

Special Initiatives

Independent Task Forces

The Council sponsors an Independent Task Force when an issue of critical importance to U.S. foreign policy arises that would benefit from in-depth, nonpartisan analysis. A group diverse in backgrounds and views is then convened to reach a meaningful consensus. The goal is to reach policy conclusions through private and nonpartisan deliberations—though the Council encourages individual views and dissents that sharpen important differences in analysis and prescription.

Task Forces draw on the expertise of Council members through a series of review meetings held nationally as well as in New York and Washington, DC. Task Forces are independent of the Council and solely responsible for the content of their reports. For the release of each Task Force report, the Council tailors a specific outreach strategy designed to engage appropriate audiences. Outreach efforts begin during Task Force deliberations and continue in the weeks and months following publication.

Under the stewardship of **Anya Schmemann**, director of the Task Force Program, the Council published two Independent Task Force reports in 2007–2008. Three additional Task Forces are currently under way.

RECENTLY RELEASED REPORTS

Council Board member and former U.S. trade representative **Charlene Barshefsky** and former commander of the U.S. Southern Command **James T. Hill** released an Independent Task Force report on U.S.-Latin America

relations in May 2008. Council Fellow **Shannon K. O’Neil** served as project director and Council Senior Fellow **Julia E. Sweig** as senior adviser. The Task Force conducted fact-finding trips to Bolivia and Brazil and held seminars with members in New York; Washington, DC; Chicago; Boston; Miami; Dallas; Los Angeles; and San Francisco. Declaring that “the era of U.S. hegemony in Latin America is over” and that “U.S. policymakers must change the way they think about the region,” the Task Force concluded that “achieving U.S. objectives and protecting U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere requires an unsentimental and reality-based assessment of the complex and dynamic changes under way in Latin America and in U.S.-Latin America relations—and of the ways in which the United States can influence those changes for the better.” A Spanish-language version of the Task Force report was released online.

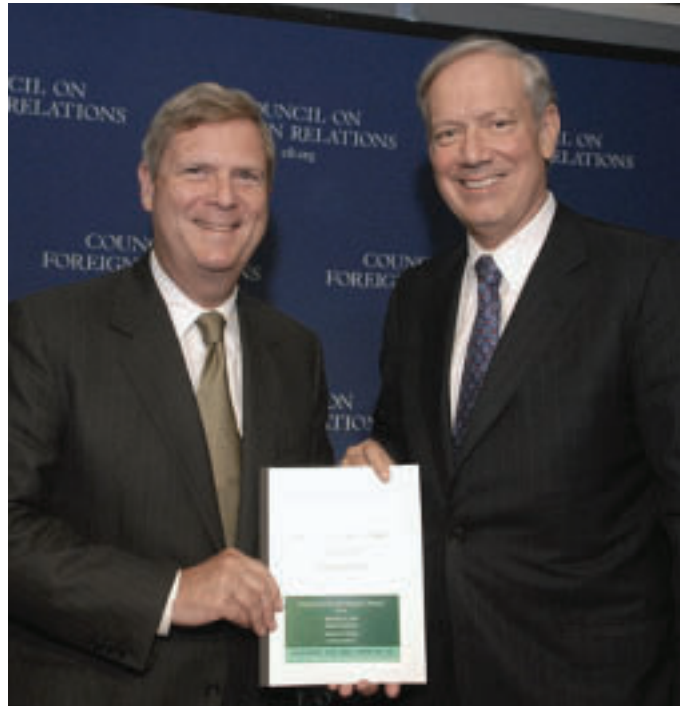
Former governors **George E. Pataki** of New York and **Thomas J. Vilsack** of Iowa released an Independent Task Force report in June 2008 focusing on climate change. Council Senior Fellow **Michael A. Levi** served as project director and Council Adjunct Senior Fellow **David G. Victor** as senior adviser. The Task Force conducted fact-finding trips in Asia and Europe and held seminars with members in Washington, DC; Seattle; Los Angeles; San Francisco; and Boston. Its report said that while the United States must pursue “ambitious and mandatory policies at home,” these would be insufficient to meet the

challenge of climate change. On the international front, it laid out a negotiating strategy for a comprehensive UN climate accord, saying that “a good UN deal would provide a strong foundation for global efforts,” but cautioning that such an accord would be hard to reach. In addition, the report called for a Partnership for Climate Cooperation that would “bring together the world’s largest emitters to implement aggressive emissions reductions.”

