

COUNCIL *on*  
FOREIGN  
RELATIONS

# State and Local Officials Initiative

Connecting State and Local Leaders  
to CFR's Nonpartisan Resources  
on Pressing International Issues





## CFR Mission

*The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) is an independent, nonpartisan membership organization, think tank, and publisher dedicated to being a resource for its members, government officials, business executives, journalists, educators and students, civic and religious leaders, and other interested citizens in order to help them better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other countries.*

## State and Local Officials Initiative

The CFR State and Local Officials Initiative seeks to serve as a resource and forum for bipartisan discussion on pressing international issues that affect the priorities and agendas of state and local governments, including the economy, trade and competitiveness, homeland security, public health, immigration, and energy supply and climate policy.

Moving America: Transport Infrastructure at a Crossroads - Council on Foreign Relations

http://www.cfr.org/publication/18611/moving\_america.html#ixzz1...

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**Backgrounder** Backgrounder is sponsored in part by **Morgan Stanley**

**Moving America: Transport Infrastructure at a Crossroads**

Author: **Robert McMahon**, Deputy Editor

February 23, 2009

1. Introduction  
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4. Eisenhower's Example  
5. Beyond the Stimulus

**Introduction**

Transportation experts view the call for dramatic federal government action in response to the economic crisis as an opportunity to overhaul the U.S. system of highways, bridges, railways, and mass transit. A series of sobering report cards from the American Society of Civil Engineers documents the inadequacy of this system. President Barack Obama took office pledging to act; his February 2009 stimulus package provides nearly \$50 billion for transportation infrastructure. But many experts look beyond the stimulus and call for shifts in longer-term policy that will fundamentally alter the approach to planning and funding infrastructure and bolster U.S. competitiveness, quality of life, and security. In the past, the United States has revamped its transportation infrastructure to build roads, transcontinental railways, and a federal highway system, in each case helping usher in periods of economic growth.

**A State of Disrepair**

A January 2009 report by the American Society of Civil Engineers on infrastructure, much of it involving the transportation sector, concluded: "all signs point to an infrastructure that is poorly maintained, unable to meet current and future demands, and in some cases, unsafe." It found that aviation, transit, and roads already rated abysmal four years ago, had declined even further. Last time from road construction, the report estimated, was costing the economy more than \$10 billion dollars a year while nearly half of U.S. households still had no access to bus or rail transit.

At the same time, national spending on infrastructure is often depicted as a futile, wasteful process. Annual federal spending on transportation infrastructure in recent years has averaged more than \$60 billion, and billions have been spent since 9/11 on aviation security. The Congressional Budget Office cites Transportation Department data showing that the number of structurally deficient bridges was not nearly in half between 1999 and 2007 due to federal spending. But 2006 Federal Highway Administration statistics also showed that more than 70,000 bridges, about 22 percent of the total, were structurally deficient. Among them was the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis that collapsed in August 2007, a collapse that killed thirteen people and spawned new debate about the focus and level of U.S. infrastructure spending.

There is a further homeland security dimension, says CFR Senior Fellow **Stephan E.**

**Related Materials**

**The U.S. Financial Regulatory System**  
By **Law Hoadley Twiss**, Associate Editor  
Backgrounder  
October 8, 2008

**Global Economic Trends: The Trailing System**  
Transcript  
September 23, 2008

**Global FDI Policy: Correcting a Protectionist Drift (Ruch Transcription, Federal News Service)**  
Transcript  
June 26, 2008

**How the Rise of the Euro Threatens America's Dominance**  
By **Bruce Stettin**, Senior Fellow and Director of International Economics  
Op-Ed  
April 23, 2008

**What Tata Tells Us**  
By **Matthew J. Slaughter**, Adjunct Senior Fellow for Business and Globalization  
Op-Ed  
March 27, 2008

**See Also**

**United States, Economic Development**

**Latest from CFR.org**

**The Meaning of Nationalization**

**After Indecision, Sudan Holds Its Breath**

**A Coercive Exit from Iraq**

**Tibet's Tenure Anniversary**

**The Dangers of 'Digitalization'**

**Breaking the Stalemate in Afghanistan**

**New Books**

**In Money, Markets, and Sovereignty**, the authors present a fascinating intellectual history of monetary institutions from the ancient world to the present and explore why, in its modern incarnation, it represents the single greatest threat to globalization.

**POWER RULES**  
In *Power Rules*, inspired by **Michael Ondaatje's** classic *The Englishman's Boy*, **Colin Kelly** offers a shimmering parable on how American power actually works and should be wielded in today's tumultuous world.

**In Russian Foreign Policy**, **Jeffrey Mankoff** analyzes Russia's interactions with major global actors and convincingly demonstrates that today's Russia is more interested in restoring what its leaders consider to be its rightful place among the world's major powers than in directly challenging the West.

Complete list of CFR books.

