

The Briefing

A Newsletter of The Alabama World Affairs Council / Spring 2012

Coming: Bing West, “Thucydides of Counterinsurgency,”

Dr. Susan K. Purcell, Latin America expert, Air War College Instructors

F Francis J. “Bing” West will speak to us on February 7. He served as assistant secretary of defense for International Security Affairs in the Reagan administration. He is currently a correspondent for *The Atlantic* and the president of the Gamma Corporation, which designs war games and teaches combat decision making. He has written three books about the Iraq war. His latest, entitled *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics and the Endgame in Iraq*, has appeared on both the *New York Times* and *Foreign Affairs* bestseller lists. The book is based on 15 extended trips to Iraq, where he was embedded with over 60 units and interviewed 2,000 participants from the frontlines to the White House.



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A graduate of Georgetown (BA) and Princeton (MA) Universities, he served in the Marine infantry in Vietnam as a member of the Force Reconnaissance team that initiated “Operation Stingray”—small-unit attacks deep behind enemy lines. He also saw action in the villages with a Combined Action Platoon, living for over a year in a remote village with the South Vietnamese. This approach directly conflicted with the Army’s concept of Air Mobility “search and destroy” operations. He wrote a book, *The Village*, about a small Marine unit who protected the people by living among them. The book became a classic and has been on the USMC Commandant’s reading list for over 30 years.

He has written a total of seven books. His collaboration with a legendary Marine fighter, retired Major General Ray “E-Tool” Smith, *The March Up*, was awarded

the Marine Corps Heritage prize for non-fiction, as well as the Colby Award for military history. West also authored a foreword for *Boredom by Day, Death by Night: An Iraq War Journal* by Marine Sergeant Seth Conner. The Veterans of Foreign Wars presented West with its National Media Award in 2005, after he wrote the book *No True Glory: A Frontline Account of the Battle for Fallujah*. His book *The Strongest Tribe* is a history of the Iraq War that was a *New York Times* bestseller and was ranked by *Foreign Affairs Magazine* as #7 among the top foreign policy books of 2009. He has been called the Thucydides of counterinsurgency. He is the recipient of the Marine Corps Heritage Award for nonfiction, the Colby Military History Award and the VFW National Media Award. The *Los Angeles Times* named him “one of the top ten journalists covering Iraq.” He has also written about the war in Afghanistan.

He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Middle East Institute, Military Order of the Carabao and the Infantry Order of St. Crispin. His articles appear in *The Wall St. Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*. He resides in Newport, Rhode Island, with his wife, Elizabeth. His web site is www.westwrite.com.

Dr. Susan Kaufman Purcell, the director of the Center for Hemispheric Policy at the University of Miami, will speak on March 6. Established in March 2005, the center sponsors public and private programs and meetings dealing with Latin American economic and political issues and U.S.-Latin American relations.

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Through its task forces and associated publications, the center helps define and shape the debate over public policies involving the Western Hemisphere.

Prior to assuming her current position, Dr. Purcell was vice president of the Council of the Americas, a non-profit business organization of mainly Fortune 500 companies with investments in Latin America, as well as vice president of its sister organization, the Americas Society, in New York. She was also a senior fellow and director of the Latin America Program at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and was a member of the U.S. Department of State's Policy Planning Staff under Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. Before joining



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the U.S. government, she was a tenured professor of political science at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Dr. Purcell holds a B.A. degree in Spanish language and literature from Barnard College and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in political science from Columbia University.

A recognized authority on Latin America, Dr. Purcell has written, co-authored or co-edited eleven books. She has published nearly 200 articles and currently writes a column for *AméricaEconomía* magazine. In addition to Dr. Purcell's writings, she regularly comments on developments in Latin America on television and radio programs in the United States, Latin America, and Europe.

Dr. Purcell is a member of the Board of Directors of Valero Energy Corporation, a Fortune 100 company

based in San Antonio, Texas. She is a former director of the Brazil Fund, the Argentina Fund, the Scudder New Asia Fund, the Korea Fund, the Scudder Global Commodities Stock Fund and the Scudder Global High Income Fund. She is also a director of the Foundation for Management Education in Central America (FMECA) and a member of the Advisory Board of The Mexico Institute of the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C.

Four senior Air War College instructors will report to the

MAY 8 Council on May 8 on their trips with AWC students to various regions around the globe as a part of their Regional and Cultural Studies Program. This event is a perennial favorite with our members.



Julian McPhillips talks to speaker Charles Kupchan; Steve Burgess in background.

Fall 2011: Three Successful Programs

On September 13, 2011 our opening program was Charles Dunlap, Major General USAF (Retired), Visiting Professor of Law at Duke University, who spoke on the legal aspects of national security, international law, civil-military relations, and military justice. A former Deputy Judge Advocate General of the Air Force, he had served on the faculty of the Staff Judge Advocate School at Maxwell AFB.

On October 4, Dr. Adam Segal, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, spoke on *How We Can Overcome the Asian Challenge*. He said that China and India, who have large and growing economies, have weaknesses, e.g., software problems, massive pollution, and rampant corruption that the U.S. does not have.

On November 8, Peter Evans, Director of Global Strategy and Planning at General Electric, addressed Energy and the American Comparative Advantage, saying that the U.S. is in a strong position energy-wise vis-a vis the rest of the world. The U.S. leads in the production of natural gas and fracking technology, there is plenty of room for expansion of renewable energy sources, and oil reserves in the Western Hemisphere are the equal of the Middle East.

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Membership and Finances Okay

The membership level of the council has remained relatively steady. Since many members have paid well above the minimum required, several community-minded corporations have contributed generous sponsorships to our programs, and the Alabama Humanities Foundation has approved a \$2400 grant, our financial position at this time is adequate to the task. A special thanks to those council members who have bumped up their level of membership so that we have been able to keep the overall dues at the same level as last year.

