

LEADERSCRIPT

Welcoming the 2008–2009 AILA International Fellows

AILA hosted its new class of [International Fellows](#) from October 5–10, 2008. The 2008–2009 class includes nine fellows representing Costa Rica, India, Japan, Nigeria, South Africa, Taiwan, and the United States. The first term’s daily sessions explored how leadership relates to individual action and problem-solving. By focusing on the bias and elite structures that inhibit inspiration and ingenuity, the fellows were challenged to bring to life the elements of their own creative leadership. The fellows return in May 2009 to complete their training with sessions on the geopolitical factors that impact international leadership.



Outside the Office: Experiential Learning at Adventure Links



Group after completing outdoor teambuilding activities

Each year, AILA brings the International Fellows to the [Adventure Links](#) rope course in Paris, Virginia, to help them gain self-awareness by interacting outside an office environment. Understanding one’s own mental and physical strengths and weaknesses is essential to being an effective leader. Experiential learning is the most powerful and effective way to absorb this information as it forces people to act on impulse. In this context, strengths and weaknesses are immediately apparent. Outdoor adventure courses expose groups to mildly uncomfortable situations that require everyone to come together to achieve a measurable goal.

Feature Article

The feature article is written by a CSIS young professional describing a unique personal experience that altered their self-perception.



iGeneration?

By [Elizabeth Sullivan](#)

“What kind of world is it going to be? What kind of vision are you going to come up with over this period of time that you are going to be talking to one another digitally and in person? What kind of vision do we need?”

That challenge was given by General Colin Powell (U.S. Army, Ret.) to nearly 400 young professionals and students at the July 2008, launch of a unique CSIS project called [Next America](#). This new Web-based initiative was developed in the spirit articulated by Gen. Powell to capitalize on our generation’s obsession with online media and social networking and use it to engage young people from across the country to voice their opinion: What is their vision for America?

It was nearly eight months earlier that [Dr. Hamre](#), *president and CEO of CSIS*, asked me to join the Next America project full-time and help shape a dialogue among my peers on what *they* think are the important international issues of the day. *(continued on pg. 2)*

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Excited by the opportunity, and admittedly a bit overwhelmed by the possibilities, I couldn't help but wonder why—with the intellectual firepower of the CSIS senior scholars—he was initiating a project focused on what my generation thinks are the most difficult questions in U.S. foreign policy.

I began to ask myself the obvious questions: Do we really see the world differently? Are there common characteristics that define *my* generation? Would anyone take what we have to say seriously?

Our generation, the so-called millennials (18–30 year olds), have gotten mixed reviews from generational theorists. There are those like Mark Bauerlein, author of [*The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future*](#) (Tarcher, 2008), who argue that millennials are digitally distracted and suffer from waning intellectual curiosity. Along with Gen. Powell, there are those on the other side of the divide who believe that technology is a positive thing for millennials because we are living in the midst of the power of technology every day and seeing firsthand how it is changing the world. Neil Howe, a Next America advisory board member and author of

[*Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*](#) (Vintage, 2000), argues that it is precisely this technological ability that has shaped our awareness of the globalized community and enabled us to communicate more efficiently.

The idea of the Next America project is to give voice to tech-savvy millennials and capture the common characteristics of our worldview in a forum uniquely appropriate for our peer group. Since its inception, Next America has hosted online debates addressing some of the most pressing and complex challenges facing our country—the price of gas, the myth of energy independence, and China's economic rivalry with United States. Next America is making a difference because it has given young professionals and students from across the country a substantive forum to voice their views.

As I have watched this project unfold, I have seen how the millennials who take part in Next America discussions are beginning to link action and vision with leadership. Through the online debates, I am learning that we do see the world differently than previous generations in two important ways. First, we consistently recognize near-term opportunities to tackle global challenges, like finding energy alternatives and responding to humanitarian disasters. We are also explicitly aware of how these challenges will require individual sacrifice, like paying higher gas prices in order to spur energy innovation, or believing some form of national service is a necessity. Neil Howe says that we are "... not as eager to grow up putting self ahead of community the way their parents did." (*continued on pg. 3*)

Interviewing History: Counseling the President

Featuring Ted Sorensen



From Left: Russ Oates, Natalia Filipiak, Ted Sorensen, Brett Edkins, and Veronica Haskins

On June 25, 2008, Brett Edkins, *former research assistant, Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski's Office*, [Natalia Filipiak](#), *research associate, Europe Program*, [Russ Oates](#), *deputy director, External Relations*, and Veronica Haskins, *former development and campaign manager, Office of Development*, gathered to interview [Ted Sorensen](#) about his experiences in the Oval Office during the Cuban Missile Crisis. As *special counsel to President John F. Kennedy*, Sorensen was intimately involved in top-level decisionmaking during this national security emergency.

Throughout the evening, Sorensen emphasized the importance of learning from mistakes and of challenging the status quo. Without these aptitudes, he suggested that we might live in a very different world today.

