

OUR UPCOMING MEETING



"We're Number 37" refers to the recent ranking of the U.S.'s health care system versus the rest of the world. T.R. Reid's presentation will be based on his upcoming book of the same name, and his recent Frontline TV program, "Sick around the

World: Five Capitalist Democracies and How They Do It." T.R. Reid discusses how these five countries—the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, Taiwan and Switzerland—deliver health care, and what the United States might learn from their successes and their failures.

T. R. Reid has become one of the nation's best-known correspondents through his cover-

WE'RE NUMBER 37 T.R. REID

Correspondent, Author

TIME/PLACE: Tuesday, November 18, 2008,
7:30 PM, Mount Vernon Country Club

age of global affairs for *The Washington Post*, his books and documentaries, and his light-hearted commentaries on National Public Radio.

Reid took a roundabout path to *The Washington Post*. He majored in Classics at Princeton University, and served as a naval officer, a teacher, and held various other jobs. At *The*

Washington Post, he covered Congress and four presidential campaigns. He served as the paper's bureau chief in Tokyo and in London.

Reid has written and hosted documentary films for National Geographic TV, for PBS Frontline, and for the A&E network. He is a regular commentator on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition." He has written six books in English and three in Japanese, and translated one book from the Japanese. His latest book, *The United States of Europe*, became a national best-seller.

Reid is a member of the board of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, the University of Colorado Medical School, and a number of community organizations and schools. He has taught at Princeton University and the University of Michigan. ■

OCTOBER MEETING REVIEW

By Laura Myers, Junior Guest
Editor, Golden High School



The U.S.-Azerbaijan Partnership in the Changing Regional Environment: Energy, Security, and Pragmatism

With a heavy accent, the Consul General of Azerbaijan, **Elin Suleymanov**, talked primarily about his nation's oil reserves and its relationship with the rest of the world. Iran, Turkey, Georgia, and the Caspian Sea border Azerbaijan, which won its independence from Russia only seventeen years ago.

Each day, Suleymanov's home country produces 800,000 barrels of oil – two thirds of Azerbaijan is rich in oil and natural gas - more than the nation can consume. The majority of oil produced is sold to other countries such as Russia, Georgia, and Turkey for shipping throughout the world. In September 1994, Azerbaijan signed a thirty- year contract with thirteen oil companies. At the time, oil was selling for \$18 to \$20 a barrel. The \$8 billion contract, which provided a factor of stability for the trans-Caspian oil trade, is known as the "Contract of the Century."

About the size of Maine, Azerbaijan is one of the major oil producing nations of the world. Home to one of the earliest oil booms of the 1900's, the economic and political stability of this pro-western, non-OPEC, NATO nation is of extreme importance for the region.

As the evening went on, Mr. Suleymanov gave his listeners the opportunity to ask questions. Referring to the presidential election and how both candidates consider independence from oil in America's near future, one member asked what the effect would be on Azerbaijan, since the United States is one of its biggest buyers. Mr. Suleymanov replied by saying he hoped there could be some sort of balance when it came to sources of energy, so every country could still profit in that area. The conflict between Russia and Georgia as well as a recent war with Armenia has threatened peace and prosperity in the region. The most impor-

tant support the United States could offer would be to help mediate the loss of twenty percent of Azerbaijani land to Armenia, encourage economic development in the region and support the territorial integrity and political independence of neighboring nations.

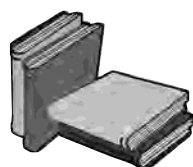
Over 90% of the population in Azerbaijan is Muslim, with sixty to seventy percent Shia and thirty to forty percent Sunni. Asked to compare the rights for women to those of the west, Mr. Suleymanov explained that women are just like any other citizen in Azerbaijan; there is no distinction. "Our religion is reflected in our culture, not our politics," he said. Azerbaijan granted women the right to vote in 1918, two years earlier than American women's suffrage was achieved. Several women have been elected to high office in Azerbaijan and as prime minister in Southwest Asia as well as in Europe,

but America has yet to elect a woman as President.

When asked about the economic crisis, and how that affected Azerbaijan, Mr. Suleymanov explained that the country did not invest in the stock market and, therefore, was not affected by the crisis. The only thing that did impact them was the drop in oil prices, and even then the impact was not very big.

Soon the night drew to a close. The Foothills World Affairs Council and the Mount Vernon Country Club were honored to host Mr. Suleymanov for a night, and what he said was cherished, valuable, and offered insight into another part of the world. ■

About the author: As sophomore at Golden High School, Laura Myers is enrolled in Advanced Placement United States History.



