Dear Alumni, Students, Colleagues, and Friends of the South Asia Studies Program,

This is the first newsletter of the South Asia Studies (SAS) concentration. We plan to bring out a newsletter each quarter during the school year with the goal of informing our students, alumni and friends about recent program activities. South Asia is among the most complex social regions in the world and virtually a case study in such issues as identity politics, security, and comparative politics. To learn more, please visit our website.

With best wishes,

Walter Andersen and Rebecca Aman

AY 14-15 South Asia Studies Recap

Fall | 2014

The 2014-2015 academic year (AY) began with our annual South Asia Studies retreat at the home of SAS director, Dr. Walter Andersen in Great Falls, Virginia. Students had the opportunity to meet their fellow classmates, professors and friends of the program. The day began with an abridged game of cricket, and continued with a discussion on Indian foreign direct investment with Pravin Krishna (SAS professor, International Economics) and Rahul Madhavan (Director, USIB, and former program manager of South Asia Studies).

In September leading Indian journalist, and newly appointed spokesperson for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), MJ Akbar spoke about India politics and recent election. Our look at Indian electoral politics continued in October with a discussion by Yale Assistant Professor, Tarig Thachil, who spoke about his book, Elite Parties, Poor Voters: How Social Services Win Votes in India.

In October, we invited Sanchita Saxena of UC Berkeley to speak on her book, Made in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka which looks into the labor in the garment sectors of each of the countries. Later in the semester our focus shifted to the security sector. 2014 of course marked the withdrawal of American troops in Afghanistan. Our program looked into implications of this withdrawal with a discussion first on the Pakistan Taliban with Zia Ur Rehman. And later a presentation by Bruce Riedel on his new book, What We Won which discusses America’s secret war with Afghanistan (1979-1989), and its modern day implications.

Winter | 2015

Over the winter inter-session students from Dr. Andersen’s infrastructure in India, and Rise of India and China’s classes participated in study trips to New Delhi, India, and Yangon, Myanmar. (See more on study trips on the next page)

Spring | 2015

The spring term lecture series began with a presentation from South Asia Studies Visiting Scholar, Li Hao (Associate Professor, Guangxi University) on India’s engagement in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations, in February 2015.

In March, the program hosted Avinash Paliwal (Teaching Associate, King’s College London), who discussed India’s Afghanistan Policy since the end of the Cold War. Later that month, Pakistani Brigadier General Naeem Salik spoke to a small group about Pakistan’s nuclear program. In April, we welcomed Syed Salman Chishty, who spoke to an audience of 60+ on the evolution of Sufi Islam in South Asia.

Department, where he met, Asst. Secretary Biswal, and her team from the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. As a result of that meeting, on the occasion of the 803rd Urs (a Sufi religious holiday), President Obama sent a chadar to the religious site in Ajmer Sharif. This is the first time a non-South Asian country has sent the community a gift for the occasion.

Later that month, Allison Berland, South Asia Studies visiting scholar, presented on the BJP and the evolution of voter-party relations in India. Her timely research over the coming months will take a look at why some Muslims vote for the BJP. The term ended with a presentation from a great friend of the program, C Raja Mohan, who spoke on Sino-Indian relations, and India’s reaction to China’s maritime silk route proposal. On May 21, seven SAS students graduated from SAIS: Anam Abdullah (with honors), Yaser Ahmed, Pingbo Jiang, Saumya Kurup, Takuya Matsuuda, Amin Nojan, and Shrey Verma. We want to congratulate them and wish them the best in their future endeavors.
**Indian and Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Myanmar**

The opening of Myanmar, which for decades was politically and economically isolated from much of the world, has been a major development in world affairs, and few countries have been more impacted by this development than China and India, Myanmar’s powerhouse neighbors. To study this timely issue, SASI sponsored a student trip to Yangon, Myanmar over the winter inter-session, where twelve graduate students from Gregory Knight and Dr. Walter Andersen’s *The Rise of India and China* course explored Chinese and Indian aid and investment.

