



World Affairs Council of Greater Richmond

www.richmondworldaffairs.org

A Message from our Chairman...

Greetings!

The Spring Programming of the World Affairs Council concluded with a successful and elegant event, featuring Congressman Eric Cantor, alongside almost 180 Council Members who attended this riveting Program.

The summer has been a busy one. We're preparing an exciting series of events for the Fall 2009 season, featuring topics sure to engage your intellectually inquisitive minds on some of the most topical current events.

We look forward to seeing our members at our September 17th Program, featuring Mike Signer, *'The Fight To Save Democracy'*. Read the details about the program, both in this newsletter and on our website.

Stay tuned for upcoming programs relating to Pakistan, the resurgence and strengthening of the Taliban, and the challenges in Afghanistan. Our October Program will feature *"Flirting with Failure in South Asia"*, with regard to the extremist forces in Pakistan and international jihadists.

Two months after a landslide election in Iran that was widely viewed as fraudulent and was followed by massive protests that rocked the country, capturing the imagination of the world, Ahmadinejad, was most recently inaugurated for a second term as that country's President. Check out our Council's website for our Iran Program, featuring Haleh Esphandiari, the

Director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center.

Thank you for your patronage and membership at our World Affairs Council.

Jim Martin



Congressman Cantor Addresses the Council

The Richmond World Affairs Council hosted its 2009 Spring Gala Luncheon in May with featured guest, Congressman Eric Cantor.

An introduction speech by Virginia Attorney General Bill Mimms spearheaded the event, as 200 guests convened at the elegant Grand Ball Room of the Jefferson Hotel. Mimms recounted how Congressman Cantor and he were among the General Assembly "freshman class of 1992," noting that Mr. Cantor now serves the nation as the Republican Whip for the 111th Congress. In this high-profile position, the Congressman commands more than the usual attention as a speaker on issues both foreign and domestic.

Congressman Cantor expounded candidly on U.S. relations in the international arena, politically and economically, while addressing the current situation of the U.S. economy, the issue of terrorism, and measures the U.S. must take to not let its guard down on national security issues due to the current focus on the economy.

He spoke passionately against the Taliban's barbarism; Cantor recalled that while he visited Afghanistan, the villagers explained that they were afraid to leave their homes because the Taliban had dumped acid on several young girls because "they dared to walk to school".

"The important question is: how do we strengthen our national defense when our economy is in trouble?" he asked. "The answer is Washington must do all it can to restore our economy to health by providing an environment for economic growth." Cantor expressed his opposition to the proposed cap and trade program saying he feared it would hurt the economy and cost jobs.

Cantor closed his remarks with a brief only-in-America story. He talked about his grandmother, who left czarist Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution and ended up raising two sons above a grocery store in Richmond's Jackson Ward neighborhood.



Richmond WAC marks the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall

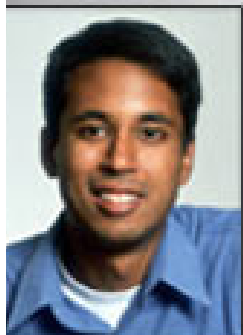
by *Rooz Dadabhoy*

November 2009 marks the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In June 1987 President Ronald Reagan stood in front of the Brandenburg Gate at the Berlin Wall in West Germany and famously challenged Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to "Tear down this wall."

The German Embassy is coordinating a public diplomacy campaign with the motto "Freedom without Walls" to commemorate the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The Richmond World Affairs Council will mark this historic period in history, with a presentation by TIME World Editor and Managing Director, Romesh Ratnesar. Ratnesar's new book "Tear Down This Wall" will be published in November, coinciding aptly with the anniversary.

Ratnesar will interpret Ronald Reagan's speech as an open gesture to Gorbachev, an attempt to move beyond the enmities of the past by pointing him to a different future.



For more information please visit our website .

