

# The Briefing

*A Newsletter of The Alabama World Affairs Council / Winter 2001/2002*

## Three Successful Programs Draw Big Crowds

### **Australian Andrew Mack Kicks Off AWAC Season**

On October 9, 2001, some four weeks after the assaults on New York and Washington, our first speaker was Harvard's **Andrew Mack**, a long-time senior deputy to Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary General, and an academic expert on security issues. Mack spoke to a large audience, arguing for a two-pronged policy against terrorism.

Of course, he argued, the U.S. must remove the current leadership of the Al Qaeda organization. Mack also argued that America should somehow prevent the base from renewing its leadership by removing the conditions of poverty and oppressive governments that breed would-be martyrs. Economic development, said Mack, takes away the stimulus to terrorism.

(Ed. note: There are no long term sociological, economic or political data that confirm Mack's analysis. Undoubtedly, economic development is better than poverty, but the leaders of the terrorists who carried out the

September 11 attacks were college-educated and from middle class families. Indeed, the leadership of Al Qaeda is (was) an upper middle class movement peopled by a millionaire engineer, a doctor, and several lawyers. Nasra Hassan, a United Nations relief worker, interviewed some 250 people involved in suicide attacks (the attackers themselves were unavailable) and her conclusion was, "None of them was uneducated, desperately poor, simple-minded or depressed.")

An insider at the United Nations, Mack's comments on the workings of that organization, in which he strongly believed, were insightful and instructive.

### **Larry Korb, VP of Council on Foreign Relations, a Hit**

**L**awrence Korb spoke on November 13, perhaps with a little more distance from September 11, to a standing room only audience. Korb, a vice president of the Council on Foreign Relations, argued that September 11 was a distinct firebreak in the conduct

and character of American foreign policy, in effect marking the line between Bush Administration one and two. "Bush one" tended to be more unilateralist, e.g., asserting its right to withdraw from the ABM treaty (something which has come to pass in mid-December in any event). Additionally, agreements on the environment, human rights, chemical and biological weapons, and even on the off-shore banking abuses were seen as not necessarily in America's best interests. After September 11, the Bush Administration, under the direction of an invigorated State Department, recognized the need for allies, assumed a more multilateral approach — and the allies were hearteningly forthcoming. Korb argued that military spending would now be at a level which seemed to him excessive. Contributors are: the high price tag for a muscular development and deployment of missile defenses, the transformation of the military to an all-service, "stealth-based" long-range precision force, and additional requirements for intelligence.

**Want to Join AWAC? After Christmas Special for Non-members Only! 40% DISCOUNT: See p. 3**

**2002 Schedule Revised: See p. 2**

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## Grossman of U.S. State Department Speaks by Video

On December 5, 30 select members of the Council were treated to an evening with **Ambassador Marc Grossman**, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, in a national interactive closed circuit video appearance. The program was hosted on campus by Auburn University at Montgomery and was a first for the U.S. State Department. Produced by the University of Wisconsin, it was beamed to twelve separate locations, with Ambassador Grossman answering pre-submitted questions from each. His responses, mostly concerning the war on terrorism, were thoughtful and authoritative. When he had to leave to attend a state dinner, his place was taken, in the interest of even-handedness, by an outspoken critic of U.S. policy, retired **Ambassador Edward Peck**. The contrast was stark and gave attendees ample food for thought.

(Ed. note: For most of the attendees, Ambassador Peck's comments and observations, essentially pacifistic in nature, seemed out of touch with not only administration policy, but also with the mood of the American electorate.)

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## Membership Increases

A combination of the word spreading about the Council, the shock of September 11 bringing the importance of international affairs into sharper focus, and some good recruiting by current members has resulted in a substantial increase in the membership. There are currently 440 members in the Council.

## AWAC Spring Schedule Modified Slightly

On January 15, 2002, famed CNN's world affairs correspondent, **Ralph Begleiter**, will visit with us. CNN's most widely-traveled correspondent, Begleiter logged over 1.5 million miles around the world with U.S. secretaries of state and presidents, **JAN 15** anchoring CNN's live worldwide coverage of Bosnia, the aftermath of the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin from Jerusalem, the Persian Gulf Crisis in 1990 and 1991, while interviewing Jordan's King Hussein, Egyptian President Mubarak, Mikhail Gorbachev, Margaret Thatcher, Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto, Chinese President Jiang Zemin and French President François Mitterand. Begleiter has just become an academic and is known as a terrific communicator. Among the many awards Begleiter has received are the Weintal Prize, one of diplomatic reporting's highest honors; the National Press Club Citation for Diplomatic Correspondence; the National Academy for Cable Programming Award; the Houston Documentary International Film Festival (Gold Award); Associated Press awards; and United Press International awards.

On March 5, 2002, **British Ambassador Sir Christopher Meyer** comes, for the first time, to Montgomery. One of Britain's **MAR 5** most senior diplomats, Sir Christopher has been the conduit for the close diplomatic and military

coordination in America's war against terror. Sir Christopher Meyer was John Major's press secretary for two years in the Tory Government at a time when it came under the fiercest media assault in recent memory. His solid defense of British interests, under both Labor and Tory governments, is considered a model of public service. When British Prime Minister Tony Blair came to meet President George Bush last winter, Sir Christopher was there to help break the ice. When the Northern Irish peace process was at a critical stage, Sir Christopher worked with Senator George Mitchell to help finalize the delicate last stages. Indeed, Sir Christopher has been at the heart of Anglo-American relations for nearly two decades and is widely considered Britain's leading diplomat.