The trip began with discussions on foreign direct investment (FDI) with representatives of two major corporations: Daewoo (Korean) and TATA (Indian). Both highlighted their projects in Myanmar, and noted the need to focus on corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts, in part due to the strong need for education and healthcare in the communities in which they work. Sunil Seth of TATA noted that for decades Myanmar has been cut off from major management best practices (due to their years of isolation), and as a result, much of the decision making power is still held by the top of the government hierarchy; resulting in a long backlog and slower than expected movement. He notes, however, that in recent years the government has been working with experts to improve its processes, and to raise its capacity. Another positive sign, in Mr. Seth’s view, is that the administration has been receptive to input from the private sector, and companies like TATA have been able to push with certain reforms.

The following day students examined the Burmese perspective with meetings with the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI). DICA is the Myanmar government’s entity in charge of overseeing the investment and joint ventures that foreign companies carry out in Myanmar. At DICA, the Deputy Director noted recent changes to the Foreign Investment Law; changes implemented to increase foreign investment. And it seems to be working; the deputy director reported that before 2011 DICA was processing fewer than 30 new permits a year, while today their limited staff process close to 20 a week. The deputy director noted that capacity continues to be an issue, but that the government has sought technical assistance to streamline their processes. The need for capacity building was reiterated by UMFCCI, Myanmar’s Chamber of Commerce, who representatives noted that to catch up to its ASEAN neighbors, Myanmar will need to focus on education, and especially vocational training.

Later in the week, the group met with the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar, and the Commerce Counsellor at the Indian Embassy in Yangon, and discussed aspects of the Sino-Burmese and Indian-Burmese relationships. Both countries highlighted their strong levels of economic engagement but noted that shortcomings in energy and transport infrastructure make these investments quite challenging. Both governments expressed a desire to see Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor materialize. The BCIM will consist of a network of railways, roads, and airways that will cut through these four countries, and aims to strengthen connectivity and trade in the region.

Students also had the opportunity to meet with SAIS alumni living in Myanmar at a dinner organized by SAIS alumni, Show Ei El Tun ’07 at the beautiful Sakura Tower in downtown Yangon.

Want to learn more?
Please visit the student study trip blog: [http://saismyanmar2015.blogspot.com/](http://saismyanmar2015.blogspot.com/)

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**Infrastructure and Development in New Delhi, India**

When it comes to infrastructure, Delhi may very well be one of the most fascinating places on earth. Where else can you find ancient stepwells dating back millennia, mausoleums from the Mughal era, and modern high-rises all within walking distance of one another? This juxtaposition of new and old is what makes Delhi so unique and an ideal case study for the students of Walter Andersen’s *Infrastructure and Development in South Asia* course. In January of 2015, eight students convened in Delhi for a week of meetings with businessmen, policy makers, and NGOs.

Students first learned about the energy sector from TATA Power which supplies electricity to about one third of the city. The representatives noted the “power of privatization” highlighting that the move from public to private ownership of the energy sector in Delhi meant a marked improvement in both the quantity and quality of electricity supplied to Delhiites. Meetings with Larsen & Toubro, currently working on building major stretches of the Delhi Metro also noted the changes to the Indian business environment including the proliferation of joint-ventures and private-public-partnerships (PPPs). Students were treated with an opportunity to see an underground metro construction site and the mammoth tunnel boring machine in action. As Yaser Ahmed, a 2nd year student noted, “We left the construction site in amazement at the magnitude of critical infrastructure development that had been occurring in Delhi. The field visit was a sobering reminder at just how vast and complex infrastructure development is.” The trip continued with meetings with NGOs Sulabh International and CHINTAN (founded by SAIS alumnus Bharati Chaturvedi- MIPP ’07) both working in the area of waste management and sustainable development. Addressing another important issue for the traffic ridden Delhi, the group later met with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, who outlined various infrastructure projects in the works. Students also enjoined the company of many SAIS alumni in Delhi at a happy hour at Summer House Café, in Hauz Khas.

Want to learn more?
Please visit the student study trip blog: [http://saissnewdelhi2015.blogspot.com/](http://saissnewdelhi2015.blogspot.com/)

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**US-INDIA CHINA INITIATIVE**

The US-India-China Initiative (USICI) was established in 2012 with a generous gift from Anil Ambani’s Reliance Group. Since its start, the Initiative has hosted three study trips that have brought together students from SAIS and Indian and Chinese Institutions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Please visit: [http://www.sais-jhu.edu/content/us-india-china-initiative](http://www.sais-jhu.edu/content/us-india-china-initiative)
Annual Alumni Happy Hour
The Annual South Asia and Middle East Studies Happy Hour (mid-May) is a great occasion to network and connect with students, alumni and friends of the program. Your attendance, commitment and time are great ways to contribute to the program.

