International Affairs Magazine

Winter 2006

Volume 3.Issue1

disease – hiv/aids in south africa
relationships – georgia & russia, south america
votes – un security council, brazil
war & conflict – lebanon/israel, uganda
books – iraq in fragments
film – black gold
>>>

The International Affairs Society is Bristol University's leading forum for discussion and debate on key international issues. Our speakers have included Dame Margaret Anstee, former UN Under Secretary General, Scott Rittel, former UN Weapons Inspector, Helen Caldicott, Nobel Prize nominee as well as representatives from embassies, government bodies, think tanks, the media and academics from the UK and abroad. Membership is open to all members of the University. For more details, please visit

http://www.international-affairs.org.uk

The Committee is currently scheduling the programme for next term. Events will include:

- Day Conference on the Middle East
- Kosovo & Independence
- Blair's Legacy
- China, Russia and India: The New Power Bloc
- Russian Politics
- British Nuclear Deterrence
- The European Union
- Climate Change
- And more

Foreign trips are also being organised as are numerous trips to London.

For speaker suggestions, please email president@international-affairs.org.uk

International Affairs Magazine is the publication of the International Affairs Society at Bristol University.

Winter 2006 Contributors

Rob Behrensmeyer completed his Masters in International Relations at Bristol. He is now on a Kibbutz scholarship in Israel and was in Israel this summer when the Israel/Hezbollah war broke out. Read his perspective on page 8.

Beatrice Karol Burks is in her third year of studying Spanish and Politics at Bristol University. She is currently in Chile for her year abroad where she works at Chile's only English-language daily, The Santiago Times. Her piece on pages 6-7 looks at the manoeuvring behind this year's vote on the Latin America seat at the UN Security Council.

James Denselow is currently a doctoral candidate in geopolitics at Kings College London, where he is researching the political geography of the Syrian-Iraqi borderlands for his PhD and a book co-authored with Richard Schofield to be published by Hurst in 2007. He has made several media appearances in print and television to discuss Middle East issues. His review of Dr Eric Herring's recent book on Iraq, 'Iraq in Fragments' can be found on pages 16-17.

Catriona Gardiner is in her final year studying Biology at Bristol University, and enjoys going to 'unusual' places. Her main experience is in Mongolia, but she has also visited Ukraine and Georgia which she writes about for the Magazine on pages 12-13. Next destinations will include Russia and Central Asia.

Harry Hayball is in his second year reading History. He founded the Bristol's Coffee Society with a friend this year and is interested in the break-up of Yugoslavia. He traveled with other students to Paris this summer, read about it on page 22.

Will Irwin is studying Sociology and Philosophy at Bristol. He spent four months in Brazil this summer before the recent Presidential elections, which he has written about on page 14.

Antonis Papasolomontos has recently graduated in a Masters in International Relations at Bristol. His piece on Uganda is on pages 4-5.

Meena Singelee specialises in nuclear non-proliferation and is currently interning at the British American Security Information Council (BASIC). She has just started her Masters in Research Methods at Bristol University. She interviewed Ambassador Simon Gass on page 20.

Sven Torfinn is based in Nariobi, Kenya, from where he travels to various African countries on assignments for a wide range of international newspapers and magazines. See his images on pages 4 and 21.

Ria Sulinda Ahmad Zabri is a fifth year medical student at the University of Bristol. She has just returned from South Africa where she worked in a rural hospital in KwaZulu Natal, which she writes about on pages 9-11.

Additional reporting by Sara Karnas.

International Affairs Society Magazine

editor-in-chief: Sara Karnas give us feedback at: journal@international-affairs.org.uk

it is our aim to be as accurate as possible at the time of going to press, please let us know if we fail to do so. For reprint permission or to request another copy please contact us at the above email.

JUSTICE AND PEACE IN UGANDA : COMPATIBLE OR CONFLICTING?

"Reconciliation should be accompanied by justice, otherwise it will not last. While we all hope for peace it shouldn't be peace at any cost but peace based on principle, on justice" - Corazon Aquino

In almost twenty years of the Ugandan civil war remarkably little is known about the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The army has waged a bloody campaign against the central government ever since the current president, Yoweri Museveni, seized power in 1986. Nor is much known about its elusive leader, Joseph Kony, other than his claim to be a prophet guided by spirits and his desire to impose rule based on the Ten Commandments.

What is known in far more detail is the barbarity of the LRA's methods. Using guerrilla tactics they have ensured that large parts of northern Uganda remain a no go area. Up to 2 million people - 90% of the northern Ugandan population - are forced to live in squalid refugee camps where disease and starvation are rife. As for abducted children, estimates range between 25,000 – 70,000, whose fate is usually that of a soldier or sex slave. And thousands more are dead or severely mutilated. The chopping off of limbs, ears, noses and lips is a trademark of the LRA.

These horrendous crimes led the International Criminal Court (ICC) to indict Kony and four of his commanders on war crimes charges last year. Kony has proclaimed his innocence:

"I cannot cut the ear of my brother, I cannot kill the eye of my brother".

But few independent observers believe him and evidence suggests he has a case to answer before the court. Here lies the problem – the search for justice is coming into direct conflict with the search for peace. The LRA are unlikely to lay down their weapons until their leaders' safety from arrest is assured.

The Search for Peace.

So what are the current prospects of the current peace talks under way in the South Sudanese capital Juba? At first glance they look fairly promising. The LRA appear willing to talk peace - it was they who declared a unilateral ceasefire, a willingness Museveni is keen to seize. Most analysts agree this is the best chance for peace the country has had for ten years. The LRA is widely believed to have been significantly weakened, pushed further into the jungle by the Ugandan army and losing the support of Sudan which once used Kony's troops to punish Uganda for meddling in the Sudanese civil war. Kony disagrees boasting 3,000 dedicated troops, and it would be imprudent to ignore him given the Ugandan army's lack of success in defeating him to date.

Whatever the state of the LRA its eagerness to talk peace provides a window of opportunity, aided in large part by Museveni's decision to offer amnesty against the ICC's wishes to those indicted. Despite the complexities of the peace process and the apparent complete lack of trust displayed in public by both sides, talks have proceeded well and as I write a truce is in place whereby LRA soldiers are to assemble in two areas under the protection of South Sudanese troops and release all women and children they currently hold. The truce is fragile however with the arrest warrants providing the greatest stumbling block to real progress, an issue Museveni would rather just go away. He has tried as much, formally requesting the ICC to drop the charges. This is ironic since it was Museveni who referred Kony to the ICC in the first place but is testament to the importance he now places on amnesty.

And who can really blame the Ugandan government from considering peace more important than justice? The war has become an economic and human catastrophe for the country. The placing of peace over justice is not a new concept, with the US and coalition forces negotiating with those they publicly claim to serve justice upon in Iraq recently. Ugandans could be forgiven for viewing a return to a stable life as the priority.

The need for justice.

But what of the countless dead and those disfigured survivors of LRA cruelty?

Should indicted war criminals be allowed to melt back into society side by side with those whose lives they have ruined?

The granting of amnesty to war criminals is at odds with the principle the ICC was founded upon: that there can be no sustainable peace without justice. Granting amnesty does not set a good example that victim's rights will be taken seriously and the current talks provide an opportunity for Uganda and the international community to send a message of intolerance to those who commit such crimes. >>

While tribal elders in Uganda have called for traditional reconciliation rituals, much like those seen in Rwanda after the genocide, many see this as a direct challenge to the ICC's already insecure status. The LRA indictments were after all the first issued by the court after its creation and other indictees are no doubt interested in the strength of its resolve. Fail now and the ICC may lose all credibility. For all the theory however, the simple truth is that the court is powerless to act if Uganda wishes to grant amnesty.

But this isn't the end of the story. There is no guarantee that if accepted this amnesty would hold anyway. If Mr Kony looks to the recent amnesty precedent in Africa he might find it makes grim reading. Not far away Charles Taylor, the former Liberian President, was granted amnesty in Nigeria. However under international pressure Nigeria buckled and Taylor was handed over and now awaits trial. Just how able or willing the Ugandan government is to uphold this amnesty promise is questionable.

Peace or Justice?

So what should we make of the compatibility of peace and justice? In Uganda it appears the two do not make good bedfellows. While Ugandans dream of a final peace the ICC stands by unable to press the cause for justice. While it is sickening to think of LRA leaders living in a peace they have denied to so many for such a long time it may be the best chance Uganda has to achieve it. Then again, if the case of Charles Taylor is anything to go by, the ICC and lady justice may have the last laugh. ♦

Antonis Papasolomontos

The International Affairs Society

Shortlisted for: Best Union Society & Best Society for Student Development

IAS Membership is open to all university students and staff. Members can enjoy many benefits:

- Free/ Discounted entry to all events
- Free access to the Interns and Graduates Network
- Discounted membership at Chatham House
- Members' only access to trips to London and abroad
- Discounts around Bristol's coffee shops, greengrocers, etc.

