Introduction

The 2020 North America Virtual Think Tank Summit was hosted by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) on Sunday, November 13, 2020. Panelists belonging to think tanks all across North America came together to discuss the multi-sectoral short-term and long-term impacts of the pandemic on the region. Panelists were asked to discuss what lessons we have learned and what are some of the best practices that have been developed to address the social, political, public health and economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis. The Summit was intentionally scheduled to take place after the US presidential elections so that regardless of the results, it could be demonstrated why experts, policy advice and think tanks matter. Speakers presented concrete recommendations, policies and programs that should be implemented to address the crisis and how to prepare for a turbulent and uncertain future. Finally, an inspirational call to action was issued by a group of thought leaders to rally the cause of national and international cooperation and action to save lives and livelihoods. Below is the access link to the recording of the Summit and a breakdown of the participants, countries, and organizations represented, followed by the 2020 North America Think Tank Summit Report.

Access Link To Recording:

https://youtu.be/Ykf47nPS8YY
## Participants

### Total Participants

Joined for part or all of the Conference

| Total Participants | 132 |

### Countries Represented: 33

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### Institutions Registered and Represented: 143

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<td>Global Center on Cooperative Security</td>
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<td>McKinsey Global Institute</td>
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Opening Session I, Introductory Remarks

James G. McGann, Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP), Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania, United States

James McGann began the summit by thanking every one of the 240 Think Tanks from North America that registered and the contributions of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program’s research interns. He explained how opening sessions usually analyze the long-term economic, social, political, and public health challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. As a result, the guests will also include how their institutions survived by tackling these issues during this international crisis. McGann also laid out how this summit will conduct in two phases: one part concerning policy changes and one part addressing how the political nature of governments is being shaped by the pandemic. However, many of the issues speakers have brought up in previous summits have been accelerated by this pandemic and either transformed or terminated many research institutions. McGann expressed that what speakers share today may strengthen North American institutions through planning and becoming more adaptable.

Session II, Panel I: Discussion The social, economic, and political impact of COVID-19 on North America

Chair: Brian Finlay President, United States, Stimson Center

Brian Finlay thanked James McGann for organizing global summits and remarked about the importance of coming together and moderated the summit by presenting the question to the panel again and re-introducing each guest for their respective speaking times.

Stephanie Aaronson, Vice President & Director of Economic Studies, Brookings Institution, United States

Stephanie Aaronson began her speaking time by explaining that the United States is in the midst of its third wave in the pandemic crisis, and hospitalizations and cases are again steeply rising. Intensive Care Units are running out of space and turning people away, and the government is seeing non-Covid health problems. The pandemic is now shifting to the midwest and hitting a lot of rural communities.
that were sheltered from this outbreak in the first two waves of the pandemic, but cases are also rapidly increasing on both of the American coasts. She did not find it dramatic to say that the government was facing a dire crisis right now. After Brian Finlay asked her to elaborate on how different American sectors had to step up as a response, Stephanie Aaronson explained that there has been substantial economic incline since May. She attributed this partially to states reopening up economic activity and rapid aid to businesses and bond markets. She worried that economic prospects may not look as good as social programs run out or expire, fearing another rise in the unemployment rate.

She also noted that the summer 2020 protests against police murders gathered social momentum, and going forward the United States will need to account for these suggested reforms in its budget. She also believed that reinforcing public health infrastructure and policy organization are the two strongest issues the future federal administration needs to be concerned about.

**Jason Clemens, Executive Vice President, Fraser Institute, Canada**

Jason Clemens noted that dealing with how to adapt universal healthcare is a unique problem that the pandemic brought to Canada. Canada ranks 26/28 out of countries where The IMF covers healthcare infrastructure and doctors. That already provided Canada with a challenge in maintaining its healthcare system even before the pandemic. As a result, the Canadian government has had to cancel 300,000-400,000 surgeries that were not Covid-19 related. The government also has an eighteen-month response rate. In order to maintain Canada’s universal healthcare, Clemens suggested referencing other countries that use the same healthcare system like Germany and Switzerland that perform better on the outcome side. The IMF predicted that Canada would have the eleventh worst recession in 2020, but at the same time the government has to borrow almost 20% of its GDP.

In comparison to its government spending, Canada has not proven to be one of the most resilient economies compared to other IMF-funded countries. The Bank of Canada indicated that it is going to step back on emergency measures, so part of the issue based on his analysis is that the federal government has focused too much on expediency and not on efficiency. In studies of income stabilization programs, he found that \( \frac{1}{5} \) of those programs’ recipients was still not getting what they needed in single-income households. One lesson from Canada is to also focus on efficiency in social programs.

