



MERIDIAN ANNUAL REPORT 2018

IMPACT THROUGH
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS





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Meridian House staircase decorated with flags for the 50th Anniversary of the Meridian Ball on October 12, 2018. Photo by Stephen Bobb.



Meridian is a global leadership and diplomatic center that strengthens U.S. engagement with the world and accelerates collaboration through the exchange of leaders, ideas and culture.

We believe that the United States is stronger when globally engaged, working with other nations to create a more secure and prosperous world. Founded nearly 60 years ago as a non-partisan, non-profit organization, Meridian works with governments, the private sector and the diplomatic community to develop exchange, training, culture and convening programs to help leaders better address global challenges and opportunities.

OUR PILLARS

Meridian strengthens global relationships through the exchange of leaders, ideas and culture.



LEADERS

Peer networks and immersive exchange programs build the next generation of global leaders. Our programs provide leaders from the U.S. and around the world with the insight, capacity, networks, and cultural context needed to navigate a rapidly evolving globalized society.



IDEAS

More perspectives lead to better policies. Meridian serves as a powerful platform to connect the diplomatic community in Washington with government and business leaders to exchange perspectives and accelerate collaboration on global economic and national security issues, while closing the gaps among these sectors.



CULTURE

The arts and culture are powerful tools of diplomacy to bridge cultural divides. From vibrant visual art displays to film screenings, exchanges and concerts, Meridian's cultural programs advance diplomacy goals by providing a common language that breaks down barriers and brings together the public through shared interests and values.

OUR PARTNERS

Meridian partners with the public, private and diplomatic sectors to develop exchange, training, culture and convening programs that help leaders address global challenges and opportunities.

United States Government

We are a principle partner of the U.S. Department of State, other government agencies and Congress. We implement the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), which promotes mutual understanding between leaders in countries around the world and the U.S.

Diplomatic Community

We work closely with the diplomatic corps in Washington, DC, to foster greater understanding of their cultures, create networks with U.S. private and public sector organizations, and provide opportunities for advancing business and trade relations.

Multinational Corporations

The world's leading multinational corporations count on us to design programs that address critical business challenges and opportunities, elevate their CSR initiatives, and accelerate development of their leaders.

NGOs, Media & Educational Institutions

We partner with NGOs, schools and media outlets around the world to convene programs on topical international issues, including: human trafficking, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, trade, cultural diplomacy, security, environmental sustainability, and global health.



United States Congress



U.S. Department of State



United States Executive Branch



Diplomatic Community



Multinational Corporations



Nongovernmental Organizations



Media Outlets

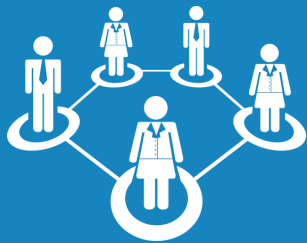


Educational Institutions

OUR APPROACH

Meridian's integrated programming approach provides leaders with a variety of platforms in neutral environments to develop an informed global view, cultural awareness and collaborative peer networks to produce better outcomes. When leaders return home and implement change, the impact of Meridian's programs is amplified across numerous arenas, including women and girls' empowerment, business and trade, human and civil rights, and energy and the environment. Directly impacting the quality of life for people around the globe, these issues are pivotal to Meridian's vision of a more secure and prosperous world today and for generations to come.

LEADERS



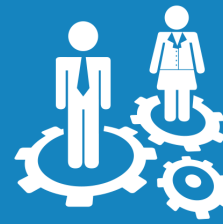
We bring together a cross-section of established and emerging leaders in government, business, diplomacy and civil society.

COLLABORATION



We then provide them with resources and insights on key global issues through our exchange, training, culture and convening programs.

OUTCOMES



These leaders develop an informed global view, cultural awareness and collaborative peer networks that increase their effectiveness.

IMPACT



These outcomes translate into better decisions benefiting individuals, communities and countries around the world.



Stuart W. Holliday, Meridian President and CEO, U.S. Ambassador (Ret.)

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Increased polarization, protectionism and a questioning of identity among many of the world's most powerful countries have challenged the strength of the invaluable relationships across sectors and borders that are necessary for global security and prosperity. Where political conflicts and economic disputes have weakened these relationships, Meridian aims to provide a space where international cooperation can thrive.


After nearly 60 years, Meridian lives at the nexus of global partnerships between the public and private sector, the diplomatic community and leaders in media, education and advocacy from around the world. These connections form the foundation necessary for accelerated collaboration and consensus building among all stakeholders as we tackle today's most pressing challenges and opportunities.

Meridian's 2018 programming spotlighted these partnerships at a new level. We engaged more than 7,400 emerging and established leaders in government, business, diplomacy and civil society, through capacity-building programs on our campus in Washington, D.C., and in cities across the U.S. Through our leadership development and diplomacy programs, we strengthen U.S. engagement with the world and build global leaders by connecting them with the people and ideas they need to grow their impact in their communities and countries.

The power of our partnerships was bolstered in 2018 with the launch of the Meridian Center for Diplomatic Engagement, which provides a neutral, nonpartisan platform for Washington's diplomatic community to collaborate on key global issues with U.S. government officials, corporate leaders and nongovernmental organizations. Fittingly, the Center officially launched at the 7th Annual Meridian Global Leadership Summit, which brought together ambassadors, members of Congress and CEOs to discuss how to prepare for a digitally driven future across sectors and borders.

Meridian's partnership with the U.S. government remains principal with the continued work on the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program, which brought 1,636 international visitors on 188 professional exchange programs to 316 U.S. cities last year. Participants learned from and built lasting relationships with dozens of local government members, small businesses, and NGOs working on issues ranging from governance and education to women's rights and environmental sustainability.

Meridian also partnered with the State Department for the third consecutive year on the Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative (YLA), which brought 250 promising entrepreneurs from Latin America and the Caribbean to the U.S. for an exchange to equip them with knowledge, resources and



networks to succeed in the digital commerce era. In addition to entrepreneurs, Meridian worked with the executive government and U.S. embassies abroad to train hundreds of international journalists, educators, health professionals and other emerging leaders and help them build meaningful partnerships here in the U.S.

While Meridian's work spans continents and international alliances, Asia was a region of focus in 2018. The Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy organized one of its biggest exhibits yet to commemorate 200 years of U.S.–Thai relations. Our annual Diplomacy Forum convened government, corporate, diplomatic and civil society leaders to celebrate the cultural influence of Japan, and Meridian organized its first Nowruz spring festival in partnership with the Central Asian embassies in DC. Beyond this focus on Asia, Meridian explored new avenues of cultural diplomacy with a variety of diplomatic and civil society partners who facilitated discussions on how fashion, sports and food can bridge divides across borders and cultures.

Whether it's exchange and training programs, discussions on global issues or cultural diplomacy initiatives, none of Meridian's work would be possible without the enduring partnerships that give the center a global impact. We were honored to have so many of our key partners with us to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Meridian Ball, a milestone event that showcased the breadth and familiarity of our international and cross-sector relationships. We are thankful to all our supporters who share our belief that U.S. engagement with the world is vital for our collective security and prosperity. As we continue to navigate the complex international challenges of our time, we look forward to further strengthening and growing these partnerships in the coming year.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND MERIDIAN STAFF - THANK YOU!



SECRETARY CARLOS M. GUTIERREZ
Chairman



AMBASSADOR STUART W. HOLLIDAY
President and CEO



Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez,
Meridian Board of Trustees Chairman

BY THE NUMBERS

595,082 PEOPLE WORLDWIDE IMPACTED BY MERIDIAN PROGRAMS IN 2018

354
Total Programs

180
Countries
represented in 2018 projects

47
U.S. States
visited by project participants

7,402
Total Participants

6
Continents
represented in 2018 projects

316
U.S. Cities
visited by project participants

Top 10 countries by number of programs:

1. ARGENTINA
2. PAKISTAN
3. CHINA
4. IRAQ
5. AFGHANISTAN
6. SAUDI ARABIA
7. KAZAKHSTAN
8. INDONESIA
9. GERMANY
10. POLAND



Top 5 program topics:

-  MEDIA AND JOURNALISM
-  GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY
-  BUSINESS AND TRADE
-  SECURITY AND DEFENSE
-  EDUCATION

Since 1960, Meridian has welcomed and trained:

78,306
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, DIPLOMATS, FORTUNE 500
EXECUTIVES AND OTHER EMERGING LEADERS

4
NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS

169
HEADS OF STATE



Participants from 2018 U.S. Congress – Republic of Korea National Assembly Exchange Program explore Washington, DC, during the opening week of their program.





