



Dr. Liane Hentschke
Executive Director

From the Executive Director

Greetings from the Tennessee World Affairs Council!

November brought two important TNWAC events: a keynote program with Tennessee Deputy Governor Stuart McWhorter and a Strategic Partnership between the United States and Japan panel presented in both Nashville and Knoxville. These programs marked a strong conclusion to our 2025 Distinguished Speaker Season. Over the year, TNWAC hosted *16 outstanding keynote speakers and panelists*, and we are deeply grateful to each of them for sharing their expertise with Tennesseans.

We extend special thanks to Board Member Sam Waitt for a generous contribution, and to our Strategic Partners at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. This season, we are also beyond grateful to our Ambassador-level corporate sponsors Pinnacle Financial Partners and The Kind World Foundation, and to Bank of America, a Consul-level corporate member. We are equally thankful to the companies that hosted our events throughout the year: Bass, Berry & Sims; Holland & Knight; AllianceBernstein; Pinnacle Financial Partners; FirstBank; and Bradley. TNWAC's growth and the quality of our programs are only possible because of the commitment of our corporate partners, individual sponsors, and members, and you are at the heart of everything we do.

November was also the month of the World Affairs Councils of America (WACA) Annual Conference in Washington, DC, which featured an exceptional lineup of speakers and panelists addressing U.S. foreign policy, trade and tariffs, geopolitical challenges, conflicts and wars, and national security. During one of the luncheons, we had the opportunity to meet ambassadors and representatives from leading think tanks. You will find more about the WACA conference in a dedicated article in this newsletter.

TNWAC also wishes to recognize Kathryn Swanton, our marketing professional, for her excellent work on our communications, postings, and promotional materials. To our volunteers, we offer our sincere thanks for your time, energy, and dedication.

Thank you for being with us and for helping build a more informed, connected, and globally aware Tennessee.

Happy Holidays!

Explore International Careers

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS / EMERGENCY RELIEF COORDINATOR

In this role, you'll manage and coordinate humanitarian responses during crises, conflicts, and natural disasters. You will lead field teams, assess urgent needs, and oversee the distribution of aid, including food, shelter, and medical supplies. Key responsibilities include strategic planning, negotiating access for humanitarian personnel and supplies with local authorities, coordinating with international NGOs and donor agencies, and ensuring assistance is delivered efficiently and effectively in accordance with international humanitarian principles.

CLIMATE CHANGE / ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ANALYST

In this role, you'll research, evaluate, and develop strategies to address global environmental challenges, with a focus on sustainability and mitigation. You will advise governments and international bodies on climate resilience, carbon emissions reduction, and biodiversity conservation, preparing comprehensive policy briefs and reports. You work closely with scientific experts and policymakers to integrate environmental agreements into national legislation and support multilateral negotiations.

Volunteer Spotlight:



Pragyan Dey

Pragyan Dey is a first-generation immigrant with a degree in International Studies and a minor in Communication and Public Advocacy from Indiana

University. His personal journey drives his commitment to public service, civic participation, and community engagement. He has gained experience in public affairs and advocacy through internships at the National Endowment for Democracy and VOX Global, and most recently served as an External Relations Associate at ThinkTennessee, supporting strategic communications and community outreach. Pragyan is passionate about connecting with diverse communities and advancing initiatives that improve residents' lives. In his free time, he enjoys reading and learning new languages.

Did You Know?

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), often referred to as the World Court, is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. Based in The Hague, Netherlands, its primary role is to settle legal disputes submitted to it by states and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized UN organs and specialized agencies. It is composed of 15 judges elected for nine-year terms by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.

Sponsor Highlight

We are grateful to the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce for their generous support and meaningful partnership. Their dedication to advancing education, civic involvement, and global understanding reinforces our work to connect Tennesseans with the wider world. With allies like the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, we are able to spark informed conversations, expand opportunities for students, and equip emerging leaders to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and complex global environment.



Thank you for your support!



Board Member Highlight: **Tim Douglas**

This month, TNWAC is proud to highlight Tim Douglas, a dedicated Board member whose diverse career spans international commerce, finance, entrepreneurship, and civic leadership. After earning a Master's from the Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce, Tim began his career in NYC's financial sector before returning to Nashville, where he's since led in roles across merchant banking, private equity, and healthcare, and now serves as Senior VP and Regional Director of Private Banking at FirstBank.

A committed community leader, Tim co-founded the Boulevard Bolt, a nonprofit that benefits people experiencing homelessness, and has served on numerous civic boards, including as a Commissioner for the City of Forest Hills. His global perspective, leadership, and heart for service make him a tremendous asset to TNWAC's mission of connecting Tennesseans with the world.

