Gorbachev Says Russia ‘Needs Time to Succeed’ as Democracy

BY JASON HOLLANDER

As a high school student, Mikhail Gorbachev was so enthusiastic about his country’s politics he joined a “young-communists” group to better show his support for the government. Four decades later, having discovered paralyzing flaws in the Soviet system, he would become the chief architect for Russia’s difficult transition to a free society.

As one of the people most responsible for ending the Cold War, Gorbachev, 71, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990, has become a respected authority on post-communist Russia political, social and economic strategy. Through an interpreter, the former Russian president told a rapt Low Rotunda audience on March 11 that while the country is making gains, it may take several generations for the former superpower to assert its presence as a successful democratic state.

“Remember, America’s democracy has evolved over 200 years,” said Gorbachev.

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Experts Gather to Discuss Living With Science and Technology in 21st-Century

The Rotunda of Low Library brought together 300 prominent researchers, government and business leaders, and social and public policy specialists for a conference March 5-7 on how democratic societies can better manage the implications of science and technology in the 21st-Century. Columbia’s Center for Science, Policy and Outcomes in Washington, D.C. and the Funders Working Group for Emerging Technologies were co-organizers of the “Living with the Genius” conference.

The goal is to bring about a new social contract between the scientific community and society as a whole—one that opens the scientific process of discovery and particularly its outcomes to more meaningful input by democratic institutions and better accountability by the scientific community.

The full conference can be viewed online at: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/02/03/genie_video.html.

—Suzanne Trimel

Four Distinguished Columbia College Alumni Receive The John Jay Award for Professional Achievement

BY ALEX SACHARE, CC’71

Columbia College honored four distinguished and successful alumni—Derek Q. Johnson, CC’81; Joel I. Klein, CC’67; Conrad Lang, CC’72; and William H. McDavid, CC’68, and College Dean Austin Quigley.

Celebrating at the Plaza Hotel, from left: President George Rupp; Derek Q. Johnson, CC’81; Joel I. Klein, CC’67; Conrad Lang, CC’72; William H. McDavid, CC’68, and College Dean Austin Quigley.

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