

Foreign Policy Association
of Harrisburg
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Middle East History and Solutions

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Larry Goodson, professor of Middle East studies at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, spoke to a standing-room-only crowd at a December 10 dinner hosted by the Foreign Policy Association of Harrisburg.

He focused on five observations regarding the Middle East: demographic growth and economic stagnation, an ancient region with young countries, Abrahamic monotheism facing postmodern Islamism, traditional authoritarianism meeting the Arab Spring, and an arena of conflict in an age of great-powers competition.

Dr. Goodson noted that the Middle East is confronted with a youth bulge - 50 percent of the population is below the age of 25. He said that many in the region, particularly the young, adhere to an interpretation of the Quran that longs for a "golden age" of Islamic ideology.

Events in history have combined to make the Middle East the least democratic region of the world, he said.

Dr. Goodson offered some predictions about the future of the Middle East. He cited expectations of a "great war" spanning more than one continent and involving many great powers with large numbers of casualties. However, he said steps could be taken to lessen the severity of such a conflict.

He expressed hope that the United States might continue to use its soft powers and employ diplomacy and avoid becoming entangled in an all-out war in the Middle East. He saw this policy as the best step forward in a situation that provides few good options.

Dr. Goodson occupies the General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower Chair of National Security at the Army War College. In addition to the Middle East, he also teaches courses on South Asia.

A widely recognized expert on Afghanistan and Pakistan, he is author of the New York Times best-selling *Afghanistan's Endless War: State Failure, Regional Politics, and the Rise of the Taliban* (2001).

More recently, he has written "The Great Middle Eastern War," which is under review for publication.

Dr. Goodson has lived in Egypt, Pakistan and Afghanistan and has traveled extensively throughout the Middle East. He attended the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill where he studied political science.

2015-2016 Program Topics / Schedule

January 28	Europe's Perception of US Foreign Policy
February 18	DATE CHANGE - Turkey as a Pivotal State Between East and West
March 24	Latin America and Its Emergence on the World Stage
April 28	Africa and the World
May 19	Hot Topic Issue - to be determined
May 2016	Embassy Trip to Washington, DC Date and country to be determined

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