Have an idea for a lecture?
We are always looking for organizations & individuals to host at our program lunches. If you have an idea for a great lecture topic please email us at southasia@jhu.edu.

Fellowship or Program Donations
Donations from Alumni and Friends are always appreciated, and help fund many of the programs we are highlighting in this newsletter.

Donation by Check
Please make checks payable to: “Johns Hopkins University” and designate “South Asia Studies” in the “for” line. Please mail to:
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Contributions via credit card can be made through the SAIS website (www.sais.jhu.edu), and click on “GIVING” on the top right. Then click on “Make a Gift”. There you will be directed to a form where you can fill in the necessary information. In the “Gift Information” section, please choose “Other” and note “South Asia Studies” in the comment section. If you would like your donation to be used toward a specific program or fellowship, please note that information as well.

Thank you for contributing your time, ideas and funds to support our students and activities.

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SOUTH ASIA STUDIES ON TWITTER

SOUTH ASIA STUDIES AT SAIS

Professors in the News
Walter Andersen wrote a chapter on India’s governing party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, for the book India’s 2014 Elections: A Modi led BJP Sweep (edited by Paul Wallace and published in June 2015). Andersen also participated in a panel on the Indian elections at the annual fall South Asia Conference in Madison Wisconsin. During the month of June, he taught two five week graduate International Relations seminars at Tongji University in Shanghai, where he serves as a National Fellow. He also gave lectures at Fudan University and Jiao Tong University, both in Shanghai. While in China, he participated in the Kunming Expo, and gave a paper there on the new Indian government at a conference in which India was the focus. He participated in two Chinese television panels focused on China’s Silk Road concept. He concluded his trip to China with a set of lectures at Sichuan University in Chengdu.

Meet our New Professors and Fellows

Karl Inderfurth will be teaching Regional Security Issues in South Asia (SA. 790.714) in the spring term. Ambassador Karl F. Inderfurth has a deep understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the South Asia region. He served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs from 1997 to 2001. Prior to serving as an assistant secretary of state, Ambassador Inderfurth was the U.S. representative for special political affairs to the United Nations. Ambassador Inderfurth was also the Wadhwan Chair at CSIS from 2011 to 2013, and is also a lecturer at George Washington University.

Pavithra Suryanarayan will be joining the faculty as Assistant Professor in the fall of 2015. Ms. Suryanarayan specializes in ethnic politics, and Indian politics. Her dissertation “Democratization, Social Inequality and Fiscal Capacity Development in Colonial India”, and journal articles demonstrate how different forms of inequality — economic, ethnic, social — structure political behavior, and impact redistributive institutions.

Allison Berland is a postdoctoral research fellow with South Asia Studies. During her time in the program, Dr. Berland has conducted research and writing on Indian voting patterns, electoral support for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the BJP’s electoral and political strategy. Dr. Berland earned her PhD from the University of Maryland, and holds an MA from Tufts University.

Zhong Zhenming is a visiting research fellow with South Asia Studies where he conducts research on the U.S.-China-India trilateral strategic and security relationship. Dr. Zhong is an Associate Professor at Tongji University in Shanghai, and received his PhD and MA from Fudan University in Shanghai.

Fall 2015 South Asia Studies Classes
The Rise of India and China (SA.755.734)
Walter Andersen and Gregory Knight
Mondays, 2:00-4:30pm

Political Economy of India (SA.790.724)
Pavithra Suryanarayan
Wednesdays, 2:00-4:30pm

Politics of Religion in South Asia (SA.790.716)
Jonah Blank
Thursdays, 6:00-8:30pm

SOUTH ASIA CHANNEL

The South Asia Channel is a special project between SAIS South Asia, New America and Foreign Policy Magazine. Each year two SAIS students are chosen as fellows and author the India section of the Channel’s Daily Brief which has a readership of over 250,000 individuals. Additionally, the fellows work with the Channel’s editor, Peter Bergen of New America to help curate articles for the channel.

2015-2016 Fellows
Udit Banerjea and Shuja Malik

To contribute a piece to the South Asia Channel please email Emily Schneider at schneidere@newamerica.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CHANNEL VISIT:
http://foreignpolicy.com/channel/south-asia-2/