

# THE NEXT GENERATION PROJECT

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

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### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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*WOODROW WILSON INTERNATIONAL  
CENTER FOR SCHOLARS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.*



[WWW.NEXTGENERATIONPROJECT.ORG](http://WWW.NEXTGENERATIONPROJECT.ORG)

# PREFACE

On June 5-7, 2008, The American Assembly held the culminating National Assembly of its “Next Generation Project: U.S. Global Policy and the Future of International Institutions.” The meeting was co-sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and Wilson Center president and director Lee H. Hamilton served as chair of the National Assembly. Sixty-eight Next Generation fellows from throughout the United States—including government officials, representatives from business, law, international institutions, religious institutions, the military, nonprofit organizations, technology companies, academia, and the media—participated. As at the four regional Next Generation Project Assemblies, which preceded the National Assembly, the fellows represented a range of views, backgrounds, and interests. They were divided into three equal groups for four discussion sessions focused 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 in the appendix of this report, along with a complete list of fellows.

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 affilia-

tions 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, engagement manager, McKinsey & Co., who participated in the National Assembly.

After inspiring introductory remarks by Mr. Hamilton, the Assembly opened with a panel, moderated by Joshua W. Busby, Assistant Professor, LBJ School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin. Jane Holl Lute, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations; LTC John A. Nagl, U.S. Army; and Sonal Shah, Google Development, Google.org served as panelists. In evening plenary sessions, Diana Farrell, Director, McKinsey Global Institute and Richard W. Fisher, President and CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, engaged in a conversation moderated by Mr. Gavin, and Dr. Donald M. Kerr, Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, gave a formal address. A video clip of the discussion between Ms. Farrell and Mr. Fisher can be found on the Next Generation Project's dedicated web site, [www.nextgenerationproject.org](http://www.nextgenerationproject.org), along with photographs of the event, a link to this and other reports, and additional information about The Next Generation Project.

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

The American Assembly and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars 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: Sharon E. Burke, Joshua W. Busby, Janine Davidson, Colin H. Kahl, Vikram Singh, and Thomas Wright, with particular thanks to Amy M. Wilkinson, the National Assembly's deputy director.

David H. Mortimer  
The American Assembly

# THE NEXT GENERATION PROJECT:

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

## NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

### DISCLAIMER

*At the close of their discussions, the Next Generation Fellows in the National Assembly of the Next Generation Project at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, June 5-7, 2008, 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

#### STRATEGIC VISION IN A SHIFTING GLOBAL LANDSCAPE

The 2008 presidential election offers a significant opportunity for refashioning American leadership, redirecting U.S. global policy, and drawing increasingly on the talents and energy of the next generation of leadership. Making the most of this opportunity will not be easy. Our nation's uncertainty as to its role, position, and purpose in this

new world system presents the Next Generation with the opportunity to help shape a national dialogue on the country's role in the world.

The United States must mobilize behind a coherent strategic vision to better navigate and help lead a transformed world. The rise of new actors and rapid emergence of new opportunities requires a careful recalibration that plays to our strengths as a nation. Our wellbeing depends on it.

Fifty years ago, American power and leadership on the world stage were a given. Challenges, while at times dangerous, were often straight-forward. Aggressive states and rising powers

defined the threat. States were the primary actors. A larger portion of economic activity was domestic. National consensus was often obtainable for grand strategies such as containment. The federal government, employing traditional economic, diplomatic, and military tools, was responsible for carrying out the national interest. Postwar international institutions provided a forum to resolve state-to-state conflicts. This environment was marked by significant progress in the codification of human rights, the rise of liberal democracies, and the expansion of economic openness, allowing millions of people to escape oppression and poverty.

Concerns about our ability to adjust to the competitiveness and economic realities of globalization are challenging these successes. Other successful elements of this earlier era are disappearing. New issues are materializing continuously and are transnational, complex, and interconnected. While the capacities of our 20<sup>th</sup> century national and international organizations have been tried by these new cir-

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**The United States must mobilize behind a coherent strategic vision.**

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cumstances, it is unclear whether they should be reformed, supplemented, or replaced. When discussing institutional design, this Assembly identified a tension between the innovation provided by smaller, flatter, more entrepreneurial organizations, and the inclusion

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***...any institutional or organizational response has to offer integrated solutions.***

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and legitimacy that were the hallmark of larger, more hierarchical policy entities. Some fellows wanted the policy process to embrace speed, while others cautioned that in many cases efficient decision-making is not always effective decision-making. The fellows did agree that any institutional or organizational response had to offer integrated solutions that reflected the growing complexity and interdependence of the world we live in.

