



TTCSP

THINK TANKS AND CIVIL SOCIETIES PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

North America Virtual Think Tank Summit Report

June 29, 2021

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Introduction

The North American Think Tank Summit 2021 was held virtually on Tuesday, June 29, 2021. The conference had 90 registered participants from 77 institutes in 28 different countries.

The focus of the summit was to discuss the operational and strategic challenges faced by think tanks in the wake of the COVID Pandemic. In the words of TTCSP Director Dr. James McGann, words, think tanks are at an “existential and pivotal” moment politically, seeing unprecedented challenges to the intellectual credibility of institutes worldwide amid massive public distrust in government and expert guidance during the pandemic, as well as struggles operationally, financially and politically as the ever developing situation has put think tanks’ adaptability to the test.

The conference saw executives and leaders from think tanks across North America describe the challenges they faced and the solutions they developed, tempering the hardships of the pandemic with innovation, ingenuity and determination to continue operations. Topics covered included the challenges of a virtual workspace, the growing technological and cultural divide across generational lines, the changing relationship of think tanks and the public, and reestablishing credibility in a world that has had its faith in experts shaken.

Summit Recording

<https://youtu.be/ou-1HHNMa7M>

Participants

Total Participants Joined for part or all of the Conference	90
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Countries Represented: **28**

Afghanistan	India	Morocco	Saudi Arabia
Austria	Indonesia	Mexico	South Africa
Bahrain	Iran	Nepal	Spain
Brazil	Israel	Nigeria	Turkey
Canada	Italy	Pakistan	United Arab Emirates
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Kenya	Romania	United States
Germany	Luxembourg	Rwanda	Uruguay

Institutions Registered & Represented: **77**

Abraham's Children Foundation	Centre for International Governance Innovation	Heritage Foundation	Mercatus Center at George Mason University	The Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia
Acton Institute	Centre for Land warfare studies	Hudson Institute	Migration Policy Institute	The Lugar Center
AERC	Chanakya Chakra	IDB	Moroccan Institute for Strategic Intelligence	Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program
African Union Development Agency NEPAD	Chicago Council on Global Affairs	IDST	Nand & Jeet Khemka Foundation	Trends

APEX (Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada)	CIAJ - ICAJ	IMCO	National Administration Association	Turkish Center for Asia-Pacific Studies
Asia Society	CIGI	Institute of Public Enterprise	Observer Research Foundation	UC Berkeley
Atlantic Council	COMEXI	Inter-American Dialogue	OEACT	UCLA Career Center
Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat)	CURI - Consejo Uruguayo para las Relaciones Internacionales	Isee Systems, inc.	Organisation Paysanne Pour Le Développement Durable	University of Pennsylvania
Baker Institute	Ecologic Institute	Islamabad Policy Research Institute	Personnel Heritage	University of Pittsburgh
Better Cities Project	Economic Policy Research Network (EPRN Rwanda)	ISPI	Public Policy Forum	University of Rochester
Brookings Institution	Elcano Royal Institute	Israel Democracy Institute	RAND Corporation	Urban Institute
Buckeye Institute	Ethos Laboratorio de Políticas Públicas	Korea Foundation	Resources for the Future	VG2PLAY
C.D. Howe Institute	Everybody Rise LLC	Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies	SIR	Wilson Center
Center for a New American Security	Global Center on Cooperative Security	Macdonald-Laurier Institute	Spiritus Partners	
Center for American Progress	Global Leaders in Unity and Evolvment	Mayhan Associates - Researchers & Consultants HealthCare	Stimson	
Center for Governance and Markets - University of Pittsburgh	Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs	McKinsey Global Institute	Strategic Fiker Center for Studies	

Event Summary & Key Takeaways

Session I: Introductory Remarks

Opening Remarks: **James McGann** - Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, *United States*

Dr. James McGann opened by welcoming the guests present and reiterated the focus of the summit: the operational and strategic challenges faced by think tanks. In his words, think tanks are at an “existential and pivotal” moment politically as well as in terms of their operations. He continued by asking that given the post pandemic situation, what will be the new and enduring policy challenges faced by think tanks? And further, how can they prepare? He emphasized that it is in the interests of all present to help sustain think tanks around the world.

