

The Briefing

A Newsletter of The Alabama World Affairs Council / Fall 2004

Medal of Honor Recipient Jack Jacobs, U.N. Sanctions Expert Vic Comras, French Ambassador Levitte This Fall

To open the 2004-2005 season for the AWAC, Jack Jacobs will speak to us on Tuesday evening, September 21 at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. His subject will concern the war on terror. At Maxwell, every level of military education schools for officers and NCOs requested to hear him discuss integri-



SEP 21 ty in leadership; as a result, he will speak to no less than five audiences during his two-day visit, plus an interview on Alabama Public Television.

Jacobs holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Rutgers University and entered the U.S. Army in 1966 as a Second Lieutenant through the ROTC program. He served as a platoon leader in the 82nd Airborne Division, executive officer of an infantry battalion in the 7th Infantry Division, and commanded the 4th Battalion, 10th Infantry in Panama. As a member of the faculty of the U.S. Military Academy, Jacobs taught international relations and comparative politics for three years, and he was a member of the faculty of the National War College in Washington, DC. He served in Vietnam twice, both times as an advisor to Vietnamese infantry battalions. He is among the most highly decorated soldiers from that era, having earned three Bronze Stars, two Silver Stars and the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest combat decoration.

Jacobs retired from the Army as a Colonel in 1987. He was a founder and Chief Operating Officer of Auto-Finance Group Inc, one of the firms to pioneer the

securitization of debt instruments; the firm was subsequently sold to Key Bank. He was a Managing Director of Bankers Trust and of Lehman Brothers, retiring in 1996 to pursue investments. He is a principal of The Fitzroy Group, a firm that specializes in the development of residential real estate in London and invests both for its own account and in joint ventures with other institutions. He is a trustee of Aegis Investments, serves on the boards of directors of a number of charitable organizations, and is the Secretary/Treasurer of the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation. Jacobs is an on-camera military and political analyst for NBC, and he is the McDermott Distinguished Professor of Humanities at the US Military Academy. Col. Jacobs is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Vic Comras, U.S. State Department



OCT 19 Vic Comras, Minister Counselor (Ret.), U.S. State Department, is currently an attorney in New York and a highly sought after consultant and writer on terrorism financing. He is known in diplomatic and academic circles as one of the foremost experts on the practicality and effectiveness of economic sanctions.

He started his diplomatic career in Zaire, then went on to other assignments in Africa, Canada, and Europe, including Chief of Mission in Macedonia. He served as

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Board of Directors Changes

Four members of the board of Directors have left the Board for various reasons. Margaret Carpenter, who has served with great distinction as Vice President for seven years (remember the Vance trip? that was her idea) has decided to retire; Bob Elliott has retired from his position as the Dean of the School of Sciences at AUM; Bill Honey is planning to spend his retirement years in California; and Major General Bentley Rayburn has moved from his position as Commandant of the Air War College to be the commander of the Air Force Doctrine Center at Maxwell. All made positive contributions to the World Affairs Council, and all will be missed.

At the most recent meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board voted to elect Bowen Ballard, CEO of Ballard Realty, as Vice President (see nearby profile). New Board members elected are: Dr. Bayo Lawal, the new Dean of the School of Sciences at AUM; Dr. James (Skip) Dotherow, Vice President for Finances and Acquisition at Ballard Realty; Robert Hayes a former Marine and semi-retired mechanical engineer who with his wife Betty has spearheaded recruiting from the Dadeville area; and Major General Robert J. (Bob) Elder, the new Commandant of the Air War College.

This is a great group and is certain to serve the Council well.

Council Trivia Questions:

How many can you answer?

- Q #1. When was AWAC founded?
- Q #2. Who was the first president? chairman? executive director?
- Q #3. Who was the opening speaker 15 years ago (1989)?
- Q #4. Who was the opening speaker 10 years ago (1994)?
- Q #5. Who was the opening speaker 5 years ago (1999)?
- Q #6. Who was the opening speaker 2 years ago (2002)?
- Q #7. Who was the opening speaker last year?

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Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and was Chairman of the U.S. State Department Open Forum on foreign policy, a high-level international discussion forum.

Comras then was placed in charge of control over implementation of the United Nations sanctions against Yugoslavia. Subsequent to that assignment, he was appointed by Kofi Annan as one of five international monitors to oversee the steps all countries have taken to identify Al Qaeda participants and supporters, to inhibit their mobility, to cut off their funding and access to economic resources, and to stop them from acquiring arms and explosives. They

submitted their fifth and final report in January 2004.

The French Ambassador

The French Ambassador to the United States, His Excellency Jean-David Levitte, has agreed to come to Montgomery and speak to our Council on



December 9. The two senior Air University professional military schools, the

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Air War College and the Air Command and Staff College, will also host the Ambassador during his visit.

Ambassador Levitte took up his current duties in Washington in December 2002. He was previously permanent representative of France to the United Nations from March 2000 to November 2002. A career diplomat since 1970, Ambassador Levitte served as a diplomatic advisor and “sherpa” to French President Chirac from 1995 to March 2000.

He holds a law degree, and is a graduate of the Institute of Political Science and the National School of Oriental Languages, where he studied Chinese and Indonesian.

