Delving into the Christchurch Shooter’s Manifesto

Shamel Dishack
Staff Writer

On March 15, 2019, Brenton Tarrant conducted two consecutive terrorist attacks on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. When the rampage ended, 50 lives were lost and 50 more were injured, marking the deadliest shooting in New Zealand’s history.

On the day Tarrant carried out the shootings, he released a 74-paged manifesto via Twitter and other social media. Since banned in New Zealand, according to CNN, the manifesto discusses the grievances that Tarrant has towards the evolution of the modern world, and the dangers that he claims threaten the welfare of the white race and European identity.

Titled “The New Replacement,” (an allusion to Jean Camus), the manifesto begins with the poem “Do not go gentle into that good night” by Dylan Thomas, and proceeds to offer a short introduction, citing that the ultimate thing one should remember from his writings is that the birth rate must change. Tarrant sees the declining birthrates in Europe as an alarming trend exacerbated by a rise in illegal migration and attributable to humanistic and individualistic culture, and mass migration and higher fertility rates of the immigrants as an immediate threat to the European identity.

In his eyes, these immigrants are bent on reversing the social and cultural landscape of Europe, culminating in an inevitable replacement of the European. Believing that democratic institutions are ineffective in combating these population shifts, Tarrant sees no option but to use radical approaches through lethal force.

From there, Tarrant attempts to answer questions that both opponents and sympathizers will ask. Through his answers, we come to discover that he is a 28-year-old Australian who primarily made income through investments, odd jobs, and traveling. He identifies as an ethnico-nationalist and eco-fascist. From there, he may have had connections with other organizations, specifically with the far-right Knighthood Templars, who he claims gave him a blessing in support.

He sees his actions as nothing but a blast whose aftershock will ripple for years to come, and his role to be insignificant but necessary. He considers himself a anti-immigration, racist partisan, since he wants to preserve the sanctity of the white race. However, he does not find himself to be xenophobic because he “tolerates” other races and cultures as long as they remain within their borders and territories.

In regards to Islamophobia, he cites the Muslim community’s high birth rates and plunders across human history as the threat, not the faith.

In the questions pertaining to the attacks, he claims that the planning was two years in the making, although the location shifted from Dunedin to Christchurch after seeing the mosques there and the

Columbia Copes with Venezuelan Migrants Amid Worsening Crisis

Axel Sontgerath
Staff Writer

Around a thousand members of the Venezuelan security forces have fled to Colombia since last month, effectively abandoning the government of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, says NBC News. Colombia’s foreign ministry released the updated number of Venezuelan police and military personnel who crossed the border, many of which fled around February 23 when opposition leader Juan Guaidó attempted to deliver United States-provided humanitarian aid to Venezuela.

These deserting forces have received housing, medical attention, and legal aid from the Colombian government, according to NBC News. 400 Colombia families offered their help to these deserters as well.

Colombia, the United States, and around 50 other countries support Juan Guaidó’s claim that Maduro’s presidency is illegitimate and that he, consequently, is the interim president of Venezuela. Despite international support for Guaidó and desertions by some of his soldiers, Maduro still holds power in Venezuela. He retains support of Venezuela’s military through its key leaders, who are considered pivotal in determining who controls the country, NBC News reports. Maduro’s strongest allegiance against Guaidó is that he is an outside collaborator with the US attempting to overthrow the government in Venezuela.

Currently, Venezuela is facing the worst moments of its long economic and humanitarian crisis. The population is enduring the effects of hyperinflation, a scarcity of medicine, and other necessities, which was only worsened by a nationwide blackout at the beginning of March, says NBC News.

According to NBC News, after the recent blackout, Maduro stated that he is planning a Cabinet reshuffle with no further details given. In the past, cabinet reshuffles have mostly consisted of a rotation of ministers, as opposed to a major overhaul of leadership. Most of the key cabinet figures face U.S. sanctions.

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Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev Resigns After 30 Years in Office

Natalie Sherman
Staff Writer

Nursultan Nazarbayev, the last of the Soviet-Era Central Asian party bosses, has stepped down after nearly 30 years in power, reports the Associated Press.

Nazarbayev assumed power in 1989, just two years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, and has remained in power under the title of President throughout Kazakhstan’s transition from a Soviet satellite to an independent nation. It is speculated that Nazarbayev has resigned rather than dying in power, like some of his contemporaries did, to ensure a smoother transition from his leadership.

The Associated Press stresses that Nazarbayev is the only leader independent Kazakhstan has ever known. His resignation will certainly make the process less difficult, but there is no doubt that what follows will be the most notable political transition in Kazakhstan since the breakup of the Soviet Union.

In his public address on March 19, Nazarbayev stated that, “As the founder of the independent Kazakh state I see my task now in facilitating the rise of a new generation of leaders who will continue the reforms that are underway in the country.”

Nazarbayev is revered as a national hero, and many Kazakhs even call him “Papa.” There is some anxiety regarding this transition to new leadership, because it comes at a time of open protests against the government, and many Kazakhs can hardly remember a time without Nazarbayev at the helm of the government.

Nazarbayev fired his prime minister just last month following protests by women demanding safe housing and financial support for housing. The protest was sparked by a fire that claimed the lives of five children. It has been suggested that the former Kazakh capital of Almaty be renamed to Nursultan to honor the president, but this proposition was also met with a small protest that was broken up soon after it started.

Nazarbayev has often been criticized by the international community for the strict censorship and control his regime places over Kazakh media. In a rare move, Nazarbayev issued a new law to wipe writing anything criticizing Nazarbayev.
France Implements Ban on Yellow Vest Protests

On March 18, French Prime Minister Édouard Philippe released a statement outlining the ban on Yellow Vest protests nationwide. This decision comes after thousands of protesters called for lower fuel taxes, reintroduction of the solidarity tax, a minimum wage increase, and Macron’s resignation. The ban was inspired by the government's response to Yellow Vest violence, which has dominated the news throughout the past several weeks. In addition, the current mayor of Paris is also angry and currently waiting for a response from the government.

Mr. Macron has been facing significant pressure from the Yellow Vest movement. In November 2018, this movement began in response to economic injustices the protesters were fighting against in the first place. Despite this, he is facing widespread criticism and backlash over his gov-ernment’s failure to contain the violence on the streets.

The Local FR reports that although he has made some economic concessions, like raising the minimum wage and postponing the tax increase, he is not doing enough to stop the protests. Critics even called him out for being on a skiing holiday while Paris was burning up.

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Santiago Losada Staff Writer

Protests call for lower fuel taxes, reintroduction of the solidarity tax, a minimum wage increase, and Macron's resignation. Courtesy of Wikimedia.

