

## Think Tanks and Nonprofits

# Securing Our Future

“Government is too big and too important to be left to the politicians,” observed former diplomat and politician Chester Bowles. Even the politicians’ advisors rely on input from others. Thorough investigation, sensitive insight, and productive dialogue are especially important for decisions that will reverberate around the globe.

Fortunately, today’s policymakers can draw on a wide range of resources. Beyond the political limelight is a diverse array of think tanks, foundations, and other nonprofit organizations whose independent research, knowledge, and experience help to guide the way toward a secure and sustainable future.

Some of these organizations focus on a particular region or country. Some concentrate on economic development, environmental sustainability, or other essentials. What they have in common is the ability to offer valuable input for policymakers, based on expertise that transcends partisan politics.

## Paths to Peace

Negotiations, treaties, and friendly alliances don't just pop up overnight. They depend on carefully developed dialogue and a deep understanding of complex developments. Security is

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**“Any solution to global warming has to come from the U.S. and China.... Substantive work needs to take place between these two biggest carbon emitters, and the U.S. will have to appreciate China’s need for economic development.”**

**Richard Ellings**, president, National Bureau of Asian Research

not a short-term process, and the drive toward peace begs for multiple approaches.

One group’s approach is inspired by the pragmatic idealism and nonpartisan internationalism of Henry L. Stimson, who served as Secretary of War under William Howard Taft, Franklin Roosevelt, and Harry S. Truman, as well as Secretary of State under Herbert Hoover. The Washington, D.C.-based Stimson Center works with policymakers around the world to develop pragmatic steps toward global security. In Stimson’s Regional Voices program, for example, a March 2009 workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka, examined the risks raised by global warming for ecologies, economies, and communities in coastal zones around the Indian Ocean. In October 2009, a workshop in Sin-

gapore will address the consequences and implications of the global economic crisis for societies in Asia and the Middle East.

In an increasingly interconnected world where information becomes globalized, the public can now play a larger role in peace efforts than ever before. “Peace-building has spread beyond pinstripe suits to much broader sectors of society,” notes Tara Sonenshine, executive vice president of the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP).

To help expand access to the world of peace-building, USIP is planning a Public Education Center for the new headquarters building it is constructing on the northwest corner of the National Mall in Washington, D.C. It will be a place where ordinary citizens can explore why people fight, what they fight over, and how to deal with different stages of conflict. On a world map, visitors will be able to click on a country and learn about conflicts in the area and what tools are used to intervene there. Simulations may even allow visitors to try their hand at resolving conflicts.

In its work abroad, USIP trains local conflict managers in trouble spots around the globe, from Iraq to Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Middle East, Sudan, the Korean Peninsula, and other areas. Depending on the local society, conflict managers may include community managers, police, members of government, or local religious leaders who benefit from learning the skills of preventive action, crisis management, and how to promote reconciliation.

Peace-building can also be an outcome of cross-fertilization between cultures and countries. Friendship and teamwork are often at the heart of good bilateral relations, and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation cultivates friends of Germany through its German Chancellor Fellowships.

The program offers an unusual and interesting opportunity for young professionals to spend a year doing research in Germany. For example, Jennifer Gerend was economic development director for the City of Edmonds, Washington before she became a von Humboldt Foundation fellow. She spent a year in Berlin working on a project involving ways to balance long-term city planning with the need for economic development. That led to a second year in Germany when she served as a planner for the City of Trier. Now, as a faculty member of Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, Gerend is in a prime position to share her familiarity with German culture, economics, and ingenuity.

“Over time, our alumni become ambassadors for Germany,” says Deirdre Kelly, senior program director for American Friends

# *for a secure* **WORLD**



Security—economic, environmental, political, social, and health—must be the cornerstone of our future: the future of our children, our nation, and our global community. Leaders must be informed, and influential institutions and people must be linked. Whether to gain insight on the Asia-Pacific or to build effective relationships through collaborations, these leaders look to The National Bureau of Asian Research.



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of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Participants receive German language instruction and join up with fellow participants, who come from the U.S., Russia, and China.

