

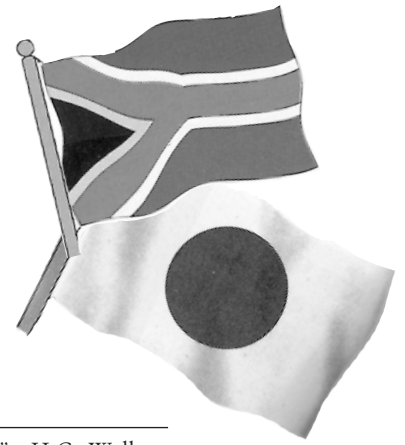


# FOOTHILLS INTERNATIONAL FORUM



www.foothillsforum.org

FEBRUARY 2007



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

## OUR UPCOMING MEETING

Dr. Jill Carroll is a professor of Humanities and Religion Studies at Rice University in Houston and is Director of the Boniuk Center for Religious Tolerance. She has also taught at all campuses of the University of Houston system, The Women's Institute of Houston, The Jung Center of Houston, and in the Texas State prison system. She is the author of three books and has been a columnist for The Chronicle of Higher Education. She is an expert in



## THE PHENOMENON OF GLOBAL FUNDAMENTALISM

JILL CARROLL

Professor of Humanities and Religion Studies at Rice University and Director of the Boniuk Center for Religious Tolerance

TIME/PLACE: Tuesday, February 20, 2007, 7:30 PM, Mount Vernon Country Club

comparative world religions and religious fundamentalism. She has spoken on these subjects at various World Affairs Councils. Through her own company and in collaboration with other organizational consultants, she has done religious diversity training for corporations, groups and individuals.

Dr. Carroll's presentation will offer a basic definition of religious fundamentalism. She will review prominent examples of world religions and politics. She analyzes religious fundamentalism and poses the possibility that we might be in a post-secular world. ■

## JANUARY MEETING REVIEW

By Evan Anderson, Guest Junior Editor



### Imam Ibrahim Kazerooni's Iraqi Perspective on Iraq

Having grown up as a Shiite in Al-Najaf, Iraq, Imam Ibrahim Kazerooni presented a unique Iraqi perspective on the current war in Iraq. At the age of fifteen, Kazerooni was persecuted, imprisoned, and tortured by Hussein's regime. This brutal abuse occurred on several occasions and, by chance, he was eventually released, whereupon the young Imam escaped to Iran to pursue his studies. Following the completion of his schooling, Kazerooni moved to England, and continued to be tracked by the Iraqi secret police. In 1983, Kazerooni was asked to return to Iraq, which he refused, resulting in the death of many family members, including his brother, cousin, and uncle. Finally, the Imam fled to the U.S. to seek asylum. He now lives in the vicinity of Denver. The Imam does not represent a solitary view of Iraq, but shares the perspective of most Shiites, who make up sixty percent of the Iraqi population.

While in no way an apologist for the Hussein regime, Kazerooni contends that America's presence in Iraq represents an illegal occupation that is in violation of international law. He is intrigued by the Americans' preoccupation to lay blame for the failure of the Iraqi occupation. His belief is that this failure was due to ignorance of the unique situation in Iraq; a situation revolving around politics, clan, and religion. Adamant that stability in Iraq can only be reached through diplomatic measures, he made it quite clear that American troops should be replaced by a multinational coalition that will seek a political solution to the ongoing civil war that has evolved.

When questioned about the repercussions of a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, Kazerooni responded that this is a problem for the Iraqis to solve. Admitting that the animosity between Sunnis and Shiites presents a delicate situation, the Imam believes this is one over which the Iraqi government should have control. He

maintains that a stable Iraq will only evolve through a self-representative government, one that is not dominated by the United States. Kazerooni sees Iraqi leaders such as Prime Minister al-Maliki as powerless, so long as they are continually being monitored and directed by U.S. decision makers in all major decisions.

Regardless of one's opinion in the Iraqi affair, this was an opportunity to gain a better understanding of outside perspectives. At times, the Forum disintegrated into a combative, emotional display of behavior, and the audience seemed to become more closed and combative to Kazerooni's ideas, ideas to which we all willingly came to listen. In an attempt to explain the patriotic sentiments of Iraqis, the Imam made an unfortunate comparison between the United States and Germany, which may have been misinterpreted, but caused some members of the audience to take offense. Nonetheless, the Imam's perspective as an Iraqi instilled an understanding of what it must feel like to be occupied by a foreign force in one's own country. ■

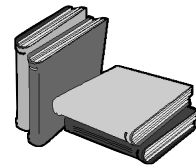
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#### About the Author:

Evan Anderson is a fifteen-year-old sophomore attending Golden High School. He grew up in Golden and moved to Switzerland in 2002, returning to Golden in 2006. Evan speaks fluent German and French, loves playing the piano, is first bassist in the Colorado Youth Symphony, and played on Golden High's tennis team. He enjoys a full schedule of Honors and A.P. classes at Golden High School and maintains a 4.0 grade point average.

## GOLDEN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT WORK FOR THE FORUM

Starting with this newsletter, we will see increased involvement of Deborah Pearce's Advanced Placement United States History class from Golden High School. Our meeting review will be submitted every month by a rotating Junior Guest Editor from Golden High School. Many of these students are earning college credit from the University of Colorado while in High School. The Foothills Forum is proud to offer this opportunity to the students and welcomes their involvement. Thank you Deborah Pearce for making it possible for the students to attend the Foothills Forum presentations and to actively participate.



