



31 December 2025

BEST WISHES TO ALL FOR A PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS 2025

While we all look forward to 2025 with great expectations, once again America will transition through a period of uncertainty as a new administration returns to office, an administration that, historically, has adopted policies that differ in many ways from the preferences in traditional US foreign policy. It is critical that New Mexicans have the insights essential to probe competing narratives as they arise, thus empowering our members and guests to make their own personal assessments. These uniquely divergent foreign policy perspectives of a renewed Trump administration and the international preferences of the traditional post-World War II, post-Cold War foreign-policy elites make the current year potentially more contentious. That, in turn, makes the role of the World Affairs Council of Albuquerque all the more critical in providing informed, non-partisan, balanced and insightful dialogue on critical global issues confronting our nation. We have done that in the past and we will continue to do that going forward.

WHERE WE WERE

In our second quarter ending in December, the Council maintained its legacy of first rate evening dinner programs on contemporary foreign policy issues confronting our country. Moreover, the Council expanded several that included another in our cooperative lecture series with the Oasis Continuing Education Center, continued high school and UNM student participation at Council events, expanded cooperation with Albuquerque Public Schools, and initiated the 2024-2025 Global Educator of the Year program.

RECENT MEETINGS

In October, our first dinner program brought Michaela Millender, a research analyst at The Soufan Center in New York City to Albuquerque. Michaela addressed far-right extremism trends in violent far-right movements”, both in the US and globally.

At the November dinner event, the Council hosted Jenny Town of the Stimson Center. Ms. Town updated the membership on the current geopolitical situation on the Korean Peninsula and the emerging North Korean role regionally and beyond, a most timely and relevant topic given the recent insertion of North Korean forces into the Kursk region of Russia fighting against Ukrainian forces.

With the 2024 presidential election just weeks away, the Council added to its cooperative lecture program with the Oasis Continuing Education Center with a presentation by Professor Jessica Feezell from the UNM Department of Political Science on the impact of foreign and domestic influences on public opinion in the 2024 election cycle.



Michaela Millender



Jenny Town



Professor Jessica Feezell

EVENTS ON TAP

The spring will focus on the transition to a renewed Trump presidency. On 15 January, the third quarter kicks off with a broad analysis of the Cold War dynamics of American foreign policy that established the foundation for this country’s global engagement even until today. Currently a historian at the U.S. Department of State

and a Ph.D. in diplomatic history from the University of Virginia, Dr. James Graham Wilson will explore the Cold War roots of our contemporary global policy structure by tracing the career path of Paul Nitze in America's national security apparatus after World War II, serving in eight presidential administrations.

In February, we will hear from Ambassador Terence McCulley, currently a senior advisor to the US Institute of Peace and senior director of practice at McLarty Associates. Formerly the US ambassador to Mali, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire, Ambassador McCulley will discuss the geopolitical situation in Africa, a timely topic given the return to Africa of military juntas and internal civil wars disrupting this increasingly vital part of the global political, economic and security order.

Planned for 5 February, the WACABQ in cooperation with the Oasis Center will host a presentation by Council board member William Itoh, former US ambassador to Thailand. Ambassador Itoh will examine 2025 security challenges in Asia for the new Trump administration including China-Taiwan potentials, confrontation in the South China Sea and North Korean nuclear threats.



Dr. James Graham Wilson Ambassador Terence McCulley Ambassador William Itoh

The Council Program Committee is exploring several dinner lecture options for March as well as a re-scheduled panel discussion at the Oasis Center on immigration over time from legal, policy and academic perspectives. We solicit the thoughts, preferences and suggestions of our members on topics and speakers that each believes would be most insightful for the Council membership. Please provide your insights directly to the Program Committee Chair, Bob McGuire at 505-281-1108 or rsmcg@comcast.net.

ANCILLARY EFFORTS

The High School Level

The Council continues its focus on Albuquerque area high school students and teachers -- public, private and charter -- including our mainstay program that, at Council expense, brings a teacher and up to five students to each of the dinner programs at Tanoan Golf Club. With great appreciation, high school access to our meetings is funded by member donations directed to this program over and above annual membership dues during the annual membership renewal period. At the next renewal, please consider a tax-free donation in any amount to this meaningful initiative.

This month the Council will kick off the application process for the Albuquerque Area Global Educator of the Year award that we initiated for 2024. That program has been a resounding success. In addition to attending the World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth Global Classroom Workshop, 2024 winner Randy Martin has been selected by the Dallas World Affairs Council to participate on a fully funded study and research trip to the United Arab Emirates in February. This year we are expanding access to the program to nearby communities including Rio Rancho, Los Lunas, Moriarty, Santa Fe and Los Alamos. The nomination period runs from 15 January through 7 April with an announcement of the winner on or about 21 April.

The Council again supported the New Mexico Model UN program at the state capitol building in November. WACABQ members who have assisted these sessions over the years have found it very reassuring to see how young New Mexicans respond insightfully and responsibly in a simulated diplomatic setting.

The University Level

At the university level, the Council continued to host students from the UNM ROTC departments and the Global National Security Policy Institute and to cooperate with the University's International Studies Institute and Department of Political Science, mutually proliferating announcements of each entity's events.