For more information please visit the website: www.international-affairs.org.uk

The International Affairs Society is sponsored by KPMG & Royal Bank of Scotland.

CHILE AND VENEZUELA'S ROCKY RELATIONSHIP

In the run-up to the United Nations Security Council Vote.

After weeks of deadlock between Venezuela and Guatemala for a two-year seat on the United Nations Security Council, Panama was finally endorsed as the Latin America representative on November 3rd.
This only came about after Venezuela and Guatemala agreed to withdraw their candidacies and throw their support behind Panama. Unable to reach consensus within government, Chile's President Michelle Bachelet abstained from voting for the Latin American candidate for the U.N. Security Council seat. Chile supported the uncontroversial Panamanian bid, escaping what could have been a difficult internal decision. This article deals with the run up to the U.N. vote, and the political balancing act that Bachelet plays both within Chile and in international forums.

Hardly a day went by in the months leading to the UN Security Council Seat vote without Venezuela making the headlines in the Chilean press. For months, Chàvez courted Chile's President Michelle Bachelet - not attempting to win her heart, but her vote.

On October 16th United Nations member states voted for the new non-permanent members on the Security Council. Two candidates from Latin America were in the running: Guatemala and Venezuela.

Chile, keen to strengthen regional cooperation and integration, looked all set to quietly push its vote in Venezuela's direction.

Venezuela came to Chile's rescue during the 2005 elections for the Secretary General of the Organisation of American States by leaning on Caricom countries to support Chile's candidate, José Miguel Insulza. Venezuela had made it clear it was time to repay the favour.

Bachelet's Concertaciòn coalition government balances an alliance of four parties. The Socialist Party, the Party for Democracy and the Radical Party all supported a vote for Venezuela and pledged alliance to Bachelet in whatever decision she takes. The Christian Democratic Party was not convinced and warned of "consequences" in the event of a vote for Venezuela.

Chàvez's unique speech at the U.N. General Assembly, kicked up a furore up and down the South American continent as some governments celebrated his anti-imperialist ranting and others wondered whether they could maintain international respectability whilst supporting this rambling mad man. His comment that he wished he could have met Noam Chomsky while he was alive certainly did him no favours in academic circles.

The issue over the U.N. vote was already polarised - the U.S. made no secret of their desire for Guatemala to represent Latin America – and Chàvez seemed to be happy to continue along these lines. The message read like this: vote for Guatemala if you're pro-U.S. imperialism and vote for Venezuela if you hate the northern gringos and everything they stand for.
An internal diplomatic blunder with Chile complicated matters further and ended the career of Vìctor Delgado, Venezuela's former ambassador to Chile. Commenting on Chile's attitude to the U.N vote during an interview on national radio, Delgado asserted that opposition to the Venezuelan bid was lead by the Concertaciòn's Christian Democrat party. Ok so far.

Delgado went on, however, to state that this same party had supported the U.S. backed coup against President Allende in 1973 that resulted in the Pinochet dictatorship. Big mistake; dredging up dirt from the past and offending many of Chile's leading politicians keen to distance themselves from those dark years. As if that wasn't enough, he then laid in to former president Ricardo Lagos for "supporting" the attempted coup against Chàvez in 2002.

It took Chàvez almost a week to respond to this situation before making an acute move and appointing "Bachelet's Venezuelan counterpart" to the ambassadorial role on October 3rd. Like Bachelet, Ambassador Maria Lourdes Urbaneja is a former Health Minister and the two women are personal friends.

The next problem came when Chile's right-wing daily newspaper, El Mercurio, published a story about a controversial military alliance between Venezuela and Bolivia.

President Evo Morales, the first indigenous leader of Bolivia, is one of Chávez's key allies. In the agreement Venezuela promises to fund and advise Bolivia's military and to help coordinate military strategy between the two nations. The document envisions the construction of 24 military bases along Bolivia's borders, for all of which Chávez will foot the bill. Chile faces a new base on its border with Bolivia on the Silala River.

The most controversial clause in the document is the ambiguous "Article 4," which gives Chávez the power to intervene in Bolivia in times of crisis, and vice versa. The intention is that each leader can count on the other's legitimate military support in the event of a future coup, such as that which Chávez faced in 2002.

The intervention of a third country in military issues that impact upon Chile has made hackles rise in Santiago. The right-wing press in Chile (ie *The* press in Chile) had a field day, dredging up old army generals to rant about national sovereignty and regional security.

Despite the alarmist protests of many Chilean officials, Chile's Concertación government has so far played down the news of the military pact, reluctant to succumb to anti-Chávez bias.

In response to this outcry from certain sections of Chile's establishment Venezuela's Foreign Sectretary, Nicolás Maduro, alleged that protests to the Bolivia-Venezuela military pact were financed and directed by the U.S. Maduro spoke of a U.S. backed campaign of "intrigue, slander and gossip" seeking to "cause a rift between our peoples."

Venezuela had already lost Peru's vote, which was initially expected to go their way. In a less than astute diplomatic move, Chàvez voiced his doubts over the legitimacy of President Alan García's victory over Ollanta Humala in Peru's recent and highly contested elections.

Fears that neither Venezuela nor Guatemala would gain the required two-thirds majority to secure the non-permanent seat on the Security Council provoked suggestions of alternative representatives early on.

Chile has held the Latin American position on the Security Council four times since 1952, the most recent being from 2003-04. Peru, for one has implied that it would support a late Chilean bid for the position. Rumours emanated from the Mexican press that U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice had also put forward this suggestion during a meeting with Bachelet in New York in September.

Bachelet's government, however, played down any notions of a Chilean bid. It would have been far more convenient for Chile if Venezuela could quietly assume the role. Judging by Chávez's recent outspoken tendencies, however, this seemed unlikely. ♦

Bea Karol Burks

Latin America Players from left clockwise: Guatemala's President Oscar Berger; Panama's President Martin Torrijos ; Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez; Bolivia's President Evo Morales; and Chile's President Michelle Bachelet.

LEBANON ◇ ISRAEL ◇ UNDER FIRE

Living in Israel during the recent Hezbollah-Israel conflict was interesting to say the least. I was living south of Haifa at Kibbutz Yagur. We were never the intended target, but neither were the Arabs in Haifa who were killed on several occasions by katyushas; nor was Hizbollah ever able to hit the reactor located in Haifa. I remained on the Kibbutz the entire time while others decided it was too much and either returned to America or went south for safety. The following article is my main recollection of my experiences throughout the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah.

I remember the day before the first missiles hit reading in the *Jerusalem Post* that Sheikh Hassan Nassrallah threatened to hit Haifa and wondering if he could do it.
The following morning,

I heard 'Boom…Boom…Boom' and felt the ground shake.

At first, I paused wondering if perhaps Israel was shelling Hezbollah positions in Southern Lebanon. But, I remembered Nassrallah's threat from the night before so I went inside to find out what the noise was, and I saw Israelis scared. Typically, Israelis are stone-faced when it comes to discussions about terrorism often referring to attacks as 'no big deal'. However, the siren sounded off for the first time shortly thereafter, and I ran into the bunker. Upon reaching the bunker I saw many Israelis crying or shaking hysterically. I remained calm, with several of my friends, and tried to pass the time as missiles continued to come.

As the war continued, a routine began to take place. The alarms sounded; we ran inside the bunkers, waited fifteen minutes and went back to work. Again and again this occurred. The 'booms' were sometimes close, sometimes far, but never directly hitting the Kibbutz. Usually, every morning I would run towards Haifa and back, but since the war started I paused to 'wait out' the situation. When I realized it was going to last longer than a few days, I began to continue my former routine hoping not to be hit by a katyusha. One morning, a day after we had heard some fairly close missile strikes, I went for my usual run in Yagur's fields. Whilst running down the tractor trails I noticed a very large crater where there was previously earth. This was the first time the war really impacted me, and from that day on, I never ran in the fields preferring to remain close to bunkers.

As the days passed, the routine sank in more and more: alarm, bunker, alarm, bunker, count the booms, listen for how close they were and then return to class or to work. It was interesting to note what affected me and what did not. The greatest emotional impact was the press coverage. Much has been written and discussed about this. From my perspective, every time we went to the newer bunkers we would have access to the news, typically CNN International or the BBC, and everyday we would see coverage of the plight of the Lebanese as Israel continued its aerial offensive. This is not to say that ordinary civilian Lebanese did not suffer, of course they did**,** but the only reason not more Israelis were killed or injured by the tens of thousands of ball-bearings placed in each missile is because Israel had prepared for this for years and built bunkers. In fact after the first Gulf War according to Israeli law, every house had to have a safe room or bunker. For example, there were no deaths in Kriat Shomneh despite being bombarded by thousands of missiles, and as the war continued and the numbers of casualties were noted on the news tickers I simply wished there had been an apostrophe explaining the seemingly disproportionate totals between Lebanese and Israeli figures.