One fact was widely accepted – the diffusion of power, both from the nation-state itself and the United States in particular. Does this mark a national decline or a unique opportunity? On the one hand, this Assembly felt this shift provided a call to action, to reinvigorate our institutions, renew our commitment to a reliable world order based on the rule of law and the protection of human rights, and reorder our priorities while we are still in a position of relative strength. Without such a response, the United States could find itself in a world less friendly to its values and interests, with little power or leverage to realize its goals. On the other hand, the point was made that this shifting order did not mark decline so much as a natural and welcome addition of new players and stakeholders, just as the revival of Western Europe and Japan worked to the benefit of the United States during the Cold War. Arguably, the continued rise of China, India, and Brazil are consistent with U.S. values and practices, since they are becoming prosperous by engaging in the global economic

order. The United States is healthier when the rest of the world is doing well.

While there was no consensus on the rate of shift, we acknowledged that the concentration of global power has altered in fundamental ways and agreed that new metrics are needed to better assess the world order and America's place in it. Thus, new solutions and innovative recommendations are needed to chart a course for U.S. global policy in the years and decades ahead. Twenty years after the end of the Cold War, strategic drift is not safe and is not acceptable. The 2008 presidential election provides an opportunity to address the hunger in our country for new ideas and proposals.

This Assembly accepted the charge to be bold and provocative but we felt some caution was in order. While fresh approaches were encouraged, one astute fellow warned against the Christopher Columbus problem – “just because it is new to you, doesn't mean it is new to everyone.” It is important not to read the present into the future; we cannot

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***It is important not to read the present into the future.***

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anticipate all the questions and issues that will emerge in the years to come. Instead, we need to develop innovative and flexible frameworks to understand how increasing complexity and change provide both advantages and burdens. Resolving many of our domestic problems – from dealing with the twin deficits to solving our health care crisis to reforming our immigration system – was seen as equally as important to changing the way we engage the world.

This Assembly made a series of recommendations below. Section I provides suggestions for a “Next Generation” way of framing the potential solutions to our global challenges. Section II builds upon the

work of the four previous Assemblies to highlight new themes and perspectives on U.S. global policy. The final section describes the unique political moment we find ourselves in, which provides an opening for the Next Generation Project fellows to make recommendations to a new presidential administration.

## SECTION I. THE NEXT GENERATION: A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

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***...social networking, information sharing, and instant communications have dramatic implications...***

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Our generation has an approach to problem-solving that potentially offers unique insights that could enhance decision-making.

First, we recognize that the emergence of social networking, information shar-

ing, and instant communications has dramatic implications for political mobilization – from the Color Revolutions to the transformation of the financing of U.S. presidential elections. We are early adopters of new information technology, whether it be thinking about the information dissemination potential of weblogs and video-sharing programs like YouTube, the mobilizational capacity of text-message programs like Twitter, the fundraising potential of the Internet, and other breakthrough technologies that reduce the costs of collective action (Flickr, Meetups, social bookmarks). We recognize that these forces can be used for good or ill but on balance we are risk tolerant and optimistic that we can harness these new technologies.

Second, we can act as an intergenerational bridge. We can serve to blend the best elements of existing institutions with the best of new

endeavors. We have knowledge of existing institutions and the historical legacy of both the national security architecture and international organizations that came out of the World War II experience. We are old enough to have been politically aware at the tail end of the Cold War, and yet, we are young enough to have escaped some of the intragenerational disputes that proved so divisive for those that grew up during the 1960s and lived through the Vietnam War. We are also old enough to have experienced and even participated in some of the post-Cold War foreign policy that preceded 9/11, a time when America and her allies successfully brought the Cold War to an end and then presided over a period of relative calm and U.S. resurgence. These qualities make us mindful of the potential utility of the institutions that were bequeathed to us, whether it be the international financial institutions, the United Nations (UN), or more local organizations like the Chamber of Commerce. We recognize that there are some things that only governments really can and ought to do, particularly the provision of security and, over many domains, authoritative rulemaking.

