

2011 Consolidated Comments – Date Sequence

CommentsV011411Wilcox

PROGRAM COMMENTS

Venice – 14 January 2011

Ambassador Philip Wilcox

Israel, Palestine and the United States: Why Is It So Hard to Make Peace?

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Not neutral enough. Needs more fairness to Palestine.

Very clear and concise in responses to questions.

Excellent.

Excellent program all around. Outstanding speaker.

Excellent!

A little too much history and not enough about current situation. Nothing on Gaza, Lebanon issues.

Too much past history. Would have appreciated more current discussion.

Needed pointer to indicate specific areas needed to be divided.

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re SILL Programs

Watch the “music” in the adjoining room. Very distracting.

Need a beam pointer.

A pointer would be helpful for the map to know which areas of the map speaker is referring to because the print on the map is too small to read from a distance.

CommentsS011911Seznec

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota – 19 January, 2011**

**Dr. Jean-Francois Seznec
The Arab States of the Persian Gulf vs. Iran**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

I'm glad he addressed the Tunisian situation.

Bring him back for a seminar.

He answered the questions we want answered, but which are not answered in the press or TV.

Excellent speaker!!

The only negative or suggestion I have is that I wish he would remain in the spotlight more so we could see him. Unimportant when compared with the wealth of information he has to offer.

Excellent!

Loved him.

Rambles, not well organized.

Good presentation until discussion of Shia and various countries and Iran. Very confusing.

He wasted too much time with first half of lecture. The second half was much more important.

The topic was especially important. However, the speaker seemed to get lost (mired down) in a detailed discussion of the importance of religion (Shia) US, ethnicity. This could have been handled without getting bogged down in a confusing discussion. The lecture could have been more focused.

The information regarding foreign workers in Saudi Arabia was very interesting. However, I would have liked to know more about the status of these emigrant workers!

Went off subject sometimes.

Have Dr. Seznec talk about Tunisia.

Fascinating review of area. Covered so much, offered so many facts. Enlightening. Very fine.

Excellent speaker.

Need more time for questions. Shorten talk.

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re SILL Programs

It would help those of us in the cheap seats (rear) to have the slides enlarged to the full size of the existing screen. It's impossible to see the details on the much appreciated maps.

Regional screen could have been blown up for better visibility.

Projected maps difficult to see even from mid-auditorium. Can the new screens above the stage be used?

A power point display with "zoom in" views would be helpful.

CommentsS012011Goldgeier

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota – 20 January, 2011**

**Dr. James Goldgeier
The Future of NATO**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Well informed but delivery poor. Prefer a subject that was more about what is taking place.

He could have gone into the problems in more depth.

The lecturer was intelligent and well informed, but there was not a clear plan of his lecture.

The speaker gave a distorted history. He did not provide an appropriate background for his conclusion. His credentials belie his presentation.

I think this was a one-sided, biased lecture (?) did not address the Palestinians and Hamas completely in (?) supporting peace talks and recognizing the State of Israel. Abba Eben was correct in recognizing that the Palestinians never missed an opportunity to miss an opportunity. The speaker never addressed that. I agree that the settlements problem needs to be (?) but the speaker minimized the (?) of removing the settlers from Gaza. I would have expected a more even handed approach from the speaker. I would not come to hear (?) again!

The speaker, though renowned and learned, is not clear and objective. Israel and Jews are not interchangeable words or concepts.

Major problem was less the speaker than interest in the subject.

US should be out of Europe (bases) and leave Iraq and Afghanistan. We have enough problems at home. Traveling to Europe several times. Why so much anti-America?

Difficult to understand.

I enjoyed the talk – even though it seems irrelevant at this time.

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re SILL Programs

The new head phone system rather than a microphone is a tremendous improvement in our ability to hear. Thank you !!

Suggest the use of visual aids.

SILL lectures should be made available on Podcasts (via I-Tunes) at either a nominal cost or for free. This would be very helpful in expanding SILL's audience and create additional interest in attending the live lecture series. T. M. Sheridan

CommentsV012811Neumann

PROGRAM COMMENTS

Venice – 28 January 2011

Ambassador Ronald E. Neumann
Afghanistan: Is It Worth It? Can It Be Done?

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Too long!

Spike too fast.

Speaker often dropped his voice at the end of sentence. Answers go on too long.

