

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
SAUL/ZILKHA ROOM

WHY FACTS AND THINK TANKS MATTER:
2018 GLOBAL GO TO THINK TANK INDEX LAUNCH EVENT

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PARTICIPANTS:

Opening Remarks:

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Global Go To Think Tank Index Presentation:

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Panel:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

GENERAL ALLEN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. And it's wonderful to welcome you to the Brookings Institution. My name is John Allen, and I'm the president of the institution, and we're pleased to have you here with us here today.

This morning's event is entitled "Why Facts and Think Tanks Matter" and coincides with the launch of the 2018 Global Go To Think Tank Index, which is led by Dr. Jim McGann of the University of Pennsylvania.

First and foremost, Jim, we are truly honored to host this event today, although I suspect all of us on this stage are biased on this point. This is an incredibly important topic and we're glad to discuss it and we're glad to have a platform to share our perspectives on the ideas that continue to matter so much today in this very challenging time. It's a unique role for think tanks to play during this period, and we're glad to talk about it and to talk about how we fit into the societies of our respective think tanks as we go along.

So ladies and gentlemen, what I'd like to do is introduce Jim McGann, who has some opening remarks, and then I'll introduce our panel members and then we'll kick off.

Jim?

MR. MCGANN: I'm going to be very brief so we have a sustained period of time for the panelists to make their brief presentations and then obviously a discussion.

I want to welcome everyone to this program, Why Facts and Think Tanks Matter. The significance of that these days is not lost on anyone I'm sure. I want to thank Brookings and John Allen and Jenn Berlin and Elliott Fleming for their assistance in helping make this program possible, and certainly, the panelists that have consciously this year, as you may know in previous years, it has been entirely a panel comprised of U.S. think tank executives. Consciously this year we have a number of executives from abroad on the panel to bring their perspective, but also to underscore or underline the importance which was brought up in the breakfast meeting of think tank presidents, of partnerships, both

domestic and international. And I would contend as a result of the increased polarization politically and fragmentation in terms of parties, partnerships between and among think tanks across the political spectrum will be increasingly important and we should encourage that.

This is a global event that is currently, and the number is growing, there are 330 organizations in 85 countries that are simultaneously launching the Global Go To Report, but more importantly, engaging in organically-created, locally-based programs to explore why facts and think tanks matter. And so that is what I believe is an effort to create a global community of think tanks and to do what I think we don't do enough of and as well as we might, which is we're very good as think tanks in terms of engaging policymakers and the public on specific policy issues but we're not so good and don't engage as frequently as I think we should in what is the value, what is the purpose, what is the value added of think tanks in countries around the world. And that's part of what this effort is and it's part of what this discussion is intended to do.

We are in truly challenging and troubling times, and it is my firm belief, heavily biased since I've been studying think tanks for 35 years, so I have great faith in the institutions. And I think that they are critical in terms of meeting the challenges we face, and I am confident that they will. But it will require significant adaptation, innovation, and transformation of institutions. And there is, as I mentioned at the presidents' breakfast, a digital divide among think tanks. Those that get it and those that don't. And that will be a significant and important element in terms of the success and impact of think tanks going forward.

Just two important announcements. One, there will be the annual think tank, North American Think Tank Summit, which brings together Canadian, Mexico, and U.S. think tanks on March 26th and 27th to explore in greater depth these issues. And then second, as promised, if you noticed a little note at the bottom, a big announcement in terms of the change in the rankings in 2019, there will be, you know, a series of changes, but the

biggest one will be that any think tank that has been nominated and ranked for three consecutive years, will be placed in a distinguished center of excellence category that will be reported at the opening section of the report and in each and every section where the think tank has achieved that distinction as a top think tank. They will be, in addition, will sit out for five years in the ranking process. The intent is, one, to recognize those think tanks that have sustained -- are sustained centers of think tank excellence, and then secondly, to give the opportunity for other think tanks to achieve the same level of excellence in the rankings. That's a major change that will take place and will be rolled out with greater specificity in 2019.

So without further ado, I turn it back to John and to the panel.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well, this morning, as I said, it's a great honor for Brookings to have the opportunity to host this distinguished panel and this distinguished audience. And I see many friends in the audience that I've seen for a bit, leaders in their fields, presidents and CEOs of other think tanks, and it's just wonderful to welcome you all here.

I'd like to introduce the members of the panel this morning if I may. And I'll start from my far right, your far left.

First is Thomas Gomart, is the director of the French Institute of International Relations. He's an expert in post-Soviet studies and is a widely published author and has been with the institute in a number of progressively important management roles since 2004. So bonjour, Mr. Gomart. Merci.

Next is -- I'm not going to try to do this for everyone, by the way. I run out of language pretty quickly.

Paolo Magri is our next guest. He's executive vice president and director of the Italian Institute for International Political Studies. He's also professor of International Relations at Bocconi University and holds a number of board and advisory positions and is an expert on many of the most important issues we are studying today that are impacting the

Middle East. So buongiorno, signore. Grazie mille.

Then we have Paul Salem. He is the most recent president of the Middle East Institute and has been president of the Middle East Institute, a tremendous organization, since October of 2018. As the name might imagine, or as the institute's name might imagine, he focuses on issues of political change and transition and conflict, as well as regional and international relations in the Middle East. He's widely published and no stranger to the think tank community. And having founded the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut before his current assignment and directing the Fares Foundation before that, he's deeply seated in that region. And Paul, welcome. I hear that you compose Arabic and Brazilian jazz music. That will be the final question of the morning to try to figure out what that is. So (speaking in foreign language).

Next, Sarah Rosen Wartell. Thank God we're now in the English portion. She is president of the Urban Institute, a role she has held since 2012. And prior, she was founding COO and later executive president at the Center for American Progress. And before that she held the position of deputy assistant for Economic Policy and deputy director of the National Economic Council for President Clinton. And before that, Sarah was a deputy assistant secretary for Federal Housing Administration at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Brookings is honored and humbled to share the Tax Policy Center with the Urban Institute. A true public servant, Sarah, you are most welcome here this morning.

And last, and certainly not least, is Ken Weinstein, who is the president and CEO of the Hudson Institute. Ken has been with Hudson since 1991, and became CEO of the institute in 2005, and later CEO and president in 2011 and is a political theorist by trade. He is also the chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors and a regular guest on radio and television. Ken, you're most welcome.

And everyone, thank you for joining us this morning.

Ladies and gentlemen, we're slated for about an hour and a half. We

started a bit late because of the weather and folks coming in from the breakfast. What I'd like to do is go for an hour here at the table with a number of questions that we have and then for the remaining period that we have we'll go out to the audience for Q&A.

A reminder that this panel is very much on the record and we're being live streamed, so our audience is coming to us over the Internet as well. And for those of you who are joining us over the Internet, you probably had some pretty good judgment with respect to the cold this morning.

And when we go to the Q&A, I'll remind you, we'll ask you for a question relatively early in the process. So if I don't hear a question mark-like thing appearing in the first 30 seconds, I'll ask you to move quickly to your question.

So with that, ladies and gentlemen, let's kick off.

It's a very important series of points that Jim made this morning in his opening remarks. These are difficult times. And it's difficult times in general to find truth and to understand even what truth might mean. And so let me start on the far left with Thomas and ask, please, in the context of the French Institute for International Relations, why do facts and think tanks matter today?

MR. GOMART: Very difficult question. I will start with the world today by starting with yesterday. If you are seated in Europe, and in France in particular, you belong to an industry which was invented, you know, more than 100 years ago by, for instance, Carnegie, 1910; by Brookings, 1917; the Council, 1921. So in fact, the job was invented there and now we see the transformation of this job, you know. Seen from Europe, there are two main transformative forces at the time being. The very first one is the emergence of the Chinese think tanks. I will be back on that. And consequently, the transformation of the U.S. think tanks. And seated in Europe, and once again I think it's my particular vision, these two transformative forces will impact our way of researching if we are doing our job. So that's my very first concern is to say that to some extent the question for us, it's not only today, it's how do we continue, you know, to develop the think tank industry given the

heritage and given the transformative force. The problem we all face I think is the evolution of the Chinese think tanks.

Let me just quote briefly President Xi Jinping about think tanks in October 2014. "Think tanks should be driven by the Communist Party and follow the right line."

