev has made significant efforts to align itself closer to the West through stronger military and economic cooperation. Kiev has even expressed public openness about the possibility of the growing democracy’s eventual acceptance into NATO. According to The Washington Post, Russia not only views this as a threat to its national security and sphere of influence but also as an insult to the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians. This was outlined in an article written by Vladimir Putin describing the history of these two nations as “one”. It seems Vladimir Putin not only has a desire to maintain the security of the Russian motherland, but to also reclaim territory that was once under the influence

of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the early Russian Federation. Although it may seem that American hands are tied given its lack of obligation to defend Ukraine, the U.S. has threatened several punitive actions should Russia go forth with a potential invasion. Reuters explains that following failed talks with a Russian delegation in Geneva, Secretary Blinken warned of “swift, severe” economic and political penalties that include sanctions of Russia’s critically important energy industry and top government officials, as well as cutting Russia off from the global financial banking system. While these threats would severely impact the Russian economy and Russian long-term economic growth, it remains to be seen whether they will deter Putin from achieving

his territorial acquisition objectives in Ukraine. The Center for Strategic and International Studies reports that it is vitally important that Moscow see any such military victory in Ukraine as long and costly. Any prolonged insurgency that grinds away at the Russian military is a means of deterrence against Putin’s ambitions. Reuters also reports a litany of Russian demands that would stop such an invasion from ever happening. These include a moratorium on NATO’s expansion eastward closer toward the Russian border, as well as a commitment that Ukraine will never join the Western security alliance. If talks eventually break down, a Russian in-

vasion of Ukraine would drastically alter the landscape of regional and international politics. Not only would Russia’s expansion undermine and dismantle an entire nation-state, but it would also raise concerns of a new conflict with the West. Whether an attack happens from the south through Crimea, the north through Belarus, or the center through Kharkiv and the Donbas, such an attack would only inflame tensions between Russia and the West..

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PROFILE: VISITING SERGIO DE MELLO CHAIR, RAJAA ALTALLI

Jasmine DeLeon
Staff Writer

Rajaa Altalli, a Syrian civil society leader, joined Seton Hall’s School of Diplomacy as the Sergio Vieira de Mello Endowed Visiting Chair and as a Fellow in the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies. Ms. Altalli brings her unique perspective and extensive experiences to the School of Diplomacy this spring. Growing up in Syria, Ms. Altalli experienced firsthand the challenges of the Syrian regime, especially against political activism. When she was twelve years old, her father, Jries Altalli, was abducted and tortured by the Security Political Branch in Damascus and imprisoned for nine years. He was a member of an opposition political party that was mainly fighting for democracy in Syria, Ms. Altalli said. In 2011, when the Syrian revolution began, she had “hope of change.” “I dreamed that no Syrian family would have to go through what my family went through because

of the political activism of my father,” she said. “The Syrian regime made the decision once more in 2011 that freedom is not allowed, democracy is not an option, and that many more Syrian families should experience the loss of loved ones.” In 2011, Altalli co-founded the Center for Civil Society and Democracy (CCSD), which aims to advocate for Syrian democracy and support Syrian civil society. To include the diverse opinions of Syrian society, Altalli made sure all provinces in Syria were represented and tried to include all ethnic, religious, political, and sectarian divides, including ranges of age and sex. In leading CCSD, Altalli said facing challenges was a “daily routine,” especially in “leading the effort for more effective women and civil society participation in the political process in Syria.” “It was important to acknowledge the challenge we were facing in

our fight, with negotiation parties and from regional and international actors, but also from the society of and the long conflict in Syria,” Ms. Altalli said. “The security challenges that people faced, including myself and the team, have been very difficult to navigate. Supporting each other and taking the time to ensure we were there for each other was essential.” According to Ms. Altalli, being a liaison between grassroots networks and international decision-makers is a “full-time commitment.” “I make sure to listen carefully to the requests and the needs from the local communities. I rephrase them in a way that fits the international and diplomatic framework,” Ms. Altalli said. “At the same time, I keep [in] my compass of the need for an integrated peace and justice framework for Syria which is inevitable to achieve the sustainable peace and the political transition based on Se-

curity Council Resolution 2254 (SCR2254), a resolution that the peace process in Syria is based on.” In Ms. Altalli’s career, she had focused much of her work on women’s peace and security (WPS) agenda around SCR1325 and its implementations, by including and empowering women, especially Syrian women in all aspects of the peace process. “Syrian women have actively participated in the fight for freedom and democracy in Syria, and they need to shape the future of their country through participating in the peace process,” Altalli said. “Women make up more than half of the Syrian society, they bring different perspectives of peace and security to the table, and they contribute a lot in local peacemaking,” she added. Ms. Altalli said that one triumph for women’s peace and security in Syria was establishing the Women’s Advisory Board (WAB) for the UN Special Envoy of-

peace facilitating the Syrian Peace Process. She also described how Syrian civil society was able to ensure around 28-29% of women’s participation in the Syrian Constitutional Committee, which consists of 150 Syrians working to write the new constitution in Syria. Her initial demand was 50% of women to be represented in the committee. “Civil society did many workshops for women to create a more gender-sensitive constitution and had advocacy missions and conferences to demand that women were involved in the constitutional process,” Ms. Altalli said. “Unfortunately, we are far from reaching full commitment from the different Syrian parties regarding women’s participation in the peace process and regarding the adoption of the international conventions to protect women’s rights and human rights. Altalli said that an important agenda item for her and CCSD is on Youth, Peace, and Secu-

ity (YPS). Around the world, little work is being done to include young people in peace and security since the adoption of SCR2250. “Students are a youth force,” Ms. Altalli said. She advises all youth, even if they do not live in a place of conflict, to look at their everyday lives and contribute to stability in their communities. “I am very inspired by youth and their long journey,” Ms. Altalli said. “Students in the field of international relations and world security can play an important role in more effective implementation of the WPS and YPS agendas,” she added.