Dr. McGann continued by giving thanks to Brookings Institution, the longtime partner of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, the summit’s Planning Committee and furthermore lauded Brookings and CIGI as “good citizens of the global think tank community.” He also iterated the TTCSP’s commitment to diversity and representativeness, not only to be “politically correct” but to be diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity and political orientation fosters innovations and is a key metric of diversity in TTCSP’s programs.

He closed by encouraging think tanks to resist being drawn into partisan warfare and further to “be a part of the solution, and not a part of the problem” when it comes to building policy consensus. Finally, he expressed that think tanks can provide the leadership needed at the critical moment we currently face.

Session II, Panel I: Getting Beyond COVID: A Mandate for Leaders, Common Purpose and Change

Chair: Kate Koett - Chief of Staff, NextGen National Security Leaders, *United States*

Dr. Koett opened by outlining the purpose of this panel: to present and discuss the short-term and long-term impact of COVID-19 on the North American region. The panelists were also asked to focus on what their countries need to do to move beyond the pandemic and address the many national and regional challenges facing North America.

John Allen - President, Brookings Institution, *United States*

Mr. Allen began by thanking Dr. McGann for his efforts in organising the summit and running this program. He then moved to enumerate the key policy challenges the United States is facing today. First, he addressed the “woeful state” of the American healthcare system. He questioned whether the U.S. could have been better prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic and argued that moving forward the U.S. ought to prepare itself for future pandemics so as to avoid the mistakes made in the handling of this one. He noted that it is not if there will be a next pandemic but when. Second, Mr. Allen highlighted the damage COVID-19 has done to the global economy. On a more positive note, he claimed that the infrastructure bill being considered currently is a “bipartisan triumph” for the Biden administration. Third, Mr. Allen mentioned that the pandemic exposed deep structural inequality in America. Racial and gender inequality left communities of color and women disproportionately affected by the economic, social, and public health consequences of the pandemic. The final challenge Mr. Allen presented was that many political leaders politicized COVID-19, resulting in an ineffective and “near catastrophic” approach to mitigating the damages caused by the pandemic.

Celia Toro - Vice President of Programs, Studies and Analysis, COMEXI, *Mexico*

Dr. Toro began by arguing that the North American project has “stalled” for more than a decade and that President Trump created perhaps “the most serious crisis the North American project has faced”, potentially threatening the future of the project itself. She highlights a number of issues that will define the future of the North American project. Among these are the U.S.’s response to rising inequalities and aggression from U.S. police at the U.S.-Mexico border in tandem with the lack of a satisfactory response to drug smuggling and undocumented migration. She closes by questioning the political purpose of North American integration today as a means of framing the future of the North American project.

Rohinton P. Medhora - President, Centre for International Governance Innovation, *Canada*

Dr. Medhora opened by stating that the COVID-19 pandemic was not unexpected. The likely occurrence of a pandemic had been discussed in policy circles before COVID-19 began to spread, it is just that minimal to no preventative action was taken. Dr. Medhora stressed that in responding to the pandemic no one is safe until everyone is safe. This means that just because the U.S. and Canada may have steady vaccine access which will likely allow for a more normal summer, everyone is still not safe until the rest of the world also has the same access. Dr. Medhora argued that structural inequalities exposed by the pandemic is the area in which the most work needs to be done. He also claimed that the pandemic demonstrated that we cannot rely on globalization entirely -- the protectionism brought about by PPE shortages being a case-in-point. Turning to solutions, Dr. Medhora argued that we need to change the perception of government being the “problem” -- public attitudes towards government need to change to see it as the solution to societal issues.

Session III, Panel II: Operational Challenges Facing Think Tanks in a Post COVID World

Chair: Aaron Shull - Managing Director, Center for International Governance Innovation, *Canada*

As chair of the panel Mr. Shull opened by setting goals for the panel. These entailed outlining various challenges from the last eighteen months, elaborating on what think tanks have done in response to the pandemic, and highlighting what the best practices are in the think tank industry.