“My experience interviewing Mr. Sorensen proved to me that youth and the ability to lead effectively are not mutually exclusive. Mr. Sorensen was just one of several young professionals in the Kennedy White House who showed a mature sense of judgment during the Cuban Missile Crisis, despite his relative lack of foreign policy experience. Theirs is a remarkable story of sound judgment and creativity trumping the orthodoxy of seasoned experience.”

—Veronica Haskins, *member, Team Sorensen*

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Second, millennials are also different in how we think about politics—specifically ideology. We have a tendency toward consensus building while ignoring partisan dogma. Perhaps because our understanding of globalization has diminished the barriers of traditional borders, we opt instead to use pragmatism as a better lens to gauge competition from China—identifying new partners who can help us achieve our goals, such as energy independence.

I see many ways that millennials are different from previous generations. We are civic minded, but with the world as our community. We are activists online, publicly, and socially. Technology has made it easier to get involved, and young people are taking advantage of the opportunity. Recent evidence of this trend is shown by how millennials engaged in this year's presidential election. According to the [Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement](#) (CIRCLE), turnout for voters aged 18–29 was 8–13 percent higher than in 2000. That means that we went to the polls in unprecedented numbers and established ourselves as a powerful new constituency.

So does our vision matter? Yes, it does.

Not only have millennials recently proven their commitment to civic engagement, but over the past several months, hundreds of Next America members have taken part in Gen. Powell's challenge. They have debated and discussed some of the country's most pressing problems with their peers across the country and demonstrated ownership over finding both long- and near-term solutions and notions of self sacrifice. I believe that Next America members have given us a glimpse into millennials' future leadership style—one built on consensus building and determination to find practical solutions.

From the debates, a sense of common passion has emerged for solving the world's problems. These rising young leaders have taken ownership over shaping a new vision for America, and I am confident that they will help usher in a new era for a renewed and spirited national debate.

Elizabeth Sullivan is the project manager and codirector for Next America

To join the debate, please visit
www.nextamerica.csis.org.



The Next America Summit will be held in spring 2009, when findings from the project's first phase will be presented to senior decisionmakers.

Summer National Security Sessions



[John Hamre](#), president and CEO of CSIS and former deputy secretary of defense, addresses the crucial defense policy challenges faced by the next U.S. president



[Tom Sanderson](#), deputy director, *Transnational Threats Project*, comments on terrorist networks in Central and Southeast Asia after his recent fact-finding trip

AILA on the Road

[Linda Jamison](#) traveled to Morocco, Vietnam, and the United Arab Emirates to promote the AILA mission abroad.



Linda Jamison and Harinder Kohli, founder, [Emerging Markets Forum](#), in Rabat, Morocco



A busy market in Hanoi, Vietnam

Summer Curriculum in Brief

AILA CURRICULUM 2008

The Abshire-Inamori Leadership Academy organized a series of informative seminars for the young professional community at CSIS this summer.

FOCUSING YOUR CAREER

June 10 — Careers in Foreign Policy
June 12 — Intern Welcome Reception
June 17 — How to Get Into Graduate School
June 24 — Strategic Leadership
July 30 — Anthropologist's Guide to Washington

FURTHERING YOUR WORLDVIEW

June 19 — Seven Revolutions
July 1 — Interviewing History Briefing
July 24—Terrorism in Central and Southeast Asia
July 28—Defense Policy Briefing
August 1—Energy Challenges in the 21st Century
August 4—Understanding Nuclear Weapons
August 6—How to Study the PLA

FINE-TUNING YOUR SKILLS

July 9 — Political and Community Organizing
July 10 — Argumentation Workshop
July 17— Using PowerPoint Effectively
July 18—Effective Policy Presentations
July 24—Speed Debate



Summer Speed Debate

Honing Rhetorical & Analytical Skills

On July 24, 2008, interns and young professionals from organizations around Washington, D.C., participated in the AILA 2008 Summer Speed Debate. AILA created the [Speed Debate Series](#) as a way for young professionals to hone their on-the-spot rhetorical and analytical skills. Teams of two competed for a total of eight minutes, testing their ability to speak concisely and effectively about topics that they received just moments before they began debating. Expert judges evaluated teams based on the logical flow of their arguments, the efficacy of their speaking styles, and their creativity.

Participants debated two resolutions. The first was about the exclusive public financing of U.S. presidential campaigns. The second dealt with the availability of the [Al Jazeera](#) news channel in the United States.

The summer debate featured participants from four organizations:

- [CSIS](#)
- [The Hudson Institute](#)
- [The U.S. Public Service Academy](#)
- [Young Professionals in Foreign Policy](#)



A team from the [Hudson Institute](#) presents their constructive argument



CSIS intern Noah Schwartz defends his position on the broadcasting of [Al Jazeera](#) in the United States

“Time is a luxury that you never have enough of in politics.”

—[Aaron Manaigo](#), director of national coalitions,
John McCain 2008

“There is no such thing as apathy, only bad organizers.”

—[Robert Creamer](#), founder, *Strategic Consulting Group*, Democratic strategist



As political strategists from either side of the aisle, [Aaron Manaigo](#) and [Bob Creamer](#) shared insights about political organizing