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**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**Haitian Prime Minister Ousted After Six Months**

*By Alyssa Velte, Staff Writer*

Following a vote in favor of government censure, the Lower Chamber of Deputies fired Haitian Prime Minister Jean Henry Céant and his government, according to the Miami Herald. The vote came after his official sixth month in office, with 93 in favor, 60 opposed, and 3 abstentions.

Chamber President Gary Bodeau cited Céant’s absence at a Chamber meeting regarding the renewal of a temporary five-year authorization of the government. The men in control are approved by both chambers of parliament. Until then, they will have limited powers, as reported by ABC News.

Since then, Haiti’s capital Port-au-Prince has been shaken by two-weeks-worth of deadly protests. The protests began February 7 amidst a belief that Céant’s ouster deepening an already unstable political climate. Both the United States and Canadian governments have called on their citizens not to travel to Haiti, according to the Miami Herald.

On Céant’s controversial stint in government, Deputy Jean Marie Forchiel Lapin told the Miami Herald that Céant’s promises failed to address Haiti’s core problems by partitioning national production or dealing with the devaluation of the gourde, Haiti’s currency, to the U.S. dollar. He explained that as the prime minister hub of the opposition in Haiti, the government and the opposition are in constant disagreement: "It is unacceptable. The justice system needs to shed light." He added, "The government says their media control and internet censorship help prevent unrest and misinformation. There may be some truth to this statement, as protests are far from the norm, but Haiti is ranked 160 out of 180 countries on Reporters Without Borders’ World Press Freedom Index. The international community is skeptical about the fairness of elections. According to Reuters, Nazarbayev won 97.7% of the vote, but the last presidential election in 2015. This number alone is enough to raise concern about the democratic process in Kazakhstan.

In Céant’s footsteps follows the new acting prime minister, Jean-Michel Lapin. In the coming days, President Moïse will consult with lawmakers about the formation of a new government. In the meantime, Lapin also retains his post of Minister of Culture.

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**Kazakhstan President Nazarbayev Resigns After 30 Years in Office**

*By Stephanie Miller, Staff Writer*

Since February 22, 2019, Algerians across the country have gathered every Friday to protest the presidency of Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Bloomberg reports. Now, two weeks after demonstrations convinced the president to step down after his current term, this latest revolution “has now entered its most dangerous phase.”

At 82 years old, Bouteflika has not made a public appearance since his stroke in 2013, leaving the mechanics of his government to his brother, current President Joseph Kufta. The new president is likely to be fired for Algeria before being taken out by Bouteflika, Bloomberg analysis states. When Bouteflika was president, his control of the country was at its peak. Unlike previous attempts, the military and declared both his opposition to Bouteflika and his support of the protest movement. With Bouteflika’s appointment to power, people are protest organizers to the next president.

The ruling National Liberation Front party (FLN) also supports the protesters after a meeting of its top officials. According to Reuters, the party will continue to stand with the protesters against a new president.

The month-long protests are “marked by the deeds of noble aims and pure intentions, through which the Algerian people has clearly expressed its values and principles of sin- 

The ousting of Bouteflika has been a long time in the making. The government and the opposition are in constant disagreement: "It is unacceptable. The justice system needs to shed light." He added, "The government says their media control and internet censorship help prevent unrest and misinformation. There may be some truth to this statement, as protests are far from the norm, but Haiti is ranked 160 out of 180 countries on Reporters Without Borders’ World Press Freedom Index. The international community is skeptical about the fairness of elections. According to Reuters, Nazarbayev won 97.7% of the vote, but the last presidential election in 2015. This number alone is enough to raise concern about the democratic process in Kazakhstan.

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**Algerian Protests Threaten to Oust Current President**

Since February 22, 2019, Algerian protests threaten to oust President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, as the country’s long-term president. Members of his family are also involved in Kazakh politics, most notably his daughter Dariga who is currently a senator. Many speculate he could be the next president of Kazakhstan.

Nazarbayev’s resignation, many feel that he is relinquishing control completely. He remains the head of both his own political party, Nur Otan, and Kazakhstan’s Security Council. Perhaps in the coming years, Nazarbayev will resign from these positions as well, but for now it seems like he is not ready to quit politics completely. When questioned by the Free Europe, the head of Russia’s foreign relations committee, Konstantin Kosachev; said that Nazarbayev will remain his close within the country and that “there will be no radical changes in foreign or home policies.” It remains to be seen how long Nazarbayev will retain these positions and who his long-term successor will be.

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March 2019

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Putin Signs New Censorship Laws

**Luisa Chainerber Staff Writer**

Russian President Vladimir Putin recently signed laws that will impose fines and even jail time for people who spread fake news which offends the Russian government, reports the New York Post. Individuals could also spend up to 15 days in jail for online material that disrespects Russian society, state, and official symbols of the Russian Federation.

Prosecutors can now evaluate publications. If officials believe a publication spreads unreliable social information, those responsible could face fines up to $23,000, says the New York Post. Individuals could also spend up to 15 days in jail for online material that disrespects Russian society, state, and official symbols of the Russian Federation.

According to Bloomberg, opponents consider the new law as an increase on censorship. The laws allow officials to shutdown access to platforms such as Facebook, Google, and websites that criticize the government and express public discontent due to inflation and pension age requirements.

Moreover, critics believe that Kremlin is expanding media control in response to a fall in Mr. Putin’s approval rating due to current economic problems, says the Telegraph. Yuri Dzhibladze, president of the Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, described the new law as a “virtual abandonment of Soviet-era laws about anti-Soviet propaganda.”

This censorship may be unconstitutional under domestic law, says the New York Post. Article 29 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation determines that “everyone shall be guaranteed the freedom of ideas and speech.” Nevertheless, laws from the past five years demanded that search engines and messaging services allow authorities to remove material from Russian security services. Experts consider the new law as a significant threat to freedom of expression and the freedom of the press. The petition urges fellow journalists to oppose these laws and to support the freedom of the press.

Human rights activists are warning that these laws threaten democracy and freedom of expression by criminalizing the sharing of information from independent sources. The new restrictions represent an attack on people’s identities, says The Moscow Times on a later report. Many active online users who are accustomed to treating the internet as a place with free speech have now lost that space. Besides monitoring citizens, the new regulations indicate the increasing dissatisfaction between citizens and the government. According to Moscow Times, if the government continues to implement the new regulations, it is likely that Russia will fall into an uncivilized cycle in which citizens and officials cannot contain, which will then lead to the government’s use of military force to control the population. The petition urges fellow journalists to oppose these laws and to support the freedom of the press.
Cameroon Crisis Endures as Defense Minister Warns Against Abuses

Jarrett Dang  
Staff Writer

The crisis in Cameroon's Anglophone south between the government and separatist rebels came into focus on March 18, as the country's top defense official warned soldiers against carrying out operations in the troubled region, according to Journal du Cameroun. In a speech during a ceremony, Defense Minister Joseph Assomo warned soldiers in the central African country to conduct their duties professionally while restoring order to the restive areas.