Liliana Alvarado- General Director, Ethos, *Mexico*

Ms. Alvarado stressed that the first challenge with which we must reckon is how we can return to the workplace. She posited that in the case of many staff members not being fully vaccinated it will be difficult to return to the previous model of full in-person working. For her organization, she said that there will be a small private office for in person co-working from July 2021. She highlighted the importance of this update by revealing the costs of an all-virtual work environment. With time lost to commute now free, many people spend that time working even more which adds stress to the team by demanding a new level of productivity. Further, workers are also losing a sense of belonging to the organizations for which they work due to a lack of interpersonal interaction. She also noted that there are express difficulties posed for journalists as it is now harder to obtain interviews as spontaneous and face-to-face interaction is no longer an option in many cases. On the flipside, however, virtual events

have had the positive impact of allowing for people to attend events and meetings they otherwise may not have been able to.

Anna Jahn - Fellow, Canada Public Policy Forum, *Canada*

Ms. Jahn began by highlighting the necessity of handling mental health challenges that have emerged as a result of the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. In solving this issue she noted that human resources departments will be very valuable. She recommended increasing mental health benefit packages and creating more social gatherings online to compensate for the lack of in-person interaction. She also stressed that people do not work less from home but more. This creates a concern about drawing boundaries between personal and professional life.

Eric Korsvall - Vice President of Operations, Heritage Foundation, *United States*

Mr. Korsvall noted that the Heritage Foundation was able to keep its buildings open throughout much of the pandemic which was incredibly beneficial for younger employees and employees with kids. Starting in May 2021, they opened up to full operations following a four phase plan to return to normal working. This, he claimed, kept morale high amongst staff. Heritage also mastered the benefits of virtual spaces including reaching new audiences and increasing event attendee figures. Overall, Mr. Korsvall highlighted that Heritage's approach to working during the pandemic has prioritized flexibility and hopes to maintain that in the future. He argued that innovation and experimentation in operations works if it is bottom-up.

Daniel M. Rothschild - Mercatus Center, George Mason University, *United States*

The biggest challenge for organizations, Mr. Rothschild claimed, is the need for speed. The pandemic response has demonstrated that it is possible to ramp up operations to act efficiently in dealing with crises. We need to maintain this ability. He also noted that the decline of think tanks more broadly creates a challenge for the think tank community. To combat this, he stresses the importance of projects over programs. Programs are more rigid and long-term, making them vulnerable to redundancy in the future as societal needs change. He argued that flexibility is key and that projects are better suited for this goal as they are more short term and can change and be re-evaluated more easily. In terms of talent, he said that think tanks are now especially looking for entrepreneurial and creative people.

Julie Varghese - Chief Operating Officer Atlantic Council, *United States*

Julie Varghese started by explaining that the Atlantic Council was involved in hosting virtual events from week one of the pandemic, hosting 847 during 2020 with 159% engagement over 2019. They saw a 16% increase in staff since March 2020, and furthermore worked to fortify cybersecurity protocols. She described the return to office and hybrid events as “infinitely complex” and that the return to “normal” would be the riskiest path forward. Only a small percentage of their staff wants to stay remote, and a majority wish to return to the office at least 3 days per week - which she posits may be because a large portion of the staff is below 35 and may want to build work relationships. During this time they’ve reworked the office to allow for hybrid events and used this time to reimagine why office space is used.

Julie Varghese closed by stating that the Labor Day that year would be a pilot program for the Atlantic Council and that they need to be agile, ready to take chances and be innovative in new ways to engage. She finally called for employees to be kind to one another as they return to a “reshaped landscape,” ending with the question “how can you create an environment that feels just as good for the people in Zoom as it does for those in the room?”

Karen Witt - Vice President of Human Resources, Center for American Progress, *United States*

Karen Witt described that 2020 was an “emotionally and mentally difficult year,” citing the election, the pandemic, racial reckoning and trauma from the Trump administration. Despite this, she stated her belief that people were committed and passionate about making change, and a feeling that hard work had paid off by January when Biden entered office. She reported that many of the CAP staff left to join the Biden administration and the organization is working 100% remotely until after Labor Day as office spaces are being redesigned and reimaged. She continued to describe that virtual work norms resulted in the “erasure of separation between home life and work life” which she felt mirrored the situation of her grandparents - both farmers, where the two were intertwined and the 9-to-5 work day was eroded as it was in CAP

She closed by stating that there is a lot of anxiety among staff around uncertainty in the future - they recognize the need to learn better to address mental health issues, which they are making efforts on, and working to figure out how to manage employees in the ways they need, fostering trust at an institutional level.

