

**HUMAN RIGHTS** 

# **SJSU research group hosts lecture**

US militarism experts talk new paths to social issues, global peace & security

### **By Eva Martin** STAFF WRITER

A human rights lecture Zoom event organized by members of the San Jose State Human Rights Institute on Wednesday featured two panelists for a discussion on U.S. militarism.

Panelists discussed the "War on Terror" which followed the attacks of 9/11, and how the U.S.' approach to global peace and security should be rethought.

Halima Kazem-Stojanovic, SJSU Human Rights Institute journalism coordinator and journalism lecturer, moderated the discussion between Neta Crawford, professor and chair of the Boston University department of political science, and Bilal Sarwary, independent scholar and journalist.

William Armaline, SJSU founding Director of the human rights program, introduced Kazem-Stojanovic, who hosted the event.

Kazem-Stojanovic is an Afghan American journalist who trained more than 300 journalists in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2014, he said.

One of the panelists, Crawford, is the co-director of the Costs of War project at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. She explores the budgetary, human, environmental and social cost of the post-9/11 wars launched by the U.S.

According to the Cost of War project, the War on Terror between 2001 and 2022 cost the U.S. \$8 trillion and a total of 929,000 lives, including more than 363,939 civilians.

"a collection of beliefs that can infuse decision making."

# **HRI LECTURE: A RECAP**

The San Jose State Human Rights Institute (HRI) gathered two panelists for a U.S. militarism discussion Wednesday on Zoom. Experts talked about new approaches to global goals including peace and security. HRI is a research and policy organization that produces scholarly research, policy analysis for the public and policy makers, policy design, human rights reporting, university and public human rights programming and educational-student opportunities.

**Neta Crawford** Boston University political science department chair and professor

**Bilal Sarwary** independent scholar and journalist



- Spoke about how U.S. troops sent to Afghanistan were given a heroic narrative later in the intervention, showing them as masculine warriors saving women from "horrific fates."
- Militarism is threatening democracy, as war and democracy, as they are normative opposites, Crawford said.
- Believed the window for a negotiated settlement with the Taliban after 9/11 was closed deliberately because the Americans felt they'd been attacked and felt "a sense of revenge."
- Said U.S. militaristic interventions often show a pattern of mistakes.

too slow.

She added that non-military tools hospital in Afghanistan after its were advocating other tools." Crawford started the discussion like diplomacy and sanctions are crew misidentified the hospital a Nov. 25, 2015 NBC News article. According to an Aug. 16, 2021 Associated Press article, the Afghanistan War caused 47,245 Afghan civilians' deaths. Crawford said all military beliefs she described were on display in the post-9/11 wars, in Iraq, Afghanistan and in Russia's current invasion of Ukraine.

Sarwary said the U.S. intervention because "we've got thousands by defining militarism as undervalued, seen as ineffective or for a compound taken over by the in Afghanistan was a "monumental of nuclear weapons remaining Taliban. It killed at least 31 civilians failure on everyone's part over in the world and that . . . should In military societies like the and injured 28 others, according to the last 20 years," and thinks a be dismantled." 9/11 commission report should be created to find out how American and Afghanistan taxpayer money had been used.

threat should be taken seriously,

"[Militarism] is an ideology," she said.

Militarism is seen as "the best option" confronting threats because of multiple beliefs, she said.

"The first [belief] is that others are hostile, they hate you and what you stand for," Crawford said.

She said the second belief regarding militarism is the idea that security is a scarce resource. If one side acts to increase its security, it would make the other more insecure, she said.

Then, she said militarism implies an overestimation of the military force utility and controllability and is seen as useful and safe.

Crawford said militarism exaggerates the advantages of the first strikes and preventive war, even if it's against International Law.

"This is the belief that if you don't act now, all will be lost," Crawford said.

The U.S. used the idea of preventative war to justify the Iraq War in 2003, by identifying the threat of weapons of mass destruction, Crawford said.

She said Putin justifying Ukraine's invasion as a reply to Ukrainian "nazis" also illustrates the use of militarism.

She said militarism values conquest as a high gain for their country.

"Militarism not only exaggerates the utility of military force . . . [it] devalues other ways of dealing with those threats," Crawford said.

U.S., war and soldiers are glorified and seen as people with insight into foreign policy decision-making, Crawford said.

She explained how U.S. troops sent to Afghanistan were given a "heroic narrative," later in the intervention, showing them as masculine warriors saving women from "horrific fates."

Decision-makers tend to overemphasize others' potential regarding successful use of force, justifying the pursuit of more military resources. She called it must take force off the table and "peacetime pessimism."

"This is both conscious and unconscious threat-inflation," Crawford said.

Economic benefits of military spending are exaggerated, and the economic cost of war tends to be minimized, Crawford said.

Finally, the human and environmental cost is forgotten from the official discourse before wars begin, she said.

