

# IDS

## **Alumnews** **September 2005**

### **Chair's letter**

Dear All,

We are writing to you at the end of the summer holidays and I hope that you all had a decent break this year from work. Here in the UK we have been coming to terms with the tube and bus bombings and the implications this has for community relationships in this country. It seems to me that never before has it been necessary for British society to better understand how what happens in the developing world affects events in the UK.

As you will all know we the alumni reunion was held in April. A very enthusiastic group discussed the topic of security and insecurity in development. Attendance was good, with more than fifty alumni taking part. We understand the difficulties over the time of year and we now have lots of suggestions about the staging of future reunions. Among other things we hope they will be more frequent in the future, and that we will give support to informal gatherings outside Brighton.



Luka Biong Deng (DP04), Amal Kunna Khairy (MA11), Mohamed Samantar (DP94) at the Reunion

Take a look at the reunions page online, <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/alumni/reunionspage.htm> for photos, the chance to obtain CDs of the presentations and photos taken at the Reunion, and other related information. Nabila has been working on the alumni website and it is worth a look. We hope to keep it evolving so it will be worth more frequent review by you. You can also apply for an 'email for life' – more information is at [www.ids.ac.uk/ids/alumni](http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/alumni)

Many alumni have showed their interest in involvement in regional meetings for the IDS Anniversary which takes place in 2006. We are formulating plans for this and will write again before the end of the year with a

special AA (Alumni and Anniversary) issue. There will be some formal events but also some informal opportunities for you to come together where ever there are 1+ alumni to make a contribution to Anniversary activities. Following suggestions at the Reunion, we are exploring the possibilities of providing learning resources for alumni from the IDS – more of that in the next newsletter.

As a result of the deliberations at the General meeting we have a new and enthusiastic committee (noted below). The Committee has agreed that I will stay on as Chair until the completion of Anniversary activities, in December 2006. I enjoy hearing your thoughts and ideas and hope that we can respond effectively to them.

**Richard Longhurst (DP81)**

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**ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW COMMITTEE**

Elections to the Alumni Association Committee were held at the Reunion. The new Committee members are as follows: **Edward Anderson (DP01)**, **Georgina Blanco-Mancilla (MP26)**, **Alan Leather (MP1)**, **Richard Longhurst (Chair, DP81)**, **Bernardo Mendez Lugo (MP4)**, **Lizbeth Navas-**

**Alemán (MP21), Kerstin Stange (MP26), Joaquim Tres (MP14, Alumni representative on Governing Body), and Rebeca Zuniga Hamlin (MA14).** Committee members' e-mail addresses can be found online at <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/alumni/alcomm.html>

Many thanks to outgoing Committee members **Jerker Edström (MP14), Tom Hewitt (MP7, DP88), Lilian Keene (MA Gov 01), Hiroyuki Hatashima (MP14) and Maite Irurzun Lopez (MP22)** for their hard work and commitment to the Association.

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## Reunion Message Board

Alumni sent in the following messages, which were put on display at the Reunion.

### MP4, DP87

**Mammo Muchie**, [mammo@ihis.aau.dk](mailto:mammo@ihis.aau.dk) : 'I have been appointed as research leader of the research centre on development and international relations at Aalborg university in Denmark... and will be happy for exchanges, links, research collaboration and the like.. We have post-graduate students from all over the world... they can visit our website: [www.ihis.aau.dk/development](http://www.ihis.aau.dk/development) Looking forward to fruitful interactions with ids as well....'

