

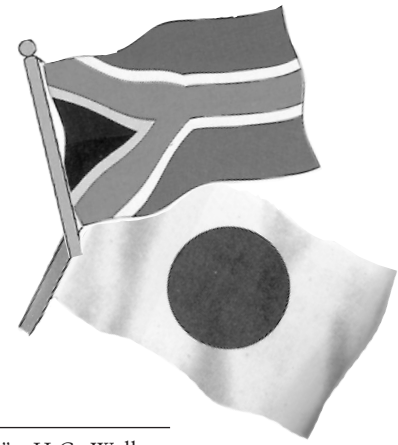


FOOTHILLS INTERNATIONAL FORUM



www.foothillsforum.org

JANUARY, 2006



"Human history more and more becomes a race between education and catastrophe"—H.G. Wells

OUR UPCOMING MEETING

The author's presentation will revolve around his recently published book "No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam". It is a thoughtful and insightful history of Islam going back to the times before the prophet Muhammad and outlining the common ancestry of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. It is written to appeal not only to a general Western audience who knows little about Islam, but also to Muslims living in Western societies who are trying to reconcile their day-to-day lives with their religious beliefs.

Aslan believes that Islam is currently experiencing the beginnings of the Islamic reformation which will bring it closer to the realities of the modern world. This reformation within Islam is a process once started that becomes unstoppable, the same way the Christian reformation changed the doctrinal absolutism of the Catholic faith in Europe and brought enlightenment to Christianity. Aslan maintains that it is the responsibility of Western Muslims to speak on behalf of those Muslims too repressed to speak for themselves. Only moderate Muslim voices can counteract the extremist view of Islam seen by many as the religion's teachings.

Some see this book as an argument for reform of a

NO GOD BUT GOD: THE ORIGINS, EVOLUTION, AND FUTURE OF ISLAM

RESA ASLAN

**TIME/PLACE: Tuesday, January 17, 2006,
7:30 PM, Mount Vernon Country Club**

religion accused of being incapable of such change. Aslan outlines a future for Islam that seeks to refurbish its image in the Western mind and shows the reader a path to reconciliation between its religious principles and Western democracy. Some would say that this view is too rosy, but whether Islam's past also points to its future is almost unimportant given the fact how badly it needs reform to sustain itself.

It is a timely book to provide a post 9-11 view of Islam and a great primer for a general audience.

Reza Aslan earned a Bachelor of Arts in Religion from Santa Clara University, a Master of Theological Studies from Harvard University, a Master of Fine Arts in

Fiction from the University of Iowa, and is currently a Doctoral Candidate in History of Religions at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Until recently, he was both Visiting Assistant Professor of Islamic and Middle East



Studies at the University of Iowa and the Truman Capote Fellow in Fiction at the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He has served as a legislative assistant for the Friends' Committee on National Legislation in Washington D.C., and was elected president of Harvard's Chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, a United Nations Organization committed to solving religious conflicts throughout the world. He has written for the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, Slate, Boston Globe, the Washington Post, and the Nation and has appeared on Meet The Press, Hardball, The Daily Show, and Nightline. His first book, No god but God has been translated into half a dozen languages and was short-listed for the Guardian (UK) First Book Award. Born in Iran, he now lives in Santa Monica and New Orleans, where he is at work on a historical novel to be published in the fall of 2007. ■

NOVEMBER MEETING REVIEW

By Mary Hendrix,
Senior Editor



"U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM"

Text approved by
His Excellency
Jehangir Karamat

The relationship between Pakistan and the United States has developed over the past 60 years ever since Pakistan became an independent country. After the split from India, it was essential for Pakistan to develop its own identity and during the cold war, the US and Pakistan were close allies. In the post Cold War period, there was a decade of estrangement but contacts continued. Pakistan defined its role not just with the US but with other countries as well. The single most important event that started a rapprochement between these two countries was the terrorist attack of 9-11 and the cooperation and identification of common interests has been growing ever since. Today there is a robust and strategic US-Pakistan relationship.