Board Member Profile: Bowen Ballard

Bowen Ballard, recently elected as Vice President of the Board of Directors, is a well-known and respected personality around our city, the state, and nation. He is the Chief Executive Officer of Ballard Realty Company, Inc., a 56-year-old multi-faceted realty company founded by his father. Bowen recently retired after 38 years in the Air Force Reserve, holding the rank of Major General. During his distinguished military career, he served as Mobilization Assistant to the Commander of Air University, Mobilization Assistant to the Director of the National Security Agency, and Special Assistant to the Commander of Space Command. In an unprecedented appointment, he was asked to serve on active duty in the Pentagon in the critical position of Deputy Chief of Staff Intelligence for the United States Air force.

Since his retirement from the Air Force Reserve, Bowen has turned his energies to working to improve the city of Montgomery.

He works tirelessly with the Chamber of Commerce and our congressional delegation to insure that our military bases remain intact as a vital economic contributor to the area.

Bowen remains active in numerous civic organizations, including the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce, the Committee of 100, and the local chapter of the Air Force Association, each of which he has served as President. He has served on the AUM advisory board for many years. Professionally, he is a member of the Boards of Directors for Colonial Bank and Beach Community Bank (FL) and the National Association of Realtors, and is a life member of the National Association of Home Builders Board of Directors.

Bowen and his wife Carol together continue to provide leadership to numerous cultural, civic and military related organizations.

Bowen's knowledge of world affairs, national and military policies and his many contacts uniquely qualify him to serve the Alabama World Affairs Council.

Answers to Trivia Quiz

1. The Articles of Incorporation were signed on June 30, 1987. The first programs were in 1988.
2. John "Bubba" Trotman, Henry Leslie, Nicholas Gerogiannis.
3. Dr. Lily Golden.
4. Shirley Williams and Richard Neustadt.
5. Dr. Joseph Nye.
6. Maj Gen Perry Smith.
7. Amb Michael Laingen.

Finances: No change in dues, still the lowest in the country

As we had programmed, last year's total income, \$30,055, just about about evened out with total expenses, \$27,284. As a result, we ended up the year in the black and are able to start this year with a modest reserve. This despite the fact that our dues structure is the lowest of any World Affairs Council of remotely the same size or larger.

Last year, we were helped out financially by the postponement of the hoped-for meeting with the French Ambassador (he has specifically agreed to come this year—December 9). But there are several systemic reasons for this success, e.g., cost control, grant support from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, and the fact that so many members are willing to join at the higher end of the dues scale.

So the dues structure will remain the same as last year, and it is our hope that the systemic factors obtain again this year.

Check out our
web site!
awac.us

Want to
join
AWAC?
Call 244-3337.

Executive Director's Corner: Dr. James Nathan

Editor's Note: Dr. Nathan has just returned from a 6-week Fulbright program teaching at the Foreign Affairs University in Beijing, China.

When I was a boy, my father would go out at night with an old hat and a flashlight and pick up thousands of smelts from Lake Michigan when they ran in the late summer. I always thought of him when I saw the rivers of Chinese bicycles upon first getting to Beijing in 1999. But now, the bikes have all but disappeared. In Shanghai, they are banned. China is changing so fast that if you blink, you think when

"There are 100 million people in the Chinese middle class."

you look again through the dust and the thick summer air that something else altogether will be there when you open your eyes. I have never seen a place change so fast, though I imagine Korea and Taiwan must have gone through a similar transformation. It is the sheer size and scale of this change that makes China so perplexing and a thing of wonder. There are now 100 million people in the Chinese middle class. They don't have credit cards yet, their housing and plumbing are still substandard, but the change is dizzying. The Chinese are producing a million cars a year and buying most of them. Soon, they will export cars. And when they do, it will affect the world markets, as did Chinese production of everything from computer chips to textiles.

The question is what will become of the place? The ideology of the ruling party is still Marxist-Leninist, a

100-year-old take on politics that history has proved fatally flawed. The party exists for itself and has precious little legitimacy with the people. It does rule with a relatively light hand, and the judicial system and the police are getting better. But China still executes 15,000 or so people a year in procedures most would consider totalitarian and inexcusable. But, from no golf courses five years ago, there are now 200. From no

advanced computer chip manufacturer, there is now a 4th generation plant as modern as any in the world. From a commercial space program that floundered in flames, there are now Chinese astronauts. But China's future is clouded by a political system that is dated, useless, and widely despised. The danger is that the party will hang on, past its time, ultimately using its ace in the hole: growing Chinese nationalism.

There is in China the most startling and blithe talk of war over the unresolved issue of Taiwan, and the widespread and disconcerting acceptance that such a war would involve the United States and perhaps millions of casualties. There is some time pressure in this. Taiwan is slipping away. Too close to the Olympics, a move on Taiwan would doom the great effort the Chinese people have extended to put a better

face on Beijing. After the Olympics, it will be too late. Taiwan will have slipped away.

There are other serious pressures on China's leadership. The situation in the countryside is generally pretty desperate, with average annual wages hovering around 300 dollars. The cities can't absorb as many workers as there are rural people who are flooding into them. Rural Chinese are seen as having a near genetic inferiority when compared to their urban cousins, at least in the eyes of the comfortable middle class. Unemployment is vastly understated, although in the South there are pockets of labor shortages. Chinese University students can't get jobs, or at least jobs worth having. The universities are pouring out 2.5 million young people a year, and the numbers are rising. China is on the cusp of becoming a considerable power, but is haunted by its own uncertain political future. Many U.S. foreign policy issues have gone under-attended in our war on terror, none more important than the problematic issue of China, Asia, and the American position in the Far East.

My son Michael, age 12, and I spent 6 weeks this time in China. I did a number of extraordinarily well-viewed extended interviews on Chinese TV, and Michael was himself on one program for half an hour.

All in all, a fantastic trip.