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ALUMNI INTERVIEW: DANIELA MAQUERA-SARDON

Melissa Myrtaj
Staff Writer

Daniela Maquera Sardon recently sat down with the Diplomatic Envoy to recall her experiences at Seton Hall University. Daniela migrated to New Jersey at age fifteen from Peru and graduated from Seton Hall University in 2021 as the university valedictorian with a Diplomacy and Economics major and an Asian Studies minor. She proceeded to do a remote exchange student at Stockholm University in Development Economics; she is now working with Mercy Corps as an intern while studying at Fudan University for her Master of Science in World and Chinese Economy on a Chinese Government Scholarship. Just beginning her studies at Fudan in 2021, she received an EMA Research Camp in Chinese Economy and Finance Certificate and expects

to graduate in July 2023. She is focused on enhancing education and poverty eradication through her research projects, programs, and studies. During her time at Seton Hall, she participated in the Latino Student Organization, Adelante, and became the Chief Financial Officer. Being a part of the organization for all four years was integral to her growth. The leader of the Latino Student Organization, Ana Campoverde, was one of the first people at Seton Hall to help her speak up and develop her confidence in her skills. Ana Campoverde helped Daniela find her first internship and was supportive from the beginning to the end. The undergraduate research Diplomacy Lab brought “richness to her college experience” and developed her newfound interest in research and writing. This was a great space for her to explore where to go from college and be

intentional with her plans. Her other engagements were in the Buccino Leadership Institute, the University Honors Program, the Global Current, and the Diplomatic Envoy. Through her experiences in classes and extracurriculars, she found a great support system that supplemented her college experience. She recalled Dr. Huddleston of the DiploLab, who was the first professor to tell her she was a good writer. He encouraged her to co-write papers and gain her a sense of confidence. Before faculty support, Daniela carried her high school shyness of English not being her first language. Gratefully, she was able to connect to teachers who pushed her and felt less alone in navigating her future. She also referred to the support of Dr. Goldfrank, who encouraged her to send her senior thesis to a journal, Dr. Santangelo, who was her collaborator

in submitting the paper, and Dr. Chen, who introduced her to the option to study at Fudan University. She greatly praised the assistance of Mary Mountcastle, as well as Dr. Price and Dean Halpin. Daniela emphasized that “all the work I did was not just what I did” – it was with her community of support at Seton Hall. She keeps in touch with many of them today. Daniela encourages students to “be more curious”, recalling her growing confidence with her constant exploration of organizations and connecting with faculty. Her various opportunities and successes signaled to her the importance of “starting with time” and “getting your feet wet with information.” She emphasized asking for help and being intentional in spending time and energy. Daniela saw her time at Seton Hall as an opportunity to absorb as much as possible and to be



Daniela’s extracurricular involvement heavily impacted her studies abroad. Courtesy of Seton Hall University.

open-minded to new experiences. She developed a great understanding of the benefit of learning and all the impact an education can have on her goal to help eradicate poverty. She concluded by encouraging the students of Seton Hall to “challenge themselves by following their passion and by being compassionate and meticulous studies and work to eradicate

poverty is something that comes from her heart and hits close to home. Daniela is a shining reminder to students who are under pressure and competitive environments to not only persevere but also bring kindness to it.

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2022 BEIJING OLYMPICS

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Those who follow sports in some way will know that politics always get involved no matter how much fans wish otherwise. As has been shown this year, domestic and international politics have characterized the Olympic Games, as the most international and inherently political non-political event there is. With the 2022 Beijing games ongoing, it is worth remembering that the Olympics' thrust into political spotlights isn't new.

Political squabbles usually flow into the international sport when determining who gets to host. A host country spends a significant amount of time sweeping controversies under the rug to make a good impression on international audiences. The three most common controversies a host country can face revolving around domestic politics, finance, or international pressure.

The controversy this time is that China, an authoritarian state, gets to welcome the world—at least metaphorically because there are no international spectators allowed according to CNN—amid a barrage of accusations and one of its worst positions on the world stage according to surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center.

Most of the time, domestic politics only affect domestic sports. In the United States, controversies in college football and baseball in the last couple of years show political and social divisions among Americans, according to ESPN. Nonetheless, the resonance of the controversies largely stays within our borders, as Major League Baseball and college football's audience is almost exclusively American, respectively. Hosting the Olympics, however, has shed light on some previous host countries' domestic affairs.

The 1976 summer games in Montréal were meant to be a celebration

of Canada's historic and political epicenter. Instead, fights with a construction union leader-turned-mobster led to a massive delay to the construction of the monumental, circular Olympic Stadium, reports the Ottawa Citizen newspaper. It would be paid for completely in 2006, turning the "Big O" stadium into "The Big Owe," a name used to mock the excessive cost, according to the Canadian Broadcast Corporation.

