



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

Fairfax VOTER

April 2009

Volume 61, Issue 8

Encouraging Public Conversation About the Middle East: Part One

Can you name the countries that make up the Middle East? Do you understand why this part of the world has been a center for conflict for thousands of years? If not, we have just the study for you this month, the first of three articles designed enable us to speak about our foreign policy in that area with some degree of understanding. Armed with increased enlightenment, perhaps we can weigh in more effectively on the public discussion of how to achieve a more secure world.

Calendar

March

- 18** Board Meeting- FFX FY10 Budget Presentation
25 Board Meeting – Regular /Apr. UC Ltr
30, 31, Apr 1 BOS public hearings on FY10 Budget

April

- 03 May *Fairfax Voter* Deadline (with AnnMtgKit)
03 FCPS Student Holiday/Last Day to Register for City/Town Elections
04 Briefing – Strategies for a Secure World/ Packard Ctr, 2nd Floor
6-10 FCPS Spring Vacation
8-10/13-15 **Units:** Background on Middle East
15 Board Meeting/May UC Letter Deadline
30 Climate Change Conf (Pt 1)

May No Units – LWVFA Annual Meeting

- 01 Climate Change Conf (Pt 2)
01 June Fairfax Voter Deadline
01 TPP Silent Sentinel Award Kick-off
2-3 LWV-VA Convention in Reston

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The President's Message

Hello! Yes, it is April, but there is no LWVFA Annual Meeting! Remember, this year the meeting will be held on Saturday, **May 16**, at Greenspring in the Hunters Crossing Conference Room (like last year's meeting). We have included some preliminary information on page 6 (hostess page) of this *VOTER* – the reservation form will be in the May *Fairfax VOTER*.

Also remember that we are hosting the Virginia League Convention in Reston on May 2 & 3, at the Sheraton Hotel (as if you could forget!). We thank all of you who have volunteered to work at the convention and who have agreed to be delegates. I especially want to thank **Brigid Rapp** and **Mary Valder** who are the Volunteer Coordinators for this event. Read more about it on page 4.

And while I am thanking people, I want to mention recent donations to LWVFA from our members **Olga Garcia Harper (O.G.)** and **Alice Schoen**. Many of you have given a donation in memory of Sally Ormsby. We have notified the Ormsby family of these donations and, if we have not already done so, we thank the following for honoring Sally's memory: **Jane Barker, Joanne Field, Eleanor Fina, Marilyn Hedges, Jane Hilder, Judy Leader, Mary Lou Melley, Sheila Musselman, Mary Nightlinger, Sheila Richardson, Alice Schoen** and **Members of the Fairfax Day Unit**.

The 2009 edition of LWVFA's *Facts for Voters* should have arrived (or be arriving soon) in your mailbox. If you need additional copies, call or write the League office at 703-658-9150 or league@lwv-fairfax.com

See you at the unit meetings in April and at the Annual Meeting in May.

Sherry

Welcome to Our New Members

Welcome to **Rebecca Williams** and **Monica Johnson** who joined LWVFA locally. We're also very glad to have two new national members: **Mary Lee** and **Lu Ann McNabb**. We look forward to meeting all of you soon.

In Memoriam Adrienne Doniger

Adrienne Doniger, a League member for 45 years from the Springfield Unit, died on February 21, 2009. Adrienne was very active, serving as Springfield Unit's action chair and always a willing hostess for their meetings. Her husband, Al, can be reached at 5815 Cove Landing Rd., Burke, VA 22015 if you wish to send condolences.

PLEASE TELL US YOUR STORY—NOW!

At June's unit meetings we will discuss services for the aging. The plan is to identify our members and friends who have had experiences in dealing with these services, for better or worse. We want to publish findings, anonymously if you prefer, in the June Voter, so they *must* be in the hands of the program chair by April 15. Unit chairs, please poll your members to see who might be willing to share their experiences and pass names on to Lois Page. Stories will be sent on to the responsible authorities for comment.

Please consider this a plea for people willing to serve on the committee as well. Names of interviewees and interviewers should be sent immediately to Lois Page. loismpage@cox.net or call 703-690-0908.

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2008 - 2009

This newsletter, partially funded by the League of Women Voters of Fairfax Area Education Fund, is published 10 times from September to June each year by:

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Subscriptions to the Fairfax VOTER are available to non Fairfax League members for \$15 per annum. Send your check to the above address and request a subscription.

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or call 703-658-9150

March Program Consensus

National Popular Vote Compact Study Yields No Clear Position From LWVFA

By Lois Page, Program Director

LWVFA responded to the call for consensus on a National Popular Vote Compact with a resounding, “What is this all about?” Only 3 of the 7 questions (2, 4 and 7) elicited answers that could be called agreement. The other four resulted in “No consensus.” A total of 109 members participated in the consensus.

