

THE  
NEXT GENERATION  
PROJECT

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

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MIDWEST  
ASSEMBLY

OCTOBER 18-20, 2007  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY  
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 THE AMERICAN ASSEMBLY  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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# PREFACE

On October 18-20, 2007, seventy-one Next Generation Fellows from the Midwest and across the nation including government officials, representatives from business, law, international institutions, the military, nonprofit organizations, technology companies, academia, and the media gathered at the downtown Chicago campus of Northwestern University for a meeting of the "Next Generation Project: U.S. Global Policy and the Future of International Institutions." The Midwest Assembly was co-sponsored by The American Assembly and the Roberta Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies, led by Director Andrew Baruch Wachtel and Associate Director Brian Hanson. It was the fourth meeting and commenced the second stage of The Assembly's Next Generation Project, which will culminate with a national Assembly held in Washington, DC 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 Midwest 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 21st century. A volume of background reading was compiled to provide common ground for this diverse group, the table of contents of which can be found as an 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.

After introductory remarks by Henry Bienen, President of Northwestern University, the Midwest States Assembly opened with a panel, moderated by Andrew Wachtel. Patrick Gorman, Next Generation Project Deputy Director and Senior Advisor for Strategic Integration and Transformation to the Director of National Intelligence and Assistant Deputy Director National Intelligence for Strategy, Policy, and Plans; J.C. Herz, White House Special Consultant, Department of Defense; and Elizabeth Stephenson, Associate Principal, McKinsey & Co., served as panelists. Marshall Bouton, President, Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and Jessica Stern, Lecturer in Public Policy, JFK School of Government, Harvard University addressed the Fellows in evening plenary sessions. Jessica Stern's 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 and the other Next Generation Project reports 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, the Nasher Foundation, and especially the McCormick Tribune Foundation, which earmarked their support for the Midwest Assembly. A complete list of funders can be found on the project's web site.

The American Assembly and the Roberta Buffett Center for International and Comparative 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 organizations and institutions with which they are affiliated.

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, Sharon Burke, Joshua W. Busby, Janine Davidson, Colin Kahl, Vikram Singh, and Patrick Gorman, the Next Generation Project's deputy director:

David H. Mortimer  
The American Assembly

# THE NEXT GENERATION PROJECT:

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

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## MIDWEST ASSEMBLY

### DISCLAIMER

*At the close of their discussions, the Next Generation Fellows in the Midwest Assembly of the Next Generation Project at the Chicago campus of Northwestern University, October 18-20, 2007, 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

The Midwest Assembly commenced the second stage of The Next Generation Project, “Crafting Innovative Solutions for the Future – The New Institutional Architecture for an Age of Globalization.” The Assembly held in Chicago built upon the findings of stage one – “Identifying the Global Challenges and Opportunities of the 21st Century” – as developed over Assemblies held during 2006-07 in Dallas, Texas; San Diego, California; and Denver, Colorado. In the

process of identifying and prioritizing a wide range of global challenges and opportunities, stage one produced several key themes, including: the need to move beyond a narrow definition of national security and emerge from the shadow of 9/11; recognizing that domestic and foreign policy are intertwined and inextricable; the de-centering of power; the eclipse of the public sphere; and the need to view the world through a lens of competition, not confrontation.

The Midwest Assembly Fellows augmented these themes in their efforts to identify and craft innovative solutions to the global challenges of the 21st century.

### ANXIETY AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

#### GLOBAL DRIVERS AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The fellows identified a simple but indisputable condition of our times – globalization has massively affected the pace, breadth, and depth of change in our world. In particular, the radical improvements in information technology, finance, transportation, and logistics have altered the global economic and political landscape. This change provides both challenges and opportunities, and on the whole, the fellows see it as a largely positive process, both for the United States and the world. The benefits are innovation, economic growth, increased choice, and freedom of movement. The fellows acknowledged, however, that the current rapid pace of globalization is not inevitable. The process has created anxiety, economic dislocations, income inequality, and envi-

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**Globalization has massively affected the pace, breadth, and depth of change in our world.**

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ronmental stress. If these challenges are not addressed, the world may fail to capture the full potential of globalization. In the extreme, this could lead to a backlash in terms of rising protectionism and increased risk of conflict.