If an authoritarian state hosts the games, pressure can sometimes come from the outside and force change. General Chun Doo-hwan ruled South Korea as a dictator from 1979 to 1987. As Seoul prepared to host the games, major protests sprung up across the country against the regime. In the end, the regime collapsed and made way for elections amid the attention it received from the rest of the world, according to the University of Alberta.

Independence campaigns, meanwhile, can

also cause disruptions to host cities. The 1992 summer games were held in Barcelona. The Spanish central government invested millions beautifying the city, only for Catalan independence activists to take advantage of the international spotlight by handing out pamphlets and flying the independence movement's flags, says a paper published by the American Anthropological Association.

China's role in international sports politics is interesting given its history. After the Chinese Civil War, the Republic of China led by Chiang Kai-shek represented China at the Olympics as Mao's People's Republic isolated itself after parting with ways with Stalin. Beijing grew irritated with the Chiang-led Chinese delegation—at this point exiled in Taiwan—taking up the name China, that it boycotted until the International Olympic Committee brokered the Nagoya Resolution in 1979. This forced the Taiwanese to compete

as "Chinese Taipei" while the People's Republic of China was recognized under its official name.

Since then, China has sent delegations to every Olympics, according to TIME. Given the boycotts of 1980 and 1984 by the U.S. and USSR, respectively, going to both games made China seem like an open, global player. This image reached its peak in 2008, with neatly organized summer games in Beijing. With an acclaimed opening ceremony, a catchy theme song, and the top place in the gold medal table thanks to a government athletics program, according to Newsweek, China projected itself as even more open and global, but now it was competitive as well.

China's involvement in the Olympic movement has been steady ever since 2008. The Chinese delegation has always been among the top five ranked on the medal table in the three summer games that have been held since. When it comes to winter

sports, however, China still has ways to go. The country hardly has any natural snow, and the 2022 Beijing games will be the first to rely completely on artificial snow for ski and snowboard events. Massive construction has taken place in the Beijing district of Yanqing and the suburb of Zhangjiakou in Hebei province. Given COVID and the accusations of human rights abuses, that controversy is among the least worrisome for organizers. The Olympics have always been about politics, but Beijing 2022 is the most interesting chapter of the political history of the Olympics.

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SPORTSWASHING

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Saudi Arabia recently made headlines in the sporting world with its purchase of a stake in the English Premier League club Newcastle United as part of their Public Investment Fund, according to NPR. This fund, which is owned by the Saudi Arabian government, ended up purchasing an 80% stake of Newcastle United for 300 million pounds, the equivalent of \$400 million.

This buyout of the English soccer club is just the latest effort by figures in the Saudi government to invest in the sporting world across several dif-

ferent platforms. These investments by Saudi Arabia, and similar actions by other oil-rich monarchial governments in the Middle East, have called attention to the practice of "sportswashing." The Guardian defines the practice as "a macro-level manipulation of sport's status as the great shared global spectacle. Sportswashing describes the way sport is used to launder a reputation, to gloss a human rights record, and to wash a little blood away."

Using the term indicates a moral standpoint on how nations and people should not normalize the actions and regimes of nations through their

association and sponsorship within the sporting world. A report by Grant Liberty states that Saudi Arabia has spent more than one and a half-billion dollars to stage professional sports events domestically and abroad. This includes events such as the annual Spanish Super Cup soccer match, professional golf tournaments on the men's and women's tour, professional wrestling, and mixed martial arts.

Similarly, in the football world, Paris Saint-Germain's recent purchase of Lionel Messi, when even Barcelona F.C. his longtime home club was unable to afford his services, attracted much attention due to the bankrolling involvement of oil-rich monarchies. As Deutsche Welle reports, "Since 2011, PSG have been owned by Qatar Sports Investments (QSI), a subsidiary of the sovereign wealth fund of the state of Qatar." This has allowed the French club to make massive moves in the free-agent

market, which has attracted criticism from critics calling this a monetization of the sport.

Deutsche Welle also reports that "PSG's transfer activities have altered the playing field in European football beyond recognition, as deals for the likes of superstars like Neymar (€222m from Barcelona in 2017) and Kylian Mbappé (€145m from Monaco in 2018) have sent inflationary waves across the transfer market." The UEFA itself, Europe's football league, has deep economic ties with the oil industry and Gulf nations in particular, according to Politico. Gazprom, the state-owned Russian oil company, is a major sponsor of the international Champions League competition and several clubs that play in it. Qatar Airways was a sponsor of its recent Europe-wide competition, Politico reports. Therefore, when the EU published climate change ads in a partnership with UEFA during the recent European competition, the

conflict of public interest drew much attention.

Some have argued that these nations are free to engage in the free global economy as well, according to the Guardian. If the Chinese government can host the 2022 Winter Olympics, for example, despite their treatment of and discrimination of the Uighur population, then those regimes and figures have just as much a right as those in Western societies to invest in the sporting world, they argue.

Along with hosting the Winter Olympics, China has taken a great interest in investing in the football world. According to Deutsche Welle, "As recently as 2014, the powers-that-be in Beijing issued an agenda aimed to make China a football superpower by 2050 — and wealthy investors quickly set out to invest in football both in China and abroad." China has also sought to decommercialize the game domestically by removing the owner's name from football clubs and removing those

clubs that do not comply with the new regulations.