One unit came out strongly in favor of the Compact, but the other 12, with the briefing being counted as the 13th unit, obviously had mixed results with many questions.

In general, the answers were often evenly divided between urging the League to stay with our long-standing attempt to amend the U. S. Constitution to get rid of the Electoral College and not being able to agree on the question being asked. It is hard to decide if the number of “no consensus responses” was the result of not understanding the issues, disagreeing with the choices being offered, or the result of a vocal minority strongly favoring the compact at unit meetings where the attendees, to a great extent, did not.

The comments not favoring the Compact were often of this nature: “...a compact conflicts with the LWV position on getting rid of the Electoral College [through a Constitutional amendment.]” Another said, “We should maintain the position of the League.” Also, “Why put the effort into this rather than work on amending the Constitution?”

Many of the comments seem to indicate that not enough time was allowed to explore this topic. The study was adopted at the June 2008 National Convention and a consensus report was required by May 1, 2009. One unit said, “We felt we were being rushed to consensus.” We would have preferred at least two unit meetings on the issue in order to fully understand the complexities, but most of the LWVFA programming for this League year had already been put in place by August. Adding the one month on NPVC led to shuffling other programs. Explanatory materials on NPVC were arriving in the local office after our March consensus meetings.

One example of an area where further exploration may have led to a different understanding was the objection that NPVC was an “end run around the Constitution.” However, the Constitution gives the states the right to choose electors in whatever manner they want. NPVC simply arranges for states

to agree on how they are going to do this, through an inter-state compact, in a way that assures the candidate with the most popular votes will win the election. NPVC is an end run around the attempt to amend the Constitution, an effort that has gone nowhere in 39 years of effort. The people who believe in NPVC feel that it is much more likely to be successful since a number of states have already passed it in at least one house of their legislatures. One challenge to this conviction is the notion that a compact should seek Congressional approval. One unit felt that consulting Congress would lead to as much delay as have the attempts to have that body propose an amendment.

Another objection was that NPVC would end up in the courts and lead to conflict amongst the states as it could be put in place before all states agree to it. However, one unit discussed what a Constitutional amendment would look like, pondering: “What body becomes the final arbiter to sanction election results?” They suggested that an amendment would end up in the courts as well, as the nation has become so accustomed to caring about which way a vote goes in each state.

Ensuring that the popular vote determines the winner, as the Compact purports to do, removes the vote within each state from having any significance. Are we ready for that? In spite of the League’s stand on abolishing the Electoral College, some members continue to be uneasy with the ramifications of that stand. Some respondents seemed to be objecting to being offered only two alternatives for ensuring a win by popular vote.

The results on a question-by-question basis (questions have been paraphrased) with numbers of responses for each item are as follows:

1. Favoring a change in a basic constitutional framework only by amending the Constitution—56; favoring action by states through a compact—5; no consensus—48. Result—**no consensus**
2. Favoring having the League continue to work toward amending the Constitution because the compact process might set a precedent for the future regarding fundamental constitutional issues—73; supporting the compact because it would help achieve an important goal—5; no consensus—31. Result—**consensus** that League should continue to work toward an amendment.
3. The possible need for Congress to consent to a compact

See **Consensus**, Page 5, Col. 2

LWVFA Sends Letter . . .

League Reaffirms Position on School Start Times

On February 19, 2009, President Sherry Szachry sent the following letter on school start and dismissal times to Daniel G. Storck, Chairman of the Fairfax County School Board

Dear Mr. Storck:

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA) is pleased to see the School Board consider changing school start and dismissal times. As public participation in governmental decisions is a major focus of the League of Women Voters, we are also pleased that community members are invited to select and attend one of the community dialogue meetings and to take an online survey.

We do have some concerns, however, about the timeline proposed for making a decision. According to information posted on the school system's website, the School Board will decide whether to move forward in making this change at its work session on March 9. This rapid turn-around following the dialogue sessions scheduled for the last week in February seems too rushed to allow for full community understanding and involvement. We believe that a decision of this magnitude should be made at a regular meeting of the School Board, where it will be televised and recorded. The process of preparing an agenda item for new business and then action would allow an opportunity to carefully consider suggestions made during the public comment period. Community members would also have an opportunity to comment on the agenda item before School Board votes on the proposal.

As to the issue of later start times for adolescents, LWVFA recently studied this topic and concluded that science has shown that later start times are preferable for the health, well-being and learning of teenage students. Our position on the subject states:

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area believes that it is desirable to delay the start time for instruction at all high schools and middle schools in order to provide the best opportunity for student learning and to promote adolescent health and safety ... [and] recommends that Fairfax Public Schools fully explore the feasibility of adopting later start times for middle and high schools.