Sarwary, the second panelist, worked in Afghanistan for 20 years after 9/11, and said he witnessed errors made by the U.S. military intervention there.

"We lost count of all of those tragic and sad incidents, and many of which amounted to war crimes from the American military," Sarwary said, mentioning airstrikes and drones that he believes were wrongfully used by the U.S. military.

He referred to the U.S. warplane attack on a medical charity

She said militarism is threatening democracy, as war and democracy are normative opposites.

"Democracy says that we resolve our disputes nonviolently," Crawford said. "In war, information and decision making power is concentrated, legislatures are sidelined in the name of secrecy and speed."

Similar to Crawford, Sarwary said the window for a negotiated settlement with the Taliban after 9/11 was closed deliberately because the Americans felt they'd been attacked and felt "a sense of revenge."

Crawford said after 9/11, there were other ways to put political and economic pressure on the Taliban, but it was perceived as "too slow."

"When a nation has been attacked, and people are fearful and angry, their prefrontal cortex is focused on threats and looks for ways to respond to those threats," Crawford said. "The American public was not prepared, because it is so militarized, to think about other tools and to support those who

He said many misunderstandings could have been avoided if more Americans spoke Pashto and Dari, which are both official Afghanistan languages.

"I think there's also this lack of understanding of who the people are, I agree completely," Crawford said.

Ariana Shah, global studies sophomore and Human Rights Institute intern attended the Zoom lecture and said it was a chance to have Afghan journalists including Sarwary and Halima Kazem-Stojanovic in this discussion, because she felt that the Afghan perspective is missing in the U.S. perception of Afghanistan events.

"We just don't know about it in America, and it's really unfortunate ... we don't know that much about these crimes," Shah said. "I think students should really become more aware and not only are our lives being affected, but lives overseas, especially civilians."

Both panelists during the lecture also spoke about the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"As an Afghan looking at the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and what's happening in Ukraine, I feel that the real bear trap is Ukraine for the Russians," Sarwary said. "They will be stuck there."

Crawford said the Russian nuclear

INFOGRAPHIC BY BRYANNA BARTLETT AND AMANI HAMED

She said negotiators ending this war should avoid mistakes made in Afghanistan, where the Afghan government was missing from the negotiating table with Taliban, the U.S. and other Western powers.

The U.S. foreign military policy also has consequences on its own territory, Crawford said.

She said the police in the U.S. have a disproportionate share of their force who are veterans or are still active in the reserves, bringing militarism back in the police officers' mentality.

Police or military budget reduction creates the same "allergic reaction" saying without force, replies are not effective, she said.

Crawford and Sarwary said that U.S. militaristic interventions are "repeating the same pattern" of mistakes again and again.

"Unfortunately . . . there are some [people] of the United States who don't want to look critically at American history, military and otherwise . . . this is because it conflicts with their idea and their ideal of what it means to be a U.S. citizen or an American," Crawford said. "And I'm sorry, you'll have to get over that and recognize that this is a complicated history, and we have good and we've got terrible . . . we'll be stronger if we face that."

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### **JOAQUIN'S COFFEE CORNER**

## A fine roast with an artsy twist

By Joaquin De La Torre STAFF WRITER

Founded by two San Jose State students, Collectible Coffee is a new online coffee shop that inspires coffee lovers with premium, locally roasted coffee and collectible bags designed by local artists.

Economics alumnus Zachary Kor and business partner David Gelovani, communications senior, began conceptualizing the coffee business over lunch in May 2021, Gelovani said.

"My dream was to open a coffee shop, but you know, as a college student I don't have the funds to do that," Gelovani said.

He said he also wanted to work with local artists.

Kor said he strives for Collectible Coffee to give independent artists exposure through a "unique medium."

both through coffee and through really cool artwork," Kor said.

The business sources its coffee from Connoisseur Coffee Company, a coffeehouse and roasting site located in Redwood City, California.

The coffee company has been providing teas and coffees to customers for over 20 years, according to the company's Facebook page.

Gelovani and Kor began working with the company after Gelovani connected with the owner, Shawn McMillan.

Gelovani said they wanted to start with a Brazilian coffee because it's a South American coffee that many people will enjoy.

"The Brazil [Santos] is actually very, very smooth, medium bodied coffee with natural sweetness," McMillan said.

Sometimes called Bourbon Coffee beans, the Brazil Santos are one of the

66

Our goal is to just, you know, bring the customer as much joy as possible both through coffee and through really cool artwork.

> Zachary Kor co-founder of Collectible Coffee

sports card industry," Kor said.

He also said that Collectible Coffee draws inspiration from the art community and the numbers on the bag are like artists numbering their proofs.

"Collectible Coffee is a brand for artists, by artists, dedicated to giving a platform for those seeking a voice that is uniquely theirs, a voice with individual meaning but collective impact," according to the shop's website.

