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Islamic fundamentalism American Dream series continues

By Tim Mak
staff writer

The third speaker in the American Dream series presented Tuesday in the Smith Chapel. Professor Baher Ghosheh spoke on Islamic fundamentalism. Ghosheh brought the audience not just into the world of Islam, but also the world of politics.

Ghosheh explored whether Islam and fundamentalism is the answer or the problem and why fundamentalism is on the rise in many Muslim societies.

"Although Muslims see themselves as victims of colonialists, neocolonialists and puppet regimes that do their bidding, for many Islamists, Islamic Fundamentalism is the only solution after both the west and the east have failed Muslim societies," said Ghosheh.

One point Ghosheh frequently raised is the relationship between Islam and politics. It is believed that there should be a balance between the government's right to obedience from people and people's right to justice from government on the reformism aspect of Islamic Fundamentalism.

"There is no separation between mosque and state," said Ghosheh. "Dictatorship means no freedom and government needs religion for power. Islamism represents a last ditch effort to better their situation after decades of living in impoverished states."

Dr. Charles Brock raised an intriguing question on why President Bush verbally attacked Muslim countries since they also want freedom, success and equality, specifically referring to when Bush claimed terrorists hate freedom. Ghosheh's critical answer applied his theory that religion and politics always intertwine.

"President Bush does not quite understand the situation of Muslims. His presentation of why he started the war

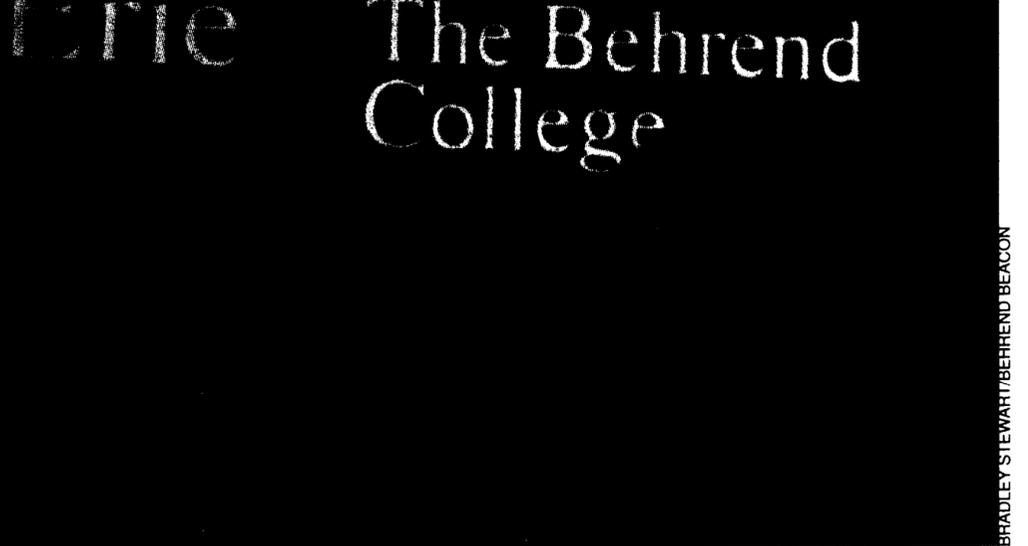
was problematic that they did not want freedom," said Ghosheh. "However, reality does not coincide with what President Bush said. They want freedom as well, but they can't achieve it."

"The talk is a little bit like RL ST 107, introduction to Islam, for those who have not done much reading or thinking on Islamic ideas," said Bill Sesler, a Christian lawyer as well as a Behrend alumnus. "It is an appropriate and well-organized lecture, but I think it needs to be more interactive." He also believes that it is difficult for President Bush to withdraw from the US-Islamic issues in a way that will not lead to a political mess.

Having taught at Edinboro University since 1989, Ghosheh developed courses in international relations, international trade, economic development and regional geography with his doctorate and masters degree in those fields. He is also interested in the interplay between religion and politics, and culture and development with the focus on Middle Eastern Studies.

Born in Jerusalem, having lived in six countries and traveled to 48 countries including about 20 Muslim countries, Ghosheh gained much experience on cross-cultural and international contacts. Those experiences allow him to be a professional guest speaker on cultural studies, politics of the Middle East, Islam: reality and misconceptions and US - Middle East Policies, etc. Being a frequent guest speaker on the Islamic and Middle East issues, he hoped we could learn more about the freedom, assimilation and liberty of countries and cultures.

Tuesday, Dr. Dan Frankforter of Behrend will speak on the topic of Christian fundamentalism as the last part of the Institute on the American Dream Speaker Series. The lecture, which will be held in the Smith Chapel, starts at 7:30 p.m. and is free and open to the public.



Former secretary of labor, Robert Reich, spoke on Wednesday as part of the Behrend Speaker Series. Reich broached topics including national economic recovery and economic policy.

