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* Meridian International Center is grateful to the Trustees who completed their service to Meridian at the end of 2008.
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INTRODUCTION:
A MESSAGE
FROM
MERIDIAN’S
PRESIDENT

Each year, Meridian works to strengthen exchange among global leaders and international cooperation on key issues such as energy, the environment, global health and civic engagement. Our programs and approach create better understanding, partnership building, and coordination on solutions to issues of global concern.

In 2008, Meridian built on its solid foundation and its 50-year partnership with the U.S. State Department to seek new ways to advance this essential mission. For example, we strategically evaluated program content, the impact of our activities, and placed a higher priority on long-range planning. We also further expanded our traditional constituencies by cultivating sectors such as social entrepreneurs and corporations, who are emerging as essential actors in fulfilling our goals. As a result, Meridian’s visibility continues to increase as a unique and forward-thinking institution connecting U.S. citizens with the international community.

Particular highlights of 2008 include our work to create I-VOTE, a major program for international political leaders to observe the 2008 US Presidential election; the Meridian/Gallup Global Engagement Forum; developing an innovative entrepreneurship program for South African women that included a public-private partnership; and a major State Department commission to send the Jazz Ambassadors exhibition overseas.

The Board of Trustees and I look forward to continuing our successes and exploring new initiatives that support sustainable global partnerships through leadership exchanges, international collaboration and cultural diplomacy.

Stuart W. Holliday
President
Meridian International Center
Meridian International Center provides a unique forum for the open exchange of American and international perspectives on current issues and foreign affairs. In this role, the institution serves as a catalyst for positive outcomes to our shared global challenges.

Meridian has been advancing work in public diplomacy and international exchange since 1960. Tens of thousands of international leaders have come through our doors to participate in leadership programs designed to increase their understanding of the United States and the American people, including important allies such as Nicolas Sarkozy, Gordon Brown and Hamid Karzai, to name just a few. Of equal importance, Meridian has provided Americans with a platform to listen, engage and act on perspectives from outside the country.

In addition to international exchanges, Meridian creates programs that convene leaders for action that have fostered hundreds of important dialogues. Diplomats, government officials and business leaders come to Meridian to help improve their understanding on key issues and discover ways to work together to bring about positive change.

Meridian’s arts and cultural exhibitions have created important breakthroughs with people in countries such as China, Vietnam, and Iran. In our own Washington, DC neighborhood, we have illuminated thousands of Washington area students on cultures and traditions around the world.

This good work has earned Meridian close relationships with leaders in all branches of the U.S. government, foreign embassies and governments, business leaders and other international NGOs. Meridian is able to tap into all of this expertise and these resources to continue to produce many exceptional programs.

The following pages feature some of the highlights of 2008.
GLOBAL LEADERSHIP EXCHANGES

Meridian is the leading manager of the U.S. Department of State’s premier professional exchange operation — the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP)—and creates custom programs for other U.S. government agencies, as well as public and private sector organizations. Meridian’s 2,500 yearly exchanges foster sustainable partnerships by linking Americans and global visitors through communities of interest.

In 2008, conflicts on three continents and the growing potential for proliferation and borderless threats gave urgency to the goals of the IVLP and our other exchange programs. Meridian’s committed program teams consistently bring their professional expertise to the service of International Visitors, gathering foreign leaders with their professional counterparts and Americans from all walks of life.

International Visitors Observe the Election (I-VOTE)

From October 25 to November 8, Meridian International Center facilitated the visit of over 70 participants in the International Visitors Observe the Elections (I-VOTE) International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Election Fellows – emerging leaders aged 30 to 50 representing their individual countries – visited Washington, D.C., where they received an orientation on American culture and insights into the dynamics of the electoral and democratic political processes in the United States during this banner election year.

The participants heard from Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs Goli Ameri, former Republican National Committee (RNC) Chairman Frank Fahrenkopf, former Democratic Congressman and Governor Jim Blanchard, POLITICO Managing Editor Bill Nichols, Washington Post columnist David Ignatius, and renowned pollster Mark Penn, among others. From Washington, the visitors then traveled to five battleground or swing states: Ohio, Colorado, Florida, Minnesota and Missouri; and on Election Day, they traveled to 50 cities to observe polling place operations, campaign events, and election night events. Following the election, a “Wrap-Up” in Boston allowed the Fellows to share their travel experiences with colleagues from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.
Women Political Leaders from the Middle East and North Africa

From October 14 to November 7, forty-four female political leaders from the Middle East and North Africa participated in an election exchange program organized by the U.S. Department of State’s Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). Implemented by Meridian International Center and American University’s Center for Democracy and Election Management (CDEM), along with its Women and Politics Institute (WPI), MEPI’s Election Exchange Program provided participants with an opportunity to learn electoral campaigning in the U.S. and witness local and presidential elections up close, with a special focus on the experience of American women in politics.