Session IV, Panel III: A Call to Action

Chair: Duncan Wood - Vice President for Strategy & New Initiatives, Wilson Center, *United States*

Duncan Wood opened the session by outlining its purpose, to outline why there is a mandate for leadership, common purpose and change in a post-pandemic world, and how think tanks can provide the leadership necessary to forge the consensus that is needed to meet to create a better and brighter future for the citizens of our respective countries. He further noted the Wilson Center held its first hybrid event the day previous, which was private and by invitation only. He expressed that a good hybrid event is one where “people coming back into the room can interact meaningfully with people outside.”

Valeria Moy- CEO, IMCO, *Mexico*

Valeria Moy started by describing that the whole team at IMCO was in desperate need of leadership, which was difficult to do in a Zoom environment. She related that people wanted to make sure the work they were doing was important and relevant, but there were issues of mental health like depression and anxiety, especially among younger members of the team. Also among the younger members was a desire to talk about the importance of their own work, and she noted that the generational divide on the view of technology, personal relationships and how leadership should work all created issues to address during the pandemic.

Valeria Moy went on to say that returning to some in-person work was “incredibly helpful” and that it provides a common purpose for think tanks and the direction they are looking for. She closed by saying that IMCO “needs a glue that keeps everyone together,” and that they should avoid the idea that everything is falling apart, but instead focus on rebuilding as their vision.

Andrew Selee - President, Migration Policy Institute, *United States*

Andrew Selee started by saying “we are together, and, we are not together.” He described that there were two people in the office at the Migration Policy Institute, and that they intended to open the following week to allow more employees back to working in person, having hosted their first hybrid event earlier that day. He expressed “I don’t think any of us will ever be in the office five days a week again” and that through the pandemic, he believes that think tanks as a whole have learned they can balance their lives in multiple ways. While it is good to have spaces where people can meet up, it’s also good to have flexibility in not being in the office every single day - and that they should celebrate that people can come back and that they won’t be here all the time.

He continued by saying that his institute is trying to keep what they learned and to balance in person and remote meetings. He stated that he believes think tanks have learned to be less elitist in a way, as they are able to draw in new voices more easily with the accessibility of the remote format, rather than working with the same voices again and again. He then posed three questions for think tanks to ponder, being how they can think about resilience to prepare for the next health crisis, how can we create resilient borders that don't have to shut down in the next pandemic, and how can society be more resilient around education so children do not lose out on their education.

Andrew Seele closed by stating that in his view there has been a loss of interest in what it means to be right next to each other for the US, Canada and Mexico, and urged thought to be directed again to regional collaboration. He finished by saying that there might be a moment we can take advantage of here where we are once again thinking about what it means to be a north american community

Brian Lee Crowley - Managing Director, MacDonald-Laurier Institute, *Canada*

Brian Lee Cowley started by stating that he believes the pandemic has demonstrated that the “cool, dispassionate and scientific expertise of think tankers is largely a myth, based on a presumption of their knowledge.” He stated his view that the baseline of humanity is ignorance, as knowledge is scarce, not abundant. Due to this, he stated that he feels responses to outbreaks will always be partial and imperfect, pointing to the lack of expert consensus, and how that marginalized certain groups. Drawing upon these lessons, he states that he believes the next pandemic will be different, and that many of the concepts we uncovered now may no longer be relevant.

He continued that the pandemic showed the weakness of the idea that experts have all the answers, and that people don't want to be ordered around by bureaucrats and experts. He further stated his belief that as a society, outside of times of extreme crisis, the public doesn't have a set of common objectives that all agree on and therefore a response to a crisis cannot be perfectly replicated for the next. He closed by repeating his opening remark that “the default condition of humanity is ignorance.”

Session V: Closing Remarks

Closing Remarks: James McGann - Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, *United States*

Dr. McGann closed the summit by stating that “if everyone agrees with everyone else, we have failed.” He warned against “following the herd” and highlighted the importance of challenging conventional wisdom and having a resident skeptic or iconoclast for the sake of constructive criticisms to counter general assumptions.