Therefore on behalf of LWVFA members, I support a full exploration of the feasibility of the adoption of later start and dismissal times. We encourage the School Board to keep the well-being of its students as a top priority for providing the best possible environment for excellence in learning.

Thank you for considering our opinion.

Sherry Zachry, President
LWV of the Fairfax Area

Note: By the time you read this, the School Board's March 9 Work Session will have taken place. As of press time (March 7) the item was scheduled as New Business on the March 5 board meeting agenda as: "6.06 Proposed Bell Schedule - Recommendation to reject the proposed bell schedule change (known as Iteration #3) and to confirm the existing structure (SB work session scheduled 3/9/09; action scheduled 3/19/09)." At the March 5 meeting, Chairman Daniel G. Storck (Mt. Vernon) presented the agenda item as New Business and said that discussion would occur at the March 9 work session and then at the March 19 meeting. During the Board Matters discussion[on 3/5], Kaye Kory (Mason District) said, "I regret that our chair and vice chair have decided to add the item about voting on the proposed bell schedule for next year to the action on the New Business agenda tonight, which effectively shortens the public conversation time by half."

State League Convention Scheduled at Reston Hotel

The League of Women Voters of Virginia's biennial convention with a theme of "Leadership for the Next 100 Years" will be held at the Sheraton Hotel located at 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive in Reston on May 2 and 3, 2009. The Fairfax Area League is hosting this event. If you have never had the opportunity to attend a League convention, this is your opportunity to meet members from all over Virginia, see how your voice carries up to the state level, and become invigorated about the League, its accomplishments and its future.

Saturday morning will be devoted to workshops, followed by lunch. The convention itself starts Saturday afternoon and continues Sunday morning, closing at 12:30 p.m.

You can be part of the action by volunteering to help for a few hours. If you signed up at the March unit meetings, good for you. If not you can still do so by contacting Brigid Rapp. As we go to press, more people are needed for Sunday and back-ups for both days would be great. You can contact Brigid at gtaylor502@msn.com 703-256-8057. Although she will be away most of March, Brigid will check for emails and voice mails so don't hesitate to contact her.

Rand Corporation Teams Up With LWV . . .

Encouraging Public Conversation About the Middle East: Part One

Issues involving the Middle East continue to be of utmost concern to US foreign policy. The tensions that arise from long-standing conflicts in the region may, in fact, be behind what has landed us in the middle of two wars which have, in turn, led to great sacrifice of American lives and property. The background piece below is one of three we will be including in upcoming LWVFA program offerings. The background and mission of the three essays are presented as follows:

The RAND Corporation prepared three papers for the League of Women Voters. The other two papers are entitled "Terrorism Past and Present" and "Strategies for a Secure World."

This educational project is directed towards encouraging public conversation about how to achieve a secure world and promoting public understanding of the critical issues surrounding terrorism and the threats it poses to our security. It is possible that such conversations will lead to greater public engagement and involvement in encouraging our policymakers to explore the uncertainty, to apply new skills in their efforts to reduce it, and to take risks where necessary.

The Middle East – A Brief Historical Sketch

The term "Middle East" originated at the beginning of the twentieth century and denotes that part of the world that sits between Africa, Europe, and Asia. As its name suggests, from the earliest times, its geographic location made it a crossroads for competing civilizations on these three continents, as well as a heartland of successive empires.

Today, the Middle East comprises Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel (including the Palestinian Authority), Jordan, Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait. Libya and Sudan are sometimes also included within this designation. In total area and population, the Middle East and the United States are roughly equivalent.

Birthplace of Civilization and Monotheism

The Middle East is often referred to as the "Cradle of Civilization." Thousands of years ago, nomadic tribes settled near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers—now in modern-day Iraq—and gradually developed an agrarian society that relied on irrigation. These peoples invented the first written language and made major discoveries in mathematics, astronomy, architecture, glassmaking, and metalwork. By about 3500 B.C., they had invented the wheel, and they were the first to use a sail as a way of capturing the energy of the wind.

The Middle East is also the birthplace of monotheism, the belief in the existence of one god or in the oneness of God.



It has been the source of three related world religions—Judaism, whose beginnings date to about 1800 B.C.E., Christianity in the first century C.E., and Islam in the seventh century C.E. — all of which survive in the region. Today, however, the population is primarily Muslim.