As the war continued, the routine continued until the day before the ceasefire. Everyone from my Hebrew class left going south for the day for a day of rest and a break from the crisis. I chose to stay refusing to leave because I didn't want to feel as if I left all those Kibbutzniks who had chosen to stay. That morning I went to work and at 10:45am my boss came to tell me that an alert went out and Israel knew that there would be incoming missiles at 11:00am. I went home early and at 11:00am exactly the siren went off so I ran to the bunker. Then I heard many 'booms' – comparatively a lot from what I could recall, then the alarm sounded again and again there were more 'booms'. This continued throughout the day, all day. I heard at least twenty-five sirens and sixty to seventy 'booms' - one, so loud and close it felt as if the sky had exploded. This was the day before the ceasefire was supposed to come into effect, and I can say without hesitation it was the hardest day of the war.

To sum up my experience was one I will never forget. It has changed me forever. Nothing in my small home town of Ohio could prepare me for this, but as I learned:

background has nothing to do with how one handles incoming katyushas.

To this day, as a motorcycle passes by or an engine starts up, my heart races a little because of the similarity between those noises and the beginning noise of every siren, and every time I hear a faint boom as a door shuts from a distance I listen a little bit more carefully, wondering if more booms are coming. My experience of war was mild compared to those in more Northern towns, but like those who remained in their respective cities, I made the best of everyday hoping the war would end until it finally did. ♦

Rob Behrensmeyer

AIDS IN SOUTH AFRICA

GRAPPLING WITH ADVERSITY

It is not uncommon for reports detailing the unsettling HIV/AIDS epidemic to have South Africa singled out in bold type as having one of the highest numbers of cases in the world, and therefore facing some of the biggest challenges in dealing with this devastating disease. The struggle against HIV and AIDS in South Africa is not confined to medical aspects. Various cultural and socioeconomic factors make the spread of disease difficult to control, and the frustrating stance held by the country's politicians line the roads to improvement with grim thorns.

At the end of last year, the number of people infected with HIV worldwide was estimated at 38, 600,000. South Africa is home to five and a half million of these people. The only other country with similarly astounding figures is India. Arriving for work on my first day at a rural hospital in the KwaZulu-Natal region during my medical electives earlier this year, these inanimate figures were quickly translated into stark reality. One after another, the clinical hallmarks of HIV and AIDS jumped out of the pages of my notes unrestrained and manifested themselves in the everyday people of South Africa who make up the growing statistics.

In one instance I observed solemnly as a doctor addressed a young man who was riddled with disease and currently being treated for a serious form of meningitis. "Stage 4 RVD," she said to me, using the abbreviation for 'retroviral disease', the preferred term used in these parts, due to the heavy stigma associated with AIDS. Clicking away in fluent Zulu, she impressed on the man the need for HIV-testing so as to be eligible for anti-retroviral treatment. Although this medication (also called ARVs) is not a cure for AIDS, it works by reducing the viral load within a patient's body and allows for some compensation by the immune system, which is then evident from a rise in a person's CD4 count. With his own peremptory clicks and unwavering gaze, the ailing patient declined. Between his eyes and hers, I gleaned the depths of the struggle that what was pervading the nation.

The profound stigma associated with HIV/AIDS has led to a distressing denial of the disease, and is one of the key things that makes AIDS such a tough beast to battle. HIV-positive individuals are often seen as social outcasts, and are liable to be fired from their jobs and receive verbal, physical and emotional abuse from their peers. Aid workers attempt to dispel this stigma by setting up various community programmes in order to provide facts about the disease, and to educate people on how to face it in a constructive manner, rather than leaving themselves trapped in a vicious, infective cycle. In every public place, posters with positive messages about testing, treating and preventing HIV/AIDS are displayed. Health professionals continuously encourage Volunteer Counselling and Testing (VCT), a preliminary to being initiated onto ARVs. Even though this facility is now widely available, the uptake is hindered by shackled mindsets.

Many men, for example, are repelled by the idea of testing for HIV, deeming it a slight to their masculinity. Since sexual transmission is an important factor in the propagation of the disease, patients often need to be counselled about the intricacies of relationships and a promiscuous lifestyle. This is especially important because in most areas, there exists a cultural acceptance of a man's multiple sexual conquests. The result is a disheartening pattern whereby a man then spreads the virus to several different women via unprotected sex. These women are in turn reluctant to test for fear of being cast aside and deserted by their partner, family or friends if their positive status were to be known.

So grave is this disquietude that even pregnant women go untested in spite of the high risk of mother-to-child transmission during childbirth. ARVs given to pregnant women help tremendously in reducing the transmission, and mothers-to-be are always encouraged to test. More often than not, the women ignore the promise of a healthier future for baby and mum on medication. They fix their eyes on the floor and stubbornly shake their heads – not for them is it to embrace this disease and lose face in society. They and their babies will take their chances with HIV.

Some of the lasting impressions from my time at the hospital were the numerous affected children stumbling into the paediatric ward, so burdened by disease that they had lost every semblance of a carefree childhood. Without their immune system, they are prone to illnesses such as TB, meningitis, horrid gastroenteritis and severe malnutrition. The idea that a country so beautiful and promising such as South Africa is plagued by a disease that is stealing the very legs from under their own youth is no less than heartbreaking.

With a fast-growing number of people having acquired HIV/AIDS, as well as the vast majority being susceptible to it, South Africa found itself deeply in need of guidance and aid from its government. Unfortunately the main issues went largely unaddressed, and the government has compounded the problem by being far from proactive in dealing with such a startling epidemic. Even though national ARV rollouts were finally started in 2004, it came not from the efforts of the internal government, but from pressures of the outside world, appalled that a government with so ostensible a problem could be so lax – and sometimes even counterproductive – about its management.

South Africa's President, Thabo Mbeki, has repeatedly disappointed both the African and international community by backing a school of thought that discredits the link between the human immunodeficiency virus, HIV, and AIDS. Therefore, while the acknowledgment of a severe AIDS epidemic at the turn of the century should have led to a prompt institution of nationwide anti-retroviral treatment, the process faltered at the hands of leaders who were still deliberating whether the costs of this investment was worthwhile. Following in this obstructive trend is the country's Health Minister, Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, who has also adopted an attitude of denial towards what is scientifically known about HIV and AIDS. While aid workers were fighting tooth and nail to increase testing and availability of medicines, she instead advocated merely the consumption of beetroot and garlic as immune boosters. >>


HIV AIDS
THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS
BE IN CONTROL
OF YOUR LIFE
SPONSORED BY:
JOZINI
Build it
Madonela Primary School
Sebenzel' Impumelelo
Strive For Success

She also supported the claims of the Rath Foundation which puts forth vitamins as AIDS treatment, and used damaging advertisements against ARVs, going as far as to accuse them of being toxic and causing AIDS.

AIDS activists were enraged even further by the recent scandal in which the former Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, admitted to having unprotected sex with a HIV-positive woman and then showering afterwards as a sufficient preventative measure.

Government-led efforts to tackle the problem by disseminating information and advocating testing and treatment were a long time in coming. Meanwhile, prevalence was rising steadily among the population, including pregnant women and their babies. Promiscuous behaviour coupled with high crime rates meant that throngs of people were infected through unprotected sex and sexual abuse. Still many more were struggling to reconcile the mixed messages sent out by the country's leaders.

"Stop playing with the lives of people," urged renowned cleric Desmond Tutu, referring to the irresponsible manner in which government officials were dispensing spurious information, and it is a call that should be heeded. AIDS does not threaten a nation as a singular disease. The incapacity caused by the syndrome leads to disability, which leads to loss of livelihood and poverty. When death ensues, one must not forget the very possible consequence that orphans are left behind to pick up the pieces. In South Africa today, there are more than 1.2 million AIDS orphans doing just that.

There has been some progress. KwaZulu-Natal, the region with the highest prevalence, has managed to set up a treatment protocol with a humble repertoire of 3 treatment regimens. In our rural hospital, ARV caravans were set up and villagers turned up for educational modules, counselling and treatment collection. ARV rollouts are now being carried out in all districts and the population is able to test for free. However UNAIDS still estimates that provision of ARVs to the people in need of them is still falling short by about 79%. South Africans are shouting louder and stronger, demanding a change, largely through the labours of enthusiastic NGOs. One of the biggest protagonists includes TAC or 'Treatment Action Campaign' who have played a major role in ensuring treatment access all over South Africa. And the Africans are not the only ones fighting. Donations and volunteers pour in from abroad to work side-by-side in a slow but steady struggle – against a disappointing government policy, against stigma and discrimination, against unhelpful mindsets from within the population, against health inequalities, and against despair.