**Ernesto Velasco, President of the Board, Fudar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación, AC, Canada**

Ernesto Valasco explained the impact that Covid-19 had in Mexico and how the government handled
the crisis. He believed that inequality worsened many of the issues the pandemic brought on. It was difficult to enforce mandatory lockdowns in Mexico, making controlling the spread of the virus difficult. He suggested looking at Mexico’s virus rates with a pinch of salt because Mexico had the lowest testing rates in North America. Mexico’s data on Covid-19 deaths are also unreliable or varied. Mexican hospitals are also having difficulty addressing the high death rate among public healthcare workers and the amount of people waiting for care for urgent non-Covid related ailments. Valasco stated that this was a combination of very diverse healthcare systems where some groups, like indigenous communities, have little information about how to take action during the pandemic or access to robust medical services.

Session III, Panel II: From Ideas to Action

Chair: Fernanda Diez-Torres, Interinstitutional Relations Director, Centro de Estudios Espinosa Yglesias (CEEY), México

Diez-Torres started by addressing the differing rates of recovery for nations impacted by the pandemic, stating that the “nicest forecasts” project the global economy will finish recovering in 2022, while she stated that her own home country, Mexico, is likely to take till 2024. With this in mind, she asked the panel what problems, policies and recommendations need to be put into action, and which permanent changes need to be made?

Diez-Torres noted that the answers are undoubtedly complex and required in-depth analysis, as the pandemic has changed the forecasted agenda of nations in health, economics, environmentalism and education - which are all interconnected, especially in their attempt to diminish inequality. She started with three introductory questions for the panelists: what ideas and research is your think tank bringing into action, are you looking for governmental or academic partners to do so, and how has your thinking about social issues changed as a result of the pandemic?

Edward Greenspon, President and CEO, Public Policy Forum, Canada

Greenspon began by mentioning that the Public Policy Forum had recently completed “Rebuild Canada,” a series of 20 academic papers aimed at policymakers addressing how the country will come out of the pandemic in the medium term and upcoming policy issues. He explained that Canada came into the pandemic with a 32% debt-to-GDP ratio and is projected to get out of it with a combined federal and provincial total of around 70%. Greenspon noted that while this is a large increase, Canada spent more per capita than any other G20 nation on relief programs and still remains in better debt standing than any nation in the G7.
Greenspon continued by stating the pandemic nevertheless brought attention to the dependency of the Canadian economy on exports to the United States. Canada’s GDP is one third exports, which is three times the percentage of the US and one and a half times that of China, and three quarters of its exports are to the US. This, coupled with the Trump administration blockage of a Canada-bound shipment of 300 million N95 masks from 3M, created what Greenspon described as a “crisis of confidence in the US border” which will last after the pandemic. Finally, he has noted that all of these combined also place emphasis on Canada’s oil industry, which is a significant source of income and has mitigated the past 11 years of deficit spending, despite Canada’s support of the Paris Agreement and agenda to decarbonize before and after the pandemic.

Rebecka Shirazi, Vice President and Managing Director, iDeas Lab, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), United States

Shirazi started by echoing the sentiments of the other panelists, that the current pandemic has not only created new issues but made older issues more urgent as well. She continued by stating that as government’s are preoccupied with the present issues of the pandemic, the role of think tanks is both to advise on the current situation but do so in a way that is looking at the long-term when every dollar and piece of attention is fixated on the immediate. She further stated that these solutions must be conducted from a global lens as well, since every nation’s actions affect those it is connected with, and policy solutions cannot be recommended solely based on local effects.

Shirazi explained that CSIS’ health security commission released a set of recommendations before the pandemic hit full force, and the situation showed as it progressed they were shockingly accurate in their predictions and advice. She stated this is an example of how think tanks must be, now more than ever, entrepreneurial, innovation driven, and continue to look towards new ideas and solutions, both for their core audiences and the audiences they need to take with them to create effective policy change. She closed by stating that the think tank world is now in a new space, with a great deal more reliance on digital and virtual components, and that the key is engaging audiences with dynamic products that are data driven, expertise driven, understandable and engaging, as without them, necessary and achievable policy changes may remain unactualized and the world may be in an even worse state than it is now.
**Bridgett Wagner, Vice President for Policy Promotion, The Heritage Foundation, United States**

Wagner began by explaining that early in the pandemic, the Heritage Foundation launched the National Coronavirus Recovery Commission, made up of former legislators, legislators, business leaders, nonprofits and faith leaders, which produced 300+ recommendations to federal, state and local governance as well as businesses, churches, charities and community organizations. She further reported they made contact 40,000 times with policymakers at all level of governance and that 45 states had adopted their top recommendations, many of which are still valid as their trackers and databases are updated.