CELEBRATING OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Meridian's work to prepare and connect global leaders from around the world would not be possible without the **cross-section of partners in government, diplomacy, business and civil society** that support and engage with Meridian programs. In 2018, Meridian saw these partnerships strengthened through the launch of the Meridian Center for Diplomatic Engagement, creation of a corporate diplomacy training program, and the 50th Anniversary Meridian Ball, which brought more than 800 of our government, business, and diplomatic partners together.

This year, Meridian continued to be the U.S. State Department's largest partner on the International Visitor Leadership Program. We also teamed up with the U.S. Trade and Development Agency and U.S. Embassies for a number training programs both in the U.S. and overseas. Through the Meridian Global Leadership Council, Meridian Corporate Council, and Rising Leaders Council, Meridian developed and maintained close relationships with leaders here in Washington who represent different industries, political affiliations and nationalities.

United Airlines CEO Oscar Munoz accepts the Meridian Corporate Leader Award at the 7th Annual Meridian Global Leadership Summit on October 12, 2018. Photo: Kristoffer Tripplaar

Collaborating Across Borders and Sectors



Meridian and Chatham House team up to commemorate the World War I Centennial

Meridian marked the centenary of the First World War and U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points by partnering with Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs to produce the "Preventing Conflict Today: Learning from World War I" conference in London on February 23, 2018. The conference analyzed the role of the international institutions and instruments in resolving and preventing modern conflicts, offering a new set of recommendations for improvement, reform or reconceptualization that could effectively adapt them to new and emerging threats in order to prevent another global conflict.



Partnering with AFLAC for our Diplomacy Forum on Japan and Corporate Diplomacy Training

In 2018, Meridian worked closely with AFLAC, which served as a partner of the Diplomacy Forum on Japan in June that brought together government and business leaders with academic experts and cultural visionaries to examine the position of soft power alongside trade and security in international relations. AFLAC also participated in Meridian's newly launched Corporate Diplomacy Professional Development Program, a series of four courses designed for AFLAC's Federal Affairs team to help them explore how to think like a diplomat in an increasingly globalized business environment.



Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze meets with the Meridian Corporate Council

On September 20, 2018, the Meridian Corporate Council partnered with BP and the Embassy of Georgia to host a discussion on U.S. – Georgia Business Relations. This roundtable provided companies the opportunity to engage with Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze of Georgia. The Prime Minister highlighted his country's close partnership with the U.S. and emphasized that now is the time to push the relationship to a new level for both countries' benefit, underscoring Georgia's gratitude to the leadership of the U.S. for working together to increase bilateral trade and develop international business.

In 2018,
Meridian was proud to
work with

**399 GOVERNMENT
REPRESENTATIVES**



**AND 4 U.S.
GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES**

542 DIPLOMATS

**AND 56
EMBASSIES**



**61
MULTINATIONAL
CORPORATIONS**

**AND
92 NGOS**



LAUNCH OF THE MERIDIAN CENTER FOR DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT

Members of the Meridian Center for Diplomatic Engagement Advisory Committee. Photo: Jessica Latos



Bringing Global Leaders Together

On October 12, 2018, Meridian officially launched the Meridian Center for Diplomatic Engagement at the 7th Annual Meridian Global Leadership Summit. This new Center accelerates collaboration between the international diplomatic corps and the U.S. public and private sectors to address global challenges and opportunities facing the United States and the world today. The MCDE convenes programs that enable participants to connect in intimate settings with top officials and policy-makers, dive deeply into issues, understand how Washington works and strengthen peer-to-peer relationships. With nearly 60 years of close relationships with the diplomatic community, Meridian is uniquely positioned to convene dialogues among leaders across borders, parties, and industries.

KEY PROGRAMS



Since its launch, the MCDE has engaged

76 DIPLOMATS from
45 COUNTRIES

Meridian Center for Diplomatic Engagement Advisory Committee

The Honorable James J. Blanchard

Governor of Michigan (1983-1991) and Meridian Chair Emeritus

The Honorable Mark Brzezinski

U.S. Ambassador to Sweden (2011-2015) and Managing Director at Makena Capital Management, LLC

The Honorable Dwight L. Bush Sr.

U.S. Ambassador to Morocco (2014-2017)

The Honorable Paula J. Dobriansky

Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs (2001-2009) and Senior Fellow at the JFK Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University

The Honorable Mark Gilbert

U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and Samoa (2015-2017) and Vice Chairman of Private Wealth Management at UBS

The Honorable Bart Gordon

U.S. Representative for Tennessee (1985-2011) and Partner at K&L Gates LLP

The Honorable Fay Hartog-Levin

U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands (2009-2011) and Distinguished Fellow at The Chicago Council on Global Affairs

The Honorable Israel Hernandez

Head of International Corporate Affairs at HNA Group and Meridian Board of Trustees member

Her Excellency Kirsti Helena Kauppi

Ambassador of Finland to the U.S.

Erin L. McGrain

Vice President of the Counsel for Public Policy and Regulatory at SK Group

The Honorable Charlie Rivkin

Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs (2014-2017) and Chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America

His Excellency Arturo Sarukhán

Ambassador of Mexico to the U.S. (2007-2013) and Nonresident Senior Fellow at The Brookings Institution

The Honorable Thomas A. Shannon Jr.

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (2016-2018)

The Honorable Alan D. Solomont

U.S. Ambassador to Spain and Andorra (2009-2013) and Dean of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University

Committee members as of December 31, 2018

Welcoming Washington's Diplomatic Community

We work closely with the Diplomatic Corps in Washington, D.C. to foster greater understanding of their cultures, create networks with U.S. private and public sector organizations, and provide opportunities for advancing business and trade relations. In 2018, Meridian hosted a number of events to recognize the important work of members of Washington's diplomatic corps. On April 18 and September 27, Meridian held its semi-annual Welcome to Washington receptions, which honor and welcome newly arrived ambassadors and their spouses to Washington, D.C. Ambassadors play an important role in bringing together cultures and strengthening relationships across sectors and industries between the U.S. and their home countries. As a part of Meridian's diplomatic engagement initiative, we design opportunities like the New Ambassadors Reception to recognize all the work that Ambassadors do to build relationships among a diverse range of constituents including the foreign diplomatic community, business representatives, members of the U.S. government, and the American public.

On August 14, Meridian hosted its annual reception to celebrate the valuable work of Washington's Embassy social secretaries and cultural attachés in promoting diplomacy. This year, Meridian included a panel discussion on the role of culture and hospitality in advancing diplomacy, featuring Dana Al Marashi, Head of Heritage and Social Affairs for the UAE Embassy in DC, and Amanda Downes, former Social Secretary for the British Embassy in DC. "Arts and culture, whether it's music or dance or reaching out to local communities, is a common language that breaks down barriers," Miss Downes said, underscoring the impact that social secretaries and cultural attachés have on diplomatic initiatives in DC and nationwide.

"Meridian provides embassies with a venue for *cross-embassy engagement* and contact, as well as *access to both the private sector and agencies of the United States government.*"

**His Excellency Arturo Sarukhán,
Ambassador of Mexico to the U.S. (2007-2013)**



**13
AMBASSADORS
WELCOMED
IN 2018**

The Honorable Ann Stock, Vice Chair of the Meridian Board of Trustees, with a group of newly appointed ambassadors to the United States at the Welcome to Washington reception on April 18, 2018. Photo: Stephen Bobb



Dana Al Marashi, Head of Heritage and Social Affairs for the UAE Embassy in DC, and Amanda Downes, former Social Secretary for the British Embassy in DC, join Ambassador Stuart Holliday for a discussion on the role of hospitality and culture in diplomacy. Photo: Stephen Bobb.