And once all the blame is spent and frustration draws one close to the edge of surrender, the answer to carrying on lies in the children, ever the victims when leaders fail to deliver solutions and social and economic structures fall apart. These young, innocent faces of Africa struggle to grow up strong when their very immune defence systems have been wrangled away from them, and are praying to be saved.♦

Ria Sulinda Ahmad Zabri

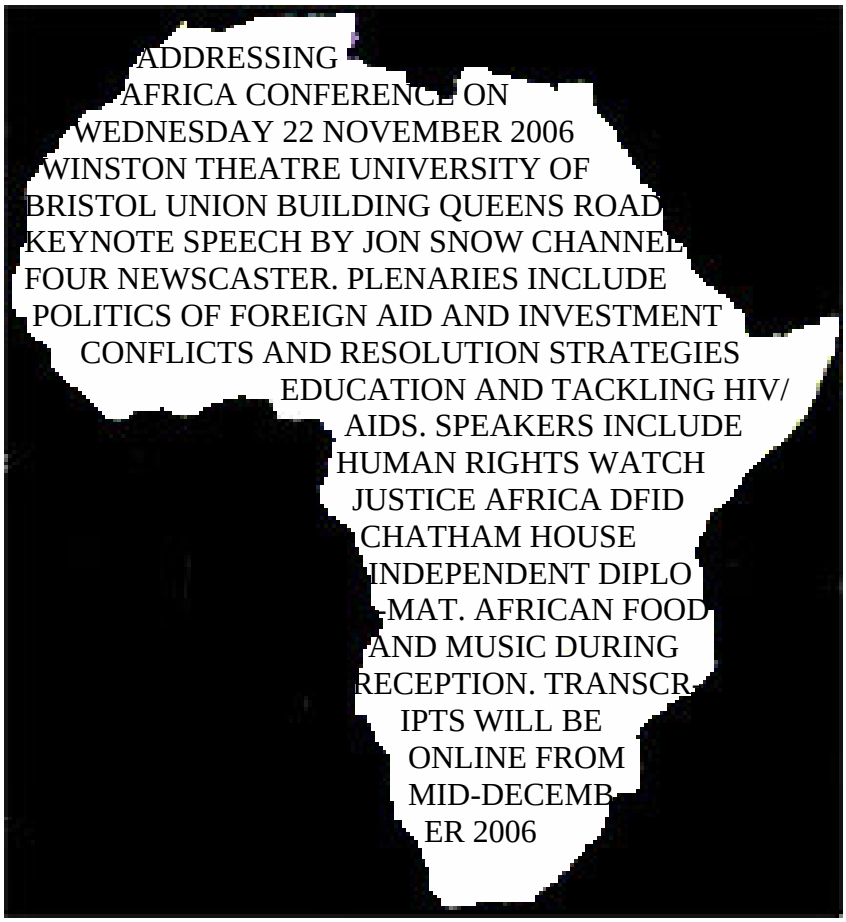
ADDRESSING AFRICA CONFERENCE

at Bristol University

Wednesday 22 November 2006

For transcripts of the conference,
Please visit the society website
http://www.international-affairs.org.uk

UPCOMING CONFERENCE:
MIDDLE EAST
In March 2007



GEORGIA AT A GLANCE

Tensions between Russia and Georgia have never been great. This year things took a turn for the worse as the animosity grew between the two countries, escalating beyond a mere diplomatic spat. Catriona Gardiner visited Georgia last spring and recorded her impressions for *International Affairs*.

In January this year a pipeline carrying Russian gas to Georgia blew up. Georgia blamed Russia, who called it 'hysteria'. More recently President Putin of Russia has accused the Georgians of 'state terrorism' and 'blackmail' after Georgia arrested four Russian officers thought to belong to a military-intelligence unit recruiting Georgians to a spy ring. Russia responded to Georgia's 'misbehaviour' with a blockade, escalating an already tense situation.

Russia's close relationship with Georgia goes back a long way. The Tsars acquired Georgia's territory gradually from the late 18th century and it became the USSR's vineyard, orchard, health spa and playground. Meanwhile the Georgians enjoyed some of the highest living standards in the Communist world, although they did not escape the ugly sides of Stalinism. The debris now lies everywhere. Ruined hotels, pot-holed roads (with the notable exception of President George W. Bush Street to the airport, other major thoroughfares, and the road to the president's granny's house) and decrepit or half-completed apartment blocks speak for themselves.

A good place to start exploring 20th century Georgia – and indeed the entire Soviet Union – is a town a few miles east of Tbilisi, Gori, which I visited this summer.

Gori is an unremarkable place, except for the enormously grand museum set in the middle of a park. Next to the main building are an old green train carriage and a marble construction built around a little brick house, like a classical shrine. For the first four years of his life, one room of this house was home to Ioseb Djugashvili and his parents. The construction of the marble shelter was ordered by Lavrenty Beria, another Georgian notorious in Soviet history. Inside the huge and suitably chilly museum, exhibits chronicle the life of the man better known as Joseph Stalin. Particularly blatant lies seem to be avoided, although one wonders how anyone knew when little 'Soso' was just four that they should preserve his family's furniture for posterity. However, small matters such as his second wife's suicide, the gulags or the deliberate starvation of most of Ukraine are somehow forgotten. While it was interesting to see the house, the personal train carriage and the pictures of Stalin as a young man, the museum is mainly a lesson in the careful use of truth.

I could forgive Gori for its selective memory. Life has not been easy for Georgians since 1990, as the museum guide reminded us: 'For 15 years we have had no gas, no heating, nothing. Our museum is so cold in the winter. I want to live in Brazil'.

It was hard not to sympathise. Georgia hit the headlines in late 2003, when 36-year-old Mikhail Saakashvili led the 'Rose Revolution' and deposed former Soviet foreign minister Edvard Shevardnadze to become the youngest president in Europe. But the biggest changes since then seem to be aesthetic. The country's new flag flies on every official building, sometimes alongside the EU flag - a potent symbol of "new Georgia's" aspirations. Certain roads were newly tarmacked in advance of President Bush's recent visit and the apartment blocks lining the roads received a lick of paint – at least on the side facing the road. Traffic police no longer demand bribes from every passing driver.

It is true that many normal Georgians must have benefited from these changes. In other areas however, progress is limited. At the time we arrived there was a riot in a Tbilisi prison and seven prisoners were killed. A Reuters report said that many prisoners were members of gangs; it did not mention that being in prison without charge for months or years is common. Meanwhile serious crimes are left unsolved. The prison riot stayed on the local news, as demonstrations were held in Tbilisi and the bodies of the dead men were shown in gruesome detail on TV. I also heard of other demonstrations held in response to a new law that would require small traders to use proper cash registers – a reasonable enough request, one might think. But the cheapest of these costs 200 lari (about £60), a huge cost to the average Georgian, and rumour has it that the importers are cronies of Saakashvili. He remains secure in his job for now, but his popularity is waning as ambitious promises go unfulfilled and people see evidence of egotism. A construction site in Tbilisi looks remarkably like the presidential palace he said he wouldn't have, and when we turned up at a former summer home of Tsar Nicolas I's nephew (later used by Stalin) we were turned away by policemen. Our driver and guide, Oleg, was not impressed. He had been looking forward to showing us the nail Stalin had hung his hat on and knew that the house was usually open to visitors if the President was not staying there. He wasn't, but we were not even allowed to walk round the outside. 'At first I thought Saakashvili very good', Oleg told us, 'He young [sic], not Shevardnadze…then I think not so good.'

Judging by the demonstrations, he is not alone. Back in Tbilisi, a taxi driver keen to practise his English asked us, 'What do you think of our government? Good, bad?' before answering his own question, 'Saakashvili is not a democratic president.'

As the EU flags suggest, Georgia's position in the world is changing. It has always been at a crossroads. Situated to the European side of the Urals and the Asian side of the Bosphorus, it was once part of the Silk Route. Despite bordering Muslim Azerbaijan, Turkey and Russian republics including Chechnya, it is definitely Christian, albeit with a significant Muslim population.

EU membership is another matter. Turning away from Russia has cost Georgia dearly, not least in terms of trade. Water from the spa town of Borjomi was reputedly Lenin's favourite drink and Russia is the largest potential market for almost any product. But since independence, Big Brother has turned very cold. Not only has Russia stopped buying Georgian wine and spring water and allowing free access across the border, it has

>>

Stalin looks down on his hometown of Gori

'Turn left for Russia.' Road signs now include English, not Russian, even 10 miles from the border

encouraged rebellion in the provinces. A war and thousands of internal refugees later, Abkhazia is nominally independent. Its citizens are eligible for Russian passports. So much for the war against terror in Chechnya.

The UK and USA are both assisting the Georgian military in their respective styles: Britain trains the Georgians to train each other; the Americans train them to be trained. Presumably feeling more secure with the new alliances, the Georgian government signed an agreement in March to get rid of remaining Russian military bases by 2008. Whether this will happen is anyone's guess, with the most recent twist happening at the end of September when the four Russian officers were arrested under charges of spying.

Information on Georgia is scanty to those who are not already well-informed and what there is, is naturally biased. Democratic revolutions led by young, Western-educated men against Soviet relics make good news stories; a slow wane of popularity and rumours of corruption and human rights abuses do not. And there is no motivation for news agencies to look behind the press releases on a story like a prison riot, when most of their public could not place the country concerned on a world map.

