

The Briefing

A Newsletter of The Alabama World Affairs Council / Fall 2008

CULLUM, HUNTER, KORB COMPLETE FIRST HALF OF SEASON; STEPHENS, LATELL, WAR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS NEXT

On September 16, 2008, **Lee Cullum** took us on a tour of different regions and issues of national and international interest. As an award-winning journalist herself, she saw a rocky future for newspapers, with strong papers like the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* surviving, but many others in trouble. Older readers still want hard news, but younger readers tend to want to read about entertainment and lifestyles. She saw U.S. backed Ukraine as a possible international flash point, with the U.S. seeking its membership in NATO, supported by Eastern Europe, but with Russia and most of Western Europe, especially Germany, opposed. She said that immigration was a problem in the U.S., and especially in Turkey, where the issue will likely block Turkey's entry into the European Union. She averred that President Bush was the weakest Republican president on foreign policy in recent memory.

On October 7, **Ambassador Robert Hunter** felt that America had two extraordinary candidates for president, and that we would be well served by either one. He said we should be winding down the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan because we have achieved most of what we wanted when we went into those countries. We must try to bring these Islamic countries and others into the modern world while isolating the "few criminals." He said it was far better to have a bipartisan foreign policy, and to work with others when we can, or do it alone when we must. He saw it the work of a generation to erect a new security structure in the Gulf region, dealing first with Iraq, then Iran, then with the Israeli problem.

Re the recent foray of Russian forces into Georgia, he felt that Russia had overstepped its bounds and had come up a net loser. On China and the U.S., he talked of our complex and interdependent relationship, with the Chinese holding a trillion dollars of U.S. debt, while we provide the major outlet for the stream of consumer goods produced by their economic machine. He said we need to assure that China develops economically and politically without becoming a military superpower.

On October 21, **Dr. Lawrence Korb** spoke of the challenges facing the new administration. He said that the age of American hegemony is over, with rising powers China, India, Brazil, and a resurgent Russia. He broke down the "Bush Doctrine" of 2002 into three basic elements: preventive war may be necessary (as distinguished from preemptive war); American unilateralism (unilateral if we can, multilateral if we must); and the belief that freedom and democracy are the wave of the future. He said that even Bush does not subscribe to this doctrine any more. He painted a grim picture of the state of the Army as overstretched, especially the Guard and Reserve. He said that when Donald Rumsfeld became the Secretary of Defense, he acted like it was a hostile takeover. Dr. Korb stressed the importance of the next Secretary understanding the military as professionals and of selecting a deputy who is a proven manager. He said if Senator Obama were to be put to the test, it would be by Al Queda or the like, not by a nation state.

Our next speaker, **Bret Stephens**, scheduled for **February 3, 2009**, is the foreign affairs correspondent for

Continued on next page

Speakers continued from page 1

the *Wall Street Journal*. He writes “Global View,” the *Wall Street Journal’s* foreign affairs column, which appears every Tuesday in the paper’s U.S., Asian and European editions.



FEB 3

He is a member of the paper’s Editorial Board and of the Senior Leadership Team of Dow Jones, the paper’s parent company.

He is also a regular panelist on the *Journal Editorial Report*, a weekly political talk show carried nationally by the Fox News Channel.

Mr. Stephens began his career as an editor at *Commentary* magazine before moving to the *Journal* in 1998. In early 2002 he was named editor-in-chief of *The Jerusalem Post*, a position he assumed at the age of 28—the youngest person ever in the job. At the *Post*, he was responsible for the paper’s news, editorial, electronic, and international editions; wrote a weekly column; and oversaw the most extensive redesign of the paper in its then 70-year history.

Mr. Stephens returned to the *Journal* in late 2004. The following year he was named a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, where he is also a media fellow. Among other honors, he is the recipient of the Frank Knox Media Award for his coverage of U.S. military affairs and of the 2008 Eric Briendel Prize for Excellence in Opinion Journalism. His coverage of the 2005

Kashmir Earthquake was recognized for its excellence by the South Asian Journalism Association. More recently, he was a nominee for the 2008 Pulitzer in two categories: commentary and editorial writing.