In regards to specific recommendations, Wagner stated that Heritage had spoken with the Department of Health and Human Services to help implement public-private partnerships with data experts to mitigate what she called the “disastrous” public consequences of the Centers for Disease Controls’ fragmented and nearly unusable data collection and reporting infrastructure. Further, she expressed that Heritage was at work on the economic front recommending any support from Congress by both targeted and temporary, be cautious against rewarding overspending states as this leads to a rise in taxation, and that there be expanded support and accessibility to relief programs for small businesses.

She closed on the topic of education, noting that public school sectors have been very irregular in their responses and reopenings, had little sharing of best practices, and sought to overregulate innovative efforts to increase educational quality. She finished with the statement that “innovation rather than regulation should be the order of the day in this crisis.”

**Vivian Ho, James A. Baker III Institute Chair, Health Economics and Director, Center for Health and Biosciences, United States**

Ho started by stating that the Center for Health and Biosciences is located in Texas, which has half the population of Italy but is roughly even in the number of total cases. She went on to describe that the Center was able to apply for expedited access to the CDC’s the Uniform Case Reports for May 5 through July 16, and was shocked at how incomplete the reports were. She noted that reporting among states and counties was voluntary, and that there was no uniform or standardized means of reporting - with some counties faxing in greatly incomplete paper copies and others reporting digitally.

Ho recommended that the new administration send in a “strike team” of experts to a small number of cities to gather complete data for case reporting forms as they are a robust instrument that can provide much needed data to update the outdated findings from China and South Korea very early on in the
pandemic. This data can provide insights into how safe or dangerous it is to fly, which industries or businesses have a higher rate of transmission, and insights into what day after exposure people test positive. This all provides crucial information to prevent unnecessary closures which cause economic harm without addressing the real sources of infection nationally, especially those surrounding differing types of retail, which Ho noted she is not convinced are the most productive targets in terms of regulation and shutdowns aimed at lowering infection. She closed by noting that strong, consistent and - most importantly, complete - reporting is necessary and needs only be done in a small number of cities to produce generalizable results that would greatly empower regulatory and case mitigation efforts.

Session IV, Panel III: Call to Action

Chair: Laura Lucas Magnuson, Vice President for Communications Strategy, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, USA

Ms. Magnuson opened the panel by introducing the question of how policy and the role of think tanks has changed as a result of COVID-19, setting the theme for the ensuing discussion. She then introduced the first panelist, Graham Fox.

Graham Fox, President and CEO, Institute for Research on Public Policy, Canada

Mr. Fox highlighted two key issues with Canadian governance that have been highlighted in the wake of COVID-19. The first is the short-comings of Canada’s federal system. He notes that Canada is one of the most decentralised federal systems, with regional governments playing a meaningful role in policymaking. With regard to issues that have been affected by COVID-19, regional governments play a notable role in economic development, a dominant role in healthcare, and an exclusive role in education. This means that for Canada has a whole to succeed in its response to COVID-19, regional collaboration is key. Mr. Fox mentioned that viewers were surprised at the level of regional collaboration at the start of the pandemic. He said, however, that this was not really a surprise to him because going into lockdown is not a very “creative” response — though it required a lot of courage and discipline, it was quite a standard move. The second wave will be more telling according to Mr. Fox, as only now have governments had to balance economic, social, and public health interests. He predicted that this more long-term response will expose fault lines of intergovernmental tension as interests are weighed and traded-off. Mr. Fox urges a change in the way Canadian federalism has been managed in order to avoid tension and chaos in the second-wave COVID-19 response. He argued for Canadian federalism to stop seeing the tiers of government as air tight compartments. The issues they are facing
are too complex and connected for this, the Canadia federal system thus needs to mature to understand this interdependence. The second issue Mr. Fox highlighted is that the Canadian government ought not to give COVID-19 too much agency. He noted that while the pandemic has created a lot of meaningful policy problems, many of the issues Canada is currently facing are ones that already existed but are just being further exposed by COVID-19. He used long-term care and income support as two such examples. In order to aptly deal with these problems he urged governments to stop blaming everything on COVID-19 entirely. He also stressed that it is time for governments to start “showing their work” — the more transparent they are about where uncertainties lie and what the evidence shows, the more likely they are to have increased support for COVID-19 restrictions and responses. In all of this, Mr. Fox calls for think tanks to be the spearheads of change. To guide governments in addressing these problems effectively to demonstrate their value.