So what does it mean, in fact, to interact with our Chinese colleagues in this context given the fact that the Chinese think tanks are more and more tools of public diplomacy, whereas, you know, European think tanks or U.S. think tanks are acting in a different way?

I will stop with this very initial remark. I am very concerned seated in Paris by the fact that authoritarian regimes seem to be more and more interested in think tanks, whereas I would say (inaudible) or democratic regimes and less and less interested in the think tanks. And I think that this evolution is very critical for all of us.

The second big issue I would like to mention quickly, it is the evolution of the ideas industry. You know, I use the word by Drezner in his book. I think we are facing two things which are a challenge for think tanks. The very first one is the fact that the ideas industry is wide spreading, whereas in (inaudible) think tank industries may be retreating, first. And secondly, we have polarization of ideas in this industry, especially in the U.S., given also the political evolution in the U.S. because there may be a revolving door in the U.S. because of this administration and I would say the prominence now of thought leaders against public intellectuals. So that's a big challenge for all of us in terms of what sort of research should we produce and what sort of debate should we organize.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thank you very much.

Paolo, would you care to comment?

MR. MAGRI: Yes, please.

I will start from one of Thomas's remarks. This peculiar situation we are facing in which nondemocratic countries, you mentioned China, nondemocratic countries are putting a lot of emphasis in creating and enhancing think tanks, but the big question is, are

these think tanks as we define them? While on the other side, in other countries, and we belong sometimes to the second group, in advanced democratic countries, most of us are increasingly marginalized out of the decision-making of the decision policy process.

To be reassuring in the early morning in this cold weather, to answer to your question, John, why do think tanks matter, there is a reassuring answer that is until a decision has to be taken by institutions, government, and companies, and policy to be adopted, there will be a role for think tanks.

But this reassuring position is less so if we take into account or into the picture two issues. Decision will have to be taken, but who is taking decision now? Sometimes new guys in office that we don't know. This is true for Italy with the new government. This was true with Trump two years ago in the States. People will take decision in a more centralized way with less scrutiny even in democracy.

And the second point is how decisions are taken. Very often taking into account increasingly polls, short-term, and the people. So we are still relevant, often in some countries more marginalized, and the point is, and this is my last comment, how do we get out of debt? How do we get out of this role we are often confined to provide facts post-decision? The role in which we try to reach the public and the people and the policymaker with (inaudible) narrative of decision taken, not decision shaped by us.

And the last comment is, on one side we are all looking at ways to engage with the new political actors, but the issue there is to engage and not to be engaged, which is the risk. And the second one, we are all struggling to reach a new audience. Jim mentioned that a few minutes ago. Everybody on the previous panel mentioned that. The public opinion, which becomes more relevant in a moment of populism in which government pretends to be acting for the people. I've never seen any government apart from dictatorship pretending to act against the people, but this is what we have been told. The new government acts for the people, so we have to reach the people. And I have a concern on that. Two concerns.

The first one, in reaching out, the new audience, which is different from the one we had in the past, we are somehow like influencers without being. We compete with real influencers, political activists, those making advocacy, young kids posting their strange videos on video -- on the web with two million likes. And we struggle with our background, which is whatever we call it. We had the discussion provoked by Thomas on whether we should call ourselves scientists. We should call ourselves scientists, but when we promote and we prepare a video or an Instagram, whatever, we have our background. We have internal meetings in which the guy from the communication department wants to do something and six researchers say, no, it's not exactly what I wanted to say and it takes two weeks and then we get out -- sometimes -- and we get out with a story which is boring. (Laughter) Boring.

I keep telling a story -- Jim, sorry to repeat that. I have a 15-year-old daughter -- the daughter of the son of my sister and I was very proud showing him, look, Luka. We did this video on migration and we had 80,000 likes. 80,000. It's smart. It's new. And the son of my daughter came to me, "Come on, Uncle. Look at this." It was a video produced by someone close to Liga, two million and a half. But the guy didn't have to meet with researchers, the planning committee. The guy went there on a PC and made his movie. It looked very professional.

The second concern, and I'm done. Sorry for taking time. I will be shorter later. When we talk about this we always talk about reach the audience, which as in the back of the mind is a vertical vision. We have the truth. These guys do not understand anything and we only have to reach out to find a new way to pack our truth and to reach out. And when I think of that I always remember the Arab Spring.

When the Arab Spring happened we were all surprised. All started in the Middle East. We were all saying Mubarak is stable. The president of Libya is stable. Everybody was very stable. And in two weeks they all went down, or sometimes more time. And I remember someone telling me, you know why you were all saying it was stable?

Because if you visit these countries, you researchers, sometimes you describe the country from Washington. If you visit the country, you don't even talk to the taxi driver while you are going to meet the member of Parliament or the director of the think tank and you go to see them and you ask them, how is the situation here? And they say, it's fine. It's stable. Perfect. If you at least talk to the driver you would get a completely different story. So when we discuss about reaching out to the new audience, we have to be very humble. We have to understand what's going on. Why they vote for Salvini and Di Maio. Why they voted for Trump. Why they are against big infrastructure. It's not just reaching them out with our embellished truth made by young researchers sitting in Milan or Paris or whatever. Thank you.

GENERAL ALLEN: Paul, I know you didn't take that personally.

MR. SALEM: I did talk to the taxi driver. (Laughter)

GENERAL ALLEN: Yeah. That's the only way I can get to the hotel.

Please, Paul, give us some of your thoughts, please.

MR. SALEM: Yeah. When I look at why do facts and think tanks matter today and I look at the word "facts," to my mind, the challenge of think tanks, of course, is to try to marshal the fact, put them either in a social science context, whether you're looking at an economy situation or political studies, political science, or in a long-term timeline or we don't do climate change, but if you're looking at facts of the weather, it's what context you put them in and what intellectual capital you bring to organizing those facts and getting them to tell you something significant and something important.

To my mind, think tanks, by definition, are special intellectual centers which bring academic expertise, or the expertise of long-term policy makers who come back into the think tank world who have the time to gather the facts, which are not gathered by them usually. It's gathered, you know, whether it's through a news organization or the World Bank or others, take those facts and work on them to see what sense they make, what they mean for the future and whatever sector you're looking at. And then matching that social science,

or science if it's a natural science, analysis to policy options and then coming up with some policy prescription. So that to me is the trade or the industry.

The challenge, obviously, there is the real work of a think tank is getting farther and farther away from the current communication challenges, which is all in sound bites or all in short videos. And so the more in a way the think tank is doing its work properly, the bigger the challenge is to reboil that down to something, whether a one pager that a policymaker will read or a tweet that 60,000 people might see, or a one-minute video.

So that's sort of a third level of challenge that think tankers have. It's on the communication side because a think tank, unlike a university, measures its impact by what impact it has not, well, I've done great research and now we can all go home. So think tanks have the additional challenge of saying, well, now I have to invest, you know, half of my budget on just communicating this stuff, let alone thinking it through.

A fourth challenge to my mind is that at the end of the day even among informed and reading, you know, publics or decision makers and so on, people are stuck in their narratives. And facts and even many theories about those facts sink into those narratives like a black hole. People have already generally made their mind up and you can take, for example, in the Middle East. Generally, you know, most of the facts are well known. You know, what's happening here and now you might differ over the numbers and so on, the dispute is not about the facts. Often the dispute is what narrative you have. And you can integrate almost any fact into your ready-made narrative.

You know, it reminds me a little bit of the climate change debate. Today, you know, it's cold so there's no climate change. It's cold, so there is a climate change. You know, the fact can easily be integrated.

That really gets me also to the sort of part B of the communication challenge, is that in order to have an impact in your communication, it goes well beyond making the video, doing the tweet. It's almost the art of engaging, trying to change somebody else's narrative. And that is more of an art. It's more about storytelling. It's

exceedingly difficult. And I've only lived in D.C. for the last five years now. And even in D.C., or even especially in D.C., I mean, let alone, you know, inner-America, well, maybe they don't have as many facts, people's minds are already made up and they're already integrating facts very ably in the world views that they already have and that makes it really difficult to change, you know, to move the needle on anything.

So I think the challenge, certainly, I mean, today, maybe recently even facts have been dispute, but in most of the areas where I work it's not so much the facts, but then the nine steps you have to do beyond the facts, which are the challenge.

