

The Briefing

A Newsletter of The Alabama World Affairs Council / Winter 2000/2001

Three (Four?) Great Programs to Finish Year

East Asia Expert to Speak on China

China is in the tumultuous throes of coming to terms with capitalism and world trade, and has shown signs of regional ambitions that could spell trouble for the West. In the process, China has assumed what is possibly the top foreign policy concern for the United States. Professor **Gilbert Rozman** of Princeton



University has made a life-long study of the Pacific rim and is recognized as one of the foremost experts on China—plus Japan and Korea.

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Prof. Rozman has taught at Princeton for 30 years, assuming the prestigious Musgrove Chair of Sociology in 1992. The many books he has either written or edited include *The China Debate about Soviet Socialism* and *Dismantling Communism: Common Causes and Regional Variations*. His article “China’s Quest for a Great Power Identity” could well be required reading for anyone interested in China.

A Mystery Guest in March?

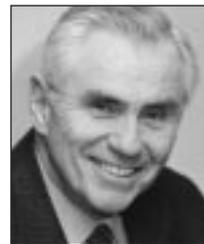
If you read your AWAC 2000-2001 brochure carefully, you will remember this innocuous entry at the bottom of the schedule on p. 3. As of this writing, we are in the final stages of negotiations, and the prospects look promising for March 6 or March 7. The speaker? Let’s just say he is a distinguished American often associated with a colorful,

MAR 6 or 7

voracious, small-tailed, three-inch salamander found in abundance in the United States. While success is not assured, we think the chances are very good that this visit will come to pass—stay tuned.

North/South Detente in Korea?

There is no one better qualified than **Donald Gregg** to speak on the global hot spot that is Korea, the so-called Hermit Kingdom, a 600-mile peninsula jutting southeast from Chinese Manchuria like a dagger aimed at



the heart of Japan. Ambassador Gregg has been involved in a career-long study of operations in the Far East, most particularly Korea, first as a CIA operative, then as a member of the National Security Council, as the National Security Advisor to Vice President George Bush, as Ambassador to Korea from 1989 to 1993, and finally, currently as President and Chairman of the Korea Society, based in New York. He is known nationally as a great speaker and will be here on March 27.

Air War College Panel Report

An annual favorite is the report to the Council by a panel of senior Air War College Instructors on their individual spring trips to different regions of the world. The Regional Studies report is scheduled for May 9.

MAY 9

Scowcroft, Walker Get Year Off to Great Start



Members at reception before Martin Walker's presentation.

On November 2, 2000, hard work and close coordination between the Alabama World Affairs Council and the Air War College at Maxwell AFB paid off for our members as Lt. Gen. (Ret.) **Brent Scowcroft** gave a fascinating presentation to a full house at Maxwell's spacious Polifka Auditorium. Gen Scowcroft, who now runs his own consulting firm (on international affairs), has served two presidents as National Security Advisor and drew on his vast knowledge and experience in addressing the hot spots and problems of the world today. He gave our 180 members and guests, plus about 1000 mostly military attendees from the Air War College and Air Command and Staff College, an insider's thoughtful look at the foreign relations issues that will face the next president. Brilliant and influential, yet level-headed and self-effacing, Scowcroft served as a senior foreign policy advisor to George W. Bush during the presidential campaign. When asked if he might play a significant role in a Bush administration, he smiled

and said, "No, behind the scenes advice only." And solid advice it is sure to be.

On November 28, **Martin Walker**, formerly of Britain's *Guardian* and currently a senior fellow at the World Policy Institute, gave a sober and generally favorable assessment of U.S. foreign policy under President Clinton. It was easy to see why Walker is held in such high regard in international reporting and policy circles—he was insightful, funny, articulate, and fearless.

Rare Access to Air War College Function

On November 29, the night after Martin Walker's talk, as a result of consideration given our Council by board member Maj. Gen. **David MacGhee**, Commandant of the Air War College, we were given a precious six spaces to attend the final event in the 2000 USAF Counterproliferation Conference. This was a dinner at Legends at Capitol Hill in Prattville, with the Honorable **Richard Butler** as the

speaker. As the head of the United Nations Weapons Inspection Team in Iraq before the team's withdrawal, his remarks carried unusual weight and authenticity. It was obvious who he considered the villain in the piece—Sadam Hussein.

Dr. Jim Nathan's Trip Report on China

On December 14, bowing to pressure from the Board of Directors, **Jim Nathan** agreed to break his own rule against local speakers and gave over 60 interested members a fascinating talk on the eleven months he spent in China as a Fulbright Scholar/Lecturer. The event took place at the Capital City Club over lunch. Complete with professional (?) snapshots of Beijing and various other locations around China, the talk was superb: first hand, engrossing and relevant, delivered with humor and insight.

Changes in Arrangements Get Generally Good Reviews

At Martin Walker's presentation at the Museum, AWAC implemented several changes that had been recommended by the membership. Reminder notices were sent out earlier, chairs were provided at the reception, the food tables were rearranged for easier access, and the string quartet was relocated to alleviate the difficulty in hearing. The Museum staff made a concerted effort to improve the sound system, with some marked improvement, but not yet to everyone's satisfaction. They will continue their efforts to enhance the system.

Report from the Executive Director

DR. JAMES NATHAN

In the second week of January, The World Affairs Council of America (WACA) had its annual meeting. This was the first meeting held in New York and reflected the greatly augmented stature of the national alliance in recent years. The theme of the meeting was “Get to Know Your United Nations.”

The meeting was held at the UN and opened by **Kofi Annan**, UN Secretary General.