 Cameroon's predominantly English-speaking regions have been subject to a heavy government crackdown since late 2016, reports the Economist. While most of Cameroon speaks French, around 20 percent of the country's population speaks English and is mostly concentrated in the northwest and southwest regions. Protests by English-speakers against perceived marginalization by the French-dominated government spiraled into violence and triggered deployment of military units to quell demonstrations.

Military personnel policing the Anglophone regions have become increasingly repressive. According to the U.S. State Department's annual Human Rights Report, security forces engaged in "arbitrary and unlawful killings," the torture of suspected separatists, and clampdowns on free speech. Witnesses also accuse government troops of kidnapping numerous teenagers who were suspected of being associated with rebel groups.

The Associated Press reports that in response to a video showing soldiers gunning down civilians, the United States cut off significant portions of its military aid to the country in February. The U.S. State Department stated "We emphasize that it is in Cameroon's interest to show greater transparency in investigating credible allegations of gross violations of human rights security forces, particularly in the North-west, Southwest, and Far North Regions."

Army-led groups fighting for the independence of Anglophone Cameroon, such as the Ambazonia Defence Force (ADF), Red Dragons, and Tigers, have met the crackdown with aggressive retaliation. "The groups declared independence from the French-speaking part of the country soon after the crackdown began, and have been fighting the government since. Foreign Affairs says that in addition to fighting against government troops, the ADF and other separatist militias engage in acts of attrition against civilians, according to Foreign Affairs.

Biosecurity Chief says that in late 2018, the conflict took the lives of over 400 civilians and 160 members of the security forces. Since the crackdown began, dozens of arrests and clampdowns on free speech. While the conflict has endangered the country's population around 20 percent of the country's population, reports the Economist. While most of Cameroon speaks French, around 20 percent of the country's population speaks English and is mostly concentrated in the northwest and southwest regions.

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While his response to the crisis has thus far been lacking, Cameroon's strongest leader is not going anywhere. Biya, who has ruled since 1982, recently won a re-election with 71 percent of the vote, according to Foreign Affairs. International observers panned the election as unfree and unfair, with reports of irregularities such as voter intimidation and ballot box stuffing being especially prevalent in the Anglophone regions.

As the Anglophone crisis drags on and public sentiment in English-speaking regions sours against the government, there will be an increased risk of the country falling deeper into chaos, R2P Monitor, an NGO that monitors potential conflicts around the globe, says that there is an "imminent risk of mass atrocity crimes" in Cameroon because of the crisis. If President Biya's government continues to ignore or escalate violence in Anglophone regions, there is a real risk of further conflict breaking out.

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Natalie Sherman  
Staff Writer

On March 16, a visibly weak, young Caviér's Beached whale washed up in the Davao Gulf of the Philippines with 88 pounds of plastic calci-

fying in its abdomen, ac-

cording to NPR.

As it lay in the shallows of the gulf, witnesses saw it vomit plastic. The Philippines’ Bureau of Fisheries and Aquat-

ic Resources contacted a locally-based marine biologist named Darrell Blatchley for help. When Blatchley, who has assisted whatche whales washed up in the Davao Gulf for several years before, arrived, he could tell from a distance that the whale was dead.

Blatchley and his colleagues performed an autopsy of the whale and discovered the shocking amount of plastic in its body. Blatchley attests in his interview with NPR that the stomach "was full of plastic — nothing but nonstop plastic." He add-

eted that "it was compact to the point that its stomach was literally as hard as a baseball."

Among the trash were eighteen rice sacks and plastic shopping bags from grocery chains local to the Philippines.

In his interview with NPR, Blatchley delivered grim facts about his work in the Philippines. "When it comes to the last 10 years, we have recovered 61 whales and dolphins just within the Davao Gulf," he said.

He also noted that of the whales recovered, "57 have died due to man — whether they ingested plastic or fishing nets or other waste, or gotten caught in pollution — and four were pregnant."

The Philippines ranks second in plastic pol-

lation, behind China. Stud-

dies show that Southeast Asia may be responsible for nearly half of the plastic pollution in the ocean.

In 2016, thirty whales suffering from ingesting plastic washed up on beaches in Europe. Of these thirty, the most notable was a sperm whale beached in Spain, which had ingested sixty-four pounds of plastic and garbage.

Last year The Guardian reported on the death of a whale in Thailand who had consumed eight plastic bags. Thon Thamrongnawasawat, the marine biologist who did the autopsy of the whale, was quoted saying that, "If you have 80 plastic bags in your stomach, you die."

Experts predict that deaths of marine life and seabirds due to ingesting plastic will rise in the coming years as more plastic enters the world’s oceans. Every year around nine million tons of plastic en-

ter the ocean. The enormous quantity of trash in the ocean, combined with some trash’s similar appearance to prey, hardly makes animals’ frequent consumption of trash surprising.

Garbage can also cause potentially lethal injuries to marine life. Improperly disposed of fishing nets alone claim countless animals every year. Ingesting plastic is lethal because the body calcifies plastic in the digestive tract to protect itself and the calcified masses can impede digestion. It is ultimately the loss of digestive function that is a death sentence for these animals.

Since the 1990s, plastic manufacturing has risen steadily worldwide. One of the main issues identified by a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in their re-

port Solving Plastic Pollu-

tion through Account-

ability were single-use plastics such as straws, plastic cups, and plastic bags. More plastic is being recycled, but according to WWF, half of the plastic produced in human history has been produced between 2000 and 2019. Humanity is consuming more plastic than ever, the majority of which was not made from recycled plastic and will never be recycled.

Plastic in the ocean is a problem that cannot be resolved easily or by any single action. As reported by the World Economic Forum, secondary markers for plastic and mark-

ers fueled by recycled plastic are not functioning as well as they could be, as plastic is often improperly disposed of or fails to be recycled. Without drastic action, plastic will con-

inue to enter the ocean, where it will pose a threat to the marine life.

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Brazil

Luisa Chainferber Staff Writer

Brazil had the highest amount of gun-related deaths in the world during 2016 according to a study from the University of Washington, reports U.S. News. The country underwent a school shooting on March 13 that killed 10 people and injured 11 others, says the Wall Street Journal.

This attack is among the five deadliest school shootings that Brazil has ever had. According to police officer Ray Ferrari Fontes, the attackers wanted to reproduce the Columbine High School shooting that took place in the United States.

