

The Briefing

A Newsletter of The Alabama World Affairs Council / Winter/Spring 2005

This Spring: Paul Smyke on Globalization, Edward Morse on Oil, Air War College Instructors on Regional Studies

Paul Smyke, World Economic Forum

Every winter, the “glitterati” of business, government and economics convene in the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland. One of WEF’s most senior managers, Paul Smyke, will be our speaker on March 15.

Mr. Smyke comes at the suggestion of his old friend and long-time AWAC Board Member, Dr. **MAR 15** Ed Bridges. The Davos



Conference of the World Economic Forum is supported by the 1000 largest corporations in the world but is more than just a gathering of the world’s business elite; also invited are the planet’s foremost intellectuals and statesmen, e.g., Tony Blair, Jacques

Chirac, and Gerhard Schroeder all spoke at the most recent conference. Senator Richard Shelby also attended.

The WEF also has a substantial “in house” research capability of its own and is generally considered one of the world’s leading think tanks. For more information, their website is www.weforum.org.

Mr. Smyke, a graduate of the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, currently serves as the Senior Advisor to the Managing Board of the World Economic Forum. A Swiss-American, he is well known in Europe as a television commentator and holds a number of board appointments in the private sector in the U.S. and Europe. Mr. Smyke will speak on globalization and the work of the World Economic Forum.

Dr. Edward Morse, Oil Expert

Edward L Morse, one of the world’s leading experts on energy, will be our guest on April 12th. Dr. Morse is a gifted speaker, and when he taught at Princeton he was recognized as Princeton’s top teacher. He was the founding secretary of the Tri-lateral Commission and later director of what was the most ambitious



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research project the Council on Foreign Relations ever undertook. Dr. Morse left the Council on Foreign Relations for the Carter Administration, where as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, he led the American economic sanctions program against Iran during the hostage drama. From Government service, Dr. Morse went on to found several petroleum-related companies. The first, Petroleum Finance Corporation, soon became the world’s leader in advising major clients on issues of oil exploration and political risk. Dr. Morse then became the publisher of Petroleum Intelligence, widely considered “the bible of energy industry newsletters.”

Dr. Morse has written four books, over 70 academic articles, works closely with the U.N. and the Volcker Commission, holds numerous academic and board memberships, and serves as a network commentator on energy matters. He currently is Senior Advisor to the Hess Petroleum Trading Company. Dr. Morse will talk about Oil, Politics, and the Future of the World Economy.

Audience Evaluations: Always Instructive, Sometimes Amusing

On any given night, about a quarter of the attendees (Ed. note: We wish it were more) take the time and trouble to fill out an Audience Evaluation Form to tell us what they liked or didn't like about the evening's reception and presentation. While the bulk of the comments are complimentary to one degree or another (much appreciated), some others are less so. All are read for content and for useful and constructive criticisms and suggestions.

The most consistent gripes have been about the acoustics and the sound system in the Museum, although these have dropped off this year. The museum staff have worked hard to improve the system, and the biggest variable now is the way the speaker projects and uses the microphone. Some speakers like the lavalier mike and some don't—it doesn't appear to make a great deal of difference. After our first program this year when the mike didn't work at all, one wag said, "The sound system was the best ever!" On the same night, one member wrote, "The acoustics are dreadful."

The food at the buffet/reception recently has received high marks, while there were a few comments on the table arrangement and the need to "make the buffet more customer friendly" that led to changes. Other comments on the buffet:

- "Too much food and not enough time to eat and socialize too." (Possi-

ble solution: perhaps come earlier?)

- "...there were no forks." On the same night: "Thanks for the forks."

- "Excellent, especially the mashed potatoes."

- "Excellent, but we need



Gen. Cleveland, President, and Bowan Ballard, Vice President, chat before a presentation.

Col. Doug Cairns, long-time member, asks a question.

some younger women, preferably good looking, for me to talk to."

Some comments on the programs:

- Concerning the Air War College presentation last May, at least four members called it the "best of the year."