The Rise and Fall of Empires

By the time Alexander the Great conquered the Middle East in the fourth century B.C.E., it had experienced a succession of empires: Egyptian, Hittite, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian. In the second century B.C.E., the Romans began to assert control, pushing the Greeks out of power and gradually conquering the region. In the first century C.E., Christianity was born, and the Jews rose up against the Romans. Although much of the population was dispersed, Jews continued to live on the land, and modern Judaism developed from the rabbinical schools that existed

for hundreds of years in the territory of the ancient nation. With the conversion of the Emperor Constantine and the designation of Constantinople as a Christian city (c. 324 C.E.), Christianity became the principal religion in much of the region.

In 330 C.E., the Roman Empire divided into western and eastern domains. After the fall of Rome, the surviving Eastern Empire—also called Byzantine Empire—and the Persians¹ fought for dominance until the seventh century. Exhausted from generations of combat, both sides were ultimately overrun by armies from the Arabian Peninsula. The Arabs brought with them their new religion, Islam, whose principles had been set forth in the *Qur'an* (*Koran*), the holy book that contained God's revelations to Muhammad (c. 570-632).² After a short period, Islam split into two main sects, Sunni and Shia. By the eleventh century, the military and political power of the Sunni Arabs was in decline due to the invasion of tribes from Central Asia and conflict with the Shiites, but Islam remained strong. Though challenged by the Christian Crusaders over the next two hundred years, Muslim forces regained control of the Middle East by the end of the thirteenth century largely because invading Turkish and Mongol tribes converted to Islam.

The rise of the Ottoman Turks in the fourteenth century marked the beginning of a reign that lasted until 1918. In addition to including most of the Middle East, the Ottoman Empire at one time encompassed the Balkan Peninsula in Europe as far as Vienna and the greater part of North Africa. However, the internal cohesion of the empire had seriously deteriorated by the mid-1800s, and an industrializing Europe gradually asserted its influence. The completion of the Suez Canal in 1869 linked the Mediterranean and Red Sea and opened a direct water route from Europe to Asia, thus diminishing the importance of the land routes and making the canal an object of great strategic importance.

Europe and Russia nibbled at the borders of the Ottoman Empire but largely sustained it as a buffer between them until the Ottoman rulers sided with Germany in World War I. Preoccupied with its 1917 revolution, Russia dropped out, leaving England and France to advance their interests in the region by encouraging Arab revolts. Some Arab leaders sought to take over the old empire; others wanted separate states. Commitments from the Europeans, however, were vague or contradictory. Some agreements were public, such as the Balfour Declaration granting a Jewish state in 1917; and some were held secret, such as the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement between England and France to establish, if not explicit colonies, at least spheres of influence for the two European powers over most of the territory.

When the war ended, the League of Nations awarded Britain a mandate³ over Iraq and Palestine, which included what today are the countries of Israel and Jordan and the territories administered by the Palestinian Authority. (The British already had Egypt under a Protectorate.) The French received a mandate for Syria, which then also incorporated an area that today is the country of Lebanon.

The Middle East in the Twentieth Century

During the twentieth century, events took place in the Middle East that set it on a path that has had ramifications extending far beyond its current territory. Several of the most crucial developments are summarized below:

The Founding of Saudi Arabia and the Emergence of a “Fundamental” Form of Islam. Between 1919 and 1926, Sheikh 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn Saud successfully defeated his rivals⁴ and unified about 80 percent of the Arabian Peninsula, including Islam's holy sites of Mecca and Medina, into the separate areas of the Hejaz and Nejd. In 1932, Ibn Saud formally changed the name of the country to Saudi Arabia, and it has been governed by his family as an absolute monarchy without legislature or political parties ever since.

In Saudi Arabia, the law of the land is the shari'a (Islamic Holy Law) and the only religion permitted to worship publicly is Islam. The ruling family enforced a particularly strict version called Wahhabism,⁵ which regards modern life as corrupt and degraded and demands a return to the pure principles and practices of Muhammad as they are understood by Wahhabis. Adherence to Wahhabism affects nearly all aspects of daily life, particularly those relating to the restricted status of women. Well-funded by oil revenue, Wahhabi schools, or madrassas, provide the only instruction that many Muslim children ever receive, not just in Saudi Arabia but worldwide. Wahhabi schools, preachers, and mosques financed from Saudi Arabia have promoted a fundamentalist culture throughout the world's Muslim communities that is vulnerable to exploitation by Islamic terrorists.⁶

In the long run, divisions within Islam itself are likely to play the most important role in determining the future of the Middle East. The Sunni sect comprises 85 to 90 percent of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims. However, the number of Shias in the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and a large part of Pakistan roughly equal those of the Sunni populations there; and the Shias are the majority in Iran. The rift between the two sects dates back to the death of

Mohammad and the fierce controversy over who would succeed him as Islam's leader. Down through the ages, there have been times and places when the two populations have intermingled and influenced each other. But despite opportunities for common cause—e.g., colonial rule, the Cold War, and the emergence of Israel—their relationship continues to be marred by intense hostility, as can be seen in Iraq today.

