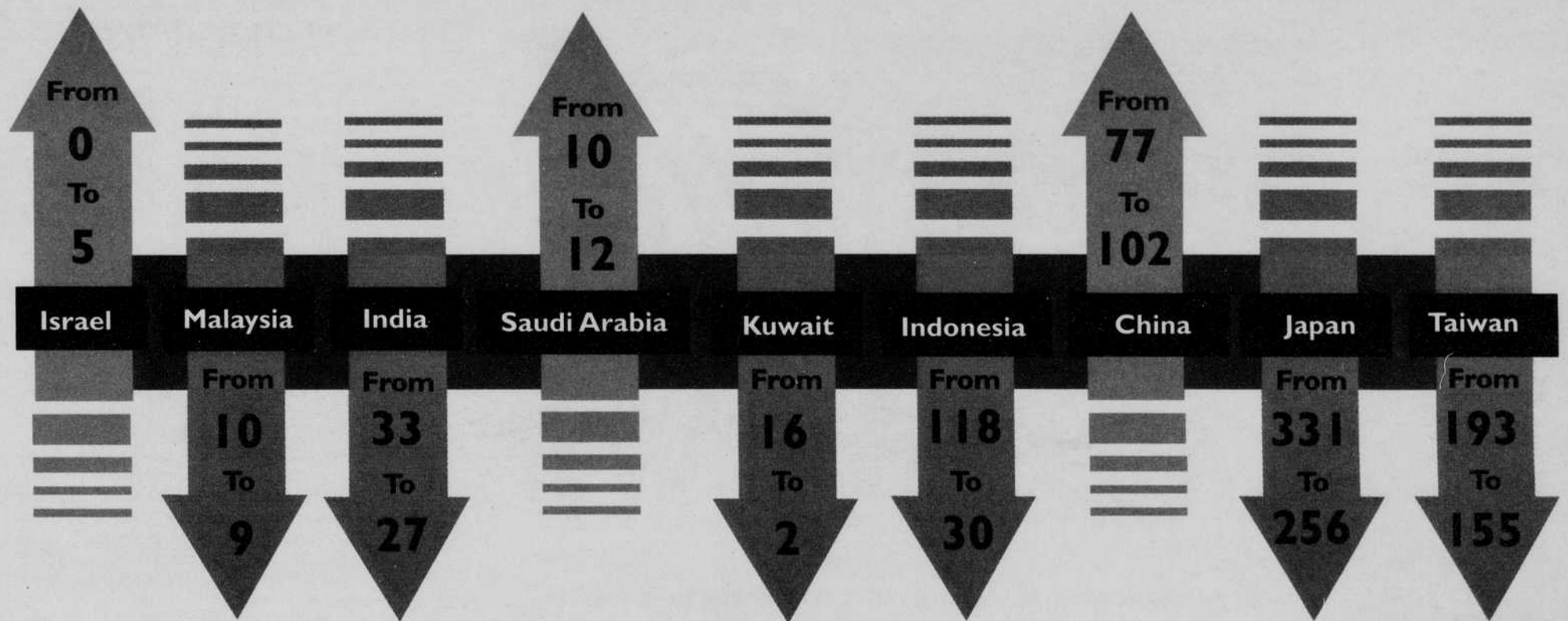


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BRET FURTWANGLER | GRAPHIC ARTIST

A crucial final exam can mean the difference between passing and failing for many students, but for international students, one unsatisfactory answer in a standard-procedure interview could mean the loss of an opportunity to study abroad in the United States.

International students must go through a rigorous interview process with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service in order to obtain a visa to study in this country. The process has gotten substantially more difficult since the United States stepped up security measures after Sept. 11, International Programs Director Magid Shirzadegan said.

Colleges around the nation are currently concerned that the new measures have resulted in fewer international students coming to the country.

Junior Deny Unardi, an international student from Indonesia, said he's heard of students traveling from his country being turned away after an interview with the USCIS.

"They think, 'Oh, I hope I pass, I hope I can go to America,'" he said. "They get scared every time they go there."

At the University, the number of international students has been on a steady decline since Sept. 11. This year, the international student population stands at 1,175 students, down from 1,440 in fall 2001.

International Student Adviser Abe Schafermeyer said there have been more instances in which students are denied visas.

"Technically, there's no change in the law," he said. "I think (the laws) might be interpreted with more scrutiny."

But decreases haven't been equal across the board; Shirzadegan

Security increases, Diversity decreases

International students face greater obstacles in obtaining study-abroad visas since Sept. 11

BY MORIAH BALINGIT | NEWS REPORTER

said there are substantially fewer students from Muslim countries. "Some students have not been able to get a visa ... because of security measures," he said.

Unardi can testify to this trend. As a student from the predominantly Muslim country of Indonesia, Unardi applied for a visa before Sept. 11, but said if he were to apply now, the process would be far more arduous.

"If you're applying for a new visa, it takes four to five months just to wait for a result," he said. "After Sept. 11, everything got so strict."