Along with this, China's recent takeover of Hong Kong, aggression towards Taiwan, and the disappearance of Chinese female tennis star Peng Shuai after her accusation of sexual assault by a Chinese government official surfaced have attracted international criticism, reports the Guardian. However, despite this, there seems to be a relative lack of blowback on the Chinese government except for the Women's Tennis Association to suspend any future tournaments in China.

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Controversial buyers play an increasing role in international sports. Courtesy of Cartridge (Flickr).

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF PENG SHUAI

Megan Gawron
Managing Editor

In a recent interview with L'Equipe, Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai announced her retirement and retracted her sexual assault allegation against a high ranking member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The interview marked Peng's first contact with a foreign publication since posting her initial accusation against Zhang Gaoli on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform.

Despite a recent sighting of Peng at an Olympic figure skating event, her initial disappearance is resulting in short-term implications for sports in China. Reuters highlights that while China has historically hosted up to 40 World Tennis Tour events in a year, the International Tennis Federation is refusing to schedule a single game in China in 2022. After three weeks without contact from Peng and an email to the IOC 'assur-

ing' her safety that many believed was coerced by the CCP, global concern emerged for her welfare. This rise in concern led to the International Tennis Federation's decision to withdraw from China and, according to the Associated Press, caused a WTA mental health counseling unit to reach out to Peng. In her interview, Peng called these actions unnecessary, emphasizing that she does not need help and that her "romantic problems" are unrelated to her status as an athlete.

The Beijing Winter Olympics were shrouded in controversy long before Peng posted her initial accusation against Gaoli, which likely impacted the IOC's response to her disappearance. The Guardian explains that the IOC received backlash from human rights groups and some Western governments for allowing China to keep its Olympic bid in light of the ongoing Uighur genocide in the

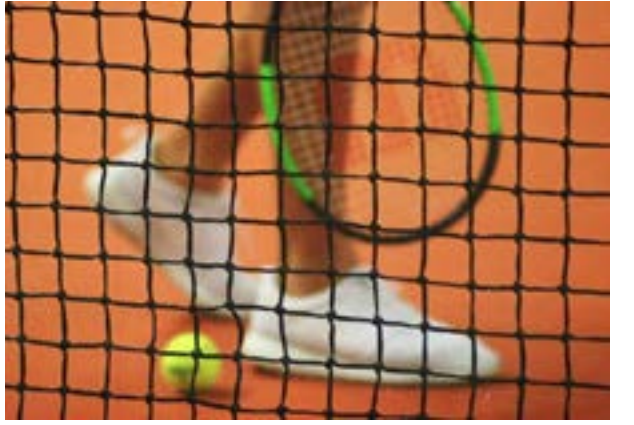
Xinjiang province. The IOC claims its mission is "to create a better world," but has failed to meaningfully address the CCP's complicity in an active genocide and the assumed censorship of Peng Shuai. The New York Times reports that the United States, Australia, Britain, and Canada are all diplomatically boycotting the Olympics in response to the Uighur genocide, which overshadows Peng's seeming coercion.

At the start of the Beijing Winter Olympics, The New York Times reports that Peng attended dinner with Thomas Bach of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to assuage concerns about her welfare. Peng promised to attend the meeting in November after an IOC inquiry into her disappearance—following her initial post on Weibo, neither the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) nor the IOC could contact Peng. The WTA emphasizes that

the Chinese government failed to address Peng's disappearance, which occurred immediately after her now-deleted post on November 2, leading to concerns about her safety.

While the WTA called for a full investigation of Peng's accusation, it is unlikely that any such investigation will occur. The Associated Press reports that in addition to Peng reversing her statement, IOC officials are refusing to go on record on whether the organization believes an investigation is necessary. Peng is connected to the IOC as a three-time Olympian, and China hosting the current Olympic games creates an apparent conflict of interest for the organization.

Outside of China, responses to Peng Shuai's disappearance have caused a broader outcry over censorship. BBC News describes that during the Australian Open, Tennis Australia briefly prevented spectators from wearing



The circumstances of Peng Shuai's disappearance are raising questions from international sports figures and organizations. Courtesy of John Formander (Unsplash)

"Where is Peng Shuai?" situation is to bow to the will of the CCP and Chinese corporations.

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THE QATAR WORLD CUP

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The 2022 World Cup will be held in Qatar, an oil-rich Persian Gulf country eager to showcase its stadiums and landmarks as the first Arab nation to hold the tournament. Despite its wealthy aesthetic, human rights organizations and journalists have discovered via whistleblowers that Qatari authorities have overlooked human rights abuses of migrant workers brought to construct facilities for the event.

According to Human Rights Watch, whistleblower Abdullah Ibhaish has been denied a fair trial in Qatar after being accused by Qatari officials of bribery, and purposely threatening national security and finances. Abdullah was accused of these crimes while working as FIFA World Cup media manager, he claims that the accusations came shortly after he had spoken out against the Qatari Supreme Committee's behavior when it dispersed a strike led by migrant workers. Abdullah was

jailed without being given a fair trial and said that his conviction was based on a coerced confession in which he was threatened and was refused counsel services. Qatari authorities also never showcased clear evidence even after Abdullah hired a lawyer, he alleged. His unfair jail time has sparked human rights organizations to heavily investigate the practices of Qatar and FIFA when it comes to their workers, reports The Guardian.