But I'll end by saying that having worked in think tanks in the Middle East and think tanks here, and I can list the dozens and dozens of challenges here and in the Middle East, obviously, I really do think, think tanks matter in an enormous way. I think not to be crude about it, but sort of dollar for dollar or person hour to person hour, they have a very big impact on policy debates, policy discussions, public opinion, and eking into policymaking, given their miniscule size at the end of the day. You know, all the media conglomerates are, you know, a thousand times bigger than think tanks, newspapers, and so on. But the way they focus a discussion, they come out with analysis and perspectives that make their way into everybody else's talking points and discussion, both in the Middle East and here to my mind. I always come back by concluding this is extremely important and an extremely worthwhile sector. Thank you.

GENERAL ALLEN: Sarah, please.

MS. ROSEN WARTTELL: Those were all terrific comments. Thanks. It's really a pleasure to be here. Thanks, John.

So let me first talk a little bit about why facts matter, and what I'll start with is something that I think you could have said at the founding of many of the institutions that you referred to 100 years ago, and then talk a little bit about that frame quickly in the current moment.

So facts matter because they help us not simply admire problems but

understand them, understand our circumstances and how they are changing. And we're at a time of very, very rapid change. And sometimes the experience of that change in some places is less well understood by people far away from it. And so facts are really important to understanding the world we live in. Facts are important because they help us to design potential remedy solution changes in the underlying rules of the road.

Facts are also important because they help us measure the effect of the policy and practices that we have and whether we're making a difference. And it's not just measure and evaluation, but it's also the relative ROI from different types of strategies to tackle the situation of people and our institutions and society.

And then finally, facts really matter because this is how we hold the public actors accountable, whether it's understanding the effects of Facebook, or whether it's understanding the effects of a local mayor's zoning policy, these are tools that we use. And that's true even in a world where people dispute the facts and they have their own different narratives and frames.

So I think it's useful to just go back to say facts are really important and all of our business model is about amassing evidence to help shape those sets of choices.

So among the things that have changed, and people here, I'm not going to repeat some of the great comments made before, is that who is making change, who those facts are relevant to in our society today is a much broader group of change makers. For a long time, institutions like ours principally got our brief from either federal agency actors or members of Congress or large national foundations who were trying to influence those relatively small set of decision makers. And we saw over time broadening our frame of reference to the influencers who influence on those still small set of decision makers. But in a much more distributed society for all the reasons we know about who has access to information, the people who make change today are much more distributed. And in a world where there is not a lot of confidence, at least in our country in the capacity to reach consensus to make change at a federal government level, change makers are decision

makers at a lot of other levels of government. County government influence a huge amount of our society safety net, for example. People don't think about counties as a major -- in the United States as a major source of change, but they are, in fact. And states and localities. But even well beyond the actors of the public sector, change makers are increasingly social entrepreneurs. And you've got Larry Fink saying to the Fortune 50 CEOs that investors are going to demand of you your clear understanding of how your firm's actions are driving change in the fundamental problems of society of hardening inequalities and the like. So if you go spend time at the business roundtable, they not only think about maximizing the well-being of shareholders, but their role in driving societal change.

So, and you can talk about social entrepreneurs and lots of other people. So the people who drive change, and thus, I wouldn't say just audience because audience assume it's a one-to-many communications model. But the people with whom we are, we like to say helping to accelerate solutions. We bring facts to bear to accelerate change. The partners with whom you do that work becomes much more distributed, very hard in our business models to be able to accomplish that.

But, when you sit down and say I'm going to sit in my office and tell you what the facts are and what you ought to do, you have a very different relationship with those change makers than if you sit down with those change makers and say, what is the change you're trying to make in the world? Let me help inform you from the beginning. What questions are you asking? We used to be pretty good at doing that with the public sector actors, but how do we do that with all of the different forces that influence change?

So we're answering the questions that they are asking in real-time with information back to them so you create a continuous learning cycle to help drive societal change. It's a much more complicated assignment that we have but it is also one in which I despair less because the forces you've described, depolarization and stalemate and dispute about whether your facts are biased or not don't happen I find nearly as much when I'm talking to a community foundation in Minneapolis or when I'm talking to the Human Services

administrator for the State of Idaho, or when I'm talking to even local elected and the like. And they become an ecosystem that acts back on the national, too.

So maybe our jobs are harder but the opportunity for influence and impact seems to me also to be greater than we can think about when we're sort of locked in Washington.

GENERAL ALLEN: Great comments, Sarah. Thank you.

And Ken, please.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Thank you, John. And thank you, Jim, for the important work you do.

In large argument with what is said, I'll try to state it in a little bit less diplomatic manner, which is I think at least from the point of view of Washington think tanks, I think in some sense a lot of Washington think tank work, there's been kind of an eco-chamber in a sense of work that is done on both the left and the right in which there are nuances shades of difference. And I think that what we've seen and what the 2016 election was about was the discrediting of elites in our country and even in some countries, for example, in France, where the Macron election was sort of a return of the elites. We've seen again that the populist movements have challenged the return of the elites in some ways. And I think this is an incredibly fluid moment in the policy world, unlike any we have ever seen and it makes the work of think tanks all the more important because there are major -- some of the most basic questions in public policy are up for grabs now on free trade, on our tax system, our alliances and the like. And defense spending, engagements in Afghanistan, Syria, et cetera. And so the question is what does that mean for organizations such as ours? And I think it's an unbelievable moment, but I think it's a moment of huge opportunity if you can take advantage of, say, the general distrust of now and the U.S.-China relationship and the distrust of the Chinese think tanks.

And Thomas, I agree with you 100 percent. I will say that when you get the Chinese think tankers alone at dinner after one of these sessions where they will spout the

party line, if you push them you can see where they disagree and it can be a useful exercise, sometimes. But there's a huge opportunity to move the policy agenda in a serious way to question some of the basics at a time when even now our business leaders are beginning to wonder what they engage with. And I give the Trump administration huge credit for shifting the policy debate on China in the United States and Asia and also in Europe. And we at Hudson take some credit. Mike Pillsbury's work and the work of others have been critical to that. So there are huge opportunities there. There are opportunities in a number of areas, missile defense, and even on alliance work that remains. So I think that our work is all the more important. One has to be clear sighted as to what the policy opportunities are that you can try to forge a consensus on, but you can certainly move it forward at this time. But it's very important. Herman Kahn, the founder of Hudson, always had a rule. He always talked to taxi drivers. Found them far more interesting than people here in Washington, people in Los Angeles and elsewhere. And a lot of our think tank work, we travel around the world and I always make sure both engaging with taxi drivers here, Uber drivers here, but also around the world to get a sense of how they view how their governments are faring because it gives a very -- and I think we need to be able to incorporate these kinds of understandings more strongly into what is essentially an elite-driven phenomena here in Washington and in other national capitals.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well, taxi drivers have figured prominently in our discussion this morning.

I had the occasion a couple years ago to do an event on Afghanistan in New York City. And an Afghan taxi driver delivered me to the event and I described what I was about to do. He was Pashtun. And I was delivered back to the train station by another Afghan taxi driver who had actually heard the event who was Tajik. And I got an earful. I'm telling you. So it was like a graduate course in Afghan politics. And I listened to every word they had to say.

So we had some wonderful remarks and comments just on this first and

essential question, the emergence of authoritarian regimes who now see that potentially think tanks have a role for them in the continuation of their policies. Certainly, the emergence of Chinese think tanks is something that we all have to take into account. That nondemocratic societies, or illiberal societies have, in many respects, marginalized the public policy process or we find that think tanks have to run fast behind decisions that have been made to try to give the context for those. Paul's point I thought was very important about how facts have a distinct relationship to the narrative. And there's a lot to that that probably deserves some additional consideration. And Sarah's very important points on why facts matter for the potential design of remedies, for an understanding of the return on investment. And very importantly, facts matter to hold people accountable. And that's essential, particularly in this world we live in today. And Ken's points, which was very important, was to understand when the policy discussion presents opportunities for think tanks to weigh in in an important way.

So let's just start again with Thomas. We're now in 2019. What does it require of a think tank to be relevant in this particular moment in our history? It's fast paced. It's technology driven. What should we be thinking about as think tanks in order for us to be relevant to this very new environment of the 21st century?

Thomas?

MR. GOMART: Let me start with a paradox which was written by a friend of all of you, I suppose, Robin Niblett, his article on think tanks publishing international affairs. Niblett explained to us that we are allocated a lot of energy and resources to disseminate our production, whereas, this production is more and more putting questions by the different stakeholders of the think tank community.