NOVEMBER RECAP

November was a month of powerful conversations and meaningful engagement across Tennessee. We began with a sold-out event at FirstBank on Tennessee's strategy for global investment, where participants explored how collaboration between state leadership, industry, and international partners continues to drive economic growth, innovation, and workforce development across our region.

We then hosted two programs with the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and the Center for Global Engagement, highlighting the U.S.–Japan alliance and its impact on security, economic prosperity, and long-term stability in the Indo-Pacific. Experts from government, academia, and policy institutions discussed shared democratic values, resilient supply chains, and why this partnership remains essential amid shifting global dynamics. A follow-up panel at Pinnacle Financial Partners continued this conversation, emphasizing how the U.S.–Japan relationship strengthens innovation, trade, and regional security.

Thank you to all our partners, speakers, and attendees who helped make these events a success. These discussions not only deepen understanding—they shape the leaders and policies that will guide our future.



Guest Columnist

Dr. Gretchen Neisler and I participated in the World Affairs Councils of America (WACA) National Conference, held in Washington, D.C., from November 18–21, 2026. The conference brought together leaders from across the World Affairs Councils network, alongside global experts, policymakers, educators, and civic organizations - all committed to advancing public understanding of international issues and strengthening global engagement in their communities.

This year's program featured a series of compelling panels and keynote presentations addressing some of the world's most urgent challenges. A significant portion of the conversation focused on the evolving dynamics in the Middle East and the fragility of current peace efforts. China was also a central theme, as speakers examined its expanding geopolitical influence and the strategies reshaping global trade, security, and diplomacy.

One of the most memorable sessions spotlighted the "forgotten places of the world," underscoring the importance of including regions such as Africa, Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, and Latin America in discussions on sustainability, national security, trade, and cultural inclusion. These perspectives reinforced how global issues intersect with communities far beyond the headlines.

The WACA Conference remains an invaluable forum for networking and collaboration. We had the opportunity to meet ambassadors, university leaders, representatives of global NGOs, and presidents and CEOs of fellow World Affairs Councils. These interactions sparked new ideas for programming, partnerships, and organizational best practices to strengthen TNWAC's mission and impact.

We encourage all TNWAC members to participate in future WACA conferences. They are a remarkable opportunity to engage with global leaders, expand perspectives, and contribute to a nationwide community committed to global understanding.

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MEMBERSHIP 2026

Start the new year with a global perspective! By joining or renewing your Tennessee World Affairs Council membership for 2026, you're investing in a more informed and connected Tennessee.

Your support brings world-class speakers, educational programs, and international engagement opportunities to our community, right here in our own backyard.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- **Discounted Programming** – Enjoy a *35% discount* on TNWAC events and programs
- **Exclusive Event Invitations** – Receive invitations to members-only events featuring prominent speakers
- **Complimentary “Global Post” Newsletter** – Stay informed with curated insights on world affairs
- **Access to the National Conference of the World Affairs Councils of America (WACA)** – Engage with global thought leaders at this prestigious gathering
- **Free Webinars** – You can register for any webinar and attend for free

STUDENT

\$25

MILITARY

\$30

TEACHER

\$35

INDIVIDUAL

\$85

FAMILY

\$140

Whether you're a student, professional, or lifelong learner, your membership helps build bridges across borders and fosters the global awareness our state needs to thrive.

Stay curious. Stay connected.

Support global education in Tennessee by joining today!



JOIN NOW



TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES



EXPERIENCE THE VICTORY: NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM VISIT

Jan 25 - Jan 29



CAMBODIA, VIETNAM, & THE MEKONG RIVER

Mar 2 - Mar 16

REGISTER NOW 

Support TNWAC

As a nonpartisan nonprofit organization, our mission is to **promote international awareness, understanding**, and connections to enhance the region's global stature and to prepare Tennesseans to thrive in our increasingly complex and interconnected world.

1

Bring a friend to one of our events and encourage them to join us as a member!

2

Introduce our team to an **expert in your network** to join us as a speaker in 2025!

3

Encourage **businesses you love to join TNWAC** as a corporate member or sponsor!



JAN 15

WEBINAR

The influence and expansionist drive of China in Serbia and the threat to Western security

Miroslav Ivica Emejdi: German Senior Police Chief Commissioner



JAN 21

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

The power of the Olympic brand and the geopolitics of global sport

Terrence Burns: Chairman and Owner T. Burns Sport Group, LLC

CONNECT WITH US!

Stay Tuned for Our Next Events! Don't miss out on upcoming webinars, workshops, and career fairs focused on international affairs and development.



@TNWAC



TNWAC 2025 Programming Goals