Connecting Our Corporate Partners

The world's leading multinational corporations count on us to design programs that address critical business challenges and opportunities, elevate their corporate social responsibility initiatives, and accelerate development of their leaders. The Meridian Corporate Council provides a platform for exchange, dialogue, and networking on key global issues among diplomatic, government, and corporate leaders. Through this exchange, members are better equipped to navigate critical challenges and opportunities in a complex international environment. Drawn from wide-ranging sectors, Council Members represent major corporations that are leaders in corporate social responsibility and international initiatives.

In 2018, Meridian saw a substantial growth in its Corporate Council membership and programming. Our corporate partners sponsored and participated in discussions on foreign policy and trade with current ambassadors from around the world, as well as senior-level government officials. They also regularly attended Meridian events along with members of the diplomatic community, government representatives, and the public sector.



71 PRIVATE COMPANIES ENGAGED



21 CORPORATE COUNCIL PROGRAMS



40% GROWTH IN CORPORATE COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP FROM 2017 TO 2018

Tiffany Atwell, Global Government and Industry Affairs Leader at Corteva, with His Excellency Ambassador Ha Kim Ngoc of Vietnam at a Meridian Corporate Council event on U.S.-Vietnam economic relations



AFLAC'S Federal Affairs team participates in a four-module corporate diplomacy professional development program at Meridian in 2018.

Diplomacy Makes Business Sense

Whether managing employees as part of a worldwide team, closing a multi-million-dollar deal, expanding into new markets abroad, or tackling a regulatory issue, diplomacy is an essential tool. Nearly every division, from global public policy teams to marketing, corporate communications and human resources can benefit from the skills that corporate diplomacy training provides. Delivered by diplomatic practitioners including former ambassadors, State Department officials and senior diplomats with decades of experience in the field, Meridian's unique training methodology identifies the most applicable diplomatic skills and knowledge and translates them to real-life corporate situations. We integrate experiential learning through real-world simulations and collaborative role-playing exercises, and connect participants with experts to develop resource networks.

In 2018, AFLAC's Federal Government Relations team took part in a four-module course with Meridian focused on how diplomatic concepts, including communications, public diplomacy and storytelling, and negotiations could better inform their work with clients. The group also enjoyed the opportunity to work together on the simulations, finding it a valuable teambuilding experience. Meridian hosted another corporate diplomacy training program in the spring of 2019.

“There is no other place in D.C. that is tied to the State Department and has this rich history of educating diplomats from around the world on how to deal with incredibly complex situations with incredibly complex people and get peaceful results. That’s what Meridian’s spotlight is.”

Brad Knox, Senior Vice President and Counsel for AFLAC's Federal Affairs

Working with the Government

Meridian is a principal partner of the U.S. Department of State and other government agencies. As part of these partnerships, we implement the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), which promotes mutual understanding among leaders of countries around the world and of the United States.

In addition to **188 International Visitor Leadership Programs in 2018**, Meridian was proud to partner with the U.S. government to implement programs such as the U.S.–Congress Republic of Korea National Assembly Exchange Program, the Pan-Africa Youth Leadership Program, the USTDA China Healthcare Executive Leadership Training Program and many more. We were also honored to have members of Congress from all political affiliations and various government officials serve as speakers at our events and host meetings with our visitors.

In 2018, Meridian
partnered with
**4 GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES**
on more than
**200
PROGRAMS**



U.S. and Korean delegates in the 2018 U.S. Congress–Republic of Korea National Assembly Exchange Program outside Capitol building during their tour of Washington, DC.

Teaming up with NGOs, Media Outlets, Educational Institutions and More

As a nonprofit organization and educational institution, Meridian frequently partners with other NGOs around the world to convene programs on topical international issues, including human trafficking, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, trade, cultural diplomacy, security, environmental sustainability, and global health. In 2018, we were proud to work with a variety of nonprofits, schools, museums and cultural organizations to facilitate exchanges and empower emerging leaders, accelerate collaboration on global issues, and celebrate the role of culture in bridging divides.

A FEW OF OUR PARTNERS IN 2018:

MALALA FUND :: **GLOBALTIES > US.**



**NATIONAL
MUSEUM
OF WOMEN
IN THE ARTS**



Meridian partnered with the National Museum of Women in the Arts to host Diplomacy X Design, a conversation exploring the role of fashion and design in diplomacy, politics and society featuring experts in fashion, diplomacy, media and public relations. Photo: Ben Droz



In April, Meridian implemented an International Visitor Leadership Program on Human Centered Design and Accessible Physical Environment. Participants met with NGOs and educational institutions focused on inclusivity and accessibility for people with disabilities.



Meridian partnered with the U.S.-Mexico Foundation to organize two delegations to Mexico as part of the U.S.-Mexico Policymakers Exchange. Participants included leaders from NGOs, think tanks, schools and universities.

Meridian Global Leadership Council

Now in its second year, the Meridian Global Leadership Council is a network of leaders and advisers in Washington and around the country who are committed to broadening the depth and outreach of our important work through their financial support and engagement in our curated programs and events throughout the year. From discussions on foreign policy issues at intimate salon dinners to lively cultural diplomacy receptions, these programs focus on cultivating relationships with the diplomatic community and impactful exchanges of ideas and culture around the world. This year's MGLC programming included salon dinners, each hosted by either an embassy partner, such as the Ambassadors of Italy, Hungary and Panama, or by Meridian's media, museum and other civil society partners. Topics discussed ranged from the environment and biodiversity to the creative economy and the rise of smart cities.



Members of the Meridian Global Leadership Council attend a salon dinner hosted by His Excellency Emanuel Gonzalez-Revilla, Ambassador of Panama, on September 12, 2018, for a discussion on Panama's environmental leadership as a global hotbed for biodiversity. Photo: Kevin Dietsch.

128
MGLC MEMBERS
IN 2018

Rising Leaders Council

Established in 2012, the Rising Leaders Council at Meridian forms a distinguished network of mid-career professionals from diverse sectors and disciplines who support Meridian's mission of global leadership and non-partisan public diplomacy. Council members are leaders from the foreign diplomatic community and the public and private sectors, who work together to foster a substantive exchange of ideas on global leadership.

The Council's engaging DC-based dinners feature dialogues that focus on international issues of importance and relevance to Meridian and RLC members, and offer guests a neutral forum for exploring key issues, sharing perspectives, and strengthening peer relationships. Rising Leaders Council events engage Meridian's broad network of cross-sector leaders of international affairs.

RLC programming in 2018 brought emerging leaders together to discuss topics such as sports diplomacy, women's empowerment, youth development and more with foreign policy experts and ambassadors.



Meridian President and CEO Ambassador Stuart Holliday speaks with RLC member Ben Chang at the World Cup Kickoff event hosted in partnership with WeWork, which featured a discussion on sports diplomacy with athletes and diplomats.



Ambassador Melanne Verwee (left) and Ambassador Paula Dobriansky discuss pathways to advance women's leadership at an RLC event hosted in partnership with the Embassy of Ukraine.

we work



Panel discussion on sports diplomacy at the Rising Leaders Council World Cup Kickoff event. Photo courtesy of WeWork.

THE MERIDIAN BALL'S GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

***Ballgowns, tuxedos, champagne:
The last real ball in Washington...***

“Meridian is the last ball of its kind. It is a survivor of a bygone era, a vision of Washington less as it is today and more as it would like to imagine itself: elegant, serious, sophisticated and united for important issues and causes.”

Roxanne Roberts, *The Washington Post*



**515
GUESTS AT**

**35 EMBASSY
DINNERS**



“This is the place where they cross aisles, cultural boundaries, and time zones to create mutual understanding between cultures.”

Megan Beyer, Meridian Trustee and member of the 50th Meridian Ball Leadership Committee

While Washington has evolved, Meridian Ball traditions — from all former First Ladies serving as Honorary Chairs since Mrs. Patricia Nixon, to pre-Ball dinners hosted by Ambassadors and a lively dance reception at Meridian House — have endured since its inception in 1969. The 50th Annual Meridian Ball convened over 800 diplomats, industry leaders, and government officials on October 12, 2018. This year, we were delighted to have over 25 former Ball Chairs serving on the host committee. Spanning decades, generations and backgrounds, each Chair has left a unique imprint on the Ball, shaping it into what it has become today.