The program began with a series of workshops on the American electoral system and then split into smaller groups to visit ten U.S. states. There they met with local political leaders and experts from NGOs. The women had a front seat view at Obama and McCain rallies in Miami, FL, Raleigh, NC, and Minneapolis, MN, and met with President Bush at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building next to the White House. Later, the participants observed the U.S. Presidential election on November 4 and exchanged insights on their experiences throughout the program.

South African Women Entrepreneurs

In March, Meridian designed and coordinated a series of three regional workshops in South Africa designed to help women entrepreneurs with business development and expansion. The program was created by a collaboration of U.S. and South African women entrepreneurs and developers from a team of organizations represented in South Africa by Pretoria’s Maxum Business Incubator at the Innovation Hub and in the U.S. by Maryland Women in Technology (MDWIT) in Baltimore. The program has helped ignite business development and expansion by launching a supportive international network of women technology entrepreneurs. Their 3 week trip to the U.S. helped develop their business skills with training and mentoring by MDWIT.

In August, the U.S. and South African women reunited in South Africa for further development and learned about the achievements they had experienced since their return from the United States. By the end of the series of workshops, almost 200 South African current and aspiring women entrepreneurs attended the regional workshops conducted by the U.S. delegation.
Qatar and Human Rights

In June 2008, Meridian conducted an exchange for seven members of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) of Qatar. The delegation visited Washington, D.C. and New York City, where they met with government agencies, advocacy groups and NGOs that address issues related to human trafficking and foreign workers. Highlights included meetings with the American Center for International Labor Solidarity, the U.S. Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, the Safe Horizon Hotline Program and the New York State Division of Human Rights.

Afghan Governors Focus on Governance and Rural Development

Eight Afghan governors visited the United States on an IVLP on Governance and Rural Development from April 5 to 26. While in Washington, D.C., they met with the President and the Secretary of State and other top government officials. Meridian organized and executed the program, and hosted a roundtable discussion focusing on the state of affairs in Afghanistan, which convened diplomats, government officials, American think tank experts, and other distinguished members of the community. From Washington, the Afghanes traveled to California, Nebraska, and New Mexico, to meet with the governors of each state, visited state and local government offices, and met with local farmers. By the end of the three-week program, the Afghan governors had enlightened Americans about Afghanistan and expanded their knowledge and leadership skills in governance and rural development.

U.S. and Brazilian Energy Leaders Exchange Ideas

Meridian accompanied a high ranking delegation of Brazilian government officials on a week long orientation visit in early June sponsored by the United States Trade and Development Agency. Designed to assist the officials in building capacity for small- and medium-sized companies that work in Brazil’s marginal oil fields, the program included meetings with U.S. Government officials, NGOs and private businesses in Oklahoma and Texas. They also toured oil fields, production facilities and an equipment plant, and discussed potential U.S. investment opportunities in Brazil.
Young Australian Political Leaders

From October 26 to November 8, Meridian facilitated an IVLP for ten young Australians to Washington, D.C. These leaders were nominated by Australia’s four main political parties, and served as party activists and key staff aides to state and federal political and government leaders throughout their country. The program allowed them to explore the historical and constitutional framework of the American electoral system in the context of the recent presidential election.

The visitors became acquainted with American party politics, political campaigns, and the use of new technology, such as blogs and Internet forums in the political and electoral processes. They also attended RNC and DNC after-parties and rallies for both then-Sen. Barack Obama and Gov. Sarah Palin, and also met Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Global Breast Cancer Awareness

As part of the State Department’s engagement with the private sector in support of public diplomacy, the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs partnered with the Avon Foundation on the 2008 Breast Cancer Global Congress in October. The program brought together breast cancer researchers, clinicians, survivors, and advocates from over 40 countries to discuss the global challenge of these disease. The Congress, which included fifteen participants was administered by Meridian and focused on awareness programs as well as recent developments in screening and treatment.

Participants included a popular Macedonian singer, a reporter for a major Japanese newspaper, and doctors from nine countries. Each visitor indicated that the project had provided him/her with considerable knowledge and information to use in the fight against breast cancer in their own countries. In St. Petersburg, Florida, the visitors participated in an organizational workshop, a sunrise opening ceremony, and a first night camp of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Three Day event. The visit culminated in the traditional 60-mile walk to raise funds and awareness.
British MPs: A Study of Federalism and the American Government

Meridian coordinated an IVLP of six members of the U.K. parliament to the U.S. during the week of September 10. Members of the delegation, representing both the Labour and Conservative Parties, were paired with Members of the U.S. Congress and joined them for weekend visits to their individual districts. The MPs also participated in a panel discussion at Meridian House on their reactions to the 2008 election cycle.

