

President's Message



President Richard N. Haass

I write this essay at a time when the international challenges to the United States are daunting in number, scale, and range.

The country is faced with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that have stretched American armed forces. Prolonged economic difficulty is a real possibility, something that could well make it even harder to generate domestic political support for relatively open trade and borders. Americans are still importing and consuming large volumes of oil despite high prices and climate change. The Middle East presents a full plate of concerns, ranging from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Lebanon to Iran, while relations with Russia remain uncertain and instability threatens countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. U.S. ties with Asia are generally positive, though the trajectory of the U.S.-China relationship, which will affect international relations in the twenty-first century more than any other, is by no means assured.

What is clear is that the signature challenges of this era are global. The work of this institution is thus needed more than ever before. The Council's evolution in recent years has ensured that it stays ahead of the issues in a rapidly changing world. This is a different organization than the one I came into five years ago, and I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on just how far the Council has come.

I again want to thank President Emeritus Leslie H. Gelb, who handed over a decidedly robust organization.

I also would like to thank the Board of Directors and especially its leadership during recent years—Chairman Emeritus Peter G. Peterson, Honorary Vice Chairman Maurice R. Greenberg, current Co-Chairs Carla A. Hills and Robert E. Rubin, and Vice Chairman Richard E. Salomon—for their invaluable advice and support.

Let me begin with the David Rockefeller Studies Program, the Council's think tank, which has more scholar-practitioners than ever producing quality work and has strengthened coverage of the Middle East, Asia, and a good many global and functional issues. The Maurice R. Greenberg Center for Geoeconomic Studies now houses twelve fellows working on issues such as visa and immigration policy, economic competitiveness, and emerging markets. Newly endowed fellowships or chairs include the David M. Rubenstein chair in energy and the environment, the General John W. Vessey chair in conflict prevention, and the women and foreign policy fellowship. Visiting fellows—those from the four branches of the armed services, the Edward R. Murrow press fellow, the national intelligence fellow, in-house international affairs fellows, and others—are better integrated with the Studies Program.

In the last five years, the Council has launched four specialized publications: Council Special Reports (CSRs), Policy Options Papers (POPs), Working Papers, and Caravan books. CSRs are policy briefs that provide timely responses to developing crises or current policy

dilemmas. Since their inception in 2004, thirty-five CSRs have been published and several more are in progress. New this year, POPs are rapid-response publications resembling government policy memos. Targeted to policymakers and government officials, they outline a list of options for dealing with pressing foreign policy issues and then recommend a course of action. Also new this year, Working Papers are opinion pieces offering both longer and more in-depth analysis than a standard op-ed. Finally, the Council joined with the Caravan Project to produce a compilation of the Council's best work on Africa. The book, *Beyond Humanitarianism*, was offered in a variety of traditional and digital formats, available for download or purchase in its entirety or by chapter. Traditional publications and programming by fellows also remain strong. In the past five years, the Studies Program has increased the number of scholar roundtables by 50 percent, and fellows now host forty-four series ranging from innovation in Asia to best practices in global health. In that same time, Council fellows have also published forty-one books through commercial and university presses.

A second area of significant change is the Council's website, CFR.org. Most obvious is the major facelift, less obvious is the updated technology. Most important is the change in the basic concept. CFR.org went from being a site about the Council and what it produces to being the most complete, authoritative, and up-to-date online resource on U.S. foreign policy and international



Top: Council International Advisory Board member Washington SyCip and Honorary Council Chairman David Rockefeller at the October 2007 Board meeting.

Bottom: Council Co-Chairman Robert E. Rubin and Lawrence H. Summers at a session on geoeconomic risk at the CEO Forum.



relations. What the Council gathers is now just as important as what it produces.

The site boasts literally dozens of new features, from a daily summary of global opinion to award-winning, interactive Crisis Guides, which have now examined the Korean Peninsula, Darfur, and, most recently, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These enhancements have more than doubled traffic, with nearly 340,000 unique visitors coming to the site each month. CFR.org has quickly become the leading nonpartisan, “one-stop shop” online resource for information and analysis on foreign policy.

A third area to highlight is outreach. For much of its history, the Council has concentrated on being a resource for its members (now some 3,800 life, 500 term, and 250 corporate) and for traditional elites, including the executive branch, Congress, and the mainstream media. Soon after I came on board, the Council began reaching out to a number of new constituencies, including college and university administrators, professors, and students; state and local officials; religious and congregational leaders; and community and nongovernmental organization leaders. It now has a robust Outreach Program that connects with these groups through workshops, meetings, conference calls, and special sections of the website. In the area of academic outreach, the Council now has nearly 11,000 subscribers to a monthly eNewsletter, *Educators Bulletin*, hosts briefings for students, engages more than 115 schools in conference calls, and offers academic modules for professors based on Council publications and featuring authors’ teaching notes. The Council also communicates regularly with more than 5,000 state and local officials and 1,600 religious leaders.