**New Book from CFR and the Saban Center at Brookings**

**Propose Middle East Strategy for the Obama Administration**

**In Restoring the Balance: A Middle East Strategy for the Next President**, reports from the Council on Foreign Relations and the Saban Center at the Brookings Institution propose a new, comprehensive Middle East strategy drawing on the lessons of past failures to address both the short-term and long-term challenges to U.S. interests.

**New CRS Council Special Reports**

**Focus on the Financial Fallout**

**Lessons of the Financial Crisis**

In this report, **Bruce Stettin** shows that the financial crisis is the inevitable host of a classic credit boom, and explains how monetary, taxation, and labor-ownership promotion policy coordinated with other features of the financial system to fuel an unsustainable buildup in debt. He recommends significant reforms to reverse the debt-financing boom and make the system more resilient to future crises.

**Global Imbalances and the Financial Crisis**

In order for policymakers to tackle today's global economic crisis, this report argues, they must go beyond bilateral and stimulus packages and focus on one of the crisis's root causes: imbalances between savings and investment in major countries.

Complete list of Council Special Reports.

**"All signs point to an infrastructure that is**

# Resources

## Publications

CFR Books, Task Force reports, and other special publications offer analysis on major topical and regional issues that affect the priorities and agendas of state and local governments. CFR can provide materials free of charge at the request of state and local leaders.

## CFR.org

CFR's award-winning website provides daily analysis of current events by CFR fellows and a news editorial team, interviews with experts, in-depth Backgrounders, and Emmy Award-winning multimedia interactives, as well as podcasts and downloadable video and audio files of CFR on-the-record meetings.

## Foreign Affairs

America's most influential publication on international affairs offers accessible in-depth analysis of current issues. CFR offers a discounted subscription to state and local officials.

To subscribe at the discounted rate, visit [www.foreignaffairs.com/outreachcfr](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/outreachcfr).

## Monthly eNewsletter

The CFR State and Local Officials monthly email highlights CFR resources available to leaders in the public sector, including upcoming sessions of the CFR State and Local Officials Conference Call series, timely new publications, and analysis.

To subscribe, visit [www.cfr.org/about/newsletters](http://www.cfr.org/about/newsletters).



# Expertise

## Scholars

CFR is home to nearly fifty regional and topic-specific scholars. Taken together, their expertise covers a wide range of international issues of local importance.

## Briefings

CFR can arrange for a fellow to brief an official or group of delegates—in person or via teleconference—prior to trade missions abroad, major international meetings, or other events. CFR fellows have spoken to groups such as the California Energy Commission and the National Association of Secretaries of State's Standing Committee on International Relations.

## Conference Appearances

CFR fellows or senior staff members are available to speak at major conferences of state and local leadership. CFR experts have participated in events for organizations such as the Council of State Governments, Democratic Governors Association, and State International Development Organization.

*For more information on expert briefings or inviting a CFR scholar to address your organization, email [outreach@cfr.org](mailto:outreach@cfr.org).*

## Fellowships

State and local leaders are encouraged to apply for a CFR international affairs fellowship, which offers a year of research and writing or service in a national policy-oriented environment.

*For more information, visit [www.cfr.org/about/fellowships](http://www.cfr.org/about/fellowships).*



CFR Senior Fellow Stephen E. Flynn testifies on homeland security and the vulnerability of U.S. seaports before the House Armed Services Committee.

# Convening Power

## Conference Call Series

The CFR State and Local Officials Conference Call series convenes officials from across the country for bipartisan conversations on timely international issues of local importance. Calls—led by CFR scholars and/or state and local leaders—address topics such as the economy and trade, homeland security, energy, and immigration. Audio recordings of each session are posted at [www.cfr.org/publication/by\\_type/audio](http://www.cfr.org/publication/by_type/audio).



Houston mayor William H. White, CFR President Richard N. Haass, NBC special correspondent Tom Brokaw, Mississippi governor Haley Barbour, and Arizona governor Janet A. Napolitano at CFR's National Conference.



### Access to Meetings and Events

CFR convenes hundreds of meetings and events each year in New York, Washington, DC, and around the country, hosting world leaders and policymakers. State and local officials are invited to attend select CFR meetings, as well as participate remotely via teleconference and/or webcast. Recent speakers include

- U.S. treasury secretary Timothy F. Geithner on the economy
- U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice on trade and diplomacy
- California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on climate change

- U.S. homeland security secretary Michael Chertoff on domestic preparedness
- New Mexico governor Bill Richardson on immigration
- New York governor David A. Paterson on the global financial crisis.

To receive invitations for CFR State and Local Officials Conference Calls, as well as teleconferences and webcasts of CFR meetings, email [outreach@cfr.org](mailto:outreach@cfr.org).

*Top from left, speaking at CFR: Timothy F. Geithner, Condoleezza Rice, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Michael Chertoff, Bill Richardson, and David A. Paterson.*

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