Iraq’s Minister of Culture Visits the U.S.

Funded by the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Meridian organized an exchange program for His Excellency Dr. Maher Dalli Ibrahim Al-Hadithi, Iraq’s Minister of Culture and two of his colleagues. The delegation spent 6 days in Washington, D.C., from October 22 to November 2, meeting with officials of the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts, the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress, and the State Department. The delegation then traveled to New Orleans to attend the World Cultural Economic Forum (WCEF).

Swedish Social Democratic Party Officials Get Insider Perspective on U.S. Politics

From October 27 to November 5, 2008, forty two senior officials from the Swedish Social Democratic Party visited the U.S. during the ten-day run-up to the 2008 presidential election. The trip was sponsored jointly by the American Embassy in Stockholm and the Swedish party. The group was led by Marita Ulvskog, the party’s Secretary General and a Member of Parliament, and included representatives of the party leadership, regional directors and senior staff.

United States Congress – Republic of Korea National Assembly Youth Exchange Project

Interns from U.S. Congressional offices and participants nominated by members of the Korean National Assembly participated in a program to build knowledge about their respective political systems, countries and cultures. The youth formed lasting personal relationships through program activities in the U.S. and Korea. Meridian has conducted this annual program since 1997.
Synopsis of Global Leadership Exchanges

For 50 years, the U.S. Department of State has partnered with Meridian to conduct people-to-people exchanges through the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). This sustained partnership between the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State and Meridian has brought thousands of civic, educational, and professional leaders to the United States.

To enhance the success of the IVLP, Meridian also designs, plans and executes specialized and targeted exchange programs, professional study tours, and training programs for delegations from around the world. Our major clients include American embassies abroad, U.S. government agencies, U.S. private industry, as well as foreign public and private sector organizations such as governments, embassies, political parties, media outlets and corporations.

The graph below shows the scale of the IVLP and other exchange programs during 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IVLP</td>
<td>1355</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near East/South Asia</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia/Pacific</td>
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<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
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<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Hemisphere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
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<td>Regional Groups</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi Regional Groups</td>
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<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voluntary Visitors:</strong></td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>103</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States Embassy Exchanges¹</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Trade and Development Agency²</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Press Center³</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Broadcast Services³</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>2,312</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Exchanges contracted from U.S. embassies abroad include professional study tours for delegates selected by the Embassy. These also include study tours for private oversees organizations nominated by U.S. embassies, such as labor unions, political parties and industry.

2. USTDA: Orientation visits for foreign delegations from developing nations in a number of industry sectors, most recently energy and information technology.

3. FPC and OBS: Administrative Support for foreign visiting journalists covering the United States.
CONVENING GLOBAL LEADERS FOR ACTION

Meridian convenes diverse decision-makers and high-level influencers from the U.S. and abroad. These leaders are drawn from the public and private sectors, academia and the arts. Participants share information and seek areas of agreement, in face-to-face and virtual exchanges of ideas, which serve as catalysts for solving challenges shared between U.S. and international leaders.

Working with the U.S. Department of State, Meridian also organizes briefings for recently posted U.S. Ambassadors, as well as training seminars on key regional issues and developments.

Global Engagement Roundtable on Strengthening Public Diplomacy

In June, Meridian International Center convened a meeting of leaders and innovators from the public, private and non-profit sectors to work toward the common goal of expanding international exchange and strengthening America’s public diplomacy efforts. The goal was to share ideas, trends, and initiatives from the fields of technology, philanthropy, and public diplomacy, and to explore how these new tools can be blended to facilitate and foster positive global engagement. Attendees included Ambassador David Abshire, Ambassador David Gross, Jonathan Spalter, former Assistant Surgeon General Dr. Susan Blumenthal, Ambassador Cynthia Schneider, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Mike Doran. Presentations were also given by Gallup, Global Giving, and the Partnership for Quality Medical Donations (PQMD).

The roundtable concluded that virtual worlds, online platforms, and mobile technology are changing the way in which traditional diplomacy is conducted. While these new technologies will never fully replace face-to-face exchanges, technology can both expand and enhance these efforts. These innovations allow a greater number of people to participate in international exchange and provide them an online platform to continue working in communities of interest.

Tactics of Hope: How Social Entrepreneurs are Changing our World

Also in June, Meridian International Center hosted Wilford Welch, author of Tactics of Hope: How Social Entrepreneurs are Changing our World, for a discussion with Nina Smith, Executive Director of RugMark, and Stephanie Fischer, Chief Program Officer for Global Giving on the growing role of social entrepreneurship. Attended by over 100 guests from the Washington, DC and California area, this program provided an insight into the global importance of social entrepreneurs.
Global Engagement Series: The 2008 U.S. Presidential Election

In the lead-up to the 2008 U.S. general election, Meridian hosted a series of five pre-election programs. Discussions were framed around world perspectives, as reflected in the Gallup World Poll on major international issues as compared to U.S. public opinion. Panelists provided the public positions of the Republican and Democrat Presidential nominees in reaction to the data. This series was funded in part through the Walter and Isabel Cutler Endowment for World Affairs.

The first session of the Global Engagement Series was held on September 11. Titled “Beyond the Rhetoric: How the New Administration will Confront Terrorism”, the panel was moderated by Marvin Kalb and Kojo Nnamdi and broadcasted on WAMU. Panelists included Peter Bergen of the New America Foundation, now Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan, and Deputy Foreign Policy Advisor to Senator John McCain for President, Kori Schake.

On September 18, the series continued with a discussion on “America the Beautiful: The View from Abroad”. Featuring Amb. Richard Burt and Jonathon Spalter, Foreign Policy advisors to the campaign of Senator John McCain and Senator Barack Obama respectively, Gallup analyst Ian Brown, and Allan Goodman, President of the Institute for International Education. Moderated by Amb. Kenton Keith, the panel discussed approaches the respective candidates would take to improve America’s image abroad upon election to the Presidency.

On September 24, “Energy & The Environment: Prospects for a U.S. Energy Policy” featured Howard Learner, Environmental Advisor to Senator Barack Obama for President, Rebecca Jensen Tallent, the Energy and National Security Advisor to Senator John McCain for President, and Gallup analyst Steve Crabtree. Moderated by Ambassador Stuart Holliday, the panel discussed how the candidates proposed to provide for the long-term energy needs of the United States.

The October 2 program continued with “America in the World Economy: Fair Competition and Open Markets”, which featured Gary Gensler, Economic Advisor to Senator Barack Obama for President & Former Undersecretary of the Treasury, and Ike Brannon, Economic Advisor to Senator John McCain for President. Gensler & Brannon spoke with Ted Alden, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, about how the next president would enhance American leadership in international economics and trade issues while coping with a weakened dollar, protectionist sentiment, and the global impact of the crisis in the U.S. credit and housing sectors.

The final installment of the series, “America and the Multilateral World”, took place on October 9 and featured Amb. Don McHenry, Supporter of Senator Barack Obama for President & Former Ambassador to the United Nations, Gallup Analyst Magali Rheault, Richard Williamson, Foreign Policy Advisor to Senator John McCain for President and former Ambassador the United Nations, and Ed Elmendorf, President of the United Nations National Capital Area Chapter. Moderated by Amb. Stuart Holliday, the panel reviewed how the next President would help to reshape and redefine multilateral international institutions to assist the global community in times of crisis against borderless threats.
The Meridian/Gallup Global Engagement Forum

On October 6, Meridian, partnered with Gallup to hold the first annual Global Engagement Forum. Key leaders from the public and private sectors came together to gain insights on global public opinion and to discuss the need for renewed approaches to global engagement. Speakers on five panels addressed a diverse array of political, economic, and social issues using data about worldwide opinions gathered by Gallup. Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President of Meridian, moderated the event, emphasizing both the Forum’s role as a medium for discussing international diplomacy and this year’s special focus on new media, global institutions, and development. Speakers included:

- Senator Chuck Hagel
- Hon. Goli Ameri, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs
- Jim Wolfensohn Chairman, Wolfensohn & Co., former President, World Bank
- Henrietta Fore USAID Administrator
- Vint Cerf V.P., Chief Internet Evangelist, Google
- Dr. Angel Cabrera President, Thunderbird School of Global Management;
- Ambassador Stuart Holliday President, Meridian International Center
- Jim Clifton Chairman and CEO, Gallup
- Abby Joseph Cohen President, Global Markets Institute, Goldman Sachs
- Rear Admiral Susan Blumenthal M.D., Former Assistant Surgeon General
- Paul Meyer CEO, Voxiva Mobile Solutions
- Jane Wales President, Global Philanthropy Forum
- Dalia Mogahed Senior Analyst and Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies
- Rajesh Srinivasan Regional Director, Asia for the Gallup World Poll
- Bob Tortora Regional Director, Africa for the Gallup World Poll
- Ambassador David Gross U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy
Bridges of Understanding Conference

Meridian works closely on a variety of projects with its partner Bridges of Understanding – a non-profit, non-political organization devoted to supporting projects and efforts that foster better understanding between the American people and people of the Arab world.

On October 21, Meridian hosted the second annual Bridges of Understanding Conference, bringing over 100 guests from across the U.S. and the Middle East to discuss the importance of new media and technology in fostering greater understanding between Middle Eastern and American youth. Participants included Young Arab Leaders Fellows, visitors from the U.S. Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program, experts in the field of new media, and past participants of Bridges mission trips.

Speakers included Patricia Harrison, CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, former Jordanian Ambassador Karim Kawar, President of the Kawar Group, Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President of Meridian, Rita King, CEO of Dancing Ink Productions, and April Delaney, Washington Director of Common Sense Media. The panel focused not only on the growing access to public television and radio across the Middle East, but also on the newfound ability of ordinary citizens to voice their opinions through new media, such as blogging, videos, social networking, and online games.

Congressional-Diplomatic Dialogue

In January, Meridian brought together Members of Congress, foreign diplomats, and private, non-profit, and public sector leaders for a discussion between Congressman Ed Markey (D-MA), His Excellency Antonio Patriota, Ambassador of Brazil, and His Excellency Friis Arne Petersen, Ambassador of Denmark on “A Post-Bali, Pre-Kyoto Look at Energy and the Environment”.

Rita King with Former Jordanian Ambassador Karim Kawar
Missy Jones, Beth Silfer, Luma Kawar, David Bradley, Tina Hone (accepting the first Building Bridges Award on behalf of Susan G. Komen Foundation), Ambassador Karim Kawar, Samia Farouki, Marlene Malek, Dee Haslam, Kathy Hubbard and Lois Stark
Senator Bill Frist
Stuart Holliday with Brazilian Ambassador Patriota, Congressman Edward Markey and Danish Ambassador Friis Arne Petersen
Preparations for the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit

A high-level delegation of Canadian environmental leaders met on June 26th at Meridian for a roundtable discussion with leading U.S. energy and climate experts from the US as part of Meridian’s ongoing work to promote dialogue on key issues leading up to the Copenhagen Climate Summit in 2009. Participants were drawn from a cross-section of government and non-profit leaders including Mr. Marlo Raynolds, Pembina Institute; Ms. Stephanie Thorson, Clean Air Foundation; Mr. Jonah Bernstein, Department of Energy, Province of Nova Scotia; and Ms. Karen Evelyn Hildahl, Department of Science, Province of Manitoba.

In September 2008, Meridian also hosted Danish Parliamentarians to discuss the need for renewable energy techniques.

Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West

On February 11th, Meridian offered an exclusive opportunity for a pre-publication preview of the late Benazir Bhutto’s book, *Reconciliation: Islam, Democracy, and the West*, with Dr. Mark Siegel, Bhutto’s friend and advisor. Dr. Siegel spoke about his relationship with former Pakistani Prime Minister and their close collaboration on her book, which entered bookstores on February 12.

Completed only two days before her tragic death, the book describes her return to Pakistani political life. “In her book, Benazir Bhutto sends a powerful message of peace and international understanding,” said Meridian President, Ambassador Stuart Holliday. With her experience governing in Pakistan and time studying and living in the West, Bhutto was uniquely capable of providing insightful commentary into both the Western and Middle Eastern perspectives on the complex, often contentious relationship between the U.S. and the Islamic world. In exploring the history of East-West relations in *Reconciliation*, Bhutto countered the argument that Islam is incompatible with democracy and emphasized opportunities for cooperation and realignment between the Middle East and the West.
Justice Anthony Kennedy

Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy spoke at Meridian on February 20, where he discussed “Implications of the International Rule of Law.” His speech reflected on the response of international law to an era of rapid globalization and major foreign policy and commercial decisions. Justice Kennedy’s comments emphasized the need for increased awareness and understanding of international law and discussed the need for strong U.S. leadership on this difficult matter. H.E. Pekka Lintu, Ambassador of Finland, and H.E. Nabi Sensoy, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey, were present in the audience during the program and engaged with Justice Kennedy during the conversation about the relationship of their countries and the United States in the context of the International Criminal Court.

Senator Chuck Hagel

On April 24, Senator Chuck Hagel gave a speech to a full crowd at Meridian as he discussed his recent book, America: Our Next Chapter. According to the Senator, America’s next chapter can be inspiring and productive, but will take hard work, smart and informed policy and strong and enlightened leadership. He stressed the importance of reaching out to the world’s youth and engaging modern technology and media to build strong, constructive ties with the rest of the world.

Robin Wright: Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East

Meridian partnered with Washington Post Foreign Correspondent Robin Wright on March 18 to feature her forthcoming book, Dreams and Shadows: The Future of the Middle East. To gain authentic insight into Middle-East, Wright conducted interviews at all levels of Middle Eastern society, including emirs and other regional leaders, political activists, and ordinary citizens in city streets. Drawing on this first-hand information and her 35 years of reporting experience in the region, Wright probed into the future of the Middle East in a period of significant transition.
The Cafritz Galleries, located in Meridian’s historic White-Meyer House, feature many of its Art for Cultural Diplomacy exhibitions and events before travelling the United States and the world.
ART FOR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Meridian’s Art for Cultural Diplomacy programs play a vital role in achieving its mission by creating opportunities for Washington, DC and national audiences to learn about other cultures through the eyes of their visual and performing artists. In 2008, after years of dedicated leadership by Mrs. Nancy Matthews, Meridian’s arts and culture programs were handed over to its new director Dr. Curtis Sandberg. Meridian continued to provide unique cultural experiences in the Washington, DC community, as well as throughout the U.S. and around the globe. Meridian’s exhibitions, concerts, and other cultural programs presented in Washington, DC attracted over 25,000 visitors, who experienced other cultures through the work of international creative artists.

Meridian Exhibitions Travel the World

Meridian’s international art exhibits typically premiere in Washington, DC and then travel the U.S. via our Traveling Exhibition Service and a national network of museum partners. Over the past year, three exhibits, *This is Our Land: Discovering America and the World through Original Illustrations from Children’s Books*, *Sudan: The Land and the People* and *Wishes and Dreams: Iran’s New Generation Emerges* have been on national tours. All traveling exhibits are accompanied by education guides that offer gallery and classroom activities for museum educators, teachers and docents. In addition to art education, the guides teach geography, map reading, and travel skills.

Life at the Edge: The Big Thaw  
(Nov. 8 - Jan. 20)

The exhibition included 50 compelling photographs by renowned photographer Paul Nicklen, with additional photographer James Balog. The images captured the Arctic environments that support land animal and sea life in these environmentally threatened areas. Organized by Meridian in collaboration with *National Geographic Magazine*, *Life at the Edge* provided viewers with graphic evidence of climate change in the world’s arctic regions, which has immediate implications on international policy issues surrounding energy and the environment.

Five American Voices:  
Selections from the Freedom Place Collection  
(Feb. 7 - Mar. 16)

Jam Session: America’s Jazz Ambassadors
Embrace the World
(Apr. 3 - Aug. 8)

This exceptional collection of photographs and documents drawn from important archives around the country chronicles the tours of American jazz legends as they traveled 35 countries and 4 continents on behalf of the U.S. State Department. From the mid-1950s through the 1970s, Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, Dave Brubeck, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman and others served as cultural diplomats by playing their world-famous music and interacting with citizens—thereby promoting a positive view of the United States at a time when Cold War tensions were at their height. To highlight the far-reaching impact of these great musicians’ voyages abroad, Meridian held two panel discussions on April 11, featuring scholars, public diplomacy officials, and jazz enthusiasts, who shared their knowledge of the State Department tours and examined the implications of these efforts as they relate to our current foreign policy. Legendary jazz pianist Dave Brubeck attended and offered insights from his tours – the first of which took place fifty years ago. For complete online gallery and list of upcoming installations, please visit http://www.meridian.org/jazzambassadors

Shigeru Ban’s Eco-friendly Architecture

In May, Meridian hosted world-renowned architect Shigeru Ban and other experts for a series of panel discussions on sustainable environmental practices, particularly as they relate to relief efforts in troubled areas. Ban’s works, which utilize eco-friendly paper and other recyclable materials, are widely exhibited in the United States, Asia and Europe and his architectural style is characterized by clean construction and zero-waste production.

Shigeru Ban traveled to DC to participate in Meridian’s symposium, “Shigeru Ban: Paper Houses and the Architecture of Disaster Relief”. Other speakers at the Symposium included John Janssen, former Mayor of Greensburg, Kansas (a city being rebuilt as “green”); Craig Farkos of Engineers Without Borders; John Ingargiola of FEMA; Dr. Gavin Smith, Director of Governor Haley Barbour’s Office of Recovery and Renewal; Dean Karen Van Lengen and Professor Anselmo Canfora of the University of Virginia School of Architecture; and Benjamin Forgey, Former Architecture Critic at The Washington Post. Participants discussed preparedness efforts in areas where disasters may strike and the importance of collaboration across borders to provide relief where it is most urgently needed.
Painting the Heart of Russia: Nikolai Timkov’s Sustaining Vision
(Nov. 14 - Mar. 8)

This exhibition presented over fifty vibrant and varied landscapes of the Russian heartland painted from the 1930s through the 1980s. These were the creative vision of painter Nikolai Timkov (1912-1993), who has been characterized by some scholars as “the greatest Russian impressionist landscape painter” of the mid-20th century. The exhibition was opened in the presence of Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak.

An Evening of Live Jazz
November 20, 2008

On November 20, Meridian hosted an evening of live jazz by the Brubeck Institute Jazz Quintet from the University of the Pacific and the Open World Jazz Quartet associated with the Library of Congress’s Open World Program, which seeks to build cooperation between the U.S. and Eurasian and Eastern European countries through international visits.
CORPORATE PROGRAMS

The private-sector plays a decisive role in building a more secure and prosperous world. Meridian creates programs for the private sector to gather unique global insights, and facilitates public-private partnerships between corporations, U.S. government agencies, foreign governments, NGOs and other private actors to extend global exchanges and collaboration.

