

OUR UPCOMING MEETING

Bringing decades of insight into the inner workings of Washington, Peter David will be providing a thorough and thought provoking commentary on the results of the U.S. elections, and the potential impact on the future U.S. future foreign policy.



Peter David has spent more than 25 years at *The Economist*. Before taking up his present job as Wash-

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE ELECTIONS

PETER DAVID

**Washington Bureau Chief,
*The Economist Magazine***

TIME/PLACE:

**Tuesday, November 16, 2010,
7:30 PM, Mount Vernon Country Club**

ington Bureau Chief and author of the "*Lexington*" column, he was For-

eign Editor (2001 to 2009), British Political Editor and author of the "*Bagebot*" column (1998 to 2001), Business-Affairs Editor (1993 to 1998), and a specialist writer on the Middle East. Prior to joining *The Economist* in 1984, he worked in Washington, DC, first as Bureau Chief of the *London Times Higher Education Supplement* and later as Washington editor of the British science weekly, *Nature*. He was educated at Liverpool College and the University of London. ■

OCTOBER MEETING REVIEW

Mosques and Qur'an Burning: Islam as Media Spectacle

Dr. Nabil Echchaibi, Assistant Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Colorado

By Deborah Pearce, Secretary,
Colorado Foothills World Affairs Council

The recent proposal to build an Islamic Cultural Center in New York City created a media vortex, swirling misinformation and falsehoods. Dr. Echchaibi, who was born in Morocco, attempts to bridge the divide between the perceptions of Muslims and non-Muslims.

Immediately following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, President George W. Bush intentionally made a distinction between the radicals responsible for the attacks and typical Muslims. Since that time, however, select groups have been framing the issues of Islam in today's media, increasing anxiety and creating a state of paranoia regarding the Islamization of

America. While Muslims have immigrated to the United States since the 18th century, today they make up one percent of the U.S. population, and overwhelming majorities condemn acts of violence. A recent Pew survey reports that Muslims are highly educated, have a higher than average income, and make an effort to integrate into society. Yet, according to Dr. Echchaibi, the mainstream media consistently places the burden of proof regarding the peaceful nature of Islam on Muslim believers.

When the story of the New York Cultural Center was first covered by the *New York Times* in December of 2009, it was billed as a positive effort to build a sense of community in a city targeted by Islamic extremists eight years earlier. However, on May 6, 2010, the *New York Post* ran the following headline, "Panel



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Approves ‘WTC’ Mosque” and soon after blog reactions to the development penetrated mainstream media. The Islamic website www.loomwatch.com reports incidents of paranoia from extreme blogs such as Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller who build on cultural fears between Eastern and Western culture. Recently, blogs called for a boycott of the Canadian branch of Campbell’s Soup because the company agreed to sell products that meet the dietary demands of “halal” restrictions. This fall, Minister Terry Jones of Florida topped the mounting spectacle with an international pledge to burn the Koran on the anniversary of September 11th.

Muslim authors and artists have attempted to bridge the divide between Muslims and non-Muslims through

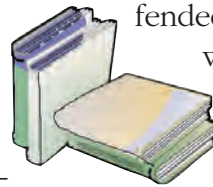


the media. *In Muslims in America: A Short History*, Edward E. Curtis chronicles the connections between African slaves and the development of American gospel music. The magazine, *Muslim Girl*, published by a Denverite, exposes issues surrounding growing up Muslim in America. The 2005 documentary, *Me and the Mosque*, addresses the inconsistencies behind barriers placed on Islamic women. The Canadian sitcom, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, created by Zarga Nawaz, takes a humorous approach to the modern issues faced by Muslim communities. Following a similar pattern of successful assimilation experienced by earlier immigrant groups, Muslim comedians have found ways to mainstream their presence in America. We must demand from the media a better discourse based on substance and informative debate, if we are to improve cultural relations in our ever growing diverse future. ■

SUGGESTED READINGS

By Fred Nyland, News Editor

Melvin I. Urofsky, *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life*, Pantheon Books, 2009. Louis Brandeis had at least four careers during his life. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he pioneered how modern law is practiced. He and others developed the idea of a modern law firm, in which specialists manage different areas of the law. He was the author of the right to privacy and led the way in creating the role of the lawyer as a counselor to both parties in a dispute. He promoted the idea of *pro bono* work by attorneys. When he was appointed to the Supreme Court in 1916, the idea of *pro bono* work was still considered radical. Between 1895 and 1916, he ranked as one of the nation’s leading progressive reformers. He invented the savings bank life insurance in Massachusetts and was a driving force in the development of the Federal Reserve Act, the Clayton Antitrust Act, and the law establishing the Federal Trade Commission. As an economist and moralist, Brandeis warned that banking and stock brokering must be separate, and twenty years later his recommendation was finally enacted into law as part of the New Deal. This law was undone by Ronald Reagan. Many observers feel that this action eventually led to the savings and loan crisis in the 1980s and the world financial collapse of 2008. Brandeis as a lawyer and reformer de-



fended an Oregon law establishing maximum hours for women workers, and in the process, invented a new form of appellate brief that had only a few pages of legal citation and consisted mostly of factual references. Before the emergence of the Brandeis brief, the law was seen by conservatives as a formal series of rules representing eternal verities, unchangeable by new circumstances.

