



Afghanistan, Pakistan, India --- Crossroads of Conflict

February 19 - 21, 2010

Book List as of February 10, 2010

Our 23rd annual program will focus on shifting conflict patterns and implications for United States foreign policy in this region. At this stage, we recommend the following books to choose from. They are listed alphabetically by first mentioned author's last name. Confirmed 2010 Camden Conference speakers are designated*.

Top Picks

Ali, Tariq. *The Duel: Pakistan on the Flight Path of American Power*, Scribner, September 2008.

Publisher Comment: A veteran journalist on Pakistan, Ali reviews the country's six-decade political history critically, indicting the leadership class and its ties to the U.S.

Allawi, Ali A. *The Crisis of Islamic Civilization*, Yale University Press, May 2009.

Publisher Comment: Allawi, former minister of defense and minister of finance in Iraq's postwar governments, offers his version of the causes and consequences of the decline of Islamic civilization and proposals for its rejuvenation. He served as Minister of Defense and Minister of Finance in the Iraqi postwar governments. He is senior visiting fellow at Princeton University.

***Azoy, G. Whitney. *Buzkashi: Game and Power in Afghanistan* (2nd ed.) Waveland Press, 2002 (Paper).**

"This new, updated edition appears after two decades, during which much, or most of it disastrous, has happened in Afghanistan. Two new chapters pay tribute to the author's friend and field informant, and describe buzkashi as it has been played by new people in new places over the past 20 years. In persisting through the terror and trials of Afghanistan's recent history, perhaps buzkashi is also an apt metaphor for the tenacity of this long-suffering people." From Foreign Service Journal, 12/02.

Amazon reader Hanif Yazid says it best: "Azoy describes a fascinating relationship between Afghanistan's 'national sport' and its political evolution. Witty and genuine, his firsthand accounts of traditional Afghan notions of power, status and honor give the book a unique flavour. Buzkashi is short, but informative. Easy to read and enjoy, it made me want to ride like the wind, dead goat in hand, to victory and glory!"

Highly recommended by several Conference Program Committee members. Azoy is a confirmed speaker at our 2010 annual conference.

Bhutto, Benazir. *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West*, Harper April 2008, December 2008 (Paper)

From Booklist. Brad Hooper commentary: Just days prior to her assassination, the late former prime minister of troubled Pakistan completed the manuscript of this book, which held great personal importance to her. Its importance extends beyond the writer's own sense of purpose and accomplishment, however, because it is a vastly significant document for anyone seeking to understand the nature of past and contemporary Islam and its current interface with the West. Afterword in paper edition by her husband and children: "There must be a reason that Allah gave our wife and mother the time to finish this book."

Cole, Juan. *Engaging the Muslim World*, Palgrave Macmillan, March 2009.

Publisher Description: Juan Cole disentangles the key foreign policy issues that America is grappling with today--from our dependence on Middle East petroleum to the promotion of Islamophobia by the American right--and delivers his informed advice on the best way forward. Cole's unique ability to take the true Muslim perspective into account when looking at East-West relations make his insights well-rounded and prescient as he suggests a course of action on fundamental issues like religion, oil, war and peace. With substantive recommendations for the next administration on how to move forward in key countries such as Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran, *Engaging the Muslim World* reveals how we can repair the damage of the foreign policy of the last eight years and forge ahead on a path of peace and prosperity.

Juan Cole, internationally respected historian, celebrated blogger, and Middle East expert, teaches history at the University of Michigan. He is a former speaker at the Camden Conference.

Coll, Steve. *The Bin Ladens: An Arabian Family in the American Century*, Penguin, April 2008.

Publisher's Description: Two-time Pulitzer Prize winner and author of the national bestseller *Ghost Wars*, Steve Coll presents the story of the Bin Laden family's rise to power and privilege, revealing new information to show how American influences changed the family and how one member's rebellion changed America.

Jones, Seth. *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*. Norton, July 2009.

