

TRITA PARSI CCWA VISIT RECAP

The Columbus Council on World Affairs (CCWA) was proud to host as its distinguished guest Dr. Trita Parsi in November 2006. Dr. Parsi proved to be an engaging speaker whose knowledge of Iran and the Middle East provided a new, thoughtful perspective to the Columbus audience.

Students make a grand entrance and exit

The visit both started and ended with some of the most energetic members of the community – our youth.

Phil Maxxon, student at The Ohio State University and intern at CCWA, had the privilege of being the first to meet Parsi. Maxxon held a one-on-one interview with the expert as a basis for an oral report and final paper for a high-level political science course. Maxxon's excitement was evident as he was exposed to fresh ideas on a subject he cares deeply about and has studied for three years.

Parsi's visit was then capped with a presentation to a group of students at Beechcroft High School. "This is the most exciting and most terrifying thing I'll do this week," chuckled Parsi as he prepared for the presentation. After speaking to a room full of attentive young eyes focusing in on every one of his words, all equally powerful in content as those delivered to older audiences, he realized that he was right in assuming these young leaders hold the key to our future.

What lies between

Dr. Parsi's impact of course went beyond students, as he touched all segments of the Columbus community. Parsi's luncheon presentation to CCWA members and guests held at the Athletic Club of Columbus proved to be as powerful as any. Addressing a mixed crowd of eighty inquisitive men and women representing business, education and community leadership, Parsi spoke about a rising Iran and US options in a changing Middle East. Not a sound was uttered during a presentation filled with provoking ideas, history and creative challenges to our policy makers and citizenry. Hands flew in the air during the question and answer period, which could have continued all afternoon if not ended by the constraints of time. In the end, Parsi's message resonated loud and clear: communication is key in dealing with a subject as complex and with such great implications as Iranian-US relations.

Call the presses!

Of course, no official visit could be complete without some media attention and Dr. Parsi garnered much of it. The Columbus Dispatch conducted a hearty on-site interview with Parsi prior to the luncheon, one that culminated in a full-length article in the paper's next morning edition. He then had the opportunity to broaden his audience during a live interview with WOSU's Fred Anderle on am radio. The incoming call button remained red during most of his 1-hour spot and Parsi's thoroughness in answering each question was undoubtedly appreciated by the all listeners.