

Mershon Memo

An e-newsletter of the Mershon Center for International Security Studies

October 6, 2008

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Coming up at the Mershon Center

Monday, October 6, 2008

Patrick James

"What Way Forward for Offensive Realism?"

Noon, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, 1501 Neil Ave.



Patrick James is Director of the Center for International Studies and Professor of International Relations at the University of Southern California. His teaching and research interests are international relations, including conflict, crisis and war; comparative politics, primarily Canadian politics; rational choice, focusing on collective action, expected utility and game theory; and empirical methods, involving research design and statistics. His most recent work, *Rethinking Realism in International Relations: Between Tradition and Innovation* (John Hopkins University Press, forthcoming), with Annette Freyberg-Inan and Ewan Harrison, will be released in winter 2008. He completed publications in 2006 and 2007 analyzing Canadian foreign policy. [Read more and RSVP](#)

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

Juan R.I. Cole

"Can Ayatollah Sistani's Alternative to Khomeinism Survive?"

3:30 p.m., Mershon Center for International Security Studies, 1501 Neil Ave.



Juan R.I. Cole is Richard P. Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan. He has written extensively about Egypt, Iran, Iraq, and South Asia. For three decades, Cole has sought to put the relationship of the West and the Muslim world in historical context. His most recent book is *Engaging the Muslim World* (Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming), and he recently authored [Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East](#) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). *This event is sponsored by the Middle East Studies Center.*

[Read more and RSVP](#)

Thursday, October 9, 2008

The Hon. Mary Robinson

"Women and International Policy"

4:30 p.m., Mershon Auditorium, 1871 High St.



Mary Robinson, the first female president of Ireland and formerly the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has spent most of her life as a human rights advocate. She now chairs the Council of Women World Leaders and is President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative. Robinson has been named a "Hero and Icon" as one of *Time* magazine's 2005

Top 100 men and women whose "power, talent or moral example is transforming the world." This event is co-sponsored by the John Glenn School of Public Affairs and the International Studies Program. [Read more and RSVP](#)

Friday, October 10, 2008

Peter Mansoor

"Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq"

6:30 p.m., Faculty Club Main Dining Room, 181 S. Oval Drive

Sponsored by the [Department of History](#)



Retired U.S. Army Col. **Peter Mansoor**, General Raymond E. Mason Jr. Chair of Military History, will speak on his new book, *Baghdad at Sunrise: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq*. The book is a memoir of his experiences in Iraq in 2003-04, when he served as Commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, in Iraq, which was responsible for security and stability in the Rusafa and Adhamiya districts of Baghdad, an area of 195 square kilometers and 2.1 million people. Mansoor later served as executive officer to Gen.

David Petraeus. To attend this event, please respond to [Gail Summerhill](#) at summerhill.1 or 292-3001.

Tuesday, October 14, 2008

Robert Rakove

"Getting the Worst of Both Worlds': John F. Kennedy and Decolonization"

Noon, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, 1501 Neil Ave.



Robert Rakove has a M.A. in European History from Stanford University and will receive his Ph. D. in U.S. History from the University of Virginia in December 2008. His project, "Befriending the Nonaligned: Kennedy, Johnson, and the Neutralist Powers," examines the efforts of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations to create lasting, constructive relations with leading states of the non-aligned world. Rakove will explore how U.S. policies of interaction with non-aligned powers helped define relations between the United States and its allies, many

of whom had tense relations with the new post-colonial states in Africa and Asia. [Read more and RSVP](#)

Friday-Saturday, October 17-18, 2008

China Plural: Local Identities, Contesting Visions, and Constructing Nations

Organized by Kwang-Kyoon Yeo, Visiting Scholar, Institute for Chinese Studies

180 Hagerty Hall, 1775 College Road

Co-sponsored by the [East Asian Studies Center](#)



Since the 1990s, China has been one of the most speculated, researched, and analyzed topics in academia, mass media, and policy debates in the United States. However, most of the analysis has been framed by the idea that China has a homogenous history, people, and culture. This monolithic image has shaped not only the study of China, but dominated the policy debates and public imagination of China in the United States. **China Plural: Local Identity, Contesting Visions, and Constructing Nations** will communicate, elaborate, and

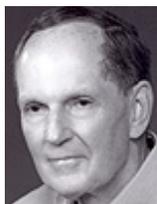
expand an interdisciplinary discourse on a multifaceted view on China. By convening scholars working on local, linguistic, and cultural diversity of China, the conference will highlight the heterogeneous and dynamic inner workings of China, and examine the representation, construction, and reproduction of a homogeneous China both inside and outside its national boundary. [Read more](#)

Wednesday, October 22, 2008

Dick Combs

"Inside the Soviet Alternate Universe"

Noon, Mershon Center for International Security Studies, 1501 Neil Ave.



Dick Combs was one of a core group of U.S. foreign service officers who specialized in Soviet and Eastern European affairs during the last three decades of the Cold War. He is author of [Inside the Soviet Alternate Universe: The Cold War's End and the Soviet Union's Fall Reappraised](#) (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008). His foreign service assignments included two years at the U.S. Legation in Sofia, Bulgaria, and a total of eight years at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Russia. In addition, he spent an academic year at the U.S. Army's Institute for Advanced Russian Studies and served two tours on the Soviet Desk in the State Department.