The evening began with dinners hosted by 35 embassies across Washington for over 500 people. At the same time, over 300 guests joined the White-Meyer Dinner and enjoyed their meal in our first ever Dinner Pavilion with American Pops Orchestra playing in the background. After the dinners, guests spread between Meridian’s two historic homes, the White-Meyer House and Meridian House, to enjoy dancing, dessert and drinks as they mingled with other leaders across sectors and from around the world.

121
GOVERNMENT
REPRESENTATIVES

62
DIPLOMATS

268
CORPORATE
LEADERS

417
NGOS OR
CIVIL SOCIETY
MEMBERS





ACCELERATING COLLABORATION ON GLOBAL ISSUES

By way of our more than 500 projects each year, Meridian brings together a cross-section of established and emerging leaders, provides them with resources and insight on some of the most pressing international issues of our time, and prepares them to effectively meet the challenges of a complex global future.



BUILDING GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURS



ADVANCING TRADE DISCUSSIONS



PREPARING FOR A DIGITAL FUTURE



EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS



NAVIGATING U.S. MEDIA & POLITICS



STRENGTHENING GLOBAL SECURITY



EDUCATING EMERGING LEADERS



BUILDING GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURS

Meridian views entrepreneurship as a critical tool for empowering women, developing youth, creating sustainable jobs and promoting wealth and prosperity for all. Through tailored training programs offered by our Global Leadership Institute and custom exchanges for public and private sector leaders, as well as events that convene leaders in business, government, diplomacy and civil society, we provide individuals with the know-how, resources, and valuable public and private sector networks to become successful entrepreneurs.



Some of the 2018 YLAI Professional Fellows pose for a group photo at the program's closing forum in Washington, DC. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of State.

394 ENTREPRENEURS engaged from 93 COUNTRIES

“With entrepreneurship remaining a strong indicator of overall economic health, it is in the self-interest of a nation to invest in their entrepreneurs’ global experiences by equipping them with the right set of tools to collaborate across sectors, borders and ideological lines, and prepare them to compete and succeed in global business markets.”

Meridian President & CEO
Ambassador Stuart Holliday in
Entrepreneur Magazine

YOUNG LEADERS OF THE AMERICAS INITIATIVE

In fall 2018, 250 Latin American and Caribbean entrepreneurs participated in the YLAI Professional Fellows Program, designed to empower outstanding entrepreneurs working to transform their communities and the region by strengthening their capacity to advance their entrepreneurial ventures and effectively contribute to economic and social development. Through fellowship placements at organizations or companies in cities across the U.S., the YLAI Professional Fellows gain valuable professional development skills and work jointly with their Fellowship Hosts on an action plan implemented upon return to their home countries. The program also features opening and closing conferences with top U.S. government officials and global public, private and nonprofit leaders. In 2019, the U.S. Fellowship Hosts will have the opportunity to travel to Latin America or the Caribbean on a reverse exchange program.

AFRICAN WOMEN’S ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

For the eighth year in a row, Meridian had the distinct honor of administering the African Women’s Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP). A flagship project of the Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program, AWEP brought 22 women entrepreneurs from Sub-Saharan Africa to learn about American approaches to leadership, business growth, forging networks, and becoming voices of change. The cohort met with high-level officials and entrepreneurial experts in Washington before traveling to cities across the country to learn from small to medium sized businesses working in their fields. They also had the opportunity to display their products at the annual AWEP product showcase on Meridian’s campus.

WOMEN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

A three-week International Visitor Leadership exchange sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Women in Entrepreneurship illustrated the impact of women-owned businesses in the U.S. and explored the progress of women’s participation in the global economy. Fifty-three participants from 53 different countries traveled across the United States in thematic sub-groups to look at the social, economic, and political factors that influence and encourage women entrepreneurs and owners or managers of small, medium, and large-scale businesses.

ITALIAN AMBASSADOR’S DINNER ON THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

From food and architecture to visual arts and music, Italy’s creative industry is renowned for its global economic and social contributions. Among the top five EU countries with a vibrant creative sector, Italy significantly adds to the 3% of the world’s GDP and 30 million jobs generated annually by the industry. Italian Ambassador to the U.S., His Excellency Armando Varricchio, welcomed guests to his residence, Villa Firenze, on May 8 for a dinner discussion with the Meridian Global Leadership Council on the role of the creative economy as a driver of global economic growth as well as cultural diversity and social inclusion. Guests heard from experts Marco Ausenda, President & CEO of Rizzoli International Publications; Davide Cremese, CEO of Boffi USA; John Jenkin, CEO of Kartell; Dodge Thompson, Chief of Exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art; and Fabio and Maria Trabocchi, Founders of Fabio Trabocchi Restaurants.

38
programs on
TRADE POLICY
in 2018

9
GOVERNMENT
TRADE LEADERS
engaged



FOREIGN AMBASSADORS FIRST TO HEAR FROM SECRETARY WILBUR ROSS FOLLOWING CHINA TARIFF ANNOUNCEMENT

One day after the Trump Administration announced a plan to impose up to \$60 billion in new tariffs on China owing primarily to its intellectual property practices, U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross joined Meridian on March 23 to brief over 75 ambassadors and senior members of the diplomatic community. In conversation with Meridian Board of Trustees Chairman and former Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, Sec. Ross debunked the likelihood of the tariffs spiraling into a global trade war. He also addressed the most pressing international trade issues, notably the complexities of the NAFTA negotiations. Across the briefing, he spoke to the future of U.S. trade policy including the Trump Administration's Indo-Pacific strategy, the commercialization of space, and efforts to resolve tensions between the U.S. and European Union.

BREXIT: AN UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC FUTURE

With the United Kingdom scheduled to leave the European Union in 2019, Meridian, in partnership with Hess Corporation, hosted a timely conversation with six British members of Parliament, who were participating in the British American Parliamentary Group (BAPG), a project of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), on the state of economic relations between both the U.S. and the UK post-Brexit. The six members of Parliament had balanced representation with three members from the Conservative Party, and three members from the Labour Party. After much debate surrounding the consequences of Brexit, the members of Parliament found consensus in Brexit providing the U.S., UK and EU with an opportunity to evolve the trilateral relationship.

THE NEED FOR INNOVATION IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE

On October 18, the Meridian Corporate Council partnered with PhRMA to host a discussion on the state of international trade with The Honorable Gilbert Kaplan, Under Secretary for International Trade at the U.S. Department of Commerce. Mr. Kaplan highlighted his domestic and international travel to meet with stakeholders and citizens to listen to their challenges and goals for trade and business. He said he was pleased to see the American spirit for innovation and ingenuity is alive and thriving, and that many foreign countries aspire to reach the same standards of the American model for trade and business.

WORKING WITH THE U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

In 2018, Meridian was proud to partner with the U.S. Trade and Development Agency on two programs that saw trade and exchange as key tools for solving global challenges like healthcare efficiency and reducing oil dependency. One program welcomed 25 Chinese healthcare leaders to learn about U.S. health system operations, including organizational structure, residency training, comparative policies, and innovative U.S. technologies that can improve patient care and safety. Meridian also collaborated with USTDA, the Department of State, USAID and the Government of Mexico to organize a workshop series and reverse trade mission focused on strengthening energy markets in Central America.



ADVANCING TRADE DISCUSSIONS



For more than five decades, Meridian has convened leaders to collaborate on solutions to the social and economic challenges faced by their communities, corporations, and organizations. Many of these solutions are grounded in the expansion of business and trade. Through a Corporate Council comprised of more than 35 top multinational corporations, numerous economics-focused exchange programs and reverse trade missions, as well as signature programs such as Global Business@Meridian Downtown, we provide leaders with the opportunity to engage on trade policy, entrepreneurship, consumer protection issues, global business trends, and other key topics.



Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross briefs over 75 diplomats at Meridian one day after the Trump Administration announced new tariffs on China. Photo: Stephen Bobb.

(From right to left) Foreign Policy Deputy Editor Sarah Wildman moderates discussion with: His Excellency Jose Manuel G. Romualdez, Ambassador of the Philippines; New America Senior Advisor Molly Kinder; Congressman Francis Rooney (R-FL); and United Airlines Vice President for Community Affairs Sharon Grant. Photo: Kristoffer Tripplaar.