Daniel M. Rothschild, Executive Director, Mercatus Center of George Mason University, USA

Mr. Rothschild highlighted three issues that limit opportunities for national growth during the pandemic. First, is that policy debates are now largely defined by negation. They revolve around that which people are against rather than for. This occurs across geographies and the political spectrum. The second problem Mr. Rothschild noted is a decline in reason as a mode of discourse — preventing policy debates and activity from reaching its positive impact potential. Finally, he warned of “outsiderism” — the notion that non-governmental political actors lack influence. He argued that think tanks and civil society groups have the ability to solve these problems. Given that governments have given up on developing positive policy agendas, it is an opportunity for market liberal think tanks to develop a positive agenda around innovation and economic dynamism that neither party in the United States and very few parties in Europe have shown interest in developing. He held that COVID-19 has exposed this opportunity given the new attention to the overly conservative and innovation averse nature of regulatory governance and think tanks can help ameliorate this. Civil societies are a source of mediation, purpose, and belonging for people. They give citizens a sense of status to come together on a voluntary basis and develop moral and policy agendas.

Veronica Ortiz, Executive Director, Mexican Council on Foreign Relations, Mexico

Ms. Ortiz outlined the primary issues facing Mexico as a result of the pandemic. She lamented that when COVID-19 hit Mexico it was already structurally weak and unprepared on public health, economic, and security fronts. On public health, when the pandemic hit Mexico’s healthcare welfare system was repealed without being replaced. As such, cases and deaths for COVID-19 are concerningly high and underreported. She noted that it is likely that the actual cases and deaths rate is 2.5 times
higher than what is being reported. On the economic front, Mexico’s GDP is now expected to fall by 10% with recovery likely to be slow. This will cost 12 million jobs given that there are no fiscal resources being allocated towards saving businesses and employers. Ms. Ortiz highlighted that the pandemic pushed more than 11 million people into extreme poverty. Consequently, she urged for the continued and expanded use of evidence-based policy making spearheaded by think tanks.

**Duncan Wood, Vice President, New Initiatives at the Wilson Center, USA**

Mr. Wood’s remarks focused on the importance of communication during the pandemic amongst policy researchers and makers. He argued that now more than ever it is important for think tanks to reach out to their colleagues in struggling countries to help and show support for them. He also noted that Zoom has enabled collaboration to a greater extent but has also revealed a need to create internal communications organically. No longer can people expect to “bump” into colleagues or see them unplanned or spontaneously. Think tanks need to ensure that their employees stay connected regardless of this loss. Another challenge posted to think tanks as a result of the changing nature of communications due to COVID-19 is that anybody can now convene conferences and meetings online, stripping think tanks of their organizational networking power. Mr. Wood argued, however, that this competition is actually good — it ought to push think tanks to innovate and find new ways of asserting their value.

**Closing Remarks**

**James G. McGann, Director, Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) at the Lauder Institute of the University of Pennsylvania, USA**

Dr. McGann concluded by thanking all the panelists for their remarks and demonstrating the positive power of coming together. He stressed that the central message for think tanks around the work is the work together as their fates are tied. The benefits of working together, he argued, far outweigh the costs. Some cross-cutting themes he highlighted were the need to develop policy for both rural and urban areas, the need to bridge divisions in our respective countries to avoid anti-establishment backlash, and the need to start listening to disadvantaged people and do something about it. Dr. McGann urged think tanks to find innovative ways to reach people and held that maintaining our think tank network is key to proving why think tanks matter, especially in times of crisis.
A special thank you to those who participated on our North America Planning Committee:

Acton Institute, United States
Arctic Initiative, United States
Atlantic Council, United States
Belfer Center, United States
Brookings Institution, United States
Center for American Progress, United States
Center for a New American Security, United States
Center for Strategic and International Studies, United States
Centre for International Governance Innovation, Canada
Centro de Estudios Espinosa Yglesias (CEEY), Mexico
Chicago Council on Global Affairs, United States
Ethos Public Policy Lab, Mexico
Fraser Institute, Canada
Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación, AC, Mexico
German Marshall Fund, United States
Heritage Foundation, United States
Hudson Institute, United States
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James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, United States
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McCain Institute, United States
McKinsey Global Institute, United States
Mercatus Center, United States
Middle East Institute, United States
National Bureau of Asia Research (NBR), United States
Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE), United States
RAND Corporation, United States
Reischauer Center for East Asian Studies, United States
Resources for the Future, United States
Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania
United States

