Since March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 global crisis, Meridian has harnessed the tools of digital connectivity and doubled down on our convening power to host nearly 40 virtual programs with leaders in business, diplomacy and governments around the world to discuss issues of heightened global importance amid this pandemic and the impacts on the future of international engagement, cooperation and collaboration.

**Pandemic Preparedness and Response: Global Perspectives on COVID-19**
**March 25**
A discussion on the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with special remarks from Ambassador John E. Lange, Senior Fellow for Global Health Diplomacy at the United Nations Foundation and often referred to as the “United States Avian Influenza and Pandemic Ambassador.”

**SPEAKERS:** Ambassador John E. Lange, Senior Fellow for Global Health Diplomacy, United Nations Foundation
Brittany Masalosalo, Head of International Affairs and Public Policy at 3M
His Excellency Ashok Mirpuri, Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore
Ambassador Nestor Forster, Chargé d’Affaires at the Embassy of Brazil

**AUDIENCE:** 95 members of the foreign diplomatic corps and private sector, 394 total views

**MEDIA:** [YouTube Livestream](#)

**Insights@Meridian with Acting Secretary of DHS Chad Wolf**
**April 1**
An off-the-record briefing from a key member of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Chad Wolf, who discussed the steps that his Department is taking to mitigate the spread of the virus, as well as ongoing international and cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination efforts taking place around the world.

**SPEAKERS:** Acting Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Chad Wolf
Oscar Munoz, CEO and President of United Airlines
*Moderated by* Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President and CEO of Meridian

**AUDIENCE:** 73 members of the foreign diplomatic corps and private sector

**MEDIA:** [YouTube Livestream](#)

**Global Business Briefing with the Ambassadors of Italy and Spain to the U.S.**
**April 2**
Exclusive perspectives from the Ambassadors of Italy and Spain to the U.S. on their countries’ COVID-19 response, along with their thoughts on both the short and long term effects of the pandemic in both nations.

**SPEAKERS:** His Excellency Armando Varricchio, Ambassador of Italy to the U.S.
His Excellency, Ambassador Santiago Cabanas, Ambassador of Spain to the U.S.
*Moderated by* Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President and CEO of Meridian

**AUDIENCE:** 149 private-sector leaders, 162 total views

**MEDIA:** [YouTube Livestream](#)
[The Washington Post coverage](#)
Insights@Meridian with Kellyanne Conway, Senior Counselor to the President
April 7
An off-the-record briefing on the measures that the Trump Administration is taking to counter the pandemic and the economic impacts of the coronavirus in the United States, as well as the ongoing multi-sectoral cooperation and coordination efforts taking place at the White House to work with state and local governments across the country to take action against this virus.

SPEAKERS:  Kellyanne Conway, Assistant to the President and Senior Counselor
Moderated by Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President and CEO of Meridian

AUDIENCE:  121 members of the foreign diplomatic corps and private sector

Global Business Briefing with the Ambassador of Germany
April 8
Perspectives on European solidarity in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as medical, financial and labor market responses from the Government of Germany.

SPEAKERS:  Her Excellency Emily Haber, Ambassador of Germany
Moderated by Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President and CEO of Meridian

AUDIENCE:  80 private-sector leaders

MEDIA:  The Washington Post Coverage

Insights@Meridian with Governors John Kasich and Terry McAuliffe
April 15
A bipartisan virtual briefing on the influence of COVID-19 on the upcoming U.S. presidential election. The conversation addressed how the pandemic has affected and will continue to impact the candidates, parties, conventions and elections – both primaries and the general election in November. The two governors also discussed the importance of the economy and what voting options might look like on Election Day.

SPEAKERS:  Former Ohio Governor and 2016 Republican candidate for president, John Kasich
Former Governor of Virginia and former DNC Chairman, Terry McAuliffe
Moderated by Susan Page, Washington Bureau Chief for USA Today

AUDIENCE:  128 members of the foreign diplomatic corps and private sector, 261 total views

MEDIA:  YouTube Livestream C-SPAN Coverage USA Today Coverage

COVID-19 and the Built Environment
April 16
A roundtable discussion co-hosted by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington, DC, and the Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy that highlighted the outcomes of a jointly organized delegation in November 2019 to the UAE that included US-based architects, architectural photographers, historians, curators and writers. The program also addressed the impact of COVID-19 on the fields of architecture and architectural photography.