Dr. McGann went on to say that think tanks need to be in the front lines and not remain in “ivory towers,” and that they are not among the public - citing the need for institutions in the heartland around the 2016 election, which few responded to. He continued by stating that “no one institution or person is the sole holder of the truth, there is a common ground somewhere and we need to find it.” He urged the audience to consider answering the questions of why think tanks matter and why they have value, and that common ground is essential to their effectiveness.

Dr. McGann closed by expressing that sharing vaccines with Canada and Mexico is in the self-interest of the US and is something think tanks can agree is a common problem needing to be addressed.

A special thank you to our panelists:

Opening Session

James McGann, Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP), USA

James G. McGann, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer at the Lauder Institute of the Wharton School and the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. He is also the Director of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania.

He conducts research on developments and problems that think tanks and policymakers around the world face, and offers guidance and technical assistance to think tanks, governments and public and private donors on how to enhance the quality and effect of policy analysis. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a think tank based in Philadelphia. Prior to joining the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. McGann was an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Villanova, where he taught international relations, international organizations and international law.



Session I, Panel II



Kate Koett, Chief of Staff; Director, NextGen National Security Leaders, Program Center for a New American Security

Kate Koett is the Chief of Staff and the Director of the Shawn Brimley Next Generation National Security Leaders Fellowship at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). In the Chief of Staff capacity, Kate manages scheduling for the CEO; her portfolio also includes diversity and inclusion initiatives within CNAS. Prior, Kate was the Associate Director of the Millennium Leadership Program at the Atlantic Council, coordinating all recruitment and logistical components for the Millennium Fellowship. She has also worked for the Washington Internship Institute and the Fund for American Studies running academic internship programs for college undergraduates.

John Allen, President, Brookings Institution, United States

John Rutherford Allen assumed the presidency of the Brookings Institution in November 2017, having most recently served as chair of security and strategy and a distinguished fellow in the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings. Allen is a retired U.S. Marine Corps four-star general and former commander of the NATO International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan. He is the co-author of the book *Turning Point: Policymaking in the Era of Artificial Intelligence* alongside co-author Darrell M. West (Brookings Press, 2020). Allen served in two senior diplomatic roles following his retirement from the Marine Corps. First, for 15 months as senior advisor to the secretary of defense on Middle East Security, during which he led the security dialogue for the Israeli/Palestinian peace process.



Celia Toro, Vice President Programs, Studies and Analysis, COMEXI Mexico

With a degree in International Relations from El Colegio de México and a Masters of Political Science from Stanford University, Celia Toro is an academic with a long career. She has been a visiting researcher at various institutions, such as the University of Texas-Austin, Stanford University, Harvard University, and the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the University of California at San Diego. Currently, she is a Professor and researcher at the Center for International Studies of El Colegio de México and Coordinator of the Mexico-United States-Canada Program (PROMEC), as well as the Inter-Institutional Program of Studies on the North American Region (PIERAN).

Rohinton P. Medhora, President, Centre for International Governance Innovation, Canada

Rohinton P. Medhora is president of CIGI, joining in 2012. He served on CIGI's former International Board of Governors from 2009 to 2014. Previously, he was vice president of programs at Canada's International Development Research Centre. His fields of expertise are monetary and trade policy, international economic relations and development economics.

Rohinton sits on The Lancet and the Financial Times Commission on Governing Health Futures 2030, as well as the Commission on Global Economic Transformation, co-chaired by Nobel economics laureates Michael Spence and Joseph Stiglitz. He serves on the boards of the Institute for New Economic Thinking and the McLuhan Foundation and is on the advisory boards of the WTO Chairs Programme, UNU-MERIT, and Global Health Centre. Rohinton is also a member of the Ontario Workplace Recovery Advisory Committee.



Session II, Panel III



Aaron Shull Managing Director, Centre for International Governance Innovation, Canada

As CIGI's managing director and general counsel, Aaron Shull acts as a strategic liaison between CIGI's research initiatives and other departments while managing CIGI's legal affairs and advising senior management on a range of legal, operational and policy matters. A member of CIGI's executive team, Aaron provides guidance and advice on matters of strategic and operational importance, while working closely with partners and other institutions to further CIGI's mission. He also serves as corporate secretary.