Mammo also sent in a response to **Bernardo Mendez Lugo's (MP4)** report on the Reunion (*see later*): 'I just read Bernardo's wonderful piece. It is written with such delightful tone and generous spirit that I felt that I was there all along with all of you. Bravo to my old class and house-mate!!! And Bernardo has not changed at all since those exciting days at the IDS and Sussex! To Nabila and others congratulations for mounting such a successful reunion and sharing it with us! Just one point or comment: I wonder how the world may look if indeed the Washington or post-Washington Consensus or the Anglo-Saxon core axis were to be replaced by some new "Beijing-Delhi" consensus! That will usher in a new epochal change in world history. It will not be a dinner party though! Look how the empire responded even to a small fish like little Iraq!!! The question is whether such a scenario or future is to be feared or welcomed. So perhaps before we make conclusions with far-reaching and unpredictable consequences, we should do more reflection, look for more evidence, and perhaps look for new hybrid connectivity and interlocking connections between the Euro-American current control of the world and the emerging putative China-India ascendancy. I think it will not be easy for the latter to emerge and assert complete independence - a degree of independence can be tolerated, but not a complete one. There does not seem a radical rupture in the relationship, and I suspect will not be for the foreseeable future. It is good Raphie (**Raphie Kaplinsky, DP81**) inadvertently may give George Bush sleepless nights... but then...you never know how George number 2 may react when he wakes up! Let me leave it there... but congrats!'



Lizbeth Navas-Alemán (MP21)

### DP89

**Marta Zabaleta**, [m.zabaleta@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:m.zabaleta@mdx.ac.uk) : 'I wish you every success and plenty of learning during the reunion. ENJOY!!!! I am glad to let you know that I have been selected by the Council for Assisting Academic Refugees (formerly the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning of the UK, funded by Albert Einstein), among 10 academics who has contributed to the culture of London since 1951 to date, and my words and personal objects, including the portable typewriter I used to write my thesis, will be shown at the Museum of London, as part of a major exhibition in the Autumn 2006.'

### DP90

**Muhammad Shtayyeh**, [shtayyeh@planet.edu](mailto:shtayyeh@planet.edu) : 'Upon the passing away of President Arafat who was my direct boss while I was serving as the vice president of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction "PECDAR", I was asked by the current president Mahmoud Abbas "Abu Mazen" and Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei to join the cabinet and become the Minister of Public Works & Housing of Palestine in addition to my responsibility as the President of PECDAR. I accepted the assignment. This means, more white hair, fewer sleeping hours and more confrontation with Israeli bulldozers of destruction in the West Bank and Gaza Bulldozers are ugly and fatal when put in the wrong hands. Rachel Corrie, an American gentle and young woman who was volunteering in

Palestine was deliberately crushed to death by an Israeli Army bulldozer while trying to stop the destruction of Palestinian homes in Gaza. My children, Ibrahim (11), Ninaru (9) and Tara (7) think that bulldozers are very ugly in shape and colour. Ibrahim wrote a letter to the American Ambassador protesting against American made bulldozers involved in the uprooting of Olive Trees by the Israeli Army for building of the Separating Wall in the West Bank. I was hoping to be with you and explain to you the relationship between bulldozers and terrorism, but I decided to stay so that less, or no more, Olive Trees are uprooted. Tara believes that bulldozers should be painted green.'

#### DP90

**Surendra Vetrivel**, [skvetrivel@hotmail.com](mailto:skvetrivel@hotmail.com) : 'Great, you made it to the Re-Union. For the next reunion, I should contact in advance those who were with me at IDS (1984-90) and encourage them all to come, and make the reunion a re-enactment of life then. Since leaving IDS, I have taken to independent consultancy in India. But, two things, that occupied most part of my life at the IDS — library work and writing, have continued. I am a regular visitor to the Nehru Library in New Delhi, and have written five books. My last book (co-authored), published in English in 2004, was entitled 'Women's Own – the Self-Help Movement in Tamil Nadu', and looked at women's self-help groups. It has also been translated into Tamil. It brings out, among other things, how micro-finance has contributed to the social, economic and political empowerment of women, and consequently to significant changes in gender relations (By no means do I claim to be a gender expert!).

I learned at IDS to be observant of the real-world processes. Although I went to Tamil Nadu to study micro-finance and women's self-help groups, what struck me most while I was in the field was the women's empowerment process taking place. I was interested in unfolding what the process was, how it was happening, the factors contributing to it and the impact so as to develop a 'road map to women's empowerment'. Another useful capability learnt at IDS was generating quickly qualitative and quantitative data facilitated through group-based workshops of people who had the knowledge and wisdom to provide simple solutions to the complex problems they faced. I am grateful to Emanuel de Kadat (my supervisor) and to Robert Chambers for these.