AUDIENCE:  132 attendees; from Brazil to Australia, 30 people tuned in from outside the United States

MEDIA:  YouTube Livestream
Global Business Briefing with EU Head of Trade Tomas Baert
April 17
Perspectives on the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade between the European Union and United States.

SPEAKERS: Tomas Baert, Head of Trade and Agriculture at the EU Delegation to the United States
Moderated by Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President and CEO of Meridian

AUDIENCE: 66 private-sector leaders

U.S. Constitution: A Living Document
April 16
A discussion organized in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and the American Center Moscow, focused on the origin and development of the cornerstone of American democracy, the U.S. Constitution, including both the origins of the document as well as its continued evolution and development in the modern

SPEAKERS: Robert Mathis, former attorney and history teacher

AUDIENCE: 9,500 total views, shared by 10 other European embassies

MEDIA: YouTube Livestream

Global Business Briefing with the Ambassador of Mexico
April 22
A discussion organized in partnership with the U.S.–Mexico Foundation that featured perspectives on the Mexican response to COVID-19, as well as COVID-19’s impacts on investments in Mexico and U.S.–Mexico relations.

SPEAKERS: Her Excellency Martha Bárcena, Ambassador of Mexico to the U.S.
Emilio Cadena, President and CEO of Grupo Prodensa and Head of the U.S.–Mexico Foundation
Moderated by The Honorable Laurie Fulton, Chair of Global Engagement Committee, Meridian Board of Trustees

AUDIENCE: 105 private-sector leaders

Insights@Meridian with Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun
April 23
An off-the-record briefing with Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun to discuss his perspective on how COVID-19 is shaping U.S. foreign policy and how the United States is balancing its coordination on pandemic response with the pursuit of its long-term geostrategic interests, relationships with allies and adversaries, and economic goals.

SPEAKERS: Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun
Ambassador Stephen J. Akard, Director of the Office of Foreign Missions
Moderated by Ambassador Stuart Holliday, President and CEO of Meridian

AUDIENCE: 118 members of the foreign diplomatic corps and private sector, 261 total views
History of Disinformation
April 24
A discussion organized in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Paris, focused on the history of disinformation tactics used during the Cold War and how those tactics have changed in the post-9/11 era. Pressing contemporary questions were also addressed, such as how effective disinformation campaigns are affecting public opinion and policies, and how new media platforms contribute to or help counter disinformation.

SPEAKERS: Vangala Ram, former U.S. diplomat and current professor at the National Intelligence University
AUDIENCE: Peak of 428 live viewers, 26,000 total viewers across Europe
MEDIA: YouTube Livestream

IVLP Virtual Meetings
April 24 – May 7
As the COVID-19 crisis began to close offices and interrupt travel in mid-March, the Office of International Visitors (OIV) at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) ended all IVLP projects that were in the country on March 12 and took immediate steps to repatriate participants. For the eight Meridian-implemented IVLP projects that were curtailed, we assisted in getting program participants safely home before international air travel restrictions went into place. Once the dust settled, we turned to how best we could support and engage the IVLP participants whose programs had been interrupted. Working closely with our partners at the Office of International Visitors, Meridian developed a plan to deliver virtual IVLP meetings, in some cases across multiple time zones, to connect participants with some of the professional resources around the United States they could not meet in person while on the exchange. As the first virtual IVLP meetings held during this period, these sessions represent our commitment to innovate in the face of challenges, while continuing to promote international person-to-person exchange.

The following are some examples of virtual IVLP meetings:

- **Multi-Regional Project – Not Too Young to Run – Engaging Youth in the Political Process**
  April 24: Eleven program participants from 10 countries met virtually with a 30-year-old member of the Florida House of Representatives, Alex Andrade, who participated in this project with the help of the Gulf Coast Citizen Diplomacy Council in Pensacola, Florida
  April 28: Nine program participants met virtually with the Political Director at New Hampshire Youth Movement in Manchester, NH, who participated with the help of the World Affairs Council of New Hampshire.

- **On Demand/Regional Project/Africa - Combating Infectious Diseases**
  May 7: Eight program participants from 5 countries in Western Africa met with research scientists from the Center for Disease Control’s Southeastern Center of Excellence in Vector Borne Diseases at the University of Florida and the University of Miami. The meeting was arranged with help from GlobalJax in Jacksonville, Florida.

CBM Staff Exchanges
April 14 – May 22
Meridian has run an in-person IVLP Staff Exchange with the CBM (Community Based Member of Global Ties U.S.) network for several years. In the face of COVID-19 travel restrictions, Meridian turned this in-person exchange into virtual convenings. These sessions bring CBM representatives together with Meridian staff to discuss programming best practices and share updates on operations, resources and processes. This virtual platform has allowed us to expand participation to more CBMs and remain engaged and supportive of the IVLP network. Since April 14, Meridian has held nine virtual staff exchanges with CBMs across the country.
Understanding Washington: A Deep Dive into Federalism with Akram Elias
April 29
Meridian's first virtual federalism briefing, which provided an overview of the inner workings of the U.S. government system, including the Constitutional decentralization of federal and state levels of government and the evolving role of the branches. This intimate program allowed for newly arrived diplomats to Washington, D.C., to immerse themselves in the complex U.S. federal government structure as quickly as possible, along with an opportunity for them to connect with their counterparts from other countries.

SPEAKERS: Akram Elias, President of Capital Communications Group, Inc.
AUDIENCE: Nine diplomats from countries across the globe, including Afghanistan, Honduras, Ghana, Ireland, Nigeria, Latvia, Oman and the European Union

The 2020 Election: National Decisions and Unconventional Times
April 29
A discussion organized in partnership with the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Embassy in Paris that featured an overview of the 2020 national elections and several factors critical to the U.S. Presidential and Congressional elections. The discussion covered conventional analyses of elections and how 2020 could be different.

SPEAKERS: Steven Billet, Legislative Affairs Program Director at the George Washington University
AUDIENCE: 22 participants in the Central and Eastern Europe Journalist Fellowship Program (CEEJ)

NATO and North Macedonia
April 30
A presentation and discussion organized in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Skopje and the American Corner in Tetovo, focused on NATO and its newest member, North Macedonia. The discussion ranged from NATO’s history, its processes and procedures, as well as its role in the world moving forward.

SPEAKERS: Larry Chalmer, Professor Emeritus of the U.S. National Defense University
MEDIA: YouTube Livestream

Insights@Meridian with Ron Klain, former Chief of Staff for Vice Presidents Joe Biden and Al Gore
May 1
A discussion on the steps that the U.S. and international community are taking to manage the pandemic, with a focus on lessons learned from Klain’s time at the White House. Klain, who served as White House Ebola Response Coordinator (2014–15), discussed approaches for future cooperation on global health and national security, as well as the potential impacts of the pandemic on the upcoming presidential election.

SPEAKERS: Ron Klain, former Chief of Staff for Vice Presidents Joe Biden and Al Gore and White House Ebola Response Coordinator (2014–15)
Moderated by Mary Louise Kelly, host of NPR’s All Things Considered
AUDIENCE: 93 members of the foreign diplomatic corps and private sector
MEDIA: YouTube Livestream
The Well News Coverage
U.S. Elections: Campaigning Amid the Pandemic
May 5
A discussion with staff and students of Southern Denmark University – organized in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen – focused on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on campaigning for the upcoming U.S. elections in a program organized in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen. This presentation included discussion on effects on local, state and national campaigns as well as election logistics.

SPEAKERS: Brian Brox, Associate Professor of Political Science at Tulane University
AUDIENCE: 26,000 total views
MEDIA: YouTube Livestream

Hip-Hop Diplomacy: Next Level Live!
May 7
Next Level Live! – a four-part virtual series and extension of the Next Level global hip-hop diplomacy exchange program organized in partnership and support from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – will feature discussions on the power of hip-hop to connect people around the world with exclusive performances from Next Level artists.