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***One of the key threats... was radical violent extremism.***

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Among the most powerful drivers shaping global affairs are demographic change, increased financial flows, the proliferation of science and technology,

the exploitation and transfers of natural resources, the changing nature of governance, and the tensions driven by identity politics. These drivers are interconnected and their interaction is always in flux and potentially volatile. Regardless of the positive or negative outcomes, the uncertainty and lack of equilibrium within the global system has caused great anxiety at home and abroad. With this unease as a background, the fellows found reasons to be simultaneously pessimistic and optimistic about the future, seeing both threats and opportunities in the years and decades ahead.

One of the key threats identified by the fellows was radical, violent extremism. This threat has many causes, including conflicting values systems, erosion of identity, nationalistic aspirations, regional goals for hegemony, and extreme competition for scarce natural resources. While there are many root causes, this threat is commonly fueled by social dislocation, a prevailing sense of inability to respond to perceived social injustices or economic inequality. Furthermore, the threat of violent extremism is accompanied by other threats such as proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction, severe and irreversible environmental degradation, and adverse restrictions on movement of people and commerce due to increasing xenophobia and protectionism. Opportunities for addressing

these threats include increasing global access to information and knowledge, rising accountability and transparency, increased innovation, empowerment of women, and ultimately the lifting of tens of millions from poverty. Other challenges can be either positive or negative depending on how they are managed, and include migration policies, empowerment of individuals and small/minority groups, and increased access to media.

A second key threat broadly discussed was the exponential growth of global human activity overwhelming the earth's natural systems' abilities to sustain themselves and human societies. This threat includes greenhouse gas emissions leading to disruptive and permanent climate change adversely and dramatically impacting societies; reduction of available fresh water sources; exhaustion of natural food sources such as fisheries; and destruction of marine systems by pollution.

What will determine how globalization shapes our future, and whether the positive outcomes will outweigh the negative? One critical factor will be the response of the nation, including how effective our governing institutions are in meeting

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***...much of our federal government is currently maladapted to anticipate, respond to, and manage these threats and opportunities.***

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these challenges in terms of both innovative policies and the effective implementation of all elements of national power. The fellows observed that much of our federal government is currently maladapted to anticipate, respond to, and manage these threats and opportunities.

## CHALLENGES TO THE AMERICAN PROJECT

The fellows believed the United States faces three key impediments to meeting these new challenges: a lack of a common or shared national interest, a loss of confidence in our national institutional competence, and

a misalignment between our values and our deeds.

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***...perhaps the most disconcerting development to the fellows is the gap between our ideals and our actions in the world.***

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The fellows felt there is a decreasing sense of a unified, American vision based on shared interests. There is a high degree of uncertainty about who we are as a nation, reflected in increased partisanship and segmentation along a num-

ber of dimensions, including ideological, class, vocational, regional, ethnic, and religious lines. The causes for this include media fragmentation, narrowcasting, distortion, and information overload. This can be seen in the transformation of the news media from what was once a small group of providers to the proliferation of thousands of outlets for niche consumers and constituencies. The lack of consensus, or even civil debate about our interests, prevents the United States from projecting a vision or articulating successes at home or abroad.

The second impediment is lack of faith and trust in our national institutions. The fellows believed that many of our tools of national policy are ill-suited for this new global environment. A prime area for improvement is the ossified organizations and bureaucracies that are unable to adapt and do not possess the operational agility to respond effectively to this new world. We do not have a balanced approach to utilizing all the tools of national power. This is reflected, for example, in the under-resourcing of our diplomacy, information, aid, and education agencies and efforts, compared to military spending.

The third and perhaps most disconcerting development to the fellows is the gap between our ideals and our actions in the world. There is a sense that we are burdened by hypocrisy, as we have failed to live up to our own ideals in our relations with other actors on the world stage.