So that leads me to try to respond to your question. For me the key word is not "impact." The key word is "intellectual relevance" to try to understand properly what is going on. So it's very easy to say that like that, but it's obviously much more difficult to do in reality and to translate that into a research program. So for me it's intellectual relevance,

which is highly important, and to very well understand the transformation of the world affairs. But consecutively, the transformation of our industry.

That leads me to a second point. I think in all industry we see two categories of actors. Very often director executives are either managers or I would say researchers and thinkers. And I think there is a strong need to be back to the thinking, to big thinking for think tanks. And that's why any type of platforms able to, you know, to bridge different approaches in terms of thinking would be very welcome.

The third thing is I do think that especially in France, you know, it's fascinating to observe all our states. Our culture is very different than yours because the state in France created its own body of expertise historically. But what is happening now is the fact that these states to some extent cut all its body to try to anticipate the future. There is less and less body to think the midterms and the long terms. The newcomer think tanks, you know, are much more I would say soft lobbyists or they try to invest as it was said, maybe half of our budget, you know, on communication. And I think that all tasks is precisely to bridge short, medium, and long term. There is a (inaudible) in all democratic regimes for thinking in the long run, which is less and less supported in my country by the state. So for me, that's clear, and that I think we should (inaudible).

Let me add a fourth thing. I started, you know, with the transformative force of the Chinese think tank. It's not to say that it's the enemy. Not at all. My point is on the contrary. To say that I see room for all the think tanks to try to create interface with our colleagues wherever they are coming from. I think that our job is also to keep channels open when the political relations are difficult.

So I'll stop there.

GENERAL ALLEN: And to be clear, I certainly didn't, I don't know that the audience did, I didn't detect your remarks as the emergence of Chinese think tanks are a threat; it's just a new force in the spectrum of our think tank and we just have to be aware of it and account for it. And I think that's a very important realization.

Paolo, your thoughts, please on the 21st century think tank.

MR. MAGRI: Yes. Relevance in our time.

I fully agree with what Thomas said, the challenge. But I would say the first challenge is to be intellectual relevant, which means producing ideas, understanding, being humble, being scientifically solid, listening and talking to taxi drivers wherever we are. But as I said, this is the first challenge, because on top of that challenge we have the challenge of dissemination. Let's call it whatever we want. Reaching new audience, influence. And I think I am at this table, John, because I represent a minority. A minority in the United States, but the majority in Europe, which means a small institute.

To be very specific, I guess I don't want to ask my colleagues, but I guess should I ask them how large is their communication department? The answer will be close to the total number of staff of my institute, which is a little bit smaller than three. So we are not far. Talking in terms of budget, you mentioned we should invest half of our budget in communication. I don't ask you what do you mean by half of your budget, but I can tell you it's not a secret that my budget is five billion euro. His budget is six billion euro, total budget. Maybe we can --

GENERAL ALLEN: Billion or million. If it's billion, I want to create a new relationship. (Laughter)

MR. MAGRI: You know, that's exactly -- thank you, John. Thank you, John. That's exactly the question I wanted to stress, how I do represent a minority at this table.

GENERAL ALLEN: That was your objective.

MR. MAGRI: That was my objective. I was provoking a little bit.

Why am I saying that? Because we represent the large majority -- I look at Jim -- of think tanks all over the world, the small ones. America, Great Britain, and a few other countries are the exception. So when we discuss these challenges, which is one plus two solid ideas and dissemination, at the end of the day when I go home and discuss this with my colleagues, my communication department is made by one person plus two

(inaudible). And usually these two persons and a half or one and a half are also in charge of eating, maintenance, administration, and controlling the port man when he's on vacation.

Am I saying that this is impossible? No. We have to utilize -- sorry John, to get some of the words of your work -- we cannot build an army. We have to look a little bit like Viet Cong, guerilla. So we have to find our way, but I wanted to mention this because this puts into our discussion in this international presentation the other dimension, which means how this is difficult for smaller think tanks.

And then my last comment is on the second challenge, which is communication, I mentioned before the difficulties we face in competing with competitors which do only that and which are free to invent their story, a short video and so on. I have one fear for our industry. We look at other think tanks and we look at cooperation and competition with other existing think tanks but building up fake think tanks -- not fake news, fake think tanks -- is extremely easy because there is a wide and broad definition of think tanks. We self-define ourselves as think tanks. But at the end of the day, if you have a website, a lot of infographics and video, a director, two sponsors, and you organize one event, you can pretend you are a think tank. And what if this new populism that we call it in different ways in different countries comes up very soon with think tanks that are like us but put on top of their fake story the framework of an even more solid background being a think tank. We start seeing that in some cases in Russia. For example, there are fake think tanks which deliver the Russian position but it is a think tank. It is invited to meetings because he has a website, a director, two sponsors, and so on and so on.

So this is my comments, John.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thank you, Paolo.

Paul, please.

MR. SALEM: Yeah, John, if I may, I wanted to make a comment about just the fact issue and just to say that we're talking about think tanks and there are so many of them working on different areas that it's very clear that in some issue areas, for example,

you know, tax, water management, climate change, a number of things, those are a certain type of policy challenge where you can do the study, the facts. A disagreement might be about how this fact would affect that fact, and those are exceedingly important in the Middle East and here and all over the world.

And then there's another set of issues, for example, that we deal with or Brookings and Carnegie. When you look at the Middle East or the big issues, the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the Iranian conflict with the Gulf or with Israel or the U.S., Turkish-Kurdish conflict, the Afghan conflict, yes, facts come into it but, you know, when a think tank is engaging it's trying to see how to negotiate, how to propose new ways forward. You know, facts are not really where it's at and that's why I would just say that there are some issues where really the work is fact and science-based and others it is really quite different. So it's a broad spectrum.

On how to be relevant in the 21st century, I would say that there's been a profound change to the world of communication and world of information/disinformation, through that public sphere. But that the challenge of policymakers, the decisions they have to make, challenges they face, and the type of information and analysis they might need hasn't fundamentally changed. So I think in some ways it's not all together very different when you're trying to influence a policymaker who has to worry about, what decision do I make on this issue? They might appreciate, you know, some extra analysis and expert opinion to make that decision. But on the public sphere, it's very, very different. And we've already talked about the challenges of impacting in this very loud public sphere. We at MEI have made the decision to use in our videos more cats. More cats, yes. More gatos. More clicks. And we're in negotiation with the administration if we can use Persian cats because that could be controversial. (Laughter)

GENERAL ALLEN: You'll end up sanctioned.

MR. MAGRI: But let me end with a few comments about the state and interacting with the state, maybe putting on my Middle East hat.

Obviously, the main challenge in the Middle East is that states are stamping out and prohibiting think tanks to start with. That's one challenge. And they are creating two types of think tanks. One type, which might be a useful one, is one which they think they need to feed into their policy process. Legitimate. I mean, it's a little bit, maybe, you know, the U.S. government has Rand and others, you know, tell us, you know, we're dealing with this issue and that issue. Give us insight. There are a number of those that are sprouting up and many of them are very serious, very professional, and they feed directly into a policy process and that's a good thing I would say.

And then, of course, there is the think tanks that are being produced, maybe we've heard about the Chinese cases, but also in the Middle East, fake think tanks that are being produced to, in a way, create disinformation or fake news. And that obviously is extremely troublesome. So that relationship to the state, even in the U.S. probably, is an interesting and complex one.

I would also want to end with one thing that is certainly relevant in the U.S. but also very relevant in the Middle East despite the climate, is that we usually focus on the fact that think tanks produce studies and reports and information. But they also produce people. In the U.S., obviously, it's that revolving door. You know, they serve an administration. They come and they go back. There's a positive side to that that those people in the think tank over the years that they're out of office at least are focusing on the issue that they're supposed to focus on and hopefully go back with more expertise.

What I found in the Middle East in some think tanks is whereas there is no beltway as it were to get into government, there's no real politics, there's no real gateway to get in, yet the government needs technocrats. And they don't produce technocrats. So it's often the case that people who, young people who come out of college, join a Middle East think tank, work for 10 years, become expert at something. For a long time the government is very upset with them because they're speaking out on a public issue, and then in some crisis they say, well, let's hire this person because they seem to know what they're talking

about. And I've seen many cases where in the absence of a political conveyor belt, the think tank has been a rare place where you can get the ideas in because you put those ideas in a person and now the person is in.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thank you, Paul. Thanks very much on that. Terrific thoughts.