On April 16, **Ambassador Robert Hunter**, a senior officer of the Rand Corporation in Washington, will speak. Hunter was U.S. Ambassador to NATO in the Clinton years, a principal architect of the larger and more outward "New NATO" and a key leader on the North **APR 16** Atlantic Council in implementing decisions of the 1994 and 1997 NATO summits. A former vice president for international politics and director of European studies and Middle East studies at Georgetown University, he was a special advisor on Lebanon, lead consultant to the Kissinger Commission in

Latin America, and a director of the National Endowment for Democracy. He also served as a senior foreign policy advisor to Governor Bill Clinton, Vice President Walter Mondale and Majority Leader Richard Gephardt. Throughout the Carter Administration, Ambassador Hunter served on the National Security Council as director of West European affairs and Middle East affairs. He was also a member of the U.S. negotiating team for talks on the West Bank and Gaza. The Rand Corporation numbers his publications at over 700. His appearances on "Nightline," the "Lehrer News Hour," CNN, and so on are even more numerous. He is a famed speaker.

On May 14, a panel of senior **Air War College** instructors from Maxwell AFB will report to the Council on their individual spring trips to different regions of the world. This **MAY 14** annual Regional Studies Report has become one of AWAC's most popular programs.

## **Report: Finances Adequate, AHF Grant Approved**

After two consecutive years in which expenses exceeded income, the World Affairs Council ended the last fiscal year (July 1, 2000-June 30, 2001) with a most welcome net income of \$4,609.96. On December 1, 2001, we were notified by the Alabama Humanities Foundation that they have approved a major grant of \$7,000 for the current year. In addition, income from dues from the increased membership has gone up so far by \$1,496.07. Even in the face of rising expenses, these factors should combine to give us adequate funding for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The grant from the Alabama Humanities Foundation is especially welcome. The AHF is the Alabama affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and funds only a very few of the best programs statewide.

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## **Board of Directors Signs Up Four New Members**

Four positions on the Board of Directors came open this year, as three members moved away and one member resigned for personal reasons. Dr. Guin Nance, chancellor of Auburn University at Montgomery, was elected unanimously and graciously accepted. In addition, the following were elected as new members: Dr. C. McGavock Porter, a Montgomery physician; Robert Troy, vice president of Aliant Bank; and Dr. Robert Elliott, dean of the School of Sciences at AUM.

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## **Critique Sheets Yield Constructive Comments**

The critique sheets after the first two presentations were generally highly laudatory of the speakers, and some offered unsolicited positive comments about the Council's programs. The acoustics and sound system, which came in for a lot of criticism last year, received some more complaints, particularly after the first speaker. The second speaker used a lapel microphone and seemed to project better, and there were actually two complimentary comments about hearability!

With the larger crowds at the reception, there were some complaints about access to the food and the bar. We will continue to explore different setups and make changes as appropriate to smooth out these arrangements.

## *After Christmas Special!*

**For non-members only:** See the enclosed pledge card, fill it out and mail it to

AWAC

P.O. Box 241462

Montgomery, AL 36124

## Executive Director's Corner

DR. JAMES NATHAN



From time to time, members have asked me my take on current events. I think with the benefit of a little distance from September

11, we can see we have done pretty well as a nation. There were undoubtedly more attacks against the U.S. and the West in the works. One plot was discovered in Paris; another, it seems, was being readied for London's financial district. Other plots seem to have been disrupted. At home, our airport security and soft target security — such as gas storage sites or toxic chemical depots — do not yet seem up to par. But security awareness certainly is getting better.

The administration focus has been, as it should be, on what appears to be an immense criminal conspiracy. CIA officers privately, and German intelligence in the *Financial Times*, speak of some 70,000 graduates of Al Qaeda training now loose worldwide. Some 30,000 Al Qaeda graduates are said to be in Europe. But Al Qaeda plotters are surely having a harder time bringing their plans to fruition.

We are not out of the woods. But we are much better off today than

most experts would have guessed on September 12.

The English newspaper, *The Observer*, claims Osama bin Laden's taped dinner was a CIA sting, but however it came to pass, the bin Laden video is astonishing. The image of bin Laden's monstrous moral insouciance will count for us well beyond the first reports of disbelief in some quarters of the Arab world.

Not every element of American policy, I think, has been as prudent as I would like. Our support for the

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Sharon government has been a bit too uncritical, and I think it was improvident to withdraw from the ABM treaty. Nor do I think the gunning for Iraq, now, is going to help us root out the kind of terrorism associated with Al Qaeda. But most of the tone and substance of post September 11 American foreign policy has been spot on: professional, competent, and, measured by results, remarkably successful.

It was also prescient and important for President Bush to have taken the lead to speak out for tolerance, reading to Islamic children, going to

mosques and calling Moslem clerics to the White House.

Indeed, September 11 has brought out the best of us as a people. If this had happened elsewhere, people would be filling their stadiums and public places chanting for blood retribution. Here, the stadiums were used for prayer; and, then, as they should be, they were used for games and concerts. We have done well as a nation. And though self-congratulation is not always good form, I think we have earned it.

At this writing, my family and I and fellow AWAC member Terry Wofford are off to Washington for the annual World Affairs Council conference. The annual meeting is a grand event, open to any member.

This year the program includes a relatively small meeting with President Bush. I am taking Michael Nathan, who will be age 10 the day before, to the meeting with the President.

I am always proud to attend these events. AWAC has such a fine reputation. Many of our guest speakers and visitors are surprised — but none has ever failed to be impressed — by the size, interest, and awareness of our audiences. By any standard, we do some of the best programs (and of course, at the lowest cost) in the country.

Thanks for your support, and best for the new year.