The scandal of Abu Ghraib is just the most extreme example of a failure that has undermined our legitimacy and reputation to address shared global challenges.

## HOPE IN ALTERNATIVE ACTORS – LOCAL IS GLOBAL

There are signs of hope and positive change, however. While the national project may be lagging, the fellows recognize that globalization has empowered innovative new actors, created new priorities, and developed new tools for addressing the complexities of this interdependent world. A key theme that emerged from this Assembly was the connection between local actors and global issues, made possible in large part by the tremendous advances in technology. New linkages and networks, including everything from person to person relationships, empowered non-governmental organizations (NGOs), dynamic entities from the private sector, and sub-national actors offer hope and possibilities for creative policy solutions. Characterized by agility and innovation, these other actors and their new modes of operations can provide a blueprint for older, less nimble, national institutions.

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## II. DIFFERENT PLAYERS, NEW POSSIBILITIES

When we look at the landscape of global politics, we observe a widening array of actors engaged in global issues. Some of them are new but many of them are not. What is new is that the transnational space that once was largely the preserve of nation states is increasingly populated by other players, including state and local government, civil society, the private sector, and technology empowered individuals.

Each of these sets of actors has their own strengths and weaknesses as problem-solvers in the global arena. Before examining how these actors could better coordinate their activities to fulfill broader public purposes, we detail the positive attributes that enhance their effectiveness and those that detract from their capabilities.

## STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Political leaders, even at the municipal level, worry about the effects of globalization on local competitiveness and employment. For example,

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***...these attributes can enhance local and state government's ability to serve as incubators for new ideas and innovation.***

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during this Assembly we noted that Chicago has long been an international city, home to large immigrant communities, from the traditional Polish diaspora to the increasingly large Latino community. Dozens of countries have consulates in

the city. Chicago has twenty-five sister cities around the world. The mayor of Chicago recently hosted a meeting of thirty mayors from around the hemisphere. The state of Illinois has an office dedicated to its international trade position and has ten offices around the world, the latest in New Delhi.

In thinking about the capacity of state and local government to address global problems, we observed that they have a number of advantages that may allow them to be or become effective problem-solvers. By virtue of their size and proximity to local populations, they can be more agile and responsive to problems, at least by contrast with the federal government. At the same time, these attributes can enhance local and state government's ability to serve as incubators for new ideas and innovation. Moreover, these tighter ties to local populations can facilitate their ability to communicate directly with citizens. They can

also improve national assessments of local vulnerabilities to transnational threats like terrorism.

Cities are grappling with how to harness the power of globalization and mitigate its negative impacts. Local and state governments also possess a number of disadvantages that may impinge on their ability to serve as effective change agents on the global stage. At their most basic level, states and municipalities, despite an increasing preoccupation with the local effects of international problems, are still largely focused on domestic and local issues. There is a basic lack of attention, expertise, and resources about and for global issues. States and cities are also limited by law in the kinds of roles they can play. At the same time, they may have limited capacity to resource unfunded mandates from the federal government for homeland security or respond to global problems like climate change.

## CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is needed more than ever to play a leading role in how the United States relates to the world in the 21st century.

Beyond government, we identified scores of interchanges by civil society as evidenced here in Chicago by a diverse range of grassroots diaspora organizations, international nonprofits, foundations, and universities.

Civil society is a catch-all category that captures a variety of actors that are different from both government and for-profit entities. These include NGOs, foundations, universities, and religious groups. Civil society organizations are extremely diverse and deserve special attention.

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***Civil society is needed more than ever to play a leading role...***

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The non-governmental sector comprises a variety of institutions of different sizes, from large-scale NGOs like Oxfam to small grassroots organizations. Some deliver services while others advocate and press governments for policy change.

