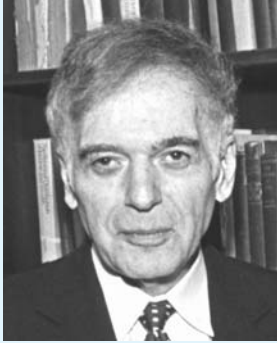


## New Chair in Israel and Jewish Studies Established

Columbia University has established a new chair at the Center for Israel and Jewish Studies. The Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi Chair will augment the study of modern Israeli history, politics and society at the University. Plans also are under way for the creation of a new visiting professorship to strengthen ties between Columbia and universities throughout Israel by bringing Israeli scholars from all fields to campus each academic year.



Professor Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi

Columbia University Trustees David Stern (chair), Law'66; Mark Kingdon, CC'71; Philip Milstein, CC'71; and Richard Witten, CC'75, have pledged more than \$3 million toward the \$5 million initiative.

The Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi professor will be chosen by an interdisciplinary faculty committee, with significant representation from Columbia's Center for Israel and Jewish Studies. The committee, which met for the first time in late March, will work together to appoint a world-renowned scholar recognized by his or her peers as a preeminent figure in the field of modern Israel studies.

"The establishment of this chair continues Columbia's long and distinguished tradition in the study and teaching of Jewish civilization and society," said Lee C. Bollinger, president of the University. "It is named after our own professor, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, for his international reputation as a historian and his long-term service to the University. Columbia University, a major research institution, must enhance its offerings in contemporary studies given the critical importance of 21st century Israel and Jewish thought in the world today."

Yerushalmi is the University's Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History and has been director of its Center for Israel and Jewish Studies since 1980. Notified of the new chair, he responded, "I am profoundly honored to have the professorship in my name and thank the Trustees for their great gift and foresight. I am convinced that the new position will enrich Middle Eastern studies at the University and other fields as well."

A native of New York City, Yerushalmi received his Ph.D. from Columbia's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences in 1966 and taught at Harvard University for 14 years, where he was chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Professor Yerushalmi's scholarly interests range from medieval through modern times, with special emphasis on Spanish and Portuguese Jewry, modern German Jewry, Jewish historiography and the history of psychoanalysis.

He is the author of *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto; Haggadah and History: The Lisbon Massacre of 1506; Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*; and *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Intermittent*. His books have been translated into nine languages, including Japanese, Hungarian and Russian. Yerushalmi is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and an honorary member of the Portuguese Academy of History. He holds six honorary doctorates including the University of Haifa, the University of Munich and, most recently, the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Sorbonne) in Paris.

"We are thrilled the professorship in Israel studies has finally come to fruition after more than a year of active thought and deliberations within the Columbia community and with our Trustees," said Michael Stanislawski, Nathan J. Miller Professor of Jewish History and chair of the search committee. "It is our goal to finish the search process and announce the new faculty appointment as soon as possible. In addition, we are working hard to have a visiting professor from Israel here for at least one semester of the next academic year."

Yerushalmi will continue his research and teaching at Columbia, and until his retirement the chair will not bear his name. The Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi Professorship is not tied to any specific academic department, providing opportunities for tapping a distinguished scholar from a variety of disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities.

### Faculty Perspective

## Multifaith America Is No Theocracy

By Jagdish Bhagwati

Two cases currently before the U.S. Supreme Court are drawing attention to America's war between secularists and religious activists. In these cases—one, from Texas, on the public display of the Ten Commandments on public land, and the other, from Kentucky, about the display of the Commandments in county courthouses—the secularists insist that such displays violate the U.S. constitution's first amendment, which says "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." In their interpretation, this clause of the amendment implies a strict separation of church and state. Their opponents retort that this strict interpretation is not appropriate.

It will be a mistake if the Supreme Court finds against the secularists, but not just because they have jurisprudential tradition on their side. To allow religious displays on public lands would arguably offend the original idea that the U.S. should not be a theocracy, like many Islamic states. Such displays are likely to occur only when sanctioned—in what is essentially a political decision—by legislatures or executives, whether federal, state or local. Given that 82 percent of the U.S. population identifies itself as Christian, one can confidently predict that these displays will belong to the Christian tradition. In theory, such displays can belong to any religion; in practice they do not and will not. Lawyers may argue, *prima facie*, that no particular religion is directly favored, but the true effect is certainly discriminatory in favor of the predominant Christian religion. If the U.S. were wholly Christian, as it was at the founding of the nation and

the writing of the constitution (except, of course, for the native Americans), this would be an empty objection. But that is no longer the case. The U.S. today is a multi-religious society: The founding fathers would have welcomed this situation and cited it as further justification for the separation of church from state.