Urban Institute, United States

United States Institute of Peace United States

Woodrow Wilson Center, United States

A special thank you to our panelists:
*Listed here in order of appearance in the program

Opening Session

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

James G. McGann, Ph.D. is a senior lecturer of International Studies at the Lauder Institute and director of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program at the University of Pennsylvania. He has served as a senior fellow and director of the Think Tanks and Foreign Policy Program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia since 1989. His research and consulting have enabled him to work with governments and civil society organizations in over 114 countries. Dr. McGann is the creator and editor of the annual Global Go To Think Tank Index. He served as the senior vice president for the Executive Council on Foreign Diplomats, a private organization that assists the U.S. Department of State by providing international and economic affairs programs for senior foreign diplomats, high-level government officials, and Fortune 500 executives. In addition, he helped develop and conduct the U.S. Foreign Policy Briefing Program for foreign diplomats posted to Washington and New York. He served as the assistant director of the Institute of Politics, Kennedy School of Government and as a National Fellow at Stanford University while writing his doctoral dissertation. From 1983-89, Dr. McGann served as the public policy program officer for The Pew Charitable Trusts, one of the largest private charitable foundations in America. He regularly teaches courses on international law, international organizations and is currently teaching a course entitled global issues, politics and institutions. In December 2020, Dr. McGann will have two edited volumes published that explore The Future of Think Tanks and Policy Advice in the US and The Future of Think Tanks and Policy Advice Around the World. The books include 64 presidents from the leading think tanks in every region of the world.
Session II, Panel I

Brian Finlay, President, Stimson Center, USA

Brian Finlay is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Stimson Center. Under his tenure since 2016, Stimson has transformed its business model, launched pioneering new engagements across Asia, and industry-defining programming on environmental security, renewable energy, and technology. As a result, the Center has tripled in size and continues to dramatically outperform similarly-sized institutions in global rankings. Notably, Stimson today boasts the most diverse and inclusive workforce of any major Washington think tank. Brian previously served as Vice President, Managing Director, and Senior Fellow at Stimson. Prior to joining the Center, he served as executive director of a Washington-based lobbying initiative focused on counterterrorism issues, as a researcher at the Brookings Institution, and as a program officer at the Century Foundation. Prior to emigrating to the United States from his native Canada, Brian served with the Public Health Agency and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. He Chairs the Board of Directors of iMMAP, an information management and data analytics organization focused on improving humanitarian relief and development coordination. Brian was an adjunct professor at American University in Washington, and today sits on the Editorial Board of Global Security, a journal of health, science and policy published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis. With expertise in nonproliferation, transnational crime, counter-trafficking, and supply chain security, Brian holds an M.A. from the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University, a graduate diploma from the School of Advanced International Studies, the Johns Hopkins University and an honors B.A. from Western University in Canada.

Stephanie Aaronson, Vice President and Director of Economic Studies, Brookings Institution, USA

Stephanie Aaronson is the Vice President and Director of the Economic Studies program at the Brookings Institution. Aaronson joined Brookings in October 2018 after nearly two decades at the Federal Reserve Board where she was most recently the Assistant Director of the Division of Research and Statistics. Aaronson also serves as an advisory board member of the Journal of Economic Perspectives and as the Washington, DC-area representative to the American Economic Association Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession. Aaronson is a labor economist whose academic research has examined, among other issues, why an increasing share of Americans are not participating in the labor force. She has published research in a variety of academic journals and speaks regularly to the local and national media on labor and monetary policy issues. Her research has been featured in numerous prominent publications, including the Economist, the New York Times, and the Washington Post. In addition to her academic work, Aaronson has been active in efforts to improve diversity and inclusion, and to promote research on economic inclusion, at the Federal Reserve and in the economics profession. In her position at the Federal Reserve Board, Aaronson helped in the preparation of the economic forecast submitted to the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), provided policy analysis to the Board and FOMC in support of
their monetary policy functions, and had oversight of sections that produce analysis, forecasting, and research regarding inflation, monetary policy, and macroeconomic activity and uncertainty. Aaronson joined the Federal Reserve in 2000 and was appointed chief of what was then the Macroeconomic Analysis section in 2012. Between 2011 and 2012 she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Macroeconomic Policy at the Department of Treasury, where she received an award for meritorious service. In 2010 she was a visiting scholar in the Department of Economics at Yale University. Aaronson has an AB degree in history from Columbia College and a Ph.D. in economics from Columbia University.