Like local governments, small grassroots organizations often benefit from their decentralized nature and proximity to their constituencies. Though

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***...this sector may have trouble scaling-up to meet broader public needs.***

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less true for the marquee NGOs that have multi-million dollar budgets and hundreds of staff, NGOs are perceived to possess a greater nimbleness, flexibility, and willingness to take risks than govern-

ments at all levels. They compensate for their relatively small size through their capacity to network and leverage other partners. In some cases, NGOs and other civil society organizations play a role that would be difficult for a government or private entity to play.

Despite these strengths, this sector may have trouble scaling-up to meet broader public needs. Some civil society organizations are perceived as better advocates than implementers or vice versa. Unlike elected representatives, their legitimacy is derived from their claims of speaking for certain populations, but that raises broader questions about their accountability, particularly as they become larger and more hierarchical. While increasingly professionalized management has made this sector more efficient and effective, size and resource constraints limit the overall impact of some NGOs and civil society organizations. Civil society organizations shut out from regions with illiberal regimes are limited in their effectiveness and benefit from government and private sector support. However, some civil society entities act in direct or oblique opposition to U.S. interests, or act in ways that complicate

U.S. policy implementation in the long run.

## PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector has long been a transnational actor. Trade and interdependence among nations date back centuries. Nonetheless, we have observed a rapid increase in the scale and scope of transnational transactions in recent decades, fostered by transformations in information technology and transport as well as more open markets around the world.

These range from large multinational corporations to small enterprises and individual entrepreneurs located across the country. For example, one Chicago-based firm has provided venture consulting services to business and nonprofit development in five continents. Another is a leading community and environmental bank that has expanded beyond the United States to provide microfinance internationally.

Private firms are powerhouses for innovation. The profit motive encourages firms to adapt and respond rapidly to changing circumstances or perish. Given the right regulatory environment, firms provide employment and economic benefits to the societies where they produce and serve. Private firms provide essential goods and services that can enhance the lives of people around the world. For example, wireless telecommunications went into Africa to look for markets in the 1990s, and despite limited purchasing power, the private sector found a sizable market and a sustainable business model. This has served much broader public purposes, allowing small-scale entrepreneurs to more efficiently conduct business

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***...the world now possesses an alphabet soup of international institutions.***

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opportunities, from fishermen making sales in real time to Tanzanian tourist companies coordinating supply lines in the field.

The private sector cannot solve collective action and market failure problems. For example, pharmaceutical companies have aggressively pursued protection for intellectual property rights for anti-retroviral drugs that are used to combat AIDS. This stance was unpopular in countries affected by the AIDS epidemic and damaged both companies and U.S. credibility on the world stage.

## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Unlike in 1945, the world now possesses an alphabet soup of international institutions. These include the familiar ones, the UN, NATO, the World Bank, the WTO as well as the more obscure, such as the Universal Postal Union. International organizations occupy an increasingly dense space, with new institutions created all the time, from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria to new non-Western organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

International institutions serve functional needs, providing states with information, bolstering confidence and trust, and facilitating international agreement and the development of rule-based regimes. International institutions also allow states to coordinate and pool resources for problems that none could effectively address on their own. Contemporary global problems like climate change, sustainable development, protection of human rights, terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are all of this nature.

Some organizations are service providers of public goods. The UN, for example, has programs in development, human rights, humanitarian affairs, and peacekeeping. While their enforcement capability is limited, many international organizations, particularly those with universal membership, possess important monitoring and verification mechanisms. They also serve a certain legitimating function and can shape international norms and expectations of what constitutes legal or just conduct. As the United States has discovered in the Iraq War, the lack of UN or NATO approval can prove costly in terms of international goodwill and support.

While these institutions often serve important purposes, there is great concern that those created in the shadow of World War II may be ill-equipped and unable to adapt. Consensus decision-making processes may be slow and there are concerns about management and effectiveness. Challenges to their legitimacy have also arisen, whether from practices and habits that member states may find controversial and objectionable such as aid conditionalities or unrepresentative membership in decision-making bodies. While regional agreements are valuable, they may also lead to fragmentation into competing blocs. That said, action by international institutions can also crowd out activities by other actors better suited to deal with local problems, such as NGOs.