Findings by Amnesty International stated that migrant workers' rights in Qatar are implemented by harsh practices. In recent years, Qatar has passed laws that positively affect migrant workers. From 2017 to 2020 Qatar passed laws regarding labor tribunals, a fund to support unpaid wages, a minimum wage, workers' autonomy from employers, and has even ratified a couple of human rights treaties. The problem stems from the fact that despite Qatar's willingness to make a change on paper, they are failing to follow through on the ground. There are numerous instances

of this documented by Amnesty, including one instance where a female employee was threatened by her employer when she requested to change employers.

This reality puts so many migrant workers in a difficult spot, to either withstand mistreatment in order to keep providing for family or not put food on the table. In some ways, migrant workers feel as if they do not have con-

legal obstacles that Qatar has implemented on their migrant workers, Amnesty found that in August 2021, Qatari authorities failed to look into migrant workers' deaths that were directly tied to dangerous working conditions.

The Qatar world cup will likely do a good job of sportswashing the human rights abuses and keep everyone focused on soccer. FIFA has a moral and organizational responsibility to push for Qatar to have

ensuring a fair trial for Abdullah, the Guardian says in a separate report.

Even though FIFA may not be completely responsible, they are responsible for putting Qatar on the world stage—the sort of stage that can build pressure in Qatari authorities to follow through on their laws while the whole world is watching. The organization has promised to promote human rights and in December held a conference on human

workers have suffered the same scenario, and the World Cup has been an opportunity for those situations to come to light.

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Migrant workers hired for the tournament face troubling workplace conditions in Qatar. Courtesy of Fauzan Saari (Unsplash)

control over their own lives since their mobility is restricted, which may inherently cause them to miss better career opportunities. Besides the

more accommodating and fair labor laws. Rights groups have pushed the organization to adopt a tougher stance on labor protections, including

rights in Qatar with stakeholders to the World Cup, according to FIFA's website. Still, stories like those of Abdullah and Aisha are not unique, as many

COLONIALISM HAS STAINED THE WEST'S ROLE IN AFRICA, BUT THE ALTERNATIVES ARE WORSE

Jarrett Dang
Editor-in-Chief

Intervention by Western nations in foreign countries—especially post-colonial developing states—has been marked by numerous failures and remains a highly-charged topic among international policymakers. The shadow of colonialism looms especially large in the West's approach to dealing with African nations, which were mostly under the control of European empires until as recently as the late 1970s. Foreign influence from the colonial era can still be found in the political and social institutions of many African states. For example, six Central African countries use the Central African CFA franc currency, a colonial-era unit of exchange that is still controlled by the French Treasury in Paris, says BBC News. This, combined with numerous European and American military units stationed throughout formerly colonized lands, paints a seemingly damning picture of Western neo-colonialism in Africa. However, while the pol-

itics and optics of the West's presence on the continent are tainted by the mistakes of the past, some actions, such as counterterrorism efforts and measures to protect democracy, should be considered in a different light. When done right, foreign involvement can help guide developing states along the path to stable governance while keeping sovereignty intact. One recent example can be found in Mali, a state mired in an ongoing ethnoreligious conflict that started a decade ago. When an Islamic extremist insurgency rose in the country's north in 2012, a French-led military campaign helped the government retake key cities and curb violence, according to The Council on Foreign Relations. A United Nations peacekeeping mission, dubbed MINUSMA, was also deployed in 2013 to help stabilize the situation, which remains dangerous to this day. While the involvement of foreign military forces did not end the conflict, it did help stabilize the

government in a time of crisis and transformed the situation from that of a civil war to an insurgency. There are obvious historical and ethical questions raised by the intervention, including whether previous colonial governance led to a central weak government in the first place, allowing an insurgency to flourish unchecked. The true intentions of the French state in deploying a sizable military presence in its former colony are also questionable. Regardless of the answers to these questions, which can be debated vigorously from either side, the West's military involvement in Mali shows the potential utility of foreign counterterrorism and conflict stabilization operations. Recent events in Mali lay the case for another type of foreign intervention: acting to protect democracy. In August 2020, the Malian military overthrew then-President Boubacar Ibrahim Keita in a coup d'état. Soon after, the new military junta was quick to placate the

world by promising to hold new elections due to take place in February 2022. When the ruling generals "postponed" the vote until 2026 in January, international condemnation was swift. Western-led bids to sanction military leaders failed, however, due to vetoes from China and Russia at the UN Security Council,



Foreign troops in African nations have become a common sight. Courtesy of Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa (Flickr).

rulers has caused a rift that may compromise the security situation. As a consequence of regional pressure, Al Jazeera reports that the junta is considering removing all French troops from the country, which could threaten a return to the violence seen in 2012. The Security Council vote is emblematic of why

of democracy is widely popular amongst populations across Africa, according to a report from Afrobarometer. Therefore, if the West wants to preserve the ideals it stands for while promoting stronger governance, it should also continue to support democracy while avoiding overreach.

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according to ABC News. The failed vote came amid lobbying by West Africa's regional bloc, which urged the Council to adopt sanctions to "ensure an expedited transition to constitutional rule." Additionally, France's opposition to the country's military

the West uses its influence to stand for democracy and human rights in Africa. Actors like Russia and China, which have increasingly turned their eyes to the continent in recent years, largely ignore bad behavior in favor of security and economic ties. The idea

WHERE'S THE WORKING CLASS IN FOREIGN POLICY?