## Spotlight: Asia

Given North Korea's not-so-friendly signals to the world in recent months, the United States sees a pressing need to form friendships on the Korean Peninsula. At the policy level, the new Center for U.S.-Korea Policy aims to expand cooperation between Seoul and Washington with programs that will address security, nuclear energy development, climate change, and the role and influence of the U.S.-ROK alliance on Northeast Asian relations. Scott Snyder, the Center's founder and director, is also adjunct senior fellow for Korea Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of *China's Rise and the Two Koreas* as well as *Negotiating on the Edge: North Korean Negotiating Behavior*.

"Strengthened forms of cooperation with like-minded allies in the Asia-Pacific are likely to be at a premium as the center of gravity for global economic and political interactions shifts toward Asia," says Snyder.

And Richard Ellings, president of the Seattle, Washington-

based National Bureau of Asian Research (known as NBR), notes that the world's major national economies are in the Asia-Pacific: the United States, Japan, China, a rising India, and a strategically powerful Russia, in addition to North and South Korea. With this in mind, NBR is now launching a National Asia Research Program in collaboration with the Washington, D.C.-based Woodrow Wilson Center.

Ellings notes that the world's largest economies—China, Japan, and the United States—are all energy importers. "Any solution to global warming has to come from the U.S. and China," he says. "They will have to agree. They are the leaders. Substantive work needs to take place between these two biggest carbon emitters, and the U.S. will have to appreciate China's need for economic development."

Asia has always been NBR's focus, but now, what happens in Asia reverberates all over the world. "In a sense, our research is becoming more global, since the impacts are felt globally," says Ellings.

## Financial Recovery, Economic Discovery

The global economic downturn has demonstrated all too clearly how policies in high-income countries and emerging markets

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**“We see Africa as the next frontier for investment.”**

**Rashida Petersen**, director of marketing,  
Corporate Council on Africa

can have major repercussions for poor countries.

“The world’s poorest are usually hit hardest,” says Rahda Friedman, director of global communications for the Seattle-based Rural Development Institute (RDI). As more and more people around the globe are being pushed into poverty, demand is rising for RDI’s legal efforts to secure small plots for landless families to farm. With support from the Gates Foundation, RDI is expanding the concept of micro-lending to micro-land own-

ing. Its attorneys work with governments of developing countries, foreign aid agencies, and other partners to reform land law and consult on land policy.

Countries that provide broad-based access and secure rights to land experience faster economic growth than countries that do not, according to cross-country

regional studies. Research also finds that when people have secure rights to land, they develop attitudes and outlooks associated with success in market economies, invest more in their children’s education, are able to more freely participate in labor markets, and increase their incomes.

A down economy has consequences not only for the rural poor, but also for programs that serve them. Like many non-profits, RDI has faced recent budget constraints. “There is more



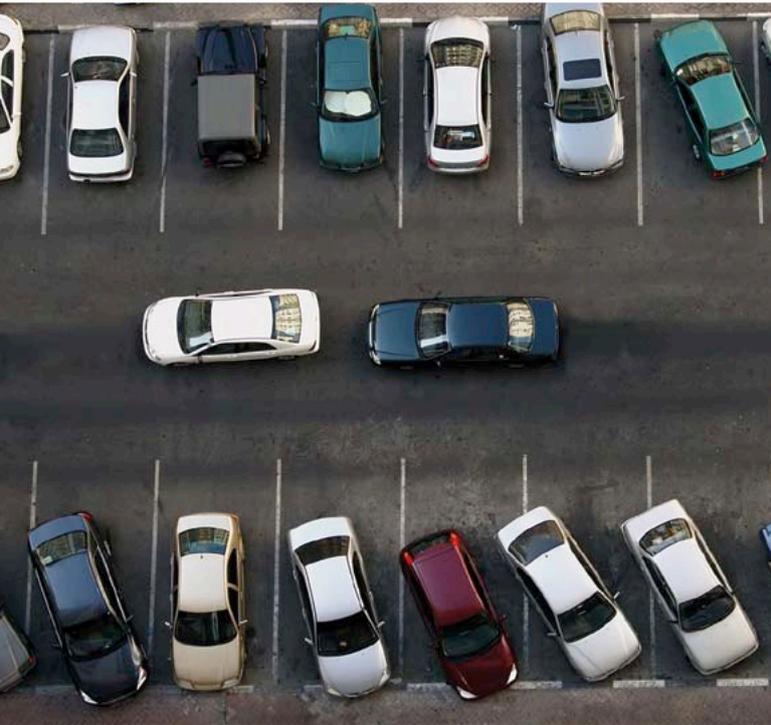
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demand for our services than supply right now,” says Friedman. “Therefore, we want to go places where we can have the greatest leverage—where there is political will to make the projects work.” Thanks to government cooperation in several countries of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, RDI’s current focus areas are primarily in those two regions.

