Special Initiatives

This year, the Council launched its Terrorism Q&A website, a unique online encyclopedia of terrorism and America’s response, in order to provide timely and trustworthy answers to the questions on the minds of millions of Americans in the aftermath of September 11. The site is part of the Council’s new mission to reach a broader audience with easy-to-understand, nonpartisan information on key international issues. The Council also launched the Arthur Ross Book Award this spring to honor a recent work in international relations or foreign policy that merits special attention for its analysis of important events and its contribution to solving pressing political or economic problems. The Center for Preventive Action revived the much needed discussion on preventing deadly conflict by offering tangible and practical strategies for regions of particular vulnerability. Council-sponsored independent task forces, Council Policy Initiatives, and the Congressional Roundtable Program have over the years become the major tools to inform policymakers and advance the foreign policy debate in Washington and around the world.

Terrorism Q&A Website

After September 11, the American public was deluged with news coverage but had no place to go to manage the information overload, sort out fact from opinion, and make sense of seemingly incomprehensible and often contradictory reports. The Council moved to fill this gap. In an unprecedented initiative, the Council launched “Terrorism: Questions & Answers” in January 2002 at www.terrorismanswers.com—the nation’s first online encyclopedia of terrorism and America’s response. In cooperation with the Markle Foundation, the website provides reliable, nonpartisan information in one easily navigable and comprehensive site, aimed at interested readers who want a clear, authoritative primer on what the experts know and don’t know.

The site’s fact sheets, presented in an easy-to-follow Q&A format, are reported and written by a Council editorial team led by the project’s director, Warren Bass, in consultation with experts both inside and outside the Council. The fact sheets include profiles of major terrorist groups, background information on Afghanistan, primers on state sponsors of terrorism and coalition states, and surveys of homeland security concerns. The fact sheets are constantly updated, with new topics added each week. In addition, the site answers a “Ques-

The site’s watchword remains simple: reliable information in troubled times.
The Arthur Ross Book Award

This year, thanks to the generosity of Arthur Ross, the Council established the annual Arthur Ross Book Award to recognize books that make an outstanding contribution to the understanding of foreign policy or international relations. The prize is awarded to nonfiction works from any recent year, in English or in translation, that merit special attention for their analysis of important events, their contributions to solving pressing political or economic problems, or their impact in galvanizing new thinking about the way long-standing issues of international concern are viewed. The award’s first prize of $10,000 and second prize of $5,000 make it the most substantial award in the United States for any book in international relations.

The winning books are chosen by a jury comprised of scholars, practitioners, and businesspeople, including the editor of *Foreign Affairs*. In 2002, first prize was awarded to Robert Skidelsky for *John Maynard Keynes: Fighting for Freedom 1937–1946*. The silver medal went to Lawrence Freedman for *Kennedy's Wars: Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam*, and an honorable mention was awarded to Walter Russell Mead for *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*.

Center for Preventive Action

The end of the Cold War brought down a world of empires and unleashed a flood of deadly ethnic and civil conflict; it also set aside great-power competition, thus creating the possibility of resolving these deadly local conflicts. The Council’s Center for Preventive Action (CPA) aims to help turn those possibilities into realities by unifying the anti-conflict stakeholders and offering tangible and practical strategies for peace. The center does this by carefully selecting countries or regions where prevention has a decent chance of succeeding, either before killing escalates or in lulls before new explosions, then establishing independent task forces of Council members and other experts who understand the roles and views of the stakeholders—governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and the business community—in specific conflict situations. These task forces develop the strategies (precise recommendations combined with concrete rewards and punishments) necessary to induce key leaders among the warring factions to alter their behavior.

After a special relaunch event in March, keynoted by Kofi Annan and dedicated to the memory of the great statesman Cyrus R. Vance, the first two CPA task forces are focusing on the Balkans and West Papua, respectively. The center is overseen by an Advisory Committee chaired by John W. Vessey, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of
Staff, and engages other experienced stakeholders from all quarters. The CPA is directed by William L. Nash, a retired major general who led U.S. Army forces into Bosnia to enforce the Dayton Peace Accords and later served as a senior civil administrator for the United Nations in Kosovo.

Task Forces

The Council sponsors an independent task force when (1) an issue of current and critical importance to U.S. foreign policy arises, and (2) it seems that a group diverse in backgrounds and perspectives may, nonetheless, be able to reach a meaningful consensus on a policy through private and nonpartisan deliberations. Once formed, task forces are independent of the Council on Foreign Relations and solely responsible for their reports.