Very strong on war aspects. He is a 5-star general really. Surprisingly weak on diplomatic aspects and hopes. Did not address the fact that people like don't have the will to continue at present pact that he insists is critical. Many competing problems. What is "winning" the war in this region. This is basically a religious conflict.

Question should be rephrased by the speaker so everyone has the point before discourse. I appreciated the diplomatic and not just an academic input into any situation.

Under the breath stuff was supposed to be humorous < not and some couldn't be heard.

Question/Answer period was very long winded! People had to stand a long time before they were addressed. Keep it short.

Top talk. Excellent.

Question answers effective, but too long.

Superb !!

Excellent speaker! Great speaking voice! Very knowledgeable!

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re SILL Programs

I like the idea of ending about 10:45 and leaving 15 minutes for questions. Most people's mind wanders after 45 minutes.

Why can't SILL get a larger auditorium in Sarasota?

When you have so many people in the room there should be better ventilation. Speaker very interesting but because of lack of air flow people falling asleep.

Replace the person who introduced the speaker.. Test the microphones in advance.

Pointer is totally useless – invisible.

Time control!

CommentsS020211Rader

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota - 02 February 2011**

**Dr. Douglas N. Rader
Challenges To Sustainability In the Changing Gulf**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Good speaker, but essentially a slide show unreadable to ½ of audience.

Too much technical detail quickly delivered and difficult to absorb.

Summarized problems – too little focus on solutions.

Great speaker.

Excellent! Best so far!

Need more of this.

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re SILL Programs

Not appropriate for Political Issues series

Slides MUST be larger for this elderly audience.

Timer is useless if speaker doesn't use podium.

Very weak slide projection system. Could not see or read slides. Why not use overhead screens?

Ineffective visuals.

CommentsS022211Millett

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota - 22 February 2011**

**Dr. Richard Millett
Searching For Stability**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Too much rambling.

Totally (?) Text read from history and economics of region.

Talk was mainly anecdotal.

Good theory – needed more specific examples, i.e., Russia, Iraq, Afghanistan, etc.

Superficial – didn't support his generalities with detailed, logical facts.

More interested in humor and clichés than providing information.

Did not like his demeanor. Think he likes to hear himself talk! He should use examples of what is happening today – not in the past.

Dr. Millett seemed to be full of himself.

Speaker was very interesting and entertaining and made a few substantive points. I'm not sure he said anything I hadn't already concluded by reading NY Times, etc.

Spent too much time on each question.

Very interesting remarks, but could not understand how topic was addressed. Very effective speaker, but could not follow his explanation of topic.

Fascinating subject – superb delivery.

Dr Millett is fantastic! Please invite him back!

Dr. Millett's presentation was informative and thought provoking. His overall review was valuable and troubling. "Technology transfers, values do not" explains so much. I also enjoyed his sense of humor. Please have him again. My only negative comment is that his answers were too long.

CommentsS022411Williamson

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota - 24 February 2011**

**Molly Williamson
Energy: Beyond the Politics of Petroleum**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Topic needs more time as it is very (?) and complicated.

Good speaker but glossed over issues.

Please invite Ambassador Williamson to return to SILL!

Molly Williamson is a very exciting, energetic effective presenter. Only constructive comment: don't move around so much during the presentation – it's a little distracting and rough for the cameraman. "Please come back to SILL"

Excellent speaker. Well informed; presentation exceptional.

Wonderful speaker.

Great speaker – thorough, entertaining, adept. Best I've heard in a long, long time.

Super presenter. Get her back again!

Very entertaining.

Incredible lecture.

Outstanding lecturer.

Outstanding in every way – only criticism is that the time was too short!!

Excellent speaker!

Best speaker of the Thursday series.

Molly Williamson was one of our best speakers!

She was outstanding! So knowledgeable and smart.

Lack of focus on environment is not compatible with an overview of energy.

Speaker moved too much during the lecture. It was very disturbing.

More discipline on time; could have spoken longer.

Dynamic, energetic presenter; great sense of humor.

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re SILL Programs

Fewer jokes and delay will lead to more time for the lecture.

Seat saving continues to be a problem. Couples band together where you have two people saving six or more seats. The other people either do not come or arrive at 10:15. This responsibility rotates between couples so that late arrival is guaranteed. My suggestion is that one person can only save one seat.

There should be at least one talk per series on oil.

Do not open side doors at end of lecture. Make folks who leave after lecture use rear doors.

CommentsV020811Chishti

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Venice – 08 February 2011**

Muzaffar Chishti

The Immigration Debate: Federal Versus State Authority in the Immigration Wars

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Concise, on topic, balanced.