Further, WACABQ again successfully nominated a UNM student as one of the 25 nationwide student selectees to attend the 2024 Conference in Washington in

November. Naserian Olemako, a Tanzanian undergraduate student in the University's International Studies Institute, distinguished herself with insightful interactions with speakers during conference plenary sessions.



Naserian Olemako, WACABQ's representative to the 2024 National Conference

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS IN ALBUQUERQUE & SANTA FE

Our efforts continue to grow WACABQ's relationships with other organizations in the Albuquerque area focused on international affairs. The reciprocal memberships with Global Ties Albuquerque, Global Santa Fe and the Santa Fe World Affairs Forum remain strong as does our co-sponsorship with the World Affairs Council of Connecticut of the book review program moderated by Jim Falk of Global Santa Fe. Keep in mind that your WACABQ membership entitles you to participate in events put on by these three partner organizations at their member prices. We will continue to forward to you announcements of their opportunities for which WACABQ members are eligible at reduced rates. (See three opportunities this month at the end of this newsletter.)

Our interactions with UNM's International Studies Institute and the Albuquerque International Association now include reciprocal distribution of each other's program announcements to the respective memberships.

More broadly, the Council has taken a leading role in the effort to synchronize the opportunities available to the community from all internationally focused organizations in the area. Referred to as the ABQ Engage Coalition, Mike Daly

from our board took the lead in creating a community-wide website that integrates information on all internationally-related events in the Albuquerque area and then seamlessly integrates the information into the Albuquerque City Government's events calendar website ABQToDo. The Council is now working with Global Ties Albuquerque, the Albuquerque city Government, the Albuquerque Sister Cities program and the University of New Mexico to identify the keynote speaker for an October community-wide exploration of local international engagement efforts. More to follow.

SOME REMINDERS

As the Council goes forward, we encourage everyone to spread the word about Council membership among others – friends, colleagues and acquaintances -- who might enjoy and benefit from what it has to offer. We eagerly look forward to former members and those who have not renewed as yet, reconnecting with us at a reduced rate for the second half of the program year.

Recently, the board has initiated some new programs, resurrected several that retreated during COVID and expanded others. It now aspires to continue to grow the breadth of what we offer to the Albuquerque community. While our financial footing is sufficient to manage our current endeavors, in order to achieve these broader aims, strengthening our finances is a must. Several board members have submitted applications for – and in at least one case received – financial support from the local community. The board asks for your help with any insights or introductions that you may have as WACABQ creates a body of sponsors – commercial enterprises, financial institutions, professional organizations, fraternal societies and others -- that have interests in global affairs.

Please remember when you meet with friends and colleagues that the Council has updated its web page, Facebook and Instagram sites to assist in growing awareness of the Council among the Albuquerque community. Our Facebook site, “World Affairs Council of ABQ” is: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551637121498&mibextid=LQQJ4d>. The link to our Instagram site is: https://instagram.com/worldaffairsabq?igshid=OGQ5ZDc2ODk2ZA%3D%3D&utm_source=qr

LAST THOUGHTS

Bob St. John has been a long time WACABQ stalwart and member of the board. We lost Bob last month, a loss both personal and organizational. As the final arrangements are announced by the family, we will communicate them as appropriate to our members.

UPCOMING PARTNER EVENTS

From Albuquerque International Association

The Albuquerque International Association presents its first lecture of the new year on Thursday, January 23 titled "From Ancient Mesopotamia to Modern Iraq & Kurdistan: Journey through the Cradle of Civilization" by Dr. Diana McDonald. It is planned for 4 pm at the Albuquerque Special Collections Library, in Botts Memorial Hall, at 423 Central NE (Central & Edith). *\$15 for AIA Members; \$20 for Non-Members; Students– Free. Register at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/my25hnt> or on our website at www.abqinternational.org or mail check by January 21 to: AIA, PO Box 92921, Albuquerque, NM 87199*

From Global Santa Fe

For 13 months, Lt. Gen. (ret.) H.R. McMaster served as President Trump's National Security Advisor. Just two days after the inaugural, he joins us to break down the critical national security and foreign policy priorities that will shape the next four years.

McMaster is also the author of [*At War with Ourselves: My Tour of Duty in the Trump White House*](#).

The details:

When: Thursday, January 23, 2025 | 5:00PM MT

Where: Zoom Webinar

Tickets: Free | [Register for Zoom link](#)

WorldNow™ with Jim Falk is hosted by the World Affairs Council of Connecticut in partnership with Global Santa Fe

From Global Ties Albuquerque

Sunday, March 30, 2025, 7:30 pm: Global Ties ABQ continues its sponsorship of global music with AMP Concerts!! Please join us for an amazing and inspiring performance by Yagody at the South Broadway Cultural Center. Yagody was founded in 2016 in the West Ukrainian city of Lviv, together with students from the local theater faculty. The four traveled through different regions of Ukraine to explore the musical traditions of the people there. With this huge collection of songs about love and life, Yagody creates their exciting sound, supported by musicians on drums, guitar, accordion, or the drama, a mouth harp of the Hutsul people from the Carpathians.

GLOBAL TIES ABQ members receive a 10% discount, please email us at info@globaltiesabq.org for the code