The school’s surveillance camera footage partially caught the attack, reports the Washington Post. The video shows one of the attackers, Guilherme Monteiro, shooting several people in the head, while de Castro, the other attack, strikes wounded people. Despite other high rates of violence, school shootings like this are rare in Brazil.

Before this shooting, Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil’s current President, promised to loosen regulations regarding gun ownership while campaigning for president. While Mr. Bolsonaro lamented the attack, his government passed a December in January that facilitated the possession of guns inside houses, reports the Guardian.

Mr. Bolsonaro claimed that the purpose of the decree is to guarantee every citizen the legitimate right to self-defense, says Reuters. The decree applies to countryside areas and urban areas with homicide rates above 10 deaths for 100,000 people. With the decree, Brazilians can have up to four guns even more after an individual case evaluation.

Even after the massacre, Mr. Bolsonaro’s administration still advocates for more liberal gun policies as the solution for endemic violence, says the Wall Street Journal in a separate report. Indeed, Senator Flávio Bolsonaro, the president’s son, introduced a bill to Congress to increase foreign manufacturers’ access to the national gun industry a few hours after the shooting.

Nonetheless, other strict regulations for gun ownership remain in national law, reports Bloomberg. It is still hard for civilians to carry guns legally, despite the existence of a large black market for illegal weapons and an estimated 60,000 murders per annum in Brazil.

According to World Politics Review, the most important part of Brazil’s gun legislation is the 2003 Disarmament Statute. This statute regulates the registration of firearms, requirements for gun licenses, ownership, and storage. In addition to the statute, citizens may not carry guns in public without a permit. Even though the federal police and armed forces do not fully implement the statute, the Minas Gerais Justice and the Institute of Applied Economic Research, two Brazilian research institutes, believe that this statute helped save 153,000 to 160,000 lives between 2004 and 2012, says the World Politics Review.

Despite Mr. Bolsonaro’s policies, most Brazilians do not want to purchase guns, says a study from the research institute IDEIA Big Data, according to the Brazilian Journal of Economics. During last December in a research pool, 70 percent of Brazilians said that they did not wish to buy a gun, 22 percent were not sure, and only 8 percent said that they plan to buy guns. Furthermore, a poll from the research institute Datafolha also indicated that 61 percent of Brazilians want to make it illegal to carry guns in public.

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Adam Varquero Staff Writer

The National Firearms Agreement (NFA), a series of gun control laws that strictly regulate the ownership of semi-automatic and automatic firearms, heavily influenced Australia’s gun control policies, Vox reports. The NFA’s pivotal point of enforcement was the institution of a gun buyback program, which resulted in the government buying about 664,000 guns from gun owners. The firearms purchased in this program were destroyed upon collection, which represented the elimination of 20 percent of privately owned guns within the country. The NFA even banned ownership of certain types of guns, such as shotguns and automatic firearms, with very limited exceptions.

According to NBC News, the NFA’s passage was brought on by a wake-sheriffed moment: Australia’s Port Arthur Massacre. The massacre occurred in 1996 when Martin Bryant entered a cafe located in Port Arthur, Tasmania. Bryant proceeded to pull out a gun and start firing. His killing spree, which resulted in the death of 35 people, earned its infamous reputation as the most lethal mass-murder in Australian history. After the massacre, the Australian government passed a separate license.

According to the Washington Post, a study that examined the NFA’s effectiveness on reducing homicide rates was not found to be statistically significant. However, the study did find that the decline in suicide rates was statistically significant. Furthermore, Fortune reports, reduction of overall gun violence and prevention of further mass shootings were apparent after the Australian government took action. Since the NFA’s inception in 2005, Australia has experienced only one mass shooting, a stark contrast to just 18 years prior to the law’s passage, in which 13 mass shootings occurred.

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Australia

According to New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, the Christchurch massacre was swift, for it. Action in the wake of the attacks was swift, for it. The NFA, reports the Guardian, slipped backward by very degrees.” Associate Professor Philip Alpers of the School of Public Health of the University of Sydney, said. “New South Wales is the most obvious example of compliance ‘slippage’.”

New Zealand

Gabrielle Goldworm Staff Writer

On March 15, two consecutive mass shootings began near the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, and are reported by BBC. In their aftermath, 50 people were dead and 50 more were injured, making the events of the day the deadliest attack in the modern history of the country.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern proposed an outright ban on semi-automatic weapons and assault rifles six days after the attacks, and this action was met with widespread public support, despite backpedaling from the State Attorney General, who stated that it might not be the government’s final decision, according to a New York Times report.

The response to the attacks in New Zealand is incomparable to those from the United States government in the aftermath of recent attacks like the Pulse Nightclub shooting, the Sandy Hook shooting, and the Charleston shooting, which left the government in gridlock over whether or not to even discuss gun control legislation. Despite the lack of immediate discussion as to how to proceed, New Zealand’s unique gun culture and history of firearms have led to those of the U.S., Canada, and Australia, owning a gun is notably not considered a constitutional right. The demographics of gun ownership reflect this; of 3.9 million New Zealanders, only 238,000 (or 6 percent) hold a gun license, reports the New York Times.

Additionally, New Zealand has a longstanding historical precedent for restricting access to firearms. In 1847, after various colonial leaders made efforts to stop the flow of muskets into tribal areas and in 1992, in the aftermath of a shooting that resulted in the death of 13 people, the parliament enacted additional restrictions on semiautomatics and handguns, says the Washington Post. Before Christchurch, the events of 1990 Aramoana Massacre were considered the worst in the nation’s history. The Christchurch attack occurred in a nation where gun legislation appears to have lent itself to decades of tragedy prevention, it seems New Zealand intends to stay the course when it comes to fire- arms.
**Switzerland**

Axel Sontgerath
**Staff Writer**

In Switzerland, gun ownership is something of a unique culture. There is a comfort surrounding firearm ownership that many would not find around the world. In the United States, it is often hailed as a success of liberal gun laws and the right to bear arms. Switzerland has the third-highest rate of private gun ownership in the world – behind the U.S. and Yemen, according to GunPolicy.org.

The Swiss trust their government more than Americans do, says GunPolicy.org. Counterintuitively, regulation of guns in Switzerland is categorized as restrictive.

According to the Atlantic, the Swiss children as young as 12 are taught to shoot as well as the rules of gun safety. They even participate in shooting competitions.

According to the Atlantic, the Swiss government has placed laws that make sure that background checks are mandated, fully automatic weapons are illegal, and military grade weapons are banned. Hunting weapons must be registered with the local municipality. All permitted firearms require a license for possession.