Third, we embrace diversity and inclusivity with respect to gender, ethnicity, and faith. We consider this diversity not only a strength but also a necessity to be relevant and lead on the global

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stage. Many of us have family members in other countries, and more of us have traveled and worked outside of America. Our values reflect this appreciation of diversity, and provide insight into the concerns and world views of people from outside the United States. This also allows us to appreciate the importance of inclusion, both in

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**...robust policy solutions require inclusion of a broad swathe of actors.**

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terms of domestic participation but also of other countries. Domestically, we recognize the significance of inclusion of relevant players from state and local government as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. For problems that require dramatic change at the local level such as climate change policy, homeland security, or comprehensive immigration reform, robust policy solutions require inclusion of a broad swathe of actors. Internationally, to the extent our actions in the United States have an inordinate impact on others, we recognize that many processes of transnational decision-making will only be sustainable if they are perceived as legitimate.

## SECTION II. PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

### AN ERA OF INTEGRATION

The kinds of global questions we face inevitably are bound up with other issues and will require interagency coordination and the integration of professionals from different specializations. For example, America's dependence on petroleum is inextricably linked to the problem of climate change and is also bound up with broader security challenges we face with oil-producing nations, particularly in the Middle East. Resolution of pieces of that problem will likely have cascading effects on other areas, whether we anticipate them or not. Moreover, we tend to see relations with other countries in the broader regional context. While many of our national-level policy orienta-

tions are bilateral, we readily recognize the broader geographic implications of policies directed at single countries, whether it be China, Iraq, Iran, or Mexico. One has to see what our policies mean not only for the country in question but its neighbors, our allies, and other potential rivals.

Likewise, we recognize that force alone, what the military calls kinetic power, can only accomplish limited objectives in war, at most creating space for new political, diplomatic, and developmental trajectories. Not correctly assessing and addressing those other elements will lead to incomplete solutions with potentially grave consequences, as we have discovered in Iraq.

### REDEFINING NATIONAL SECURITY

Security today means more than protecting space against enemy armies and shoring up lawless regions militarily. The Next Generation fellows focused on preventing public health threats, attacks via computer on our infrastructure, and cascading impacts of natural disasters on interconnected communities.

Securing our financial institutions and capital markets from disruption and lessening our dependence on foreign energy are security priorities.

Globalization and the transfer of ideas mean that both threats and opportunities are changing in business, governance, international cooperation, and warfare itself. We must build a more resilient society equipped to anticipate, respond to, and rapidly recover from calamity.

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***Security today means more than protecting space against enemy armies...***

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***The best weapons to combat struggles in the future may be strategies to redirect misguided ideas.***

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Next Generation Project fellows believe that force still matters, but matters differently than it once did. Within our military establishment an adaptation is occurring in response to the emerging strategic landscape. Our adversaries are thinking and evolving in new ways, by not confronting our tanks directly but turning to insurgency and terrorism. Today our greatest threats may no longer be states that are too strong, but states that are too weak. While our national security establishment is adapting to new threats, its progress is uneven.

In the conflicts of the future the ability to use information and understand how information moves and flows may be as critical as traditional weapons of war. Economic development and education policy may be as important as control of the air or sea. Winning may be defined not as capture of physical ground but the ability to influence mental and emotional space. We must earn the support of the people who are threatened. The best weapons to combat struggles in the future may be strategies to redirect misguided ideas.

### THE CENTRALITY OF ENERGY

Energy and resource scarcity have salience again like no time since the 1970s. There are a number of related developments that are having and will continue to have unprecedented effects on global politics including:

1. Rising energy prices and their impact on other necessities, especially food, that are a drain on consumer income and have a disproportionate effect on the poor;
2. The rising economic role of emerging markets, particularly Brazil,

China, and India, with immense populations and ever-increasing consumption aspirations, and the resulting social and political implications of their newfound wealth;

3. Global dependence on fossil fuels contributing to climate change, with unprecedented effects on the planet, through the rising severity of storms and extreme weather events, more variable rains, and potentially devastating effects on human populations and biodiversity;
4. Energy-rich nations able to throw their weight around by virtue of their natural reserves and control of pipelines;
5. The flow of petro-dollars globally that can be deployed for good purposes, such as improving infrastructures and the quality of life, or for ill, such as financing regional arms races or terrorism; and
6. Possibilities for the rapid emergence of the green economy and technology as a major generator of wealth and jobs in this century, some of which have been innovated in the United States and are now being captured primarily by firms from other countries, whether it be Japanese hybrid car technology, Danish wind power, or the German solar industry.