The bags of coffee are created in small, 500-batch releases and feature the production number on the bags, according to the same website.

The numbering system will let customers know how rare their bag is, Kor said.

"Our goal is to just, you know, bring the customer as much joy as possible

"We draw a lot of inspiration from the highest-grade coffee beans and are grown at a high elevation before they are dry processed, McMillan said.

> Dry processing means the coffee beans are dried while still a cherry, which is what gives them a sweet nutty flavor, according to Espresso and Coffee Guide.

> The bean is then dried using one of three methods: the dry process, wet process or honey process, which affects the resulting flavor profile and overall quality, according to an April 8, 2016 Eater article.

> The owners said they aim to pair specific coffees with specific artwork.

> "So like, you know, if it's like a dark roast, maybe have a piece of art that has a little bit of a darker feel to it or . . . just the color scheme," Kor said.

> Collectible Coffee bags currently feature the artwork of Megan Yama,

a Bay Area native currently studying a little bit of money and then the company illustration and graphic design at Kyoto University of the Arts, according to Collectible Coffee's website.

"I feel like artists . . . are underpaid and underappreciated for what they do because they offer a lot to society as a whole," Gelovani said. "And so we want to be able to bring them real opportunities."

In addition to coffee bags, Collectible Coffee also sells shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies and mugs on their website.

"It's very rare that you'll get a product where literally some of the proceeds actually end up going directly to the artists you know, oftentimes they just pay [artists] like

PHOTO COURTESY OF COLLECTIBLE COFFEE

owns their artwork," Kor said.

After featuring Yama, the brand highlighted Lauren Monique, an Evergreen Valley College alumna, at a "First Friday" event held at Salon Blu on March 4, according to an Instagram post.

Collectible Coffee would love to work with artists from SJSU in the future, Kor said.

"I really want to give back to the school and to the local art community as well," he said.

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### **OPINION**



ILLUSTRATION BY BIANCA RADER

## Traveling is the best education

Living in another country can expand your horizons, expose your cultural biases more than tourism



Eva Martin STAFF WRITER

Living abroad is not just about discovering new places or people, but also learning about your own country and culture.

I came to San Jose from France on August 13, 2021, and I've learned more about my country by leaving for one year than I residents wouldn't even think about.

They just think, "That is how life is and that's it."

Those traveling outside of their country for long periods of time may realize that their own cultural habits are not universal.

I'm not talking about traveling for a few days or weeks, because in this case you keep your way of life and thinking in your bags. You're just moving them with you and keeping an outsider's vision of your environment, which pushes you to admire anything new as long as it's different from your home. You put your criticism to the side and work on your touristic experience to make it fun anyway. This is not the type of travel I'm talking about.

you were raised to think. By trying to fit in with unfamiliar surroundings, you're forced to confront what you're used to in your home country, from the food you eat to your relationships.

I've always thought rampant cigarette smoking was an inaccurate French stereotype, until I noticed how I rarely see young Americans smoking them. It made me realize how smoking was trivialized in my home country, and how young people start there.

I've always thought university professors were people you had to keep an important hierarchical distance with until I started studying at San Jose State and saw how the relationships between students and professors could be more collaborative. I also quickly learned in my experience abroad that humor also changes with each country. Sarcasm and irony are pretty usual where I'm from, and I've felt that being sarcastic could lead to a lot of

funny misunderstandings in the U.S. I believed every word or idea could be translated from my language to English, and then realized some French words didn't have an "English twin."

For example, in a study published in 2014, Jianjun Wang and Sunihan Sunihan from Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia something more "normal" than what they discover in another area, putting one custom "above" another.

Because we consider what we're used to as our norm, culture shocks may cause people to have a judgmental approach to cultural differences and reject them, perceiving different habits as "weird" or "too strange."

I came to San Jose from France on August 13, 2021, and I've learned more about my country by leaving

would've by staying inside.

Studying abroad shouldn't be the privilege that it is now. Students around the world should be more financially supported and motivated by their universities to leave their homes, because they would build a better understanding of where they're from.

After more than 20 years in the same country, some may normalize thousands of cultural habits that most I'm talking about settling down for months, opening your bags and deconstructing the way



## for one year than I would've by staying inside.

in the north of China analyzed the untranslatability between English and Chinese from an intercultural perspective. They said in the introduction of their research that "Language is of course translatable to some extent, while we should not neglect the basic fact that there are still a lot of phenomena showing that untranslatability can be seen and exist in intercultural communication."

Canadian anthropologist Kalervo Oberg theorized the idea of "culture shock" in 1954, as a feeling of uncertainty and anxiety that affects people immersed in cultures unfamiliar to them, according to the Longwood University website. Oberg said culture adjustment can be frustrating when individuals focus on the negative aspects of cultural differences, according to the same website.