According to the Atlantic, the Swiss follow these regulations closely, and the effort pays off. According to a report from GunPolicy.org, the total deaths resulting from firearms in 2015 were 231, of which 47 were homicides. Additionally, the estimated total number of guns (both licit and illicit) held by civilians in Switzerland is somewhere between 2.3-3.4 million. Suicide-related deaths are the highest in Europe, but U.S. gun-related deaths are three times higher than Switzerland.

In an interview with the BBC, Professor Martin Killias, director of criminology at Zurich University, stated, “It’s like smoking. Less is more. I do not support outlawing guns; I recognize people have their hobbies, just as I have mine. But the fewer guns there are in cellars, attics and armories, then that would be helpful, because there is a strong correlation between guns kept in private homes and incidents occurring at home – like private disputes involving the husband shooting the wife and maybe the children, and then committing suicide.”

Professor Killias was a supporter of the referendum that failed, stating to the BBC, “Forty-three percent of homicides are domestic related and 90 percent of those homicides are carried out with guns. However, over the last 20 years, now that the Swiss people do not have ammunition at home, we have seen a decrease in gun violence and a dramatic decrease in gun-related suicides. Today we see maybe 200 gun suicides per year and it used to be 400, 20 years ago.”

Overall, as liberal as the gun laws are in Switzerland, they are nothing compared to those in the United States – and the Swiss want to make sure their historical customs are not being seen in tandem with those of the U.S. In an interview with the BBC, Professor Killias states, rather irritatingly, “We don’t have a gun culture! I’m always amazed how the National Rifle Association in America points to Switzerland – they make it sound as if it was part of southern Texas!” Professor Killias went on to say that, “To shoot someone who just looks at you in a funny way – this is not Swiss culture!”

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**Netherlands**

Alyssa Veltere
**Staff Writer**

Following an attack at a tram stop at Utrecht’s 24 Oktoberplein, where left three dead and five injured, Dutch officials, who had originally ruled out terrorism, have reconsidered it as a potential motive upon discovery of a letter from the shooter the next day, reports NU. Gokmen Tanis, 37, was arrested eight hours after the shooting.

With the attacker’s motives still in question, many have turned to Dutch laws on firearm ownership. Dutch gun culture is much stricter than that of the United States, and an event like the Utrecht Tram Shootings is significantly more unexpected an event than it is in the U.S. Unlike the United States, where gun ownership is virtually limitless, there are two permissible reasons for gun ownership in the Netherlands: sports and hunting, according to The Dutch Review.

In the Netherlands, self-defense is not regarded as a viable reason for carrying a firearm, save for police officers and members of the armed forces. Those who wish to be armed must undergo rigorous psychological testing and background checks before they are allowed to purchase any weaponry, says The Dutch Review. Regulations grow stricter based on events, such as the Alphen aan de Rijn Shooting in 2011, in which six people were killed by a gunman in the Riddershof Mall, about 21 miles southwest of Amsterdam, says The Washington Post.

The process for obtaining a weapon in the Netherlands is complicated, as individuals are required to obtain per mission from the police, says Steemit. In the case of a home invasion, it is illegal to use a firearm to deter intruders. However, if an intruder is armed, individuals are allowed to fire retaliatory shots. Hunting requires an additional license; hunting for target shooting requires a minimum one-year membership to a shooting club, and anything above a .22 caliber firearm requires additional years at the club.

Steemit goes on to say that no one person may own more than five guns. Additionally, those who would like to transport their own personal firearm arm need to dismantle the weapon in a case and carry both paperwork and proper licensing. Concealed and open carry are strictly forbidden and any history of illegal activity is grounds for denial to a license. Violation of these laws can result in conviction for license and confiscation of weaponry.

Even airport gun regulations are strict. Airport weapons are restricted to the older than 16, who are members of the National Dutch Airsoft Association (NDAA). Carrying a knife or pepper spray in public for self-defense is also illegal. According to Expatica, however, you may still carry a bow, crossbow, and pellet rifle if you reen acting a mainstream gun control is grounds for denial to a license. In the case of the Utrecht shootings, it is likely that Gokmen’s weapon was purchased legally and the limits on the circulation of firearms, says GunPolicy.org.

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**Gun Legislation**

March 2019
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Crash of Flight 302 Damages U.S. Image

Daniel D’Amico
International News Editor

On Monday, March 18, 2019, Delta airlines arrested the driver of a truck suspected of opening fire on a train in the Dutch city of Utrecht, killing three people and injuring five others, according to CNN. The police identified the suspect as Gokmen Tanis, 37, who had been previously run-ins with law enforcement.

While the reason for his actions are not confirmed, Dutch authorities are considering “a possible terrorist motive” for the incident, reports CNN. Utrecht Mayor Jan van Zanen said the motive behind the attack is still unclear.

The incident occurred at around 10:45am local time as police responded to reports of a shooting aboard one of the city’s trams at the 24 Oktoberplein junction. According to BBC News, one witness told local media that “a man started shooting wildly.” Several of the injured were said to be in a critical condition. Additionally, other witnesses spoke about their efforts to help those affected by the train’s emergency stop. The shooter then fled the scene, which led to the manhunt up until his arrest on Monday night.

The New York Times reports that “thus far, a terrorist motive is being strongly considered,” according to the national police. They explain that “the reason for this, among other things, is a note found in the getaway car. Other motives aren’t being ruled out. These are being investigated as well.” However, people that knew the suspect said he may have come from a domestic dispute, but police have found no links between the suspect and the victims on the train.

The New York Times highlights how terrorist attacks frequently seen in other countries Belgium, Britain, France, and Germany are not normally seen in the Netherlands. In addition, gun attacks are not as common in the country and as such, the country was taken by surprise when this shooting occurred.

Mr. Tanis had previously been arrested multiple times before the incident and was most recently facing a rape charge. The New York Times reports that people who knew him from the Kanaleneiland neighborhood of Utrecht, home to many immigrants from Turkey and Morocco, described him as “erratic, troubled and aggressive.” This could lend to the argument of a domestic dispute or instead that this was a random act of terror without any clear motive in mind.

CNN confirms that a second suspect has also been taken into custody, Mayor Zanen said, adding that it is not clear what his involvement was in the shooting. The police said that the incident was largely the work of one person.

Prime Minister Mark Rutte expressed his concern to the victims and their families. Rutte added that the incident was largely the work of one person.

The Netherlands is a country that does not typically suffer gun violence and potential acts of terror as other countries do. This shooting was especially frightening as it followed another deadly shooting in New Zealand in which 50 people were killed. Their response, as well as that of New Zealand in response to the shooting, are two examples of a government responding rapidly and appropriately to a threat.