Jason Clemens, Executive Vice President, Fraser Institute, Canada

Jason Clemens is the Executive Vice President of the Fraser Institute and the President of the Fraser Institute Foundation. He has an Honors Bachelors Degree of Commerce and a Masters Degree in Business Administration from the University of Windsor as well as a Post Baccalaureate Degree in Economics from Simon Fraser University. Before rejoining the Fraser Institute in 2012, he was the director of research and managing editor at the Ottawa-based Macdonald-Laurier Institute and prior to joining the MLI, Mr. Clemens spent a little over three years in the United States with the San Francisco-based Pacific Research Institute. He has published over 70 major studies on a wide range of topics, including taxation, government spending, labor market regulation, banking, welfare reform, health care, productivity, and entrepreneurship. He has published over 300 shorter articles, which have appeared in such newspapers as The Wall Street Journal, Investors Business Daily, Washington Post, Globe and Mail, National Post, and a host of U.S., Canadian, and international newspapers. Mr. Clemens has been a guest on numerous radio and television programs across Canada and the United States. He has appeared before committees of both the House of Commons and the Senate in Canada as an expert witness and briefed state legislators in California. In 2006, he received the coveted Canada’s Top 40 Under 40 award presented by Caldwell Partners as well as an Odyssey Award from the University of Windsor. In 2011, he was awarded (along with his co-authors) the prestigious Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Award for the best-selling book The Canadian Century. In 2012, the Governor General of Canada on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, presented Mr. Clemens with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of his contributions to the country.
Ernesto Velasco has an outstanding track record of leadership. He holds a Doctorate in Governance and Public Administration from the Complutense University of Madrid, a Masters in Public Management from the University of Birmingham and a Bachelor’s Degree in Public Administration from El Colegio de Mexico. He is Director General of Cívicus, Consultants on Public and Social Administration, S.C. He was a member of the International Panel of Experts of the Reporting Mechanism of the Open Government Alliance and has been a consultant in projects from the National Council for the Evaluation of the Social Development Policy of Mexico, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, among other institutions. He is an associate investigator of the Government Administration and Public Policy Research Group (GIGAPP). He has been a professor at El Colegio de México, the CIDE, Ibero-American University, and the Public Administration School of the Federal District, among others. He specializes in themes of public organizations and nonprofit administration, evaluation of policies and programs, and deliberative processes. Among his publications are, “Can the New Public Administration Strengthen Government Transparency? The Case of Performance Management” in Revista de Gestión Pública, and “Public Administration and Accountability: A Compliance-Based Focus to a Results-Based One.”

Fernanda Diez-Torres holds a Bachelor’s degree in Law with a specialization in International Law and a Bachelor’s Degree in Economics. She has worked in diverse areas of public administration. She was Undersecretary of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment in the state of Puebla (2005-2008), Municipal Secretary of Social Development (2008), Adviser Coordinator of the Puebla City Hall (2009) and General Director of Integral Family Development Municipal System of Puebla (2010). She has been part of the Espinosa Yglesias Research Center since September of 2011.
Rebecka Shirazi is vice president for strategic initiatives, leading and supporting management and implementation of a range of high-priority efforts. From April 2016 to October 2020 she was vice president and director of External Relations and managing director of the iDeas Lab at CSIS. In these roles she oversaw and led the Center’s outreach, audience engagement, and publications efforts as well as digital/creative projects, including web development, design, and audio and video collaborations. Previously, she was associate director of the CSIS Middle East Program. She graduated from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in 2010 with an M.Sc. in comparative politics–conflict studies. She also earned an M.A. in international relations and Middle East studies from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland in 2008. Ms. Shirazi previously worked as project coordinator and research assistant at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in Sweden. She joined CSIS in November 2012.