Reich speaks on economy

By Bradley Stewart
news editor

On Wednesday evening, former U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich spoke to Behrend students, staff, community members concerning the nation's economy and political situation.

In the McGarvey Commons, before an audience of more than 100 people, CEO and Dean Jack Burke introduced Reich as a counterpoint to Linda Chavez, the republican supporting speaker that outlined her views on national and international policies and politics.

Reich spent the majority of his speech shying away from any political bias. He presented his economic views in nonpartisan, layman terms, allowing all audience members to easily comprehend his presentation.

"It's not George Bush's fault," said Reich. "It's not Bill Clinton's fault. There are other forces at work."

Reich felt the economic recession was no particular individual's or administration's fault. He explained the

business-cycle to the McGarvey audience as well as what he believed to be the three driving forces, "vectors," behind the nation's economy.

Some of his views were notably democratic. "We need immigrants," said Reich, while explaining the dire situation of social security. While other views could be considered closer to republican agendas, specifically when he spoke on outsourcing of jobs.

"I thought he did an excellent job," said Dr. James A. Kurre, associate professor of economics. "There are some subjects most economists agree on, and then there are those that are subjective from a political standpoint. I give him credit for trying to separate the politics from the economics."

Kurre felt that Reich's presentation was impressive, only disagreeing with him in relation to China and patent laws. "He kind of glossed over the topic of China and prescription drugs," said Kerre. "He gave the impression that we're rich enough and we can afford to

subsidize. But there are a lot of senior citizens who can't pay for their drugs."

Ultimately Reich foresees economic growth in the near future as part of the business cycle; the economy fluctuates up and down. In one of his few partisan comments, he identified the Bush administration "as blowing it big time" in terms of speeding up economic recovery.

He quelled fears of soon-to-be career-searching graduates. "I'm not so worried about there being enough jobs," said Reich. "You will have jobs but the nature of the job contract is dramatically different. The key competitive advantage is innovation. You graduates will be working very very hard."

After the forty-five minute speech and question-answer session, Reich received a standing ovation. "Overall, I thought he was a better speaker than Linda Chavez and reinforces my reasons for being a Democrat," said Matt Leister, PLTSC 07. "Republicans just criticize and place blame."

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Erie party representatives battle at Behrend Moore, Porter meet in Reed 117 to debate campaign issues



Brad Moore, far left, represented republican Phil English on Tuesday night in opposition to democratic Dr. Steven Porter, far right. Chris Hvizdak, center, mediated the debate that took place in Reed 117.

By Annie Sevin
staff writer

Behrend held a political forum on Tuesday. Members of the COMMU 405 class (organizers of the event) as well as other students, faculty, and community members welcomed Dr. Steven Porter and Brad Moore as they debated politics in the Reed building.

Porter is running against Pennsylvania Congressman Phil English (R-3) for Pennsylvania's third congressional seat. Due to other obligations, English was not able to attend the debate this week. Moore, English's campaign manager, came in his stead.

The COMMU 405 course, taught by Professor Davis took advantage of this year's intense political atmosphere by inviting the two Congressional candidates to campus.

"Being election year, I just had to do this," said Davis. "It was just something too good to let go, especially the way the campaign is going. I figured this is really something; we should dedicate this to this class. I'm really happy with the students who are involved with the campaign they learned and felt they accomplished something. I'm very happy tonight."

The debate, like most political debates

this year, was both lively and boring.

Porter gave some lengthy commentary and a few heated moments arose between the two gentlemen.

Porter and Moore dealt with issues such as healthcare, social security, importing of drugs, and, of course, the Iraq war. Each gentleman disagreed on almost every subject discussed.

Porter stood and faced the audience every time he addressed a question. He kept raising his voice to get his point across. One of the more ardent moments came when he expressed his view of the future, "I am frightened for my country...I am fearful of the country you

will inherit," said Porter.

Throughout the debate, Porter kept pulling out fact sheets and e-mails to use as proof that the Republican Party is wrong on certain issues.

"I wish both sides had been represented by the people running for congress," said Cary Daniel, MRKT 07, one of the students in attendance. "It would have been more balanced."

"It was a lot of fun to sit up there," said Moore, "but I was at a little bit of a disadvantage." He was still very positive about the future of this country in the hands of republicans and he was extremely optimistic about the Republican Party's position in the presidential election.

The students involved with setting up the debate seemed very pleased with how the event turned out. Chris Hvizdak, COMBA 09, commentator for the debate, said, "I think it went very well, they were both conversational, they were both willing to state their case. We didn't have a time limit so they were able to fully elaborate on their arguments and they were able to convey their parties personal points of view."

Jared Clough, COMBA 07, another COMMU 405 student helped out with the debate as well. "It was extremely interesting. I think Mr. Moore was at a disadvantage because he was not the candidate [English] and it was blatantly obvious that he was not prepared to [counter] Dr. Porter's stances. They both got their points in; I think overall it was pretty good. I wish more students were there because we...could've asked more questions."