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The relationship between China and Pakistan has thrived despite regional tensions between Pakistan and India, according to the South China Morning Post. Despite giving the choice of siding with either Pakistan or India, Kashmiri leaders chose India, which may provoke Pakistan to assert itself in an all-out war. China wants to further its economic plan instead of getting involved in a physical conflict that might damage its long-term vision. Thus, it is not surprising that China continues to support Pakistan in face of the recent suicide bombing attack carried out by the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) organization, which led to the deaths of 40 Indian police officers in February. In fact, in a UN Security Council meeting regarding this matter on March 13, China blocked the international community’s effort to blacklist the leader of the organization that carried out the bloody attack, reports the New York Times. This is not the first time China vetoed such an attempt. The reason given by the Chinese delegation is that the evidence given to is not sufficient enough for China to agree to the plan. The implication of Beijing’s relationship with its South Asian allies is undeniable, but recent escalation has put the Chinese in an odd position, according to CNN. While maintaining support of both Pakistan and India for economic development is looking positive, the situation with Pakistan complicates China’s relationship with India. It may appear that New Delhi has neglected when compared to its in-conflict neighbor. Despite this, Global Times reports the first China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will be able to ease tensions, not only with Islamabad’s neighbor, but also to ensure stability in the region through cooperation on many fronts. The strategic dialogue serves as promises between the two states because it is in both of their common interests to achieve common goals such as conflict management and economic development.

In a quote to Pakistani Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Chinese Vice-President Wang Qishan said that “China supports Pakistan’s efforts to seize development opportunities and handle challenges, and manage its ties with neighbors.” This underlines Pakistan’s importance to China and how these two powers view each other. In a later discussion with his counterpart in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Wang Yi included a similar tone in the conversation.

Over the course of the last decade, China has been an essential ally to Pakistan in the region. A report by the Observer Research Foundation suggests China is equivalent to the United States in terms of its alliance to Pakistan. With China’s Belt and Road Initiative, Pakistan has received enough funding for infrastructure, defense, and public services, yet the funding is large enough for Islamabad to not be concerned about U.S. influence. For Beijing, Pakistan is the gateway to expand further West, connecting Xinjiang with the Sea Port of Gwadar. The ultimate achievement is economic growth for all sides, not just regional influence for Chinese officials. Therefore, any conflict would not be preferable for China because it could destabilize Beijing’s stance on many of their ambitious plans.

Witnessing the attack by the JeM, China, though still supporting Pakistan, issued a statement condemning the actions and calling for the crimes to be held accountable. Without complicating the issue any further, China is on the right trajectory as it supports Pakistan to a certain extent. Not backing India may be questionable because New Delhi is also one of Beijing’s allies in South Asia, and risking that relationship can bring about inconceivable economic consequences in the future. The News states that for the moment, China holds a strong tie with Pakistan amid the complicated conflict. China’s regional goal is to ease this tension between its two allies and develop more measures to prevent terrorist activities in the future.

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March 2019

Saving the Planet by Skipping School

Mariah McCloskey Managing Editor

On March 15, empty desks took up many class rooms. The students who regularly fill them were not skipping class to hang out or sleep in; they were trying to save the planet. Walking down streets or marching to their nation’s capital, teens are finally pushing their posters up in the air and their voices out of their chest in protest of climate change.

Young people need to get behind the earth. At the current rate that nations are burning fossil fuels and increasing carbon emissions, there will not be an inhabitable planet Earth for much longer. The thought that this generation’s grand-children will not have a safe place to live is terrifying, but it is not a thought that many people concern themselves with. It is a thought that most people ignore since they know that it will not be during their lifetime. The current generation that see the effects of climate change, and must take on the initial impact of the damage done in previous generations.

Ever since the 2015 lawsuit Juliana v. United States, the youth community has been a huge force in the climate change movement. This case is what many young activists are using as their platform for the environmental debate because it is the leading edge of environmental law. According to the American Bar Association Journal, the suit asserts that the government violated youths’ rights by allowing activities that harmed the climate and sought the government to adopt methods for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

While previous lawsuits about climate change have been dismissed by U.S. courts, Juliana v. United States gained attention in 2016 when the case came to U.S. District Court of Oregon Judge Ann Aiken. She upheld that access to a clean environment was a fundamental right as stated by Climate Liability News, therefore the case was allowed to proceed. Since then, the government has sought to dismiss the case for various concerns, and the realization that teens cannot sue the U.S. government, teens are taking matters into their own hands. Organizing a worldwide walkout titled Fridays For Future, teens are encouraged to, as much as it makes teachers and parents cringe, hit the streets instead of the books in protest of climate change. Marking their calendars for March 15, students in over 1700 places and in 112 countries around the world protested to take back their world.

The woman behind organizing this greenhouse gas gang of teenagers is not even old enough to vote yet. 16-year-old Greta Thunberg from Sweden is in the face of the youth climate movement. She planted the seed of the movement at Sweden’s parliamentary elections in 2018. She sat outside the country’s Parliament building with a sign demanding radical action from the government for the future. Her efforts even got the attention of world leaders after she delivered a speech at the UN’s climate conference in December. Her unending support for the planet landed her a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Despite all the progress that has been made, there is still a long way to go before the planet can pass any health exams. What the protesting teens are saying is a very simple concept: if someone is sick, they should be taken to the doctor to help themselves heal. By continuing to poison the planet, the population is not letting it heal, and eventually, it will not be able to heal.

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Martha W. Johnson, a technology teacher at Los Angeles High School in California, was nominated for a Nobel Prize. Courtesy of Jon Almk.
During the first half of his career, he held operational assignments as an Apache helicopter pilot, with combat deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan.

In addition to receiving his commission from the United States Military Academy (USMA), he also graduated with a B.S. in History. Additionally, he received his M.A. in International Relations from St. Mary’s University in Texas, as well as his M.A. and Ph.D. in political science from Stanford University.

From 2012 to 2018, Dr. Price was a USMA professor in the Department of Social Sciences and Director of the Combating Terrorism Center (CTC). In his role as director, he briefed the Secretary of Defense, Directors of the CIA, DIA, and NCTC, as well as several combatant commanders.

At the start of his research, Dr. Price was fighting an uphill battle. All the previous conclusions drawn on leadership decapitation suggested it was not the optimal solution. These conclusions noted its ineffectiveness against drug cartels, as killing kingpins seemed to make more leaders step up, forcing more drugs across the U.S. border.

Furthermore, there was also the short-term negative consequence of an increase in revenge attacks. While those facts remain true, Dr. Price compared leadership decapitation to domestic policy on education and economics. Policymakers tend to look at the long-term effects of these, and it is important to do the same with the snakehead strategy.

One question the book answers is whether or not the type of terrorist group matters. In order to ensure results were not skewed, Dr. Price only included groups that committed four or more deadly attacks. A major distinction that he discovered was between groups that are profit based or value based, such as drug syndicates like the Sinaloa Cartel versus Al-Qaeda. This distinction had a direct effect on the group’s eventual mortality rate, due to the leaders having a large influence on organizational performance.