Meridian Global Leadership Summit



2018

BRINGING LEADERS AT THE NEXUS OF DIPLOMACY

#MeridianSummit

CENTER for DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT

PREPARING FOR A DIGITAL FUTURE



As Meridian fulfills its mission of preparing private and public sector leaders for a complex global future, it focuses on innovation in various areas that are critical to the development of organizations, communities, and countries - with science and technology as a top priority. Through our programs in cyber-security, internet freedom, mobile communications, telecommunications and broadband innovation, we provide leaders with the information, skills, and networks to face the contemporary challenges of operating in a borderless world, where technology is constantly evolving.



IVLP SPOTLIGHT ON THE DIGITAL AGE

This year, the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program sponsored several programs on issues pertaining to an increasingly digital future. As an implementing partner of the IVLP, Meridian welcomed many of these visitors, connecting them with our vast network of technology companies, government officials working on issues of technology regulation, and civil society organizations and experts knowledgeable about the challenges and opportunities ahead.

A few of these programs included:

- A conversation on the future of data privacy policymaking in the U.S. and EU with Google's Senior Privacy Policy Counsel David Lieber and an IVLP group of French experts and government figures working on privacy regulation issue
- An IVLP for Brazil on legislation and regulation for the digital age in which participants met with representatives from Facebook, Congress, the Internet Association and the Center for Information Policy Leadership
- A multi-regional IVLP that brought together educators, administrators and technologists to connect innovators in digital learning

MERIDIAN TACKLES FUTURE OF WORK, TECH REGULATION AND ISSUES OF TRUST AT GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The most significant policy issues and business decisions of the day are increasingly related to new challenges formed as a result of digital innovation. Public and private sector leaders around the world are forced to make quick decisions as questions of security, economic growth and job stability mount. The 7th Annual Meridian Global Leadership Summit gathered 200 business executives, international ambassadors, government representatives and policy experts at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center to explore how global leaders are responding to these swift changes and preparing for a digitally-driven future across sectors and borders.

The Summit featured a series of panel discussions with leaders in government, business, media and education to delineate some of the most complex challenges and opportunities resulting from digital and technology innovations around the world. Key topics covered included the impact of automation on the global skills gap, online privacy, regulation of social media and technology firms, and leadership acumen in the digital world. These conversations on the rapidly evolving shape of technology and innovation prompted similar conclusions about what needs to be done to prepare for the digital age that is already well underway, with the general consensus being that governments and businesses alike are facing critical questions about the immediate effects and future of technological advancement and increased globalization.

The Summit also featured remarks from its chairs. Chris Whittle, CEO of Whittle School and Studios, which served as the Summit's Global Engagement Chair, spoke on the future of international education, announcing Whittle School's plan to provide a common global curriculum that will use technology to equip students with the skills needed for the jobs of 2025 and beyond. The Summit ended with the presentation of the Meridian Corporate Leader Award to Oscar Munoz, CEO of United, the Summit's Corporate Chair, who was recognized for his work to increase international collaboration, make societal impact a corporate policy and help his company succeed in the global marketplace. Foreign Policy served as Media Partner and Deputy Editor Sarah Wildman moderated the first panel discussion on closing the global skills gap. The full summit aired live on C-SPAN.

2018 SUMMIT PARTNERS:

UNITED 



RONALD REAGAN BUILDING AND
INTERNATIONAL
TRADE CENTER
Setting the stage for tomorrow

196 ATTENDEES 15 SPEAKERS

9 GOVERNMENT
REPRESENTATIVES

37 DIPLOMATS

59 CORPORATE LEADERS

56 NGO OR CIVIL
SOCIETY MEMBERS



IVLP GOLD STAR: MS. ROSANA SCHAACK

In June, Meridian welcomed Gold Star alumna Ms. Rosana Schaack of Liberia, for a two-week U.S. tour program that followed up on her first Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) administered in 2006. A former nurse, Ms. Schaack is an elected official in the Republic of Liberia's House of Representatives, Chairperson of the Women's Legislative Caucus in the House and the Executive Director of Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness, a nonprofit organization that focuses on the rights and well-being of survivors of domestic violence. On her return trip to the U.S., she met members of Congress and representatives of NGOs promoting women's rights across the country. She made new contacts and revived former connections with Americans in Washington, DC; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Cleveland, Ohio.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE AWARDS

In partnership with the State Department, Meridian welcomed the 10 recipients of the 2018 International Women of Courage award, an annual honor begun by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2007 to pay tribute to women around the world who have courageously advocated for the rights, equality, and social progress of all citizens despite the adversity and dangers they often face. The awardees participated in workshops and professional meetings ahead of their official award ceremony at the State Department and then split off for individual programming in cities across the U.S.

PHOTO EXHIBIT: A WORLD WHERE EVERY GIRL CAN LEARN AND LEAD

To officially open the "A World Where Every Girl Can Learn and Lead: The Story of Malala Fund" photo exhibition, Meridian held a reception on October 17 that included a panel discussion with leaders in the promotion of girls' education and a live auction of select photographs on display. The exhibition, hosted by Meridian in association with Citi, featured photographs by Colombian photographer Nick Garcia that were taken for a storytelling project organized by Citi during Malala Yousafzai's 2017 visit to Nigeria. Proceeds from the auction went directly to Malala Fund to support its work with local activists in Nigeria trying to break down barriers to girls' education.



Photo: Chuck Kennedy

ADVANCING WOMEN'S FOREIGN POLICY LEADERSHIP

On April 30, Meridian's Rising Leaders Council joined the Embassy of Ukraine for an intimate dialogue with Ambassadors Paula Dobriansky and Melanne Vermeer on how to advance women's foreign policy leadership. Among the gathered group of guests included female Ambassadors and ambassadorial spouses, along with rising leaders across the U.S. government, foreign embassies, business, media and NGOs, all of whom engaged in the dialogue and offered timely questions on everything from the U.S. gender agenda to International cooperation that will accelerate the vision for women.



First Lady Melania Trump with the 2018 International Women of Courage award recipients at the official award ceremony at the U.S. Department of State. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Department of State.



EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRLS

Meridian partners with governments, civil society organizations, and NGOs worldwide to champion the empowerment of women and girls. Through our programs, women and girls enjoy increased access to world-class education, greater opportunities for entrepreneurship, and networks that support the fulfillment of their highest potential.



NAVIGATING U.S. MEDIA & POLITICS

As a global leadership organization committed to transparency, open dialogue, and neutral forums for collaboration, Meridian highlights the work of leaders in the field of media and journalism. We regularly develop dynamic programs each year that explore contemporary issues that directly impact members of the media around the world. Meridian also maintains close partnerships with members of the media in the nation's capital, and through these connections, is able to increase awareness of key developments in the international arena.



Ambassador Stuart Holliday (right) welcomes POLITICO reporters and diplomats to Meridian. Panelists (left to right) Luiza Ch. Savage, Charlie Mahtesian, Lorraine Woellert, Michael Crowley. Photo: Kristoffer Tripplaar.

401 JOURNALISTS engaged on 73 PROGRAMS



Meridian Intl Center
@MeridianIntl

Thank you @wuerker for meeting with this #IVLP and showing them around @Politico. While in the US, these political cartoonists from Tanzania are examining the link between political cartoons and freedom of expression.



11:54 AM - 22 May 2018

9 Retweets 22 Likes

IVLP and US Embassy Tanzania

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ENGAGING INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISTS ON REPORTING TOURS

In 2018, Meridian began implementing the Journalist Reporting Tours in Northeast Asia, a series of six programs for regional journalists examining the policy of the U.S. and its allies toward North Korea. The program also focuses on DPRK violations of international norms and human rights abuses. It is designed for working journalists seeking to inform their reporting on DPRK issues in light of the June 2018 DPRK-USA Singapore Summit. The first cohort's program took place from November 27 to December 7, and featured meetings with government organizations such as the State Department, the Department of Defense, and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as well as prominent Washington NGOs and think tanks like the Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, the Korea Economic Institute, and Center for East Asia Policy Studies at Brookings Institute. The group also traveled to New York City to visit the U.S. Mission to the UN and the Asia Program of the Council on Foreign Relations.