NEWS & SUGGESTED READINGS

By Fred Nyland, News Editor

Joyce Tyldesley, *Cleopatra, Last Queen of Egypt*, Basic Books, 2008. This book is a new biography of the Macedonian ruler and attempts to debunk many myths surrounding her legacy. The author, an Egyptologist, digs into Cleopatra's life, piecing together a unique portrait of her successes and failures. In chronological fashion, the author covers the major historical issues surrounding Cleopatra, but she avoids lingering too long on well-traveled ground. Tyldesley examines many of the burning questions that continue to puzzle historians. Was she black? Did she marry her brother? Was she beautiful or ugly? Many biographers focus too much on Cleopatra's reputation as a temptress, but the author energetically examines her politically astute nature against the backdrop of the bloody, brutal times in which she operated. The various stories about Cleopatra's relationship with Antony are thoroughly dissected and the author provides an examination of Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. The most absorbing passages concern her relationship with Antony and her subsequent demise, which are interspersed with sometimes conflicting quotations

from fellow historians. One critic, Allen Barra, summarized his views directly. Cleopatra was the author concludes, "an intelligent and effective monarch who set realistic goals and who very nearly succeeded in creating a dynasty that would have re-established Egypt as a world super power." Roman historians saw only an unnatural, immodest woman who preyed on other women's husbands. From this view developed the myth of the sexually promiscuous Cleopatra...a harsh legacy indeed for a woman who probably had no more than two consecutive sexual relationships. The author's theories as to what most likely did happen are at least as interesting as the folklore." (Sources, *Kirkus Reviews*, Allen Barra, Cleopatra biography blasts old illusions, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*).

Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006-2008*, Simon & Schuster Adult Publishing Group, 2008. As the violence in Iraq reached very high levels in 2006, a second front in the war raged at the highest levels of the Bush administration. In his fourth book on President George W. Bush, the author takes readers inside the tensions, secret debates, unofficial backchannels, distrust and determination within the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department, the intelligence agencies and

NEWS & SUGGESTED READINGS

(Continued from page 1)

the U.S. military headquarters in Iraq. Approached with intimacy and detail, Woodward sets forth an account of a president at war during a period of distress and uncertainty within the U.S. government from 2006 through mid-2008. During this interval in time, the White House launched a secret strategy review that excluded the military. The commander in Iraq (General Casey) believed that President Bush did not understand the war and eventually concluded he lost the president's confidence. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also conducted a secret strategy review that went nowhere. On the verge of revolt, they worried that the military will be blamed for a failure in Iraq. Further internal conflicts arose when the Secretary of State (Rice) strongly opposed a surge of additional U.S. forces and confronts the president, who replies that her suggestions would lead to failure. For months the administration's strategy reviews continue in secret with no deadline and no hurry, in part because public disclosure would harm Republicans in the November 2006 elections. This book provides an account of the struggles of General David Petraeus, who took over in Iraq during one of the bleakest and most

violent periods of the war. It reveals how breakthroughs in military operations and surveillance account for much of the progress as violence in Iraq plummeted in the middle of 2007. Jill Abramson commented on this book, "it is impossible not to be impressed by Woodward's reporting, which provides a vivid week-by-week chronology, from the post-9/11 attack on Afghanistan to the Iraq surge, of how the president's war policy unspooled and of its consequences." (Sources: Publisher's notes, and Jill Abramson, *New York Times*).

Scott McClellan, *WHAT HAPPENED, Inside the Bush White House and Washington's Culture of Deception*, Public Affairs, 2008. The author was one of a few Bush loyalists from Texas who became part of his inner circle of trusted advisers, and remained so during one of the most challenging and contentious periods of recent history. Drawn to Bush by his commitment to compassionate conservatism and strong bi-partisan leadership, McClellan served the president for more than seven years, and witnessed day-to-day exactly how the presidency veered off course. One of the author's most painful experiences occurred in July 2005, when he discovered that what he had told the press two years earlier—that Karl Rove and Lewis Libby were not involved in the leaking of "classified information" about Valerie Plame, Ambassador Wilson's wife—was untrue. Finally in his book, the author looks forward to the future, exploring the lessons this presidency offers the American people as we prepare to elect a new president. Not included in the book was McClellan's decision to endorse Senator Obama for president. Was this an act of revenge or of repentance? (Sources: Publisher's notes, Jonathan Yardley review in *The Washington Post*). ■

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WINTER BREAK

The T.R. Reid presentation concludes our programs for 2008. We will be back again on **January 20, 2009** with our first speaker for the second part of the program year.



Happy Holidays to all the Foothills WAC members.

CFWAC supports the Denver Insight Lecture Series. On November 12, 2008, **Reza Aslan** (who spoke to us two years ago) will speak on "The End of the War on Terror". CFWAC members can get a 20% ticket discount and complimentary passes to the VIP reception following the lecture. Use promo code AA108 when purchasing tickets online at www.insightsspeakers.com.

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



VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:

www.ColoradoFoothillsWAC.org

The Colorado Foothills World Affairs Council 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 Walter "Joe" Shaw 303-979-5927. ALL COLORADO FOOTHILLS WAC 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 Colorado Foothills WAC. 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.

The Colorado Foothills World Affairs Council (WAC) is a non-partisan organization and does not endorse any political affiliations. The views and opinions of speakers, members and guests expressed at the Colorado Foothills World Affairs Council 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 Colorado Foothills WAC or any of its officers, or contractors acting on its behalf.

Student memberships: \$5; Individual memberships: \$30; Family memberships: \$45; Supporting memberships: \$75; Contributing memberships: \$100; Patron memberships: \$250; Corporate memberships: \$400.

HAVE YOU MOVED? Please let the Colorado Foothills World Affairs Council 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 Editorial Committee: Beatrice Szadokierski, Editor in Chief, 1923 Parfet Estates Drive, Golden, CO 80401, email: szadokierski@comcast.net or call 303-279-2638.