- For the same Air War College program, the best presenter was "the speaker on Korea." (Ed. note: there was no speaker on Korea.)

- From last year, "limit questions to some reasonable length, some of which turn out to be speeches." Amen.

- Also, tongue in cheek, "Have teleprompter available for some



Dr. David Lai, Air War College, chats with Dr. James Nathan, AWAC Executive Director.

questioners."

- Ref. Col. Jack Jacobs, the Medal of Honor recipient, "(He was) only here to sell his book." (Ed. note: Not true. Col. Jacobs was against the sale and made no money from it. The MOH Foundation and AWAC were the only ones to profit.)

- In the "different-strokes-for-different-folks" category, re an unnamed speaker, one member said, "Truly outstanding, knowledgeable and experienced," while another was somewhat less complimentary. "This presentation was the poorest one I have attended in five years... surely we can get better speakers than this feather merchant."

Air War College Instructors

On May 10, three Air War College faculty members, a perennial favorite, will present their report on recent visits to countries around the globe.

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Cleveland, Wofford Attend WACA National Conference in Washington

The World Affairs Council of America (AWACA) held its national conference, January 26-29, 2005, in Washington, D.C. The theme, “Tackling the World’s Toughest Issues,” was timely and well received by a record 530 conference attendees, representing 86 Councils. The program consisted of plenary sessions, ambassadorial luncheons, discussion groups, embassy receptions and optional tours and workshops. The Alabama World Affairs Council (AWAC) was represented by Council President General Charles Cleveland and Terry Wofford, long-time member.

The 2005 conference featured for-

mer Secretary of State Colin Poweell, as the dinner speaker.

Plenary sessions included speakers on global issues. Rep. Lee Hamilton, co-chairman of the 9/11 Commission, talked about the work of the Commission and what needs to be done now. General Brent Scowcroft talked on “Weapons of Mass Destruction: What Should We Do?” Charles Krauthammer, a conservative political pundit, addressed several approaches to our global relationships. Laurie Garrett, Council on Foreign Relations, spoke eloquently of the devastating effects of the recent tsunami and of the worldwide problem of AIDS.

The session entitled “Israel and Palestine: Is Peace Possible?” was presented by Amb. Dennis Ross. U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel addressed “Major World Challenges.” as he saw them, and European Union Ambassador John Burton spoke on the “Future of Europe.”

This great opportunity is available to all members —watch for word on next year’s conference.

Jacobs, Comras, and Levitte Score in Fall '04

Jack Jacobs (Col. USA, Ret.) a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, gave an entertaining and instructive talk on his experiences and his (mixed but generally positive) views on the war on terror. He was very clear on his view that Iran poses the most dangerous threat to the West in the long term.

Victor Comras, retired from the U.S. State Department, is a noted expert on international trade sanctions. He spoke of the partially successful international efforts to disrupt the flow of funds into terrorist coffers.

The French Ambassador to the United States, Jean-David Levitte, proved an excellent representative of his country to a relatively skeptical audience. His mission was to mend fences and build bridges; he stressed the support France is giving the United States in Afghanistan and in intelligence gathering, while defending their decision not to support the U.S. with troops in Iraq. He received a standing ovation both before and after his talk.

Our Records Show Long-Time Loyal Members

One of the most intriguing aspects of the World Affairs Council is the extraordinary long-time loyalty that so many of our members have shown. From the first relatively meager membership in 1988 and 1989, a goodly number have stayed with the Council through thick and thin. These stalwarts include early officers and founding members **John “Bubba” Trotman, Henry Leslie, Lawrence “Buck” Grinter, James Loeb,** and **Major General Will Hill Tankersley.**

In addition to the above, the early lists of dues-paying members indicate that the longest serving members of the Council are **Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Henry**, who joined with a family membership on April 21, 1988. Congratulations and thanks to **Bob and Carol Henry** for their long-time

interest in international affairs and the Alabama World Affairs Council.

