
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It is only a small stretch to speak of three phases in the post–Cold War American foreign policy debate. The first, from 1989 until 9/11, was dominated by the pervasive view that foreign policy counted for less, now that the Cold War was over and the Soviet Union a thing of the past. Indeed, with the exception of what can be described as a mostly elite discussion of Bosnia and Kosovo, one is hard pressed to identify much of a foreign policy debate during the 1990s.



Richard N. Haass

Al-Qaeda's attacks brought this phase (one is tempted to say "illusion") to an abrupt end. Clearly, the United States could not hide or shield itself from the many manifestations of globalization, most notably terrorism. The world remained a relevant and dangerous place for the United States. But still there was little domestic debate, as Americans almost to a person agreed on the need to confront terrorism in Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The Iraq war, however, has ushered in a third phase, and suddenly foreign policy and national security are not simply front and center but controversial. The war in Iraq—at its core a war of choice, one that has proved to be more costly and difficult than anticipated by many—has raised basic questions in the United States and around the world about the use of American power, including when and how it should be employed.

This heightened interest in the world and in what the United States should do to shape it presents obvious opportunities for the Council. We have done our best to take advantage of them. Council fellows—in their books, reports, articles,

congressional testimonies, speeches, and media commentaries—along with Independent Task Forces have helped to deepen our understanding, shape debate, and, in some cases, affect policy on issues ranging from the conflict in Iraq and the future of transatlantic relations to the potential role of nonlethal weapons and choices for addressing global climate change.

We have succeeded this past year for many reasons. One is where we began. I am fortunate and then some in my choice of predecessor. Leslie H. Gelb deserves our continuing thanks and recognition for all he did to transform this organization.

I would also like to thank Board Chairman Peter G. Peterson, Board



Council Honorary Chairman David Rockefeller with Nestor Kirchner, President of Argentina.



Council members await the arrival of new Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari two weeks before the June 28, 2004, U.S. handover of power in Iraq.



Council Vice Chairman Robert E. Rubin with Richard N. Haass and Council Director of Studies James M. Lindsay.

Vice Chairmen Carla A. Hills and Robert E. Rubin, and the two-dozen-plus other directors who do so much for this organization. Pete, in particular, has been generous with his wisdom, and if I have done well this first year, it is in no small part thanks to his counsel. I would also like to thank Alton Frye for his dedicated service to the Council. We are recognizing his invaluable contribution by naming him the Council's first presidential senior fellow emeritus.

Last but hardly least I want to thank the members of the Council—term, life, and corporate. You

ent and commitment of our employees.

It has been a year of considerable change. On the personnel side, we have a new director of studies (James M. Lindsay), a new Washington director (Nancy E. Roman), our first fellow in global health (Laurie Garrett), and a new next generation fellow (Steven A. Cook). We also can look back on a revised mission statement; the improvement of an already strong meetings program owing to the introduction of book clubs, a History Makers series, and film nights; the regular convening of dedicated conference calls for our national members; the publication of a Council promotional brochure and a revitalized annual report; the introduction of a bequest initiative to complement annual giving; the launch of a monthly *Foreign Affairs* bestseller list in conjunction with Barnes & Noble; the establishment (thanks to Patrick M. Byrne) of the new General John W. Vessey Senior Fellowship for conflict preven-



King Abdullah II of Jordan (center) with Madeleine K. Albright and George J. Mitchell.

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tion; the introduction of a series of Council Special Reports to supplement the important work of Council-sponsored Independent Task Forces and Council Policy Initiatives; and the opening of a Council “store” where members can take care of their holiday shopping and look smart too.

I noted earlier that the increased interest in the world and in U.S. policy has presented new opportunities for the Council. It also poses important obligations. We have gone and will continue to go the extra mile to live up to our mission and be truly independent and nonpartisan. My goal is to make the Council a true and valued resource for members in New York, Washington, and around the country in conference rooms; for students and professors in classrooms; for journalists in newsrooms; for business leaders in boardrooms; for members of Congress in committee rooms; for the administration in the situation room.

As much as we have accomplished, there will be no resting on our laurels in the year ahead. Board Chairman Peter G. Peterson describes in his essay all that we are doing and planning to do to contribute to the quality of the presidential campaign and the subsequent transition. In addition, we plan to continue to strengthen our Studies Program, sharpening the focus on our priorities of

Council Vice Chairman Carla A. Hills (center) with Louis V. Gerstner Jr. and Mickey Kantor at a meeting of former United States trade representatives.

American grand strategy, global governance, and Arab world reform while we continue to address critical regions, countries, and issues. We also are hard at work improving our already excellent website, www.cfr.org. A new and even better version will be up and running this coming year. And we are exploring what more the Council can do in the education realm; I believe that we can continue to serve our members and this country's foreign-policy makers while at the same time making more of a difference in the lives of students and interested citizens throughout this great country of ours.

Let me close if I may on a more personal note. This has been a wonderful, challenging, and satisfying year for me and for the entire Haass family. I want to thank all of you for your support, for your advice, and for how much you care about and are committed to the Council.

Richard N. Haass
President