Mr. Stephens has reported stories from around the world, including Iraq and Afghanistan, and has interviewed dozens of world leaders. He is a frequent guest on CNN, BBC, National Public Radio and other major media. Raised in Mexico City and educated at the University of Chicago and the London School of Economics, Mr. Stephens lives in New York with his wife, Dr. Corinna da Fonseca-Wollheim, and their two children, Lara and Noah.

On March 10, 2009, Dr. **Brian Latell** will speak on the past and present fortunes of Cuba, with a look ahead to what the future holds. He is probably the most qualified American to address the issue of the only communist country in the Western Hemisphere. He has been a Latin America and Caribbean specialist for the last four decades and lectures regularly on these subjects to university, professional, and political groups. He is currently a senior associate in the Center for Strategic International Studies (CSIS) Americas Program and a Senior Research Associate at Miami University’s Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies. He was an adjunct



MAR 10

professor at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. In 1998, Latell retired after three and a half decades as a foreign intelligence officer, having served in the U.S. Air Force and at the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Intelligence Council. From 1994 to 1998, he served as director of the Center for the Study of Intelligence as publisher and chairman of the editorial board of *Studies in Intelligence*, the journal of the profession.

From 1990 to 1994, he was national intelligence officer for Latin America, the highest-ranking analytic position for that region in the U.S. intelligence community. In that position, his responsibility was to track Fidel Castro and his brother Raoul, and he regularly briefed government officials from the Secretary of State to the President. Dr. Latell has consulted throughout the region with presidents, senior government officials, U.S. embassy officers, and regional leaders in diverse fields. He is frequently quoted in press coverage. He studied at universities in Mexico and Spain and has lived or traveled extensively in all but one of the Latin American countries.

On May 5, three **Air War College** senior instructors, moderated by the Dean, will report on the trips they have just taken escorting War College students to countries around the globe as part of their Regional Studies Program.

Board Member Profile: Dr. Tom Vocino

Dr. Tom Vocino is one of the long-time members of the Alabama World Affairs Council, having attended his first meeting in 1988, and has been a member of the Board of Directors for 15 years. Tom is Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Auburn University Montgomery and has served on the AUM faculty since 1974. A native of Kenosha, Wisconsin, he holds bachelor's and master's degrees in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Ph.D. in political science from Southern Illinois University.

In addition to his academic experience, Tom has worked as a research analyst for the Illinois Commission on State Government, and he spent a year in Washington, D.C. as an American Political Science Association Congressional Fellow. He is co-author and/or co-editor of six books, including a textbook, *Contemporary Public Administration*, which has been used at over 100 universities. He is also the author or co-author of over 60 articles, book chapters, case studies, and technical reports. His work has been published in all the leading journals in his field. He is a past co-editor of the *Public Administration Quarterly* and the *International Journal of Public Administration*.

Tom has served on the governing boards of the American Society for Public Administration, the National Association of Schools of Public

Affairs and Administration, and the Southern Political Science Association. During 1996-1997, he served as President of the Policy Studies Organization. He is a recent recipient of the Elmer B. Staats Career Service Award of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. He currently serves as President of Pi Alpha Alpha National Honor Society, the honor society for public administration and public affairs.

Tom has been very active in the Montgomery community. For the past 25 years, he has been a member of the Montgomery Capital Rotary Club; he is past president of this club and has chaired its beneficiary committee for several years. He serves on the Board of Directors of Partners in Education and chairs its development committee. He is a long-time member of Woodland United Methodist Church in Pike Road.

Tom is married to Dr. Caroline Adams, who is retired from the AUM Biology Department. They have two children, Anna and Nick, and one grandchild, Lucy. Anna, a graduate of Emory University, is an actress in Los Angeles and is the co-star of a television show, "Free Radio," which will start its second season on VH1 in 2009. Nick, a graduate of Auburn University, is in law school after having served as a governmental affairs coordinator for a local trade association. Tom and Caroline make their home in the Pike Road area.

