

THE  
NEXT GENERATION  
PROJECT

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U.S. GLOBAL POLICY  
& THE FUTURE  
OF  
INTERNATIONAL  
INSTITUTIONS

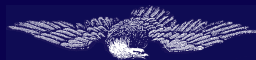
**SOUTHWEST  
ASSEMBLY**

OCTOBER 19-21, 2006

JAMES M. COLLINS CENTER  
FOR EXECUTIVE EDUCATION  
DALLAS, TEXAS



THE AMERICAN ASSEMBLY  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



THE JOHN GOODWIN TOWER CENTER FOR POLITICAL STUDIES



## **PREFACE**

On October 19-21, 2006, sixty-six women and men from the Southwest and across the nation including government officials, representatives from business, government, law, international institutions, the military, nonprofit organizations, academia, and the media gathered at the James M. Collins Executive Education Center at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas for the inaugural meeting of the “Next Generation Project: U.S. Global Policy and the Future of International Institutions.” The Southwest Assembly was co-sponsored by the John G. Tower Center for Political Studies, led by director James F. Hollifield and associate director Lynne Novack, and The American Assembly. It was the first of six meetings that will take place across the country, culminating with a national Assembly held in Washington D.C. with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in June, 2008, timed to coincide with the run-up to the presidential election. The fellows at the Southwest Assembly, representing a range of views, backgrounds, and interests, were divided into three equal groups for four discussion sessions on U.S. foreign policy and the international system in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A volume of background reading was compiled to provide common ground for the diverse group of fellows. The table of contents from the background material can be found at the appendix of this report.

The Next Generation Project is directed by Francis J. Gavin, Tom Slick Professor in International Affairs and director of studies at the Strauss Center for International Security and Law at The University of Texas at Austin. The project is ably assisted by a senior advisory council and steering committee of distinguished leaders, whose names and affiliations are listed at the end of this report. The senior advisory council is chaired by Admiral B.R. Inman, Lyndon B. Johnson Centennial Chair in National Policy, The University of Texas at Austin. The steering committee is led by Andrew P.N. Erdmann, consultant, McKinsey & Co., Inc.

After introductory remarks, the Southwest Assembly opened with a stimulating panel of experts with diverse world views. The panel, moderated by James Hollifield, was comprised of Philip C. Bobbitt,

A.W. Walker Centennial Chair, The University of Texas School of Law; Charles A. Kupchan, senior fellow, Council on Foreign Relations and professor, Georgetown University; and Gilman G. Louie, partner, Alsop Louie Partners. On Friday, the fellows heard an address by Geoffrey Garrett, president, Pacific Council on International Policy. The panel and address can be found on the Next Generation Project's dedicated website, [www.nextgenerationproject.org](http://www.nextgenerationproject.org), along with a link to this report and additional information about the initiative. The site will be continually updated as the project progresses.

The Assembly gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Coca-Cola Company, the Hickrill Foundation, and the Nasher Foundation. A complete list of funders can be found on the project's website.

The American Assembly and the John G. Tower Center for Political Studies take no position on any subjects presented here for public discussion. In addition, it should be noted that fellows took part in this meeting as individuals and spoke for themselves rather than for their affiliated organizations and institutions.

We would like to acknowledge and express special gratitude to the discussion leaders and rapporteurs who guided the fellows in the sessions and helped to prepare the draft of this report: Alexis Albion, Hilary Aldama, Joan Dempsey, J.C. Herz, Colin Kahl, and Amanda Schnetzer, with particular thanks to Joshua W. Busby, who served the Assembly as deputy director.