## NEWS & SUGGESTED READINGS

By Fred Nyland, News Editor

Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy*, Yale University Press, 2006. The author is the Director of the International Development Program in the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He is a neoconservative with close ties to the Bush administration and this book complicates the notion that many of the Bush administration's policies are based on neoconservative thought. He finds fault with many aspects of Bush's foreign policies, notably the inadequate planning for the post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq, the conflation of the threat of radical Islamism with Iraq and the administration's non-cooperation with international organizations like the United Nations during a deluge of Anti-Americanism. In a recent seminar, Fukuyama stated that America finds itself where it is today in Iraq because of three fateful misjudgments. First, he argued that the Bush administration applied a doctrine of preventive war to the rogue state proliferation problem presented by Iraq. Such a doctrine was eminently justifiable against al Qaeda. Preventive war is an attempt to head off threats that are months or even years in the future. "In Iraq, American knowledge of enemy capabilities—even its near-term capabilities with respect to weapons of mass destruction—was sorely deficient." The second misjudgment was the failure to account for undercurrents of anti-American sentiments, "sentiments that had been brewing long before the Bush administration took office...." When administration policy makers formulated their neoconservative doctrine of "benevolent hegemony", they naively assumed that the U.S. assertion of power in Iraq would be supported, because it was so widely understood that American foreign policy was "simply more moral" than that of other countries. The final misjudgment stemmed from the administration's failure to heed the manifold lessons of nation-building in attempting to bring democracy to Iraq. Many organizations inside and outside the government had accumulated and disseminated a great deal of knowledge about what is necessary for successful nation-building—in particular, knowledge about the levels of troops, money, and time required in a variety of nation-building

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## NEWS & SUGGESTED READINGS

(Continued from page 1)

environments. Unfortunately, according to Fukuyama, "the Bush administration made little use of any of this extensive body of knowledge." The administration assumed that once Saddam Hussein was removed from power, there would be a relatively painless transition to democracy. When that did not happen, the administration was taken by surprise. The primary lesson that America should learn from its experience in Iraq is not that the U.S. should eschew promoting democracy abroad, but that there are limits to what any nation can do. "No country has ever been democratized without the people doing it themselves." The demand must come from within. "Ultimately, democracy is spread by the prestige and moral credibility of countries that are democratic," Fukuyama said. Sources: Review from Publishers Weekly, Rand Review, Fall 2006.

Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope, Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream*, Crown Publishing Group. 2006. On July 27, 2004, U.S. Senate candidate Barack Obama riveted a nationwide television audience with his Democratic National Convention keynote speech. In this volume, he shares his thoughts about healing the divisions in our country. The author calls for a different brand of politics—a politics for those weary of bitter partisanship and alienated by the "endless clash of armies" we see in Congress and on the campaign trail: a politics rooted in the faith, inclusiveness, and nobility of spirit at the heart of "our improbable experiment in democracy." Obama explores those forces (fear of losing to the perpetual need to raise money to the power of the media) that can stifle even the best intentioned politician. At the heart of this book is Senator Obama's vision of how we can move beyond

our divisions to address concrete problems. He examines the growing economic insecurity of American families, the racial and religious tensions within the body politic, and the transnational threats that gather beyond our shores. He discusses the role that faith plays in a democracy; where it is vital and where it must never intrude. Underlying his stories about family, friends, members of the Senate, even the President, it is a search for connection or the foundation for a radically hopeful political consensus. Only by returning to the principles that gave birth to our Constitution, he says, can Americans repair a political process that is broken, and restore to working order a government that has fallen out of touch with ordinary Americans. Those Americans are out there "waiting for Republicans and Democrats to catch up with them." One reviewer (*Publishers Weekly*) commented that "he seizes hold of the problems plaguing the nation while criticizing both sides' failure to grasp the actual problem and to become bogged down in petty politics. But even in his exploration of the political landscape, he does not hesitate to admit to his own limitations within the system." Gary Hart (New York Times Sunday Book Review) pointed out that Obama is at his best when he writes things like this: "I find comfort in the fact that the longer I'm in politics the less nourishing popularity becomes, that a striving for power and rank and fame seems to betray a poverty of ambition, and that I am answerable mainly to the steady gaze of my own conscience." Reed Business Information reviewers were seemingly less enthusiastic about the book. They observed "Obama castigates divisive partisanship (especially the Republican brand) and calls for a centrist politics based on broad American values. His own cautious liberalism is a model: he's skeptical of big government and of Republican

### Executive Board

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tax cuts for the rich and Social Security privatization; he's pro-choice, but respectful of pro-lifers; supportive of religion, but not of imposing it. The policy result is a tepid Clintonism, featuring tax credits for the poor, a host of small-bore programs to address everything from worker retraining to teen pregnancy, and a health care program that resembles Clinton's Hillary-care proposals. On Iraq, he floats a phased out but open-ended troop withdrawal. His triangulated positions can seem conflicted: he supports free trade, while deploring its effects on American workers, in the end hoping halfheartedly that more support for education, science and renewable energy will see the economy through the dilemmas of globalization." Sources: Barnes and Noble, *New York Times*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Reed Business Information*. ■

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

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

### HAVE YOU MOVED? Please let the FIF Treasurer,

Bruce Glenn, know about your move so your mailing information can be updated. Send change of address requests to: FIF Treasurer, P.O. Box 1602, Evergreen, CO 80437-1602.



### 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](mailto:szadokierski@comcast.net) or call 303-279-2638.



### VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: [www.foothillsforum.org](http://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, 1.1 miles from the I-70 exit.

**DINNER AT 6:00 PM** in the main dining room at Mount Vernon Country Club is optional. Reservations have to be made no later than the Sunday before the event. 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: Bruce Glenn, P.O. Box 1602, Evergreen, CO 80437-1602.

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

