Two Great Speakers Scheduled for November

Brent Scowcroft, retired US Air Force Lieutenant General and former National Security Advisor to Presidents Ford and Bush, will speak to a combined military and civilian audience (Air War College, Air Command and Staff College, and the Alabama World Affairs Council) at 6:00pm on Thursday, November 2. Among many other posts, General Scowcroft is currently the Chairman of the Defense Policy Board and the USAF Academy Board of Visitors, is president of the Scowcroft Group, and also serves as a senior foreign policy advisor to George W. Bush.

The presentation will be in Polifka Auditorium on Maxwell AFB and is open to all AWAC members and guests. Those planning to attend are asked to call the AWAC office (244-3337), and we in turn will furnish more information on base access and directions. This promises to be an extraordinary evening: General Scowcroft will speak on the foreign policy challenges facing our next president.

Martin Walker has served as bureau chief for Britain’s The Guardian (formerly known as The Manchester Guardian) in Washington, D.C. and as assistant editor. A regular commentator on CNN, Inside Washington, and NPR, he is also a contributing editor to the Los Angeles Times. He has written for the New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today, and The New Republic, and was awarded Britain’s Reporter of the Year prize. He is a senior fellow of the World Policy Institute in New York and has lectured at many American universities. He is the author of six books, including The President We Deserve and The Cold War: A History. He is known as a dynamic, informed, and authoritative speaker, and we are lucky to have him here.

The venue for his presentation is a familiar one: Tuesday evening at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, 5:30 free buffet and reception, plus a cash bar, with the program starting at 6:15, ending no later than 7:30.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Leads to Changes

On June 28, we sent out a survey instrument to current members asking for comments and suggestions for improvement of the programs and arrangements. We were encouraged with the response rate of 50% (which in our view gave us a margin of error of +/- 0%). The most important findings were as follows:

• Most of our membership (54%) are long-term loyalists, with about 10% new members every year.
• Over 80% go to at least 3 events a year—most of them to 4, 10% to all 5.
• There is overwhelming support for the buffet reception (3.25 on a 4.0 scale).

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Want to join AWAC?

It’s easy: call Dahdee at 244-3337, and she will send you all the necessary information. The more members, the better for AWAC, for Montgomery, and for Alabama.

Continued on next page
scale). Most of the more negative comments concerned the difficulty of access to the food tables.

• There is somewhat less but still strong support for the live music of the string quartet (2.66 on a 4.0 scale). The vast majority of the more negative comments concerned the bad acoustics and the difficulty in hearing.

While there were many unsolicited positive comments about the program, there were several suggestions for improvement that we plan to implement:

• “Do something about the sound system!” We will.
• “Rearrange buffet tables to cut down congestion.” We will.
• “Send out reminder notices earlier.” We will.
• “There are no chairs at the reception for the older folk among us.” We will provide some.
• “Would like to hear more about international connections to Alabama/Montgomery.” We are working on that.

There were others, more scattered, but all constructive. Thanks to those members who responded.

AWAC, Air University in Close Coordination

From the very beginning, the Air University, most notably the Air War College, has been closely involved with the Alabama World Affairs Council. In fact, Prof. Lawrence “Buck” Grinter was one of the three founding members in 1983. Since that time, AWAC has helped the Air University in securing outstanding presentations, and AU has helped AWAC by Board of Directors participation, support from the International Officer School, and presentations by Air War College instructors as a result of their Regional Studies program.

Last program year, the War College and AWAC cooperated in getting General Barry McCaffrey, the Director of White House Drug Policy (otherwise known as the Administration “Drug Czar”), to speak to us in a program held at Maxwell AFB on August 22, 2000. Over 100 of our members attended along with the War College student body and faculty. General McCaffrey’s presentation was memorable, not only for his picture of the national and international drug problem, but also for his description of the Army involvement in Kuwait and Iraq in the last days of Desert Storm.

An initiative by AWAC to get Brent Scowcroft to come to Montgomery was enthusiastically supported by the Air University, with the end result that Scowcroft will speak to a mixed audience at Maxwell on November 2. Without War College interest and support, it is highly doubtful that the very busy Gen. Scowcroft would have come to Montgomery at this time. So both organizations will benefit from the close relationship.

