

# AMERICAN ACADEMY

## The Fellows and Visitors of the 2008-2009 Academic Year

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**DER TAGESSPIEGEL**

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By RICHARD C. HOLBROOKE

The next president of the United States of America will inherit leadership of a nation that is still the most powerful in the world, a nation that could, and must, again inspire, mobilize, and lead the world.

At the same time, his core challenge will be nothing less than to re-create a sense of national purpose and strength, after a period of drift, decline, and disastrous mistakes. He will need to rebuild productive working relationships with friends and allies. He must revitalize a flagging economy; tame a budget awash in red ink; re-examine every aspect of relations with Russia; tackle the growing danger of nuclear proliferation; improve the defense of the homeland against global terrorists while putting more pressure on al-Qaeda, especially in Pakistan; and, of course, manage two wars simultaneously, a daunting agenda which will require what the Declaration of Independence called "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind."

Nothing was as important to the emergence of the United States as its spectacular economic growth fueled, literally, by cheap domestic oil. With the price of oil quadruple in four years, the world is witnessing the greatest transfer of wealth from one set of nations to another in history. The wealth now accumulating in the producing nations will lead over time not only to even greater economic muscle but also to greater political power.

Oil-rich nations will become more common and act more boldly. More money will be available to fund dangerous non-state actors who seek to destroy Israel or destabilize parts of Africa or Latin America - or attack the United States.

No doubt the current assertiveness on the international stage of, for example, Iran, Russia, and Venezuela stems from the economic muscle that accompanies their growing petrodollar reserves. At the same time, the problem of climate change has reached a level that, in the view of many scientists, threatens the planet.

The two major presidential candidates, Senator Barack Obama and Senator John McCain, both say that they take climate change seriously. Obama has an ambitious goal for emissions reduction and substantially greater investments than McCain's plan in technologies to achieve these goals. McCain stresses removing environmental restraints on domestic and offshore drilling - hardly a long-term solution to anything. Even if major new fields were found, they would do nothing for climate change or conservation. Today China and the United States produce almost 50 percent of the world's carbon emissions. Multiple agreements in which various combinations of nations address specific parts of the larger problem might offer greater opportunity for US-Chinese projects, from carbon capture to solar and wind energy.

Both Obama and McCain have sought to emphasize the changes they would bring. Both have said that they would put more emphasis on Afghanistan, both have promised to strengthen US relations with NATO allies and have expressed concern over the recent behavior of Russia, especially in Georgia; both agree on solidarity with and defense of Israel.

But they offer two different visions of America's role in the world, two different attitudes toward diplomacy. On most issues, with the exception of climate change, McCain supports neoconservative hard-line positions, and no dis-



Climate as a challenge. Both candidates agree that they take climate change seriously. Their approaches, however, differ.

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## The Next President

There are many issues waiting for inspired and noble US leadership

agreement between the two reaches the level of that over Iraq and Iran. Obama's policy proposals are forward-leaning; he proposes adjusting policies to new and evolving realities and emphasizes the need for diplomacy as the best way of enhancing US power and influence.

When McCain says that the United States is in Iraq to win, he means it - he has repeatedly made clear that he is ready to leave troops in Iraq indefinitely rather than take the risks that he believes would accompany major reductions. He never acknowledges the risks and costs associated with continued deployments. Obama believes military victory is not possible and that it is necessary to start withdrawing US ground combat troops at a steady but careful pace to put more pressure on Iraqi politicians to reach the compromises necessary to stabilize the country, emphasizing diplomacy as an indispensable component.

McCain's boldest proposals on world politics are neither new nor original. His "League of Democracies," for example, "could act where the United Nations fail to act," McCain says. But his "League" would still be viewed as an attempt to create a rival to the United Nations. Obama would improve and reform the organization, starting by asking Congress to pay the arrears that have grown once again, under Bush, to over \$1 billion. Similarly, Obama endorses the bipartisan proposal to eliminate all nuclear weapons, a goal McCain is simply ruling out.