Sarah, please.

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: So on relevance, a couple things. First on your communications point.

I worked at a think tank long ago that came close to the 50/50 model here in the United States. It was unusual in its design and build and it was built intentionally to try to shape a wider debate. Today, at Urban, we are over 500 people. We have over 50 people in our communications department, so about 10 percent. (Laughter)

MR. GOMART: I hope she didn't say that. I knew because I checked before. Fact checking.

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: Sorry.

GENERAL ALLEN: She does. She does.

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: As probably do you, John.

GENERAL ALLEN: I do, actually.

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: But what they do is not just dissemination of a report. It's about being part of the design and thinking about the audience of the work and who we're trying to reach and engage. And making sure that when decision makers are thinking about questions they know that there's an expert here that can engage. So it's also a much broader understanding of what we mean by communications than we did once before.

To this question of relevance, I probably have said this at this panel in prior years. But in the United States there's -- one of the world's greatest hockey players was a guy named Wayne Gretzky. And this may be apocryphal, but the story goes that Gretzky's

father taught Gretzky that good hockey players skate to where the puck is and great hockey players skate to where the puck is going to be.

And so I think to your question of how do you stay relevant, when our colleagues at the Tax Policy Center anticipating that 2017 was going to be a year in which corporate tax policy was at the top of the agenda, spent 2015 and 2016 building the corporate tax components of the models that we use to analyze. That is about skating to where the puck is going to be.

When we work with a foundation -- in this case, recently the AARP Foundation -- on a piece of analysis that we did on the challenges of older work groups, older Americans who are still in the workforce and they change their foundation strategy to help them now focus on that problem, we were part of them anticipating what comes next for their body of work. So it is very much, relevance is about being able to look around corners. And I think a number of people said that about think about the future in important ways.

And I guess the last thing about relevance is something that those of us who have spent our careers mostly in policy influence aren't so good at -- John talks about this a lot as well -- we need to be far more fluent in the way that technology is changing our society. And I would say that matters to us in two ways. Of course, it is understanding technology's impact on the problems that we're applying ourselves to, whether it's the spread of information or the changing nature of the labor market in the United States, in educational opportunity and how we deliver education, all those things. So there is an understanding of technology's impact which requires us to have a different set of skillsets than technocrats have traditionally had and social scientists have traditionally had. But it is also about understanding the way we can embrace technology to do our work. So in our world, for example, we're used to using carefully curated official government statistics which are generated through very carefully collected survey methods. But, you know, big data existing in the wild has lots of flaws and influences but being good at mining it and being able to take advantage of the cloud to manipulate huge amounts of data to gain insight, that

is transforming the way we do social science research and being able to use AI and other things to do our modeling to optimize for different policy outcomes instead of just put in three new variables changes the way we do research. So I would say the third thing for relevance is that our institutions need to gain a whole new set of skills that have not traditionally been part of our sort of toolbox.

GENERAL ALLEN: Terrific.

Ken, please.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Thank you, John.

Okay, again, very interesting comments.

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: It's hard to go last.

MR. WEINSTEIN: No, no. Look, I guess in thinking of this issue, it's funny. We're about 80 people all together. Our public affairs department is four people. So maybe we need to have a bigger public affairs department. And I think in some ways Hudson is kind of an old-fashioned think tank in a lot of ways, but not as old fashioned as we used to be. So for our founder, Herman Kahn, and for the institute in the first 20 years of its existence, we produced reports like the 1967 classic, The Year 2000. Or the classic, the 1963 classic, I think was on thermonuclear war. These were big studies that took an awfully long time to produce that, you know, over a year, team working on it. Had a major long-term impact when these reports came out. They had a big focus on getting people to think in the long term on some critical issues. I'd say today we still have this focus of trying to get the long-term picture correct, because if you don't get the long-term picture correct, you're not going to get the short- and medium-term picture right. But we have much more of a focus on policy relevance today as everybody does and as you need to. And our focus is less than some think tanks focus on what policymakers ought to think, and our focus still remains, how they ought to think and how do you look at the complex challenges that policymakers face in a world where we have security challenges in Europe. We have security challenges in the Middle East. We have security challenges in Asia, not to talk about numerous policy

challenges in Latin America and Africa. And so, but thinking in this way, still it's allowed us to, when the moment is right, through -- and here we've stepped up and we put in place a government relations team over the last few years and we've been able to leverage our contacts both at the White House, in Capitol Hill and elsewhere, to have an impact on policies. Mention the China policy, the National Security Strategy, which was drafted by our colleague, Nadia Schadlow when she was deputy national security advisor at the Missile Defense Review. Call for WTO reform. A lot of the impact we've had now is increasingly through our international partners who find themselves very much at a loss to make sense of events here and also at home. And so we find ourselves much more on the road than in the past, going to national capitals to meet with key officials to talk about the challenges they face, talk about the challenges the United States faces, and to think through ways that we can work together both as countries, as think tanks, to move a stronger policy agenda forward. And so, and this international element and the internationalization of the think tank business has become increasingly important. I find myself in contact -- if I look at my lunch and breakfast schedules, I'm meeting diplomats and officials from around the world certainly far more than I'm meeting my colleagues from other think tanks. And arguably, as much as I'm seeing anybody in this town.

One last quick point is the rise of the public affairs industry, which has really transformed the think tank world, and this is something that we've seen in Washington. We now see it in Brussels, Paris, London, where public affairs firms have increasingly sought to drive the think tank agenda. These are not fake think tanks as you put it, but it requires great caution and prudence when dealing with these firms. That's not to say that the interests they represent necessarily are in any sense wrong. There are some excellent partnerships that can be developed, but it's transformed the think tank business in some fundamental ways as well as we sort of -- there's an attempt to sort of shape the agenda of work that policy research organizations do. And it's something we need to be aware of as well.

GENERAL ALLEN: These were terrific answers. Let me summarize just a bit.

We heard from Thomas two very important points. And Sarah reinforced this at one point. Where it's not just about impact but it's also about intellectual relevance. And what think tanks can do in the world today is, of course, to provide short, medium, and long-term analysis. And I think the long-term analysis gets us to the Wayne Gretzky view of being able to anticipate where the issues will lead you. And in a world where we have relatively tight electoral cycles and very tight media cycles, everyone tends, a military term, lots of folks tend to have what we call "close battle fixation." You are focused on the end of the day. You are focused on the news for that night. Or the next election. And the capacity to think at the strategic level, to see the deep horizon and provide quality research and potential policy considerations is an extraordinarily valuable role for think tanks in this particular world.

Paolo, of course, got my attention immediately when he talked about the army versus the Viet Cong. (Laughter) There's a lot to be said for the smaller organizations. There's an agility and a freedom that some of the smaller organizations have that they're not as weighed down with process.

And I thought that Paul's and Thomas's thoughts about the emergence of fake think tanks, this is a real issue. And when you see the sophistication of communications and the use of technology in communications and deep fake efforts that are underway now increasingly in the world, the role and the emergence of those think tanks that become frankly quite competitive because they can package their malicious or just wrong perceptions and their narratives in ways that are superior to standing think tanks with lots of experience and lots of resources.

And of course, I thought that Ken's point about what makes a think tank relevant in the 21st century is internationalizing. How much better could we be sitting in Washington about the relevance of Trump administration policies in Europe than to be tied

closely to European think tanks who can help us to see it on the ground from where the crack of the whip occurs?

So, you know, this is really important. And we talk a lot here about how does a think tank remain relevant in the 21st century? And I think it's a function of some qualities. The quality of flexibility. The quality of agility and often think tanks are so big and so mired in process and so dependent upon certain fund-raising capabilities it limits your flexibility and your ability. And those two qualities alone in the 21st century will determine your relevance. How flexible are you and how agile? How quickly can you pivot an organization onto an issue to maintain that intellectual relevance which is essential?

And then finally, technology, which Sarah I think hit very well. And technology with a think tank hits us I think in three ways. One is the technology associated with statistical analysis -- big data analytic and predictive analytics, which puts I believe a very sharp edge in many respects on our products and our research so that in the competition for facts, those who have done the legitimate big data analytics have an edge on theirs which makes their facts more relevant often than those who are not. So it affects our research. Technology as it affects our capacity to disseminate our work, understanding the many different digital platforms that are now de rigueur. They're part of the process every single day, and we have to understand where those platforms are and use them accordingly to reach the audiences that we have to spend even more time thinking about.