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***...action by international institutions can also crowd out activities by other actors better suited to deal with local problems...***

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While these entities have begun to fill the international space and complicate the behavior of state actors, governments are still the primary actors on the world stage. These other entities remain under-utilized, their actions may not scale, and their sheer number and diversity of practices and goals raises questions about coordination and commensurability of missions. Some of us no longer look to

the U.S. federal government as the sole or even main mechanism by which to address these problems. Nonetheless, while its ambitions may exceed its capability, the U.S. government is still the first among equals in terms of its global footprint.

### III. NEW MODELS FOR GOVERNANCE

The fact that the new global environment makes space for non-traditional actors to have greater influence in global policy poses challenges and opportunities that will require new models for governance. The fellows shared their own experiences with effective and ineffective governance and drew from them certain essential qualities.

#### ADAPTATION AND NIMBLENESS

In a globalized world, operating conditions – be they in business or diplomacy – change rapidly, requiring successful actors to adapt to changing circumstances with speed and agility. An example is an initiative by the Illinois state government when faced with the challenge of a dwindling market for selling grain. The state adapted by negotiating directly with

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***Traditional governments need not necessarily be threatened by more empowered actors.***

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Cuba, a nation state with which the federal government has poor relations, to sell grain. States and cities are taking the lead in developing environmentally friendly technologies and policies,

pulling the federal government and demanding action. These examples demonstrate the agility of a sub-national actor to adapt to the changing economic environment.

#### COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Traditional governments need not necessarily be threatened by more empowered actors. Rather than compete, governments should recognize the comparative advantage these actors possess and allow or enable them to operate. The goal should be effectiveness. For example, the efforts of the U.S. government to reach out to Muslim communities abroad have proved far less effective than the activities of the Islamic-American community.

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***Effective governance means listening to constituents and responding to their needs.***

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#### RESPONSIVENESS

Because technology and increased information flows have allowed individuals and other non-state actors to act more independently, customers and citizens have become more demanding: they expect more from service providers, businesses, and governments. Effective governance means listening to constituents and responding to their needs. This involves everything from leveraging technology to make government bureaucracies more responsive to those they serve, to soliciting more local involvement in development decisions.

#### LEGITIMACY

It can no longer be assumed that global policy is the exclusive domain of the nation state. Today, there are numerous globally-oriented actors who possess equal or even greater capability to meet peoples' needs. This challenges the authority of traditional structures. Various responses to the Hurricane Katrina disaster revealed this disparity when private sector actors such as Wal-Mart were able to respond faster and more efficiently than the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Governance structures for the 21st century will need to compete for legitimacy with these empowered actors.

## NETWORKING

Savvy actors on the global stage need to share information and connect with others on multiple levels, horizontal and vertical, within and across agencies. They need to form lasting as well as ad hoc networks, focused

on shared objectives to effect change. The Jubilee 2000 campaign provides a powerful example: through networking religious groups, development and human rights constituencies, and thou-

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***Transnational challenges, such as combating terrorism, demand transnational collaboration.***

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sands of young people around the world, the campaign developed an informal coalition around the common goal of debt relief for the world's poorest countries. Also noteworthy are new technologies, such as Internet-based platforms that promote networks among individuals and, potentially, among NGOs and other actors in the future.

## PARTNERSHIP

The complexity of the global landscape means that successful governance structures need to build relationships across sectors and across borders, between public and private, local and global. Local government challenges, such as improving public education, have benefited from private sector engagement. Transnational challenges, such as combating terrorism, demand transnational collaboration. We highlighted the importance of people-to-people connections. For example, Kiva.org is an organization that enables individuals to make loans to entrepreneurs and the working poor in the developing world. Kiva.org enables partnerships between individuals to support economic independence.