Establishment of the State of Israel. A small number of Jews had lived in Palestine throughout the millennia. In the late nineteenth century, the development of Zionism—largely a response to European anti-Semitism—led to a call for a Jewish homeland. Jews from Central Europe began to immigrate to Palestine in growing numbers. Russian pogroms⁷ increased the rate of immigration to the Middle East and to other parts of the world as well. Partly because other countries, including the United States, were neither eager to confront Tsarist Russia on this point nor accept large-scale Jewish immigration,⁸ the prospect of a Jewish homeland in an area held by the weakening Ottoman Empire offered a more attractive alternative to many Jews and to European governments.

The publication of the Balfour Declaration supported this approach. In a letter to Baron Lionel Walter Rothschild during the First World War in 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, a member of Lloyd George's government, asserted that

His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use its best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of the object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.⁹

Over time, however, it became clear that the Palestinians and the Zionists would come into conflict over the land. In the decade before and immediately following World War II, Jewish immigration to Palestine soared despite the objections of both Britain and the Palestinians. In 1947, having failed to reconcile the two populations and facing ever increasing levels of violence, Britain withdrew from the Palestine mandate. The United Nations then approved a two-state partition plan with the Jews gaining about 55 percent of the land and the Arabs retaining roughly 45 percent. Because it was a holy site to Muslims, Jews, and Christians

alike, Jerusalem was planned to be an international region administered by the United Nations.

As the date of independence neared, the Arab League¹⁰ declared its support of the Palestinians; and fighting escalated on both sides until war formally broke out on May 15, 1948, one day after the British had departed, the State of Israel had been proclaimed, and the armies of Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt had crossed the borders. The war ended with partition but not peace.¹¹ Seven hundred thousand Palestinian refugees were housed in camps, largely on what is now the West Bank, and in Gaza, Lebanon, and Syria. Several hundred thousand more were displaced in the wars that followed.

Finally, the President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, made peace with Israel in 1979.¹² By then, as a result of its victory in the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel had retaken the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. The successive defeat of the neighboring Arab states by Israel further inflamed Islamic terrorists, and the peace agreement led directly to Sadat's assassination.

Peace today is likely to require a two-state solution in which a Palestinian state coexists with an Israeli state recognized by its Arab neighbors. This has proved to be an elusive goal, especially when it comes to the final issues of control of Jerusalem; Israel's withdrawal to its pre-1967 boundaries, including Jewish settlements in the West Bank; and the return of Palestinian refugees. Public opinion polls show strong support for peace on both sides, but the negotiations have always faltered on Palestinian demands for the right of return and control of Jerusalem and on Israeli security concerns.

Although the death of Yasir Arafat opened the door for hope with new leadership of the Palestinian Authority, the victory by Hamas—a fundamentalist Islamic organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel—in the most recent Palestinian election keeps the prospects as uncertain as ever. Israel began to implement a "unilateral" solution, withdrawing from Gaza and from some settlements from the West Bank and walling it off with a security fence. However, the outbreak of attacks by Hamas in Gaza and by Iranian and Syrian-supported Hezbollah in Lebanon has caused Israel to declare that a unilateral attempt to achieve peace and security is no longer viable.

The Importance of Middle Eastern Oil

In the minds of most Americans, oil is the essential link between the Middle East and the United States. According

to varying estimates, the Middle East possesses half to two thirds of the world's known oil reserves. Yet, because it was a major oil producer itself, the United States was a relative latecomer to the Middle Eastern oil market. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, British entrepreneur William Knox D'Arcy succeeded in obtaining the oil concession of three quarters of Persia for 60 years. By the 1920s, control of oil from Iran and Iraq was a British monopoly. In 1929, with U.S. government help, several U.S. companies were able to muscle in on the cartel. At the time, there had been no oil discoveries in the Arabian Peninsula. In 1933, shortly after King Ibn Saud renamed his land Saudi Arabia, he granted Standard Oil of California (now Chevron) a large concession in exchange for personal, interest-free loans totaling \$50,000. The first major oil deposit was discovered in 1938.

The strategic importance of Middle East oil first became apparent when the British and US navies converted from coal to oil before WWI. That conflict was the incubator of mobile motorized combat, and WWII confirmed that oil was essential for victory in modern warfare. In the post-war period, cheap Middle East oil fueled the recovery of Western Europe and America's industrial expansion.¹³ The economies of the United States and Europe grew increasingly dependent on oil from the Middle East during the 1950s and 1960s as the Arab oil boycott of 1973 dramatically demonstrated.