Not only did the above capabilities contribute to successful consultancies, but also simultaneously to knowledge building and new understanding. My interest has continued with studying processes at micro level: participation, empowerment, community-based organisations and the role of NGOs. In 2005, my interest has turned to low-cost renewable energy sources and technologies to produce electricity and heat for those who presently use kerosene and fuel wood. **I will be most happy to hear from those who have access to these technologies and who have information about funding the initiative.'**

#### MP10

**Isabelle Van Notten**, [vannotten@pontenova.nl](mailto:vannotten@pontenova.nl) : 'Inspired by **Hong Gang (MP10)** who sent his news in the last newsletter, I am sending you mine. I have been living in Amsterdam for the past 11 years with my American husband David (who I met in Costa Rica) and our seven-year old daughter Sarah. After Sussex, I worked for UNIDO in Costa Rica for three years. (It was a wonderful time and I am still figuring out how to move back to Costa Rica or elsewhere in Latin America.) David and I then moved to Boston (where he is from) and then later to Holland (where I am from), just to make sure we still liked each other without palm trees and sunshine every day. During that time I worked as a management consultant in manufacturing. I wanted to understand what 'industrial development' meant in practice and thought I better see some factories from the inside. Among other things I learned something about process improvement and employee empowerment in the adhesive paper industry!

When Sarah was born in 1998, I took a year off and then went to work for the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam where I ended up managing the Intercultural Communication Training department. We offered training for business, government and NGO people about to move to foreign places. I left the Institute in 2000 so I could balance work better with spending time with Sarah. For the past four years I have been working mostly for NGOs as a free-lance consultant in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility, combining my business and development experience. I am currently doing a three-month stint at the Dutch Consumers Union. The Union publishes monthly test reports on products and now includes for half of them an evaluation on the sustainability and social responsibility of the product or company involved. It's a lot of fun and David and I are now meeting professionally at times, as he is running Utz Kapeh, a certifying organisation for responsible coffee.

I often think back at my time in Sussex. Many of the issues that we pondered then are just as relevant today. The different roles of the market and the state are still a central theme in my work! After all this time, I am still often in touch with **Jocelyn DeJong (MP10)** who is living in Jordan and married to **Tariq Tell (MP9/MP10)** and exchange letters with **Mariko Higashi (MP10)** who is in Washington D.C. at the IFC. I wish you a great reunion!

#### **MP21**

**Amira Taha**, [amiradinos@hotmail.com](mailto:amiradinos@hotmail.com) : 'I miss every single person and every single place. I even miss the weather (!!!!!) I have two kids now, Nadia (born June 15, 2000) and Yassin (born Feb. 7, 03) they are great but a real hard work. I worked with Save the Children/USA for 3 years, then stayed home for a year when I had Yassin and then back to work a year ago now, I am working in a USAID funded project (capacity building for the civil society in Egypt). Aladdin in alright, all is cool. Steph and Kate (**Stephanie Foerster and Kate Hamilton, MP21**) visited me in Egypt. It was great, I wish I could see you all guys again. Love you all.'

#### **MA4 and MP14**

**Louise Cooper**, [louise\\_caroline67@yahoo.com](mailto:louise_caroline67@yahoo.com) and **Charles Williams**, [williams.2642@osu.edu](mailto:williams.2642@osu.edu) : 'Hello from Ohio! Sorry we cannot be there for the reunion -- we would love to hear from all of you. In the meantime, a brief update: Charles is teaching political science at Ohio State University and on the editorial board of a socialist magazine, Against the Current. Louise is still involved in community development, currently working as a fund-raising consultant for non-profits in San Francisco while spending time at home with our 10-month old son, Angus. Please send either of us a quick line.'

#### **MA5**

**Dorothy Oben**, [dorothyoben@hotmail.com](mailto:dorothyoben@hotmail.com) : 'I am writing to express regret for my inability to be present at the IDS Alumni Reunion. I am currently teaching at the University of Buea, Cameroon and the second Semester work at the University has just started. Due to my teaching load coupled with the scarce human resources in my department, I cannot afford to take time off even though it is just a few days. However, my prayers and thoughts are with all the alumni as you share experiences at this memorable occasion. I consider it my loss! Wish you all a very fruitful and successful deliberation/reunion.'