### DOMESTIC = FOREIGN POLICY

Many of us felt that some of the issues that would most influence the future success of U.S. global policy were, in fact, traditionally considered domestic issues. There were two that were of particular importance:

**Immigration** – Many fellows felt that an effective system of immigration

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***...the issues that would most influence the future success of U.S. global policy were, in fact, traditionally considered domestic issues.***

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was one of the things that propelled the United States to its status as an economic and cultural power, and worried that abandoning or unduly restricting that traditional orientation would push the United States backwards.

**Education** – Most fellows felt that those nations with the best educated workforces would be the most successful, and were dismayed at how far the United States has fallen behind its competitors in certain fields. They also thought that our citizens had to have a globally oriented education, in order to better understand the rest of the world.

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***We may need new vocabulary to describe the intersection between domestic and foreign policy.***

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These issues, which are at first blush domestic, were cast in terms of global competitiveness. In many ways, the division between these two realms—domestic and global—no longer makes sense, as issues we once considered purely local have global implications, and global issues profoundly affect our local lives. We may need new vocabulary to describe the intersection between domestic and foreign policy.

### GLOCAL POWER

The United States is an enormous and complex society, facing an extraordinary number of challenges. In places like Southern California, Colorado, Illinois, and Texas, there is a growing sense that Washington, D.C. and the federal government are not always the most relevant or effective stewards for every problem. When it comes to trade or immigration, state officials may have a different attitude than the national government, and at the very least will be more focused on quick, effective results.

One of the insights of our discussions was that in a global world, local knowledge, expertise, and decision-making may become critical. With the economies of five states now representing 40% of U.S. GDP, key state and regional capitals may become as important as national capitals in certain crucial areas. This is important because while most elite policymakers and analysts are focusing on how to reform big institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or UN, the real action may be elsewhere – at the state and local level. It may very well be that the model of large, centralized, nation-state-centered organizations driving global policy, with help from similarly big, centralized international organizations, may not be the most effective model for the future.

### GOVERNANCE BEYOND GOVERNMENT

National governments no longer are the only players in U.S. global affairs. Next Generation fellows found governments are increasingly sharing ground with businesses and NGOs. Global companies are spearheading change around the world. Wal-Mart can be described as its own “nation” with revenue numbers exceeding many countries’ GDP figures. Wal-Mart’s decision, for example, to adopt new environmental standards sent a ripple effect

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***...governments are increasingly sharing ground with businesses and NGOs.***

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not only across Wal-Mart’s international store locations, but also across its extended network of international suppliers. International businesses do not wait for the U.S. government to drive decisions. They are acting themselves. This is even truer of NGOs. While the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation currently gets much of the attention for its work in Africa and elsewhere, the Next Generation Project fellows pointed out that

there are thousands of NGOs around the world that have been addressing pressing societal problems. Organizations like Ashoka and Echoing Green have been supporting a new generation of social

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***The challenge is to better harness the creativity, talents, and unique qualities of the private sector and NGOs for positive change.***

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entrepreneurs. Some non-traditional players harness technology to impact international development by applying business models to social change. KIVA.org provides new technology for microfinance, for example. In many cases they also mobilize political participation, as evidenced by the ONE

Campaign's advocacy in support of global public health.

While the scale of traditional institutions cannot be replaced, Next Generation Project fellows discussed ways to link old and new institutions and leverage the capabilities of more innovative new models. This Assembly concluded that public-private partnerships and networks of interested groups may prove more effective and responsive to emerging policy problems. However, the so-called decline of public sector leadership and the rise of the private sector and NGOs should not be overstated. The reality is that governments and governmental institutions will remain dominant in the policy sphere. The challenge is to better harness the creativity, talents, and unique qualities of the private sector and NGOs for positive change. At the same time, government and international institutions must remain ready to reconsider their proper role as the private sphere continues to evolve in these areas.

## HEALTHY COMPETITION

In Washington today, debate often focuses on possible future confrontation rather than collaboration. Scarce energy resources, it is

argued, will lead to greater geopolitical rivalries. Rising powers, such as India and particularly China, will offer a challenge to U.S. primacy that must be met head on. A renascent Russia may be a future foe.

The majority of the emerging young leaders from the Next Generation Project fellows do not view the future of international politics as a zero-sum confrontation. Rather, we see a healthy competition, one based not on land and resources but ideas and innovations. For example, when we look at China, we see a booming economy, a rising middle class, and a great spirit. There will be competition, but it will be in the science lab, not the boxing ring. In fact, we know that our success is linked to China's continued growth. If we have concerns about the ability of China's antiquated institutions, regulatory or governance practices, we must step forward to help. Even on energy and the environment, which are widely seen as a great global challenge, many of us believe that there are opportunities to use knowledge and emergent technology to move forward.