The myriad problems associated with that dependence are bearing down hard today. Looking toward the future, as Asia grows exponentially, access to oil and gas in the Middle East will be increasingly critical to competitiveness in a global economy. The uncertainties inherent in relying on a part of the world that is currently so unstable to satisfy a basic need pose a dangerous challenge for our security.

Perceptions of America in the Middle East

Public opinion polls conducted in the Middle East show that America is regarded as the greatest threat to peace in the region. Support for Israel, stationing American troops on holy Islamic soil in the first Gulf War, and the current military presence in Iraq—all have contributed to rising anti-American hostility. While the appeal of American popular culture remains relatively strong, U.S. society is viewed by many Muslims (and by other conservative populations throughout the world) as an example of moral decadence. Moreover, television and the Internet make the economic disparities with the West quite stark in the eyes of young, uneducated populations unable to benefit from the global economy.

The "blame" for the lack of social and economic progress and a widespread sense of humiliation in the Middle East has been focused on the West in general, and especially on America, which is seen as supporting repressive local regimes with arms and diplomacy.¹⁴ One of the effects of this complex combination of humiliation, contempt, frustration, hatred, and envy can be seen in the rise of Islamic terrorism on an international scale. It is this subject that is explored in "Terrorism Past and Present," the second paper in this series.

Footnotes

¹ The Persians were predominantly Zoroastrians, followers of the prophet Zoroaster, also known as Zarathustra. Zoroastrianism is one of the oldest monotheistic religions, perhaps dating back as far as 1000 B.C.E. The issues of moral choice and the ongoing battle between good and evil lie at the core of its teachings.

² Muhammad's connection to earlier prophets, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus was acknowledged by the Muslims; but they believed that Muhammad was the final prophet, chosen by God to correct distortions of His word, and that the *Qur'an* (*Koran*) was the final revelation.

³ In this case, the term *mandate* refers to a nation that has lost its sovereignty and has been placed under the control of another country. It was the responsibility of the nation with mandatory power to prepare those nations for the eventual resumption of their independent status, which the Europeans were loath to do.

⁴ The last of these rivals was Hussein Ibn Ali, king of Mecca and leader of the Hashemite family (descendants of Muhammad), who had established his sons as kings of Iraq and Jordan.

⁵ Founded by Muhammad ibn "Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), who in 1744 made a pact with Ibn Saud's great grandfather in which each would support the other in unifying the Arabian Peninsula and spreading Wahhab's interpretation of Islam.

⁶ Another impetus toward terrorism can be found in the writings of Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), who called for the strict observance of Islamic law. Born in Egypt, he was a teacher and, for a time, an official in the Egyptian Ministry of Education. Qutb studied in the United States from 1948-1950; however, he spent most of the rest of his life writing behind bars in Egypt until he was executed in 1966 for planning the assassination of President Gamal Abdel Nasser. His abhorrence of the racism and sexual mores of the American culture spurred his rejection of the West in general and the United States in particular. His experience in prison, watching the torture and execution of others, led to him to reject the secular power of the Muslim state. In its place he called for a Muslim theocracy under the rule of shari'a. His writings became a major influence in the development of Al Qaeda and what is

today generally called Islamic fundamentalism.

⁷ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Cossacks under the direction of the Russian government led violent mob attacks—pogroms—primarily against Jews.

⁸ The United States, however, did permit significant Jewish immigration from Europe.

⁹ This may also have been a *quid-pro-quo* for the financial support for the war provided by the Jewish community in Great Britain.

¹⁰ Created in 1945, the Arab League is an organization currently comprising 22 states whose mission includes coordination of economic, cultural, social, and health affairs. Its charter forbids member states from resorting to force against each other. The seven founding states are Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen.

¹¹ Four wars followed—in 1958, 1967 (the Six-Day War), 1973-74 (the Yom Kippur War), and 1982. In the 1967 war, Nasser ordered the withdrawal of UN forces from Egyptian territory, barred Israel from the Gulf of Aqaba, and tried to mobilize surrounding Arab countries. Israel attacked first, destroying Arab air capability and capturing the Old City of Jerusalem, the Sinai, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights. In 1976, the Arabs caught Israel off guard during a religious holy day and initially regained territory. However, Israel not only took back that territory but it also extended its control to the Suez Canal. In later years, much of this land was exchanged for peace.

¹² Jordan signed a peace treaty in 1994.

¹³ Because of Woodrow Wilson's post-WWI policy to end

colonialism and promote independent democracies in the Middle East, for many years the United States was seen to exert a positive influence. Attitudes changed after 1953, when the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency brought down the democratically elected Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran for trying to nationalize Aramco, the British-Iranian oil company. In his place, it then installed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who was much more responsive to Western interests.