On November 28-30, the Air War College will sponsor the USAF Counterproliferation Center Conference in Montgomery. On Wednesday, November 29, there will be a dinner at Legends at Capitol Hill in Prattville. The keynote speaker will be the Honorable Richard Butler, Diplomat-in-Residence, Council on Foreign Relations. Everyone will recognize this name—as head of the United Nations Weapons inspection team in Iraq, his lucid, informative interviews appeared in or on virtually every news outlet in the country.

There are three aspects of this opportunity that are different: One, it is on the night after the scheduled presentation by Martin Walker; two, the attendance will be limited in numbers (yet to be determined); and three, since this is an extra target of opportunity offered to us by the War College, the costs are unbudgeted, and it may be necessary to ask attendees to pay for their own dinner, probably around $30 a head. As soon as more information becomes available, we will pass it on to our members.

Alabama Humanities Foundation Grant Approved

AWAC is indeed fortunate again this program year to have received approval from the Alabama Humanities Foundation for a grant to help us sustain our quality programming without interruption or degradation. The grant criteria are exacting, and strict accountability is required. The $6650 provided by AHF is deeply appreciated. The AHF is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.
**AWAC in the Black ... Barely**

At the end of our fiscal year 2000 (September 30), our operating income ($20,365), was slightly less than our operating expenses ($21,580), resulting in a yearly deficit of $1,215. Because we had started the year with a balance of $7,132, we were just able to absorb the loss and end up in the black, with an end-year balance of $5,917.

In addition, we spent all of the $5,700 grant from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, mostly on speaker expenses. It is sobering to think that without the grant, we would have only $217 in the bank! We must and will do better in the coming year.

**Three New Board Members Elected**

With the departure of Dr. Roy Saigo, who as Chancellor of AUM personified that institution’s support of AWAC, plus the leaving of Ted Giles and Maj. Gen. Lance Smith, three new members of the Board of Directors were elected to fill those vacancies. William Honey, Frank Mastin, Jr. and Maj. Gen. David MacGhee were unanimously elected—all have expressed their interest and support of AWAC’s activities.

The board also reelected Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Charles Cleveland as president, Margaret Carpenter as vice president, MaryAnne Douglass as treasurer, and Nan Rosa as secretary.

**Report from the Executive Director**

**Dr. James Nathan**

In August of 1999, we were off to China with some trepidation. American warplanes had accidentally bombed the embassy of China in Yugoslavia and 3 Chinese diplomats were killed. In the aftermath, student rioters threw Molotov cocktails at the US embassy in Beijing and the Chinese authorities whipped up a great deal of anti-American sentiment country wide. So we were naturally a bit nervous.

But with Lisa, my wife, and Michael, our now 8 year old in tow, we set out for what proved to be a grand adventure. As a “Senior Distinguished Fulbright Professor,” I was offered a place at the Foreign Affairs College of Beijing (China’s diplomatic training academy), the first such person to have ever been in that position. At every turn, the faculty and staff were kind and generous beyond anything I had imagined.

Not that we lived in splendor. Our dime sized apartment was about 450 square feet, with two tiny bedrooms, a kitchen big enough to accommodate two burners, and a bathroom about the size as found on most airplanes. But it came with a western toilet, we had constant hot water, and there was an air conditioner. We lived far in advance of most middle class Chinese.

Moreover, the College gave me an office and Xerox machine, both nearly unimaginable privileges. We even had CNN, after I protested at the quality of news on China TV not being enough to prepare a course on US foreign policy. CNN was something no professor at the College of Foreign Affairs was ever allowed to see on campus.

I was invited to lecture at universities over the length and breadth of China—from the far South, near Vietnam, to the South West, near Burma in the Tibetan foothills, to the far West, on the Khazak frontier, to the Russian frontier way north of North Korea.

We, of necessity, learned more Chinese than I thought was possible. Michael went to a binational school with instruction half in Chinese, half in English. Lisa taught oral English classes downtown and American and British Literature on the college campus. Everywhere we went...I mean everywhere...we were treated with courtesy and kindness.