OTHER TASK FORCES

Former senator and 9/11 commissioner **Bob Kerrey** and former CIA and FBI director **William H. Webster** are chairs of the Independent Task Force on Civil Liberties and National Security, which has reviewed national security programs and policy since 9/11. Council member **Daniel B. Prieto** serves as project director. The Task Force has conducted outreach events with privacy and human rights nongovernmental organizations, a bipartisan group of members of Congress, and senior congressional staffers.

Former secretary of defense **William J. Perry** and former national security adviser **Brent Scowcroft** are chairs of the Independent Task Force on U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy. Council Senior Fellow **Charles D. Ferguson** is the project director. The Task Force is reviewing and assessing current U.S. nuclear doctrine and policy, and will consider whether the United States still needs nuclear weapons and, if so, what purposes



Thomas J. Vilsack and George E. Pataki, chairs of the Independent Task Force on Climate Change.

these weapons should serve. It will then make recommendations based on these determinations concerning arms control policies, nonproliferation, and the U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal.

Former governor of Florida **Jeb Bush** and former White House chief of staff **Thomas F. McLarty III** are chairs of the Independent Task Force on U.S. Immigration Policy. Council Senior Fellow **Edward Alden** serves as project director. The goal of the Task Force is to broaden the immigration debate by examining globalization, economic competitiveness, terrorism, and national security, in conjunction with the international dimensions of illegal immigration, to craft recommendations for a twenty-first-century immigration policy that better serves U.S. economic, diplomatic, and national security interests.

Council Special Reports

Council Special Reports (CSRs), written by Council fellows or outside experts, are concise policy studies that respond to a developing crisis or contribute to an emerging policy debate. Developed in consultation with an independent advisory group of experts on the country or issue in question, a report's conclusions and recommendations reflect the views of the author or authors, not those of either the advisory group or the Council. The Council actively publicizes each report with rollout events such as national meetings, press briefings, and teleconferences. To heighten the impact of the reports, the Council makes a special effort to distribute them to appropriate government officials, who are briefed on the contents and asked for comments and suggestions. The reports are also featured on CFR.org.

In her report, *Avoiding Transfers to Torture*, Ashley S. Deeks, a CFR international affairs fellow working at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, notes that efforts to return detainees to their home countries face a significant hurdle when the detainees are likely to be tortured on return. In those cases, the United States may obtain “assurances against torture.” But human rights groups, courts, and some in Congress have questioned the reliability of these assurances. Deeks argues that the United States should “address the criticisms about and practical problems with the use of assurances” to avoid undercutting “U.S. efforts to improve its reputation in

the struggle against terrorism.” She concludes by recommending ways for the United States to use diplomatic assurances more reliably, effectively, and sustainably.

MAURICE R. GREENBERG CENTER FOR GEOECONOMIC STUDIES

Under the direction of Sebastian Mallaby, the Maurice R. Greenberg Center for Geoeconomic Studies (CGS) released three reports, two of which were part of the Bernard and Irene Schwartz Series on American Competitiveness. Robert J. LaLonde, professor at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, authored *The Case for Wage Insurance*. This report explains why existing programs that emphasize retraining and insurance for short-term job loss do not assuage workers' fears about globalization and recommends rethinking traditional trade adjustment assistance programs to address the problem of job displacement for long-tenured workers. It proposes a shift of resources from existing programs to wage insurance—effectively, an earnings supplement for a number of years—for workers facing a long-term reduction in wages.