¹⁴ U.S. support of many Middle Eastern states during the Cold War was a consequence of its concern for stability in the region as a buffer against Soviet expansion. The West lost influence in the 1950s with the attempted takeover of the Suez Canal by Britain, France, and Israel—even though the United States forced their withdrawal—and again in the 1960s when the United States declined to build the Aswan Dam and the Soviets took over the project.

Recommended Reading

Efraim Karsh and Inari Karsh, *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East 1789-1923*, Harvard University Press, 1999.

Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*, Beacon Press, 2004.

Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, Modern Library, 2003.

Vali Masr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*, W. W. Norton and Company, 2006.

Milton Viorst, *Storm from the East: The Struggle between the Arab World and the Christian West*, Modern Library Chronicles Book, 2006.

Assistance Needed for Community Elections

Heads up, folks. LWVFA will be working on the following community elections and your help is needed. Volunteer at your next unit meeting or contact Una White, Elections Coordinator, 703-922-8721 or unawhite@gmail.com

Burgundy Village Preference Poll will be a mail-in ballot, with vote counting on a Saturday in late May (Burgundy Village is located in Alexandria part of Fairfax County off U.S. 1)

McLean Community Center election will be Sunday, May 16, 2009 at Lewinsville Park on Chain Bridge Road. Counting will take place at the Community Center is on Ingleside Avenue.

Skyline Plaza Condominium election will be Wednesday, June 10, 2009. (Skyline Plaza is in the Falls Church part of Fairfax County, near Bailey's Crossroads.)

League Tracks United Nations Activities Online

Did you know that the League of Women Voters has a United Nations Observer? Her name is Doris Schiapira and you can read her summary of many UN activities during 2008 on the LWVUS website, www.lwv.org. On the home page type Un Wrap-Up 2008 in the white search box on the right of the blue space, click on the little arrows, >>, and a listing of two UN Wrap-Up reports will come up. Click on the one for 2008. The summary itself is only one page long, but it has many links for use to follow various issues in more depth.

Silent Sentinel Award Event – May 1**League to Kick Off TPP Fundraiser With Award**

by Jane Barker, LWVFA Member
and TPP Memorial Committee Chair

Our last update on “Turning Point Plaza” (TPP), the memorial to the suffragists who fought for female voting rights and were then imprisoned for their efforts, was in the in the January *Fairfax* VOTER. Progress continues to be made to celebrate the achievements of these brave women.

On May in Lorton, Virginia, an LWVFA award event is being planned to honor a woman who has been instrumental in advancing voter participation and been an outspoken advocate for the voting rights for all, as well as being an inspiration and educator to the general public—someone who shares common traits with those original suffragists who made personal sacrifices to secure the 19th Amendment. “The Silent Sentinel Award” event will also kick off the memorial fundraising efforts and all LWV members are invited. Please watch the www.lwv-fairfax.org website for details on this event. Attendees at the State Convention (delegates and workers) are invited to visit the TPP memorial on Sunday afternoon after the Convention, perhaps on your way home! Details will be available at State Convention.

Plans for future improvements to the memorial site are being worked on by the TPP Planning Committee made up of LWVFA members as well as partnerships with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, George Mason University’s Center for Women and Gender Studies, the Lorton Arts Foundation, the Sewall-Belmont House and Museum, the Occoquan River Communities and others. The memorial project will be completed by 2010, the 90th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment. Funds are being solicited to help with the construction of the memorial. Details on giving are found at: www.lwv-fairfax.org and you may email questions to: silentsentinels@live.com.

“Ready or Not – A Conference on Issues and Solutions for Adapting to Climate Change”

The League of Women Voters of the United States and several other national organizations concerned with global environment are sponsoring a conference on climate change.

Consensus

(From Page 3, Col. 2)

should not stop the plan from going forward—41; promoters must plan on seeking congressional consent before the plan can go forward—10; no consensus—58. Result—**no consensus**.

4. Regarding the question on enforcement of NPVC provisions, only 6 people felt either sufficient enforcement provisions are in place or it should be passed anyway even if we cannot be sure enough provisions are in place. Most (67) were convinced that the compact would lead to uncertainty and end up in the courts. The rest either concluded that NPV is not viable because of lack of provisions (18) or could not agree (18). Result: **consensus** that enforcement of the plan is likely to add uncertainty and bring the courts into the presidential election in ways that raise substantial concerns.
5. Believing that uniformity of voting systems is more important than ensuring the election of the highest vote getter through NPVC—53; achieving the popular election of the President through NPVC is more important than uniformity of voting systems—14; no consensus—42. Result—**no consensus**.
6. Believing that it is more important to achieve the popular election of the President than to abolish the Electoral College—5; it is more important to amend the Constitution to abolish the Electoral College than it is to achieve popular election of the president by alternative means such as NPVC—51; no consensus—53. Result: **no consensus**.
7. On this one we all agreed: the Compact will have problems being passed because of the need for congressional approval and action by so many states AND so will the constitutional amendment. Result: agreed (**consensus**).