Much of the recent dispute between Georgia and Russia has been rhetoric and some Georgian officials have ridiculed the recent Russian sanctions. They have a point; one would expect better behaviour from a country that is a member of the G8. But to someone who has driven along the main roads to both the Turkish and Russian borders, the difference in traffic highlights which way Georgia is looking these days. And with such a long history of enmity it is hard to know where it will all end. ♦

Catriona Gardiner

RORY BREMNER LIVE IN BRISTOL

The International Affairs Society

presents:

Rory Bremner Live in Bristol

Date: Friday 1 December 2006

Time: 17.00 (doors 16.30)

Venue: Joe Public's (next to Habitat on Queens Road)

Rory Bremner, one of the UK's leading political satirists will be doing a live stand-up act exclusively for the International Affairs Society.

Brazil at the Polls

The political map of South America in 2007 will be hugely altered from that of 2006. By the end of the year, twelve countries will have held elections since November 2005.

Most recently, the continents' largest country, geographically, economically and in terms of population, Brazil, has gone to the polls. In a country where only the over-70's and the illiterate are exempt from a legal obligation to vote, a huge and diverse population put their opinions to paper in October, voting for a new President, new members of the national congress and new members of the federal senate.

This election hardly inspires the dramatic imagery and strong rhetoric of the elections held earlier this year in Mexico where there were claims of electoral-fraud, and huge rallies of hundreds of thousands were held in Mexico City with thousands of protestors camping on the streets. The elections in Brazil were nonetheless a captivating electoral race. The presidency can only be claimed after a first-round of voting if a candidate claims an overall majority of votes. This did not happen. The election was between Luiz Inacio da Silva, popularly known as 'Lula', of the left-wing 'Worker's Party' (PT), pitted against the more right-wing, ex-mayor of Sao Paulo Geraldo Alckmin of the PSBD.

O Estado de Sao Paulo, one of Brazil's largest daily newspapers proclaimed the race as 'one of the most exciting contests ever seen in Brazil' and *A Folha de Sao Paulo* proclaimed it to be 'electrifying'. Even with months to go, Lula's lead seemed unassailable, and it seemed Alckmin would be left to watch a humiliating defeat. During the last elections, Lula claimed victory in the first round by 23.2% and by almost 20million votes in the second. Even weeks before the poll his popularity seemed to be ensure first-round victory by between three and five percentage points.

However, pressure began to mount on Lula as a few key issues turned his campaign belly-up and the election seemed his to lose. Pivotal has been the 'dossier affair', which has besmirched the reputation of Lula's already questioned government. On September 15th the Federal Police confiscated 1.7 million Reais (about $790,000) from two men thought to hold links to Lula's Worker's Party (PT). Lula quickly reacted by sacking his Campaign manager, but failed to reassure the public of the character of his party. Last year's cash-for-votes scandal, which is only just beginning to fade in the public memory, does not help. Lula chose not to appear in a television debate shortly after the scandal's surfacing and launched a public inquiry which has, thus far, come up with no answers. Overall, the impression was not good. Criticism has also come Lula's way for alleged ineffectuality and failure to deliver on promises. Since the election in 2002, many see him as carrying the hopes of Brazil's poor but he has been criticised for implementing relatively little.

This poor reputation extends to the area of crime and security, particularly as far as the Brazilian middle classes are concerned. Crime was also high on the agenda for the election, unsurprisingly for a country with such a high crime rate – under UN classifications Brazil qualifies as being a low intensity civil war zone, such is the rate of violent murder and the recent waves of shootings and bus-burnings in Sao Paulo, orchestrated by the crime ring the CSS provided political capital for Alckmin. However, Lula has been sure to consistently drive home Brazil's positive economic performance under his tenure. Current account surplus hit £1.6bn, inflation has stayed low, and growth has been stable. The reforms he has implemented such as the 'Bolsa Familia' (Family Grant) system, has provided benefits for 11 million of Brazil's poorest families.

The election was interestingly poised with both candidates vying for votes that could prove decisive. The first-round vote was split geographically, with the poorer Northeastern region providing high support for Lula, and the South voting in favour of Alckmin. Both candidates tried to make inroads into the others regional dominances. In addition, they competed to win the votes of the 10% of the electorate who voted for other candidates, and hoped for support from regional candidates in the ten states which experienced run-offs in their regional elections.

Alckmin claimed a change of President for Brazil would see his government implement sweeping reforms of the political system, which would limit the number of parties in government to seven, thus increasing political stability. He also promised to increase the efficiency of public spending, and overhaul the tax system, which, he claimed, overburdens the taxpayer, accounting for 37.5% of GDP. However, it is exactly the inefficient multi-party system in Brazil (there are 19 different parties overall) that Alckmin wanted to reform, which would make implementation of these reforms tricky. Lula, on the other hand stresseed consolidation of good economic performance, and continuation of social policies in line with aims such as ending hunger in Brazil.

The election could prove significant for Latin America as a whole, and for Brazil's position globally. An Alckmin victory would have pleased the US as it would be a reversal of the recent rise in the number of new left-wing governments in Latin America. Lula has been keen to forge stronger links with the rest of the continent, supporting the strengthening of Mercosur, the South American trade bloc. At the end of 2005, on visits to Argentina and Chile, he asserted that Mercosur should take priority over all other trade agreements. However it would have been likely for Alckmin to move Brazil away from forging closer links with its neighbours. In an interview with the *Financial Times* on July 8th 2006, he declared himself "concerned about Mercosur", saying "Mercosur, instead of increasing internal competitiveness has increased protectionism". Moreover Alckmin would have been less likely than Lula to offer any support to the more radical of South America's leaders such as Venezuela's Chavez or Bolivia's Morales due to his more right-of-centre political ideology.

In the end, despite a series of corruption and political scandals that tarred his image and undermined his credibilty, President Lula da Silva won a landslide re-election victory. Speaking after the results were announced, Lula proclaimed that 'Brazil is living a magical moment'. The closeness of the presidential race however shows a Brazil that is torn, and the unlikelihood of having the confidence to assert its own agenda. **Will Irwin**

HILARY BENN
International Development Secretary

So, we've seen the pictures on TV and in the papers, there's been rallies around the world, Condi has said it – is genocide happening in Darfur?

Violence is violence, regardless of what you call it. I've just returned from Darfur, where civil war has been fuelled in part by the fight over resources – thousands have been killed – numbers ranging from 80,000 to 300,000 to 400,000 – no one knows, because no one was counting. And just under 2 million people displaced.

The Abuja peace process and the wealth-sharing arrangements in particular, provide a framework – if those who are fighting are prepared to put bombs and bullets aside - for addressing these issues. The precondition for all of this is security. We are working hard to improve security on the ground through support to the African Union Mission in Sudan, despite continued ceasefire violations on the part of the Government and the rebel groups, we are providing financial and technical support to the Abuja process. I welcome the news that the African Union have expressed support, in principle, for a transition to a U.N. operation this year, for there are too few AU troops. The world's patience has run out. Because the only chance the 1.8 million people - tonight and every night - have to leave these camps and go home is through peace.

When asked whether British troops would be sent to Darfur, you have said that British troops are committed elsewhere; how great an impediment is the fact that Western governments and Western media are (perhaps) preoccupied with events in the Middle East?

I don't think they are, there is a lot of coverage of events in the Middle East at present, but there needs to be. There is only so much capacity in the world, but I think Africa is receiving more recognition and that's a positive step.

Your dramatic decision to cut off aid to the Ethiopian government was an illustration of the tricky moral issues facing aid donors. How does Britain decide where the priorities in aid to Africa should be?

We have to look at the function of aid, what are people's needs, how best to contribute. There are three clear principles we consider: poverty, human rights and good governance. And we want to see results as much as they do. And of course, part of history means we have a special relationship with some countries, such as Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana

What about bad governance, security and conflict with regards to aid which can lead to large scale theft and squandering of the wealth and resources?

One of the reasons this happens is that rich countries and we, their consumers, are willing to pay a great deal of money for valuable commodities, like oil and gas to keep us warm and coltan to make our mobile phones work. This provides an opportunity for political elites in some countries to enrich themselves, and the ease with which money can now move around the world makes it easier to steal.

The DRC is an example of a country with huge natural resource wealth, above the ground, below the ground, but which has seen terrible conflict, bad governance and as a result desperate poverty.

Mobutu's appalling and corrupt regime was backed by rich countries for much of its history. During the 32 years he was in power, what was then Zaire received over $12 billion in aid - not just because Mobutu was on the side of the west in the Cold War, but also because of the DRC's huge wealth of natural resources. The whole economy of Zaire was geared towards institutionalised kleptomania for the benefit of those who controlled the army and the police. During that time, according to the UN, Mobutu embezzled $5 billion.

As the regime collapsed, different armed groups fought for control of these resources, including armies of neighbouring countries, with many doing deals with international investors along the way. The ensuing regional war led to the deaths of 4 million people – more than lost their lives in battle in the 1st World War. Some 1,200 people a day are still dying in the DRC from disease and malnutrition and violence.