I was also asked by the US embassy to travel under the auspices of the US speakers program to give presentations in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Macao, and Harbin. In Hong Kong, we met our eldest son, who came to visit for several weeks in the early Spring...a treat for all of us.

I told my student and faculty audiences of the negative images which dominate the US media about China. I showed pictures many had never seen before—of the famous man who, alone, braved a tank column in June of 1989. I showed American editorial cartoons depicting Chinese religious dissenters brutalized by a thuggish regime...and more. My talks were not censored, but I was censored by the media in some of my TV and radio interviews.

Most urban Chinese are doing better than ever and most live free private
lives. They are not free, of course, from a very burdensome, corrupt, and pervasive state in their commercial life, or in the way children are educated, or in what they can read, write, and speak about in schools or universities. The heavy hand of the state is ubiquitous, oppressive, and frequently arbitrary. It is also cynical and corrupt. Most Western economists think corruption costs China at least 8 per cent of its GDP a year.

Government functionaries are widely despised. But the government is also seen by many, perhaps most, as an instrument of national unity and security. Nationalism is a serious, ever growing thread of Chinese life.

The government itself is deeply afraid and insecure. We wanted to see China’s October 1 national day, an important celebration of fifty years of Communist party rule. We took a hotel at the edge of the parade route and secured a room that overlooked the place where the tanks, troop carriers, and missiles make their way toward the immense, forbidding concrete expanse of Tiananmen.

Central Beijing was nearly locked down in a virtual state of siege that week of 1 October, 1999. Police formed up at 3:00 in the morning, standing at attention on stands ten feet apart along every artery, large or small, that feeds the city center. Soon, tanks rumbled up from the urban side streets, emerging out of unimaginably large underground tank parks. The effect was something out of Hollywood’s Men in Black, eerie and surreal. Weapons of war in huge number, hour after hour, rumbling out of the dark, rain-shrouded landscape.

When the sun came up, we were under virtual hotel arrest. We could not stray more than 30 feet from the main entrance.

We watched the parade from our window and on CNN. When the commentary on CNN drifted toward a hint of criticism, the channel would mysteriously shift to China television’s voice-over description. None but invited guests got to see the massive display on anything else but television. Can you imagine having a July 4th in the US, or any national day, and not inviting the people to celebrate? But in China, they held an immense party for the Party. The people went out of town, or watched in sullen anger at the billions spent on the affairs that they had nothing to do with.

The police routinely and brutally move people about for purposes that seem both fickle and excessive. I saw police beat vendors in public, toss the meager goods of merchants to the gutter, and chase beggars and religious dissenters.

China’s problems are immense. Its government is a brutish dinosaur. People have hard lives, but most people’s lives are generally getting better. The best of the best of the young people are leaving in huge numbers, but a new trend seems to be emerging. Many Chinese émigré’s, now Americans or Australians or Canadians, are starting to come back to invest and work. As for the government and the dominance of one party…that will go. But it is deeply entrenched in every nook and cranny of society and sixty million strong. They are afraid the World Trade Organization will bring increases in unemployment and unrest. Their only legitimacy is now found in nationalism and prosperity. Growth has resumed at close to nine percent. Exports are up an astounding 50% year over year, but it is unclear what the immediate effect of a serious opening up of the state owned enterprises will bring for China. Taiwan’s continued defacto independence and sovereignty is more than a maddening embarrassment, it is an indicator of continued impotence. The Chinese Communist Party cannot last. But like the time approaching the end of any dynasty, the time that China’s communist party withers and falls will only seem soon to historians of a different age.

It is good to be home. Our volunteer leadership, General Cleveland, Margaret Carpenter, the Board and the unstinting support of AUM and the Alabama Humanities Foundation explain our continuing success. I am honored that they have asked me to resume my duties as Executive Director.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Dr. Nathan will speak on his Chinese experiences at a lunch at the Captial City Club on Thursday, December 14. Since this lunch is unbudgeted, there will be a $20 charge for attendees.