Publishers Weekly: Since 2001, RAND Corporation political scientist Jones has been observing the reinvigorated insurgency in Afghanistan and weighing the potency of its threat to the country's future and American interests in the region. Jones finds the roots of the re-emergence in the expected areas: the deterioration of security after the ousting of the Taliban regime in 2002, the U.S.'s focus on Iraq as its foreign policy priority and Pakistan's role as a haven for insurgents. He revisits Afghan history, specifically the invasions by the British in the mid- and late-19th century and the Russians in the late-20th to rue how little the U.S. has learned from these two previous wars. He sheds light on why Pakistan - a consistent supporter of the Taliban - continues to be a key player in the region's future. Jones makes important arguments for the inclusion of local leaders, particularly in rural regions, but his diligent panorama of the situation fails to consider whether the war in Afghanistan is already lost. (July) Copyright © 1997-2005 Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc.

Khalidi, Rashid. *Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and American Dominance in the Middle East*. Beacon, March 2009.

Publisher Description: During the 45 years of the Cold War, policymakers from the United States and the Soviet Union vied for primacy in the Middle East. Their motives, long held to have had an ideological thrust, were, in fact, to gain control over access to oil and claim geographic and strategic advantage. These interventions deeply affected and exacerbated regional and civil wars throughout the Middle East, and the carefully calculated maneuvers fueled by the fierce competition between the United States and the USSR actually provoked breakdowns in fragile democracies.

Kilcullen, David. *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, Oxford University Press, 2009.

Publishers Weekly, Starred Review: Kilcullen, adviser on counterinsurgency to General Petraeus, defines accidental guerrillas as locals fighting primarily because outsiders (often Westerners) are intruding into their physical and cultural space, but they may also be galvanized by high-tech, internationally oriented ideologues. This interaction of two kinds of nonstate opponents renders both traditional counterterrorism and counterinsurgency inadequate. Kilcullen uses Afghanistan and Iraq as primary case studies for a new kind of war that relies on an ability to provoke Western powers into protracted, exhausting, expensive interventions.

Levy, Adrian & Scott-Clark, Catherine. *Deception: Pakistan, the United States, and the Secret Trade in Nuclear Weapons*. Walker 2007.

Here is the shocking, three-decade story of A. Q. Khan and Pakistan's nuclear program, and the complicity of the United States in the spread of nuclear weaponry.

In December, 1975, A. Q. Khan—a young Pakistani scientist working in Holland—stole top-secret blueprints for a revolutionary new process to arm a nuclear bomb. His original intention, and that of his government, was purely patriotic—to provide Pakistan a counter to India's recently unveiled nuclear device. However, as Levy and Scott-Clark relate in their investigation of Khan's career over the past thirty years, over time that limited ambition mushroomed into the world's largest clandestine network engaged in selling nuclear secrets—a mercenary and illicit program managed by the Pakistani military and made possible, in large part, by aid money from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Libya, and by indiscriminate assistance from China.

The authors reveal that the sales of nuclear weapons technology to Iran, North Korea, and Libya, so much in the news today, were made with the clear knowledge of the American government, for whom Pakistan has been a crucial buffer state and ally—first against the Soviet Union, now in the “war against terror.” Every successive American presidency, from Carter to George W. Bush, has turned a blind eye to Pakistan's nuclear activity—rewriting and destroying evidence provided by its intelligence agencies, lying to Congress and the American people about Pakistan's intentions and capability, and facilitating, through shortsightedness and intent, the spread of the very weapons we vilify the “axis of evil” powers for having and fear terrorists will obtain. *Deception* puts our current standoffs with Iran and North Korea in a startling new perspective, and makes clear two things: that Pakistan, far from being an ally, is a rogue nation at the epicenter of world destabilization; and that the complicity of the United States has ushered in a new nuclear winter.

