Dear Record,

Ph.D. students don’t really have summer vacations, and I am no exception. Apart from ten days in June when I returned to Columbia for an oral history seminar, “Living to Tell,” I’ve been in Bosnia and Herzegovina interviewing people about the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). My dissertation asks whether the process of bringing the perpetrators of atrocities during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995) to justice has advanced the transition to democracy. What do Bosnians think about developments in The Hague? My findings should be relevant to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

In September, I am planning to interview Bosnian military officers and to survey approximately 500 members of the Bosnian armed forces about the ICTY. I expect to call upon the knowledge gleaned from attending the Columbia workshop in June. I benefited greatly from exchanging ideas with other researchers who are confronting the challenge of working with populations who have lived through trauma, and from learning about the established methods of doing oral history interviews. When I leave the country, I hope to hand over at least part of my oral history archive to a Bosnian NGO that has already compiled over 7,500 stories.

This may be my last postcard. Assuming all goes well with my committee, I will soon be joining the ranks of Columbia alumni.

—Lara J. Nettelfield, Ph.D. student
Political Science

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Political Science

Dear Record,

I’m writing from Capitol Hill, where I’m working in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as a non-merit intern. I’m in the minority office, so technologically I’m working for Senator Joe Biden of Delaware. Thanks to my Columbia courses, I’m already familiar with many of the issues that classes can’t teach, such as what is really meant by political maneuvering. For instance, United States is confronting in Iraq and the administration failed to provide key witnesses. At one point, the administration is trying to deflect blame for the deteriorating situation in Iraq.

One of the biggest surprises has been how small the committee staff is relative to the amount of information that has to be covered in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Individual staffs are responsible for not only committee business, but also for overseeing the Senate’s foreign policy initiatives.

I love being back in D.C. for the summer (it’s where I grew up), though as a city it doesn’t really compare to New York. I miss NYC pizza, Kozy’s, and the atmosphere of New York. There’s no place like it, and I can’t wait to see my family again

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Political science major

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