## TRANSPARENCY

Governing structures need to facilitate trust in order to build and maintain legitimacy, create networks, and foster partnerships—in other words, to operate effectively within an inter-connected, participatory global community. In order to move forward governing and private institutions must increase “truth-telling” to deepen trust between the American public and its institutions. Such arrangements that depend on trust require transparency and the open sharing of information. Nuclear non-proliferation, for example, requires countries to allow inspections of their facilities and the sharing of information about their energy programs. Meeting the challenges of climate change is going to require that governments share information about emissions and best practices.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Governments and organizations need to demonstrate to citizens, donors, businesses and their customers that they are operating effectively in order to sustain their support. Meaningful accountability requires measuring performance and reporting results, but government tends to measure inputs and activities. Instead, we need metrics for outcomes and impact. The World Bank proposal for an International Initiative for Impact Evaluation aims to provide analyses that measure the net change in outcomes for social and economic development programs for a particular group of people.

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***Governments and organizations need to demonstrate... that they are operating effectively.***

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We recognize that many of these qualities are overlapping and mutually reinforcing. For example, networking can enable adaptation and nimbleness; responsiveness to public needs enhances legitimacy and requires

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*...there was widespread agreement on the fundamental interests and values the U.S. government must protect and nurture at home.*

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transparency. All these qualities for effective governance share an appreciation for responsible and respectful leadership with partnership.

#### IV. LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP: A NEW PARADIGM FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

Although the U.S. government is not the only or optimal actor to address all of our most pressing global challenges, it remains an indispensable player, enabler, and partner; and, in some cases, must take the lead. The U.S. government possesses extraordinary resources, tremendous human capital, the ability to project power and influence in every corner of the globe, and remains the dominant actor in most international institutions and fora.

While some of us were ambivalent about the active promotion of American values abroad, there was widespread agreement on the fundamental interests and values the U.S. government must protect and nurture at home. It has a responsibility to defend Americans against traditional and non-traditional threats to security, promote economic prosperity and opportunity, and address barriers to social advancement. It also has an obligation to preserve central elements of our democratic system and the aspects of our shared identity—including our collective aspirational commitment to tolerance, diversity, basic human rights, and the rule of law—that bind us as a nation despite our myriad differences.

Protecting these interests and fulfilling these obligations in a globalizing

age requires the U.S. government to take action.

First, it must take steps to ensure that Americans are prepared to compete and prosper in the global marketplace. The U.S. economy is increasingly “knowledge-based,” and there was widespread agreement that future economic growth and opportunity hinged on continued improvements in human capital. Providing the U.S. economy with the right skills requires significant investments by the public sphere, as well as public-private partnerships, to provide quality education (especially in pre-K and K-12 schooling) and health care. Visa policies should also be modified to balance the desire to keep high-skilled workers who obtain degrees in the United States with the goal of maintaining the intellectual resources of their native countries.

The economy also needs demand for low-skilled workers to be met. We need a more rational discourse on immigration that recognizes the enormous benefits provided to our economy rather than simply focusing on costs.

Second, steps should be taken to clarify the tangible benefits from maintaining an open economic system and the dangers of giving in to protectionist impulses. At the same time, it is imperative to address the very real economic anxieties and dislocations produced by globalization. As American industries and communities face pressure from global competition, for example, the U.S. government should partner with the private sector to provide wage insurance and ensure that displaced workers have access to appropriate retraining.

Third, the U.S. government should do more to improve the lives of those left behind by globalization in other countries. Some advocated working with international organizations,

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*...the U.S. government should do more to improve the lives of those left behind by globalization in other countries.*

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migrant organizations, civil society, and the private sector to maximize the impact of remittances, expand micro-loan programs, provide inexpensive

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***...more should be done to promote inter-cultural and inter-faith exchange.***

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computers, and take other steps aimed at empowering the world's poorest individuals. Others thought that emphasizing efforts to improve maternal health and the education of women and girls would

have powerful knock-on effects on public health in poor countries. Many believed that the U.S. government should lead an effort to address and reform agricultural subsidies in industrialized countries that stifle economic trade and growth in the world's poorest nations. Others suggested expanding the Peace Corps or creating "teach for the world" and other tuition reimbursement initiatives designed to encourage more Americans to live overseas, provide education, and promote development.