At the heart of the United States' geo-strategic challenge lie five countries

with linked borders: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. In this arc of crisis, incoherence has marked US policy since 2003. Washington preaches different policies on democracy in neighboring countries, confusing everyone. No single concept beyond the vague "global war on terror" has guided US strategy. Any serious policy will require dealing with all the countries in this region, as well as Israel and the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, and the very unpleasant reality in Iran.

Obama and McCain agree that preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state must be a major priority. Both would tighten sanctions. Neither would remove the threat of the use of force from the table. But their emphasis and language differ significantly. Obama is ready to have direct contacts with Iran not only on nuclear issues but also on Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran's support for terrorist organizations. McCain not only opposes such direct talks but also has famously said that the only thing worse than a war with Iran would be a nuclear Iran.

Another crucial issue is Afghanistan, where the situation is far from hopeless, but Americans should be told the truth: this war will last a long time. Success will require new policies with regard to the tribal areas in Pakistan, the drug lords, the national police, and the incompetence and corruption of the Afghan government. Afghanistan's future will require regional agreements that give Afghanistan's neighbors a stake in the settlement that includes Iran as well as

China, India, and Russia, and, most importantly, Pakistan.

If history is a guide, issues that are neglected too long often emerge at the top of the policy agenda - Somalia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Darfur, Myanmar, Tibet and Zimbabwe are only a few recent examples. US relations with the Muslim world will require special attention. Efforts so far to encourage moderate Muslims to deal with extremists have not worked. A new, creative approach to public diplomacy must be developed. The next administration should focus more on human rights and basic human needs while still encouraging the development of democratic forms of government, accompanied by the evolution of a pluralist political culture, the rule of law, and improvements in material conditions, especially through job creation. If there is progress in these areas, democracy will follow in ways that countries will determine for themselves

### Americans should be told the truth about Afghanistan

- with US encouragement, that is the lesson of Chile, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and several promising young democracies.

The next president must address the enormous implications of the Russian invasion of Georgia. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, Moscow has sent its troops into action in a neighboring country, raising memories of Hungary 1956, Prague 1968, and Afghanis-

tan 1979. Blaming Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili for the war, as some Europeans have done, is blaming the victim for the aggression. Now the transatlantic alliance must find a new policy, in writing, that walks the line between a new Cold War - which is out of the question - and ignoring the unmistakable signs of a Russian policy that seeks to overthrow neighboring governments it does not like. Making clear to Moscow that such behavior has real costs will require a US-European unity that has been sorely lacking in recent years. And Georgia itself will need massive assistance from the US, the EU, and the interventional financial institutions.

The United States is not a helpless giant tossed on the seas of history. It is still the most powerful nation on earth, and within certain limits, it can still shape its own destiny and play the leading role in a multipolar world. It can still take the helm in addressing the world's most pressing problems (as President Bush did effectively on only one issue, AIDS). There are many issues waiting for inspired and, yes, noble US leadership, backed up by enlightened US generosity that is also in our own interest.

The United States is still great. It deserves leadership worthy of its people, leadership that will restore the nation's pride and sense of purpose. That task must begin at home, but the world will be watching and waiting.

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EDITORIAL

## Rethinking a New Epoch

By GARY SMITH

When Arthur Miller was introduced together with our first class of fellows ten years ago on a makeshift stage in the garden of the American Academy in Berlin, expectations were high, if vague. Henry Kissinger had called the Academy "the first American post-Cold War institution in Europe." Both key speakers that afternoon, US Ambassador John C. Kornblum and Academy Vice Chair Gahl Hodges Burt, expressed their hope that the Academy would contribute new traditions to the city's special relationship with the United States.

It was not entirely clear on that September day just how prescient Richard Holbrooke's intuition was that transatlantic relations would undergo a fundamental, sometimes painful transformation, as he had observed upon the Academy's founding in November 1994. But he and the other founding trustees of the Academy - Fritz Stern, Kurt Viermetz, Richard von Weizsäcker, Tom Farmer, and others - understood the urgency of creating institutions that kept pace with the times. "New thinking" requires scrutiny of old categories. As Walter Benjamin might have reminded us, when awakening to a new political epoch, we still experience the aftereffects of dreaming the last one.