POLITICO AND MERIDIAN TEAM UP TO FORECAST 2018 MIDTERM ELECTIONS FOR DIPLOMATS

More than 70 leaders attended the Insights @ Meridian program focused on the 2018 elections, including representatives from 43 embassies. This high-level audience of Ambassadors and top political counselors was joined by the participants in a Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program of young European leaders to hear from POLITICO reporters about the upcoming elections. Moderated by Luiza Ch. Savage, Editorial Director for Cross-Platform Content and Executive Director of POLITICO Pro Canada, panelists explored the upcoming Congressional mid-term and gubernatorial races, the voting electorate and the major issues driving voting trends. Election hacking, appointment of conservative justices, voter turnout and the effect of personal foibles on electoral results were at the forefront of the conversation.

SWEDISH MEDIA PROFESSIONALS EXPLORE U.S. ELECTIONS COVERAGE

During the week of the 2018 midterm elections, Meridian welcomed a group of seven media professionals from Sweden to participate in the Swedish-U.S. Foreign Policy and Media Exchange program, organized for the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm. These central and southern Swedish journalists and editors examined the contemporary landscape of U.S. media and political journalism. The program explored the media's role in navigating and covering today's political climate, challenges facing traditional media and the future of transatlantic writing. The group met with news organizations in Washington, DC, and in Columbia, South Carolina, including POLITICO, Axios, the Heritage Foundation's media and communications department, the University of South Carolina's communications department, and COLAToday among many more.

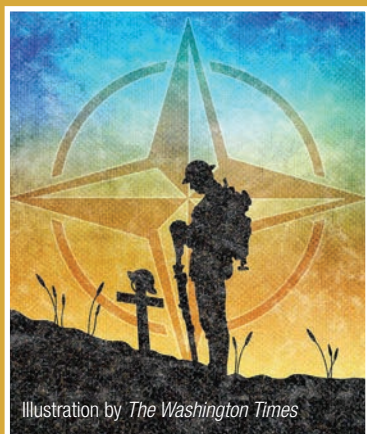


Illustration by *The Washington Times*

“Diplomacy, international cooperation and a robust national defense are necessary and enduring elements of U.S. and international security. Alliances such as the ones we share with France and the United Kingdom — a key partner in World War I — underpin and strengthen our ability to defend democracy. This foundation built one hundred years ago through shared sacrifice provides us strength and resilience and should not be taken for granted.”

President and CEO Ambassador Stuart Holliday in his reflection in *The Washington Times* on the WWI Centennial

FROM THE BATTLEFIELDS OF WWI: LESSONS ON THE FRANCO-AMERICAN MILITARY ALLIANCE

With U.S.-France economic tensions on the rise, what lessons can be gleaned from the Franco-American relationship that began over 250 years ago? Meridian explored this question during a summer visit to France that brought U.S. National Guard officials and American diplomats together with French military and political leaders in commemoration of the Second Battle of the Marne in partnership with the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission. The July 28 commemoration was *en leur mémoire* (in their memory), acknowledging not only the French and American soldiers who fought together for liberty and democracy but also the Germans who today share those same values and are key allies in the modern fight for global security, peace and prosperity.

GLOBAL THREAT COOPERATION

In October, Meridian welcomed over 100 counterterrorism officials from more than 60 countries around the world to participate in the Global Threat Cooperation project of the Department of State’s International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) Special Initiative. The program was designed in partnership with the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS to promote multilateral cooperation and information sharing among partner nations in addressing global security threats. The participants included representatives from government, law enforcement, academia and civil society with a special interest and expertise in areas of global security and counter-terrorism.

COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM: STRONG CITIES EXCHANGE

Meridian worked with the U.S. Embassy in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, to implement exchange programs on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) from 2017 to 2018. Divided into five cohorts, and ending in November 2018, the program helped build capacity of community leaders and government officials to improve resilience amid the threat of violent extremism. Participants returned home empowered to develop realistic counter-narratives to ISIS, promote best practices for cooperation between community and law enforcement, and build a network of credible voices to counter the threats posed by violent extremists.

DEFENDING THE TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY ALLIANCE

With the Catalan separatist movement fading for the time being, regional security returns as a focal point in Spain and in relations between the United States and the EU nation. On February 28, Meridian and Lockheed Martin hosted Ambassador of Spain Pedro Morenés and a group of seasoned transatlantic security experts from the public and private sectors for a deep dive into NATO and the security partnership between Spain and the United States. Held as part of the Meridian Global Dialogue Series, the dinner conversation hashed out the 2% standard from multiple perspectives. Whether Spain’s (and Europe’s) principal security threat was from the east or from the south was also widely debated with the general consensus that attention must be paid to both areas.





STRENGTHENING GLOBAL SECURITY

Meridian enlists a multi-faceted approach to global security. Together with partners from the government, civil society, education, health, transportation, trade, economic development, media, human rights, and security sectors, we develop programming that explores all of the factors which impact the safety, stability, and well-being of citizens around the world. In many of our exchange programs, we also provide neutral forums in which security stakeholders openly discuss solutions to the security challenges, which many communities and countries face.



Members of the United States National Guard attend the WWI Centennial commemorative event on July 28 at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery and Memorial, which contains the graves of 6,012 American soldiers who died while fighting in the Fère-en-Tardenois vicinity during World War I.

EDUCATING EMERGING LEADERS

Building on nearly 60 years of experience in preparing effective global leaders, Meridian offers a unique approach to education. Our custom training programs combine practical tools with expertise from our high-level network, ensuring private and public sector partners are well-equipped to navigate global challenges and opportunities. Our leadership development programs feature topics such as regional briefings, action planning, business diplomacy, and cultural intelligence. Further, each of our exchange and cultural programs feature experiential, on-the-ground learning on a variety of topics. Many are tailored to focus specifically on education and pedagogical techniques.



Summer 2018 Pan-Africa Youth Leadership Program participants celebrate their final night of the program at a closing reception at Meridian's campus, which featured cultural performances and welcomed guests from the U.S. government and African embassies in DC.



133 EDUCATION INITIATIVES in 2018



“We gained valuable insights into the reasons why the U.S.-Korea relationship is so important. As a result, we grew as individuals and professionals.”

Katelyn McAlister, U.S. participant in the 2018 U.S. Congress – Republic of Korea National Assembly Exchange Program

PAN-AFRICA YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

In August 2018, Meridian welcomed 109 high school students and adult mentors from 23 African countries to the U.S. for the Pan-Africa Youth Leadership Program (PAYLP), an annual three-week academic and cultural exchange on leadership development and civic engagement. During their program, they traveled across the country, staying with American families, learning about U.S. history and culture, engaging with local communities through volunteer work, and honing their leadership skills by developing action plans for critical issues in their home countries. They presented these plans in a final “Pitch” session to panels of locally-based experts in social enterprise and African development, as well as the U.S. Department of State.

THE FUTURE OF U.S.–KOREA RELATIONS: EDUCATING YOUNG LEADERS

The 2018 U.S. Congress – Republic of Korea National Assembly Exchange Program gave 10 Korean students and 10 American students, nominated by their respective governments, the opportunity to broaden their perspectives on the legislative process in both countries, the history of U.S.–Korean relations, and current economic, political, and security aspects of the bilateral relationship. The three-week program also provided the participants with firsthand experience of each other’s people and culture, and allowed participants to form long-lasting personal contacts.

ADVOCATING FOR U.S.–CHINA INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND EXCHANGE

The role of international education and exchange amid strained U.S.-China relations was the focus of the November 13 program co-hosted by US-China Education Trust and Meridian International Center on Meridian’s campus as part of the official kickoff of International Education Week. Audience members from local and international high schools and universities, government agencies, think tanks, consulting firms and a Fulbright delegation from China listened and contributed to an engaging conversation that stressed the need for continued international exchange as a means for public diplomacy.

EXPANDING HEMISPHERIC EXCHANGE IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION

This project for university administrators and ministry of education officials from seven countries in the Western Hemisphere sought to provide a broad overview of higher education in the United States as well as to promote international exchange and the globalization of higher education in the U.S. and across the hemisphere. Through visits with institutions of higher learning, education focused non-profits, and organizations devoted to promoting international exchange as well as with government leaders, the program explored different approaches to the internationalization of education, recruiting and serving foreign students, study abroad programs, research collaboration and other faculty-to-faculty linkages, and requirements to establish institutional partnerships.