Edward Greenspon has worked at the intersection of journalism and public policy for more than 30 years. Before becoming President & CEO of the Public Policy Forum, Ed was a journalist with The Globe and Mail, Bloomberg News and newspapers in Western Canada. He is also the author of two books on Canadian politics, policy and public opinion. At the Globe, Ed specialized in politics, economics, foreign affairs and business while serving as Editor-in-Chief, Ottawa bureau chief, European correspondent and managing editor of the Report on Business. He was an early proponent of digital transformation as founding editor of globeandmail.com. At Bloomberg News, he was Editor-at-Large for Canada and global managing editor for energy, environment and commodities, a group situated in 22 countries on six continents. Ed is the author of Double Vision: The Inside Story of the Liberals in Power, which won the 1996 Douglas Purvis Award for best public policy book, and of Searching for Certainty: Inside the New Canadian Mindset. He was a winner of PPF’s Hyman Solomon Award for Excellence in Public Policy Journalism. In 2010, he chaired a 13-person panel for the Canadian International Council that produced a bold international policy strategy called Open Canada: A Global Positioning Strategy for a Networked Age. Ed holds a combined honours degree in journalism and political science from Carleton University and was a Commonwealth Scholar at the London School of Economics, earning an M.Sc. (Econ.) with distinction.
Bridgett Wagner, one of the conservative movement’s best-known and well-connected leaders, is senior vice president for Policy Promotion at The Heritage Foundation. Wagner oversees the leading think tank’s Coalition Relations, Truluck Center for Leadership Development, and Young Leaders Program, among other duties. All are focused on spreading conservative principles, policies, and ideas among allies, public audiences, interns and young professionals, and new audiences. Her responsibilities also include advising and consulting with fellow leaders in the private and public sectors. Wagner previously was Heritage’s director of coalition relations since 1998, a position in which she drew respect for motivating, supporting, encouraging, counseling, and otherwise helping to build a vital network of conservative think tanks and issue-based organizations in the U.S. and around the world. Wagner, who was promoted to vice president of external relations in May 2016, joined Heritage in 1981 as a research assistant and speechwriter for Ed Feulner, the think tank’s longtime president. Her other roles at Heritage include director of development, director of business relations, and director of events for the think tank’s 25th anniversary “Leadership for America” campaign. As head of coalition relations, Wagner served as Heritage’s liaison to policy organizations, experts and activists at the state, national, and international levels. She advised other think tanks on ways to advance their policy prescriptions and built support for Heritage’s policy research agenda “beyond the Beltway.” She organized Heritage’s annual Resource Bank meeting, a gathering of hundreds of conservative groups from across the nation and around the world to meet and discuss strategy. She also oversaw publication of Heritage’s quarterly magazine, The Insider. Wagner’s work growing and strengthening the conservative movement, and her success at building diverse coalitions around key policy initiatives, were recognized internally with Heritage’s President’s Award. She is a member of the Mont Pelerin Society and the Philadelphia Society. Wagner, originally from Richardson, Texas, holds a bachelor’s degree in economics from the University of Dallas. She and her husband, Steve, live in Washington, D.C.

Vivian Ho, Ph.D., is the James A. Baker III Institute Chair in Health Economics, director of the Center for Health and Biosciences, a professor in the Department of Economics at Rice University, and a professor in the Department of Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine. Ho’s research examines the effects of economic incentives and regulations on the quality and costs of health care. Her research is widely published in economics, medical and health services research journals. Ho’s research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the American Cancer Society. In 2020, Ho was elected as a member of the National Academy of Medicine. She has served on the Board of Scientific Counselors for the National Center for Health Statistics, as well as on the NIH Health Services,
Outcomes and Delivery study section. She is also a founding board member of the American Society for Health Economists and a board member for Community Health Choice. Ho received her A.B. in economics from Harvard University, a graduate diploma in economics from The Australian National University and a Ph.D. in economics from Stanford University.

Session IV, Panel III

Laura Lucas Magnuson, Vice President for Communications and Strategy, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, USA

Laura Lucas Magnuson is the Vice President for Communications and Strategy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Prior to joining Carnegie, Laura was the communications director for the Obama Foundation, where she managed strategic communications and media relations. Laura previously led communications and public relations for the global law firm Morgan Lewis and media relations for the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. Laura was a Foreign Service officer at the U.S. Department of State for more than a decade, serving overseas at the U.S. embassies in Nepal and the Czech Republic and later working at State Department headquarters to advance U.S. policy related to NATO. She served as the spokesperson for the Office of the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and the press unit chief for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. Laura also worked as a special assistant to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. From 2013 to 2014, Laura served as a White House spokesperson and director of strategic communications at the National Security Council under President Barack Obama. She was responsible for communications related to Europe and Russia, South and Central Asia, cybersecurity, and international economic policy.