Loyn, David. *In Afghanistan: Two Hundred Years of British, Russian and American Occupation*. Palgrave Macmillan, July 2009.

Publisher Description: Afghanistan has been a strategic prize for foreign empires for more than 200 years. The British, Russians, and Americans have all fought across its beautiful and inhospitable terrain, in conflicts variously ruthless, misguided and bloody.

This violent history is a history littered with misunderstandings and broken promises, in which the British, the Russians, and later the Americans, constantly underestimated the ability of the Afghans. *In Afghanistan* brings to life the personalities involved in Afghanistan's relationship with the world, chronicling the misunderstandings and missed opportunities that have so often led to war. With 30 years experience as a BBC foreign correspondent, Loyn has had a front-row seat during Afghanistan's recent history. *In Afghanistan* draws on his knowledge of the Taliban and the forces that prevail in Afghanistan, to provide an analysis of the lessons these conflicts have for the present day.

Luce, Edward. *In Spite of the Gods: The Strange Rise of Modern India*, Doubleday, January 2008.

Publishers Weekly. Luce illuminates the drastically lopsided features of a nuclear power still burdened by mass poverty and illiteracy, which he links in part to government control of the economy, an overwhelmingly rural landscape, and deep-seated institutional corruption. While describing religion's complex role in Indian society, Luce emphasizes an extremely heterogeneous country with a growing consumerist culture, a geographically uneven labor force and an enduring caste system. This lively account includes a sharp assessment of U.S. promotion of India as a countervailing force to China in a three-power "triangular dance," and generally sets a high standard for breadth, clarity and discernment in wrestling with the global implications of New India.

Luce currently is the Washington bureau chief for the *Financial Times*. He was the paper's South Asia bureau chief, based in New Delhi, between 2001 and 2006.

Peters, Gretchen. *Seeds of Terror: How Heroin Is Bankrolling the Taliban and al Qaeda*. Thomas Dunne, May 2009.

From Publishers Weekly. Peters draws on 10 years of reporting from Afghanistan and Pakistan for this important examination of the nexus of [drug] smugglers and extremists in the global war against terrorists. Citing firsthand testimony, classified intelligence reports and specialized studies, Peters builds a solid case for her contention that the union of narco-traffickers, terrorist groups, and the international criminal underworld is the new axis of evil. Ground zero is Afghanistan, where the rejuvenated Taliban depend on opium for 70% of its funds and there is overwhelming circumstantial evidence of Osama bin Laden's involvement in the drug trade. Peters argues that the failure to halt this money flow to terrorist networks is the single greatest failure in the war on terror, and warns that stanching the flood of drug money into terrorist coffers is essential.

*** Pillar, Paul R. *Terrorism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Brookings Institution. January, 2004.**

This revised edition includes a new introductory essay on counterterrorism since 9/11.

Publisher: In this critical study, a career CIA officer provides a guide to constructing and executing counterterrorist policy, urging that it be formulated as an integral part of broader U.S. foreign policy.

Amazon Reader David Fallas adds: “*This is not a book about secret operations or police actions against terrorism. This text is about the phenomenon of terrorism, its different manifestations and the kinds of groups related to this activities. Mr. Pillar explains the methods for answering the terrorist threat and - contrary to what many may think - he relegates military actions to the last place of the list. The first edition of this book was written before September 11, 2001, but certainly it helps explain why the attacks took place and sets the path to prevent such acts in the future.*”

***Rashid, Ahmed. *Decent into Chaos: The United States and the Disaster in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, Penguin, 2009 (Paperback Edition).**