David M. Marchick, managing director for the Carlyle Group, and Adjunct Senior Fellow for Business and Globalization Matthew J. Slaughter coauthored the second report. *Global FDI Policy: Correcting a Protectionist Drift* describes how many countries are adopting and expanding regimes to review inward foreign direct investment (FDI) for either national or economic security purposes. These tendencies to increase restrictions on FDI have been occurring as FDI has flowed increasingly into sectors widely seen as critical to national security. The report explores what best practices and principles should guide governments in formulating policies to govern reviews of FDI inflows, including how to prevent legitimate national security reviews from becoming tools for economic protectionism.



Left: An assembly line worker in Fremont, California.

Opposite: A shrinking iceberg in Antarctica.

Climate change threatens worldwide security and prosperity by possibly contributing to political violence and undermining weak governments.



Climate Change and National Security: An Agenda for Action, written by **Joshua W. Busby**, an assistant professor at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, outlines how climate change threatens worldwide security and prosperity by possibly overwhelming disaster-response capabilities, causing humanitarian disasters, contributing to political violence, and undermining weak governments. Recognizing that some climate change is inevitable, the report proposes a portfolio of feasible policy options to reduce the vulnerability of the United States and other countries to the predictable effects of climate change. It goes on to draw attention to the strategic dimensions of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, arguing that sharp reductions in the long run are essential to avoiding unmanageable security problems.



Members of a Zimbabwean honor guard with a portrait of President Robert Mugabe during Independence Day celebrations in Harare.

CENTER FOR PREVENTIVE ACTION

Led by General John W. Vessey Senior Fellow for Conflict Prevention **Paul B. Stares**, the Council's Center for Preventive Action (CPA) released two CSRs this year. **Michelle D. Gavin**, adjunct fellow for Africa, wrote *Planning for Post-Mugabe Zimbabwe*. This report argues that mismanagement has driven Zimbabwe to social and economic ruin and urges the United States to look past President **Robert Mugabe's** government to Zimbabwe's future. It proposes a series of multilateral steps to provide incentives for Zimbabwe's next leaders to pursue constructive reform and sound governance and give the United States an opportunity to strengthen its often-troubled relationship with South Africa.

Mona Yacoubian, a special adviser to the United States Institute of Peace's (USIP) Muslim World Initiative, and **Scott Lasensky**, acting vice president and senior research associate at the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention at USIP, wrote *Dealing with Damascus: Seeking a Greater Return on U.S.-Syria Relations*. They contend that the U.S. policy of diplomatic isolation of Syria has failed to advance U.S. interests in the Middle East. The report examines Syria's domestic politics and external behavior and draws lessons from the recent history of U.S.-Syria relations. Arguing that dealing with Syria's government could bring benefits on issues ranging from Lebanon and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Iraq and Iran, the authors make a case for conditional engagement with Damascus.

The Arthur Ross Book Award



Trita Parsi and Robert Dallek with Council President Richard N. Haass, Paul Collier, and *Foreign Affairs* editor James F. Hoge Jr.

The annual Arthur Ross Book Award recognizes books that make an outstanding contribution to the understanding of foreign policy or international relations. The prize, endowed by the late Arthur Ross in 2001, recognizes nonfiction works published in the preceding two years, in English or in translation, that merit special attention for bringing forth new information that changes our understanding of events or problems, developing analytical approaches that allow new and different insights into a significant issue, or providing new ideas to help resolve foreign policy problems.

The award is the most significant in the United States for books on international affairs. It consists of a gold medal prize of \$30,000, a silver medal prize of \$15,000, and an honorable mention of \$7,500. The Council was able to increase the award amount this year thanks to a generous bequest from the estate of Arthur Ross.

In 2008, the gold medal was awarded to **Paul Collier** for *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. The silver medal went to **Trita Parsi** for *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the United States*, and honorable mention to **Robert Dallek** for *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power*.