Liliana Alvarado, General Director, Ethos, Mexico

Liliana Alvarado holds a graduate degree in International Relations (ITAM) and a Masters in Public Policy and Administration (London School of Economics). She collaborated in the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit where she acquired extensive experience in tax policy and specialized in the analysis of tax systems in the international arena. She also worked at Fundar in the Public Budgets Area, on budget transparency and accountability. At Ethos, she has coordinated work on public finances, poverty, public security and anti-corruption.



Anna Jahn, PPF Academy and Action Canada Fellowship, Canada Public Policy Forum, Canada

Anna Jahn is the Executive Director of PPF Academy and the Action Canada Fellowship at Public Policy Forum. Her experience in Canada and abroad has fed her passion for providing inclusive, innovative spaces where leaders can develop their expertise and create better public policy. Before joining the Public Policy Forum in 2016, Anna held a leadership role at the Centre on Public Management and Policy at the University of Ottawa.

Eric Korsvall, Vice President Operations, Heritage Foundation, United States

As vice president of Operations, Eric directs corporate real estate and oversees the Workplace Services, Information Technology, and Events & Programming teams for Heritage, supporting a workforce of nearly 400 people and 7,000 events and public programs annually in Washington D.C. and across the country. Through Eric's leadership, the Operations team provides excellent stewardship of Heritage's real property and financial resources and delivers exceptional customer experiences across all programs, platforms, and solutions to amplify Heritage's impact and standing. From high-profile events to cyber security, the Operations team ensures operating and capital investment decisions are aligned to enterprise-wide objectives, while effectively managing risk to protect Heritage's interests and seeking new opportunities to advance Heritage's mission, strategic plan, and business results.



Daniel M. Rothschild, Executive Director, Mercatus Center, George Mason University, United States

Daniel M. Rothschild is the Executive Director of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. He leads strategy and oversees all programs and operations for the organization. Prior to serving in this role at Mercatus, Mr. Rothschild was director of state projects and a senior fellow with the R Street Institute. He joined R Street in October 2013 after two years as the first-ever director of external affairs and coalitions at the American Enterprise Institute. Previously, he spent six years in a variety of policy, communications, and project management positions at the Mercatus Center. He has worked extensively with think tanks throughout the country.

Julie Varghese, Chief Operating Officer, Atlantic Council, United States

Julie Varghese is the Atlantic Council's chief operating officer with over 20 years of experience in a variety of non-profit, healthcare, governmental, political, and cultural organizations. Julie joined the Council in 2013 as the first director of events and has steadily taken on increased managerial responsibility leading to her promotion to vice president for global events and external relations in 2016, her promotion to chief administrative officer in 2018, and eventually her promotion to chief operating officer in 2021. She came to the Council after ten years at New York-Presbyterian Queens Hospital as director of special events where she served as principal development officer and producer responsible for fundraising, design, and implementation of event programming for annual galas, golf classics, and cultivation dinners.





Karen Witt, Vice President of Human Resources, Center for American Progress, United States

Karen Witt is the Vice President of Human Resources for the Center for American Progress.

Session IV, Panel III

Duncan Wood, Vice President for Strategy & New Initiatives, Wilson Center, United States

Duncan Wood, PhD, Vice President for Strategy & New Initiatives and Senior Advisor to the Wilson Center's Mexico Institute, is an internationally renowned specialist on North American politics, Mexico and U.S.-Mexican ties who lectures and publishes on hemispheric issues and relations.



Valeria Moy, CEO, IMCO, Mexico

Before her current position, Anna spent four years as the head of ¿Cómo vamos?, a research center focused on the economic policy of Mexico. She worked in the National Banking and Securities Commission in the areas of Development and Economic Studies, Market Supervision and Stock Market Supervision. She was also a senior researcher for the Mexico-based Harvard Business School for three years. Since 2001 she has taught macroeconomics, at the bachelor's and master's level, at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM). She is a weekly columnist and has an economics podcast called "Pears and Apples." She is further a nonresident associate of the Atlantic Council and the Brookings Institution. She was educated as an economist from ITAM and received an MBA from the London School of Economics.

Andrew Selee, President, Migration Policy Institute, United States

Andrew Selee is President of the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), a global nonpartisan institution that seeks to improve immigration and integration policies through fact-based research, opportunities for learning and dialogue, and the development of new ideas to address complex policy questions, a position he assumed in 2017. He also chairs MPI Europe's Administrative Council.