We're working with FCO, MoD and other donors to help create a safe and secure environment for people to live in, for example helping the DRC's transitional government to integrate various fighting forces into a proper national army. Some 50,000 soldiers have decided to return to civilian life and are being helped to do so. And for those who stay, we are supporting reform of soldiers pay, so that they do not resort to robbery and violence to make ends meet.

We supported the elections – the first the people of DRC will have experienced for 40 years - and in the longer term we want to ensure natural resources are used for the benefit of the citizens of DRC. Government revenue from the mining sector - copper, cobalt and diamonds - amounted to $15 million in 2004. Potential revenue - if governance had been better - is estimated to have been ten times that! Meanwhile the annual income for people from using forests – wood, charcoal, bush meat – is around $900 million – poor people depending on earning a living from natural resources.

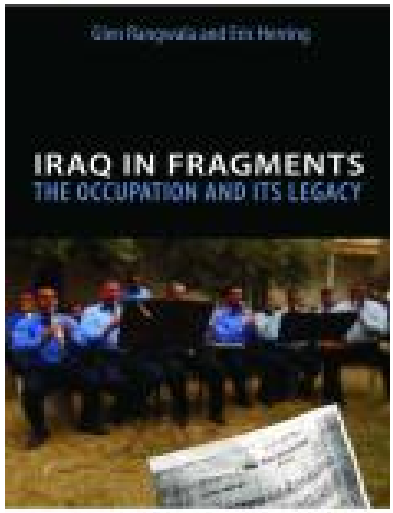
What impact is China having in Africa?

China is doing a great deal in Africa. All around the world China is trying to secure energy and natural resources for its growing economy - that is their foremost motivation. We will have to wait and see the outcome. ♦

This interview was conducted in February 2006. Not much has changed since, conflict is still occurring in Darfur where millions of people have fled their homes and hundreds of thousands have died; the DRC held successful elections (at time of print no declared winner has been announced); China held a summit in Beijing for fifty African leaders and promised to double aid to Africa and provide $5bn in loans in the next three years.

SK

IRAQ IN FRAGMENTS



IRAQ IN FRAGMENTS:
THE OCCUPATION AND ITS LEGACY
368pp, C. Hurst and Co., £20.00

Eric Herring and Glen Rangwala give academic justice to the complexities of the legacy of the Iraq invasion, says James Denselow

Much has been written on Iraq over the past three years. Journalists, former officials and a host of 'experts' have contributed to what is one of the great debates of our time. Yet until now no book has addressed the legacy of the occupation in academic terms, which is exactly the aim of 'Iraq in Fragments', a dense, largely textual analysis of the evolution of the Iraqi state from the toppling of Saddam Hussein to the situation today.

Although any work on Iraq is guaranteed topicality, this book has particular relevance in the light of the present discussion over possible radical changes in US policy on Iraq, typified by the work of James Baker's bipartisan Iraq Study Group. The bedrock of 'Iraq In Fragments' argument is that Iraq is not yet a failed state, but is rather a deeply fragmented one. Reflecting therefore on the United States ability to affect change in the country, it concludes that political dynamics at the level of central government have 'moved out of US control'. Such a disconnect was recently witnessed during this October's US-led operations in Baghdad's Sadr City when Prime Minister Maliki, who relies on a fragile alliance of support including that of Muqtada al-Sadr, reminded Washington that while he is America's friend, he is not 'America's man'.

But how did the American project get to where it is today in Iraq? One answer is the disparity between the US attempt at state building in Iraq the conscious programme of building a democratic and stable US ally in the region and the actuality of what has emerged from the process of state formation. Reflecting on the history of the Iraqi state, the authors explain that it has been 'largely external to society', relying on a combination of rentier based enticement and state terror to maintain power.

Following the 2003 invasion, the looting (which saw 17 of the 23 ministries rendered obsolete) and disintegration of the state, forced an unprepared US to move from a micro to macro approach to post-war governance. This shift was witnessed by the dissolution of Jay Garner's 'Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance' (ORHA) which hoped to have a democratic Iraq in place by the end of 2003, to Paul Bremer's 'Coalition Provisional Authority' (CPA). This immediately fuelled an emerging insurgency by pursuing an aggressive de-Ba'thification programme and disbanding the Iraqi armed forces, factors that meant the US 'had to run faster' simply to stand still. With the evolving insurgency in the background, the CPA launched an ambitious political process that had the effect of reinforcing the trend towards sectarianism so often misunderstood by other works in their tendency to explain Iraq through a prism of ethnic essentialism.

Despite trying to maintain an 'Iraqi face', the CPA ensured that it was the driving force behind the body-politic. Crucially, however, it failed to build a state that engaged society through either employment or service provision; often doing the exact opposite in terms of its inability to improve electricity or water and of the decisions that resulted in instantaneous mass unemployment. Having failed in 'soft power' engagement with an increasingly restless society, there was a preference for more coercive methods leading to the mass militarisation of Iraqi society, resulting in more armed personnel in Iraq today than prior to the invasion. Thus the Americans preferred short-term control, that was to fragment political authority amongst the various actors that emerged post-Saddam, over long term state building.

This preference for coercive methods was reflected in the huge disparity between the number of civil and military personnel in the country, itself partly a product of bureaucratic turf wars between the State and Defence departments in Washington. Meanwhile, on the ground the conflicting impulses within the CPA, both to keep and to hand over power, resulted in an ad-hoc political programme with '18 arrangements for 18 Governorates'. This allowed local groups to flourish at the expense of the national; the differential development between Anbar, Karbala and Basra providing evidence to support this narrative and dispel the idea of a 'straightforward hierarchy between national leaders and local officials'.

Indeed 'national' leaders like Iyad Allawi realised that 'a client base outside of the Green Zone was not necessary to achieve power with the political list electoral system that treated Iraq as a single constituency effectively ruling out any open political competition. Such a system encouraged 'sectarian pathways of development' that would dilute Iraq's history of nationalism over sectarianism and, due to the core-periphery disparity, would lead to spatially variegated political trajectories emerging within a fragmented entity. Crucial to understanding the causes of civil strife, therefore, is the 'collapse of institutions of the Iraqi state and the reconstruction of their fragments along sectarian lines'.

Whereas the academic outlining of the political fragmentation is unique, the chapters on the insurgency and counter-insurgency have largely been seen before in the plethora of security-focused works (for instance Rick's excellent 'Fiasco' and Hashim's 'Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq') What Herring and Rangwala do so well, however, is to connect the insurgency battle to the absence of an integrated political process and to the US dilemma of both maintaining control and handing over the state to the Iraqis, ultimately >>

achieving neither. They dismiss over-hyped ideas of Iran and Syria sponsoring chaos in Iraq by explaining that chaos poses more of a threat to the region than any form of stability. Instead, the counter-insurgency had a choice between coercion and legitimation, with the US preferring the former. Coercion has little respect for the rule of law (Abu Ghraib, Falluja) and has had the effect of 'widening the gap between state and much of society'.

While the insurgency and civil-strife dominate the headlines, Iraq's economic transition has gone largely unnoticed. This is a story of US global, neo-liberal governance of Iraq with little Iraqi over-sight. With little transparency and a flourishing trans-national informal economy, Iraq is deeply penetrated and at the whim of the winds of globalisation. The authors make the powerful argument that the Iraqi state today is 'not representing Iraq in a globalising world, it is representing the globalising world in Iraq'.

Yet despite the bleak situation that now includes reports of Baghdad residents having their names and addresses tattooed on their legs to aid their relatives locating them in the event of their murder, it is perhaps never too late for a national political process to be endorsed by all of Iraq's 'fragments'. The cases of Bosnia and Rwanda show that people find it harder to live apart than together. On the other hand the partition of Pakistan from India and the still open wound of Kashmir shows that political fragmentation could lead to huge levels of geographic displacement. Almost 50% of Iraq's population live in the cities of Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and Kirkuk, all ethnically and sectarianally diverse to differing degrees. Baghdad is moving towards a hyper-version of civil-war Beirut, complete with the range of militias and identity triggers that spell life or death. It is perhaps the 2007 Kirkuk referendum that could be the next major formative event for Iraq, rather than the November Congressional elections in the US.

'Iraq in Fragments' does not tell the whole story of the situation in Iraq or the road to it, but it makes no claim to do so. Instead, it is an examination of the fundamental flaws in the state-building process by focused political scientists. Looking to the future, they argue for a reality check in terms of what America could do next, given that, as Dr. Herring has said, it 'never really had control'. This is a well structured and engaging academic account of Iraq today and with Cornell Press publishing it in the US, one hopes it can find its way into policy circles and gain the influence that its intelligence so clearly deserves. ♦

James Denselow

About the Authors

Eric Herring is a senior lecturer in International Politics at the University of Bristol. He is the author of Danger and Opportunity: Explaining International Crisis Outcomes and co-author with Barry Buzan of The Arms Dynamic in World Politics. Glen Rangwala is a lecturer in Politics at the University of Cambridge

Books mentioned

Ahmed Hashim, 'Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq', C.Hurst and Co, 2006
Thomas E. Ricks, 'Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq', Allen Lane, 2006

FAIRTRADE: FAIR ENOUGH?

