

May 3, 2011

To: Katonah Great Decisions Participants

From: Fred Piker – Discussion Leader

Re: Summary of 4/26/11 Meeting – “The Caucasus” – Topic Leader:
Dick TenDyke

10:15: KICKOFF

Welcome and Introduction of Guests

Please welcome Marga Spiller who has decided to join our Chapter. Marga had previously attended an earlier meeting as a guest.

Forthcoming Spring 2011 Day Time Meeting Date and Topic

5/10–“Making Sense of Multilateralism”–Co-Topic Leaders: Fred Piker & Harry Stanton

4/19 Planning Committee Report

Fred reviewed the highlights of the 4/19 Planning Committee meeting, including the “Provisional” schedule which immediately follows, the “mixed” Katonah Chapter reaction to the 2011 FPA DVD segments (particularly comments – many lacking in substance - from members of various G. D. Chapters), and the “Current Events” add on module to the regular meetings (which started up early in 2011). Following discussion, the “Provisional” schedule was adopted. Fred indicated he will draft a letter to FPA re the DVDs. (Also note discussion comments and action step below re the “Current Events” module).

“Provisional” Schedule of Fall/Early Winter Day Time Meeting Topics

9/20–Book Review-“The Next Hundred Years”-Author: George Friedman
Topic Leader: Howard Jacobs

NOTE – PARTICIPANTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO READ THIS BOOK OVER THE SUMMER. THE BOOK IS AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM, AT BORDERS, AND ON AMAZON

10/4 –“Middle East Realignment”- Co-Topic Leader: Tyler Beebe

11/8 – “Global Public Service, Ethics, and the Role of the U. N.”

Co-Topic Leaders: Terri Sachs & Outside Resource

12/6-“EU, Russia, NATO, Turkey, U. S. Shifted Interest”

Co-Topic Leaders: Joe Adams & Mike Kornfield

1/10/12-“Oil and the Balance of Power/Natural Resources”

Co-Topic Leader: Charlie Kimball

Revisiting the “Current Events” Module

Following discussion, participants endorsed the 4/19 Planning Committee Consensus (as noted in the accompanying e-mail entitled “4/19/11 Planning Committee Notes.”). Starting at the 9/20/11 meeting, the “Current Events” Module will run from 10:15 – 10:30 A. M. followed by start up of the regular meeting at 10:30 A. M.

Forthcoming KVL Foreign Policy Evening Forum

May 4 – “Can NATO Survive Libya?”

Sarwar Kashmeri – Author of “NATO 2.0 – Delete or Reboot?”

Copies of the press release and the electronic promo flyer have been sent to all participants.

End of Year Luncheon

The traditional end of the year luncheon, open to all participants, will be held on 5/10 at one of the local Katonah restaurants.

GROUP DISCUSSION

CHAPTER MOTTO - “DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED WITHOUT FONDNESS FOR DISPUTE OR DESIRE FOR VICTORY” – BEN FRANKLIN

Pre-Meeting Preparation

Readings and References

Priority

2011 FPA Briefing Book – Topic #7 – “The Caucasus”

HYPERLINK "http://www.bedfordny.com" www.bedfordny.com – then go to “Katonah Great Decisions” followed by “Reference Materials for April 26” (upper left side of

“Katonah Great Decisions” home page)

Supplementary

“Suggested Readings” noted on page 100 of the 2011 FPA Briefing Book

Book Review: “The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus” – Author: Charles King – (the review can be found on Google)

NYT – 1/26/11 – “Linking Attacks to Caucasus, Russia Faces Old Problem” – Kremlin’s efforts in Region have little success

WSJ – 2/2/11 – “The Roots of Moscow’s Chechen Problem” – for the Kremlin, suicide bombers are far more useful than a real democratic opposition

Time – 2/7/11 – “Putin’s Terrorism Problem. Behind the Moscow attack is a history of Russia’s flawed, brutal policies in the Caucasus”

Valley News – 2/11/11 – “Muslim Extremism in Russia Threatens Its Political Stability”

The Economist – 4/9/11 – “Russia’s Unruly North Caucasus – Islam Inflamed” – Muslim fundamentalism is on the rise in the North Caucasus. To stop it, Russian policy must change AND “From Moscow to Mecca” – as this part of Russia’s empire frays, fundamentalist Islam takes a stronger hold

Topic Introduction

Initially Dick introduced “The Caucasus” by providing background on the region (including its location, surrounding geography, issues, and history) which stretches from Chechnya to Iran and around the Caspian Sea. Subsequently, we watched the related FPA DVD segment. Dick and Fred then co – led discussion on the questions listed below.

Preliminary Discussion Questions

1-Does the U. S. have commercial interests in the Caucasus/Caspian Region that should be protected by the force of our government? (Think Exxon-Mobil)

2-Oil, politics, and corruption blend like the Andrew Sisters. Should the U. S. use foreign policy tools to ameliorate corruption because of its negative impact on human rights?

3-Should the U. S. support Georgia militarily if another war breaks out with Russia over Abkhazia or North Ossetia? Similarly, should the U. S. continue to ignore Russian atrocities in Chechnya?

4-How do our relations with the Caucasus/Caspian countries have to be tailored to our objectives in dealing with: (1) Iran, (2) Afghanistan, (3) Pakistan, and (4) Turkey? (Consider military bases and fly-over zones for example).

Participant Observations

Elizabeth Hall's summary of discussion is included with this transmission.

Meeting Assessment/Feedback

Participants were highly engaged. Several indicated they learned much about a relatively unknown region of the world - thanks to Dick's extensive preparation and his informative and interesting delivery!

12:00 P. M. – ADJOURNMENT

Hope you can join us, both on 5/4 and 5/10.

Best regards,

PAGE

PAGE 3