

Veteran U.S. Diplomat Lectures at C.T.O.S.

ON THE EVENING of May 20, 2008, Dr. Kiki Munshi, a veteran U.S. diplomat, lectured on the Iraq War at the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies in Etna, California, during a visit to the St. Gregory Palamas Monastery. Dr. Munshi, whom Archbishop Chrysostomos met while he was a Fulbright Scholar in Romania, where she was an officer at the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest, is a graduate of Swarthmore College, did her graduate work at the University of California, Berkeley, and received her doctoral degree from the University of Bucharest, Romania. For twenty-two years, she served in the U.S. diplomatic corps in various parts of the world, including Africa, Greece, and Romania.



For most of 2006, Dr. Munshi, “a senior foreign service officer,” as *The Atlantic* described her in an article in April of 2007, “came out of retirement to run the PRT [Provincial Reconstruction Team] in [Iraq’s] Diyala Province” for the U.S. Department of State. Since that time, she has shared her trenchant comments of the political and moral dimensions of the war in Iraq in frequent public lectures and in an oft-quot-

ed editorial piece that appeared in *The Washington Post* in 2007 (July 7, p. A15).

The some thirty-six monastics and clergy, along with a handful of laymen, attending Dr. Munshi's lecture in Etna were presented with a clear and detailed picture of the immense complexities of the Iraq War, both from the standpoint of the country's complicated religious and tribal structures and in terms of the strategic military challenges that the war effort itself entails. In an unusually objective and fair assessment of the noble *and* troublesome aspects of U.S. policy in Iraq, Dr. Munshi praised the sacrifices and dedication of members of the U.S. armed forces.

Of particular interest to those attending her lecture, of course, were the spiritual implications of Dr. Munshi's comments about the absolute necessity of the cultivation of the good—both in personal and community activism—in American society, thus setting an example for the rest of the world of moral uprightness and confronting the enemies of good by our example and sense of social responsibility. All present were moved and greatly inspired by Dr. Munshi's insights, as evidenced by a lively and enthusiastic question-and-answer period at the conclusion of her lecture.