Also members from those early days who are still active include: **Robert and Ardes Anderson, Bowen Ballard** (Vice President), **Aletha Barsanti, Margaret Benson, Dr. and Mrs. Ed Bridges** (Ed is a Board member), **Louise Candler, James D. (Danny) Cassady, MaryAnne Douglass** (Treasurer), **Nita Hagen** (a Board member), **Ken Kostenbader, Fred Lippincott, H.F. (Jim) Levy, Beverly Lipton, Col. Lonnie Martin, Julian McPhillips** (a Board member), and **Paul Miles.**

Laurie Peacock, Tigjo Price, Frank and Nan Rosa (Nan is Secretary), **Jim Sabel, Starr Smith, Mary Lee Stapp, Tom Vocino** (a Board member), **Luther Waller, and Gay Winter.**

Executive Director's Corner: Dr. James Nathan

With son Michael, I was off to the Philippines for part of November and early December as "Sy Cip Distinguished Fulbright" Professor to Asia, speaking in innumerable classrooms to Philippine students. It was quite an experience.

The Philippines have always been troubled. Typhoons and other natural disasters wreak havoc, and there are several insurgent groups that have been in business more or less continuously since the 1940s. Most of the insurgencies are a weird combination of regional secessionists, layered with Maoist and/or extreme Islamic leadership. Hence, from time to time, a bomb goes off in Manila, or a ferry is sunk, or a bank is robbed, or business people and tourists are kidnapped.

Traffic in the city center is the worst I have ever seen. Manila jitney drivers—those who man the wildly decorated jeep-like vehicles that can transport 7-9 people at a time—were on a one-day strike; but even when

Alabama Humanities Foundation Approves Grant

The Alabama Humanities Foundation has notified AWAC that AHF has approved our grant request for \$3785, covering most of the period of the 2004-2005 season. This welcome and generous grant with members' dues and contributions, plus other miscellaneous income, gives our Council a solid financial base to complete the year.

the jitneys came back into service, getting from the city center to a dinner at an Embassy officer's house some three miles away took two hours.

Much of the Philippines' problems have to do with their many natural catastrophes, made worse by a lack of building codes, zoning, or any environmental regulation. When the rains come in the form of mud slides and floods, there is terrific devastation. We caught two typhoons—two of the 26 that hit the islands this year. And in the last typhoon, on the day before we left, a thousand people were buried alive by mud.

The Philippine people have the reputation of being the most sympathetic to the United States. Their admiration for America is heartening. President Bush is more popular than their own president, Mrs. Gloria Arroyo; and indeed, approval for the U.S. and for Mr. Bush—according to the most recent public opinion survey—is higher than any place else in the world, including the U.S.

Mrs. Arroyo's capitulation last year to terrorism in Iraq (she withdrew all Philippine forces when a Philippine woman was captured by Islamic rebels) was popular at the time. Now, in retrospect, her decision is widely criticized. To some, she involved the Philippines in a craven international humiliation that will make her position in her own war against terrorists nearly impossible. To others, nationalists, she remains a shameless toady of President Bush.

President Arroyo's clout in Washington remains substantial. She is a democrat who was popularly elected. She has cooperated in all kinds of ways, public and private, with the Bush administration's worldwide war against terrorism. But at home, she is weaker by the hour, with approval ratings hovering around 8%.

Ethnic and religious divisions are intense. There are no strong political parties; political position is a function of family name, money, relationships with the army, and how well you do on TV. She is constantly facing the threat of coups from the chronically dissatisfied younger officers, most of whom see their senior leadership as corrupt and either want a share of the lucre themselves or are upset by the senior military's indecently blatant habit of raiding the public treasury for private gain.

The Philippines have an American democratic system by every nominal indicator. Indeed, their institutions and constitution are modeled almost exactly on the U.S. There is free speech. There is a corrupt, but free press. There is freedom of religion, though the majority Catholic Church weighs heavily. But the Philippines flirt with chaos and stagnation. Reform legislation gets caught in perpetual gridlock. Corruption is endemic. Public safety and crime problems are accelerating. Poverty is extreme and pervasive, and the gap between rich and poor in the Philippines is only topped in Asia by China.