David H. Mortimer  
The American Assembly

**THE NEXT GENERATION PROJECT:  
U.S. GLOBAL POLICY AND THE FUTURE OF  
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

**SOUTHWEST ASSEMBLY**

**DISCLAIMER**

*At the close of their discussions, the Next Generation Fellows in the Southwest Assembly of the Next Generation Project at the Collins Center, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, October 19-21, 2006, reviewed as a group the following statement. This statement represents general agreement, however, no one was asked to sign it. Furthermore, it should be understood that not everyone agreed with all of it.*

**INTRODUCTION**

More than fifteen years after the Cold War, the United States lacks a clear understanding of how best to prepare for and respond to the challenges of the new century. Debates over U.S. foreign policy are increasingly polarized, marked by incivility and no unity of purpose. The policy process appears unfocused and adrift, with detrimental domestic and international consequences. Public opinion, both within the United States and abroad, reveals deep fissures about the aims and effectiveness of U.S. global policy.

The intensifying process of globalization underscores the need for new ideas. Many claim that new technology and growing interdependence offer the promise of increased prosperity and the hope for world peace, while others warn of global calamity and deepened division. Nation states remain the principal building blocks of the international system, yet even the most powerful appear unable to manage the transnational challenges of our time. New powers, like China and India, and new actors, from non-governmental organizations to global businesses to terrorists and

international criminals, play an increasingly important role in global affairs. Whether the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a period of peace or conflict may depend largely on how the great changes of globalization and interdependence are managed, so that the

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*WITH CHALLENGES COME  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW  
IDEAS FROM THE NEXT  
GENERATION OF LEADERS*

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benefits are widely shared within and across nations and the dangers are managed through effective cooperation. However, there is a widespread belief that many of our current national and international institutions and

established processes are not up to these tasks. And there is no consensus on how best to move forward to meet these challenges.

With challenges come opportunities for new ideas from the next generation of leaders. We explored the threats and opportunities of the future and how the United States should respond to these global challenges.

Our discussions laid the groundwork to assess the strengths and weakness of our current national and international institutional architecture. Perhaps most importantly, fellows with a wide range of perspectives discussed these complex questions in a productive, respectful, and creative manner.

The discussion sessions were structured with several goals in mind. We identified the factors and forces we believe will matter most in the years to come. We resisted the urge to leap into the realm of remedies, of domestic and institutional responses, before there is sufficient recognition of the threats and opportunities we face and the goals we should prioritize. We recognized the complexity, connections, and trade-offs involved in U.S. global policy. We focused on the future while avoiding the partisan and ideological battles of the past.

The first section of this report discusses what we believe will drive U.S. global policy in the years to come. The second section explores how public opinion – both domestic and foreign – affects the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. In the final section, we prioritize U.S. strategic goals for the future.

## THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Globalization is the underlying factor that will dominate the economic, political, military, and socio-cultural dynamics of international relations in the future. Globalization can transmit and amplify effects, flows, and information at a faster pace, at a greater geographic reach, across more issue areas, and on a larger scale than ever before. Because globalization leads to multiple complex intersecting agendas, it exacerbates both threats and challenges, as well as provides opportunities that can positively affect international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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*THE PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS  
OF MASS DESTRUCTION [IS] THE  
PREDOMINANT SECURITY ISSUE OF  
THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS*

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With globalization as the backdrop, we identified the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – particularly nuclear proliferation – as the predominant security issue of the next twenty years. Violent extremists, especially Jihadist movements, and terrorist organizations were another concern. One of the key areas affected by globalization, and also identified as a common theme in current and future international relations, is the stability and sustainability of the global economy. The rise of China and India as competitors with the United States is a significant challenge. We believe that their rise should be seen more in terms of competition for markets and resources than as a geopolitical threat.

We discussed other threats and opportunities that exist or will emerge to challenge international relations and foreign policy development. Key examples include:

- ❑ **demographic instability.** Aging populations and immigration in developed countries, and youth bulges, rapid urbanization, and extreme poverty and inequality in developing countries put pressure on societies, potentially threatening political stability.
  
- ❑ the importance of an **immigration** policy that is true to our character as a nation of immigrants and that strengthens our economy and security.