William Kanatzar
Staff Writer

The wealthiest country in human history finds itself helpless in stopping a nation with an economy smaller than that of Texas. There's no punchline to follow, and if there was, it would certainly fall flat to Ukrainian comedian-turned-President Volodymyr Zelensky. NPR reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin has encircled Ukraine's border with 100,000 Russian soldiers. This is largely due to Russia's fear of Western invasion and skepticism of American intentions after major broken promises from Washington. Instead of approaching this situation with realism, President Biden has resorted to a distorted view that believes Putin meddles in Eastern Europe because Russia is on a never-ending quest to destroy democracy. Biden must defuse the situation with a realist worldview that recognizes the constant aim of states to

protect and grow their security. If Biden continues with this flawed approach to countering Russian aggression, he will fail at accomplishing his goal of a foreign policy that benefits the American middle class while simultaneously reaping disastrous economic outcomes. In order to understand the ongoing crisis, one must look back in history. Covered in depth by UT Austin's National Security Review, War on the Rocks, Moscow's steel grip on Eastern Europe started to slip in 1990. The Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and uprisings spread throughout the Soviet sphere. During this period, Soviets worried that the West would take advantage of the momentarily destabilized region and plunge NATO deep into the heart of Eastern Europe. They were ultimately right. Despite promises from then-U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to former Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev that, "there would be no extension of NA-

TO's jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east," the region is now dotted with NATO bases across nearly every Eastern European nation. This broken promise remains a frequent point of contention between the world's greatest nuclear powers. On February 9, Putin told reporters at the Kremlin that if Ukraine joins NATO, the West will be pulled into war in Ukraine, as reported by France24. Biden offered a similarly grim summation of the crisis, shocking many with his frank honesty that, "...he will move in, he has to do something," according to NBC News. Biden was right in taking troops off the table in the instance of a Russian invasion in Ukraine. However, he is failing to effectively defuse the situation. Resorting to the liberal outlook on international relations, the Biden administration regularly claims that Russia is meddling in Ukraine to destroy democracy in Eastern Europe. But history points to

a far bigger concern. Putin, like many Russians, is heavily skeptical of Western intentions after the broken promises of the 1990s and of any military presence to Russia's west. Nearly 27 million Russians died the last time invading forces crashed through the Soviet Union's western defense, disguised under the veil of empty German diplomatic promises. If President Biden wants to truly defuse this crisis, he must approach Russia with realism. True conflict resolution starts with signaling to the other that their concerns are heard and understandable. Thus, America must acknowledge that it broke its promise not to expand NATO and promise to cease expansion. American liberal internationalists will cry, "what about democracy!?" Doctor Heal thyself. Between rising American distrust of government, raging economic inequality, and one of two American political parties believing the last election was stolen, perhaps Amer-

ica should learn how to build democracy inward before trying to promote it outwardly. Planes tell passengers to secure their oxygen mask first before helping the person next to you, because otherwise both passengers will likely die. Recognizing Russian emotion over Western invasion as a valid concern signals that America listens when it engages in diplomacy. This is always what Russia has wanted: inclusion in decision making over the post-World War II European security project. Do they not deserve it? Look at the figures of the amount of lives lost by each allied nation. Russia dwarfs the U.S., France, and Britain collectively, as reports The WWII Museum. When Secretary of State Anthony Blinken gave his first major speech as Secretary of State, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace highlighted one of his key promises - when the Biden administration would make its for-

eign policy decisions, it would be guided by these questions: What will our foreign policy mean for American workers and their families? What do we need to do around the world to make us stronger here at home? These are clearly not the questions the Biden Administration is asking itself as it fails to defuse European tensions while inflation soars at home. Fomenting war between a major global energy supplier, Russia, and a major global grain exporter, Ukraine, as American workers are being crushed at the gas pump and the grocery store is the last thing that America's middle-class needs.

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MARS WRIGLEY'S 'PROGRESSIVE' REBRANDING OF M&M'S IS MISGUIDED FEMINISM

Shweta Parthasarathy
Digital Editor

Earlier this year, Mars Wrigley announced that it will be updating its personified M&M characters to be more "current" and "representative of [M&M's] consumers," according to the president of Mars Wrigley North America Anton Vincent, in a report for CNN. The two female M&Ms will be different; the Green character will wear sneakers instead of high heels, and the Brown character will wear more 'sensible' heels rather than stilettos. The M&M characters' upgrade is intended to reflect Mars Wrigley's commitment to "upend the expected [and] break through barriers" using its products, as the M&M website notes. Mars Wrigley's move came just days before Disney unveiled a new pantsuit for Minnie Mouse in honor of Disneyland Paris's 30th Anniversary and International Women's Day, according to the park's website. CNN reports that