Publishers Weekly: Starred Review: “Long overshadowed by the Iraq War, the ongoing turmoil in Afghanistan and Central Asia finally receives a searching retrospective as Rashid (*Taliban*) surveys the region to reveal a thicket of ominous threats and lost opportunities—in Pakistan, a rickety dictatorship colludes with militants, and Afghanistan's weak government is besieged by warlords, an exploding drug economy and a powerful Taliban insurgency. The author blames the unwillingness of American policymakers to shoulder the burden of nation building. According to Rashid, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and subsequently refused to commit the forces and money needed to rebuild it; instead the U.S. government made corrupt alliances with warlords to impose a superficial calm, while continuing to ignore the Pakistani government's support of the Taliban and the other Islamic extremists who have virtually taken over Pakistan's western provinces. With his unparalleled access to sources—I constantly berated [Afghan President] Karzai for his failure to understand the usefulness of political parties—Rashid is an authoritative guide to the region's politics and his is an insightful, at times explosive, indictment of the U.S. government's hand in the region's degeneration.”

Rashid is a Pakistani journalist, based in Lahore, who has also authored *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (2002) and *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (2000). He also writes for a number of international newspapers.

Riedel, Bruce. *The Search for al Qaeda: Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future*, Brookings, 2008.

Publishers Weekly: Riedel, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and senior adviser on the Middle East to three past presidents, reviews how al-Qaeda has flourished since the September 11 attacks with ‘franchises’ mushrooming around the world. The author surveys al-Qaeda’s origins, workings and key members and introduces fresh information about the organization’s ideology and future plans. Riedel warns against conflating the war against al-Qaeda with the current war in Iraq (the president chose to declare war not on al Qaeda, but on ‘terrorism, a concept that he and Vice President Dick Cheney arrived at by confusing 9/11 with Saddam Hussein’s Iraq) and demonstrates how U.S. actions compound the public’s ignorance and vulnerability.

He argues that concentrating forces in Iraq has diverted attention and presence from Afghanistan and Pakistan, the hotbeds of jihadist organization, and suggests redirecting the military back to the badlands of the Afghan-Pakistan border while offering economic aid to forestall the extremism that thrives in destitute areas. Riedel’s argument in favor of greater U.S. involvement in the Arab-Israeli peace process is persuasive, and his prescriptions are well-evidenced, unfailingly sound and refreshingly sensible.

***Schaffer, Teresita C. *India and the United States in the 21st Century: Reinventing Partnership*. Center for Strategic & International Studies, June 2009 (Paper)**

Publisher Description: Schaffer examines the astonishing new strategic partnership between the United States and India. Unlike other books on the subject, it brings together the two countries’

success in forging bilateral relations and their relatively skimpy record of seeking common ground on global and regional issues.

Our two governments have a vigorous military-to-military relationship, reflecting similar security interests. They have devoted much less attention to creating a common vision of the world, and they regularly spar in multilateral settings. The big global issues in the coming decade, however, including climate change, nuclear proliferation, and international financial reform, cannot be addressed without India.

Talbott, Strobe. *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb*. Brookings, August 2004.

Publisher Description: On May 11, 1998, three nuclear devices exploded under the Thar, or Great Indian Desert, shaking the surrounding villages—and the rest of the world. The immediate effect was to plunge US-India relations, already vexed by decades of tension and estrangement, into a new and acrimonious standoff. The situation deteriorated further when Pakistan responded with a test of its own two weeks later.

Engaging India is the revealing, authoritative account of the intensive talks that the United States conducted on parallel tracks with the South Asian nuclear powers over the next two and a half years. Bill Clinton's point man for that high-stakes diplomacy takes us behind the scenes of one of the most intriguing and consequential political dramas of our time, reconstructing what happened—and why—with narrative verve, rich human detail, and penetrating analysis.

Strobe Talbott is president of the Brookings Institution. He served as deputy secretary of state from 1994 to 2001.

Von Hippel, Karin & Barton. *Afghanistan and Pakistan on the Brink*, CSIS, January 2009.

Dramatic changes are needed in order to succeed in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Almost daily, the people of the region experience deteriorating security and a worsening economic situation. At the same time, Afghans and Pakistanis will both be making tough political choices in the coming months, and the United States and major allies are in the midst of multiple policy reviews. The appointment of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke should provide the opportunity to transform the current approach into one that has clear goals and a compelling narrative.