While religious terrorist groups are five times more likely to end after decapitation than nationalist terrorist groups, both of their mortality rates are still higher than profit driven firms. Dr. Price compared leadership decapitation to the long-term effects of these, and it is important to do the same with the snakehead strategy.

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The views expressed in The Diplomatic Envoy are those of the writers and are not intended to represent the views of the School of Diplomacy, Seton Hall University, or the CJM Fund.

For more information on sources, go to TheDiplomaticEnvoy.com.
The students take a group picture in Ethiopia.Courtesy of Joaquin Matamis.

SHU Students Study Abroad in Ethiopia

Joaquin Matamis Staff Writer

During the 2019 Spring break, fifteen other diplomacy students and I had the opportunity to study abroad in Ethiopia. The trip’s parallel academic course, African Union Conflict Resolution Mechanisms, was open to both under-graduate and graduate students alike. Dr. Assefaw Barigabeta, Professor of Diplomacy and International Relations as well as the Post-Con-Fllict State Reconstruction and Sustainability Certificate Program, led the trip alongside Susan Malcomin, Secretary of the School of Diplomacy. Dr. Barigabeta’s course was designed to ask and answer two particular questions: Has the AU contributed in some way to the positive developments in Africa? What is the AU’s role in conflict resolution? During our first few days, we immerged ourselves in the culture of Ethiopia. The group was quickly introduced to the hot weather of Ethiopia’s dry season, which was a welcome change to the winter of the American mid-Atlantic region. The country offered a variety of new foods to try, including injera, the country’s signature sourdough flatbread, and the occasional Tej, or honey wine. Our group visited many historic and cultural sites. The first included the towering “tegel” obelisks of Axum. These stelae, originating from the year four AD, marked the tombs of ancient kings and remain iconic symbols of Ethiopia’s ancient capital city. The “Fasil Ghebi” castle compound of Gondar was a remarkable sight. The 17th century medieval gardens housed the remains of Emperor Fasilides’ fortress, Empress Mentewab’s castle, and many other surviving buildings like the stables and dance hall. Perhaps my favorite were the churches of Lalibela. Their most unique feature lies in the construction; each church was hewn out of a single rock and all still survive from the 13th century with little restoration. Charlotte Pierre, a graduate student who attended the trip, said, “I think it was really impressive how they were built from the top down, especially considering the resources they had at the time.” Each city gave us a glimpse of the different lifestyles and regional traditions of the Ethio- pian people, varying from unique Christian practices to distinct art and architecture. Following the cultural component were the academic and diplomatic activities. The U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia welcomed our delegation with open arms, even hosting a number of guest speakers to explain the operations of the missions to Ethiopia and the AU itself. Students could ask questions and gain greater insights on organizations like the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the various political, security, and economic branches of the Embassy. We even had the chance to meet with the U.S. Ambassador to the AU: The Honorable Mary Beth Leonard. Our delegation also met with the United Na- tions Economic Commis- sion for Africa (UNECA), which held a lecture on the improved economic condition of Africa as a whole. Students learned more about the regional economic communities that make up Africa, such as The Southern African Develop- ment Conference (SADC) and The Economic Community of West Afri- can States (ECOWAS), as well as future issues with gaining economic stability and unity. The highlight of our trip, however, was our visit to the AU headquarters itself. Staff members greeted us and gave a tour of the facility and grounds. The illustrious conference center and office complex hosts the an- nual Assembly of African nations, and rivals the UN headquarters in both size and beauty. The trip ended with talks from various AU commission heads and administrators, who discussed different matters of peace and security in the region. While any study abroad trip is fruitful for students, the trip to Ethiopia was certainly a memorable one. Students found themselves at the heart of the developing African world and in the middle of the thriving, bustling metropolis of Addis Ababa. With the combined wealth of culture, history, and new-found economic prosperity, the trip, accor- ding to Dr. Barigabeta, “came at the right mo- ment.” The professor also added his own words of praise, stating, “Students loved it! Some of them [from past years] even went back and formed an NGO. It seems to me that many students fell in love with the country itself.”

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Tien Phan Staff Writer

Another year and another exploration opportunity was opened to the School of Diplomacy students. As in 2018, China was the destination of choice. There was no doubt in all the travelers’ minds that “the Red Dragon” was a wonderful location to learn and observe new ideas of diplomacy in a vastly different culture.

As the trip’s course name was China’s Rise: Opportunities and Challenges, the adventure brought a series of wonderful experiences from sightseeing Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai, to meeting local students and officials who work in U.S.-China relations. The trip came at a time when diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China have been damaged because of an ongoing trade war. This gave the students a chance to search for some common ground between the two world powers. Our official day started with a visit to the National Museum of China, where most Chinese historical documentation is stored. The exhibition trailed through a journey of many dynasties. Directly outside the museum is Tiananmen Square and the Great Hall of the People.

Unfortunately, this year’s trip took place during the gathering of the country’s National Congress, which necessitated extreme security measures in many public spaces. That afternoon, we walked through five gates of the Forbidden City, the palace where both Ming and Qing dynasties resided until the fall of the Feudal system. The next day, we walked the marvelous Great Wall of China in the morning. This excursion left many students in wonder, of the magnificent architectural feat of the Wall. After, we visited the tomb of the 13th Ming Emperor of China with the Sacred Path, where rituals were performed before the emperor was taken to his final resting place. Peking University was our first professional stop, where we spoke with undergraduates and students in International Relations to understand their perception of the U.S. Then, we visited the Institute of American Studies in China’s Academy of Social Science, where graduate students provided more insight into the current political climate between both nations. The last stop in Beijing was a visit to Greenpoint, a strategic consultant firm to multinational companies who have an interest in U.S.-China relations for business.

The experience of boarding a high-speed train that only takes three hours to travel from Beijing to Nanjing left everyone amazed at China’s infrastructural development. In a city with a mixture of traditional and modern values, we visited Nanjing University to discuss the South China Sea matter with Ph.D. candidates. Afterwards, the group was humbled by the Nanjing Massacre Museum, revisiting the tragic stories of local people during the Japanese Em- pire’s attack. Nanjing was concluded with a hike to Sun Yat-Sen’s Mausoleum, where the Nationalist Party founder’s historic site provides a magnificent view of the city.

Standing 128 stories above the ground, the Shanghai Tower Observer was an awe-inspiring and visible sight. The fast-paced style of living in Shang- hai quickly returned the group to a familiar lifestyle. Though it is a modernized city with many skyscrapers, outside Shanghai brought imag- enes of old times in China. Strolling through old corners of the “water town” exposed peacefully aesthetically pleasing cities.