- ❑ the importance of **education** at home to sustain American competitiveness in a knowledge-based economy and the need to better educate global populations to develop human capital and improve economic conditions. Special attention was paid to educating women, girls, and vulnerable groups.
- ❑ the **failure of both states and international institutions** to function effectively. Questions remain, however, regarding the future efficacy of international institutions and America's role in helping them reform and adapt.
- ❑ the **discomfort resulting from pushing American-style democracy** on other countries.
- ❑ **environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and inadequate health care**, which are no longer simply "local" issues in an increasingly interconnected world.
- ❑ the increasing number and variety of **individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGO's)** that can now achieve a level of influence commensurate with nation-states and multinational organizations.

Overall, we focused on the importance of soft power and the limitations of hard power against the backdrop of globalization.

## **PUBLIC OPINION**

We identified and discussed some of the well-known and deep divides in attitudes towards global policy, both within the United States and between the United States and the world.

We could not agree on a single dominant reason for why anti-American sentiment has increased abroad.

The United States' status as the world's sole military and economic superpower and the global pervasiveness of American culture was

cited for the baseline level of anti-American sentiment. Such anti-Americanism may be a product of a natural tendency to balance against concentrations of power and/or a broader dissatisfaction with unequal wealth and power we have in the world today. Globalization has been a key driver and has led to the identification abroad of globalization with “Americanization.”

The policy choices of the American government, namely the war in Iraq, have amplified existing anti-American feeling and broader concern about U.S. unilateralism, policy of preemption, and “go-it-alone” mentality. American policy choices have long been described as hypocritical due to the perceived discrepancy between American ideals of promoting democracy and what we actually do in practice. In summation, the reality of the policy choices has not lived up to the rhetoric. Another view was that the message of American policy is simply not getting through to the rest of the world, due to ineffective and inconsistent messages and possible barriers in other countries to the free flow of information.

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*THE POLICY CHOICES OF THE  
AMERICAN GOVERNMENT...  
HAVE AMPLIFIED EXISTING  
ANTI-AMERICAN FEELING*

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We considered whether the rise of anti-American sentiment matters. Most of us believe that it does, because it limits America’s freedom of action, increases the cost of cooperation, empowers those who seek to harm the United States by allowing them to easily mobilize opposition, and weakens American influence in international institutions. There was also some suggestion that public opinion only matters when we need outside cooperation. However, a dissenting view was that anti-American sentiment has not had a great effect on America’s ability to conduct business abroad, noting that people would still rather engage in commerce with the United States than with other countries. Distinctions were made between attitudes of elites and those of the general public. Cooperation between elites is not necessarily affected by public opinion.

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*ANTI-AMERICAN  
SENTIMENT...LIMITS  
AMERICA’S FREEDOM OF  
ACTION*

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We discussed whether domestic public opinion constrained policymakers. The American public often does not have strong opinions on many foreign policy issues. That

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*DOMESTIC OPINION WAS  
DISCOUNTED AS A DRIVER  
FOR MOST FOREIGN  
POLICY ISSUES*

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lack of interest, in itself, can be a constraint, but the general consensus was that public opinion does not usually have a significant effect on U.S. foreign policy. The issues that provoked the strongest public opinion

included: large-scale loss of American lives, job losses, trade, and immigration.

Domestic opinion was discounted as a driver for most foreign policy issues, because of Americans' low level of knowledge and interest in overseas events that do not result in the loss of American lives or jobs. But while leaders have a wide degree of latitude to make decisions about foreign policy without wide consultation, there was a consensus that public opinion does serve as a "punishing mechanism" if the results of those foreign policy decisions are perceived as failures.

There is also a blurring of the lines between domestic and international communication, because of technological shifts that make it possible for domestic speeches to be disseminated abroad, and for international media (e.g. Al Jazeera) to be viewed domestically. The tension between what plays well abroad and what plays well at home, both for American leaders and their foreign counterparts, is exacerbated by online access to international media, particularly as international public opinion of the United States erodes.