Documentary: Black Gold

Fairtrade seems to be everywhere.
From chocolate to clothes, endorsed by Chris Martin, P Diddy and the like, your consciene can be clearer knowing that by buying fairtrade you can help guarantee a better deal for the disadvantaged producer in the developing world.

In a system that frequently filters farmers to the lowest economic stratum, fairtrade recognises them as equal partners and gives them a platform from which they can command more control over their business and lives. Before we wait for our Government to make changes, or companies, or financial institutions, we as consumers can do something to help by buying fairtrade products. And that's not difficult because the fairtrade range is a growing business. Sales are rising by 50 per cent each year and total £140 million in the UK and $1bn across the developed world. With so many products now bearing the fairtrade logo you'd think things were looking up for fairtrade farmers, right? No.

Let's take coffee. As the most heavily trade commodity after oil and the most common drink after water, coffee is a major focus of the fairtrade movement. It is also the main focus of Marc and Nick Francis' provocative documentary, Black Gold.

Conventional coffee prices are at their lowest in a century, even below the cost of production. Farmers are having to pull their children out of school, abandon family land and look elsewhere for work, despite the fact that our consumption of coffee is at an all time high. This bleak scenario is the situation in Ethiopia, the birthplace of coffee; the central location for Black Gold; and home to Tadesse Meskela.

Tadesse Meskela is on a mission to save his 74,000 struggling coffee farmers from bankruptcy. The film shows his farmers struggling to harvest some of the highest quality coffee beans on the international market and Tadesse striving to find international buyers willing to pay a fair price.

The documentary also travels to New York where we watch consumers guzzling the tens of different varieties of coffee. Inside the New York Stock Exchange, New York commodity traders decide the price of the beans. In London the documentary follows Tadesse meeting potential clients and into a supermarket where he is disappointed not to find his brand of fair-trade Ethiopian coffee on the shelf but lots of other non-fair-trade types. Towards the end of the film the double dealings of trade ministers at the World Trade Organisation reveal the many challenges that lie ahead for Tadesse in his search for a long term solution for his farmers. The international dimension of the coffee we drink comes across loud and clear as does the ethical dimension. It is thought-provoking without pointing a finger at either you or the corporates. 'We wanted to humanise the economic reality of what is going on. Economics used to mean difficult algebraic equations, but not anymore. The fairtrade system works by humanising the unfair trading regulations and raising awareness', Nick Francis, one of the brothers behind the film told me.

The impetus behind the film started in 1984 with the Live Aid Concert, an idea that resurfaced last year with the Live8 concert. The initiative behind the concerts and the much larger campaign was simple: raise money, give money, problem solved.

But it isn't so simple, as Nick Francis argued, 'Part of what we wanted to do was to challenge people's perceptions of Africa. Why did we have to have another concert to help raise money and awareness? Aid doesn't necessarily alleviate the problems. The problems are with us, not Africa. Without reforming our trading system no amount of aid will help the continent in the long-term'.

Without ever being critical of the fairtrade movement in the film, it's not all rosy either. The fairtrade movement is praised for its democratic nature as farmers form part of a cooperative who supervise a trust fund into which social premiums are paid. The cooperative that Tadesse is part of in Ethiopia decide how the money is allocated to projects that benefit the entire village and every farmer has a say. In the film the farmers speak of a need for a school, they want their children to be educated and all the members vote in favour. But, they don't have enough money. And they still won't next month as the price of coffee falls. Some farmers resort to harvesting Chat, a banned substance in the US and many part of Europe and other farmers have to take their children to receive medical supervision for starvation.

So, rather than simply showing the negative aspects of the coffee farmer's lives and then saying, 'but look there is a solution – buy fairtrade!' the documentary goes beyond that, perhaps not enough, but raises the fundamental, but often neglected, question of whether 'fairtrade' is 'fair' enough. Not one farmer is represented in the New York Stock Exchange or

Tadesse: Man on a Mission

Picking out the good from the bad on less than $1 a day

at the WTO talks and buying fairtrade will not alter what is happening behind closed doors.

Part of the problem is found on the shelf at Sainsbury's or on the notice-board at Starbucks. There are far more non-fairtrade products than there are fairtrade. The fairtrade products are more expensive, which you would think is justified because of the money going back to sustainable projects. But in reality, supermarkets and coffee retailers have found a niche and often create profit on fairtrade products. Less than 1% of Nescafe's products are fairtrade and the vast majority of Starbuck's coffees are non-fair-trade too. Nick Francis believes that for many companies seeking certification, the rules governing Fairtrade are too rigid, leaving even the most principled companies to invent their own systems or join alternative programmes, such as Starbucks' 'Commitment to Origins' standards. This can lead to confusion and mistrust. But on the other hand Nick argued, a major brand's one fair-trade product does not mean they are an ethical company. 'We need to be probing deeper, asking whether it's ok for only one product to be certified fair-trade, or whether it should be companies who are certified fairtrade instead'.

It's a good point, but one that doesn't necessarily translate in the film which focuses on Tadessene's fair-trade coffee beans.

Black Gold mocks much of the West with footage of enthusiastic Starbucks barristas and a behind the scenes look at a cappuccino-making competition, while also considerately showing the plight of many Ethiopian farmers against the backdrop of stunning Ethiopian scenery. The documentary did not mention the tense political climate in Ethiopia, its long civil conflict and border war with Eritrea, but perhaps this omission enhanced the filmmaker's aims of trying to make a general point about the coffee industry rather than be country specific. Nick Francis made the point that they do not want to preach to the already converted but appeal to a larger audience, for whom fairtrade is just a funky logo. The film does not undermine the fair-trade movement or point a finger at Starbucks, but rather provoke discussion about what really needs addressing: trade.

There are lasting benefits to fairtrade; its true point is the cultural, communal, and environmental stability it bolsters. And there is trust to be had in the fairtrade logo, but until the players at the top do something about trade then unfortunately fairtrade may be the ethical choice but it's not the solution. ♦

SK

Black Gold will be on general release next spring, in the meantime check out the website at: www.blackgoldmovie. com

SIMON GASS – QUITE THE DIPLOMAT

Britain's Ambassador to Greece

I'm a long standing career diplomat. I studied law at university but discovered during the course of the degree that law and I weren't made for each other so we parted company with little regret on either side.

I remember very clearly the day when I decided to go for the diplomatic service. I really didn't have any idea of what I wanted to do other than I didn't want to do law and I was thinking of taking a year traveling. I remember sitting having breakfast with some friends and one of them said, 'I just applied to join the diplomatic service for a bit of a laugh' and it suddenly struck me that I wanted to travel and the diplomatic service would allow me to do that. And so I applied.

I had absolutely no expectation that I would get a job. The competition was very fierce. Coming from Reading University I rather had the impression that the Foreign Office was populated primarily by graduates from Oxbridge so my chances would be slim, particularly as I wasn't a very distinguished student by anybody's stretch of the imagination.
But in the end I did and since joining in 1977, I've worked in London a good deal of the time, but also in New York, Nigeria, South Africa, Greece twice and Italy. In that time, I've done a huge number of jobs: multilateral diplomacy, commercial work, political work, financial work and in the European Union. I'm a mongrel in career terms. I've done a bit of everything and I have to say it's been terrific fun. I've really enjoyed it.

Why do I like being an ambassador? You are in a position where you can make a difference.
You can make a difference to the operation and policy. And I like to think that in my time here I have been able to both make the operation of the embassy run more smoothly. I am very proud of the part we took in helping Cyprus with the evacuation of Lebanon this summer. We have always got to be on standby for emergencies.
Secondly, you meet fascinating people. I not only get to talk closely to Greek ministers, but I also meet a range of people who visit the Embassy, whether it's Jack Straw [at the time Britain's Foreign Secretary] or an official. Terry Wogan came on the night of the Eurovision Song Contest with his wife for dinner. That was fun.
The third aspect which gives me particular pleasure is what we call public diplomacy: dealing with the press and the media. I am fortunate to speak Greek and therefore I can talk directly to the press. That gives you an extra bit of profile and the ability to work in an environment which isn't always friendly to the British government positions, whether it's on Iran or Iraq for example, you can try and convince them otherwise! Trying to build a good strong profile of Britain and British Greek relations is something that gives me a good deal of satisfaction.

I've been at the Foreign Office for thirty years but I don't think young diplomats will have the same career path as I've had.
Firstly we're increasingly determined that young diplomats will want to reach the higher levels of the Foreign Office should spend some time out of the Foreign Office, doing something different. It often means that we tend to recruit people who have had a job before they get to us. This isn't always the case, we still recruit some people straight out of university, but to be at a successful organisation, at a successful Foreign Ministry, we increasingly need people who have different experiences of the world with different perspectives on the world.