A number of Next Generation Project fellows believed that confrontation may be unavoidable in certain circumstances. When considering confrontation, the "mode" (unilateral, regional, or multinational) must be carefully weighed and legitimacy examined before any action is taken.

Overall, the Next Generation Project fellows identified the importance of maintaining an open, vibrant, and well-functioning global economic system as vital. Concerns exist, from increased protectionist sentiments at home and abroad, to problems with intellectual

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***...on energy and the environment...there are opportunities to use knowledge and emergent technology to move forward.***

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property rights, to job dislocation and worker re-training. Promoting open and fair global markets, however, was identified as an area in which the United States should take a prominent leadership role in world affairs.

## ROI—RETURN ON INFORMATION, IDEAS, AND INNOVATION

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### ***Knowledge and information will increasingly be the foundation of prosperity and strength.***

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In the 21<sup>st</sup> century global environment, it will not be gold or large factories or even oil that drive the world economy, nor will having the largest navies or most advanced weapons systems define which state is the most powerful. Knowledge and information will increasingly be the foundation of prosperity and strength. The nations with the most educated and mobile work forces, the most entrepreneurial cultures, the best universities, laboratories and public health systems, will succeed. In such a world, military or hard power may have limited utility compared to the past though may still be needed in places with weak governance. Ideas, institutions, networks, and innovation may matter more than tanks and planes in the future. Given the massive increase in the amount of data available, governing institutions will need to be far better at gathering, assessing, analyzing, and disseminating complex information. Unfortunately, most of the Next Generation Project fellows believed few of the institutions responsible for crafting and implementing U.S. global policy possessed the qualities necessary to thrive in the information age. But many of us have experience with the flatter, more entrepreneurial structures in the private and nonprofit sector, and use

large, complex but responsive person-to-person networks that allow information to disseminate rapidly and instantaneously. There was some debate over whether old, legacy institutions could be reformed or whether new institutions needed to be created. All agreed however, that openness, transparency, accountability, innovation, and responsiveness were the critical qualities needed to succeed.

## SECTION III. THE POLITICAL MOMENT

The international community continues to look to the United States for leadership, but faith in that leadership has dramatically declined in recent years. Controversial U.S. policies—ranging from harsh interrogation practices to resistance to global climate conventions—have tarnished our reputation and strained relations with many of our closest allies. At the same time, America's post-9/11 focus on a narrow set of issues—principally Iraq and the war on terrorism—has contributed to strategic drift in other areas.

The next U.S. president will face a daunting array of challenges: wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the persistent threat posed by failed states, violent extremism, and transnational crime; the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; instability in the Middle East; the existence of China, India, Russia, and Brazil as assertive powers; mounting environmental degradation, competition for natural resources, and climate change; growing risks of pandemic disease; and widespread poverty and inequality. Yet great

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***The next U.S. president will face a daunting array of challenges.***

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gains in global affairs may come from addressing what once were seen as “domestic” challenges that directly affect our security, prosperity, and international standing, such as: an economy under stress; an antiquated

energy policy; health care and educational systems that leave too many people behind; and a broken immigration policy.

The complex interdependencies among international and domestic challenges make prioritization difficult, and any attempt to tackle them in isolation is likely to prove inadequate or even counterproductive. In this context, the next president should adhere to a set of guiding principles to shape and encourage innovative and holistic responses to complex challenges. Many principles were discussed during our sessions, but three stood out: sustainability, partnership, and competitiveness.

## SUSTAINABILITY

The notion of sustainability refers to the maintenance or preservation of the global systems that underpin life. Most often this concept is applied solely to the environment, but the United States ultimately has a stake in the sustainability of both the natural world and the political and economic systems that support American interests.

In the realm of environmental sustainability, much of our discussion focused on energy security and global climate change. Without concrete steps towards a secure and stable energy supply, America's prosperity will be at great risk. U.S. leadership is necessary to mitigate the dangers of human-caused climate change: disruption to hydrology, disruption to agriculture, sea level rise, heat stress, and resulting mass human displacement. We must fulfill our obligation to avoid dangerous interference in the climate system through a binding agreement on carbon emissions. Moreover, even as we try to

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***U.S. leadership is necessary to mitigate the dangers of human-caused climate change...***

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prevent damage to natural systems, the lessons of Katrina, the Southeast Asian tsunami, and the cyclone in Myanmar demand improved domestic and international responses to natural disasters.