Two New Board Members

To replace two departed members of the Board of Directors, the board unanimously elected **Dick Amberg** and **Don Armstrong**. Dick recently returned to Montgomery after a 13-year absence in Washington as associate publisher and general manager of the *Washington Times*. Don is a respected member of the community who recently retired after 10 years with Alfa Insurance and 24 years in the Air Force.

Board Member Profile

Thornton Clark has been a member of the Board of Directors since August 2007, soon after he and his wife, Pat, returned to Montgomery. He was born here, attended Cloverdale Junior High and Lanier High School, and graduated from Harvard in 1959. After working first for a major bank in New York City, he moved to State Street Bank in Boston, where he became their youngest-ever vice president.

Thornton and two Boston friends started a travel agency that was the first in the country to specialize in business travel and grew to become the seventh largest in the U.S., with offices nationwide. That agency started a consortium comprised of the largest travel agencies in each country on five continents, named Woodside and headquartered in Boston.

When the businesses were sold, Thornton and Pat (at her suggestion) sold their home and lived aboard a 55-foot sailboat for two years, sailing

15,000 miles together. When they decided it was time to come ashore, they chose Savannah, where they lived for nine years. There, he was elected to the board of the Savannah Symphony. After being elected as president, he found that the orchestra was in serious financial trouble. A majority of the board wanted the general manager fired, so he stepped into that job for two years, learning the vagaries of dealing with a tough union, but successfully returning the orchestra to profitability.

Upon their return to Montgomery, she became active in the tennis community, and he became a founder of the 631-mile Alabama Scenic River Trail. He had explored the river many times, starting in 1954, when he and two friends canoed from Montgomery to Mobile Bay. He followed the path of his dad, who had made that trip in 1917 in a canoe with his best friend, Mills Thornton.

Thornton is a painter and currently serves as president of the Montgomery Art Guild. Although he usually does large oil paintings, he won first prize for works on paper in the 45th annual Regions Bank Show this past September. If you enter Fieldcrest Drive from Vaughn Road, you will see the beautiful landscaping, a flagpole, and the Vaughn Meadows sign, a project he spearheaded as president of the neighborhood association.

Thornton has already played a major role in the World Affairs Council, serving as chair of the Fund Raising Committee.



Sam Johnson and Liz Rutherford converse with General Cleveland at reception.

Executive Director's Corner: Dr. James Nathan

Q: What do **Muammar Gadhafi** and **Mikhail Gorbachev** have in common?

A: They answered to Mr. Market and the voices of the many. Both are gone from power. But there's something else. Gadhafi had given up his nuclear pretensions, and Gorbachev had given up the Cold War. The reasons were the same. If there is any lesson of recent history, it is that in the end, the demands of peoples and the market defeat all oppression.

James Mann, a brilliant foreign correspondent cum historian, recently documented the "End of the Cold War" as a long seduction of Gorbachev by **Ronald Reagan** and his secretary of state, **George Shultz**. Mann says that Reagan spelled out to Gorbachev the requirements of modernity, but that Gorbachev was less compelled by Reagan as he was by the realities of the market. But once Gorbachev turned to transforming the Russian economy, it was clear the Cold War was an insuperable barrier to reform. The claim that Gorbachev crumbled in the face of US spending, Mann shows, misses the mark. It was the new reality of globalization that ended the Soviet regime, and it was Reagan's shrewdness that allowed him to embrace Gorbachev as the agent of an astonishingly smooth glide from one kind of international epoch to another.

As for Gadhafi, his important

renunciation of nuclear weapons and his surrender of nuclear weapons blueprints, centrifuges, and switches enabled Libya to reopen its trade links with the US and the EU, and allowed the revival of Libya's limping oil industry. Above all, it allowed Libya to take its turn as a member of the UN Security Council. That Gadhafi's nuclear ambition crumbled in response to the start of the war in Iraq was the claim of some in the Bush administration. But one Thatcher cabinet defense official, **Eldon Griffiths**, said that this explanation is "too simple by half." In fact, it was the cost of exile from markets and legitimacy that forced Gadhafi's hand. In the end, Gadhafi's reign was done in by the very forces he embraced.

Political operative **James Carville** once mused, "I used to think that if there was reincarnation, I wanted to come back as the president or the pope or as a .400 baseball hitter. But now I would like to come back as the bond market. You can intimidate everybody."

Carville's point was telling. Markets dictate as much as dictatorships. But it is not just the markets that dominate today's politics but the new spring of democracy that has been welling up for over thirty years. The same wellsprings of Middle East revolution burst forth in the Americas in the 1980s, in the former Soviet bloc the last twenty years, and can be found today even in Burma.

To be sure, there are notable exceptions: North Korea and China. But like South Africa and the Soviet Union, their demise is a matter of when and not if.

What does this mean for the United States? For one thing, military power gains can be a chimera compared to the costs. And the budgetary costs of maintaining our nuclear deterrent posture in Europe are very high. Once the most earnest advocates of nuclear weapons, **George Shultz**, **William Perry**, and **Henry Kissinger**, now argue that a world with no nuclear weapons ought to be an everyday goal of policy. Even in matters of nuclear deterrence, "Mr. Market" now pushes on America's most enduring strategic position.

Of course, internet and other information controls may slow the process and delay the inevitable. But the new politics of our time are crowding Asia's last communist tyrants, Middle East despots, and the theocrats of Persia, without surcease.

James Carville was right: for good, or ill, the bond market, not politicians or bomb makers, will prevail, as will the demands of the people. Democracy and markets are married, and they have fueled a tide that has not ebbed for over a generation. This was the message first heard in the American Revolution, and it has more recently been energized and made more determinative than ever.