During the last days, we had the privilege of touring both China Ocean Shipping Company (CO- SCO) and Apple’s Shanghai headquarters. These visits gave us a sense of companies with very different business focus- es operate in China. Our visit to Shanghai Interna- tional Studies University left the best impression of our interactions with Chinese students. Aside from the usual discussion, we were able to enjoy a delicious dinner together and discussed likeliness rather than differences.

There are many similarities between the U.S. and China. Both countries develop gradually every year. However, China’s innumerable skyscrapers made us feel that even a city like New York cannot compare to the magnitude of infrastructural develop- opment that the Chinese have achieved.

Still, much needs to be addressed in the country. Environmental sustain- able identity is an immediate is- sue in China. There have been measures to reduce the pollution, but due to the excessive population in most Chinese cities, the matter is still a difficult one.

In our meetings, we re- alized that most discourse revolves around the issue of whether U.S. President Donald Trump will stay in office and his foreign policy regarding China. In light of the ongoing trade war that complicates this important relationship, the trip proved to be a wonderful opportunity for both sides to meet on a personal level. Our trip was a wonderful opportunity for further bilateral understanding.

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SHU Students Study Abroad in China

MARCH 2019

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Campus News
Seton Hall Professor Brings Ancient Qur’an into the Modern Age

Mariah McCloskey
Managing Editor

Every student in the School of Diplomacy and International Relations has spent time in a foreign language classroom. Nonetheless, Diplomacy students may never know about the activities of the language department’s faculty outside of class. Recently, Professor Youssef Yacoubi, Director of Seton Hall’s Arabic Studies Program, had the opportunity to inspect and digitize a 17th century Qur’an.

In 2018, Dr. Yacoubi received the Seed Grant with the purpose of bringing to light some of the textual and calligraphic aspects of the 1698 manuscript of the Qur’an. Dr. Yacoubi stated that the main objective of the project was to decipher the Arabic marginalia through a number of Google tools and applications. In addition to uncovering the journey of the ancient book, his goal is that the Qur’an will be used as a digital tool for scholarship and teaching of language and culture.

Dr. Yacoubi maintained that these texts “solidify our understanding of material and religious cultures.” Because the Qur’an is sacred to Muslims and occupies a central position in many aspects of Islamic culture, universities have always paid particular attention to manuscripts of this type. Princeton University, where Yacoubi was a Doctoral fellow, holds nearly 10,000 Islamic manuscripts, including a substantial number of Qur’ans.

The new Seton Hall Qur’an exhibits “significant features of book illumination typical of medieval and classical literature of the Islamic world.” This project involves a number of specialists and experts worldwide who look at different aspects and measures already established within the different manuscripts.

Specifically, Dr. Yacoubi pointed out that at the top left side of the folio are the chapter title and verse numbers in bold golden letters. The title is in a gold-painted rectangular heraldic band ornamented with a golden medallion outlined in blue projecting into the left margin. These stylistic choices help distinguish certain phrases, inform the recitation, and increase the ability for movement from reading one chapter into the other. Dr. Yacoubi stated, “The aesthetic value of this Qur’an lies in the supplementary stylistic choices used.”

In addition to the digitization of this Qur’an, Dr. Yacoubi hopes to use the manuscript as a resource for his own courses in the future. After receiving the Seed Grant, he was given the Digital Humanities Fellowship in order to develop a course that introduces students to the new Qur’an and a plethora of other digital works, named Digitized Literatures and Cultures of the Islamic World. Dr. Yacoubi believes that students can “explore centuries of intellectual, cultural, scientific, and religious aspects of the Middle East through digitized manuscripts.” He hopes that through this, students can gain a deeper understanding of the Islamic world by means they can access anywhere.

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Diplomacy School’s Op-ed Workshop Aims to Make Students More Marketable

On Thursday, March 29, the School of Diplomacy and International Relations ran its fifth annual Op-ed Writing Workshop. Dr. Martin Edwards, an Associate Professor in the School of Diplomacy, ran the interactive lecture with students to discuss what op-eds are and useful tips for writing them.

Op-ed stands for “opposite of the editorial column” or “opinion editorial.” It is a method to publish writing without being an editor of the news or commentary source. This style of writing may be difficult for students, as it is very different from academic writing. While academic writing is long and complicated, op-eds must be concise and easily understood. Students can include colloquialisms, numbered-lists, or other elements of writing considered “inauthentic” for academic writing.

When submitting op-eds, students must remember their “ABCs,” meaning they must have a defined argument, maintain brevity, and stay in touch with current events. Op-eds must take an angle on issues that are relevant and explain them clearly. At the same time, it is safe to assume that readers already have some background knowledge on the event or topic being discussed. It is wise to aim for an informed, but not expert audience.

Undoubtedly, the process for writing and getting an op-ed approved is challenging and requires practice. It can also take months for a piece to be approved. It is important to remember that editors sift through hundreds of submissions each week. Despite this, editors will appreciate if submissions follow their guidelines and reflect the tone of the news or commentary articles for making students marketable. He noted how Seton Hall University students face competition from many prestigious schools. Dr. Edwards stated, “The job market is very competitive, students need to think about how to differentiate themselves, and this is an efficient way to do that.” To have writing published in a journal, blog, or newspaper is a way to prove that a student’s written communication skills are strong. It will also differentiate students from those that submit writing purposed for university as their sample in job applications. He then said “you’re in Diplomacy to both master a body of knowledge, but also to develop skills that will help you move forward.”

When asked about his motivations for holding these lectures, Dr. Edwards stated “Once I started figuring out how to do this, then it became incumbent on me to hold these workshops for students to teach other.” He believes that faculty are a great resource to guide students through this process. Dr. Edwards went on to say, “Diplomacy faculty have won three of the four University Teacher of the Year awards, and students need to take advantage of the opportunities that faculty are building for them outside of class every single day.” Team effort is extremely helpful with these types of learning endeavors. Dr. Edwards especially noticed this after relying on 14 graduate and undergraduate research assistants to assist him in writing his book.

Overall, Dr. Edwards wants students to learn from the mistakes they make in the process of writing op-eds. It is a useful way for students to improve their writing, while also working on something they love. While discussing how to pick a topic he stated, “If you don’t know what you care about, don’t start writing.”

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Students take notes at Professor Edwards’ presentation on op-ed writing.

Photo Courtesy of Twitter/Seton Hall School of Diplomacy.

A page of an Ilkhanid Qur’an dated from 1256 to 1353 A.D.

Courtesy of Wikimedia.

Saveria Antonacci
Staff Writer

Students participate in the interactive lecture.

Photo Courtesy of Twitter/Seton Hall School of Diplomacy.

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