

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

- Include Council-sponsored independent task forces, Council Policy Initiatives (CPIs), the Congress and U.S. Foreign Policy Program, and the Center for Preventive Action.
 - Use Council members, contacts, and resources to help resolve or manage current major policy problems where there is too little debate and too few concrete ideas being offered.
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From North Korea to the Balkans, in the halls of Congress and around the country, Council-sponsored independent task forces, Council Policy Initiatives (CPIs), and the Congress and U.S. Foreign Policy Program have influenced policymakers and informed the foreign policy debate. A complete list of CPI and Task Force reports can be found on pages 102 and 103.

TASK FORCES

The Council sponsors an independent task force when (1) an issue of current and critical importance to U.S. foreign policy arises, and (2) it seems that a group diverse in backgrounds and perspectives may, nonetheless, be able to reach a meaningful consensus on a policy through private and nonpartisan deliberations. Once formed, task forces are independent of the Council on Foreign Relations and solely responsible for their reports.

Peter G. Peterson and Carla A. Hills chaired a blue ribbon task force on “Safeguarding Prosperity in a Global Financial System: The Future International Financial Architecture,” which garnered extensive congressional and media attention for the ambitious reform agenda outlined in its report. The task force recommended more burden-sharing among private lenders and smaller rescue packages from the International Monetary Fund.

The task force on “Promoting Sustainable Economies in the Balkans,” chaired by Steven L. Ratner, issued a report saying that the countries in the region have only a few years to demonstrate real progress before the international community turns its focus elsewhere. Specifically, these countries will have to deal not only with a range of macroeconomic and structural reforms but with political instability, corruption, legal and regulatory reform, and civil society and institution-building to create an environment likely to attract investment.

Bob Graham and Brent Scowcroft co-chaired a task force on “U.S. Policy toward Colombia,” cosponsored with the Inter-American Dialogue. Their interim report urged policymakers to find a proper balance between providing arms aid and training to deal with drug and security problems on the one hand, and helping Colombia build the legitimacy and effectiveness of its government on the other.

In its most recent report, the task force on “U.S. Policy toward North Korea,” co-chaired by James T. Laney and Morton I. Abramowitz, laid out recommendations to help reinforce the consensus in Washington and the region for continued conditional engagement of the North.

Following its influential report, the task force on “U.S.-Cuban Relations in the 21st Century,” co-chaired by Bernard W. Aronson and William D. Rogers, continued in a standby capacity, meeting at



Speaker Brent Scowcroft, former National Security Adviser, and Speaker Bob Graham, Member, U.S. Senate (D-Fla.), at the March 23, 2000, Press Conference for the Independent Task Force on U.S. Policy toward Colombia.

the call of the chairs in the event of significant developments in Cuba.

At the request of Palestinian National Authority Chairman Yasir Arafat, the Council extended the Task Force on “Strengthening Palestinian Public Institutions,” chaired by Michel Rocard, to examine the necessary steps for the proper implementation of the recommendations in its initial report.

The task force on South Asia, cosponsored with the Brookings Institution and chaired by Richard N. Haass, reconvened in March 2000 and issued an open letter to President Clinton on the eve of his trip to India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

The Council’s four task forces on economics will each issue reports in the next few months examining economic policy in specific countries. Stephen Robert chairs the Brazil task force, Robert D. Hormats chairs the China task force, Laura D’Andrea Tyson chairs the Japan task force, and Paul A. Volcker and Graham T. Allison chair the Russia task force.

COUNCIL POLICY INITIATIVES

The Council undertakes a Council Policy Initiative (CPI) when a foreign policy issue is of current and critical importance but it seems highly unlikely that clashing views can be reconciled in a meaningful consensus by a task force. CPIs aim to spark debate among interested Americans on key foreign policy and international issues by presenting the issues and policy choices in ways that can be easily understood by informed nonexperts. Its aim is to make the best case for each alternative. To this end, the Council will publish a concise text containing the choices, written usually as speeches that a U.S. president could give with a cover memo as if written by a key presidential adviser, summarizing the choices and giving the necessary historical and political background.

Through the National Program, the Council sponsored debates in key cities nationwide on the Council Policy Initiative “Toward an International Criminal Court?” CPI authors Ruth Wedgwood, John R. Bolton, Anne-Marie Slaughter, and Kenneth Roth examined whether the United States should endorse, reject, or revise the proposal to create an international criminal court.

Project Director Alton Frye led a new CPI on “Humanitarian Intervention: Crafting a Workable Doctrine,” which clearly laid out the arguments for and against U.S. military intervention to stop massive humanitarian abuses. Holly J. Burkhalter, Dov S. Zakheim, Stanley A. McChrystal, and Arnold Kanter authored the report.



Speaker Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch, Presider Griffin Bell, and Speaker John R. Bolton, Senior Vice President, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, at the February 22, 2000, Council Policy Initiative Debate, “Toward an International Criminal Court?” (in Atlanta).



Speaker Edwin J. Feulner, President, Heritage Foundation, Speaker Sherrod Brown, Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Ohio), Speaker Carla A. Hills, Chairman and CEO, Hills and Company, Speaker Philip M. Crane, Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Ill.), and Speaker Sander M. Levin, Member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Mich.), at the May 5, 2000, Conference, "China's Bid for Permanent Normal Trade Relations: A Hearing on the Debate."

CONGRESS AND U.S. FOREIGN POLICY PROGRAM

An informed Congress is essential to an effective American foreign policy, and an informed congressional staff is essential to an effective Congress. Reaching across party lines, the Council's congressional staff roundtables provide a forum to discuss major international issues under the Council's tradition of nonattribution.

The Congress and U.S. Foreign Policy Program, co-chaired by Thomas E. Donilon and Kenneth M. Duberstein, held its seventieth meeting this year. The program continues to provide a neutral setting for key congressional staffers from both houses of Congress to engage in reflective, nonpartisan discussion of Asian politics and security, national security, and international trade and economics. Alton Frye is the Project Director.

CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION

The Center for Preventive Action has spent the last several years as part of the Studies Department focused on assessing efforts at prevention and bringing various groups involved in this effort together at the center to exchange information. In its second phase, launched in July 2000, the center will move into more operational activities—well short of doing actual negotiations. Basically, the center will develop plans to harmonize the contacts and influence of nongovernmental organizations and business with the power of governments and international organizations, in order to make peaceful compromise more appealing to the contending parties than killing. The center will then market these plans publicly and to those who would carry them out.