Balanced presentation by well-informed speaker.

Excellent. Conveyed message effectively even when emotional nationality was not there (??)

This speaker had an agenda! Not good!

Hard to understand him.

I'm not sure we are any closer to understanding (or resolving) our immigration issues. I still feel powerless about my ability to change anything.

Hard to understand.

Although obviously knowledgeable, presentation and choice of topic area was unfortunate. Speaking delivery was most difficult. First word of sentence boomed, rest of sentence trailed off to a mumble. This was made worse by speaker too fast. I wish I could understand more of what he was saying. The subject (the)

Speaker's phrasing and cadence were very hard to understand. Surely we can find speakers who speak "standard" English. Speaker spent too much time and effort in advertising his position instead of analyzing and explaining issues. speaker chose was Immigration Law which may be the most specialized and least interesting area of the immigration debate.

CommentsV021811Takeyh

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Venice – 18 February 2011**

**Dr. Ray Takeyh
Iran In Transition**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

I think Dr. Takeyh had a good message that may have been hindered by his cold/cough. An overhead of the structure of government would have been helpful, i.e., religious leaders vs. presidential role. Good analysis of difficulties facing Iran, but would have appreciated more insights on age of population – future trends, etc. Not as easily followed as most lecturers.

Presented as Israel involvement in nuclear bombs.

Good, but a little flippant.

Difficult when topic is in transition.

Speaker needs to use slides.

Personally – some accents difficult to comprehend. Hearing aids don't help much. An observation – thanks.

Good sense of humor.

Too bad he “uh's” too much – detracts from speaking ability.

Excellent speaker; included humor in a very informative talk!

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re SILL

Zumba music could be quieted. Speaker needs pitcher of water plus glass – sometimes necessary.

Music from 10:30 on distracting.

Love the 45 minute lecture – anything past that we lose our attention.

Music played loudly on left side in another room about half way thru program. Very distracting.

Have pitcher of water available to speaker. (Nearby to his/her hand).

CommentsS030211Keith

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota – 02 March, 2011**

**Ambassador Kenton Keith
Pakistan's Internal Fault Lines: What They Mean For the Region and For
America's Policy Goals**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Speaker knowledgeable but not good speaker.

Tough subject. Not effectively organized. Too much info-jumbled as presented.

Subject is very worthwhile – The speaker was ineffective!

Too much. Poorly organized.

Information good! Presentation was too much use of notes.

He should read his talk rather than speak extemporaneously.

Referred to notes too much. He should be encouraged to be a better speaker next time.

Speaker could be a little more dynamic. Well educated, knowledgeable, interesting, certainly experienced on the ground. Hard topic handled well.

Excellent speaker. Knew his subject!

Very knowledgeable. Articulate but a slow speaker.

Maps hard to follow.

CommentsS030811Hitz

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota – 08 March, 2011**

**Frederick P. Hitz
CIA From Its Inception To the War on Terror**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Very good.

This is the first SILL lecture in which I've fallen asleep! Last 15 minutes the best.

Nothing new. Repeat of newspaper history.

Too much history (which most of this audience knows). Not enough comment on current situation, e.g., what is going right, what problems. Not enough to say "too big and bureaucratic." What needs to be cut?

Interesting material; boring delivery!

Too much opinion. Not enough big broad view of history. Too many dates and names for early part of talk. Poor pacing – last 15 minutes most important --- and he just skimmed.

I didn't get interested until the end when speaker talked about 9/11 intelligence failure. Questions & answers were great. Forget Intelligence History!

Subject does not fit well in global issues. At least the history of the CIA doesn't.

A tough topic to make interesting. Speaker knew topic very well, but hard to stay focused on great details.

Lecture = History = Very interesting. Current events and intelligence will be a continuing interest and link to N. A. economic issues.

Would love to hear more about present day CIA mission involvement, etc.

Outstanding!

The broad overview of the CIA was interesting information. A future lecture on specific topic, The McCarthy hearings, the failure of warning before 9/11, etc., would be valuable. Also, the speaker has a wealth of information and background.

CommentsS031011Lincoln

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota – 10 March, 2011**

**Dr. Jennie Lincoln
U.S. – Mexican Relations: Closest Friend and Nearest Enemy**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Too many slides. I would like to hear about what would happen if drugs were legalized.

Little too simplistic for this audience.

No slides next time.