#### **MA7, SC21**

**Mahmuda Rahman Khan**, [MR-Khan@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:MR-Khan@dfid.gov.uk) : 'Dear Friends, Very warm wishes from Bangladesh! I will miss this year's Alumni Reunion. However, I just want to let you know I always feel like I am still part of IDS as I receive all the information through all the electronic communications. Thanks to all these modern technologies and big thanks to IDS alumni organisers. Moreover, being a DFID staff, as IDS is very closely linked with DFID, I am well aware about many research activities. Last year in August I went to IDS with my family particularly to remind my elder daughter about her playgroup in which she used to go back in 1993 and also to show the Institute where I studied. Unfortunately, we could not meet any member from IDS as it was a dead time. Fortunately, on our way back in front of Art D, I met **Mick Moore (DP81)** and we had a quick chat. It was very kind of him, giving me time while he was on his way to meet someone else. He said "never ever come to IDS in August". I will certainly remember that in rest of my life as we all were very upset for not meeting anyone. He felt sorry as well. I am also in touch with Anne Marie Goetz and Rosalind Eyben. In nutshell, I would like to say "IDS is at heart". My family expanded to 5 last year through the arrival of my baby boy Shafeen Rahman Khan (14 months old). My elder daughter is in class VIII and second one is in KG II. My husband is doing fine with his artistic work on studio pottery through his own studio and show room. That's it for now. Warm wishes once again to all IDS alumni, particularly to MA7.'

#### **MA Gov 04**

**Nhean So Munin**, [somunin2000@yahoo.com](mailto:somunin2000@yahoo.com) : 'I wish I could come to UK again and have an opportunity to attend an IDS alumni reunion. Hope sometimes in the future. I am currently in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, my country. I am working part-time as a consultant for GTZ-Administrative Reform and Decentralisation Project at the Department of Local Administration (the Ministry of Interior) and at the Council of Ministers, and as a National Legal Consultant for ADB-EWMI Land Law Implementation Project at the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. Wish those who could come to the UK a great IDS reunion. Best regards, Munin.'

## Back to the Future: Good Nostalgia and Fresh Ideas at IDS

AAC member **Bernardo Mendez Lugo, (MP4)** shares his experience of the fourth IDS Alumni Reunion

I spent fewer than three days at IDS – exactly 63 hours - and travelled more than 10,000 miles from San Francisco to London and back. But coming to the Alumni Reunion was worth a thousand trips; it was invaluable to revisit a place that holds so much importance in my life and which has shaped my understanding of world development.

I say back to the future because IDS is the future, always ahead, leading the search for new paradigms for human development and advancing theory and policy-making on key issues for our planet: education, health, employment, water and food security, gender equality and fair trade, amongst others. In a word: sustainability - security and governance understood from the perspective of civil societies.

My trip was worthwhile and valuable in many senses, but just shaking hands with Sir Hans W. Singer moved me. To see that Sir Hans is doing well and thinking ahead is a unique experience for any young or middle-aged person afraid of commitment. Hans told me that he is working on a book honouring the late Celso Furtado, one of the most important thinkers in development and well known for his dedication to the analysis of Latin American societies.

It was good to hear Richard Jolly recount his tireless efforts to find new policies favouring human and social security while softly but clearly questioning the recent manipulation of the concept of security. It was also encouraging to see that Lawrence Haddad has the stamina and energy to put IDS at the forefront.

Always creating new scenarios in world development trends, Raphie Kaplinsky made an outstanding assessment of the meaning of the new presence of China and India in world markets. Striking data demonstrates the relocation of investment and increasing professional outsourcing in China that is affecting commodities and professional labour markets the world over. However, tendencies are not easy to predict. China and India make up one third of the world population and other countries should look for ways to cooperate and negotiate, not an easy task within the traditional hegemony of western powers. The scenario presented by Raphie made me think: 'It is getting late and I am not learning Mandarin. We have to recognise that the two giants are awake and pretty soon we will have to locate our centres of decision making to Shanghai, Beijing or New Delhi - London, Paris, New York and Washington are becoming nostalgic places of decreasing importance despite attempts at transatlantic cooperation'.