Afghanistan and Pakistan on the Brink is the result of a 200 person conference, held on November 21, 2008 at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and co-organized by the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) at the National Defense University (NDU). The event included participants from all parts of the U.S. government.

Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower : Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, Knopf, 2006.

Publishers Weekly. Starred Review: Wright, a *New Yorker* writer, brings exhaustive research and delightful prose to one of the best books yet on the history of terrorism. He begins with the observation that, despite an impressive record of terror and assassination, post-WWII, 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 Osama bin Laden, pursued a different agenda, blaming America for Islam's problems. Less wealthy than believed, bin Laden's talents lay in organization and PR, Wright asserts. Ten years later, bin Laden blew up U.S. embassies in Africa and the destroyer *Cole*, opening the floodgates of money and recruits. Wright's step-by-step description of these attacks reveals that planning terror is a sloppy business, leaving a trail of clues that, in the

case of 9/11, raised many suspicions among individuals in the FBI, CIA and NSA. Wright shows that 9/11 could have been prevented if those agencies had worked together.

Zaeef, Abdul Salam. *My Life with the Taliban*. Translated and edited by Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn. Columbia University Press, 2010.

Publisher Description: *My Life with the Taliban* is the autobiography of Abdul Salam Zaeef, a former senior member of Afghanistan's Taliban and a principal actor in its domestic and foreign affairs. Translated for the first time from the Pashto, Zaeef's words share more than a personal history of an unusual life. They supply a counternarrative to standard accounts of Afghanistan since 1979.

Zaeef shares his experiences as a poor youth in rural Kandahar. Both his parents died when he was young, and Russia's invasion in 1979 forced Zaeef to flee to Pakistan. In 1983, Zaeef joined the jihad against the Soviets, fighting alongside several major figures of the anti-Soviet resistance, including current Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar. After the war, he returned to his quiet life in Helmand, but factional conflicts soon broke out, and Zaeef, disgusted by the ensuing lawlessness, joined with other former mujahidin to form the Taliban, which assumed power in 1994.

Zaeef recounts his time with the organization. He served as ambassador to Pakistan at the time of 9/11, and his testimony sheds light on the "phoney war" that preceeded the U.S.-led intervention. In 2002, Zaeef was delivered to the American forces operating in Pakistan and spent four and a half years in prison, including several years in Guantanamo, before being released without trial or charge. He also provides an illuminating perspective on life in Guantanamo.

Human Interest and Other Stories

Crile, George. *Charlie Wilson's War: The Extraordinary Story of the Largest Covert Operation in History*. (Paper, Grove/Atlantic, 2007). Also on DVD.

Publisher Comment: From an award-winning 60 Minutes reporter comes the extraordinary story of the largest and most successful CIA operation in history—the arming of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan.

Fraser, George MacDonald. *Flashman: A Novel*. Plume, 1984.

Jim Algrant recommendation; Jim Matlack recommendation and commentary: I have just finished reading *Flashman*, the splendid novel about a character for a whole series of subsequent books. Harry Flashman is a total scoundrel, bounder, and coward who manages to be present at various battles and historic episodes and to win fame and promotion through luck and lying about his exploits. Based on the school bully in *Tom Brown's School Days*.

Fraser has great fun with his character who narrates all the books as if given in autobiographical reminiscence. They are, however, quite accurate as to history and manners and killingly funny. The first book, *Flashman*, finds our hero sent to Imperial India in the 1840's for his misconduct at home while in the army. The greater part of the narrative follows Harry into Afghanistan in 1839 as the British troops take over in Kabul in the First Afghan War. As you will perhaps know, their brutal and short-sighted conduct creates a total uprising against them by 1842, compelling a withdrawal under constant harassment during which an initial column of 15,000 soldiers, family members, and camp followers is completely wiped out in the mountain passes. One wounded military doctor limped into Jalalabad as the sole survivor of the evacuation column. It was one of the worst defeats

ever endured by the British military. Needless to add, Harry Flashman does survive through a series of implausible but exciting adventures.