Two successful new outreach initiatives are the Higher Education Working Group, which gathers top college and university presidents semiannually to explore the roles of their institutions and of students in meeting the challenges of globalization, and the Religion and Foreign Policy Workshop, which convenes a diverse group of religious leaders each summer to discuss international

Left: Hoshiyar Zebari, Iraq’s minister of foreign affairs, speaking about the political climate in Iraq.

Opposite top: Melinda French Gates, Council Board member Tom Brokaw, Council Co-Chairman Carla A. Hills, and Council President Haass at the National Conference.

Opposite bottom: Rex W. Tillerson, Samuel A. DiPiazza Jr., and Ira A. Lipman at the CEO Forum.

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There is much to feel good about. But the Council cannot rest on its laurels, much less coast.



Top: Council Vice Chairman Richard E. Salomon with Condoleezza Rice at the International Affairs Fellowship Conference.

Left: Council Chairman Emeritus Peter G. Peterson at a meeting in Washington, DC.

developments. These and other forms of outreach have the potential, over time, to make a meaningful difference in the foreign policy debate in this country.

Closely related to these new series of outreach initiatives is a new emphasis on connecting what we produce—be it the work of fellows, policy symposia, Task Forces, or other Council activities—with Council constituencies. Every Council product and publication has a tailored marketing strategy. Better marketing and improved tracking methods have led to 25,000 press mentions for the Council in fiscal year 2008, up from 1,000 in fiscal year 2003. Rollouts of Council reports and other publications include meetings with government officials; briefings at think tanks, academic institutions, and military bases; conference calls; and print, radio, and television interviews. The Council now boasts eleven regular columnists contributing to major publications around the world, and more than 350 op-eds and articles were published by Council scholars this fiscal year. Commentary by Council scholars has appeared in leading newspapers and magazines in the United States and abroad. Briefings for members of Congress and their staffs, the diplomatic corps in both New York and Washington, DC, and the media have increased markedly. The Council's new building in Washington will not be simply a base for members in the area, but also an enhanced platform for promoting the full range of Council outreach and activities.

It is less difficult to measure activity than it is to determine impact or influence, but Council work is making a difference. To name just three areas: Stephen E. Flynn's work on resilience is altering the debate on homeland security in this country, Laurie A. Garrett's work on HIV/AIDS changed policy here and around the world, and the presidential candidates' essays in *Foreign Affairs* influenced the 2008 presidential campaign. I could cite other examples, but, in sum, the Council is producing an impressive amount of good work and getting that work to those in a position to influence and make policy.

The list of other innovations from the past five years is long and worth noting: an oral history of the organization that will help preserve the Council's legacy; an expanded Board of Directors; the CEO Forum; a new International Affairs Fellowship in India; and several new meeting series, including Lessons Learned and HBO-sponsored History Makers, which feature prominent individuals reflecting on their careers.

Let me also say a few things about *Foreign Affairs*. On the editorial side, the credit goes to editor Jim Hoge, managing editor Gideon Rose, and those other individuals who six times a year turn out the highest-quality publication in the field. On the publishing side, credit goes to publisher David Kellogg and his staff for the magazine's extraordinary success in getting its message out. Circulation is now over 160,000, up 29 percent in the last five years, and advertising revenue has grown 127 percent.

I would be remiss if I did not say a word or two about the Council's staff. That more than 55,000 resumes arrive each year for Council positions gives a sense of how much competition there is to work here. This institution has always attracted high-quality people, but I continue to be impressed with the intelligence, creativity, and dedication of so many of my colleagues throughout the institution. The success over the past five years would not have been possible without their input.

Another piece of good news is that even as the organization has been able to do much more, its financial situation remains strong and is arguably stronger than ever. Annual Giving increased from \$3.6 million in fiscal year 2003 to more than \$5.7 million this fiscal year. Foundation grants increased sharply, and Corporate Program income doubled. The institution's major fundraising initiative, the Campaign for the Council, was a success, raising more than \$123 million, nearly \$40 million more than the goal originally set. This will prove transformational. That so many of those in the Council community have chosen to show their support by giving to the Campaign or the Annual Fund or both is a strong vote of confidence in the work that the Council does.

In short, there is much to feel good about. But the Council cannot rest on its laurels, much less coast. The environment is dynamic and highly competitive; this will not change. I look forward to working with the co-chairs, the members of the Board, the staff, and the Council's extraordinary membership on meeting the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Richard N. Haass
President