



## THINK TANKS AND THEIR ROLE IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY SELECTED WEBSITES AND ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

From time to time, the Reference Center seeks to bring to your attention recently issued reports on specific subjects which we think may be of interest.

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**Think Tanks** in the United States have become an integral feature of the political landscape. By focusing on the policy cycle, getting issues on the political agenda, and policy formation and implementation (actually affecting the outcome of policies already on the political agenda), think tanks play an important role in shaping the political dialogue and the policy preferences and choices of decision-makers.

**Think Tanks and U.S. Foreign Policy: A Policy-Maker's Perspective** - From the perspective of U.S. policy-makers, today's think tanks offer five principal benefits, according to Ambassador Richard N. Haass, former Director of Policy and Planning, U.S. State Department. He believes that they generate "new thinking" among U.S. decision-makers, provide experts to serve in the administration and Congress, give policy-makers a venue in which to build shared understanding on policy options, educate U.S. citizens about the world, and provide third-party mediation for parties in conflict. He says that of the many influences on U.S. foreign policy formulation, the role of think tanks is among the most important and least appreciated.

**The Brookings Institution: How a Think Tank Works** - The goal of The Brookings Institution, and all other think tanks, is "to provide the policy community with analysis and conclusions to use as the basis for developing new policies, and for modifying or retiring existing policies," says former Brookings President Strobe Talbott. "One of our most challenging tasks," he says, "is to identify early on the new and important issues our nation and the world will confront in the future" and bring them to the attention of policy-makers and the public.

**The U.S. Institute of Peace: A Hands-On Approach to Resolving Conflict** - The USIP is a unique entity in the increasingly crowded Washington foreign policy think tank community. Its approach is "to go a step further" than a traditional think tank, and "climb into the trenches with those trying to bring peace to their parts of the world and work directly with them," says Richard H. Solomon, who has been President since 1993. The Institute, which was created by the U.S. Congress, brings with it "a growing wealth of knowledge and expertise in the techniques of managing conflict and building peace."

### **The Role of Think Tanks in U.S. Foreign Policy: A Selection of Internet Sites**

- There are approximately 1,500 think tanks in the United States. They engage in a range of policy-related activities, and comprise a diverse set of institutions that have varied organizational forms. The list below, far from inclusive, is a representative sampling or cross section of think tanks that deal with U.S. foreign policy issues.

**American Enterprise Institute**

**Aspen Institute**

**Atlantic Council of the United States**

[Brookings Institution: Foreign Policy Studies](#)

[Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#)

[Cato Institute: Foreign Policy](#)

[Center for Strategic and International Studies](#)

[Council on Foreign Relations](#)

[Foreign Policy Research Institute](#)

[Heritage Foundation](#)

[Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, Stanford University](#)

[Hudson Institute](#)

[Institute for Defense Analyses](#)

[Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis](#)

[Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy](#)

[John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University](#)

[National Defense University](#)

[New America Foundation](#)

[RAND: International Affairs](#)

[Henry L. Stimson Center](#)

[U.S. Institute of Peace](#)

[Woodrow Wilson International center for Scholars](#)

*For a more comprehensive view, the next two sites provide many more links to think tanks.*

[Lehman Social Sciences Library, Columbia University](#)

[University of North Carolina](#)

[Foreign Policy in Focus: A Think Tank Without Walls](#)

**Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program**

**The Global "Go-To Think Tanks": The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations in the World by  
[James G. McGann](#)**



*"Gone are the days when a think tank could operate with the motto "research it, write it and they will find it." Today, think tanks must be lean, mean, policy machines. The report that follows summarizes the findings of a pilot project to identify some of the leading think tanks in the world, and provides lists of what might be called the "go to think tanks" in every region."*

View [The Global "Go-To Think Tanks": The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations in the World, 2007](#) (24p. 265K )

[Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program](#) at *FPRI*.