Although never directly attacked because of his Jewish heritage, there was a brutal confirmation battle when he was appointed to the Supreme Court. His opponents harshly criticized him on many personal counts, labeling him as “a striver,” “self-advertiser,” and “a disturbing element in any gentlemen’s club.” Even the president of Harvard University accused Brandeis of lacking “judicial temperament.” During his years on the court he developed the concept of the modern jurisprudence of free speech, the doctrine of protection of privacy, and suggested elements of the doctrine of incorporation. As a judge, he tried to teach both his colleagues and the public that the law had to change to keep up with the economy and society. Over time, the court adopted every one of his dissents as the correct constitutional interpretation. As Alan Dershowitz has commented, “Brandeis is seen by liberals as their patron saint because of his views

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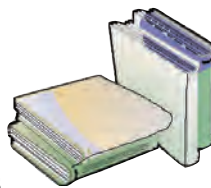
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on speech, privacy, liberty and social welfare, yet conservatives claim him as well because of his commitment to judicial restraint. In many ways he defies labeling. ... He said of the Supreme Court that 'the most important thing we do is not doing.'"

Brandeis had an important and active role in at least one aspect of the foreign policy of his day. His view was that the Jews deserved a homeland. He converted from being a secular Jew to that of a committed Zionist. (Sources: Publisher's notes, Alan M. Dershowitz, "The Practice," *New York Times*, September 27, 2009.)

T. J. Stiles, *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt*, Vintage reprint edition, April, 2010. This book provides a comprehensive portrait of a dynasty builder who created a vast fortune. He was born on Staten Island during the Washington administration, and rose from boatman to builder of the nation's largest fleet of steamships and later the head of a railroad empire. He interacted as a consultant with President Lincoln, was an early ally of Jay Gould, and later his sworn enemy. Vanderbilt helped to launch the transportation revolution, propelled the Gold Rush, reshaped Manhattan, and invented the modern corporation shaping the economic world of today.

His tracks as a tycoon were opulent. His version of camping out consisted of an elegant railroad car and a caravan for his servants. His private rail car is still on display in the Adirondack Museum. His "cottage" in Newport is so much larger and grander that it too is of museum quality. Michael Kazin, in his review of this book, has stated, "Cornelius Vanderbilt spent little of his long life fretting over his image. If Americans were not grateful for the many steamships he built, the major railroad lines he integrated into a common system, the stock



market panics he soothed and the Grand Central Terminal he constructed with his own millions, that was their fault, not his.

Vanderbilt was the richest man in 19th century America: at his death in 1877, he possessed, at least on paper, one-ninth of all the American currency in circulation. But like other corporate giants of his era and ours, he saw no reason to apologize for manufacturing and managing commodities everyone wanted and needed." The author, T. J. Stiles also notes, "Vanderbilt was many things, not all of them admirable, but he was never a phony. Hated, revered, resented, he always commanded respect, even from his enemies." (Sources: Amazon.com, Michael Kazin, "Ruthless in Manhattan," *New York Times*, May 10, 2009, *The New Yorker* magazine.)

Wendell Steavenson, *The Weight of a Mustard Seed: The Intimate Story of an Iraqi General and His Family During Thirty Years of Tyranny*, Harper Paperbacks Reprint edition, 2010. The author has lived in and reported from Iran and Iraq. She tries to discover why underlings of Saddam Hussein continued to serve, even as they saw the terror perpetrated on the innocent. The author investigates the career and ultimate demise of the famous general, Kamel Sached. He was born in 1947 and joined the police in 1975. Later, he was in the army and was promoted to the Special Forces during the war with Iran. In 1983, he was imprisoned and after his release he was called before Saddam himself, who promoted him. It was only after the invasion of Kuwait that Sached gave up on the regime, believing that Saddam Hussein has needlessly destroyed the country. In the years that followed, his alienation deepened, but as a career soldier he did not rebel, but refused to allow one of his sons to join the

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

The November presentation concludes our events for 2010.

Happy Holidays to all our members.

Our programs resume in January, 2011.



SUGGESTED READINGS *(Continued)*

army. In the end, he seems to have known what was coming, but refused offers to escape. The exact cause of Sachet's execution remains a matter of speculation. In his review of this book, Robert Worth states, "Steavenson is impressively scrupulous about the facts, carefully assessing each of her witnesses and the lapses that may distort their memories. In almost every case, her quarry is the private moral struggle, the moment of brave protest or the self-delusion that patches over a troubled conscience. To some extent, she becomes a character in this story herself, the earnest interviewer who is constantly probing Iraqi faces for signs of hidden guilt of willful forgetting. This moral preoccupation is reflected in her title, which comes from a passage in the Koran about the way God will weigh all good and evil on the Day of Judgment, down to the 'weight of a mustard seed.'" The author visited with Sachet's family and found that Sachet's sons supported the Sunni insurgency against the Americans. Such actions may not bode well for the presently politically divided country of Iraq. (Sources: *Publisher's Weekly*, *Booklist*, Robert F. Worth (Beirut Bureau Chief), "Decline and Fall," *New York Times*, May 17, 2009.) ■

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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: Ned Biggs, P.O. Box 1602, Evergreen, CO 80437-1602.



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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, Ned Biggs, know about your move so your mailing information can be updated. Send change of address requests to: CFWAC 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.