Too many slides and not enough information.

Well prepared, but not interesting presentation.

Should not use so many detailed charts.

Too many slides.

Slides – Too many slides which had too small printing. They could not be digested.
Need more editing and more focus.

No new info for me.

Bring her back!! (2)

Need an economic view of Mexico and what is possible. A review of drug cartels and the methods which are successful to control them.

Never gave any possible solutions to problems.

Very organized and excellent speaker.

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re S.I.L.L.

Can you make screen size of slides larger?

Slides were worthless – too small! Show them on stage screen!

How can we stop “self-appointed” experts from lecturing!

CommentsS031611Barnes

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota – 16 March, 2011**

**Robert Barnes
The Judiciary in Transition**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Very factual, but no major suggestions about improvement/change.

Suggest using screen highlighting points.

My interest is in the Supreme Court. He didn't address it.

A good speaker who made the topic interesting. Mr. Barnes reinforced my own opinion that the Judicial selection process is broken, the whole Judicial branch of government is composed of partisan members, and the judicial process needs to be brought to the 21st century. Very discouraging!

His presentation was much too short. Ask for longer speech and fewer questions.

Too much reading and numbers.

He did not deal with subject of Supreme Court and Obama.

The speaker was very informative, but he could address some of the issues and personalities on the Supreme Court. He did an excellent job in describing the structural process that cases have to go through before being accepted for hearing in the Supreme Court itself.

The speaker was very knowledgeable and interesting. The Supreme Court is so little known that there are many aspects that could be addressed in future talks.

Only heard first half of his sentences. His voice went down.

CommentsS031711Gregg

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota – 17 March, 2011**

**Ambassador Donald Gregg
A Region in Flux: the Koreas, China and Japan**

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Excellent presentation from a person really involved. Background of situation most interesting. Needs to be brought a little up-to-date.

Very, very effective!

Outstanding.

One of this season's best!

The one major negative was his apparent (really obvious) bias against Republicans and that North Korea made only "mistakes."

Fascinating!! (2)

Highest marks. Bring him back, especially regarding Japan's economy, etc.

A lucid, brilliant speaker who spoke clearly and effectively. By all means have him back!

Gregg is possibly the most impressive speaker SILL has had in 10 years! He has allowed us insight into North Korea and their policies. Thank you SILL and Ambassador Gregg!!

An extremely interesting talk and a sensible approach to improve our relations with North Korea which is very advisable.

Important topic. Cover it again. Speaker is very informative, could be better organized. Should be invited back again. Answered questions very well.

Get him back yearly.

Fabulous speaker!

He is a most informed speaker.

Great!

Very little mention of China (as scheduled).

Great presentation!

I learned more from him than from many others. He was/is a very fine presenter. Much value to what he said; is interesting to all and should be paid attention!

PROGRAM COMMENTS
Venice – 25 March, 2011

Ira Loss
The FDA: Does Science Trump Politics?

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

The chronology of the FDA wasn't very relevant. He should have addressed the policies of the FDA (Washington, funding, etc.)

He read his notes.

Wonderful material, but uneven delivery. He spoke better when answering questions than reading from a script.

Too many ah's while speaking.

I'm not sure if enough change will happen in a short time to have a repeat.

Would like more on the chemical hazards in our homes and in our food.

I marvel and applaud the directness of this and the other speakers.

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re SILL

The sound system is problematic. The sound is harsh and sometimes painful with sudden spikes. It seems to over amplify when the speaker raises his/her voice and goes very soft sometimes inaudible when the voice is lowered.

Two annoyances: 1) Shimmering backdrop on stage is disruptive. 2) SILL staffers are the largest source of noise during talks.

CommentsS033111Cohan

**PROGRAM COMMENTS
Sarasota – 31 March, 2011**

William D. Cohan

Why the Scorpion Stings: Goldman Sachs and the U.S. Financial Collapse

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re Presenter

Lots of ego!

Pass him by for next year.

Effective, but all too full of himself.

I'm not knowledgeable enough on this subject, but although he might be right on everything he said, I could place a "sided" position.

Too much name dropping. Too tangential making him difficult to follow. Too many "asides." Hard to follow because of the above back and forth.

How did Goldman Sachs put other firms out of business?

Excellent. (2)

This issue should be addressed in the future. He conveyed his message effectively. Please invite him back. Good lecture.

VERBATIM COMMENTS: Re SILL

Perhaps recast the series into domestic and foreign affairs.