However, the main aim of the Reunion was to strengthen the IDS Alumni Association and build a network of Development Studies academics and policy makers all over the world, as Caroline clearly stressed during the Alumni reunion. Thanks to **Richard Longhurst (DP81)** for his dedication and hard work. And thanks also to Nabila Jiwaji, Diane Frazer-Smith and Caroline Knowles for organising the Reunion.



Francisco Pareja (MP4), Bernardo Mendez Lugo (MP4) and Sheila Burgess

Ideas flourished during the Reunion, with current IDS students and alumni from faraway places providing valuable input. **Francisco Pareja (MP4)** came all the way from Lima, **Melito Montenegro (MP12)** travelled from Manila and **Meharoonah Ghani (MA14)** from Vancouver. From Europe, **Thomas Grammig (MP12)** came from Frankfurt, **Joaquim Tres (MP14)** from Barcelona and **Mary McKeown (MP14)** from Ireland, alongside many others from the UK. I was glad to speak to Susan Joeques who is now with IDRC-Canada in Paris and IDS Governor Paul Isenman, with the OECD in Paris.

It was a delight to talk to Aaron Schneider, a new IDS Fellow and graduate of UC Berkeley and therefore close to my heart as a former Mexican academic living a few miles from Berkeley. I was so happy to see my dear Sheila Burgess, a wonderful person who worked at IDS for many years, and to

speak to Gabriel Gutierrez, the Mexican Chef and IDS' Catering Manager (don't forget to share the tequila!)

I enjoyed meeting professors and lecturers from my own student days at IDS 25 years ago: **Angela Little (DP82)**, Emmanuel de Kadt, Charles Harvey, Richard Jolly, Robert Chambers and **Raphie Kaplinsky (DP81)**, among others. It was also a pleasure to meet for the first time John Toye and Mike Faber, wonderful people, key to the history of IDS.

Nostalgia is not a bad feeling when it serves to refocus and energize: Raphie and I remembered our dear Gordon White playing the piano but very importantly, missed his powerful thinking on China, much needed now, as Raphie told me. We also missed the late Sir Dudley Seers and his bright mind. We were reminded of other outstanding Fellows who are no longer at IDS or on secondment, such as Ronald Dore (now living in Italy), Martin Godfrey (in New York), Robin Murray (in Montreal), David Evans, Kate Young, Christine White, Robert Wade, Malcolm Seagal and so many others.

I had a great time in the IDS bar on Friday night, listening to music and dancing. I was delighted and proud to meet two wonderful women from my home country: **Georgina Blanco (MP26)** and **Ana Ortiz Monasterio (MP27)**, both very kind, smart and serious students. Ana was very busy finishing her term papers.

My time at IDS and in Brighton was unforgettable. I visited my old neighbourhood near London Road Station where I used to live with several MPhil classmates, and managed to fit in Saturday afternoon tea with Sussex alumni Dr David Stephens and his wife, Dr Claire Ashendon. I ran to The Lanes, had a drink at the Druid Heads pub and savoured some Indian food with **Joaquim Tres (MP14)**, thanks Kim for pushing me to come), **Georgina Blanco (MP26)**, **Lizbeth Navas-Alemán (MP21)**, Milasao Chere-Robson (DPhil) and other Sussex friends.

Those were my last hours in England. In the chilly night, I strolled toward Palace Pier and walked past Brighton Pavilion, enjoying the lights and proud to be in the City of Brighton and not the town of my old times. The sounds of the sea mixed with the joy of people ending their Saturday night when the bell announced last orders, reminding me of other times, and the need to return to Falmer. I left IDS early on a Sunday morning still grey with dawn and the cries of seagulls interrupted only by the sharp punctuality of a taxi driver arriving exactly at 5.30 am.

See you all at our next Alumni Reunion!