Budget constraints can have a silver lining, though. For the Stimson Center, cutbacks have led to new approaches that cut across different programs and get them to work together. For example, Stimson’s Global Health Security program has begun a new initiative that combines global health with international development finance to identify a new mechanism for tracking international health aid. “Because of this, we have been able to expand the work that we do while at the same time being much more aware of our financial circumstances,” says Nancy Langer, Stimson’s Director of External Relations.

Meanwhile, the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), a trade association, sees business opportunities in African economies that were not engaged in the global financial market. “We see Africa as the next frontier for investment,” says Rashida Petersen, CCA’s director of marketing.

Despite the dramatic decline in 2008, the performance of African stock markets during the global financial crisis has exceeded that of many stock markets in more developed regions. African

governments have been making unprecedented reform efforts to attract foreign investment. In fact, the International Monetary Fund has projected a 3.4 percent growth rate for Africa in 2009.

While the global downturn has helped to decrease energy consumption worldwide, any rebound in the economy carries the challenges of a new surge in energy use and increased impacts from global warming.

## Climate Change and Security

Climate change is already beginning to raise significant security challenges. For one thing, global warming affects land use in many ways. When melting glaciers lead to flooding, vast areas can no longer be used for farming. Pollutants from industrial use make land unproductive for farming. And land grabs by people anticipating climate change also decrease farming options for the rural poor, notes RDI’s Friedman.

Unsustainable exploitation of global ecosystems can lead to ecological and social challenges that may undermine political order and fuel international instability. The Stimson Center is now expanding its program on climate change to research effects on security. Researchers are examining climate-related stresses on water supplies and food security; exacerbated competition for natural resources; forced migration and environmental refugees; sustainable management of rivers, forests, and fisheries

## German Chancellor Fellowship

### *International Opportunity for Young Professionals*



**Alexander von Humboldt**  
Stiftung/Foundation

Germany’s Alexander von Humboldt Foundation awards ten **German Chancellor Fellowships** annually to young professionals in the private, public, not-for-profit, cultural and academic sectors who are citizens of the United States. The program, which also includes fellowships for citizens of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China, sponsors individuals who demonstrate the potential to strengthen ties between Germany and their own country through their profession or studies. The fellowship provides for a stay of one year in Germany for professional development, study, or research. Prior knowledge of German is not a prerequisite. Fellows are provided with intensive language training prior to and during the fellowship.

The program begins September 1 and lasts twelve months. It is preceded by three months of intensive language classes in Germany. Candidates must have received their bachelor’s degree after September 1, 1998. **Application deadline for U.S. applicants: October 31, 2009.** Applications and FAQs available at:

[www.humboldt-foundation.de](http://www.humboldt-foundation.de) (applications)  
[www.americanfriends-of-avh.org](http://www.americanfriends-of-avh.org) (alumni website)

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## The United States Institute of Peace *25 Years of Building Peace*

**2009 marks the U.S. Institute of Peace's 25<sup>th</sup> year as a leader in international conflict management and peacebuilding.**

Created by Congress during the Cold War, the Institute has responded to the unique challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century conflict by developing and applying practical skills in international conflict management. Independent and nonpartisan in its work, the Institute is professionalizing the field of peacebuilding, training practitioners, and serving as a convener of parties to disputes around the world.

The human capacity for conflict is ever-present, but conflicts can be managed without violence. Building peace requires the skills of preventive action, crisis management, and the promotion of reconciliation. The Institute is a national center of innovation in such skills, teaching and training in techniques of conflict management and deploying staff to international zones of conflict.