Now Unardi, who hasn't returned home since he arrived here three years ago, said he is afraid to go back to Indonesia because he doesn't want to have to reapply for a visa, and he's heard that he may be denied entrance into the United States.

"I don't want to go through all the trouble again," he said. "I can't meet my parents. I can't meet my family, but I guess it's better to stay, ... better than having to risk not coming back here."

Graduate student Heni Attiah from Egypt faces a similar predicament. Like Unardi, he applied for his visa before Sept. 11, but won't return home because he too is afraid he won't be able to reenter the United States. As a young, single male of Middle Eastern descent, he said he feels he's scrutinized far more than other visa candidates, and added the U.S. government regarded him as "suspicious" even before Sept. 11.

"My age and my looks and my ethnicity ... all of them combine together to make a bad concoction," he said.

Attiah has also said that he won't return home until he has finished his education because he's afraid he'd be denied a visa.

"I feel like I'm a prisoner," he said. "I don't have the freedom to come and go."

While students from other parts of the world may face less scrutiny when applying for visas, the process for them is also becoming increasingly difficult.

Senior Santiago Garcia of Spain said it only took him fifteen days to obtain his student visa, although he applied right after Sept. 11, when the increased security measures had not yet been put into place.

INTERNATIONAL, page 6

IN BRIEF

Muslims celebrate end of Ramadan with 'Eid-ul-Fitr

Muslims around the world celebrated 'Eid-ul-Fitr (the Festival of Fast-Breaking) on Sunday, marking the end of Ramadan. The holiday began Oct. 15 and is a month-long Islamic celebration of fasting during daylight hours.

'Eid-ul-Fitr falls on the first day of Shawwal, the 10th month in the Hijra calendar. During the celebration, Muslims dress in holiday attire, attend a special community prayer in the morning, visit with friends and family and often exchange gifts.

In many Muslim countries, the holiday is a three-day celebration with the main festivities occurring on the first day. Fasting is forbidden on the first day of 'Eid-ul-Fitr because the festival celebrates the end of the Ramadan fast.

After rising, participants dress in new, festive clothes and attend a community prayer. Part of the celebration of 'Eid-ul-Fitr is the giving of an obligatory gift to charity. The gift is usually given during the month of Ramadan so it can be used by the recipient for the 'Eid-ul-Fitr celebration. The gift, called Zakatul Fitr, is normally given to needy Muslims in the local community.

— Amanda Bolsinger

Insurgent battles escalate in Sunni regions

Although fighting in Fallujah has dropped off since attacks began last week, military officials say more is expected before the city is secured

BY TINI TRAN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Insurgents stormed two police stations Sunday in the strife-ridden city of Mosul, killing at least six Iraqi troops as attacks spread throughout Sunni Muslim areas following the U.S.-led assault on Fallujah.

At least 38 American troops and six Iraqi soldiers have been killed in the fighting in Fallujah. The number of U.S. troops wounded is now 275, though more than 60 have returned to duty. U.S. officials estimated more than 1,200 insurgents were killed in the week-long fighting.

"The perception of Fallujah being a safe haven for terrorists ... and the reality of it will be completely wiped off before the conclusion of this operation," said Lt. Gen. John Sattler, commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

U.S. forces have spread throughout the city, although it could take several more days of fighting before the city is secured, American officials said.

Fighting in Fallujah was ebbing, but insurgent

attacks appeared to escalate elsewhere in Sunni Muslim areas of central and northern Iraq.

About an hour after heavy explosions rattled central Baghdad, approximately four more large explosions rocked the Green Zone, headquarters of the U.S. and Iraqi leadership. Clashes were also reported on Haifa Street, a center of insurgent support in the heart of the capital.

In Mosul, where an uprising broke out last week in support of the Fallujah defenders, militants raided two police stations, killing at least six Iraqi National Guards and wounding three others. One insurgent was killed and three others were wounded before Iraqi security forces regained control of both stations, witnesses said.

Governor Duraid Kashmoula said the curfew will continue to be imposed on the city from 4 p.m. to 6 a.m.

A dozen explosions rocked an American base in the western part of Ramadi, about 30 miles west of Fallujah, after insurgents fired missiles.

U.S. assault quicker than expected

The U.S. military's ground and air assault of Fallujah has gone quicker than the April assault after sending in six times as many troops and 20 different types of aircraft. The military said 38 Americans and six Iraqi soldiers have been killed in the siege.

Militants killed two police stations and at least six Iraqi National Guards and wounding three others.

Saboteurs set fire to four oil wells.

At least two heavy explosions hit central Baghdad after nightfall, followed by gunfire.

Marines found the mutilated body of what is believed to be a Western woman.

U.S. warplanes dropped four 2,000-pound bombs on a series of underground bunkers.

Witnesses reported seeing flames and smoke billowing from the base.

One Marine and an Iraqi soldier were hurt when five mortar shells struck a checkpoint outside Fallujah.

In an interview with Iraqi television Sunday, interim Prime Minister Allawi defended his

IRAQ, page 4