There are lessons to be learnt from the Athens Olympics Games, but the experience of Beijing will be particularly important to London in 2012. The Olympic Games in Athens were very successful but they were characterised by a lot of last minute hiatus. Their long range planning is perhaps not as good as ours is but they do have a tremendous ability to work very fast in the last stages. On the less positive side, I think that Greece has found it very difficult to make satisfactory use of the installations after the event. One of the lessons for the Britain will be to have a plan for good use of the installations once the games are over.

I definitely recommend the foreign service as a career.
The upsides of it are you are dealing with some of the most interesting topics that are part of governance within the world today. Some of the most difficult topics today – how do you stop genocide in Darfur? How do you deal with globalisation? What are the implications of the new Russia or the new China for world affairs? Or the changing balance in the United States? Increasingly it is about public services too. How do you run good consular services? How do you run good and fair visa services which are fair both to the applicants and their families and also fair to the people living in the United Kingdom? How do you make the best of the commercial opportunities available to British companies?

It isn't only about big global issues. There are a lot of practical issues day by day as well. It's endlessly changing, you tend to shift jobs somewhere between every two and four years. What other organisation pays you to learn foreign languages and to learn about other people's culture and then put that into effect in a positive way?
It's not all a bowl of cherries.
You have to be very flexible and the job has implications for your personal life. It's not all being posted to Washington and Paris. You have to think if you are resilient enough to be posted to Kyrgystan or to Kinshasa. They can be difficult environments and rather dangerous, although we do look after our staff very well. A lot of people have very high aspirations when they join the Foreign Office. They come in with the thought that they want to contribute to changing the world. That is a very legitimate and worthy aspiration. But we're all working as part of a big machine. After all, the purpose of the Foreign Office is to work for the interests of the United Kingdom in a fair, just and prosperous world. It's a mixture of working for the United Kingdom but also trying to make the world a better place. ♦

Meena Singelee

PARIS WHEN IT SIZZLES

This June, members of the International Affairs Society took a trip to Paris. Here, are Harry's impressions.

The day we travelled was an early start (for me), but before I knew it I was in Paris with my co-travellers - Meena Sam, Christina, Ivis and Ellen. As the only undergraduate on the trip, I was sometimes made to sing and dance while they prodded me with sharp sticks, smoked cigars and cackled wickedly.

After we had checked into our hotel, we began our sightseeing. That day we visited Notre Dame, where Sam claimed he saw the site's famous hunchback handing out Socialist Worker Party leaflets in front of the cathedral. I, however, believed Sam to be mistaken, doubting that the hunchback, though crippled by the unjust division of labour and capitalist monopolies of the means of production, would have the level of class consciousness required to be a Trotskyist. When I subsequently found a copy of Proudhon's 'What is property?' near the cathedral's entrance, this confirmed my belief that the unfortunate cripple had not progressed beyond petit bourgeois anarchism.

During our travels around Paris, Meena's fluent French proved very handy (my fluent Uzbeki less so). She was, though, for some reason absolutely insistent on not appearing in any of our photos, always avoiding the camera's glare and deleting any in which she appeared. On one occasion, in which I was about to take a picture of a bridge that she was standing on, she spotted me and immediately dived right off it and into the murky depths below.

She popped back up in time for the evening meal which we all attended in a pleasant restaurant, the first of many restaurants on the trip. Some of us shared some snails for our starter, and they proved to be quite delicious. I also felt that their tastiness vindicated my earlier childhood decision to eat a caterpillar, so their benefit was not only material.

After that, we proceeded to a huge perfume store named Sephora. I had misplaced my masculinity somewhere in the woods as a child, so had no gripes about entering the place. Once in, I spent some time sampling the men's fragrances, and, not noticing the little sticks for spraying on, covered much of my arms in perfume. In the end I didn't buy anything but I did get some Armani Code in duty free. I needn't have bothered. Its expense (in relation to my cheapness) means that I rarely use it, which consequently means its expense in relation to its actual utility is even higher, increasing my reluctance to use it.

The following day, in addition to more sight-seeing, we went to an academic conference on the theme of 'Order and Disorder in a Changing World', at the American Graduate School of International Relations and Graduate Diplomacy. The talks were of varying interest, the most interesting probably being the one on multiculturalism in Britain, in which the speaker attacked the idea as leading to ghettoisation, the sacrifice of fundamental Western values, and so on. I found the speaker's arguments quite convincing, though I expect that they had lost a lot of their rhetorical punch since France's 'integrated' Algerians had risen in revolt against its own model earlier that year.

Later in the day we met John Randal, an American former *Washington Post* journalist, and recent author of books on the history of the Kurds and Osama bin Laden, for dinner. The discussion proved interesting given his areas of expertise. We then made our obligatory, but 'worth it', trip up the Eiffel Tower. The views were quite spectacular at the top, though the wind was bitter, and it was fun sliding down the side afterwards.

On Tuesday the only thing pencilled into the itinerary was a visit to the British Embassy at four, and, after my obligatory, guilty lie-in, Sam, Christine and I decided to visit some art galleries. First, we went to a Picasso gallery, which had a large and diverse collection of the artist's work then to the Pompidou Centre, a huge, bizarre complex that contained floor upon floor of different art exhibits. The interactive part on the bottom floor was memorable, though small children unfortunately prevented me from trying a lot of the exhibits. After a coffee and rest at a café, we headed off to the embassy.

We arrived at the embassy a little before the others, and so waited for a few minutes opposite it. At one point the embassy's guard at came over to check that we hadn't taken any photos, he evidently sharing Meena's aversion to cameras.

After Ivis and Ellen arrived, and Meena had dispatched the guard with a small curved dagger she kept on her at all times, we entered the embassy and went up to meet the Deputy Ambassador. The embassy secretary led us into his office, where he was frantically shredding documents. The Deputy Ambassador took a break from his work to discuss his work representing the UK in France with us. Before we had time to introduce ourselves, however, he indicated to us that the office was bugged, so we conducted our conversation via mime. The discussion proved very interesting. In addition to his current post, he had occupied many important positions in the past, including foreign policy speechwriter for various figures in the 1990s. He confided to us that he used to insert innuendos into John Major's speeches. As the meeting wrapped up, we mimed shaking hands, and headed back off onto the streets of Paris (after, for security purposes, samples of our hair and flesh were taken).

Nothing IAS-related was scheduled for Wednesday, and, aside from temporarily getting lost in the banlieu, panicking and accidentally triggering race riots, I also slept through a boat trip up and down the Seine with Meena (an understandable transgression, given my young age). After visiting another restaurant, where I had more snails, we were into our last day.

All in all, it turned out to be a very enjoyable trip. Paris is a great city, I enjoyed the time spent with my co-travellers, and, aside from visiting the city's great sites, fine restaurants and wonderful art galleries, we also got to meet the UK Deputy Ambassador, a very interesting journalist and author, and get a glimpse into an academic conference. In short, I look forward to future IAS trips. ♦

Harry Hayball

IAS INTERNS & GRADUATES NETWORK

Interns & Graduates Network Afternoon
The International Affairs Society has a unique Interns & Graduates Network. Students have the opportunity to meet potential employers in an informal environment. The next Networking Afternoon will take place in February 2007. Organisations which have previously attended the Interns & Graduates Network Afternoon include: The Times, VSO, Red Cross, Chatham House, European Commission, GCHQ, Ministry of Defence, BBC and Christian Aid.

UPCOMING GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES DEADLINES

REUTERS CAREERS IN JOURNALISM & BUSINESS
31 December 2006
http://about.reuters.com/careers/graduate

In every issue, IAS publishes a list of employers in the field of International Economics, Politics, Security and Law. If you would like to receive more information about these organisations, please visit their website.

Non-Governmental Organisations (Bristol)
Royal African Society http://www.royalafricansociety.org
Schumacher Institute http://www.schumacher.org.uk
Wateraid http://www.wateraid.org

Non-Governmental Organisations & Think Tanks (London)
Amnesty International http://www.amnesty.org
Demos http://www.demos.co.uk
Foreign Policy Centre http://www.fpc.org.uk
Human Rights Watch http://www.hrw.org/london
Institute for Public Policy Research http://www.ippr.org
International Institute for Strategic Studies http://www.iiss.org
Royal African Society http://www.royalafricansociety.org.uk
Saferworld http://www.saferworld.co.uk

Government
Bristol City Council Local Government http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk
GCHQ http://www.gchq.gov.uk
Parliament http://www.w4mp.org
UK Civil Service http://www.faststream.gov.uk http://www.fcocareers.co.uk

European & International Organisations
European Union http://europa.eu.int/epso
Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe http://www.osce.org
United Nations High Commission for Refugees (London) http://www.unhcr.org
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Vienna) http://www.unodc.org
United Nations Development Programme http://www.undp.org

For more details on careers, please visit http://www.international-affairs.org.uk and http://www.bris.ac.uk/cas/jobs


PALESTINE
ISRAEL


DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER