

Sen. Chuck Hagel,
Brookings Institution's
90th Anniversary
Leadership Forum,
July 28, 2006:

“Brookings has been at the center of every important policy debate in this country for 90 years. . . . Ninety years after the creation of the Brookings Institution, we live in a different world, but once again a world in transition. . . . American leadership is still indispensable.”

The Century Foundation, *The Best and Worst in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina*, December 25, 2005:

“[The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program Director] Bruce Katz and his staff have done a tremendous job of documenting the federal response to Hurricane Katrina. Their analysis is clear and their recommendations strong and on target.”

Robert G. Kaiser, associate editor of *The Washington Post*, in a review of *The Broken Branch*, August 13, 2006:

“[Thomas Mann of Brookings and Norm Ornstein of AEI] are members of what, sadly, may be a disappearing breed in Washington: independent-minded, knowledgeable experts whose concern for process is stronger than their desires for particular outcomes. . . . Their devotion to Congress has won them admirers from all points on the political spectrum.”

Sen. Barack Obama, on The Hamilton Project launch, April 5, 2006:

“[The Hamilton Project is the] breath of fresh air that I think this town needs. . . . I am glad that Brookings has been willing to provide a home for this wonderful effort.”

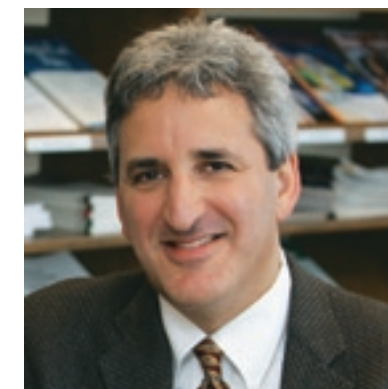
Robert Zoellick, former United States Deputy Secretary of State, on the launch of the John L. Thornton China Center, October 9, 2006:

“Jeff Bader’s unsurpassed expertise, insight and experience in leading the new John L. Thornton China Center, combined with the Brookings Institution’s commitment, couldn’t come at a more important time in Sino-American relations.”

Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate in Economics, October 11, 2006:

“I am delighted that Brookings is taking an active interest in problems of development and the global society. The new Wolfensohn Center for Development is a very welcome move in just the right direction, and it nicely supplements what is happening under the new Global Economy and Development Program at Brookings.”

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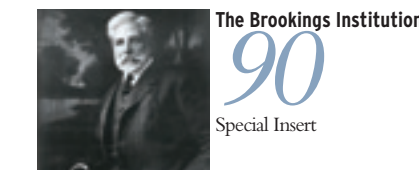
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1775 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: 202-797-6000
Fax: 202-797-6004
www.brookings.edu
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Reporters interview Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska after his remarks at a Brookings 90th Anniversary Leadership Forum on U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East.

The Brookings Institution is a private nonprofit organization devoted to independent research and innovative policy solutions. For 90 years, Brookings has analyzed current and emerging issues and produced new ideas that matter—for the nation and the world. ■ For policy-makers and the media, Brookings scholars provide the highest quality research, policy recommendations, and analysis on the full range of public policy issues. ■ Research at the Brookings Institution is conducted to inform the public debate, not advance a political agenda. Our scholars are drawn from the United States and abroad—with experience in government and academia—and hold diverse points of view. ■ Brookings’s goal is to provide high-quality analysis and recommendations for decision-makers in the United States and abroad on the full range of challenges facing an increasingly interdependent world.

RALPH ALSWANG

It has been 90 years since Robert S. Brookings founded America's pre-eminent policy research organization. He had come to Washington from the Midwest to help the United States government prepare to rescue a world that was aflame in "the Great War." America was just emerging as a major power at a time when European empires were in decline or on the verge of disintegration. Three decades later, in the aftermath of World War II and at the outset of the Cold War, Brookings scholars were deeply involved in designing the United Nations and the Marshall Plan.

Today, the international system faces new challenges. Five years after 9/11, the United States, along with its allies and partners, is wrestling with a combination of unprecedented dangers and all-too-familiar conflicts. The war in Iraq entered its third year with no end to the violence in sight. The Middle East has suffered further setbacks to the peace process. The North Korean nuclear test and the Iranian program to develop a bomb of its own threaten regional peace and the worldwide nonproliferation regime. The public and policy-makers have woken up to the reality of global warming.

Brookings scholars are intensely engaged on all these issues, conducting cutting-edge research on the problems and developing bold but pragmatic ideas for their solution. No matter what their areas of expertise, they—like all of us—are aware of the growing importance of China.

Just as the emergence of the United States on the world stage was a crucial factor 90 years ago, the rise of China is likely to weigh heavily in shaping the geopolitics—and geoeconomics—of the 21st century. That nation, with a population of more than one-sixth of humanity, has a surging economy and an increasingly proactive diplomatic strategy. Whether the issue is ensuring energy security, promoting healthy trade, protecting the environment, or preserving peace itself, the futures of the American and Chinese people are increasingly intertwined.

Having spent much of my career in East Asia and the last several years working in China, I have supported the opening of a new China Center, based in Washington but with an office in Beijing. While breaking new ground, the center will uphold our signature standards of quality, independence, and impact.

The China Center joins other innovations of Brookings's 90th-anniversary year: the creation of the Global Economy and Development Program, the Wolfensohn Center for Development, the Hamilton Project, and the International Advisory Council. These new ventures will work closely with our other research programs and centers to advance Robert Brookings's original vision for the Institution that bears his name. He knew, and so do we, that being the best American think tank carries with it an obligation to think—and act—globally.



John L. Thornton, Brookings chairman

Strobe Talbott, Brookings president

As we celebrate the Institution's 90th anniversary, all of us at Brookings have been giving fresh thought to the challenge of fulfilling our core mission—policy research that meets the highest standards of quality, independence, and impact—in a rapidly changing political landscape, both in the United States and around the world.

Everything we do at Brookings starts with the proposition that good governance is based on good ideas, respect for facts, rigorous thinking, and civil discourse.

All those values undergird our commitment to nonpartisanship, which we seek to uphold in what we do and in how we do it. We are always on the lookout for ways to support nonpartisanship—or, in the form it sometimes takes on Capitol Hill, bipartisanship. With that goal in mind, we entered this year into a partnership with the Center Aisle Caucus, a newly formed effort in the House of Representatives dedicated to encouraging discussion of national issues across party lines. It was in a similar spirit that our Budgeting for National Priorities initiative—led by Senior Fellow Isabel Sawhill—tackled the problems posed by the U.S. deficit, and that our scholars testified before Congress more than 40 times. Meanwhile, joint programs with the Chautauqua Institution and Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School have allowed us to broaden the scope of our work and the constituencies we are reaching.

Brookings prides itself as offering a forum to leaders and commentators from across the political spectrum. Senators including Hillary Clinton, Chuck Hagel and Richard Lugar spoke at Brookings during a pivotal election year. Senator Barack Obama spoke at the launches of both the Brookings-AEI Election Reform Project and the Hamilton Project, an economic policy initiative aimed at advancing strategies to restore the nation's promise of opportunity, prosperity, and growth. Members of both parties in both houses of Congress also sought the advice of Brookings scholars on Iraq, Lebanon, Russia and North Korea.

This year more than ever before we've internationalized our agenda and our outreach. We provided a platform to Rodrigo de Rato, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, to give an important address on globalization, trade, economic growth, and the need for reform of multilateral institutions. He spoke under the auspices of our newest research program, Global Economy and Development, which is the institutional home for another exciting new venture, the Wolfensohn Center for Development, created through the generosity of our trustee James Wolfensohn.

We also held the inaugural meeting of our International Advisory Council, which brings together leaders from around the world who will help us chart our course in becoming a truly global research institution. And—thanks to John Thornton—we formally launched a new China Center dedicated to understanding the impact of that emerging power.

Varied and growing as this agenda is, every project we undertake has a common denominator: the best possible scholars working on the most important challenges facing our nation and the world. There is no better example than Bruce Katz, vice president and director of our Metropolitan Policy Program, which is working on the reinvention of local governance around the nation and the world. Bruce was this year's recipient of the prestigious Heinz Award for Public Policy.

All this would not be possible without the support of our many friends. To all of you, thanks—and, since we're always looking over the horizon at Brookings, here's to a productive decade that will take us to our Centennial.