Steps must also be taken to ensure the sustainability of an international political and economic system conducive to the American way of life. A free political-economic order requires protection of the global commons, from the seas and space to cyberspace. This will require the United States and its allies to maintain the capabilities to prevent, deter, and dissuade disruptive actions, be they military threats in regions vital to the global economy or cyber attacks against U.S. information networks. The current strain on the U.S. military imposed by operations in Iraq and Afghanistan should be reduced or the ability of the U.S. military to endure those strains should be increased. Finally, a commitment to sustainability also implies U.S. leadership in promoting an international political order that is compatible with (although not necessarily identical with) core American values. This means a renewed commitment to supporting human rights, good governance, and the rule of law.

## PARTNERSHIP IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Partnership refers to the nature of America's relationship with the rest of the world. One of the reasons that the United States prevailed against the Soviet Union in the Cold War was because it created partnerships with Western democracies that were more in tune with the desires of their inhabitants than those countries in the Eastern bloc. Today, those partnerships are under pressure.

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***...the United States must work collaboratively with other nations and subnational groups.***

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If the United States is to succeed in the coming decades, it must work collaboratively with other nations and subnational groups. The immediate steps should include: closing the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay; initiating a conversation with key partners on issues of shared concern including global poverty; appointing a climate change czar and initiating a major diplomatic effort to tackle the climate crisis; reinvigorating the Middle East peace process; and continuing the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The successful stabilization of Iraq and Afghanistan is essential for enabling the United States to be an effective partner for security and development in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The next president must quickly forge effective working relationships with important states. As new powers such as China, India, Brazil, and

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***...the goal should be sharing responsibility for the maintenance of international order.***

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Russia rise, extensive coordination is increasingly necessary to achieve our most vital national interests. Exercising U.S. leadership within—as opposed to over—this more balanced and diffuse

distribution of power requires a collaborative mindset that eschews a “know it all” or a “go it alone” attitude. Instead, the goal should be sharing responsibility for the maintenance of international order. In practice, this will require efforts to reform existing membership and voting shares within the UN Security Council, international financial institutions, the G-8, and other international bodies to more fully integrate emerging powers into the decision-making process.

## COMPETITIVENESS

Competitiveness is the lifeblood of the U.S. economy. We benefit by living in a vibrant economy. To ensure our leadership position in the

future, Next Generation Project fellows focused on building a model of competitiveness that will continue to adapt and evolve as the velocity of change increases.

Technological innovation has led to breakthroughs in information sharing and interconnectedness. The individual has been empowered with a greater voice and greater opportunity to build new ideas. Emerging economies have increased their participation in the global marketplace and international capital flows have found their way to invest in best ideas across the globe. Creative destruction drives the engine of our innovation. To harness new technologies in an increasingly interconnected information economy, Next Generation Project fellows know that we must be proactive not reactive. To that end we suggest:

## ECONOMIC POLICY

We must stem the tide of protectionism and support free trade. Open markets lead to higher living standards and incomes while enhancing the competitiveness and strength of U.S. companies. Free trade is a “win-win,” as trade liberalization expands overall economic production, reducing poverty in developing countries while also

benefiting our economy at home. U.S. workers can compete against workers anywhere in the world when given a fair playing field. First and foremost, this requires efforts to resist protectionist impulses at home and preserve an open economic system abroad. At home, public education and town hall meetings may help to explain the benefits

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***...America needs to encourage other rising powers to support and abide by the basic principle of free trade and open streams of capital and labor.***

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of trade to citizens across the country. Abroad, America needs to encourage other rising powers to support and abide by the basic principle of free trade and open streams of capital and labor. We recognize anxiety over job loss and suggest the need for portable pensions, portable health-care coverage, and greater job retraining programs to support worker transitions. Concern about strengthening intellectual property rights remains, while a reform of our global taxation regime is essential to ensuring the continued repatriation of multinational profits.