And after ten years, the Academy is different than any of us had imagined. Admittedly, our very first printed program of lectures, seminars, and screenings announced that the fellowship program would become more than an academic monastery. As we would later extend invitations for shorter residencies to many distinguished writers, artists, and policy experts, their stays in Berlin might include up to twenty to thirty meetings, presentations, and roundtables. The Academy had become an experiment in privatizing public diplomacy.

That it has, is only fitting. When the Academy villa was formally dedicated as the Hans Arnhold Center, it was due to a remarkable act of private generosity from the family of Hans and Ludmilla Arnhold, forced to leave Berlin under National Socialism and reestablish the failed bank Arnhold & S. Bleichroeder in New York. Our early decision to eschew public funding and build upon a foundation of private support brought new convictions as well as challenges: from the importance of perpetually "thinking an institution new" to the belief that excellence ultimately finds its patrons.

Institutions dedicated to fostering excellence and understanding have an obligation to create access to its most compelling ideas and individuals - its intellectual capital. The gratifying resonance of the American Academy's first decade testifies to the effectiveness of personal dialogue, and to an enduring openness as characteristic of American self-understanding as it is of the new Berlin.

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## A New Cold War?

This new Russia is not what was hoped for, but common interests can still be found

By JOHN F. LEHMAN

A few months ago, Senator John McCain said some harsh things about Russia. Not many people agreed with his views. But it turns out that one important man did: Vladimir Putin.

Russia's recent activity in Georgia means that the next American president and our European friends will have one very big issue on the top of the transatlantic agenda. This is not the Russia everyone hoped would be an integral democratic partner of the West. But what does Moscow want? And what should NATO and the European Union do about it?

It will be tempting to see Russia's dismemberment of Georgia as either a

murky ethnic conflict or a Putinesque fit of anger against Presidents Bush and Saakashvili. No doubt these are part of the story but not the most important part. Like a thunderclap on a clear summer day, Georgia foretells a broader crisis in the making, a struggle over the shape and nature of the post-Cold War settlement.

In 1989, President George H. W. Bush called for a "Europe whole and free" and, thanks to Ronald Reagan's military and naval buildup, to German courage, allied solidarity, a strong hand in Washington, and Gorbachev's statesmanship, the Cold War was brought to a peaceful conclusion. After German unification, the Russians themselves ended the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact to general

relief and considerable rejoicing.

The Western leaders of that day then faced a dilemma. Should NATO and the European Union preclude membership for the peoples between Germany and Russia, the other side of the Iron Curtain? When the new Yeltsin government floundered in 1993-94 in the face of a resurgent Communist Party and vitriolic nationalists, President Clinton and his European colleagues decided to open membership for those who could pass the democratic and

economic tests rather than chance yet another crisis in the middle of Europe. Many did. But the peaceful evolution of European-wide politics promised by the new era, including a prospering democracy in Russia, did not quite materialize.

There were two big reasons. First, the Western allies were too slow to arrest Serbian President Milosevic's aggression in Croatia and Bosnia, or his ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, all of which produced the worst massacres since World War II. But the results of that intervention, including Serbia's turn toward the West, and especially the independence of Kosovo with strong US support, redrew the map of a sovereign state despite Moscow's wishes. In the eyes of those who thought that

the areas beyond a united Germany should be neutral until Moscow recovered its strength, it appeared that the West was moving east, sometimes by diplomacy, sometimes by force, while Russian interests were disregarded.

Second, the United States and the Europeans put too much trust in Yeltsin himself, who proved better at taking things apart than putting them together. When the democratic and economic experiments of the 1990s turned into chaos, corruption, and impoverishment, the scene was set for the reappearance of old concepts. The foreigners had supported Yeltsin and so they, too, were to blame

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