

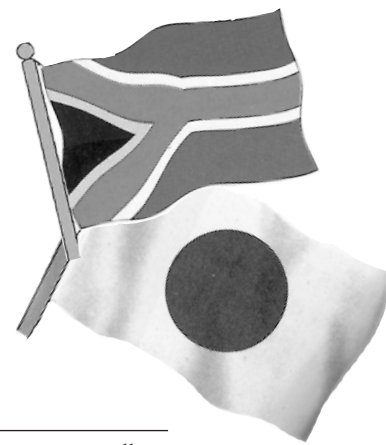


FOOTHILLS INTERNATIONAL FORUM



www.foothillsforum.org

MARCH 2007



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

OUR UPCOMING MEETING

David Evans will provide a brief history of terrorism and discuss what motivates terrorists, a subject rarely presented accurately by politicians. He will then review the intractable "I's" in the Middle East—Israel, Iran and Iraq—and briefly touch on Afghanistan and North Korea.



Mr. Evans chairs the Denver World Affairs Council and is past president of the Quad Cities World Affairs Councils. He has been an active member of World Affairs Councils for nearly 40 years. Mr. Evans owns a small international consulting business, Evanwood Corporation, with clients in the U.S., India and China. Prior

TERRORISM AND THE MIDDLE EAST: THE ABSENCE OF UNDERSTANDING

DAVID EVANS

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

"While nothing is easier than to denounce the evildoer, nothing is more difficult than to understand him."

—Fyodor Dostoevsky, 1866

to Evanwood, he spent 26 years with Deere & Company (John Deere) and then served as Chief Financial Officer of two Internet companies. Mr. Evans has worked in Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom in addition to the United States. He is also the Chief Executive of Rose Creek Ridge, LLC, a farming operation in Iowa. Mr. Evans currently serves on the boards of two public corporations—Pearl Mutual Funds, Inc. and John Deere Receivables, Inc. He is also on the Advisory Board for the Institute of International Education in Denver, which is the parent organization for the Denver World Affairs Council, and he is the Program Chair for the Foothills International Forum. Mr. Evans holds a BS degree from Iowa State University and an MBA degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. ■

FEBRUARY MEETING REVIEW

By Lauren Goh, Guest Editor



Jill Carroll on Global Fundamentalism

Dr. Jill Carroll, Professor of Humanities and Religious Studies at Rice University in Houston and Director of the Boniuk Center for Religious Tolerance, shared her professional views on religious

activism around the world. She enthusiastically explained global fundamentalism, and what it means to be a fundamentalist, including the five characteristics of a fundamentalist movement.

Fundamentalists, she explained, are traditionalists who have become activists because of what they have observed in the modern world that threatens the foundation of their beliefs. She spoke of fundamentalists' tendency to reactivity, which she defines as a militant response incited by modernity, and their attempt to "take society back."

Selectivity, the second characteristic of fundamentalist movements, is the ironic use of modern methods to combat modernity. Fundamentalists who denounce modernity use very modern means of communicating their ideas. According to Dr. Carroll, they are also selective in what parts of their faith they choose to make fundamental, often focusing on trivial concepts that are not necessarily the cornerstones of their faith. Instead, they manufacture "issues," and they pick and choose evidence selectively, usually from their religious text, to support it. These issues become the "defining feature" of whether one is with them or against them.

Third, she talked about duality, the tendency of the fundamentalist movements to have very black and white views of the world, creating a moral dichotomy; such as good versus evil, God versus Satan, and light versus darkness. Using this moral duality, much like selectivity, one is either with or against them. This duality has the propensity to convert all issues into "cosmic battles," and allows no room for compromise or negotiation.

Authoritarianism, the fourth trait, is the

understanding within the fundamentalist movement of what the faith considers authoritative. Sometimes the authority is within a person, but more often it is within a text, such as the Bible or the Koran. The idea of authoritarianism, Dr. Carroll clarified, comes down to the question of where truth ultimately comes from, and how we as humans find our own truths. When world events shake the foundations of our own convictions, the resulting conflict may appear cataclysmic.

The last characteristic explained was millennialism, which, in her words, encompasses the idea that "the past was glorious and the present is murky, but the future is assured: we win." Often this stems from the religious texts that assure fundamentalists of a life after death -- inevitably in the favor of the righteous. Ordinary human conflicts can be elevated to cosmic dimensions when groups believe they are fighting for the laws of God and something eternal.

Apart from the characteristics of fundamentalism, Dr. Carroll also talked about the secularization thesis, which is based on the idea that in time people will have no use for religion and it will disappear. However, evidence indicates the opposite is true, and there is in fact an increase in religious activity here in the United States compared to one hundred years ago. Despite the evidence contradicting this thesis, ninety nine percent of the people in charge of foreign policy today have been educated to believe that religion is based on superstition and scientific rational societies are more evolved. She used this data to demonstrate that we perhaps need to revise our understanding of the role of religion. She stressed that religious questions are fundamental to everyone, and when one attempts to relegate religious beliefs or exclude religious practice, one creates fundamentalism.