Korean Business Leaders Luncheon,

Prompted by an invitation from Mr. Roy Ryu, Chairman and CEO of Poongsan Corporation and PMX Industries, Meridian hosted a delegation of 15 Korean business leaders on Capitol Hill in April. The luncheon focused on the U.S. general election and the impact that the change in administration will have on US foreign policy, the international financial system, and US-Korean relations.

Representing views from the Democratic and Republican perspectives were Mr. Charles Manatt, a Meridian Trustee, who was previously chairman of the DNC and Mr. Lorne Craner who is a longtime foreign policy advisor to Republican candidate Senator John McCain and Assistant Secretary for Democracy and Labor under Secretary of State Colin Powell.

GALLUP POLL: State of the World Briefing: Kenya

Meridian collaborated with Gallup in September to host a breakfast briefing on Gallup’s “Responsive Leadership Platform,” the largest Kenyan public opinion survey which measures trends shaping the country’s economic, political and constitutional policies.

GALLUP POLL: State of the World Briefing: Asia

In November, Meridian and Gallup hosted “State of the World: Asia” in New York. This briefing featured a small working group of public and private sector leaders who shared insights on key priorities driving consumer behavior, policy decisions in Asia, and leadership commentary on the outcomes of the G-20 Economic Summit.
Visa International Financial Insights

On May 20, leaders in public-private sector partnerships met with Visa International’s President for Europe, Middle East, and North Africa, to discuss the company’s growing commitment to larger economic and development issues. High-level executives from the World Bank, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. State Department, the Embassies of France, Morocco, Russia, and South Africa, FINCA and USAID were attended.

20-Now: Financing Green Buildings Action Forum

As part of an ongoing focus on energy and the environment, Meridian partnered with the Energy Efficiency Partnership of Greater Washington, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and United Technologies to hold “20-Now: Financing Green Buildings Action Forum.”

The April 23 conference promoted global and national best practices in financing energy efficiency projects to achieve zero net emission buildings. The audience included over 100 regional and national building owners, developers, and financial institutions who expressed an interest and commitment to energy efficiency in their work. Panelists described the great strides that have been made in reducing energy usage in Washington, while emphasizing that much work remains.

Meridian Corporate Programs offer:

Global Insights
• Seminars & Briefings
• Intimate Working Dinners

Global Networking
• The Meridian Ball and VIP Networking Receptions
• International Leadership Perspectives
• Cultural Diplomacy Events

Executive Education
• Global Readiness Training
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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
WORLD CONNECTIONS

Meridian works with the liaison of the Executive Office of the Mayor to connect the District with the diplomatic corps through cultural and educational programs; empower educators to bring the world into DC schools; inspire Washingtonians to engage with the wider world; and enhance the reputation of the District abroad.

International Children’s Festival

On May 10, Meridian presented its second annual International Children’s Festival, which brought together D.C. residents and the foreign diplomatic corps. The Festival featured 17 embassies, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Poland, Senegal, South Africa, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Embassies created interactive displays, crafts and other activities highlighting their countries’ rich cultural heritage. Various booths introduced children and their families to world geography – engaging children of all ages to learn about the world and the importance of global citizenship. Over 1000 participants learned about geography and culture with Mrs. Michelle Fenty, Mayor Adrian Fenty’s wife, this year’s honorary Patron. Amazing international performances throughout the Festival capped off this event with gorgeous costumes and remarkable dancing. Lively Irish Step dancers, graceful Rwandan performers, and the rhythms of Capoeira martial arts experts are just a few that combined their energy and talent to bring their unique cultural traditions to life.

International Classroom

The 2007-2008 school year was an incredibly productive one for Meridian’s International Classroom program. Over 100 cultural consultants/volunteers from 50 countries and 60 teachers in 30 schools reached over 3000 students in the DC public schools system.

Passports to the World

In November 2008, Meridian held its 3rd annual Teachers’ Workshop, “Passports to the World: Infusing International Themes Across the Curricula.” At the workshop’s 6 different sessions, 16 teachers learned methods of integrating international education across all subject areas of their curricula.

These classes received International Classroom presentations from Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. In the program, students received their own Meridian Passport, which was stamped at the close of each presentation. Students were tested at the beginning and end of the program to assess country recognition and mapping skills. In 2007-2008, Passports students achieved an average of 16% improvement over the course of the year.
Gateway to America

Meridian International Center’s campus has been America’s exchange gateway for 50 years.

Comprising historic Meridian House and White-Meyer House and beautiful gardens, the campus is located 1.5 miles north of the White House. Serving as a gateway to America for our visitors and a major conference center, Meridian occupies a city block of remarkable historic and architectural importance.

