

## **News Division Coverage Of Virginia Tech Shootings, April, 2007**

As is usual on big breaking stories, VOA's first reports on the Virginia Tech massacre were filed by our Central News writers and editors in the morning of April 16 when it seemed that perhaps one person was killed and half a dozen or so wounded. Less than an hour-and-a-half later, it was apparent a major tragedy had taken place in southern Virginia and the Central News (CN) file started cranking out the reports and updating the casualty figures. At the end of the news cycle in the early evening, there were 16 updates and sidebars on the wire, including pieces on U.S. and world reaction, a rundown of previous similar attacks and details about prayer vigils on the campus and elsewhere.

As TV/Radio correspondent Brian Padden rushed from Washington to the Virginia Tech campus that afternoon, Peter Fedynsky filed Correspondent Reports wrapping up the situation as the information came in. Paula Wolfson added separate stories including reaction from the White House and other officials during the day. We also had a TV/CN and a television package that wrapped up details of the massacre and included a student's cell phone video of the actual shooting attacks as well as video from President Bush, the university president, police and others.

The next morning, as the Central News file kept filing updates and sidebars, Brian Padden began filing video back from the Virginia Tech campus, concentrating on the many students there from outside the United States. These video pieces -- including interviews with students from nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America -- were picked up by the languages services and incorporated into their programming. At the end of the day, Padden produced a package on the foreign students and filed additional video on the student prayer vigil that evening. Central television also produced a late day wrap by Jim Fry. The radio file was kept up with wraps by Peter Fedynsky that got updated when police identified the shooter as a 23-year-old South Korean man, a background report by Jim Malone that dealt with issues such as gun control and the psychology of mass killers an update wrap by Paula Wolfson and a world reaction story by Chip Buel.

The following day, April 18, began with Heda Bayron in our Hong Kong bureau wrapping up South Korean reaction to the news that the shooter came from that country. Bill Ide did wraps and updates throughout the day as details came out about the men identified as the killer, Jim Malone produced a background report that included remarks by a former teacher of the man who said she had warned he was dangerous and analysis from criminal psychologists who outlined why people carry out these kinds of attacks. When a package from the killer turned up at NBC in New York, David Dyar put out a correspondent report on its contents and quickly updated the VOA website with all the material that was available, including the pictures of the shooter brandishing semi-automatic pistols in each hand. Central television produced a wrap by Jim Fry and Brian Padden produced a TV profile of the Blacksburg, Va., where the campus is located, detailing how the townspeople were coping with the tragedy. It should be noted that Brian also filed numerous requested interview feeds for the language services with students and

The VOANEWS.COM internet site, as noted, was on top of the story from the beginning, posting almost every update report and sidebar and illustrating all of them with available pictures, audio packages from the correspondent reports as well as television packages outlining all the major issues from straight news wraps to sidebars on prayer vigils, student interviews and pieces on gun control and official reactions.