**Think Tanks in Brief** - The following fact sheet profiles nine U.S. think tanks, selected to show a representative range of views, with budgets ranging from \$3 million to nearly \$30 million, and staff sizes that range from 35 to around 250.

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#### **American Enterprise Institute**

(<http://www.aei.org>)

**Mission:** The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, founded in 1943, is dedicated to preserving and strengthening the foundations of freedom -- limited government, private enterprise, vital cultural and political institutions, and a strong foreign policy and national defense -- through scholarly research, open debate, and publications. AEI is strictly nonpartisan and takes no institutional positions on pending legislation or other policy questions.

**Structure:** A 24-member Board of Trustees, composed of leading business and financial executives, governs the Institute, and its research agenda and appointments are reviewed by a Council of Academic Advisers, a group of distinguished outside scholars. President Christopher C. DeMuth guides the Institute's daily operations. The Institute has about 50 resident scholars and fellows, and maintains a network of more than 100 adjunct scholars at American universities and policy institutes.

**Funding:** AEI is an independent, non-profit organization supported primarily by grants and contributions from foundations, corporations, and individuals.

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#### **The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace**

(<http://www.ceip.org>)

**Mission:** The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP), founded in 1910, is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations and promoting active international engagement by the United States. Through research, publishing, convening, and, on occasion, creating new institutions and international networks, the Endowment's associates shape fresh policy approaches.

**Structure:** The Board of Trustees, composed of 23 leaders of American business and public life, governs the Endowment and directs its research initiatives. President Jessica T. Matthews oversees the Endowment's daily operations. The Washington Office supports a staff of 100, and nearly 40 Russian scholars work at the CEIP office in Moscow.

**Funding:** Most of the Endowment's annual funding comes from contributions, rental income, and publications, including "Foreign Policy," one of the world's leading magazines of international politics and economics.

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#### **The Cato Institute**

(<http://www.cato.org>)

**Mission:** The Cato Institute, founded in 1977 as a non-profit public policy research foundation, seeks to broaden the parameters of public policy debate to allow consideration of the traditional American principles of limited government, individual liberty, free markets, and peace. Toward that goal, the Institute strives to achieve greater involvement of the public in questions of policy and the proper role of government.

**Structure:** A Board of Directors, composed of 15 business professionals, governs the Institute, which has approximately 90 full-time employees, 60 adjunct scholars, and 16 fellows, plus interns. President and founder Edward H. Crane oversees the Institute's daily operations.

**Funding:** In order to maintain its independence, the Cato Institute accepts no government funding or endowments. Contributors include individuals, corporations, and foundations. Other revenue is generated from the sale of publications and conference fees.

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#### **Center for Nonproliferation Studies**

(<http://cns.miis.edu/>)

**Mission:** The Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), established in 1989 by its current director, Dr. William Potter, strives to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by training the next generation of non-proliferation specialists and disseminating timely information and analysis. CNS at the Monterey Institute of International Studies is the largest non-governmental organization in the United States devoted exclusively to research and training on non-proliferation issues.

**Structure:** CNS has a full-time staff of more than 65 specialists and over 65 graduate student research assistants located in offices in Monterey, California; Washington, D.C.; and Almaty, Kazakhstan. An International Advisory Board -- including U.S. and Russian legislators, former ambassadors, United Nations officials, renowned non-proliferation experts, and corporate executives -- meets twice a year to review CNS programs and activities. In addition, the Center has convened the Monterey Nonproliferation Strategy Group, an international panel of experts who meet periodically to develop policy recommendations.

**Funding:** CNS is a non-profit educational institution supported by donations from individuals, foundations and corporations. Three times a year, it publishes the journal *The Nonproliferation Review*.

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#### **Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)**

(<http://www.csis.org>)

**Mission:** For four decades, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) has been dedicated to providing world leaders with strategic insights on -- and policy solutions to -- current and emerging global issues. CSIS helps to develop national and international public policy by generating strategic insights, convening strategic networks, crafting policy solutions, and developing today's and tomorrow's leaders.