Hosseini, Khalad. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Riverhead, May 2007 (Paper, November 2008).

Publishers Weekly. Starred review: Afghan-American novelist Hosseini follows up his bestselling *The Kite Runner* with another searing epic of Afghanistan in turmoil. The story covers three decades of anti-Soviet jihad, civil war and Taliban tyranny through the lives of two women. Mariam is the scorned illegitimate daughter of a wealthy businessman, forced at age 15 into marrying the 40-year-old Rasheed, who grows increasingly brutal as she fails to produce a child. Eighteen later, Rasheed takes another wife, 14-year-old Laila, a smart and spirited girl whose only other options, after her parents are killed by rocket fire, are prostitution or starvation. Against a backdrop of unending war, Mariam and Laila become allies in an asymmetrical battle with Rasheed, whose violent misogyny—"There was no cursing, no screaming, no pleading, no surprised yelps, only the systematic business of beating and being beaten"—is endorsed by custom and law. Hosseini gives a forceful but nuanced portrait of a patriarchal despotism where women are agonizingly dependent on fathers, husbands and especially sons, the bearing of male children being their sole path to social status. His tale is a powerful, harrowing depiction of Afghanistan, but also a lyrical evocation of the lives and enduring hopes of its resilient characters.

The Kite Runner (2003) is also highly recommended.

Mortenson, Greg. *Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books, Not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan*. Viking, December 2009

In this first-person narrative, Greg Mortenson picks up where *Three Cups of Tea* left off in 2003, recounting his relentless, ongoing efforts to establish schools for girls in Afghanistan and Pakistan. He also worked tirelessly in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan after a massive earthquake hit the region in 2005. In unique ways he has built relationships with Islamic clerics, militia commanders, and tribal leaders even as he was dodging shootouts with feuding Afghan warlords and surviving an eight-day armed abduction by the Taliban.

He shares for the first time his broader vision to promote peace through education and literacy, as well as touching on military matters, Islam, and women—all woven together with the many rich personal stories of the people who have been involved in this remarkable two-decade humanitarian effort.

Mike Mullen, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, adds: "What Greg understands better than most—and what he practices more than anyone else I know—is the simple truth that all of us are better off when all of us have the opportunity to learn, especially our children. By helping them learn and grow, he's shaping the very future of a region and giving hope to an entire generation."

Mortenson, Greg and David Oliver Relin, David Oliver. *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time*, Penguin 2007

Publishers Weekly. Starred review: Some failures lead to phenomenal successes, and this American [mountaineer's] unsuccessful attempt to climb K2, the world's second tallest mountain, is one of them. Dangerously ill when he finished his climb in 1993, Mortenson was sheltered for seven weeks by the small Pakistani village of Korphe; in return, he promised to build the impoverished town's first school, a project that grew into the Central Asia Institute, which has since constructed more than 50 schools across rural Pakistan and Afghanistan. Coauthor Relin recounts Mortenson's efforts in fascinating detail, presenting compelling portraits of the village elders, con artists,

philanthropists, mujahidin, Taliban officials, ambitious school girls and upright Muslims Mortenson met along the way.

As the book moves into the post-9/11 world, Mortenson and Relin argue that the United States must fight Islamic extremism in the region through collaborative efforts to alleviate poverty and improve access to education, especially for girls. Captivating and suspenseful, with engrossing accounts of both hostilities and unlikely friendships, this book will win many readers' hearts.

Samina Quraeshi. *Sacred Spaces: A Journey with the Sufis of the Indus*. [2010 Camden Conference speaker.] Peabody Press, 2/10. May be distributed by Harvard University Press.