Culture shock can easily lead people to rank what they are familiar with as Rather than developing a negative perspective of U.S. characteristics, I gained more knowledge about what could be my country's identity each time I felt disoriented when I faced a cultural gap. At each moment of cultural shock, I felt how my biases affected my perception of what was universal to human nature and what's not.

Growing up in a globalized world made me think culture shock was an old-fashioned concept that was no longer relevant in Western countries including the U.S. and my home country. After spending eight months in San Jose, I can say I was wrong and perhaps ignorant to think this way.

Studying abroad is an opportunity that should be accessible for students to allow them to discover what they thought they already knew: their home.

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### **OPINION**



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SPORTS

## Manfred almost ruins baseball again

By Gio Gaxiola STAFF WRITER

On March 1, Major League Baseball (MLB) commissioner Rob Manfred announced that MLB would delay the 2022 season.

Manfred is the worst commissioner, not only in MLB history, but possibly the worst commissioner of any sports

and the lockout came from Manfred.

This is just the latest mismanagement from Manfred's inferior run as MLB commissioner.

Manfred said in a March decoding, and relaying hand 1 news release that the two signals from the LA Dodgers' catcher to their pitcher groups "failed to achieve [their] mutual goal of a fair deal.""To when batters for the Astros Our Fans: I had hoped against approached the plate, according hope that I would not have to to a Nov. 3, 2021 New York beliefs."

The cheating allegations were later proven thanks to ex-Astros starting pitcher Mike Fiers coming forward. The Houston Astros had been stealing signs - observing,

minor league baseball team's stadiums, including those of the Kalamazoo Growlers and the Bismarck Larks, to ban Manfred.

A tweet from the Growlers' Twitter page read, "The Growlers stand strong in their belief that fun is the key to baseball. Rob Manfred stands in direct opposition to these

the draft, according to a Nov. 21, 2019 Time article.

This has been an issue under Manfred's watch as players work hard to win and no one wants to lose games on purpose.

MLB implemented a new lottery system for next season to stop clubs from tanking, according to a March 11 Baseball America article.

organization of all time.

When the Atlanta Braves won the 2021 World Series against the Houston Astros, fans were filled with excitement but the celebration was shortlived as fans soon realized that this may be the last time they would see a live MLB game.

The looming issue was the collective bargaining agreement between MLB and the Players Association signed in 2017. The agreement came to an end on Dec. 2, 2021.

The collective bargaining agreement is a legal contract between MLB and the players. Many talks between the two sides carried on into the winter months with neither side backing down.

MLB and MLBPA came to an agreement March 10 to end the 99-day lockout after the two groups reached a salary negotiation for the players, with opening day scheduled for April 7, according to a March 10 New York Times article.

The main problem for many of the failed negotiations

### The greed and incompetence of Manfred has led to the terrible state of MLB. Bud Selig must be shaking his fist in the air in his grave from Manfred's antics.

be in the position of canceling games," Manfred said. We worked hard to avoid an outcome that is bad for our fans, bad for our players and bad for our clubs."

Manfred's greed for profits and lack of respect for baseball was one of the main reasons a season-ending lockout almost happened.

It all started back in February 2020, when Manfred referred to the World Series Trophy, or Commissioner's Trophy, as a "Piece Of Metal" during an ESPN interview when asked about stripping the title from the Astros after a cheating scandal in 2017.

**EDITORIAL STAFF** 

Times article.

Players and coaches work hard all year to win a World Series title and the Astros cheating scandal was a slap in the face to honest MLB players.

Many MLB fans were disappointed and left with a sour taste after seeing the Astros go unpunished and celebrated for cheating.

Manfred continued with his antics, cutting some minor league teams and MLB players' salaries and benefits to boost revenue, according to a Nov. 21, 2019 NBC Sports article.

Minor league teams had the right to be upset with Manfred, which led some independent

If someone isn't allowed at events for the sport they supervise, they shouldn't be a sports organization commissioner, nor do they deserve any respect.

Some players spoke out, including San Francisco Giants starting pitcher Alex Wood, who was vocal on Twitter about his boss. "To be clear. Manfred/ MLB want stricter penalties under the Collective. All the CBT does is suppress spending and encourage TANKING. Aren't fans tired of this?" Wood questioned.

Tanking is a term used when a team loses all of its games on purpose to secure a top pick in

### But the damage has already been done. Teams including the Detroit Tigers and Baltimore Orioles have tanked so much that the likelihood of either team having a winning season in the near future is slim to none.

The greed and incompetence of Manfred has led to the terrible state MLB is in, and Bud Selig must be shaking his fist in the air in his grave from Manfred's antics.

The sooner MLB gets rid of the inferior commissioner that is Manfred, the sooner the league will see its popularity boost. The league is a better sport without Manfred at the helm.

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