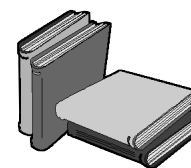
In the face of numerous and diverse religious beliefs, Jill Carroll enlightened the Forum guests as to the vital significance of our understanding of other religions. She emphasized how crucial it is for us to practice informed acceptance and tolerance of the role of religion in politics and peoples' world views. Her noble cause for peace, at least in the parts of the world that will embrace it, is one that we

all can respect and, to whatever extent we can, emulate. ■

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About the Author:

Lauren Goh is a sixteen-year-old sophomore at Golden High School. She is a first-generation Asian-American who has grown up in Golden and enjoys participating in her community by getting involved with groups such as the Golden Junior Leadership Council, Student Government, and National Honors Society. She enjoys playing the piano, and is very interested in her academic studies. She is involved in an accelerated class schedule and maintains a 4.0 grade point average.



NEWS & SUGGESTED READINGS

By Fred Nyland, News Editor

Jimmy Carter, *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*, Simon and Schuster Adult Publishing Group, 2006. In this book, former President Carter and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, offers his assessment of what must be done to bring permanent peace to Israel with dignity and justice to Palestine. President Carter, who brokered peace between Egypt and Israel, has stayed in touch with the major players from all sides in the conflict and has made numerous trips to the Holy Land, most recently as an observer in the Palestinian elections of 2005 and 2006. In this book, President Carter shares his knowledge of the history of the Middle East and his personal experiences with the principal actors, and he addresses sensitive political issues that many American officials avoid. Forthrightly, Carter prescribes steps that must be taken for the two states to share the Holy Land without a system of apartheid or the constant fear of terrorism. President Carter was asked to explain the use of the term "apartheid" in the title. "The book is about Palestine, the occupied territories, and not about Israel. Forced segregation on the West Bank and terrible oppression of the Palestinians create a situation accurately described by the word. I made it plain in the text that this abuse is not based on racism, but on the desire of the minority of Israelis to confiscate and

(Continued on page 2)

NEWS & SUGGESTED READINGS

(Continued from page 1)

colonize Palestinian land..... My surprise is that most critics of the book have ignored the facts about Palestinian persecution and its proposals for future peace and resorted to personal attacks on the author. No one could visit the occupied territories and deny that the book is accurate.” The critics, though, have written much about this book. Reed Business reviewers asserted, “Carter would seem to be a perfect emissary in the Middle East, an impartial and uniting diplomatic force in a fractured land. Not entirely so. Throughout his work, Carter assigns ultimate blame to Israel, arguing that the country's leadership has routinely undermined the peace process through its obstinate, aggressive and illegal occupation of territories seized in 1967. He's decidedly less critical of Arab leaders, accepting their concern for the Palestinian cause at face value, and including their anti-Israel rhetoric as a matter of course, without much in the way of counter-argument.” In a review in the Washington Post, Jeffrey Goldberg initially points out that “Carter makes it clear in this polemical book that, in excoriating Israel for its sins—and he blames Israel almost entirely for perpetuating the hundred-year war between Arab and Jew—he is on a mission from God.” Goldberg further alleges that Carter must have a specific agenda. “Carter seems to mean for this book to convince American evangelicals to reconsider their support for Israel. Evangelical Christians have become bedrock supporters of Israel lately, and Carter marshals many arguments, most of them specious, to scare them out of their position.” This particular review is extensive and interesting in its own right, especially if the reader disagrees with Carter's stand on Palestine. (Sources: Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com, Washington Post)

Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, Knopf Publishing Group, 2006. This book provides a narrative history of events leading to 9/11, a look at the people and ideas, the terrorist plans and the Western intelligence failures that culminated in the assault on America. The book is based on five years of research and many interviews that the author conducted in many domestic and foreign locations. The story provides insights through interweaving the lives of four men: the two leaders of al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri; the FBI's counter terrorism chief, John O'Neill, and the former head of Saudi intelligence, Prince Turki al-Faisal. The book outlines the crosscurrents of modern Islam that resulted in a number of important issues. It helped to radicalize Zawahiri and bin Laden. The milieu gave birth to al-Qaeda. The unsteady development of al-Qaeda into an organization capable of the American embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania is described. Other events include the attack on the USS Cole. The author describes O'Neill's efforts to track al-Qaeda before 9/11 and his tragic death in the World Trade towers. Further, the author provides insights into Prince Turki's transformation from bin Laden's ally to his enemy, and discusses the failures of the FBI, CIA, and NSA to share intelligence that might have prevented the 9/11 attacks. Despite an impressive record of terror and assassination, post World War II Islamic militants failed to establish theocracies in any Arab country. Many helped Afghanistan resist the Russian invasion of 1979 before their unemployed warriors stepped up efforts at home. Al-Qaeda formed in Afghanistan in 1988 and led by bin Laden, pursued a different agenda, blaming America for Islam's problems. Less wealthy than believed, bin Laden's talents lay in organization and public relations. Ten

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years later bin Laden blew up embassies in Africa which opened the floodgates of money and recruits. The reviews of the book are generally very good. Publisher's Weekly assessment states, “This is an important, gripping and profoundly disheartening book. Wright, a New Yorker writer, brings exhaustive research and delightful prose to one of the best books yet on the history of terrorism.” (Sources: Barnes and Noble, Publisher's Notes, Reed Business Information.) ■

ATTENDANCE AT FEBRUARY PROGRAM

237 people attended the lecture of which 125 were members and 112 were guests.

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

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The Foothills International Forum is a non-partisan organization and does not endorse any political affiliations. The views and opinions of speakers, Forum members and guests expressed at the Forum presentations as well as the press releases, summaries and reading list included in this newsletter do not necessarily constitute or imply the endorsement, recommendation or favoring of the Foothills International Forum, or any of its officers, or contractors acting on its behalf.

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.

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 or call 303-279-2638.



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