Evaluation Comments from Attendees

Here are some of the recent comments made by AWAC members who took the time, much appreciated, to fill out an evaluation sheet.

Comment: How about including a former U.S. President as a speaker?

Response: A wonderful idea, but the price tag of, say \$100,000, is beyond our means (our entire yearly budget runs around \$35,000).

Comments: There were several references to the need for two tables for the main course.

Response: The Museum now provides two tables for the main course.

Comments: At reception, should introduce speaker around.

Response: When speaker arrives on time, we are doing that. And please be proactive in introducing yourself when you see either the president or executive director talking to a strange face.

Comment: Can we get a summary of the presentations?

Response: After each talk, our website (awac.us) carries notes kept by Jeremy Lewis. And you can get an audio tape of each talk by calling Dahdee at 244-3337.

Comments (several): The sound system needs improvement.

Response: The Museum keeps trying!

Comments: Would like red wine

Response: The Museum does not serve red wine at any function because of their experience with stains.

Executive Director's Corner: Dr. James Nathan

In China, a Party for the Party

You know a country is a great power," quipped John Stewart of the "The Daily Show," "when they have great powers."

Now China is making rain. Really.

We just returned from China after another tour in Beijing with Auburn Montgomery students, son Michael and his friend Scott Williams.

We were lucky. Only two or three academic programs and several tens of thousands visitors actually got visas. Even those who had long-standing Chinese invitations could not get in this time.

The reason it was so hard to get there is that the Chinese authorities were all but frenzied in their efforts to make sure everything went right. Chinese authorities wanted to ensure "social harmony," as they put it.

Part of a harmonious society, it seems, is to clear the air and skies, at least when guests are coming. Still, the air was lousy, up until the night before the opening ceremony. Then, there was a great volley of noise. And it rained. The rain was not, as the communists are fond of saying in times gone by, an accident.

Sixty billion dollars was spent on construction, shooing undesirables out of town, closing concrete and power plants, taking half the cars off the road, and making rain in advance

of the opening ceremony.

For the opening ceremony, Chinese had "guaranteed good weather." And in the hours before the jaw-dropping ceremony, Beijing city's meteorological bureau bombarded gathering clouds.

More than 1,000 silver iodide rockets shot at the skies from gun batteries located at 20 different sites in the city's suburbs. And it rained, not on the Bird's Nest, of course, but elsewhere. In fact, nearly every place else in Beijing was soaked. But the great stadium was as dry as the Gobi.

Weather chief Guo Hu had promised good weather. He delivered.

In truth, China had been turning itself inside out for the games. In the weeks we were there, people kept offering us their place in line. No old person whacked me on the back in the bus or tram. I was not elbowed once for a ticket. English signs were everywhere.

Not that the air in the weeks before the games wasn't as thick and cruddy as ever, three times what would be considered merely dangerous, as measured by BBC. Chinese officials insisted, along with the China Daily experts, it was simply "ground fog" caused, they said, by "low clouds." You could believe Chinese officialdom, and the relent-

lessly cheery China Daily, or your own lying eyes, ears and throat.

But when the great games were about to begin, misstatements were not going to do the trick. China's meteorologists made rain to order, again. There were showers at the city edges outside.

These rains apparently pre-empted rainfall from falling on Beijing's Olympic Bird's Nest stadium. And for the following several days, the skies of Beijing held newly minted air.

But China, in fact, faces huge problems still. They are running out of water and air that is clean on other than festive occasions.

Pollution costs Chinese GDP an astonishing 8 percent of annual growth. The Chinese currency is getting too expensive. Many light manufacturers are leaving. And young boys outnumber girls in ways that portend a demographic disaster (160 boys to 100 girls are born in some provinces).

But this time, as when any guest comes, the Chinese house was clean and cheerful.

Beijing held one whale of a party. And young Scott Williams, Michael Nathan and his father had the time of their lives.

Check out our web site! awac.us