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## Other News

### **Biplab Dasgupta**

We are very sorry to hear of the death of Biplab Dasgupta, IDS Fellow from 1972 to 1987. On leaving IDS, Biplab returned to India to work within the Communist Party of India-Marxist and eventually gained a seat in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament, where he served for many years. We offer our condolences to his family and friends.

### **MP2**

**Diane Morcom**, New Zealand's Cabinet Secretary, was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit and the Queen's Service Order in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June.

### **MP4**

**Bernardo Mendez Lugo** has written to say that many of his friends and colleagues with the Mexican Foreign Service the world over would be happy to meet with IDS alumni and staff on their travels, in particular those involved in development and social policy. If you are interested in meeting some of Bernardo's friends, please contact the Alumni Office.

### **MP9**

**Jesoni Vitusagavulu** was appointed Fiji's Ambassador to the United States in May 2005. He is also accredited to Cuba and Canada. Jesoni is the founder and managing director of Toptier Management, a management consultancy and investment company.

**MP12**

**Melito Montenegro** informed us that **John Maluda** was appointed Deputy State Minister of Sabah, Malaysia in June.

**MP15**

**Hilary Cottam** has won the Design Museum's Designer of the Year 2005 award. Hilary is Director of the Design Council's Research and Development team which designs solutions to social and economic problems. For more information about the Design Council's work, go to [www.design-council.org.uk/](http://www.design-council.org.uk/)

**MP21**

**Tim Holmes**, [timothy.holmes@gmail.com](mailto:timothy.holmes@gmail.com) wrote in June: 'I am just about to finish my contract as a Regional Programme Manager for the Aga Khan Foundation in Afghanistan. I have been here for two and a half years now and it is the right time to move on. I have been based in Bamyan, in the centre of the country, with my wife Jo and 15 month old son Benjamin. It is a tough but stunningly beautiful place - I must have one of the best commutes in the world: a 10 minute walk to work through a World Heritage Site! We plan to take a break in the UK for a few months (our second child is due in November) before heading off somewhere else - job and location yet to be determined, suggestions welcome...'

**MA Participation, MP27, MA18 and MA Gov 05 students**

Welcome to the IDS Alumni Association! We look forward to hearing more from you in the future, and hope you will take full advantage of the services we offer.

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**Forthcoming Meetings**

**CODESRIA: Professor Sir Richard Jolly** will be attending the 11<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (**CODESRIA**) in **Maputo, Mozambique, 6-10 December 2005**. The theme is "Rethinking African Development: Beyond Impasse towards Alternatives". Richard would very much like to meet IDS alumni at CODESRIA. He will also be in Johannesburg before and after the CODESRIA meeting and would like to meet alumni either on 4-5 December, or 10-11 December. If you will be attending the CODESRIA meeting or would like to see Richard in Johannesburg, please e-mail [alumni@ids.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@ids.ac.uk)

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**Connecting People and Places**

**An opinion piece by AAC Member Lizbeth Navas-Alemán (MP21)**

Last week (7-9 September) I went to the Development Studies Association (DSA) Conference in Milton Keynes. The topic was "Connecting people and places: challenges and opportunities for development". I then attended a very interesting conference in London about the Geopolitics of the current Oil Price Crisis, organised by the new London campus of the University of Chicago.

Needless to say, the abyss between the views that were shared at the DSA Conference and the views of the speakers at the University of Chicago's event in London could not have been deeper. I totally agree with Richard that the events of this last summer have provided further proof of the need for global understanding about our interdependence. However, my usual optimism about this type of understanding taking place 'slowly but surely' was really dented as I listened to the speakers at the conference organised by the University of Chicago. I am not saying necessarily that the DSA conference had all the right answers and the University of Chicago had none: only that the global solutions both groups envision are completely different and in both groups there were representatives of powerful agents in our society. We must involve more representatives of the business community, certain sectors of the government apart from the usual invitees (DFID) and even of the media in our discussions about development if we want to start bringing closer together each other's views of the world. Hence the importance of our Alumni Association

Some of us were concerned at some point that an Alumni Association where many members are no longer working directly in 'development' might be only a good job-hunting network with little policy

relevance. Now I would argue exactly the opposite: if we don't want to be always 'preaching to the converted' that is exactly the audience and membership that we need to involve in our discussions. I think we need to encourage informal (and formal) exchanges between our alumni wherever they are in the world without making them feel that they need to be fluent in the latest development jargon to make useful contributions. Our alumni are placed at different levels of responsibility in the companies and organisations (and even governments) they work for, many of them making small and big decisions that are affecting in practice the very issues that are discussed in IDS's classrooms and research meetings every day.

