

Strengthening Global Ties

Spring 2004

Sharing their perspectives on major world issues with members of the Columbia community, 13 senior statesmen from around the world including President Vladimir Putin of Russia, President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan, President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana, and Indian Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited the University last fall in conjunction with the UN General Assembly.

The visits served to augment global outreach efforts by President Lee C. Bollinger '71LAW, who is working with other University administrators and faculty members to strengthen ties with world leaders, address the impact of globalization on American universities, and position the University as the world's leading academic institution for international studies.

Bollinger believes the impact of globalization is the most significant issue facing academic institutions in coming years.

"Just as the influence and involvements of Columbia have steadily widened over the last 250 years from the local to the national, so will they now do so at the international level as well. The fundamental purposes and structure will not change, for they are enduring. But the problems to be solved and the pool of talent to solve them will broaden. This is our way to ensure we remain vigorous, and relevant, in a mercurial world," wrote Bollinger in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed that ran last fall.

Columbia administrators and faculty, joined by Bollinger, also have been connecting with the world at large through a series of visits abroad. Their presence at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January underscored Columbia's leadership role in addressing today's major global issues. Bollinger recently returned from a 12-day visit to East Asia where he visited distinguished alumni as well as civic, political, and cultural leaders in Tokyo, Seoul, Beijing, Taipei, and Hong Kong, and explored the possibilities for new cooperative ventures in the region.

Bollinger has created a task force on globalization at the University that includes Provost Alan Brinkley, Earth Institute Director Jeffrey Sachs, Middle East Institute

Director Rashid Khalidi, SIPA Dean Lisa Anderson, Senior Executive Vice President Robert Kasdin, and economists Jagdish Bhagwati and Joseph Stiglitz, among other faculty members and administrators, which will build on conversations Bollinger has begun with foreign leaders and will work to define Columbia's role as a global university.



[Guide to school abbreviations](#)

[All categories >](#)