

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Bill Schlotter

Sen. George Mitchell and Harvard Prof. Samuel Huntington to Debate the Conflict of Civilizations

It is generally believed that when terrorists attacked the United States on September 11 last year, they did so to punish the U.S. for its support of Israel and for its perceived indifference to the rights and grievances of Islamic people throughout the Arab world.

Were the attacks and resulting War on Terrorism harbingers of future clashes between the United States, its allies and non-western cultures?

Former U.S. Senator George J. Mitchell and Harvard University professor Samuel P. Huntington will take opposing views of that issue in a debate titled, "The Conflict of Civilizations?," at 3 p.m., Saturday, April 13 at UC Santa Barbara. The event, to be held in the Pavilion Gymnasium of the UCSB Recreation Center, is presented as part of the Arthur N. Rupe Distinguished Dialogue Series.

The debate is open to the public.

Tickets cost \$5 and are available from the UCSB Arts and Lectures box office (893-3535) or at the door.

"Senator Mitchell and Professor Huntington will debate whether or not the current state of strife that marks so many places on the globe, reflects at its heart, a conflict

of civilizations," said Aaron Ettenberg, acting provost of UCSB's College of Letters and Science. "Can there be a world order characterized by global peace and security, or does the unique nature of each of the world's great cultures necessarily place them on the road to conflict? The Arthur N. Rupe Foundation has generously provided us with the resources to bring to Santa Barbara some of our nation's greatest minds to debate some of society's most difficult issues, and we welcome the campus and community to what we believe will be a unique, timely, and important event."

The positions of Mitchell and Huntington can be gleaned from the titles of recent books. Mitchell, who played a key role in negotiations that led to a historic peace agreement in Northern Ireland, is the author of a book about that experience, "Making Peace" (1999). He also chaired an international committee seeking ways to be involved in seeking solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Huntington is the author of the controversial best seller "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order," (1996). Called a "critical current affairs book" by Booklist, Huntington's book looks at the world in terms of cultures, identifying eight major groups.

In it, Huntington predicts that the United States and its Western culture allies will find themselves increasingly in danger of conflict with the other seven groups: Eastern Orthodox, Latin American, Islamic, Japanese, Chinese, Hindu, and African.

And he argues against Western interventions into the affairs of the other groups.

At Harvard, Huntington is director of the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies and is chairman of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies in the Center for International Affairs. He is the founder of the influential quarterly journal "Foreign Policy," and served in the administration of President Jimmy Carter as coordinator of security planning for the National Security Council.

Mitchell was a U.S. Senator from Maine from 1980 to 1995 and was Senate majority leader his final six years in office. Before seeking public office, he was a U.S. District Court judge.

Benjamin J. Cohen, the Louis G. Lancaster Professor of International Political Economy at UCSB, will moderate the debate.

The Arthur N. Rupe Distinguished Dialogue Series seeks to provide a forum for intellectual and stimulating discussions of critical societal issues.

The series is administered through the Office of the Provost in the College of Letters and Science and is presented by UCSB Arts and Lectures and the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center.

Books authored by Mitchell and Huntington will be available for purchase and signing at the debate.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.