And then finally, at a substantive level, the policy associated with just technology in general. And I've just returned. I was overseas for the last 10 days, and everywhere I stopped the conversation about what appears to be the growing challenge of the competitive environment, competitive ecosystems of technology that are emerging in the 21st century, has everyone's attention. So technology touches think tanks in multiple ways as well.

And let me just quickly -- and we'll go to the audience in just a moment. Let me ask, starting with Ken and going the other direction this time, within your institutions,

could you just take a second and tell us what -- I know that you have many, many priorities, but what's the biggest policy issue for each of your institutions? This is an incredible moment for the United States and the world in particular, and we're coming up very quickly on a presidential election. So as we think about our policy issues, what is the number one policy issue, if I could ask for each one of your institutions, please?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yeah. For us it's American national security, and in particular, it's increasingly -- we're increasingly focused on Asia. Which means U.S.-Japan, U.S.-China. It means South Korea's role in the alliance. It means the defense of Taiwan, which is critical to us, and doing all we can to make sure that there's sufficient missile defense capacity to assure that the North Koreans, whatever happens in the negotiations between the United States, the South Koreans, the North Koreans, and potentially the Japanese, that we can defend against whatever happens, whatever transformation occurs in North Korea.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thank you, Ken.

Sarah?

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: So for us it's really looking at how the grand forces have changed around the globe, whether that's demographic change, technological change, globalization, and climate, are in many ways hardening the inequalities that we see in society and the bridges between the haves and the have nots, and looking to find ways in which those forces can be harnessed and said to be a way to create a more inclusive growth and shared prosperity.

And I want to emphasize one of those forces in particular that we spend a great deal of time focusing on both in terms of how we run our own internal institution, as well as the effect of society, which is diversity and demographic change. We haven't talked about that before and I actually think I should have made that the first answer to your question about relevance because I'm sure many U.S. institutions at least in the think tank space really suffer from not looking like America and not bringing the talents and the insights

from the communities that we're looking at into our work. And so it's not just an HR problem; it's actually about changing fundamentally which questions you ask, how you communicate, what language you use to communicate, how you move from a disparities mindset to an assets mindset. There's a whole set of issues around thinking very differently about sort of not so much we as experts but we as a mechanism by which insights from a lot of different places become part of the debate. So that's top of mind as well.

GENERAL ALLEN: Let me thank you specifically on the point about diversity. That's critical I think for the future of think tanks. Relevant think tank in the 21st century has got to be a diverse think tank.

Paul, please.

MR. SALEM: In the Middle East it's a region in flames. And so among the many priorities, the main one for us is doing what we can to bring about negotiated, sustainable ends to the four civil wars that are causing such carnage. At the same time, working to deescalate regional conflict and work in the long term towards an inclusive regional order that includes the main players -- Arab countries, Israel, Iran, Turkey -- so that such disintegration doesn't continue to recur.

Within that, trying to impact U.S. policy towards the Middle East in directions that favor de-escalation, ending civil wars, relieving human suffering, and working towards a regional order that is stable rather than fueling regional division and regional conflict which is creating civil wars and carnage in the long term.

GENERAL ALLEN: Terrific, Paul. Thank you.

Paolo, please.

MR. MAGRI: We are brought into the daily data checking by the public debate, and we are brought into being mainly a migration institute since migration is the only topic strongly debated. If you ask, as you do, what is my priority out of this too heavy burden is, first, to put strong emphasis on the future as everybody said, and there is one future we are more concerned of is the future of Europe.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thomas, please.

MR. GOMART: Three main directions. I mean, it's not to sum of all the production we have at IFRI but it's to try to simplify.

The very first one, we work very consistently on the relation between China and the U.S. to try to anticipate the curse of the globalization.

Second, a big direction is obviously the future of Europe, both domestically and externally. So we work a lot on European security issues, the relation with the Middle East, with Russia, namely. Also, we do intend to develop, you know, a partnership and to work more on the sub-African region. So for instance, we started a new forum quite recently. We have four European think tanks -- Bruegel, ISPI, HOSI and IFRI, and four African think tanks -- IDP, PCNS, Bethros Foundation and EPS from (inaudible) because for us it's a real concern in terms of migration, in terms of security, in terms of climate change, and so on.

And the final direction, it is something which may be more difficult to explain, but it is the tension between the perception of a limited world in terms of natural resources and an unlimited world in terms of technological access. And we do believe that there is a strong tension, you know, in terms of artificial intelligence, for instance, and we research on that as well.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well, I think we see a strong intersection between the many think tanks, but I'm sure the many think tanks that exist on the principal issues that are driving our intellectual curiosity and the imperative for the work that we have to do today, not just to help us understand what's right before us but to skate to where the puck will be.

We've got about a half hour left, ladies and gentlemen, so what I'd like to do is go out to the audience. I see hands already.

Let me just offer a couple of ground rules, please. First, we're going out on webcast, so I would ask -- we have microphones I think that will come to you. Thank you. So there's one. Take the microphone. I would ask you to identify yourself, please, so we

know where you're from. And I know we have a lot of scholars and leaders, as well as folks who are trying to stay warm. But everyone is welcome to ask a question. I just ask that about 30 seconds into this I can perceive a question mark in your process.

So let's go out to questions, and we'll go for about a half hour.

Yes, sir. In the back. Right on the, yes, sir, on the aisle.

MR. CLIFFORD: Thank you very much for this important forum. I'm Bill Clifford, president of the World Affairs Councils of America.

GENERAL ALLEN: Marvelous.

MR. CLIFFORD: The hockey puck analogy didn't exactly go where I thought it might. I very much understand your primary audience is elite policymakers and you're concentrating on the issues. That's a must for sure. But you know, given the disconnect between elites and non-elites, given the disconnect between the cast and the heartland, I'd love to know your strategy and deployment of resources on how to engage nonpartisan civil society organizations, such as the World Affairs Councils and others, to have more of a dialogue than the dissemination of research and the outward communication without a return.

And I'd love to hear also from the overseas-based think tanks on how they're doing the same in Europe. Thank you.

GENERAL ALLEN: Terrific question. We'll go a question after another and then as we get to the end we'll do a lightning round.

But Sarah, you started all this with the hockey analogy. And I know you've got a great answer, so please.

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: Well, let me give you two examples because there are 100. You've diagnosed the problem for relevance perfectly.

So two examples. The first is that -- and we were predominately researchers. But the source of insight is not just numbers that our scholars come into a community or into a field of data and mine, but actually understanding that insight comes

from places.

So we're frequently doing what we call community participatory research now where the design of the research project itself is often designed with the community. Let's say we're working in public housing or economic development workforce in a community. You actually gather people. Sometimes we use residents of a community to collect information, and we very much use partners in the community to interpret information so that the insight, the whole process involves a different set of actors. You know, know about us without us is increasingly something we hear, particularly in criminal justice but in a whole range of issues.

Another thing is that often our work, we use our analysis to set the table in a decision-making process. And so the key question is who is around the table? And if, again, if we're working in a particular city, you know, there are plenty of processes that involve civic leaders and elected and whatnot. And we're always insisting that the tables that are being set often around some piece of analysis that we use is a much broader array of voices and we will often now at our think tank, we not only have the scholars who can do the table setting analysis, but we have people who are skilled at managing those much more collaborative processes. So we have a different mix of skillsets in our institution to be able to engage more effectively. It's one of the many places where diversity and insight from the communities that we're doing our work in really matter.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thank you, Sarah. That was terrific.

Let's also go to Paolo and Thomas for their international perspective and then we'll go to the next question.

MR. MAGRI: I'll give you one example on migration. I mean, there is a need, as you said, and as I said, not to channel information but to have a dialogue. And there are a number of regulars who meet regularly on migration. But they meet on emergency. These are church organizations, NGOs, security apparatus, CT officer, and we invited them in a permanent table which meets every two months out of the emergence,

which means they do not meet to understand what to do when a boat arrives in the harbor, but to find a way to discuss solutions and tools and policies out of this emergency. We did so far two meetings. It's too soon to say if this is successful, but they are coming and we are meeting. And the first time we put together different stakeholders for the same issue.