**Structure:** CSIS is led by President and Chief Executive Officer John J. Hamre, a former deputy secretary of defense, and is guided by a Board of Trustees chaired by former Senator Sam Nunn and consisting of prominent individuals from both the public and private sectors. CSIS employs 190 researchers and support staff.

**Funding:** Contributions from corporations, foundations, and individuals constitute 85% of the revenue needed to meet CSIS's budget, with remaining funds come from endowment income, government contracts, and publication sales.

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### The Council on Foreign Relations

(<http://www.cfr.org>)

**Mission:** Founded in 1921, the Council on Foreign Relations is a non-partisan membership organization, research center, and publisher. It is dedicated to increasing America's understanding of the world and contributing ideas to U.S. foreign policy. The Council accomplishes this mainly by promoting constructive debates and discussion, clarifying world issues, and by publishing Foreign Affairs, the leading journal on global issues.

**Structure:** The Council is governed by a 31-member Board of Directors. Leslie H. Gelb is the Chief Executive officer and president. It has a staff of approximately 200, including about 75 fellows. Its membership (approximately 4,000, chosen by a nomination process) is divided almost equally among New York, Washington, D.C., and the rest of the country.

**Funding:** The Council is an independent, tax exempt organization financed by member dues and gifts, foundation and individual grants, corporate contributions, and revenues from its own endowment.

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### The Heritage Foundation

(<http://www.heritage.org>)

**Mission:** Founded in 1973, The Heritage Foundation is a research and educational institute whose mission is to formulate and promote conservative public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense. The Foundation produces research and generates solutions consistent with its beliefs that are marketed to the Congress, the Executive Branch, news media and others.

**Structure:** A 19-member Board of Trustees governs the work of 185 Heritage employees, including some 75 experts in a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues. President Edwin J. Feulner oversees the Foundation's daily operations.

**Funding:** The Heritage Foundation is supported by contributions from its members, including corporations and more than 200,000 individuals across the United States.

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### Hudson Institute

(<http://www.hudson.org/>)

**Mission:** The Hudson Institute, founded in 1961, produces independent, high-quality research and strives to compete boldly in the debate of policy ideas. Hudson works to counsel and guide policy change, applying its ideas whenever possible alongside other leaders in communities, business, non-profit organizations and governments alike. Its mission is to be America's premier source of applied research on enduring policy challenges.

**Structure:** In 1984, Hudson broadened its scope by securing a diverse, influential research staff. The Institute, which has a staff of 75, maintains its headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, while also operating an office in Washington, D.C. and satellite offices across the United States. Institute President Herbert I. London and two vice-presidents, one in Indianapolis and one in Washington, D.C., preside over the Institute, and its work is guided by a Board of Trustees.

**Funding:** Hudson Institute is a non-profit organization supported primarily by contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations.

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### New America Foundation

(<http://www.newamerica.net/>)

**Mission:** The purpose of the New America Foundation, founded in January 1999, is to elevate new voices and ideas to the fore of the nation's public discourse. Relying on a venture capital approach, the Foundation invests in outstanding individuals and policy ideas that transcend the conventional political spectrum. New America sponsors a wide range of research, published writing, conferences, and events on the most important issues of the day.

**Structure:** The New America Foundation, which has a staff of 35, is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit public policy institute that was conceived through the collaborative work of a diverse and intergenerational group of public intellectuals, civic leaders, and business executive. New America's Board of Directors original Chair was James Fallows. Ted Halstead is the organization's founding President and CEO.

**Funding:** The New America Foundation is supported primarily by grants and contributions from foundations, corporations, and individuals, and by the sale of its publications.

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**American Reference Center, U.S. Embassy, P.O. Box 1190, Wellington**  
**We welcome your feedback! Email: [wellington.arc@state.gov](mailto:wellington.arc@state.gov)**