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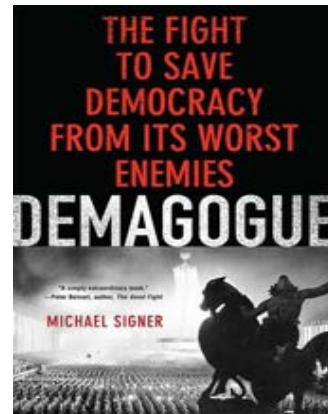
Thomas A. Silvestri

Our September Event!

"The Fight to Save Democracy"

Presented by Michael Signer

Introduction By The Honorable Viola O. Baskerville,
Secretary of Administration



Democratic states have long been threatened by demagogues -- political figures who fashion themselves as leaders of the people but in fact use the levers of government to establish autocratic rule. During our intriguing dialogue, Signer will explore the intellectual and historical aspects of this old and troubling danger.

Signer will debate the insights of the fragility of governance by the people; discuss portraits of some of history's most infamous tyrants such as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, as well as petty demagogues such as U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy and U.S. General Douglas MacArthur.

Can the United States cultivate constitutional values in countries undergoing democratic transitions -- especially engaging civil-society groups and promoting education and development?

In the end, we will debate whether 'outside states' can make a difference.

Flemish Room at the Jefferson Hotel

September 17, 2009

5:00pm – Registration & Networking [cash bar]

5:45pm – Program begins

**7:00pm – Dinner with the Speaker
& Board Members**

To Purchase tickets call us at 804-934-9000 or
Visit us on the web at www.richmondworldaffairs.org

Richmonders Around The World

Uliana F. Gabara, PhD
Dean and Carole M. Weinstein Chair
of International Education
University of Richmond



For more than 20 years, University of Richmond faculty members have studied and experienced distant and unfamiliar countries and cultures, all in an effort to understand them and bring them into their classrooms. This year 10 people from business, history, education, political science, art and theatre, biology, and religion departments, visited St. Petersburg, Almaty, and Bishkek during May.

Russia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan have been transformed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, yet it was the unpredictable ways in which the newly formed nation states are and are not like the Soviet

Union that drew our attention. It would be impossible to begin to understand them without constant references to the pre-'91 world. While meeting with academics, human rights activists, Peace Corps volunteers and American diplomats, we were acutely aware of the old and the new interacting in complex, multiple ways to create cultural, economic, social realities which already affect not only the local population, but the world, including the United States. The story of the Manas base in Kyrgyzstan is a good demonstration of this truth. For more information about the University of Richmond's Faculty Seminar visit http://international.richmond.edu/facstaff/faculty_seminar/index.htm.

Spotlight on Board Member

Dr. R. McKenna Brown

R. McKenna Brown, Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the Office of International Education at VCU, and joined the Board of the World Affairs Council in 2004.

McKenna received the Elske V.P. Smith Distinguished Lecture Award in 2007, the Presidential Award for Community Multicultural Enrichment in 2006, and the Humanities and Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award in 2002. He also produced an award-winning video on the current Mayan movement, and his translation of Mayan poetry was selected as finalist for the 2002 PEN Literary Award for Poetry in Translation. In addition, he is the recipient of three Fulbright awards, one of which supported his teaching linguistics at two universities in Guatemala.



Check out our new website!

www.richmondworldaffairs.org

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Dr. Brown has held leadership positions in several community and professional organizations including *Colaborando Juntos*, the Virginia Latino Higher Education Network, the Red Cross Multicultural Advisory Board, Guatemala Scholars Network, the Foundation for Endangered Languages, and the Modern Language Association.

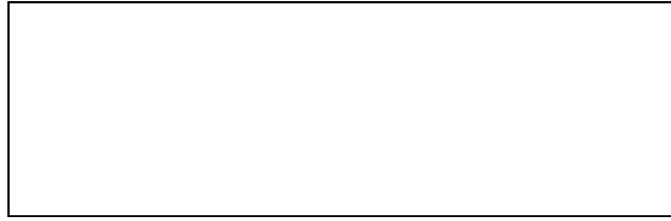
If you would like to contact Dr. McKenna Brown please visit our website at www.richmondworldaffairs.org and click on "Ask a Board Member."

Watch us on YouTube!



<http://www.youtube.com/user/RichmondWAC>

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