Communication technology enables people to find communities of common interests – from Jihadist propagandists to ethnic diasporas – further complicating the landscape of public opinion and our ability to shape it at home and abroad. For example, those who hold minority – even marginal – views can now more easily find each other to mobilize, act, and influence events well beyond their numbers.

Perhaps most significant was the consensus about the importance of policy versus messaging – America’s actions versus its public communication and media positioning. In a nutshell, actions speak louder than words. The United States’ standing abroad is best served by actions that convey its commitment to international cooperation (e.g. the U.S. military’s humanitarian response to the Indonesian tsunami and the Pakistan earthquake), rather than well-crafted messages about American values or intentions.

## **STRATEGIC GOALS**

We reflected on the strategic goals that should shape American foreign policy in the decades ahead. At the most general level, there was a strong consensus that the United States should seek to promote security and prosperity at home and abroad. Traditional separations between national security and human security, and domestic and foreign, were largely rejected in favor of a view that a globalized world made these distinctions less meaningful. The goals are perennial, but to deal with the evolving context of globalization, the strategies must be brought up to date.

We emphasized the importance of **defending the homeland** by preventing attacks and other direct threats against U.S. territory. In the post-9/11 era, this requires strong steps to detect, prevent, and mitigate the effects of catastrophic or disruptive technologies (e.g., WMD, cyber-attacks), especially at the hands of non-state actors and rogue states. However, the notion of homeland defense was also broadened to include the need to mitigate and manage the dangers posed by pandemic diseases in a highly connected world.

There was also widespread agreement on the need to promote **global stability**. Efforts are required to minimize the risks associated with geopolitical competition (e.g., over energy resources), limit the proliferation of WMD, address the potential dangers posed by rogue states, prevent and contain the dangers emanating from failed states, respond to regional flashpoints, combat religious extremism and terrorism, and prepare for the potentially destabilizing effects of rapid demographic changes (e.g., aging, migration, youth bulges, and rapid urbanization).

Promotion of **economic prosperity** at home and abroad was another prominent strategic objective. Prosperity was seen as a win-win situation; the notion of a zero-sum relationship between economic progress in the United States and around the world was largely rejected. At home, we pointed to the need for policy-makers to ensure the fundamental health and competitiveness of the U.S. economy, while also addressing problems of poverty and inequality. Abroad, we embraced the goal of maintaining and expanding the open, market-based international economic order, and believed that it was strongly in the United States' interest to promote economic development and reduce poverty.

In an interconnected world, problems that were formerly considered domestic or purely humanitarian concerns are increasingly viewed

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*MANY EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN ABOUT ACTIVELY PUSHING AMERICAN-STYLE DEMOCRACY ON OTHER COUNTRIES*

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as part of the security equation. We widely embraced that notion that it was vital to preserve the **global environment** and promote **global health**. This necessitates steps to address threats to the global commons (e.g., climate change) and other transboundary environmental stresses (e.g.,

water scarcity), promote sustainable development, improve basic public health infrastructure, and encourage international collaboration to monitor and mitigate the risks of pandemic disease.

The promotion of basic **political rights and civil liberties** was also seen as an important strategic goal. However, many expressed deep concern about actively pushing American-style democracy on other countries. There was much wider agreement that the United States should promote economic prosperity overseas as a means to encourage long-term democratic progress. There was also a strong sense that more attention should be given to reinvigorating and strengthening democracy and reducing polarization at home as both an end in itself and a means of promoting liberty abroad.

There was widespread sentiment for strengthening the **leadership** role of the United States in world affairs. This was generally viewed

as a facilitator for all the other objectives noted above. Some felt that efforts were needed to restore the credibility and legitimacy of American leadership in the wake of recent events, and believed this was only possible by embracing multilateralism and embedding leadership more firmly within institutional frameworks. Others expressed doubts that American leadership could be effectively exercised within existing institutional arenas, pointing to the need for bilateral and ad-hoc arrangements and regional partnerships. Still others were concerned about signs that American public opinion may be turning against a lead role for the United States in world affairs.