Mr. Annan and his staff could not have been more helpful in facilitating briefings, tours and amazing lunches, some 60 in all with groups of about ten. About half of the lunches were with ambassadors to the UN at their homes nearby and were a remarkable testimony to the stature and seriousness with which the rest of the world regards informed American public opinion leaders.

We were hosted by ambassadors from Russia, France—yes, France!—Japan, Germany, North Korea—yes, North Korea!—China, South Korea, Iran and so on. They were fabulous affairs. The ambassador from China is a former foreign minister and brought with him, as



Dr. Nathan, Martin Walker, and Gen. Cleveland.

do many of the UN ambassadors, his own cook.

We also had lunches with American network broadcasters and journalists, and a larger luncheon with UN Ambassador **Richard Holbrooke**. This was a special day for Holbrooke. He had just returned from appearing before Senator **Jesse Helms**' Senate Foreign Relations Committee to ask for about a half billion dollars to pay US debts to the UN. Instead of the usual grilling Helms is known to give American officials, Helms, before Holbrooke had begun to speak, asked the committee and those assembled in the room to stand and give Holbrooke a round of hearty applause. Helms said

that Holbrooke is one of America's greatest diplomats ever, and had pulled off the amazing accomplishment of getting Russia, China, the Europeans, and others to accept a larger percentage of the financial obligations of the UN and for the US to be assessed at 25% less. In addition, the UN agreed to some much needed reforms. It was all quite remarkable, and Holbrooke was justifiably proud—he spoke off the cuff for about 45 minutes and answered another half hour's worth of questions.

So we were treated well, and we ate well. We really felt like we had a fly-on-the-wall perspective on how the UN and US are doing.

Our accommodations were splendid, as has been usual the last few years at national meetings. For “only” 145 dollars a night [but NYC, that's amazing], we had *suites* with a kitchen, dishwasher and stove in a luxury hotel across the street from the UN—a short walk from the refurbished and beautiful Grand Central Station. Aside from the hotel, there were no costs for most of our food or anything else, as it was all paid for by

Alert: After Christmas Special For Non-Members Only!

For those readers who have not yet joined the Council, you have missed two great programs in 2000. But there are still three (and probably four) outstanding programs yet to come this season in 2001. We want to make a special and final offer for you to join even at this late date, at a **FORTY PERCENT DISCOUNT FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SEASON**. Just mail the enclosed pledge card to us with your payment.

a modest registration fee, the UN, and other underwriters.

New York glistens, burnished by the prosperity of the 1990s and the ministrations of **Mayor Guiliani**. The meeting also arranged some remarkable tours with high level officials of the New York Stock Exchange, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and of the UN itself and its stunning collection of world art.

These national meetings of the World Affairs Councils of America are open to all in the national system, and next time, I hope Montgomery can be better represented (illness prevented **Terry Wofford** from attending this year). Savannah, for instance, had six members attending, and I think we can do at least as well. Some 300 members of different councils attended. About a third were officers of their local chapters; most were “just members.” So next time, please do consider attending the national meeting.

Sir Eldon Griffiths, whom many of you met last year, is now Chairman of WACA, and he and the Washington office have done a terrific job. Collins Signs from Alabama, CVS, Exxon, Intel, Hewlett Packard, Merrill Lynch, and other firms are now supporting us at a national level. Their underwriting efforts have made the national office a serious resource for all the regional affiliates.

We have come a long way from when I began. Not only had our local chapter not met in over a year, the national office was closing when I started trying to bring a bit more of the world to Alabama.

When I was in New York, **I had an opportunity to compare notes with other councils**. Our programs are simply as good as—indeed, I think better than—any, including many of the meetings held in New York, Chicago and Washington. We have had in recent years **Dick Cheney, Abba Eban, Brent Scowcroft, and David McCullough**. All the people we bring are authoritative, significant and engaging opinion leaders and policymakers.

But our dues are the lowest... really, the lowest in the World Affairs Council system. All other councils charge for their headline events. We do not.

We have been able to pull it off because of some disproportionate efforts by some of our members, because AUM sustains our office, and because we have a grant from the **Alabama Humanities Foundation**. But next year, our four-year funding from the Alabama Humanities Foundation is uncertain at best and may well not be renewed. In addition, our national dues are rising. This will leave us with a 30% hole in our budget. We need more members and more money if we are to keep our doors open next year. Please help by augmenting your dues and bringing in a new member or two. Either or both would help tremendously.

We have begun to offer scholarships to local school kids, we have brought our guests to appear on local TV and radio spots, thus helping to spread the “message” of the significance of an awareness of international

affairs, and we have become something of a cultural high point in the civic life of Montgomery.

But we need your help. If you can bring in more members or help with an additional tax-free contribution, then we can be assured of continuing our work at the same high level.

When I was in New York, **I also worked a bit with the New York Council on Foreign Relations**, which included the process of vetting the just released papers of the decision by the Beijing leadership to use tanks to clear Tiananmen Square ten years ago. There were a number of former top-level officials who have worked UN-China policy at the meeting, including **Winston Lord, Chas Freeman and James Lilley**. I think we have a good shot at getting somebody of this caliber to come to Montgomery next year. I also attended a kind of goodbye dinner at the Council for **Sandy Berger**, President Clinton’s National Security Advisor. Berger made a pretty good case for the last few years of Clinton’s Foreign Policy, not too dissimilar to the arguments made by **Martin Walker** when he came to Montgomery last November. To give you an idea of Walker’s stature, he too was asked to give a talk to the New York Council the day I left. Again, the folks who come to Montgomery are the best of the best. We as a council have every right to be proud.

See you at the next meeting!