Brian Lee Crowley, Managing Director, Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Canada



Brian Lee Crowley has a long and distinguished record in the think tank world. He was the founder of the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS) in Halifax, one of the country's leading regional think tanks. AIMS is one of the world's most honoured think tanks. It is a four time winner of the Sir Antony Fisher Award. No think tank in the world has won this honour more times than AIMS. Crowley is a former Salvatori Fellow at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC and a former Senior Fellow at the Galen Institute, a health care policy think tank also based in Washington. In addition, he has been a member of the boards or advisory councils of institutes in places as diverse as Canada, the USA, Nigeria, Britain, France and Brussels.

Closing Session

James McGann, Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP), USA





About the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program:

The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the Lauder Institute of the University of Pennsylvania conducts research on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world. Often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank,” TTCSP examines the evolving role and character of public policy research organizations.

Since its formation, TTCSP has laid the foundation for a global initiative that will help bridge the gap between knowledge and policy in critical policy areas such as international peace and security, globalization and governance, international economics, environment, information and society, poverty alleviation and health. This international collaborative effort is designed to establish regional and international networks of policy institutes and communities that will improve policy making as well as strengthen democratic institutions and civil societies around the world. TTCSP at the Lauder Institute works with leading scholars and practitioners from think tanks and universities in a variety of collaborative efforts and programs.

About the Lauder Institute:

Founded by brothers Leonard and Ronald Lauder in 1983 in honor of their father, Joseph, the Joseph H. Lauder Institute for Management and International Studies provides a fully integrated business education to a new generation of leaders coming of age in a rapidly globalizing world.

About the University of Pennsylvania:

The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) is an Ivy League school with highly selective admissions and a history of innovation in interdisciplinary education and scholarship. As a world-class research institution, The University of Pennsylvania peer institutions are Stanford, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Dartmouth, Cornell, Cambridge and Oxford. Penn was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1740 to push the frontiers of knowledge and benefit society by integrating study in the liberal arts and sciences with opportunities for research and practical, pre-professional training at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Penn is committed to meeting the full demonstrated need of all undergraduates with grant-based financial aid, making this intellectually compelling integration of liberal and professional education accessible to talented students of all backgrounds and empowering them to make an impact on the world. Penn boasts a picturesque campus in the middle of Philadelphia, a dynamic city that is conveniently located between Washington, D.C. and New York, New York.

About the Director:

James G. McGann, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer at the Lauder Institute of the Wharton School and the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. He is also the Director of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the University of Pennsylvania. He conducts research on developments and problems that think tanks and policymakers around the world face, and offers guidance and technical assistance to think tanks, governments and public and private donors on how to enhance the quality and effect of policy analysis. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a think tank based in Philadelphia. Prior to joining the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. McGann was an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Villanova, where he taught international relations, international organizations and international law.

His main research priorities include: analyzing global developments in research on safety and international affairs; influencing United States' foreign and domestic policies through think tanks; strategic advice to BRICS and G20 countries from think tanks and transnational and regional public policy challenges. He is the creator and author of the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index which ranks think tanks in every region of the world.

Dr. McGann has served as a consultant and advisor to the World Bank; the United Nations; the United States Agency for International Development; the Soros, Rockefeller, MacArthur, Hewlett and Gates foundations; the Carnegie Corporation; and foreign governments on the role of nongovernmental, public policy and public engagement organizations in the US and developing and transitional countries. He has also served as the Senior Vice President for the Executive Council on Foreign Diplomats, the Public Policy Program Officer for the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Assistant Director of the Institute of Politics, John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He has also served as a Senior Advisor to the Citizens' Network for Foreign Affairs and the Society for International Development.



“Helping to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy”

The mission of TTCSP is to increase the profile, capacity and performance of think tanks at the national, regional and global levels so they can better serve policymakers and the public.

TTCSP conducts research on the relationship between think tanks, politics and public policy, produces the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index, develops capacity-building resources and programs, manages and supports a global network of over 8,000 think tanks and trains future think tank scholars and executives.

TTCSP is often referred to as the “think tanks’ think tank.”

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