FROM OUR CEO

Thanks to the steadfast support of our members and the generosity of our donors, World Affairs continued to delve into the most salient international issues of the day in 2018. With 125 programs at World Affairs Center in San Francisco and at Bay Area chapters, a national public radio show produced in association with KQED-FM, and conferences for philanthropists and social investors, we took audiences behind the headlines to explore global issues that impact our world, our country, our communities, and each one of us in some way. We amplified these conversations through our podcast and radio show. We enrolled high school students in simulated UN debates, small group sessions with iconic thought leaders and policymakers, career mentor nights and study-abroad scholarships. We continue to engage diverse voices from multiple generations and points of view. Given the San Francisco Bay Area’s growing prominence as a global center of technology, innovation, economic growth and social change, the ideas, policies and actions that emanate from the Bay Area will increasingly influence and shape world events. Together, with pointed questions about the nature of American leadership internationally, the work of World Affairs—to convene, connect, and educate and to be a catalyst for creative, concrete, material action—is more critical than ever.

All of us at World Affairs look forward to another year with you.

PHILIP W. YUN

2018 HIGHLIGHTS

The Guardian’s West Coast Bureau Chief Rory Carroll was based in Caracas as Latin American correspondent, documenting the country’s economic decline and witnessing the first protests against President Nicolás Maduro. He spoke about the social unrest and what’s next for Venezuela and the region.

Populist far-right parties galvanized a groundswell of support with a clear message: mass migration is threatening economies and cultural values and the establishment is doing little to serve and protect citizens. Yascha Mounk, Harvard University lecturer, grappled with the question: Is this truly a new era of far-right power?

With cybercrime and cyberwarfare on the rise, the question for businesses and governments is not if they will experience a cyberattack, but when. Ray Rothrock, RedSeal CEO and author of “Digital Resilience,” and former national security advisor Richard Clarke, discussed how these entities can work together.

With greater scrutiny of Moscow following its interference in the 2016 presidential election, tensions between the US and Russia remain high. According to former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul, this may not mark a return to the Cold War, but it most certainly could be described as a “hot peace.”

Election interference, fake news and a decline in citizen trust are just some of the forces undermining democratic institutions worldwide. We took a step back to provide some perspective with a 3-part radio series, The Global Erosion of Trust.

China’s international influence continues to grow—diplomatically, economically and politically. Elizabeth Economy, Asia director of the Council on Foreign Relations, and John Pomfret, former Washington Post bureau chief in Beijing, discussed the ramifications of America’s abdication of its global leadership role.

In partnership with COAL+ICE Spotlight on Solutions Symposium, we sponsored sobering yet hopeful conversations on climate change with former Vice President Al Gore, Tom Friedman of The New York Times, David Gelber, executive producer of “Years of Living Dangerously,” and others.

As it became clearer that Irish border issues would have profound consequences for Brexit, Fintan O’Toole, a journalist for The Irish Times, provided insights about how Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic could prepare for this profound change.

This year’s Guggenheim International Speaker was Dr. Susan Rice, former national security advisor and ambassador to the UN. Speaking about ways to advance American objectives just days before the US midterm elections, Rice noted that national security policy should be distinguishable from politics.
KEY FIGURES

5,600+ ATTNDEES

400+ STUDENTS

1.9+ Million NPR LISTENS

868,000 VIDEO STREAMS

125 PROGRAMS

264,000 PODCAST STREAMS
Our Global Policy Forums explore political, economic, security and environmental policy and practice through 100+ moderated conversations annually. These discussions with key leaders take place in San Francisco and in self-organized chapters around the Bay Area. Audience members have the chance to ask questions and gain insights they might not get elsewhere. Our CONNECT events are social and networking opportunities for globally-minded young professionals. We also host quarterly photography exhibits to visually explore issues that transcend borders. Photographers who show their work at World Affairs humanize places often over-simplified in the media.

Now, more than ever, our youth must be equipped with trusted information and tools to understand complex global challenges. For over 40 years, our education program has focused on building global awareness, leadership and civic engagement. Activities, such as a student-led policy simulation, provide high school and community college students with in-depth study opportunities on today’s global issues. We offer structured opportunities to meet with leading figures in international affairs, participate in global conversations and guided research on current issues, explore international careers and study abroad. We also bring diplomats from among the San Francisco Consular Corps to local high schools.

WorldAffairs is a nationally-syndicated program broadcast on NPR affiliates across the country as well as a digital podcast streamed on multiple platforms. Our show is dedicated to curating conversations across difference, on both global challenges and global solutions. We explore international affairs with the world’s most knowledgeable voices in politics, business, academia, media and technology. Each hour-long episode marries thought-provoking analysis from multiple perspectives to make complex issues relatable. Our expert hosts, former Senior National Security Council Director Jane Wales, and renowned journalists Ray Suarez (pictured) and Markos Kounalakis, have only one goal: to inform and inspire listeners so they can become active participants in this great experiment of democracy.
GLOBAL CITIZEN CERTIFICATE

Inspiring and equipping young people to be global citizens through our Education Program is a critical part of our mission. Andrew Huang, Abbey Reuter (not pictured), Stacy Shimanuki, Zara Fatteh, and Madeline Wong were awarded Global Citizen Certificates by Jonathan Visbal, Board of Trustees Chairman, at our Annual Dinner. These high school students earned the honor by participating in either our Student Ambassador or Summer Institute program, taking part in our Policy Simulation exercise, writing personal reflections on World Affairs programs they attended, and completing at least 10 hours of community service.

GLOBAL PHILANTHROPY FORUM

In 2018, under the title of “No Bystanders” the Global Philanthropy Forum (GPF) conference focused on trust, and argued that without it we cannot manage the dangers we face nor steward the resources we share. Without it we cannot address large problems together. Yet we face a global trust deficit, one that could rob us of our ability to solve.

We examined the antithesis of the trust deficit, and its cure. We focused on social capital: the product of overlapping and reciprocal relationships of cooperation that allow societies to function. We explored the ways in which leaders in all sectors are modelling collaborative problem-solving, addressing real world dangers, and building social capital and citizen agency in the process.

The conference was opened by former United Nations Secretary-General and Nobel Laureate Kofi Annan in what would be one of his last public appearances. And while the conference featured a number of remarkable sessions, a conversation between David Hogg, a student survivor of the Parkland shootings and leader of March for our Lives and Nicole Hockley, founder and managing director of Sandy Hook Promise who lost her son Dylan in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, stood out with its powerful and deeply touching message on youth agency.

In order to build social capital and remedy global distrust, the visionaries and leaders at GPF, both onstage and in the audience, remind us that it is imperative that we act boldly—there are no bystanders.
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Thank you to all of our generous supporters. Your contributions make it possible for World Affairs to provide outstanding, relevant and insightful context for so many of the world’s challenges while serving and engaging a diverse community.

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