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## **Being in America: First Impressions** **An opinion piece by Akio Takahara, MP6, DP88**

I learnt from Bernardo's brilliant report that those of you lucky enough to attend the Reunion had a wonderful time. A couple of developments in my career prevented me from attending. First, on 1 April, I was transferred to the Graduate School of Law and Politics at the University of Tokyo. Since the School attracts the best students, I consider my largest task to be the breeding of the researchers of the next generation in the study of Chinese politics. Now I find myself older than Gordon, the late Professor Gordon White, when he supervised me, J-J Guo, Jude Howell, Shinyuan Lai, Shunchen Duan and others in the 1980s. Second, I immediately took a sabbatical, which had been decided before the transfer, and came to the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research at Harvard University on 18 April. I shall be here until the end of March 2006.

My first impression of this place is mixed. I have been greatly impressed with the number and variety of research seminars that take place, and also with the concentration of resources including human talent as well as books and journals. I suppose the wealth of the university represents in some way the wealth of the nation. The vastness of land and the beauty and richness of nature are striking, not to mention the rows of beautifully built and maintained houses and gardens in many parts of suburban Boston.

On the other hand, I am not impressed with the way rubbish is collected here! There is no differentiating of flammable and non-flammable rubbish, so I presume it is just dumped altogether in a large pit somewhere, or emitting dioxin if it is incinerated. And the portion of food here is just too large. Men and women can live and actually be a lot healthier with less food. There is also the problem of bureaucracy, which of course is ubiquitous in the world, but I did not expect the American clerks to be so smile-less in governmental offices and the organisational efficiency in general to be so low.

Also striking is the extraordinary number (and size!) of the American national flags, on top of the buildings, on the side of the buildings, in parks, classrooms, petrol stations, gardens, cars, everywhere. Coming from an island country, the lack of a sense of unity in society and the need for a nationalistic symbol to unite the country seem obvious. I suppose, though, that the variety in this 'salad bowl' is also a source of vigour. And as long as the American Dream ideology remains prevalent, the wish of the people to implement their right to live well, which at times is hard to demarcate from greed, will probably sustain the system.

Actually I cannot pretend I know how much to eat is best for a person. There must be different ideas in different culture, and individual need and taste vary. But for the sustainability of mankind as a whole, we probably need to seek a golden mean in terms of material comforts, and power. And what hampers us from doing this, at the end of the day, is our greed, which destroyed empires in the past and will ruin the world in the 21st century if not controlled. This could be the area in which the responsibility of this nation really lies.

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**Internship Programme** If you or your organisation would be interested in recruiting interns who have recently completed their studies at IDS, please email the Alumni Office. More details are online at: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/alumni/PGInternship05.doc>

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**Alumnews** is your chance to find out about the latest events at IDS, as well as to catch up on news from your classmates. Send in your news and opinions to the Alumni Office.

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**Email for life** IDS offers a permanent e-mail address for all IDS alumni, with an option to redirect mail from that account to another e-mail address. This facility has already been provided to students who started at IDS in October 2004. Sign up: <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/alumni/Alumniemailaddress-form.doc>  
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**Planning a trip to IDS?** Let us know in advance so we can organise a **meeting with current students** for you to share your experiences since leaving IDS. So far this year, students have attended sessions by **Caitlin Porter (MA Gov 02), Jeremy Armon (MP17), Sonomi Tanaka (MA8), Shandana Mohmand (MA Gov 02) and Miguel Loureiro (MA Gov 02)**. Contact the Alumni Office for more information.  
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