As well as using the first amendment, the Supreme Court also needs to use the "equal protection" clause of the 14th amendment to require that no public displays that belong only to the predominant religion should be permitted in public places. If Christian displays are permitted, they must be matched by simultaneous displays by all the country's leading religions and possibly also by a tablet for the humanist doctrine of the nonbelievers. If Christian activists realized that a successful resolution of their demand would result in such a requirement, they would probably back off. These cases raise deep philosophical questions about what we mean by religious freedom, a cornerstone of our fundamental political beliefs. The conventional American view of religious freedom considers it to be what I might call, borrowing philosophical terminology from debates on liberty, negative religious freedom: the U.S. permits the free exercise of religion. But one also needs to consider what should be called positive religious freedom: that no religion should be favored in displays in public spaces that would have the effect of marginalizing other religions. While theocracies typically elevate the dominant religion to a status that compromises positive religious freedom, there is no excuse for this happening in self-described nontheocratic societies such as the U.S. Yet, for historical reasons, this is what has happened. Even

in the quasi-public space of university convocations, Christian ministers are typically called on to give the blessing, with an occasional rabbi thrown in. Where are the Hindu and Buddhist priests and invocations? George W. Bush, the U.S. president, now makes an occasional nod to Islam. But that is a feeble response to the political need to demonstrate that Americans are not anti-Muslim, in the face of Islamic fundamentalists' claims to the contrary. The U.S. Supreme Court has a unique opportunity in these two cases to shift the U.S. towards a firm embrace of positive religious freedom, grounded in the equal protection clause of the 14th amendment. Since many of the justices now draw on foreign jurisprudence for ideas, and have cited the Indian Supreme Court, a pioneering court on public interest litigation, in decisions on affirmative action, it may be worth pointing out that they can also draw on that court's rulings under the Indian constitution's article on equal protection.

But perhaps the best advice for the U.S. court is that it should learn from Mahatma Gandhi. He used to begin his public meetings with prayers that drew on the sacred texts of all India's principal religions, among them the Bhagavad Gita, the Koran, the Old and the New Testaments and the Granth Sahib of the Sikhs. Gandhi is known to have borrowed the idea of civil disobedience from Thoreau. Now it is time for Thoreau's country to borrow from Gandhi.

*Jagdish Bhagwati is a University Professor in Economics and Political Science.*

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## Joseph Biden Delivers Blinken Lecture at SIPA

By Ernest Beck

Senator Joseph Biden, the ranking minority member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called on the United States and Europe to adopt a new approach toward foreign policy, one that would require both sides to look at each other's interests in a new way and share responsibility for meeting new threats from terrorism.

"We need a common understanding between the U.S. and Europe that all citizens face a new nexus of threats and this demands a new response," Biden said, while delivering the Vera and Donald Blinken Lecture at Columbia's Kellogg Center in the International Affairs Building. The April 4 lecture, "A View Across the Atlantic: America and Europe in a Changing World," was sponsored by the Institute for the Study of Europe and the School of International and Public Affairs.

Biden was introduced by Richard Gardner, a law professor at Columbia and a former ambassador to Italy, who recalled that the senator had visited him in Rome 25 years ago. "Back then, we felt as one, that there was a unity and that we understood each other," Biden said. "We were so Eurocentric in the way we looked at the world."

Since then, the world has dramatically changed—and those transformations present the U.S. with two national security challenges, the senator said. One threat is Islamic terrorism. Equally important is keeping "dangerous weapons out of the hands of the most dangerous people," Biden said. To accomplish that, he detailed the necessity of a fundamental shift in U.S. foreign policy and reconsideration by Europeans of how they respond to international situations.

Looking at the view from Washington, Biden said that although America today is more confident of its military power, "we have forgotten the power of our example, and for all our



Senator Joseph Biden

might, we are no less comfortable in the world but more alone and more isolated than at any time in our history." The result, he continued, is that the U.S. is less secure than it could or should be. To restore the country to credibility, he suggested "a policy based both on force of arms and also on the power of our ideas and our ideals."

Furthermore, considering the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, Biden said U.S. policymakers should think twice about initiating a conflict if they are not prepared to engage in postconflict resolution. "We are good at projecting force but no so good at the staying power to finish the job," he said.

Biden also urged Europeans to rethink the doctrine of the use of force. While the U.S. remains committed to a strong military, and reserves the right to use force when all other options fail, European governments must understand that the new threat of terrorism—from an enemy that is stateless and who

might be amassing weapons of mass destruction and is not a standing army—must be met with a new response. Therefore, Biden said, "Our allies must be willing to get tougher with terrorists."

Overall, U.S. foreign policy should be based on three fundamental principles: building effective international alliances with international organizations; forging a preventive strategy to defuse security threats; and reforming failed or anti-democratic states that are "sources of instability, radicalism and terror," Biden said. He criticized the Bush administration for having little interest in the first of these principles, noting "they see allies and agreements more as a burden than as a benefit." For his part, Biden believes that foreign policy is more effective when "we do not act alone."

Such alliances with European allies have worked before, such as in the 1990s when joint intervention helped to save lives in Bosnia and Kosovo. Biden called on America's European allies to adopt that same approach toward countries that harbor terrorists or seek weapons of mass destruction.

On another level, Biden called for a common effort and more resources to bolster democracy because "failed states are the cracks in the international system" and threaten our security. Praising President Bush's support for this policy, Biden said the United States and Europe must work together to reinforce democratic traditions and the forces of progress.

Concluding his remarks, the senator expressed the view that despite recent tensions in U.S.-European relations, "there are hundreds and millions of hearts and minds open to American ideals and we must reach them to make the world truly safer and the world open to the growth of liberal democracies." The first step was showing respect for one another—a step, the senator added, "that has already begun."