Columbia Receives NSF Grant to Conduct WTC Oral History Project

(Continued from Page 1)

Columbia's department of sociology, Robert Smith, assis-
tant professor of sociology at Barnard College, an ISERP
research fellow, and an affiliate of the Oral History Research
Office, is a co-investigator. Lerner said, “We hope to understand the ways in which stories of the tragedy were told, transformed, circulated, and shaped the understandings of people, both closely and only distantly involved,” said Peter Bearman.

“Hundreds of volunteers have stepped forward to conduct interviews, transcribe data, organize field materials, and help in launching a giant field project in a matter of days,” said Bearman. “Because narra-
tive quality decays quickly, the support of the volunteers has meant that we can get into the field quickly, an essential ele-
ment for project success.”

“This project represents a wonderful opportunity for Columbia University to partici-
pate in a productive and educa-
tionally appropriate way to help us understand the reactions of individuals to an unprecedented tragedy,” said Provost Jonathan Cole, provost and dean of facul-
ty at Columbia. “We are deeply appreciative that the NSF is able to act so quickly to support this project, which will capture the reactions of survivors of the hor-
rible attack on the World Trade Center and others. The study will have lasting historical value and help those who participate in the study deal with the consequences of this disaster.”

SIPA Professors Expound on American Agenda

(Continued from Page 1)

political science department, focused on different aspects of American military and diplo-
matic activity in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

SIPA’s institutes and research centers have been sponsoring a range of forums to addres issues surrounding the war on terrorism.

“The near-term issue is how to take military action that appears inevitable,” said Bob Betts, who heads SIPA’s Insti-
tute of War and Peace Studies (IWPS). “The United States has set its sights on Afghanistan and has fixed them long enough for strike forces to arrive.

Acknowledging the chal-
lenge of launching a successful military operation in Afghanistan, Zisk noted that the United States faces fewer obstacles than did the Soviet Union when the Soviets invad-
ed the country in 1979. The Soviet Union took five years to fail after defying to fail Afghan rebels.

Under the Soviets, the United States has no plans for a large-scale military invasion designed to conquer Afghanistan. TheIWPS leadership, noted Zisk, currently a fellow at the Council on For-
egin Relations. She added that the Taliban does not have the level of international support the Afghan rebels enjoyed in the 1980s.

However, Zisk added that the Taliban did receive aid from outside sources received from the United States during the 1980s, when it was battling the Soviets. The United States included 50 to 200 Stinger mis-
siles, which are effective in shooting down low-flying aircraft such as helicopters. Hel-
icopters, Zisk said, will be neces-
sary for securing the land front and Special Forces into Afghanistan.

Bettos, who has served as a consultant to the Central Security Council and the Cen-
tral Intelligence Agency, added that now the Pentagon budget soon rises to $400 billion. Within a total that high, the United States could double spending on intelli-
gence and special operations without displacing other pro-
gress.

Legvold, a specialist on the international relations of the post-Soviet region, thought the attacks could spur a new diplo-
matic relationship between the United States and Russia.

“The war on terrorism could be the reason for a new relation-
ship with Russia, much like WW II did, because they both transm in different fundamental differ-
ences between the two nations,” he said.

Legvold maintained that Russia was motivated to assist the United States, in part, because of the Taliban’s proven record in battling Bin Laden and the al Qaeda—also believed to be behind the Sep-
tember 11 attacks. Russia’s foreign policy pri-

test group operating in Chech-
ya. Russia is currently bat-
ing rebels in the North Caucasus region.

But Legvold cautioned that the international coalition the Bush Administration is forging is a fragile one.

“If what the U.S. does is judged as ineffective, it will begin to lose its coalition partners, including Russia,” he said.

Zisk also focused on the role Russia will play in assisting the United States, especially with regard to Afghanistan. Wilson Ladcn has based his net-
work. She said this would include sharing intelligence and allowing the U.S. to use military bases in Tajikistan.

“Tajikistan has signed a cooperation agreement with Russia whereby Russia uses that country’s bases in order to help protect its borders against the drug trade and insurgents com-
ing from Afghanistan. Zisk added that the Russians would also assist with search-and-res-
cue operations, open the Northern Alliance, which is battilng the Taliban for control of Afghanistan, and open its airspace for humanitarian relief missions.

She offered reasons for why Russia would be willing to assist the United States: it is fearful of an Afghan refugee crisis in Tajikistan, it is con-
cerned about the Taliban’s sup-
port in the region of Chechnya, and it is hoping to good create future concessions. These would include greater U.S. flexibility in renegotiating the anti-ballistic missile treaty and the softening of American criticism of Russian actions in Chechnya.

On September 27, White House spokesmen Ari Fleisch-
er, the President’s new commu-
nications chief, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, explained that Russia viewed the Taliban’s support for Chechen leadership, like all responsible political leaders around the world, must imme-
diately and unconditionally cut all contact with international terrorist groups such as Osama bin Laden and the al Qaeda organization.

However, Fleischer denied a link between the statement, which marked departure from past U.S. criticism of Russian actions in Chechnya, and Rus-

sia’s agreement to cooperate with the United States in bat-
ting terrorism.

In a brown-bag lecture spon-
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tute, SIPA adjunct professor Peter Sinnott discussed how the anti-ballistic missile treaty and the softening of American criticism of Russian actions in Chechnya.

Sinnott also focused on the role Russia is going to play in re-naming “Homeland Defense.” “This is the new, enlarged version of what the Pentagon is going to be called ‘Homeland Defense.’”

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