Stella McCartney, who designed the navy blue polka-dotted suit, explained that her creation would serve as "a symbol of progress and empowerment for a new generation." The decisions made by Mars and Disney are said to be reflective of their customers' dedication to feminism and inclusivity, but the changes have become a point of contention amongst both conservatives and liberals. In a Fox News interview, conservative commentator Candace Owens criticized Disney for destroying "fabrics of our society" by making Minnie "more masculine," while other conservative hosts made similar hyperbolic arguments against the update to M&M's characters, including Greg Gutfeld on his Fox broadcast show Gutfeld!, and Tucker Carlson, according to The Week. Carlson derisively and erroneously condensed Mars's goal; "M&M's will not be satisfied until every last cartoon character is deeply

unappealing and totally androgynous. ... When you're totally turned off, we've achieved equity." Conservatives have argued that these changes are neither progressive nor simply unnecessary; rather, they pose a grave danger to the understandings of gender that have shaped American society. Those who support Mars Wrigley and Disney's decisions, however, believe that the changes are a step towards eroding gender norms. The Associated Press explained that the overhaul of the M&Ms was meant to make them less "stereotypically feminine." This was also the motivation behind changing perceptions of the Green M&M, which was often sexy and seductive, whose sultry tone in one advertisement literally melted the male M&Ms. However, that reasoning is exactly what many progressives disapprove of. The changes made to the Green M&M, in particular, have been criticized for undermining a basic

principle of feminism: the right to decide what kind of woman you are, without judgement. Wearing stilettos or heels makes one no less of a woman and in no way undermines society's progress towards gender equality. According to The Independent, one social media user pointed out, "Isn't the point of feminism that we get to choose if we want to be feminine or whatever we want[?]" Choosing one version of female in favor of another automatically marks the replacement as superior. Switching from the 'sexy' image of the Green M&M to a more modest and supposedly progressive one demonizes female sexuality and sends the message that women, or female anthropomorphized candies, should not express their sexuality, or they risk losing respect, power, and credibility. Pitting one group of more modest 'sensible' women against another more adventurous, risqué group of women achieves something entirely opposed to

Mars Wrigley's stated goal of empowering all women. Admittedly, Mars and Disney are not alone in attempting to shift perceptions of their brands—many companies have adapted to meet society's evolution in recent years. Mattel launched a new line of Barbies in 2015 with a range of skin tones, hair types, and body types, reports NPR. More recently, according to the New York Times, Hasbro announced last year that it would be dropping 'Mr.' from its Potato Head line of products in order to promote gender inclusivity. What sets Mars Wrigley's modifications apart however, even from Disney's changes, is their demonization of a certain type of female representation in favor of what they consider to be more progressive. Unlike the new M&Ms, Minnie's new outfit is an addition to her existing wardrobe, actively including all women regardless of their clothing. Barbie's revision actively included

women with all skin, hair, and body types, and the Potato Head adaption actively included all gender identities. In contrast, the M&M's rebranding actively excludes certain women whom Mars deemed to be antithetical to progress. However well-intentioned Mars Wrigley's M&M makeover may have been, the fact remains that the move was fundamentally inimical to their stated goal of creating a platform for inclusivity. The unintended consequence of what the company likely believed to be an empowering move was a betrayal of one of the cornerstones of feminism: the right to choose, free of judgement, the woman you want to be.

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"PARTYGATE" COVERS UP DEEPER PROBLEMS WITHIN UK MEDIA

Andrea Gonzalez
Staff Writer

In November of 2021, a series of rumors about social gatherings at Downing Street, the home and office of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, set off a spiraling crisis that put his career in jeopardy. According to Foreign Policy, Johnson's residence hosted over a dozen gatherings with more than 100 staff. At the same time, COVID-19 restrictions kept working class Britons from "mixing, visiting elderly relatives, or attending the funerals of loved ones." The latest scandal has the potential to sweep away voters from the Conservative Party and sink the Prime Minister's political career. Still, other factors jeopardize the Conservative front, and 'Partygate' may be the only thing that keeps the public from looking deeper. The UK has been facing a troubling economic downturn since leaving the

European Union in January of 2021, exacerbated by COVID-19 setbacks. Issues in the labor force, increasing oil prices, higher electricity bills, and empty grocery store aisles lowered the living standard of many Britons. Furthermore, in October of 2021, the prime minister's plans to increase the National Insurance Tax were met with opposition from both the Labour Party and lawmakers from his own Conservative front. Opponents claim a tax increase would betray his initial vow to voters in 2019. As economic complications compromise voters, 'Partygate' puts another strain on Conservatives for future elections. If the Civil Servant's investigation determines that Johnson's behavior was, in fact, harmful and proves his culpability, then it may be only a matter of time before Conservatives oust him to prevent further disillusionment with their base. The Metropolitan police

requested that Civil Servant Sue Gray, who is leading the investigation, use minimal details in the public report to avoid "prejudice" and wavering public opinion about the events. The report includes various quotes from Johnson's press briefing in which he apologized and promised to fix the conduct of his office, reports Al Jazeera. Nevertheless, the investigation is still in the hands of the Prime Minister, who has the potential to veto any investigation into his office and its affairs, according to The Guardian. If Johnson vetoes the investigation, it will exhibit his lack of concern for state-imposed safety measures, while highlighting the backwards foundation of the structure of British government. But the aforementioned economic concerns the UK is facing are being overshadowed by pack-journalism more concerned with electric headlines than substantial reporting. Last April,

while Queen Elizabeth II mourned her late husband, media attention shifted to an alleged governmental gathering that occurred the night before. In turn, images of the grieving Queen were juxtaposed with more than three hundred images from the government sponsored "bring your own booze work event," leading Johnson to offer a public apology to the country after initially rejecting the accusations. In anticipation of the release of the Gray investigation, the prime minister told reporters that "I have learned enough to know that there were things we simply did not get right." However, the apology did little to appease citizens and elected officials questioning his judgment and integrity and gave hungry journalists a perfect excuse to hyperfocus on the issue. Pushing the court of public opinion towards a campaign against Johnson's character, rather than high-