As we celebrate a quarter century of our work, we look forward to broadening our service to the American people and our international partners through the Institute's new headquarters facility,

now under construction at the northwest corner of the National Mall in Washington, D.C.—within sight of our memorials to the heroism and sacrifices of war.

With congressional and public support, the headquarters building will house offices and conference facilities, professional education and training programs, and a Public Education Center that will reach nearly half a million of those who visit the “war and peace” corner of the Mall each year.

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that extend beyond national boundaries; global warming impacts on coastal ecologies and communities; and other challenges.

In Southeast Asia, the Mekong River has been a prime source of food security and livelihoods for some 70 million people. This nursery of mainland Southeast Asian civilization now faces severe and irreversible damage from ill-considered efforts to tap its very large hydroelectric power potential. The Stimson Center's Mekong Hydropower Transparency Project aims to educate financiers, media, and the public about the threats from massive hydroelectric projects along the river. It also seeks to influence the decision-making process among regional governments, aid-donor nations, and multilateral development banks. Stimson analysts also will offer policy recommendations to the U.S. foreign policy community, the administration, and Congress.

Recognizing the growing need for energy conservation, a number of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's German Chancellor Fellows have focused their research on renewable energy and other "green" fields. Recent research has examined German techniques for recycling home construction materials, the use of reusable modular components for office buildings, and European approaches to urban redevelopment.

Energy conservation will be crucial as economic recovery begins to boost global energy demand. The key will be to limit consumption through increased energy efficiency, according to NBR's Ellings. NBR's upcoming Pacific Energy Summit, to be held November 3–5 in Tokyo, aims to advance the adoption of policies and technologies necessary to sustain economic growth and reduce environmental impact throughout the Asia-Pacific. In recognition of the crucial need for development-friendly ways to minimize greenhouse gas emissions, the Summit's theme will be "Increasing Energy Security and Economic Growth along a Low-Carbon Path."

NBR and other nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations offer diverse philosophies, missions, and areas of focus, but they face common hurdles in securing our future. Any effective global strategy must consider the closely intertwined needs of financial security and environmental sustainability. ■

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*The articles in this supplement were prepared by Nancy Henderson, a Washington, D.C.-based freelance writer, in conjunction with the business department of FOREIGN POLICY, and did not involve the editorial staff of this magazine.*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**September 1:** Publication of *One Billion Rising: Land, Law and the Alleviation of Global Poverty* (Rural Development Institute, [www.rdiland.org](http://www.rdiland.org)).

**September 22–24:** *Strategic Asia 2009–10* book launch, examining geopolitical ramifications of the global financial crisis on the Asia-Pacific region; Washington, D.C. (National Bureau of Asian Research, [www.nbr.org](http://www.nbr.org)).

**September 23:** Panel discussion on the evolution of U.S.-Iranian relations, featuring John Limbert, author of *Negotiating with Iran: Wrestling with Ghosts of History*, and Ambassador Nicholas Burns (ret.); U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. (U.S. Institute of Peace, [www.usip.org](http://www.usip.org)).

**September 25–27:** People's Liberation Army (PLA) Conference 2009; Carlisle, Pa. (National Bureau of Asian Research, [www.nbr.org](http://www.nbr.org)).

**September 29–October 1:** 7th Biennial U.S.–Africa Business Summit; Washington, D.C. (Corporate Council on Africa, [www.africacncl.org](http://www.africacncl.org)).

**October 31:** Deadline for U.S. applications to the German Chancellor Fellows Program (Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, [www.humboldt-foundation.de](http://www.humboldt-foundation.de)).

**November 3–5:** Pacific Energy Summit, "Increasing Energy Security and Economic Growth along a Low-Carbon Path: Innovation, Market, and Policy Approaches," Tokyo (National Bureau of Asian Research, [www.nbr.org](http://www.nbr.org)).

**March 11, 2010:** International Women's Day luncheon for women's land rights, Seattle (Rural Development Institute, [www.rdiland.org](http://www.rdiland.org)).



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