STRENGTHENING ACCESSIBILITY AND WOMEN’S SPORTS IN UNIVERSITIES

The U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, invited 20 representatives from Argentina to take part in the “Higher Education Visitors Programs – Accessibility and Women’s Sports in U.S. Universities,” a 10-day program aimed at creating opportunities for cooperation between institutions of higher learning from the two countries and exposing the participants to best practices in the U.S. The delegation met with U.S. federal agencies, universities, and NGOs to discuss the U.S. educational system, Title IX, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. They also met with representatives from American universities and explored opportunities for future collaboration between Argentine and American universities.

BRIDGING DIVIDES THROUGH ARTS AND CULTURE

Meridian believes that leaders who have a global view, cultural awareness, peer networks, and the ability to collaborate produce stronger outcomes. Through our Center for Cultural Diplomacy, we develop unique programs that increase cross-cultural understanding and strengthen relationships between the U.S. and countries around the world. These programs include exhibitions, trainings, and conferences, as well as cultural intelligence sessions, artist exchanges, and educational programming that provide emerging and established leaders with a forum for learning and engaging across borders. By understanding the impact of cultural diplomacy, private and public sector leaders are better positioned to form relationships that set the foundation for increased business opportunities, long-lasting partnerships, and innovation through collaboration.



20
CULTURAL
PROGRAMS
in 2018

Cultural performance at the Nowruz springtime celebration hosted at Meridian in partnership with the Ambassadors from the Embassies of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Photo: Stephen Bobb.



CELEBRATING U.S.–ASIA RELATIONS WITH CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

Relations between the United States and Central, South and East Asia saw many milestones in 2018, which marked 200 years of friendship between the U.S. and Thailand, nearly 40 years of normalized diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China, and a continued U.S. interest in and alliance with nations across the Asian continent and the Pacific with shared priorities in youth development, environmental stewardship, economic strength and national security. To celebrate these valuable relationships, the Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy organized dozens of programs, exhibitions and delegations to bring different aspects and mediums of Asian culture to an American audience, using cultural diplomacy as a tool for fostering mutual understanding.

These projects brought together diplomats, government officials, corporate leaders and NGOs together to engage with cultural traditions, art and histories from the other side of the world. Specific countries that were spotlighted include China through Meridian's annual Chinese New Year celebration at the Chinese Embassy, Japan through Meridian's annual Diplomacy Forum, and Thailand through a commemorative exhibit in Bangkok. Meridian also joined the embassies of several Central Asian nations to celebrate the beginning of spring with a Nowruz festival and worked with the East Asia and Pacific Bureau of the U.S. Department of State to organize a traveling exhibition honoring the valued relationships the U.S. maintains in the Southeast Asian region.

Performance at the 2018 Diplomacy Forum on Japan, hosted at Meridian. Photo: Kristoffer Tripplaar.





CHINESE NEW YEAR

On February 13 Meridian International Center hosted the eighth annual Chinese New Year celebration with our partners at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China. Every year, Meridian's Chinese New Year celebration invites leaders from all sectors including the government, diplomatic, policy-making, business, and cultural communities in Washington to experience this centuries-old celebration rooted in ancient Chinese tradition.



DIPLOMACY FORUM ON JAPAN

The annual Meridian Diplomacy Forum convenes government and business leaders with academic experts and cultural visionaries to examine the position of soft power alongside trade and security in international relations. This year the Diplomacy Forum explored U.S.–Japan relations, one of the most important bilateral relationships in the world. Through featured speakers and panel discussions, the Diplomacy Forum examined various aspects of U.S.–Japan ties.



NOWRUZ

On a snowy March 20, Meridian, along with the Ambassadors from the Embassies of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan celebrated Nowruz. Every year, Nowruz falls on the first day of spring, serving as a symbol for new beginnings and the renewal of nature as winter comes to an end. Celebrated by millions of people across the globe, Nowruz brings together varying cultures under a shared sense of tradition and common history.



ART EXHIBIT ON U.S.–THAI RELATIONS

In commemoration of 200 years of friendship between the United States and the Kingdom of Thailand, the Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, organized an exhibition at the Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles displaying the official gifts exchanged between the two nations at significant moments over the past 200 years. *Great and Good Friends* underscores the significant bilateral ties that helped establish Thailand as America's oldest treaty ally in the region.

EXAMINING DIFFERENT MEDIUMS OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY



FASHION

In partnership with the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA), Meridian hosted Diplomacy X Design, a conversation exploring the role of fashion and design in diplomacy, politics and society.



CULINARY

In November, the Embassy of Hungary hosted the final 2018 Salon Series: Entrée to Dialogue at Meridian. Guest enjoyed learning about fine Hungarian wines from Ambassador László Szabó, MD, who shared interesting facts about the country.



ART

In association with Citi, Meridian hosted the "A World Where Every Girl Can Learn and Lead: The Story of Malala Fund" photo exhibition, which shined a light on Malala Fund's support of local activists in Nigeria working to break down barriers to girls' education.



SPORTS

In February, Meridian celebrated the diverse world of sports with our partners at the Embassy of Japan. Japanese Ambassador Kenichiro Sasae welcomed guests to enjoy a night of conversation regarding the role sports play in fostering cross-cultural understanding.


“The universal language of arts and culture — music, film, sports, food and other areas of shared interest like fashion — serves as a powerful platform to promote mutual understanding.”

**Meridian President and CEO Ambassador Stuart Holliday
*Capitol File Magazine***



**118, 590
visitors saw the
*Great and Good
Friends* exhibition
while on display.**

Visitors examine letters written by Thai kings to U.S. presidents, from the collections of the National Archives, at the Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles during the *Great and Good Friends* exhibition celebrating 200 years of U.S.–Thai relations. Photo courtesy of U.S. Embassy Bangkok, Thailand.



Participants in the UAE Cultural Diplomacy Exchange Program visit the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in the UAE. Photo: Haitham Al Mussawi, Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington.

MERIDIAN ON THE ROAD

In addition to welcoming thousands of international visitors to Washington each year, Meridian sends delegations overseas and to other regions of the U.S. as part of cultural initiatives, professional exchanges and educational training programs.

In 2018, Meridian sent **16** delegations to **15** countries around the world.



U.S.–UAE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY EXCHANGE PROGRAM

In April, Meridian completed a week-long delegation trip to the United Arab Emirates, where top-level museum directors, curators, board members, and private collectors from around the United States experienced firsthand the flourishing museum infrastructure of the UAE and how it has helped develop a vibrant arts culture and a diverse population of global citizens. In partnership with the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington, D.C., Meridian developed a multi-city cultural program in the UAE that provided the American delegation members a better appreciation of the UAE's commitment to cultural identity while emphasizing the importance of global partnerships and bilateral collaborations. This delegation traveled to Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah.



NEXT LEVEL HIP-HOP DIPLOMACY

Meridian continued its strong partnership with the U.S. Department of State and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to implement several Next Level delegations over the course of 2018. Next Level is a global program that uses hip hop music, dance, and art to foster cross-cultural creative exchange in diverse communities and works to promote understanding and conflict resolution in these audiences. In 2018, Next Level traveled to 11 countries, including Uzbekistan, Turkey, Guatemala, and Cambodia, for two-week programs in each place. During the exchanges, teams of emcees, DJs, hip hop dancers, beatmakers, beatboxers, and graffiti artists conducted public concerts, interactive performances with local musicians, lecture demonstrations, workshops, and jam sessions with diverse audiences.



U.S. SPEAKER AND SPECIALIST PROGRAM FOR INDIA

In 2018, Meridian continued to work with the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi to implement the U.S. Speaker and Specialist Program for India. Through this program, Meridian sent U.S. experts to India to connect with Indian audiences on critical issues facing both countries. Over the summer, Cristal Williams Chancellor, Director of Communications for the Women's Media Center, spoke with Indian audiences and organizations about the portrayal of women in media and gender equality. Elizabeth Ferris, Research Professor at the Institute for the Study of International Migration of the Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, was also selected to participate in the program as an expert on the issue of refugee inclusion.