The recent earthquake disaster in Kashmir has been very devastating for Pakistan and it is estimated that 3.6 million people have been affected. This event has brought the Pakistani people together like never before to help the victims of the disaster.

Help for the victims has arrived from every corner of the world. The aid came in many forms: military forces have been flying supply and evacuation missions, medical personnel have set up field hospitals to treat the injured.

Tents, organizational help along with food and water has arrived from multi-national donors as well as private voluntary organizations. The challenges of rebuilding will be monumental because the infrastructure of the area is pretty much wiped out. Aid personnel from the outside face massive rock slides that block access to the mountain villages and heavy equipment has to be mobilized to clear these obstacles. For many victims, time and the onslaught of winter are critical and with the delay in medical help reaching the remote population, for many the amputation of limbs is the only option. The Pakistan Army is the lead agency and the relief and reconstruction efforts are well under way.

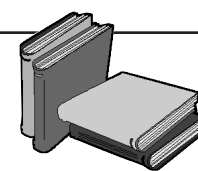
Organizational support is an important part of recovery and it will ensure that the large amounts of money that have been donated for relief are used effectively. Pakistan is grateful to all the different nationalities involved in the relief effort and the outpouring of assistance. The US is supporting massively.

On the political and diplomatic front, an institutional procedure ensures a good working relationship with the United States, NATO and Afghanistan. This is partly an outgrowth of fighting the war on terror and to insure an increased level of security in Pakistan and in the border area with Afghanistan. The cooperation has resulted in a number of al Qaeda people being arrested or killed. Pakistani forces have been moved to the border areas and have been able to establish increased security.

On the economic front, Pakistan has strengthened its finance and banking system and established an environment that is inviting to corporate investments. Increased economic activity, better access to education and an abundance of job opportunities should help keep the general population from embracing dissidents and terrorists. Improved bi-lateral

relationships with the US and other countries will help in this effort. In fact, it is hoped that the parameters guiding the US-India relations will be extended to Pakistan in the future.

In many ways, Pakistani society is in transition and the objective is to maintain a liberal, moderate Islamic outlook. As in many other countries with democracy, there are dissenting voices but in general, the Pakistani population sees the advantages of the close relationship with the US. The Pakistani Government has created an investor friendly environment to attract investments from the US and the rest of the world. Pakistan is firmly on the path to economic and political stability. ■



NEWS & SUGGESTED READINGS

By Fred Nyland, News Editor

Mohamed El Baradei, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, was awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize. He infuriated the Bush administration by challenging its claims that Iraq was preparing to resume work on nuclear weapons. In his acceptance speech, El Baradei stressed the importance of global nonproliferation efforts including sharper reductions in Russian and American nuclear arsenals. He pointed out that there are about 27,000 nuclear warheads lying around, many of them on hair-trigger alert. Americans are wrong in viewing nonproliferation efforts only with countries such as Iran and North Korea. To deal only with rogue nations as the Bush administration prefers is a serious mistake.

A. N. Wilson, *After the Victorians: The Decline of Britain in the World*, Farrar Straus Giroux, 2005. This book is a popular history

(Continued on page 2)

NEWS & SUGGESTED READINGS

(Continued from page 1)

addressing the half century between Victoria's death in 1901 and the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953. The author has sought to render "a portrait of an age, rather than a formal history." The author covers the territory with many anecdotes and gossip. The story of Britain in the first part of the 20th century is one of steady decline toward the dissolution of the empire. The story of Churchill standing against Hitler is one of the high points of the book. Few of the politicians that are praised are on the left. When it comes time to reveal the true villain, it is none other than the United States. (Source: Damn Yankees, a review by Walter Olson, NYTimes.com, 12/11/05)

Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America*, Knopf Publishing Group, 2005. This book is well written and exhaustively researched. It is one of the most ambitious books ever published about Cody and his times. Cody's carefully constructed persona is examined in detail. The effort in many cases boils down to an attempt to separate fact from fiction, fake exploits and real deeds. One reviewer has written that "He is a poseur, but he poses impeccably." The author seems less interested in nailing Cody's lies than in understanding why he told them. As a result, Warren provides an account of the many worlds through which Bill Cody made his way en route to becoming Buffalo Bill. Among Cody's occupations were his roles as a courier, teamster, horse thief, Civil War soldier, would-be entrepreneur, gold seeker, buffalo hunter, Indian fighter, and chief of scouts. In part, Cody was an internationalist. He not only brought the Wild West to the Eastern Establishment, but also carried out his carnival appearances in Europe. Even his actors

in the Wild West Show constituted an international cast that included American Indians some Cossacks, gauchos, vaqueros, Arabs, and African Americans. Cody is buried on a mountain in close proximity to our meeting place. (Material drawn from a review by Geoffrey C. Ward, NYTimes, 12/11/05)

George Packer, *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq*, Farrar Straus Giroux. One reviewer has characterized this book as "A rueful liberal hawk explores the road to war in Iraq and its chaotic aftermath." Questions as to how the war in Iraq happened and how could the strongest power in modern history find itself stuck a few years later amid increasing chaos are facing Americans today. We will be debating the answers for decades, and we may be unlikely to find a better guide than George Packer's masterful new book, according to Gideon Rose, managing editor of Foreign Affairs. Rose offers three rationales for the invasion of Iraq in the run-up to the war: fear of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, links between Iraq and terrorism, and a desire to bring democracy to Iraq and the Middle East at large. The first rationale was assessed as an honest mistake since many thought Iraq was hiding a weapons program. The second rationale was assessed as dishonest, and the third was attributed to be a high-stakes gamble. In his book, Packer (a staffer on the New Yorker magazine) tells the story of the third rationale – how it emerged, how the Bush administration tried to implement it and how things turned out on the ground. When WMD stockpiles failed to materialize, the quest for democracy became the prime rationale for ongoing operations, gaining greater significance after the fact than it had beforehand. The result, according to the author, has been one of the worst self-inflicted wounds in the history of U.S.

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foreign policy. Some readers will not agree with many of the arguments presented in the book, but many of the author's conclusions may not be in error. It is a sobering account. (Source: Welcome to the Occupation by Gideon Rose, Washington Post, October 9, 2005) ■

ATTENDANCE AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING

*Attendance in November 2005
was at an all time high of 261*

P.O. Box 1602, Evergreen, CO 80437-1602

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FOOTHILLS INTERNATIONAL
FORUM

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: www.foothillsforum.org

The Foothills International Forum is a non-profit organization which meets to provide a forum for those in our community wishing to keep abreast of developments in international relations and to discuss them on a regular basis with those having similar interests.

For more information, call Larry Hendrix 303-463-4690. ALL FOOTHILLS INTERNATIONAL FORUM MEETINGS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. RESERVATIONS ARE NOT REQUIRED.

DIRECTIONS to Mount Vernon Country Club: Exit I-70 at Genesee Park (Exit #254). Go North on Mount Vernon Country Club Road. Staying on the paved road and curving to the right. The Club entrance will be on your left, .1 mile from the I-70 exit.

DINNER AT 6:00 PM in the main dining room at Mount Vernon Country Club is optional. Reservations are imperative. Call Mt. Vernon Country Club at 303-526-0616 and ask for seating with the Foothills International Forum. Cost of dinner will be collected by the Club.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS, AND MEMBERSHIP DUES: Information can be sent to: Bill Anstine, P.O. Box 1602, Evergreen, CO 80437-1602.

Student memberships: \$5; Individual memberships: \$30; Family memberships: \$45; Supporting memberships: \$75; Contributing

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memberships: \$100; Patron memberships: \$250; Corporate memberships: \$400.

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SEND YOUR IDEAS and articles for the newsletter to the Forum Editorial Committee: Beatrice Szadokierski, Editor in Chief, 1923 Parfet Estates Drive, Golden, CO 80401, email: szadokierski@comcast.net or call 303-279-2638.