Sufism, the mystical path of Islam, is a key feature of the complex Islamic culture of South Asia today. Influenced by philosophies and traditions from other Muslim lands and by pre-Islamic rites and practices, Sufism offers a corrective to the image of Islam as monolithic and uniform.

Pakistani artist and educator Samina Quraeshi provides a locally inflected vision of Islam in South Asia that is enriched by art and by a female perspective on the diversity of Islamic expressions of faith. A unique account of a journey through the author's childhood homeland in search of the wisdom of the Sufis, the book reveals the deeply spiritual nature of major centers of Sufism in the central and northwestern heartlands of South Asia.

Quraeshi relies on memory, storytelling, and image making to create an imaginative personal history using a rich body of photographs and works of art to reflect the seeking heart of the Sufi way and to demonstrate the diversity of this global religion. Her vision builds on the centuries-old Sufi tradition of mystical messages of love, freedom, and tolerance that continue to offer the promise of building cultural and spiritual bridges between peoples of different faiths. From publisher.

Schmidle, Nicholas. *To Live or to Perish Forever: Two Tumultuous Years in Pakistan*, Holt, May 2009.

Publishers Weekly. Journalist Schmidle offers a gripping, grim account of his two years as a journalism fellow in Pakistan, where his travels took him into the most isolated and unfriendly provinces, and into the thick of interests and beliefs that impede that nation's peace and progress. The author reports on the murky relationship between the Pakistani intelligence agencies and the Taliban and how American bombings have actually helped the Taliban gain influence in the border regions. While Schmidle amplifies the danger an unstable Pakistan poses to its neighbors and the world, he also turns a constructively critical eye back to American support of mujahideen during the Afghan war against the Soviets and shows how American intervention was both a help and an exacerbation of problems between Pakistan and Afghanistan. As a witness to Musharraf's last days in power and the rage that followed Bhutto's assassination, Schmidle has, with this effort, established himself as a fresh, eloquent and informed contributor to the ongoing dialogue regarding Pakistan, terrorism and the strategic importance of engaging Central Asia in efforts toward peace and stability.

Seierstad, Asne, *The Bookseller of Kabul*. Back Bay Books, October 2004.

Publisher Comment: After living for three months with the Kabul bookseller Sultan Khan in the spring of 2002, Norwegian journalist Seierstad penned this astounding portrait of a nation recovering from war, undergoing political flux and mired in misogyny and poverty. As a Westerner, she has the privilege of traveling between the worlds of men and women, and though the book is

ostensibly a portrait of Khan, its real strength is the intimacy and brutal honesty with which it portrays the lives of Afghani living under fundamentalist Islam.

Stanton, Doug. *Horse Soldiers: The Extraordinary Story of a Band of US Soldiers Who Rode to Victory in Afghanistan*, Scribner, May 2009.

Publisher Comment: From the author of *In Harm's Way* comes a true-life story of American soldiers overcoming great odds to achieve a stunning military victory. *Horse Soldiers* is the dramatic account of a small band of Special Forces soldiers who secretly entered Afghanistan following 9/11 and rode to war on horses against the Taliban.

Stewart, Rory. *The Places In Between*. Harvest, June 2005 (Paper).

Publisher Description: In January 2002 Rory Stewart walked across Afghanistan-surviving by his wits, his knowledge of Persian dialects and Muslim customs, and the kindness of strangers. By day he passed through mountains covered in nine feet of snow, hamlets burned and emptied by the Taliban, and communities thriving amid the remains of medieval civilizations. By night he slept on villagers' floors, shared their meals, and listened to their stories of the recent and ancient past. Along the way Stewart met heroes and rogues, tribal elders and teenage soldiers, Taliban commanders and foreign-aid workers. He was also adopted by an unexpected companion - a retired fighting mastiff he named Babur in honor of Afghanistan's first Mughal emperor, in whose footsteps the pair was following.

Through these encounters-by turns touching, confounding, surprising, and funny - Stewart makes tangible the forces of tradition, ideology, and allegiance that shape life in the map's countless places in between.