lighting the issues that affect the lives of the average Britons, has undoubtedly been detrimental to the journalistic credibility of media outlets in the state. In a scholarly article citing systematic issues with British broadcasters and editorial boards, Oxford Professor Bill Dutton criticized the lack of a "diverse array of stories" that has only worsened with 'Partygate.' Dutton explains that coverage of world events has been "marginalized" by the endless televised testimonials of individuals and parliament members expressing how they feel about the incident. Others, including British historian Sir Anthony Seldon in an interview with BBC News, focus on the unusual circumstances of the Prime Minister's situation. Though he has recovered from past public scrutiny, the Prime Minister must rapidly rebuild his relationship with his constituents and his Cab-

inet, as lawmakers are not afraid to use their power to remove him from office via a Vote of No Confidence. Salvaging his tenure as Prime Minister will require Johnson to face the weakening foundation of his office. The PM needs forgiveness and an economic plan to prove that he is still worthy of the title and whatever credibility he has left. Meanwhile, the future of journalism in the UK must examine if 'Partygate' is an event worth fixating on at the expense of substantial investigations into the financial health of the state. Striving for a better Britain that shares pain and success should be a responsibility, not for the Prime Minister but those whose platform allows them to enter the homes and minds of the people.

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ALUMNI INTERVIEW: MARK MCGUIRE

Joshua Powanda
Staff Writer

The Diplomatic Envoy recently sat down with Diplomacy alumnus Mark McGuire to discuss his professional life post-undergrad, his time at Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy and International Relations, and some advice he has for current Diplomacy students.

Mark started his Diplomacy journey in the fall 2016 semester, where he immediately noticed the "collaborative atmosphere" and energy of the school. It was this constant academic activity that prompted him to join several organizations such as the Ethics Team and German Club, of which he would become Captain and President respectively. In conversation with McGuire, it was clear that his involvement on campus was extensive. However, it was his unique commitment to leadership that contributed to bettering the School of Diplomacy.

He eventually earned a seat on the Board of Overseers, a governing body within the school, where he served as a student representative. In this position, McGuire helped expand the Board to support a broader representation of the student populace.

Upon graduation in 2020, he began working as a Management and Program Analyst for the Department of Justice (DOJ) in a national security position he says he always knew he wanted to pursue. As someone who is more "policy-centered," he found the role to be both "interesting and impactful" regarding his specific goals.

McGuire also mentioned that "[he] always knew [he] wanted to work in national security." The early clarity of his professional ambitions prompted him to follow the advice of Assistant Dean of the School of Diplomacy Ursula Sanjamino when she told him to "make a plan." He tailored his academic experience and

internship search to his national security interests and recommends students interested in a specific field do the same.

In McGuire's case, the key to success seems to be commitment and persistence. Not only did he fully commit himself to achieve academic success through his involvement in various Diplomacy-oriented organizations, but his persistence in applying to positions that suited his interests was key to earn-

ing him an internship at DOJ. It was his internship and leadership background that provided him with the experience and avenue to earn his current job.

His commitment to success was evident early on. Not only did McGuire harness the advice of Dean Sanjamino, but he highlights the importance of other Diplomacy faculty such as Dr. Catherine Ruby, Director of Internships and Career Development. Along with pursuing a plan

tailored to his specific interests in national security, he utilized the experience of Dr. Ruby in his freshman year. He told the Envoy that he was often in her office reviewing resumes and cover letters to ensure he was prepared for upcoming internship applications.

McGuire credits his coursework and extracurricular engagements for his ability to take on the challenges associated with the position. The ability to concisely speak about a certain situation or case is something McGuire developed in his time as Captain of the Ethics Team and as a Staff Writer in the Diplomatic Envoy. Being able to understand an audience, as well as concisely deliver information, is a quality he expanded on in these academic positions and now employs at the DOJ. Along with courses such as Public International Law and International Conflict and Security, he noted the significance of quality writing to his current analytical role. "Condensing com-

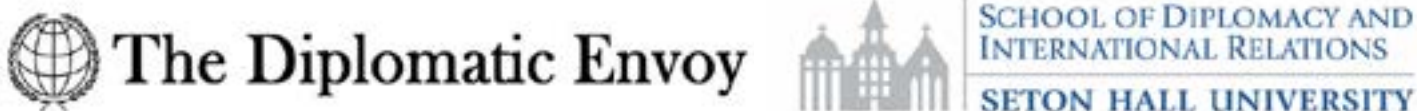
plex sets of information" in a "synthesized way" is a crucial asset for him to provide clear and concise analysis to his supervisors.

As for advising current Diplomacy students of all academic levels, McGuire recommends to "not be discouraged by bumps along the way." He explains that no matter how many rejection letters you receive, eventually something interesting will land. If a student has a goal, putting in the extra effort to see themselves in a specific position will take them farther than they can imagine.

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McGuire shares how the School of Diplomacy influenced his interest in U.S. national security. Courtesy of LinkedIn



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For more information on sources, go to blogs.shu.edu/thediplomaticenvoy

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