GENERAL ALLEN: Thomas?

MR. GOMART: I would take another example. You are very often asked, you know, as a European think tank to publish in English your prediction to be read, which we do, obviously. But we decide also to continue to publish in French, also in Russian. But I insist on that for the French because we have now the feedback. The country in which we are the most read, the more read, sorry, the African countries. So to some extent that's absolutely fascinating to observe all our production is read thanks to the French language. You know, in African countries. So we address people we simply didn't address before by continuing to publish, you know, in French. For us it's something we will continue.

So to address the other audiences, many things, on migration, we have similar things that I think were mentioned by Paolo. You know, a working group (inaudible) people really concerned by the migrant issue, even if it's not at the same scale in France and in Italy. And we try ourselves to develop specific products for young people. So that's, I think, for all of us. You know, in photographs, things like that.

GENERAL ALLEN: Paul or Ken, anything you'd like to add? Please.

MR. SALEM: I like the comment about link with civil society that was raised by Bill, but I think, I mean, in the Middle East context that civil society, I mean, think tank work in the '90s and the 2000s, really ended up empowering and impacting civil society and disempowered public and was a great part of the dynamic that then led to the Arab Spring. That indicated, one, the power of ideas. And I was rather shocked to see, you know, in a fallow ground in the '90s and 2000s, an idea thrown out by a think tank that's been thought through, whether it's about a political issue or an economic issue or a social issue in such a dry context it was taken up so quickly by a thirsty public. And a lot of these think tanks

structurally became part of the civil society network, the young people's network that ended up spearheading the initial movements.

It's also the reason why governments in the Middle East, and I would dare say in Russia and other places afraid of color revolutions, have hit down hard on think tanks because thinking matters and ideas are very powerful and they're being stamped out.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Look, we have various fora around the country that we regularly take part in and have speaking series in four different cities now that get a diverse array of people taking part, but we also encourage our experts to go around the world. I have a colleague in Germany doing a number of events right now. We've had others who have gone into -- and in German, do events in French, do events in Arabic, to engage with people in civil society and also journalists and others, not just in capitals but also off the beaten track to both give a better sense of the direction of things here in Washington, but also to improve our feedback on what's going on around the world has become a big part of what we do.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well, thanks for those answers. I think one of the -- we've touched on it but it has not been -- and if I offered it as a question to be tabled we'd probably have a lot to say, but the issue of Africa. Africa, by the middle of this century, will provide some of the greatest opportunities we have seen in several centuries. But can also provide some of the greatest challenges. And for think tanks who are considering and bearing down on the issue of what Africa and Africans face in the next century is going to be extraordinarily important. And I know that our European colleagues are deeply engaged on that and I really applaud that.

Let's go to the next question, please.

Yes, ma'am, in the second --

MS. HEDBERG: Good morning. Angelique Hedberg with RTI International. Thank you for being here and your comments.

I am curious how you're thinking about managing our talent in the future and

your organizations as the leaders of those organizations. You've mentioned technology and you've mentioned communications. There's an evolving role for your researchers in the future and how your organization recognizes the talent to remain a competitive think tank and what strategies you're deploying to involve that role of the researcher within the institute.

GENERAL ALLEN: Who would like to start with that?

I will. We're obviously thinking about the challenges of the future. Sarah touched on it a bit in terms of the grand forces that are at work. We call them mega trends as well. So we have to anticipate what those are.

A couple things shape our thinking in that regard. We are looking for -- we're looking obviously for diversity, number one. That gives us the pool to be able to see more deeply into the future and more with greater breath into the challenges we face every day. We're looking for scholars, sometimes we use the term who are "bilingual" in the context of they not only understand the policy process but they also understand how technology in the future will shape some of those policy processes in ways we can't now imagine.

And here I go again. We're also looking for youth. The intersection of technology and young scholars from a diverse field is an extraordinarily powerful pool of talent and we think in those terms.

Anyone else care to comment?

Yes, sir. Thomas, please. And then I'll come back to you, Sarah.

MR. GOMART: If we do consider that it's at least five years to educate a researcher, so it's a huge investment. As soon as you do a mistake, that's something difficult to repair. So we are very, very concerned by the, I would say, the employment process.

We tried in the recent decade to fund some Ph.D. So people having the ability to make their Ph.D. and to start as a think tanker. And we are searching I would say in good English (speaking in foreign language). I don't know how to say it in English, but

you know, the guy or the woman who is able to interact with the political sphere, with the business sphere, having a very strong academic background and able also to have (inaudible) exposure.

So I depends on each individual. Some of them are more or less good in these four spheres. Some of them are better in one. But you should be able to address these four spheres for sure. That's something we ask very, very seriously to our researchers.

MR. MAGRI: Can I --

GENERAL ALLEN: Please, Paolo.

MR. MAGRI: I play again the minority. Would you allow me for the last time?

This is a huge challenge because we ask for people with Ph.D. background. They have to be able to write a Ph.D. thesis, but also to tweet, to write a short note, to give interviews, to talk to ministers, to listen to the taxi driver, possibly to dance Samba.

(Laughter)

GENERAL ALLEN: And play hockey.

MR. MAGRI: And we pay them 1,500 euro per month. That's the issue. That's an incredible issue. But we have a nice story. This is the most beautiful job in the world. But sometimes it doesn't -- it's not enough. But it's a huge challenge.

GENERAL ALLEN: Sarah, please.

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: So in service of how you reach some of the goals that each of you were trying to do some things differently and how we both recruit and retain talent. First of all, I'm trying to ban the use of the word "fit," "cultural fit" with our institution. Because you replicate yourself if you allow people to look for someone who looks just like you or has the same credential, you end up will only hire people from the Michigan Economics Department or whatever.

We're also looking for alternatives to the Ph.D., for example, as the criteria.

What are the skills that you learn in pursuing a Ph.D., and what other ways might someone acquire those skills and competencies that might be different that allow you to look at a much broader pool of individuals. And then when people are on board, it's really important to be clear what success looks like to people. In many ways we found that we communicated informally what success was, and then people who proceeded to be successful kind of had that ability to informally communicate and they ended up being the people who looked a lot like and had the same background with the current incumbent leaders at the top who were not particularly diverse and had a same particularly discipline and training in their school.

So if you instead say we're going to be very explicit and be much more articular about what success looks like in outcomes, not necessarily in credentials, then you start finding a broader set of people have a chance to be successful in your organization. That process is painful because when you go to articulate it, it challenges a lot of assumptions that particularly your leadership has about what, you know, who has earned the chance to have the same stature that I might have, the same title that I may have in the organization? So there's a lot of time and energy going into that but I think it's profoundly important if we're going to have the kind of people be successful in the future.

GENERAL ALLEN: Let me just make a quick comment.

Did anyone else want to comment on this?

One of the things we talk about here as well is the absence of clear career progression for public policy specialists. And so we think a lot at Brookings about how do our young scholars both have the capacity to progress in a career process, but also professional development. So it's two things -- career progression and professional development for public policy specialists and authorities. And at the same time, auguring their capabilities academically as well. And that's a real challenge I think for most think tanks.

Please, Ken.

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yeah. Let me know at one point, in terms of managing talent we haven't discussed, I think it's managing intellectuals can be a challenge some have noted over the years. (Laughter) But in all truth, the focus on moral, we've tried to be very un-hierarchical at Hudson. We really have tried to keep the hierarch as flat as possible, and we've done so out of a belief that intellectuals have to feel that they have the freedom to say and do what they want to do as long as it fits within the framework of respectful research-based policy work. And we need to keep morale high because it's a competitive market. We have lost people to other think tanks. We have poached people from other think tanks. And this is something, experts won't be productive if they feel that they are constantly being pressured by management. So it's important that we hire the right people and we try to leave them be to the extent it's possible as long as they're productive and entrepreneurial, which is very important.

GENERAL ALLEN: Jim, I think you had your hand up?

MR. MCGANN: Yeah. Two questions.

GENERAL ALLEN: Can we -- let's get the microphone to you. There we are.

MR. MCGANN: Two questions.

GENERAL ALLEN: And this is Jim McGann, by the way, for those of you who missed it.

MR. MCGANN: I'm curious. There hasn't been a discussion in terms of that the traditional model for think tanks is the academic model. And my contention is that's shattered both in terms of communications, data scientists, fund-raising, and in terms of the executives and the tensions that creates in terms of that shift. So I'd be curious a response to that.