## IMMIGRATION

Much of America's competitive advantage comes from the melting pot of talent that has found its way to our shores. We have attracted the world's best engineers, scientists, mathematicians, and managers, and the children of immigrants from all nations and segments of society have contributed to U.S. advancement. Our competitiveness depends

***Our competitiveness depends on attracting and retaining... immigrant contributors.***

on attracting and retaining similar immigrant contributors. Next Generation Project fellows suggest that significant reform of our immigration system is needed, including increasing visas available to those who innovate and contribute as scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs. Next Generation Project fellows suggest overhauling the H1B Visa system. The program is used for "in-sourcing" labor for support roles by international software companies, while many of our best foreign graduate students are forced to return home due to immigration complications. Similarly, Next Generation Project fellows suggest that we increase the number of Green Cards available to foreigners who innovate within our borders as scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs.

## EDUCATION

Our classrooms must prepare our students to be competitive globally. Students today will become our workforce tomorrow. Our approach to education should foster innovation and creativity. To remain competitive we must improve pre-K-12 education and consider whether national curriculum and performance standards are necessary to continued national success in a globalized setting. We must train more of our own scientists and engineers. We must pay attention to class size, performance metrics, and funding in an effort to support enhanced student capabilities. Our students must learn to speak foreign languages and increase proficiencies in math and sciences. At the university level, we must maintain our world class learning environments and foster greater collaboration across universities, industry, and research.

Just as meeting the challenges of the Cold War required government investment in science, math, and the humanities, today's challenges require national attention to support continued competitiveness.

Many specific ideas emerged from this Assembly. Not all the Next Generation Fellows agreed on all of the following:

- Reaffirm our commitment to international agreements we have already signed and ratified, work towards ratification of pending signed agreements, and lead the development of new international agreements to meet critical international challenges.
- Establish a bipartisan commission to forge a consensus on action on climate and energy security, including the adoption of national targets to mitigate climate change.

- Provide additional resources for alternative energy research and development, with complementary incentives for increased energy efficiency.
- Strengthen and expand military and political alliances beyond the Middle East.
- Undertake an immediate presidential action to signal our interest in listening to and engaging with the world.
- Immediate presidential engagement on the Middle East peace process in the first year of a new administration.
- Expand, improve, and offer greater incentives for participation in domestic and international voluntary services such as the Peace Corps, Americorps, or other new initiatives.
- Undertake a leadership role in meaningful reform of the UN Security Council, multilateral policy bodies like the G-8, and international financial institutions.
- Increase the volume, quality, and predictability of America's international development assistance.
- Craft a bipartisan consensus on a pathway to return the federal government to fiscal sustainability.
- Actively promote a consensus in support of free trade as a central tenet of America's economic strength.
- Implement a comprehensive immigration policy that will support American competitiveness, economic prosperity, and physical security.

- Improve the quality of education to incorporate multilingualism, global awareness, and high levels of proficiency in math and science; and promote opportunities for international student engagement and exchange.
- Significantly expand the capacities of our foreign affairs agencies.

## CONCLUSION

We are at a juncture in U.S. history. There are both great challenges to be met and promising opportunities to be seized. As we close the National Assembly of the Next Generation Project, we hope the ideas we have put forward here will help to shape public discourse and guide the future of U.S. policy in the months and years to come.



## THE NEXT GENERATION PROJECT

June 5–7, 2008

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Washington, DC

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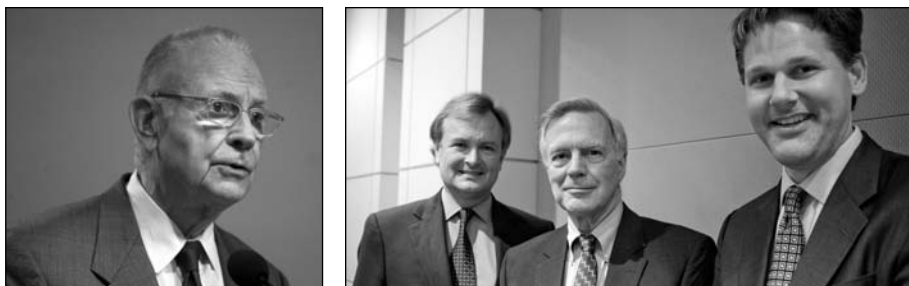
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# BACKGROUND READINGS

## SESSION I: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Next Generation Project Wiki Introduction and Wiki Theme Introductions

## SESSION II:

## VIEWS OF THE NEW WORLD – WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

“A Challenge of Economic Statecraft”

Robert B. Zoellick, President of The World Bank Group, Center for Global  
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- Guarding the Golden Egg

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### SESSION III: THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN 2008

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