April 30, 2009 – Topics: health, agriculture, disaster risk reduction and water availability. Place: True Reformer Building, 1200 U St., NW, Washington DC, 8:30 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.

May 1, 2009 – Topic: A hill briefing on financing issues. Place: Capitol Hill, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Contact Vicky Rateau (vrateau@oxfamamerica.org) or Ilana Solomon (ilana.solomon@actionaid.org) with any questions and for more information.

This Month's Unit Meeting Locations –

Topic: Strategies For a Safer World

Members and visitors may attend any meeting convenient for them. As of March 7, 2009 locations were correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. Some meetings at restaurants may need reservations

Saturday, April 4, 2009

10:00 am 'At Large' Unit meeting & Discussion Leaders' Briefing
Packard Center Conference Room
4026 Hummer Rd, Annandale 22003
Contact: Lois Page 703-690-0908

Wednesday, April 8

9:30 am Fairfax Station (FXS)
7902 Bracksford Ct., Fairfax Station 22039
Contact: Lois 703-690-0908

Thursday, April 9

9:00 am Reston Day (RD)
Will not meet on Thursday, April 9, but location and date were undetermined at press time.
Contact: Viveka, 703-404-0498 for information

Monday, April 13

1:30 pm Greenspring (GSP)
Hunters Crossing Classroom
Spring Village Dr, Springfield 22150
Contact: Kay, 703-644-2670

Tuesday, April 14

12:30 pm McLean (McL)
Star Nut Gourmet
1445 Laughlin Ave, McLean 22101
Contact: Anne, 703-448-6626

7:45 pm Vienna Evening (VE)
409 Beulah Rd., Vienna 22180
Contact: Annette, 703-281-9715

9:30 am Mt. Vernon Day (MVD)
Mount Vernon District Gov. Center
2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria 22306
Contact: Gail 703-360-6561

12:00 noon Chantilly/Herndon (CHD)
Sully District Governmental Center
4900 Stonecroft Blvd., Centreville 20151
Contact: Susan, 703-391-0666

6:15 pm Dinner Unit (DU)
Yen Cheng Rest. Main Street Center
9992 Main Street, Fairfax 22030
Contact: Tin 703-207-4669

9:15 am Fairfax City Day (FXD)
3133 Singleton Circle
Fairfax 22030
Contact: Barbara, 703-273-7825

9:30 am Springfield (SPF)
Packard Center (Lg. Conf. Rm.)
4026 Hummer Rd, Annandale 22003
Contact: Nancy 703-256-6570
or Peg, 703-256-9420

7:45 pm Mt. Vernon Evening (MVE)
Note: Change of place
Paul Spring Retirement Community
Mt Vernon Rm 7116 Fort Hunt Road
Alexandria 22307
Contact: Marge, 703-768-5212

Wednesday, April 15

7:30 pm Reston Evening (RE)
NOTE: Date & place change
Reston Regional Library
11925 Bowman Towne Drive
Reston 20190
Contact: Lucy, 703-757-5893

LWVFA Annual Meeting – Saturday, May 16

10AM, at Greenspring Village
Hunters Crossing Conference Room

Speaker: Jennifer Krafchik from Sewall-Belmont House

Luncheon Cost: Approx. \$30

Menu: Fresh Garden Salad, Asparagus Spears, Chicken Cordon Bleu, Roasted Red Potatoes,
Cheesecake with Strawberry Sauce, Coffee and Tea.

Reservation Form in May VOTER

For more information call: Jean Hill, 703-569-6659



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
4026 Hummer Road, Suite #214 Annandale, VA 22003-2403
703-658-9150. Web address: www.lwv-fairfax.org

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April, 2009

Sherry Zachry, President
Ron Page, Editor
Mary Grace Lintz, Coordinator

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a member.

LWVFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Dues year ends June 30, 2010.)

Membership Category: Individual \$55 ____; Household (2 persons–1 *VOTER*) \$75 ____; Advocate Member \$100 ____; Student \$27.50 ____ (Coll. Attending ____)

Membership is: New ____; Renewal ____; Reinstate ____; Subsidy Requested ____

We value membership. A subsidy fund is available, check block above and include whatever you can afford.

Dues are not tax deductible. Tax-deductible donations must be written on a separate check payable to LWVFA Ed. Fund.

Please Print Clearly!

Name _____ Unit _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____ E-Mail _____

Thank you for checking off your interests:

<input type="checkbox"/> County Govt	<input type="checkbox"/> Voting Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Systems	
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Problems	