Fourth, in a world increasingly plagued by violent extremism, more should be done to promote inter-cultural and inter-faith exchange and, critically to amplify the voice of those who oppose violence as the vehicle for political change in all forms of media such as Interfaith Youth Service. By funding these institutions directly, the United States risks de-legitimizing the very voices we wish to strengthen. Instead, we should fund such initiatives through global trust funds – possibly under the auspices of the UN's "Alliance of Civilizations" or the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). There was also widespread support for adjusting risk assessments in visa policies, especially as it relates to Muslim scholars and activists, which currently frustrate efforts to foster moderation and inter-faith dialogue, as well as procedures for government clearances that hinder recruitment of individuals with critical cultural and linguistic skills. More broadly, our literal and figurative public architecture should symbolize America's aspirational values as opposed to our fears.

Fifth, the U.S. government must take dramatic steps to reform the ability of the federal bureaucracy to tackle complex global challenges. Our most pressing challenges abroad—terrorism, failed states, weapons proliferation, environmental degradation, and pandemic disease, etc.—require holistic responses that leverage a combination of diplomatic, intelligence, developmental, and military instruments. There is a sense that the federal government sometimes responded admirably during times of international crisis, for example, in response to natural disasters such as the Southeast Asian tsunami and earthquakes in Iran and Pakistan. Nevertheless, we feel that substantial barriers often stand in the way of coordinated governmental efforts, particularly for long-term challenges. These include: existing bureaucratic structures and organizational cultures

that encourage rivalry over collaboration; legislative authorities and Congressional committee structures that create walls between defense, diplomacy, and development; inadequate resources for civilian agencies; earmarks and authorities that prevent nimble responses to emerging challenges; and the failure to provide armed forces and civil servants with the cultural, linguistic, and political skills to succeed in complex environments.

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***...the United States must reestablish our leadership and credibility in the recognition and enforcement of the international rule of law.***

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Sixth, the United States must reestablish our leadership and credibility in the recognition and enforcement of the international rule of law. This includes promoting and protecting human rights at home and abroad.

In this context, we identified a number of avenues for reform. Too little effort is placed on whole-of-government strategies aimed at preventing threats before they mature. For example, development programs that can

improve governance capacity in poor countries require long-term commitments that are not susceptible to the vagaries of annual budget cycles

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***...U.S. government must better adapt to the complex landscape it confronts.***

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and earmarks. At the same time, U.S. agencies require more flexibility in times of high threat and crisis. Some argued for the creation of flexible “conflict pools” or “national security budgets” that could

better allocate resources to address emerging threats and priorities in a timely fashion. To avoid abuse and ensure accountability and transparency, however, such flexible systems must be accompanied by effective oversight and clear metrics to measure success. The tools available to the U.S. government to prevent future threats and manage existing ones are also chronically imbalanced. Until civilian agencies are adequately resourced, we will continue to over-rely on the military to address many international challenges, including those that are fundamentally political or economic in character.

New structures for interagency collaboration are also required. Promising examples include: the creation of civil-military teams capable of operating in dangerous environments; virtual teams within and across agencies that combine technical, functional, and country expertise on crosscutting issues; and an architecture for interagency planning to complement military planning.

Finally, the U.S. government must better adapt to the complex landscape it confronts. It must do a better job of exploiting the current information environment and technologies to inform policy-making. The government requires better systems for leveraging “open source” materials and integrating innovative ideas from outside normal bureaucratic processes. Adapting federal organizations to a globalizing world also requires differ-

ent models for professional development that include better education in language, culture, science, and politics across the entire career of public servants, and more opportunities in non-traditional roles and settings, e.g., overseas deployments, interagency assignments, and more interaction with international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector.