This year, perhaps more than ever, the Council’s independent task forces have played an important role in shaping foreign policy. Decision-makers in government look to the Council’s task forces—groups of high-ranking individuals with diverse experience and expertise—and to the Council’s task force reports—written simply and clearly to highlight key recommendations—to help guide their decisions on complicated issues.

The Independent Task Force on Terrorism, co-chaired by Carla A. Hills and Richard C. Holbrooke, convened in the immediate aftermath of September 11 and met over 20 times to discuss issues as diverse as border security, biological and chemical weapons, public health, the future of Afghanistan, and government restructuring. The task force submitted a paper to the administration that suggests techniques to better convey U.S. foreign policy to the world.

Interest in this effort was so acute that a separate Task Force on Public Diplomacy was launched. This task force’s report has already been demanded—even in draft form—by the executive branch and Congress alike. In its report, the task force outlines a number of measures to enhance the effectiveness of public diplomacy in support of U.S. foreign policy.

While a more effective public diplomacy is an immediate policy need, task forces often take a longer-term perspective. For instance, the Council’s new Independent Task Force on Chinese Military Power, co-chaired by Harold Brown and Joseph Prueher, looks ahead to determine the future capabilities of the Chinese military, identifying what specific developments should spark an American response as well as what sorts of U.S. actions might influence Chinese behavior.

Issued in the fall of 2001, the independent task force report Building Support for More Open Trade recommended that Congress give the president trade promotion authority and use the benefits of trade expansion to deal with labor, environmental, and other social issues.

Frank G. Wisner II and Nicholas Platt continue to co-chair a task force on South Asia cosponsored with the Asia Society; their work has become increasingly critical as the stakes in the region grow higher.

The Threats to Democracy Task Force, co-chaired by Madeleine K. Albright and Bronislaw Geremek, seeks to
encourage preventive action and develop mechanisms to
deter unconstitutional interruptions of the democratic
process as well as the slow erosion of democracy.

The Council is also sponsoring an independent task
force to better define the U.S. role in the United Nations.
This effort, cosponsored with Freedom House, is chaired
by David Dreier and Lee H. Hamilton.

In addition, the Korea task force, co-chaired by Morton
I. Abramowitz and James T. Laney, has reconvened.
Finally, the Japan task force, chaired by Laura D’Andrea
Tyson, will meet to evaluate the current situation in that
country.

Congressional Roundtable
Program

An informed Congress is essential to an effective American for-
egn foreign policy, and an informed congressional staff is essential to
an effective Congress. Reaching across party lines, the Coun-
cil’s congressional staff roundtables provide a forum to discuss
major international issues under the Council’s tradition of
nonattribution.

Co-chaired by Thomas E. Donilon and Kenneth M.
Duberstein, the Congressional Roundtable Program has
held more than 130 meetings on Capitol Hill since 1998,
providing a neutral setting for key congressional staffers
from both houses of Congress to engage in nonpartisan dis-
cussion of various policy matters. This year, the program
hosted meetings on the war on terrorism, China’s entry
into the World Trade Organization, priorities for economic
development, and security issues in Southeast Asia, among
others. Alton Frye and Robert C. Orr co-direct the program.

Council Policy Initiatives

The Council undertakes a Council Policy Initiative (CPI) when
a foreign policy issue is of current and critical importance but
it seems highly unlikely that clashing views can be reconciled in
a meaningful consensus by a task force. The goal of a CPI is to
spark debate among interested Americans on key foreign policy
choices in ways that can be easily understood by informed non-
experts. CPI authors try to make the best case for each alterna-
tive. To this end, the Council will publish a concise text
containing the choices, written usually as speeches that a U.S.
president could give, with a cover memo as if written by a key
presidential adviser, summarizing the choices and giving the
necessary historical and political background.

Lawrence J. Korb’s Reshaping America’s Military: Four
Alternatives, updating an earlier CPI, outlines four possi-
ble defense policy options: “Enhanced Defense” would
substantially increase spending on both existing and
future capabilities to deal with both traditional and new
threats; “Revolutionary Transformation” would put
defense dollars toward new revolutionary technologies
now, with an eye on future threats; “Evolutionary Trans-
formation” would rebuild our existing capability to com-
bat present threats and only secondarily invest in future
technologies; and “Cooperative Defense” would pro-
mote burden-sharing with our allies and international
institutions.