Meridian House, considered by many experts to be the finest example of 18th Century French-style urban architecture in the United States, was designed by John Russell Pope and built by Irwin Boyle Laughlin, a distinguished American Ambassador and member of a Pittsburgh steel family. It became the home of Meridian International Center in 1960, thanks to major support from the Ford Foundation and many Meridian supporters. Pope’s next other major domestic commission in Washington was the Henry White house, built adjacent to Meridian House. White-Meyer House was the home of several distinguished families including American diplomat Henry White. Eugene Meyer, owner of The Washington Post, purchased the house in 1934. It was acquired by Meridian in 1987 through a capital campaign under the leadership of Roberto Goizueta, Chairman and CEO of Coca-Cola. The first floor serves as Meridian’s premier art exhibition space, having been refurbished by the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation. These combined properties create a three-acre intercultural center of international importance.
Stewardship in Preservation and Restoration


Of critical importance was the replacement of the roofs of both houses — both of which were many decades old — to secure the integrity of the buildings’ interior.

Both Meridian House and the White Meyer House received exterior painting, stone, masonry and wood restoration. Preservation work also included ironwork and hardware, structural repair and refinishing of Meridian House’s fire escape and shutters. Restoration of weatherstripping of windows of both houses has resulted in more energy efficiency.

Under the careful stewardship of the Board of Trustees and the President of Meridian, the work is of the highest quality of workmanship and materials befitting these national treasures.
GALAS AND BENEFITS

40th Annual Meridian Ball

Friday October 17th, 2008 marked the 40th anniversary of the Meridian Ball. One of the most celebrated social events in Washington, the 2008 ball was Chaired by Mr. and Mrs. Nels Olson and saw over 750 guests convened at Meridian House following dinners at 30 participating embassies as well as our own White-Meyer House.

Meridian Spring Garden Benefit — An Evening in Kyoto

Over 300 guests celebrated the historic city of Kyoto with the Embassy of Japan at Meridian House at May 16th. Held under the patronage of His Excellency Ambassador Kato and Mrs. Kato, the evening gave guests the chance to sample delectable Japanese cuisine, listen to live music and enjoy the Japanese ambiance created by floral arrangements and guests dressed in traditional Japanese attire. Chaired by Meridian Trustee Judith Heisley Bishop, the benefit raised funds to help support much needed improvements in Meridian’s historic gardens.
SUPPORTING MERIDIAN

Contributions to Meridian help support its work to strengthen sustainable global partnerships and international collaboration - critical factors in America’s national interests and long-term security and prosperity.

Individuals and companies can support Meridian’s mission in a variety of ways:

Meridian Council and Friends of Meridian
Council Members access the unique vantage point that is offered by Meridian’s government, diplomatic, policy and cultural network. Friends of Meridian, as individuals, can support Meridian at a variety of levels, and participate in many of Meridian’s programs and events. For more information, contact Siobhan O’Connell at 202.939.5522 or soconnell@meridian.org

Campaign for Meridian at 50
Celebrating Meridian’s 50th Anniversary, the proceeds from this fund will restore Meridian’s facilities and preserve it as a unique hub for world leaders, ideas and culture. Meridian at 50 events and opportunities for recognition are underway and will culminate at the Meridian Ball in October 2010. For more information, contact Mary Ellen Matheson at 202.292.2288 or mmatheson@meridian.org

Annual Meridian Ball
Washington’s premier diplomatic gala, the Meridian Ball welcomes the diplomatic corps, government officials, leaders in industry and private citizens to Meridian House to raise awareness and funds for its work. The 41st Annual Meridian Ball will be held on Friday, October 2, 2009. For more information, contact Mariya Manzhos at 202.939.5524 or mmanzhos@meridian.org

The Meridian Award for Public Diplomacy
Each year Meridian recognizes a public sector and a private sector organization from the U.S. and abroad with an award for international collaboration. Recipients are chosen on the merits of innovation, creative partnerships and results.
FY 2008 Revenue and Expense Breakout

Revenue by Source FY 2008

Federal ....................................................... $20,695,085
Non-federal ............................................. $6,264,466
Total ........................................................... $26,959,551

Total Revenue net of Pass Through FY 2008

Grants ......................................................... $7,344,559
Contributions .......................................... $1,793,923
Special Activities ................................... $940,129
Investment/Other ................................. $172,635

Total Expenditures net of Pass Through FY 2008

Program Expenses ............................... $6,085,907
Fundraising .............................................. $1,114,150
General Administrative ..................... $1,857,908
Maintenance and Operations ..... $1,632,679
Honoring contributing corporations, individual private donors, private foundations and trusts from the past fiscal year, which ended on September 30, 2008.

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