



THE ROBERT S. STRAUSS CENTER™
FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND LAW

Strauss Center

BRIDGES ACADEMIC AND GLOBAL POLICY DIVIDE



AMBASSADOR BOB STRAUSS HAS HAD A career that few people can match. From modest beginnings in the west Texas town of Stamford, this graduate of the University of Texas and the UT School of Law has risen to the commanding

heights of the worlds of law, business, and government. He founded one of the country's most influential law firms, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld. Corporate leaders at home and abroad have relied on his negotiating talents and business savvy. Presidents from Lyndon Johnson to George W. Bush have turned to him for advice and counsel. He has served as U.S. Special Trade Representative, the president's personal envoy to the Middle East peace process, and America's last ambassador to the Soviet Union and its first to the newly reborn Russia.

But Ambassador Strauss's biggest legacy also may be his most generous: endowing the creation of the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law at UT. The Strauss Center was founded as a multidisciplinary center dedicated to promoting policy-relevant discussion and research on pressing issues in global affairs.

"Globalization is rapidly remaking the world as we know it," says James M. Lindsay, the center's Director and the Tom Slick Chair for International Affairs at the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs. "It is creating new sources of wealth as the global economy

expands. But as we saw on 9/11, it is also spawning new problems and vulnerabilities. The Strauss Center was created to examine how these issues are going to affect our world in the 21st century—and to generate workable policy solutions that the public can embrace and policymakers can enact."

The Strauss Center formally began operations in late 2006. It is part of the broader commitment that UT President Bill Powers has made to improve and expand the university's programs in global affairs.

"President Powers was one of the guiding forces behind the center's creation," according to Francis J. Gavin, the center's Director of Studies. "We now have a unique opportunity to make a major contribution to life on the UT campus and to national and international policy debates."

One of the Strauss Center's guiding principles is to bridge traditional academic divides and operate campus-wide. This commitment to multidisciplinary work is built into the center's very DNA: it was founded as the result of a collaboration among the College of Liberal Arts, the LBJ School of Public Affairs, the School of Law, and the Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation. The UT faculty who have joined the center as fellows during its first six months in operation have come from a half-dozen different schools on campus.

"The tremendous diversity of our fellows in terms of their professional training and experience is the center's great strength," says Gavin.

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"Issues in world affairs today are complex and multidimensional. Finding answers to these problems requires mobilizing experts from across a range of disciplines."

A second guiding principle behind the Strauss Center is a commitment to bridging the gap between the world of ideas found at UT and the world of action beyond the campus. The center actively seeks to involve not just scholars but also policymakers, business leaders, and nongovernmental officials in its work.

"UT faculty are doing research that can help people solve real-world problems," Lindsay says. "At the same time, policymakers, business leaders, and nongovernmental activists bring insights to the discussion that enrich the research we do. It's win-win for everyone."

The Strauss Center is equally committed to bringing a diverse set of views into the discussion. "Throughout his career, Ambassador Strauss has had a unique ability to transcend partisan politics and to bring together different cultures, nations, and organizations," observes Gavin. "We want to do the same thing here at UT. We want to be known as the place that encourages broad and respectful discussion."

The Strauss Center's senior staff bring considerable academic and practical experience of their own to global affairs. Lindsay is an award-winning political scientist who has more than a dozen books on various aspects of American government and foreign policy to his credit. He was previously Vice President and Director of Studies at the Council of Foreign Relations in New York. Earlier in his career he served on the staff of the National Security Council under Bill Clinton. Gavin is the first Tom Slick Professor of International

Affairs at the LBJ School and a distinguished diplomatic historian. He is also the director of the Next Generation Project, a multiyear national initiative designed to identify new leaders in American foreign policy. Jill Angelo, the Strauss Center's Associate Director and an alumnus of the UT School of Law, served in the White House of George W. Bush. She also has worked in the private sector giving strategic advice and counsel to clients on communications and public policy issues.

The Strauss Center's work spans a wide array of substantive issues. It has four broad programmatic areas: America's role in the world, science and technology, energy and the environment, and global development and governance. Under each of these topics the center operates specific projects that bring together UT faculty with similar interests.

One of the center's first major projects is the Future of North America Initiative. In conjunction with the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies at UT, the center is working to establish a network of researchers at universities and think tanks in Canada, Mexico, and the United States interested in exploring the deepening ties among the three countries. The North America initiative will focus on three key topics: promoting regional economic development, enhancing mutual security, and managing natural and environmental resources. The initiative will assess major economic, demographic, and political trends within North America and evaluate competing policy proposals for shaping the region's future.

"The growing interconnectedness of Canada, Mexico, and the United States is a smaller example of the broader process of globalization," says Lindsay. "It is a natural topic

for the Strauss Center to tackle, given UT's tremendous strength in Latin America and the extensive ties the state of Texas has to Mexico."

Collaborations with partner universities will figure prominently in other Strauss Center research efforts. The center already has struck a partnership with the Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO), Russia's premier university for the study of world affairs. Under the terms of the collaboration, the Strauss Center and MGIMO will conduct joint research on the major policy challenges created by globalization.

"By working together we can identify where Russian and American interests overlap and where they diverge," says Gavin. "That can help Moscow and Washington develop more productive relations."

The Strauss Center also is collaborating with the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University and the European University Institute on a project to analyze the prospects for promoting cooperation among democratic countries on global issues. This summer the three universities hosted a conference on creating a "concert of democracies" that attracted distinguished scholars and former policymakers from around the globe.

The Strauss Center seeks to establish itself as a leader among academic research institutes devoted to global affairs. Its staff recognizes that is an ambitious goal. But they are not intimidated by the task that awaits them.

"Ambassador Strauss's long and distinguished career has set a very high bar for us to reach," says Lindsay. "We plan to reach it."

For more information on the Strauss Center, visit <http://www.robertstrausscenter.org> 🌟