As the U.S. government gets its own house in order, it also has a crucial role to play in enabling, leading, partnering, and integrating the valuable efforts of others. Even in areas where other actors are better suited and situated to lead efforts to confront global challenges, the U.S. government cannot be ignored. State and local governments, civil society, and the private sector will continue to operate in an environment governed, regulated, or otherwise affected by federal action. In some cases, the federal government can enable and empower these actors by providing resources and incentives, or altering regulatory frameworks. For example, to address global energy needs and their effect on climate change, some suggested that the U.S. government create contracting preferences for green

businesses, commit to procuring energy efficient and renewable energy technologies to spur demand, and design contests aimed at incentivizing rapid technological breakthroughs. In other instances, the U.S. government can work to forge a

common understanding of challenges and identify congruent interests that facilitate collaboration and dialogue across actors and sectors. For example, at home and overseas, there may be opportunities for the U.S. government to help pair business interests in appearing “green” and socially responsible with NGO interests in monitoring environmental and human rights conditions.

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***...U.S. government...has a crucial role to play in enabling, leading, partnering, and integrating the valuable efforts of others.***

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***...we need to recognize that U.S. leadership and international partnership are not competing paradigms.***

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Moreover, as the most powerful country in the international system, the United States will continue to exercise disproportionate influence on international institutions and organizations. On many important issues (e.g., human rights, climate change, proliferation), the world continues to expect and depend upon U.S. leadership, or, at a minimum, active American participation. Where international institutions and organizations must reform (e.g., to accommodate the rise of China, India, and other emerging powers) or adapt to new challenges (e.g., terrorism and transnational crime) U.S. leadership is also essential. In leading, we must emphasize genuine consultation, engagement, and dialogue rather than imposing our preferences unilaterally on others. Here the tone our decision-makers set is often as important as the substance. Even in areas where international or regional organizations such as the UN or NATO are best suited to take the lead, the United States can often enhance the efficacy of their efforts by providing financial resources (e.g., to combat AIDS and other deadly diseases) or critical capabilities (e.g., logistics for international peacekeepers). Ultimately, we need to recognize that U.S. leadership and international partnership are not competing paradigms—U.S. leadership is often necessary to build international partnerships, while partnerships are typically required for effective leadership.

## CONCLUSION

This Assembly began with the fellows identifying weaknesses and failures of existing institutions and the nation to meet new global challenges of the 21st century. We sought ways to recreate a shared national vision

and illuminate new models of governance that empower non-traditional actors and partner them with reinvigorated institutions. We call for a broadened global policy leveraging traditional as well as decentralized organizations made more responsive by robust networking technologies that link public sector, private entities, and non-governmental actors to national governments and international institutions.



### THE NEXT GENERATION PROJECT MIDWEST ASSEMBLY FELLOWS

October 18-20, 2007

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# BACKGROUND READINGS

## SESSION I: IDENTIFYING THE CHALLENGES

- Selections from What Matters, McKinsey & Co., 2007
  - Globalization: A Portrait in Numbers
  - Building a Whole New World
  - Consumers, Inc.
  - What Could Go Wrong?
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## SESSION II: DIFFERENT ACTORS, NEW APPROACHES

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Executive Summary of the Princeton Project on National Security  
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## SESSION III: ASSESSING THE CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL ARCHITECTURE

- “How I’d Fix the World Bank”  
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- “The Ideology of Development”  
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- “The New New World Order”,  
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## SESSION IV: A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

- “The Future Of Global Governance,”  
Conversation with Strobe Talbott, Ann Florini, Jessica Mathews,  
and James Steinberg  
Brookings Institution/Carnegie Endowment For International Peace Briefing  
Co-Sponsored By Island Press  
<http://www.brookings.edu/comm/events/20030408.pdf>
- Selections from “American Interests and UN Reform”  
Report of the Task Force on the United Nations  
United States Institute of Peace
  - American Interests and the United Nations
  - In Need of Repair: Reforming the United Nations[http://www.usip.org/un/report/usip\\_un\\_report.pdf](http://www.usip.org/un/report/usip_un_report.pdf)
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