[Read more and RSVP](#)

Other events

Friday, October 10, 2008

Study Abroad Fair and Global Fest ... a Celebration of Cultures

10 a.m.-3 p.m., Tom W. Davis Special Events Gym

RPAC (Recreation and Physical Activity Center), 337 West 17th Ave.

Sponsored by the [Office of International Affairs](#)

Students can explore a myriad of opportunities to learn in another country at The Office of International Affairs' **Study Abroad Fair**. The fair will showcase 100 different programs available in more than 40 countries that support and complement students' progress in their curriculum. Students will be able to talk with the Office of International Affairs study abroad staff about the wide range of programs available in Asia, Australia, the Middle East, South America, Europe and Africa, how to earn academic credit, and what options are available to finance their study abroad. Also on hand will be representatives from Ohio State academic departments who help facilitate study abroad programs, as well as other representatives. Students also will be able to obtain passport applications and have their passport photo taken for a fee on site from representatives of the United States Postal Service. [Read more](#)

Tuesday, October 14, 2008

Dawood Azami

"Drug Money: Opium, Crime, and Insurgency in Afghanistan"

4 p.m., Mershon Center for International Security Studies, 1501 Neil Ave.

Sponsored by the [Middle East Studies Center](#)



Dawood Azami is a writer and broadcast journalist. He has been working with the BBC World Service for nearly 10 years. As a senior producer, he supervises and produces news and current affairs transmissions in Pashto and Persian languages. He has also worked in the BBC's English Network, BBC World Television, and BBC News Online covering international news and current affairs. Dawood specializes in politics, security and culture in Central and South Asia and the Middle East (especially Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan including the Tribal Areas). He has produced several special radio documentaries for the BBC World Service on

politics, religion and human rights. [Read more](#)

Friday, October 17, 2008

Bernd Fischer and May Mergenthaler

"Enlightenment, Culture, and the Public Sphere"

3:30 p.m., 488 Hagerty Hall, 1775 College Ave.

Sponsored by the Department of [Germanic Languages and Literatures](#)

In this seminar, we will discuss two short seminal texts: "Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" by Immanuel Kant, and "On the Question: What Does It Mean to Enlighten?" by Moses Mendelssohn. This event is part of a larger project on **The Public Sphere and Modern Social Imaginaries**, which includes a reading group, lectures and seminars, and a conference in 2010-11. The goal is to investigate how cultural and artistic expressions arising from and contributing to modern social imaginaries work within and against the classical Habermasian notion of the political public sphere of German speaking and European societies, in a historical (1750-today) and global context. Our guiding question is whether the creation of a political public sphere is and has indeed been necessary for establishing and maintaining social freedom and justice. Please indicate your interest by replying to mergenthaler.4@osu.edu.

Featured Mershon research project

If it Bleeds, It Leads: Assessing Media Effects on Transnational Terrorism

Principal Investigators: [Edward Crenshaw](#), [J. Craig Jenkins](#), Department of Sociology



Do mass media make it more likely that terrorists will target democracies? Many scholars argue that yes, terrorists target democracies because democracies have mass media that will cover these acts of violence and therefore spread the terrorists' message.

Crenshaw and Jenkins, however, see a flaw in this logic. All the databases that list terrorist acts get their data from the mass media; therefore, these databases count only the acts of terrorism that the media happen to cover. This means that media selection bias could skew the results of any research based on the data.

To address this flaw, Crenshaw and Jenkins propose a new way to measure the role of mass media in terrorist attacks.

First, to control for media selection bias, they look at total press capacity, or the total number of news stories originating in a country, whether these stories are about terrorism or not. By crossing this measure with the database of terrorist attacks, they can determine the extent to which the media emphasize terrorism in their reporting.

Second, to gauge access to a large audience, they measure Western media presence, or the number of Western press bureaus in a country. By using both media indicators to explain terrorist attacks across nations, they can get a truer sense of whether terrorists are targeting a particular country because it has a large mass media presence.

Crenshaw and Jenkins are measuring press capacity to using two databases: the Protocol for the Analysis of Nonviolent Direct Action at Harvard University's Weatherhead Center, which runs from 1984-1994, and the Integrated Data for Events Analysis project, which covers 1990-2004. They are also seeking data from the 1970s.

They are measuring the number of Western press bureaus in more than 200 countries using the Europa World Yearbook, which has data covering several decades.

Preliminary results show that terrorism in general, and Islamic terrorism in particular, is significantly correlated with the presence of Western media outlets. This suggests that the theatrical aspects of terror are important to Islamic terrorists.

Another preliminary result shows that once media presence is taken into account, democracies are no more or less likely to be sites for terrorist attacks than non-democracies. This suggests the common notion that democracies are more prone to terrorism may be entirely due to press freedom and media coverage, a possibility that warrants more study.

For more information, please see the [project web page](#).

About Mershon Memo

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