Foreign, national security, and domestic policies are related and affect each other. Therefore, over the next decade, U.S. leaders must reevaluate tradeoffs among policies and institutions in the following areas in order to ensure U.S. security, competitiveness, and prosperity:

- Civic engagement
- Defense
- Education
- Energy
- Entitlements
- Health care
- Human rights
- Immigration
- Intelligence agencies
- International development
- Non-proliferation
- Public diplomacy
- Technological development
- Trade

One broad theme cutting across these policy arenas is the notion that domestic and international institutions are maladapted to address the challenges posed by, and seize the opportunities emerging from, the current international landscape. At both the national and global level—a distinction that many believed was increasingly meaningless—institutions must be used in new ways or scrapped in favor of dramatically new institutional models (e.g., institutions that more fully harness market forces or supplementing the UN with a community of democracies). The rise of non-state actors, including NGO's and

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*DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ARE MALADAPTED TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES POSED BY...THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL LANDSCAPE*

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philanthropists, was seen as an opportunity to explore alternative non-institutional responses to many of the challenges and threats traditionally addressed by states and international organizations.

## **CONCLUSION**

Making policy in a complex world will require trade-offs and entails opportunity costs. But creative policies in both the domestic and international arenas can transcend apparently false, either/or choices. The most promising examples of such thinking include encouraging public/private partnerships; designing institutions that incorporate flexibility and the best elements of the private sector; and instilling accountability and oversight.

American leadership must play a large role in navigating the future. But how will that leadership be maintained? And what type of leader will we be? In the end, the challenges and opportunities of globalization require us to re-think the instruments through which we exercise our influence and power.

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## **THE NEXT GENERATION PROJECT: BACKGROUND READINGS**

### **SESSION I: THE WORLD AS IT IS**

### **SESSION II: THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE**

“Seeing the Futures”

Philip Bobbitt *The New York Times* Op-Ed December 8, 2003

“Using Scenarios to Envision Possible Global Futures, 2007-2020”

Prepared by Andrew Erdmann

“Mapping the Global Future”

Report of the National Intelligence Council’s 2020 Project

[http://www.din.gov/nic/NIC\\_2020\\_project.html](http://www.din.gov/nic/NIC_2020_project.html)

“Shell Global Scenarios to 2025” Introduction and Executive Summary

Shell International Limited (SIL), 2005

[http://www.shell.com/home/Framework?siteId=royal-en&FC2-FC3=/royal-en/html/iwgen/our\\_strategy/scenarios/introduction\\_to\\_global\\_scenarios/intro\\_jvdv\\_scenarios\\_28022005.html](http://www.shell.com/home/Framework?siteId=royal-en&FC2-FC3=/royal-en/html/iwgen/our_strategy/scenarios/introduction_to_global_scenarios/intro_jvdv_scenarios_28022005.html)

### **SESSION III: WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT AMERICA AND THE WORLD**

“Global Views 2004 – American Public Opinions and Foreign Policy”

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations

<http://www.c CFR.org/globalviews2004/index.htm>

“The Pew Global Attitudes Project”

Pew Research Center

<http://pewglobal.org/reports/display.pho?ReportID=252>

“Confidence in U.S. Foreign Policy Index: Americans Wary of Creating Democracies Abroad”

Public Agenda, Volume 2, Winter 2006

[http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/foreign\\_policy\\_index\\_wnter06.pdf](http://www.publicagenda.org/research/pdfs/foreign_policy_index_wnter06.pdf)

### **SESSION IV: WHAT SHOULD OUR PRIORITIES BE?**

“The National Security Strategy of the United States of America”

March 2006

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/>

“The National Security Strategy of the United States of America”

September 2002

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.htm>

“A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement”

February 1996

<http://www.fas.org/spp/military/docops/national/1996stra.htm>

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