SPEAKERS: Next Level Director, Junious Brickhouse
Next Level Founding Director Mark Katz
Next Level alumni MC Toni Blackman and beatmaker DiViNCi
AUDIENCE: 112 attendees, including 12 from outside the U.S.
MEDIA: YouTube Livestream

Insights@Meridian Pulse Check: How International Businesses are Reacting to COVID-19
May 8
An exploration of how businesses are responding to the multitude of government policies and consumer trends related to the pandemic. The conversation addressed supply chains, employment and worker health.

SPEAKERS: Leila Afas, Director of International Public Policy at Toyota Motors North America
Tiffany Atwell, Global Government & Industry Affairs Leader at Corteva Agriscience
Fred Humphries, Corporate Vice President of U.S. Government Affairs at Microsoft
Mark Isakowitz, Vice President of U.S. Government Affairs and Public Policy at Google
Moderated by Brad Knox, Senior Vice President & Counsel of Federal Relations for Aflac, and Meridian Trustee
AUDIENCE: 61 members of the foreign diplomatic corps and private sector

Global Business Briefing with Ambassador Philippe Étienne of France and FedEx
CEO Fred Smith
May 11
Perspectives on the French response to COVID-19, in discussion with Mr. Fred Smith and Mr. Rajesh Subramaniam of FedEx who offered private sector perspectives.

SPEAKERS: His Excellency Philippe Étienne, Ambassador of France
Fred Smith, CEO of FedEx
Rajesh Subramaniam, President and COO of FedEx
AUDIENCE: 92 private-sector leaders
Insights@Meridian with Senator Tim Kaine
May 12
A discussion on ongoing foreign policy issues and how they have been affected by COVID-19. The conversa-
tion covered the pandemic’s effect on U.S. immigration and alliance participation, as well as the importance
of balancing foreign policymaking power between the legislative and executive branches.
SPEAKERS: Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA)
Moderated by Julie Pace, Washington Bureau Chief, Associated Press
AUDIENCE: 92 members of the foreign diplomatic corps and private sector
MEDIA: YouTube Livestream
Reuters Coverage

Journalists Facing the COVID-19
May 12
A discussion organized in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Brasilia to celebrate Press Freedom Day. The
conversation focused on journalists’ safety during the pandemic, the future of the media beyond COVID-19
and combating disinformation amid a global health crisis.
SPEAKERS: Judith Matloff, American writer, journalism professor and media safety advocate
AUDIENCE: 1,043 views

American Journalism: Powering Self Governance
May 13
A presentation organized in partnership with the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Embassy in Paris on
the role of and protections for journalists within the U.S. constitution and as a function of democracy. The
discussion covered free speech, journalistic ethics and accountability, and challenges for journalism in a
changing field.
SPEAKERS: Charles Self of 227 International, LLC, and the University of Oklahoma
AUDIENCE: 25 participants in the Central and Eastern Europe Journalist Fellowship Program (CEEJ)

Dance Diplomacy: Global Arts Perspectives on COVID-19
May 14
A high-level virtual program of Artistic Directors of major ballet companies from across the globe discuss-
ing how to best lead dance and performing arts organizations through the COVID-19 crisis. The program
included performances by dancers of Alvin Alley II, Hong Kong Ballet and American Ballet Theatre as well as
the internationally acclaimed choreographer Jessica Lang.
SPEAKERS: Kevin McKenzie, Artistic Director, American Ballet Theatre
Julie Kent, Artistic Director, The Washington Ballet
Ted Brandsen, Director, Dutch National Ballet
Moderated by Septime Webre, Artistic Director, Hong Kong Ballet
AUDIENCE: Approximately 370 attendees
MEDIA: YouTube Livestream
A presentation organized in partnership with The Wilson Center focused on the current climate of dis- and misinformation, covering how dis- and misinformation is spread, why actors spread it, and what we can do.

**SPEAKERS:** Nina Jankowicz of The Wilson Center

**AUDIENCE:** 36 attendees