And I'm also curious that there hasn't been mention to the intelligence group's presentation earlier in the week. And Dan Coates's comment who said we need to seek and speak truth, which is something you would often hear from think tanks. And the

moment itself and the challenge it poses in terms of presenting facts in terms of the administration I think is interesting. And it's not just think tanks and others that are a part of this debate and challenge, so I'm curious in terms of the response to those two things.

GENERAL ALLEN: I'll make a couple of comments.

I'll let them all speak for themselves, but we pride ourselves on being nonpolitical, nonpartisan. And we may not get political on an issue, but that doesn't mean we won't address a policy. And policies exist often as a result of a political process, but the policy is, of course, where we should spend our time. And we may not be political, but we're also not values neutral. And we'll take a values-based issue or a position on many things and I think that's important as well.

I think your comment about what is the reality of the 21st century in many respects, for the relevance of a think tank you're exactly correct. And it's been addressed here. You know, often think tanks 50 years ago you had to have a terminal degree and you had to be able to publish a monograph. And that was it. That was pretty much where this ended. But think tanks now must be, as I said, flexible and agile. And so I think we need to think differently about the kinds of educational qualifications that the scholars have to have in the 21st century. It's not to say that we diminish at all the importance of a Ph.D. But we have to think differently about that. We have to think differently about how I think technology shoots through everything. And if we're imaginative about that, then we can see to the deep horizon much more clearly and technology both gives us the capacity for a more relevant set of facts because they're based on technology, and we can see where technology is leading society in the context of megatrends. And so we just have to think differently.

And I'll open the floor to anyone else who wants to --

Paul?

MR. SALEM: Yeah, maybe again to disaggregate, I mean, it also, I think, depends on what policy area that think tank is looking at in which program. There are some areas which require really serious "academic" scientific credentials and where that scientific

report will really have a big impact because that's the nature of that issue. Climate change might be one. We don't do any work on it. Some things like that. And other areas which might be more transactional or more diplomatic and so on, we have found that getting somebody who is a former diplomat or somebody who has experience in that area where the challenge is not so much the science and the report but how to go from war to peace or how to -- so you'd find somebody different to engage in that area.

A third criteria which is impact makes you look at two additional criteria to put in your think tank. One is the ability of that person to communicate. You know, great twitter followings, great on TV, great to brief people. And that might take you away from an academic who is effectively trained to be a hermit. You know, you become an academic by becoming a hermit and not communicating and being in the carrels of some library somewhere which disqualifies you in a way from a think tank role.

Other criterion as well, which all of us do, we want people who have impact possibly in policy circles so you get -- sometimes you want people in your think tank who just have -- who have come from government or have contacts in your region and that's why they're there. And so it's a bunch of people that you need to get.

And I'm struck by, yeah, if you look back at when think tanks first began it was you just put out the monograph and, you know, sit on it, and maybe the term think tank was correct. The lumbering heavy. I think we're more like having to be nimble. Maybe we're more like think drones at this point swarming all over the place and being at the right place at the right time.

GENERAL ALLEN: Please, Sarah.

MS. ROSEN WARTTELL: So one thing that I'm sort of shocked but we haven't mentioned was you talk about the business model, is where the money comes from. And all of us have slightly different funding mixes, I suspect. Urban is very different than Brookings in that we are sort of in some ways like half Rand and half like some of these others that get independent funding from foundations and individuals and corporations. But

for each of us, the mix of funding and how you retain your independence with that mix of funding is a perennial set of challenges depending if you're getting some funding from government or from companies.

And then the other question is where the competitors come from. And we've hinted at this idea that there are a lot more voices in the debate. Let me mention two others.

Universities, which used to be the scholar who wrote the monograph, too, and hoped somebody would find it on the Internet today are building what are essentially mini think tanks with very different, you know, focused on a line of work, not always crosscutting, but those think tanks have the ability that their faculty are paid for through different sources. So a lot of their expertise doesn't have to get paid for in the same way we do, and they can have an endless stream of graduate students and undergraduates who can support some of the work, which means -- and they have alumni who are a source of funding. So the revenue model makes them very different. They're further away from the debate in some ways, a little further away from Wayne Gretzky, perhaps, but in many ways they have world-class brilliant experts who we struggle to be able to relevant in the same debate with them. So that's one source.

The other is that some of the firms themselves with their own data assets are building their own, in some cases, more instrumental and in some cases quite independent institutions as well. So we have a lot more voices in the policy debate than we did in the past.

GENERAL ALLEN: Okay. We have about five minutes left. Let me -- this is a speed round. So your question has got to be out in about 15 seconds and we'll do three.

So this gentleman in the second row.

MR. MCALLISTER: Sure. Paul McAllister, Global Leaders in Unity and Evolvement. I'm also a minister.

And one of the questions I had as I listened to one of the panelists speak is, what role does the faith community have today in light of the crisis that we face, and what would you expect for faith community leaders to take from think tanks such as yours to solve problems?

GENERAL ALLEN: Okay. And the lady on the aisle about halfway back. I saw her hand up. Right there, please.

MS. MCLEGGAN: Hi, there. My name is Pat McLeggan.

The ultimate think tanks are the people who actually use your information. And they are the people who have the narratives that are the reality distortion field that ultimately determine, you know, what's going to happen. I'm wondering what responsibility think tank leaders and think tanks themselves have in helping to change the capabilities of the people who are ultimately using the information. They're really the last link in the supply chain.

GENERAL ALLEN: Okay. And a final question. Sir, about five rows back on the left.

SPEAKER: Hi, I'm (inaudible). I work at the Embassy of Austria.

My question concerns -- my questions are about your views of the changing role of increasingly well-funded, private, philanthropic foundations such as a prominent example, the Gates Foundation or the Open Society Foundation, which also increasingly engage in very long-term thinking engaged -- focused on large-scale problems but who then use their own means, perhaps, to affect change in those areas.

To what degree do you think that your role is sort of complimentary or perhaps in a more sort of competing space?

Thank you.

GENERAL ALLEN: Okay. We've got just about three minutes left, so anyone who would care to answer any of those or all of those?

Paolo.

MR. MAGRI: One word on your first question, very short. It depends on the topics. You were asking, what is the involvement of the faith community? It depends on the topics. We started in 2001 a program on religion and international politics with relation to the Middle East mainly, and on migration as mentioned we have actively involved the church and the different institutions. On other topics, no.

GENERAL ALLEN: Sarah, please.

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: Increasingly, whether it's the Gates Foundation --

GENERAL ALLEN: Your microphone, please.

MS. ROSEN WARTELL: Increasingly, whether it's the Gates Foundation or the Ford Foundation or the Obamas or any of the new voices in philanthropy, they are not saying who is doing good work, let me hand out some money to support them. They are thinking about what change they want to drive in the world and then they're looking at the eco system of thought leaders who can both help make them smart and who can help execute on a strategy that funders have. And so it changes the relationship of institutions like ours to become more of the co-creator and the thought partner with institutions like that. Some people worry, and there's a book, Winner Take All that many people are talking about that those kinds of institutions and the solution set that they're willing to tackle may be too limited, but it's not the only force of change. And it is an important additional source of change to the public sector, particularly in Washington when it's so paralyzed. So I would argue that those are -- you have to understand the way they engage, but that's generally a very positive dynamic in the world.

GENERAL ALLEN: Ken, did you have something?

MR. WEINSTEIN: Yeah. On faith leaders we have a regular stream of faith leaders coming to Hudson. We were involved in coming up with the idea for the faith-based initiative under the Bush administration and even we just had a major summit on persecution of Christians in the Middle East, that there were more men in different kinds of robes, men and women in different kinds of robes than I could possibly identify.

On the issue of the consumers of our policy work, look, there's a learning curve here in Washington. It happens to everyone who comes here. Clearly in the think tank world as well. And bringing people up to speed, giving them new perspectives, deepening their appreciation of aspects of policy they might not have understood, that's a key part of what all of us do on a daily basis and it's critical to our work.

GENERAL ALLEN: Well, Thomas, Paolo, Paul, Sarah, Ken, this was a tremendous panel. I can't thank you enough for your insights. And ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking our panelists today.

(Applause)

GENERAL ALLEN: Please have a great day. Try to stay warm but certainly stay safe. Thanks very much. Good day.

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