Graham Fox, President and CEO, Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP), Canada

Graham Fox was appointed President and CEO of the IRPP in April 2011, and brings to the organization extensive executive-level experience in the fields of politics and public policy. Prior to coming to the IRPP, Graham was a strategic policy adviser at the law firm of Fraser Milner Casgrain, where he provided public policy analysis and government relations advice in the fields of telecommunications, economic development, international aid, foreign investment, energy and aerospace. Before that he was vice-president of the Public Policy Forum, executive director of the KTA Centre for Collaborative Government, and director of communications at the IRPP. In politics, Graham contested the 2007 Ontario general election as a candidate in the constituency of Ottawa-Orléans. He was chief of staff to the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, and adviser to
members of Parliament in the House of Commons. In 1998, he served as press secretary to the Hugh Segal campaign for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada. A policy entrepreneur, Graham’s research interests include parliamentary reform, democratic renewal, citizen engagement and federalism. He holds an undergraduate degree in history from Queen’s University, where he was a Loran scholar, and a master’s degree in political science from the London School of Economics. In the community, he is a member of the board of directors of Le Gesù, a creative arts space in Montreal’s Quartier des spectacles, where he serves as chair of the Finance Committee. He also volunteers with the Loran Scholars Foundation, was chair of the Festival franco-ontarien and was a member of the board of directors of the Montfort Hospital and the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. A frequent media analyst, Graham has appeared regularly on CBC News Network, Radio-Canada, CTV NewsNet, TFO and CFRA. His columns and articles have appeared in The Hill Times, the Globe and Mail, the National Post and Policy Options. He is co-editor, with Jennifer Ditchburn, of The Harper Factor (2016), an analysis of the policy impact of Canada’s 22nd prime minister.

Daniel M. Rothschild, Executive Director, Mercatus Center at George Mason University, USA

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. His popular writing and articles and reviews have appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Reason, Weekly Standard, Roll Call, The Hill, Chicago Policy Review, Economic Affairs, and many other popular and policy publications. He was a 2012-13 National Review Institute Washington fellow. Dan has testified before the U.S. Congress and several state legislatures on tax and fiscal policy, government reform, and disaster recovery policy. Rothschild has a Bachelor’s degree from Grinnell College, a master’s degree from the University of Manchester, and a master’s degree in public policy from the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan.
Veronica Ortiz, Executive Director, Mexican Council on Foreign Relations (COMEXI), Mexico

Veronica Ortiz is Executive Director of the Mexican Council for Foreign Relations. She is a law graduate from the Pan-American University and has studied Comparative Law and Society at the University of Oxford. She worked for the Baker & McKenzie law firm before entering the public sector, where she held positions in the Legal Council of the Presidency, the Ministry of Economy and the National Banking and Value Commission. From 2008 to 2012, she was associate consultant for the GEA, Economists and Associates Group. Since 2013, she has been a consultant and independent policy analyst for national and foreign companies and audiences. She is a member of the Mexican Council for Foreign Relations (COMEXI). She is part of the National Committee for Economic Studies of the Mexican Institute of Finance Executives (IMEF) and the Technical Adviser for the Council of the Center for Economic Studies of the Private Sector (CEESP/CCE) belonging to the Business Coordinating Council. She publishes the biweekly column “Ventana Política” in El Heraldo de México. On TV, she co-hosts, together with journalist Leonardo Curzio, the show “Incursionando” for the Congress Channel.

Duncan Wood, Director of Mexico Institute, Woodrow Wilson Center, USA

Duncan Wood, PhD, Director of 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. He regularly gives testimony to the U.S. Congress on U.S.-Mexico relations, is a widely quoted source on Mexican politics, and has published extensively on this and other issues. He is the author or editor of 12 books and more than 30 chapters and articles. He is currently co-chair of the World Economic Forum’s Global Future Council on Transparency and Anti-Corruption, has worked closely with the WEF on Energy policy, and is a member of the editorial board of Foreign Affairs Latinoamerica. From 1996-2012, he was a professor and the director of the International Relations Program at the Instituto Tecnologico Autonomo de Mexico (ITAM) in Mexico City for 17 years. Over the course of his 30 year career he has been a Fulbright Fellow and a Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS); an editorial advisor to Reforma and El Universal newspapers; Technical Secretary of the Red Mexicana de Energia; a consultant with McLarty Associates, the Economist Intelligence Unit, Horizon and Eurasia Group; and owner of a speakeasy in Mexico City. He studied in the UK and Canada, receiving his Doctorate in Political Studies from Queen’s University, Canada, and is a recipient of the Canadian Governor General’s Visit Award for contributions to the Mexico-Canada relationship.
Closing Remarks

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.”

Contact:
Recognizing and Thanking all TTCSP Interns Involved:

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