U.S. POLICYMAKERS DISCUSS BILATERAL RELATIONS IN MEXICO

The U.S. Mexico Foundation partnered with Meridian International Center to bring 15 policymakers from Washington, DC, to Mexico City for a five-day study tour under this U.S.–Mexico 360 Public Diplomacy initiative. The trip gave a 360-degree view of U.S.–Mexico relations, current affairs and Mexican culture. Participants of the trip are experts in their fields, from a diverse array of think tanks, businesses, non-profits and academia. During the trip, the group participated in a wide variety of meetings, allowing them to take a deep dive into the bilateral relationship between the two countries. Participants met with representatives from the U.S. Embassy in Mexico, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mexican Business Council, nonprofit leaders and private sector officials.



WILBUR ROSS
U.S. Secretary of Commerce



KARA SWISHER
Executive Editor, Recode



MAMUKA BAKHTADZE
Prime Minister of Georgia



KELLYANNE CONWAY
Counselor to the President



ROBIN GIVHAN
Fashion Editor, *The Washington Post*



MIKE POMPEO
U.S. Secretary of State



OSCAR MUNOZ
CEO of United Airlines



REP. STEPHANIE MURPHY (D-FL)
U.S. Congresswoman



BRIAN HOOK
U.S. Special Representative for Iran



HER HIGHNESS PRINCESS LALLA JOUVALA
Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the U.S.



DAN AMOS
Chairman and CEO of Aflac, Inc.



SHRI KARAN AVTAR SINGH
Chief Secretary of Punjab



MARIE ROYCE
Assistant Secretary of State for
Educational and Cultural Affairs



CAL RIPKEN JR.
Former Baltimore baseball player



HIS EXCELLENCY YOUSEF AL OTAIBA
Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates
to the U.S.



SEN. ROGER WICKER (R-MS)
U.S. Senator



TOM LEWAND
CEO of Shinola



MANISHA SINGH
Acting Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth,
Energy and the Environment



AMBASSADOR CATHERINE RUSSELL
Former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global
Women's Issues



AMBASSADOR SEAN LAWLER
U.S. Chief of Protocol



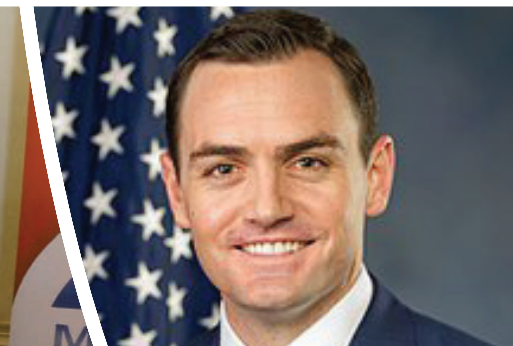
THE HONORABLE PÉTER SZIJJÁRTÓ
Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Trade



SEN. ED MARKEY (D-MA)
U.S. Senator



THE HONORABLE GIL KAPLAN
Under Secretary for International Trade at the
U.S. Department of Commerce



REP. MIKE GALLAGHER (R-WI)
U.S. Congressman

STEWARDSHIP AND PRESERVATION

Meridian's campus comprises two historic buildings, Meridian House and White-Meyer House. Meridian stewards these residential jewels, designed by John Russell Pope, architect of the Jefferson Memorial, the West Building of the National Gallery of Art, and the National Archives. Both houses are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



MERIDIAN HOUSE

Meridian House, at 1630 Crescent Place NW, was built by Ambassador Irwin Boyle Laughlin. He purchased the land in 1912, two years after his friend Ambassador Henry White bought the adjacent site. After a long and distinguished career with the U.S. Foreign Service, Mr. Laughlin retired in 1919 and built Meridian House, filling it with his collection of 18th century French drawings and Oriental porcelains and screens. Although he later returned to the diplomatic corps, serving as Ambassador to Greece and Spain in the 1920s and 30s, Mr. Laughlin also played an active role in Washington's artistic and historical communities.

The house was described by Architectural Forum in 1929 as: "Perhaps as fine a piece of work of its kind as this country can show... Certainly the manner of this house has not in this country been better done, not only in terms of stylistic authenticity, but in terms of pure architecture, meaning good taste in selectivity, in elimination, in execution. It cannot from its nature do otherwise than set a standard which should endure permanently." After undergoing a major renovation in 1994, Meridian House's principal rooms retain their architectural detail as well as some of the original decorative features, such as the 18th century European overdoor paintings and antique brass hardware and lighting fixtures. The classical symmetry of the Louis XVI style is reflected throughout the house.

The Latin inscription "Quo habitat felicitas nil intret mali" appears over the front door and translates "Where happiness dwells, evil will not enter." The inscription over the rear courtyard doors reads: "Purior hic aer: late hinc conspectus in urbem," meaning "Purer here the air whence we overlook the city," a quotation also inscribed on a house at the top of Rome's Spanish Steps. The rear and side gardens largely retain their original design. The pebbled courtyard has 40 linden trees, imported from Europe when the house was built. The statues throughout the garden are original to the house.



WHITE-MEYER HOUSE

White-Meyer House, at 1624 Crescent Place NW, has been home to two prestigious Washington families. The property was purchased in 1910 by distinguished American diplomat Henry White, who had been Ambassador to Italy and France. The red brick Georgian home was completed in 1912 at a total cost of \$155,497.

During the Whites' tenure, the house was the scene of many significant social and historical events. Notable guests included Georges Clemenceau, Robert Cecil, Henry Cabot Lodge and President Warren Harding. In 1917, at the request of the Department of State, Ambassador White lent the house to the French mission of Marshal Joseph Joffre for its headquarters, and the French flag flew from the residence while high-level strategic meetings took place inside. Marshal Joffre later wrote that in this house "were sown the seeds of military and naval cooperation which bore fruit several months later on the battlefield."



When Henry White died in 1927, the property passed to his son, John Campbell White.

Eugene Meyer, who subsequently became owner of The Washington Post, rented the house for several years before purchasing it in 1934. The Meyers, including Katharine Graham, spent many years in the house. Prominent guests included Eleanor Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson, Thomas Mann, Earl Warren, and John and Robert Kennedy.

After the Meyers' deaths, the house became the property of the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation and was leased for use by the Antioch Law School Library. In 1987, it was purchased by Meridian International Center. An extensive renovation of White-Meyer House, which was completed in 1988, won an American Institute of Architects award for excellence. Great care was taken to retain the house's architectural integrity and preserve as much of the original garden as possible. Throughout the house, ceilings and walls have been refinished and architectural details and period hardware restored or recreated.

PHOTO: JIM GARRISON



PRIVATE EVENTS

Meridian House and White-Meyer House are available for corporate and private use and have been the setting for international conferences, networking sessions, board dinners, corporate receptions, and personal celebrations. To inquire about availability for a private event, please call 202-939-5592 or email eventrentals@meridian.org.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

ASSETS

Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,905,719
Receivables, net	3,341,077
Prepaid expenses	837,317
Investments	7,436,217
Property held for sale	1,055,937
Property and equipment, net	4,625,469

TOTAL ASSETS **\$19,201,736**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Line of credit	\$650,000
Accounts payable	1,691,969
Accrued expenses	2,092,888
Capital leases	15,222
Deferred revenue – General	1,648,134
Deferred revenue – Property held for sale	2,500,000
Term loan	2,779,621

TOTAL LIABILITIES **\$11,377,834**

NET ASSETS

WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	\$7,032,151
WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS:	
Time and Purpose Restrictions	108,144
Perpetual Restrictions	683,607

TOTAL NET ASSETS **\$7,823,902**

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS **\$19,201,736**

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

REVENUES

Grants and contracts	\$33,258,664
Contributions	2,579,962
Events	581,000
Investment income	781,861

TOTAL REVENUES **\$37,201,487**

EXPENSES

PROGRAMS:

International Visitor Leadership Program	\$17,646,256
Other exchange programs	11,474,877
Cultural programs	2,148,255
Convenings	321,192

DEVELOPMENT **1,334,824**

SUPPORT SERVICES:

General and administrative	3,485,069
Maintenance and operations	307,122

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$36,717,595**

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS **\$483,892**

NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR **\$7,340,010**

NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR **\$7,823,902**

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01.01.2018 – 12.31.2018

* Indicates portion of donation is an in-kind contribution

\$100,000 +

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Whittle School & Studios

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