Scotsman Stewart is the Ryan Family Professor of Human Rights and Director of the Carr Center on Human Rights Policy at Harvard.

The Troubling Middle East Setting

Gardiner, David. *Last Chance: The Middle East in the Balance*. I. B. Tauris, July 2009.

Publisher comment: As Barack Obama seeks to chart a new course in American foreign policy, David Gardner addresses the controversial but urgent question: why is the Middle East so dysfunctional? And what can be done about it?

Gareth Evans, President, International Crisis Group, and former Foreign Minister of Australia, adds: "*The basic message is clear and compelling. Stop propping up Arab autocrats, don't reject democratic election outcomes the West doesn't like, and don't retreat into any other form of 'shallow realism': just let Arabs decide their own future in whatever form they wish. Few observers of the region are more knowledgeable or experienced than David Gardner, associate editor, Financial Times, as he provides an overdue wake-up call for policymakers.*"

Maass, Peter. *Crude World: The Violent Twilight of Oil*, Knopf, September 2009.

Publisher Description. A stunning and revealing examination of oil's indelible impact on the countries that produce it and the people who possess it.

Every unhappy oil-producing nation is unhappy in its own way, but all are touched by the "resource curse"—the power of oil to exacerbate existing problems and create new ones. Maass presents a

vivid portrait of the troubled world oil has created. He takes us to Saudi Arabia, where officials deflect inquiries about the amount of petroleum remaining in the country's largest reservoir; to Equatorial Guinea, where two tennis courts grace an oil-rich dictator's estate but bandages and aspirin are a hospital's only supplies; and to Venezuela, where Hugo Chávez's campaign to redistribute oil wealth creates new economic and political crises.

Maass, a *New York Times Magazine* writer, also introduces us to Iraqi oilmen trying to rebuild their industry after the invasion of 2003. Rebels, royalty, middlemen, environmentalists, indigenous activists, CEOs—their stories, deftly and sensitively presented, tell the larger story of oil in our time.

Nasr, Vali. *Forces of Fortune: The Rise of the New Muslim Middle Class and What It Will Mean for Our World*, Free Press, September 2009.

Publishers Weekly. Nasr offers a fresh look at the future of religious extremism in the Middle East, suggesting that the great battle... for the soul of the region will be fought not over religion, but over business and capitalism. He posits that a rising middle class—seen most dramatically in Dubai, but a force across the whole Muslim world—is far more interested in economic success than in fervent religiosity, even as many bring a distinctly Muslim approach to the business they do. He points out that while the Reformation created the modern world, it wasn't that era's intolerant faith that made the transformation but rather trade and commerce, adding that values gain currency when they serve the economic and social interests of people. His in-depth analysis of the failures of various governments to provide for their people, as well as special focus on what is working in Turkey, and what is crippling Pakistan, helps drive his thesis home.

Historical, Cultural, Etc. Background

Weatherford, Jack. *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*. Three Rivers Press, March 2005.

In the early 13th century, the Mongol army led by Genghis Khan subjugated more lands and people in twenty-five years than the Romans did in four hundred. The Mongol Empire extended from the Pacific to the Mediterranean and from northern Siberia to Southeast Asia. In nearly every country the Mongols conquered, they brought an unprecedented rise in cultural communication, expanded trade, and a blossoming of civilization. Vastly more progressive than his European or Asian counterparts, Genghis Khan abolished torture, granted universal religious freedom, and smashed feudal systems of aristocratic privilege. From the story of his rise through the tribal culture to the explosion of civilization that the Mongol Empire unleashed, this brilliant work of revisionist history is nothing less than the epic story of how the modern world was made.

ooo000ooo

As the Program Committee selects specific issues, speakers, and relevant books for the 2010 program, we will recommend additional reading material. As this unfolds, our booklist editor will also welcome your suggestions at smdb@samfelton.com.