



Dr. Liane Hentschke
Executive Director

From the Executive Director

Recent events in the Middle East remind us how quickly regional tensions can carry global consequences. For the United States and its allies, developments in and around Iran raise serious national security concerns, particularly regarding the safety of U.S. personnel in the region, the stability of key partners, and the broader risk of regional escalation. The economic implications are also significant, as instability in the region can contribute to volatility in global oil and energy markets. For businesses, policymakers, and communities alike, understanding these connections has become increasingly important.

In a time of diplomatic uncertainty and geopolitical change, informed dialogue and global awareness are more important than ever. Through its programs and Distinguished Speaker Series, the Tennessee World Affairs Council (TNWAC) continues to bring leading experts to Tennessee to help illuminate these complex global challenges and their implications for our state and our nation.

In February, TNWAC focused on two regions that are often underrepresented in global discussions: Africa and Latin America. These two events highlighted both the opportunities and challenges across 87 countries, with insights from two highly respected speakers, Ambassador Michael McKinley and Chidima Blyden. In March, we hosted a panel on South Korea, highlighting the longstanding partnership between South Korea and the United States and the significant investments South Korea has made in the U.S., particularly in Tennessee.

On March 18, we will host a senior leader from the United States Air Force who will discuss the conflict involving Iran, America's unique ability to project military power globally, and the strategic implications of this capability.

We are also honored to welcome our newest Board member, Mr. Riney Green, a partner at Bass, Berry & Sims, who has graciously hosted TNWAC events.

TNWAC will continue bringing high-level speakers to Nashville and Knoxville, reaffirming our commitment to promoting global awareness, diplomatic understanding, and cultural literacy—essential skills for economic strength and civic engagement in an increasingly interconnected world.

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Liane Hentschke".

Explore International Careers

GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY SPECIALIST

In this role, you will support the development and evaluation of global health policies and programs that strengthen healthcare systems and improve access to essential services. You will conduct policy research, analyze health data, coordinate with ministries of health, and collaborate with multilateral organizations and NGOs to address public health challenges such as pandemics, maternal health, and health equity. [Learn more...](#)

PEACEBUILDING / CONFLICT RESOLUTION OFFICER

In this role, you will design and implement initiatives that prevent conflict, support post-conflict recovery, and strengthen democratic institutions. You will conduct field assessments, facilitate dialogue among stakeholders, support mediation efforts, and work with governments, civil society, and international partners to promote sustainable peace and security. [Learn more...](#)

Volunteer Spotlight:



Amy Hilton

Amy is a community volunteer, mother of four, and wife with a lifelong connection to international affairs. Her global experience

began with 6 months old when her family moved to England with the Air Force, and she later lived abroad in Norway, France, and England while raising her children. She has traveled extensively across Europe and participated in a mission trip to the Philippines as a teenager. The daughter and wife of combat veterans, international issues have deeply shaped her life. Amy holds a degree in International Studies from the University of South Carolina.

She actively serves her community through leadership and volunteer roles, including board service with Franklin Tomorrow, church leadership, Moms in Prayer, Impact100 Nashville, and support for veterans and local initiatives, while actively supporting her children's activities.

Did You Know?

The Organization of American States (OAS) is the oldest regional organization in the world? Established in 1948, it brings together 35 independent countries of the Americas to promote democracy, human rights, security, and development across the hemisphere. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the OAS plays a key role in election observation, conflict prevention, anti-corruption efforts, and advancing social and economic inclusion throughout the region.

Sponsor Highlight:

FirstBank is committed to strengthening communities by expanding access to financial services, supporting local businesses, and investing in initiatives that promote economic opportunity. Through strategic partnerships and community-focused programs, the bank prioritizes financial literacy, innovation, and inclusive growth. Its mission is to empower individuals, families, and entrepreneurs with the tools and resources they need to thrive in a dynamic, evolving economy.



Thank you for your support!



Board Member Highlight: **Samuel Waitt**

This month, we're proud to highlight Samuel Waitt, a Board Member whose lifelong passion for global affairs began at an early age, most memorably with his win at the 2007 New Mexico State Geography Bee and a trip to the national finals in Washington, DC.

A Nashville native by way of Santa Fe, Sam holds degrees in Political Science and International Affairs from Furman University and a Master's in International Affairs from Middle Tennessee State University. Today, he works as a freelance writer and podcaster, bringing global politics and international issues to life for a wider audience. Having traveled extensively across Europe, Israel, and New Zealand, Sam pairs firsthand global experience with deep intellectual curiosity, making him a thoughtful and energetic contributor to TNWAC's mission of global understanding.

Guest Columnist

The views and opinions expressed in our guest column are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Tennessee World Affairs Council.

I have always found it useful to consider how a foreign country's population compares to the U.S. to understand the impact of events. It is also valuable to research how the geographic size of another country matches up to an individual American state or other foreign nation to determine potential risks from proposed actions. Here are a few examples demonstrating the value of these comparisons related to current international challenges.

- Iran has a population of 90 million, and it is the equivalent of four Californias in geographic size. Another comparison is that Iran is almost three times the geographic size of Ukraine. America's military power is formidable, but dictating terms to an enormous country with that large a population would be a challenge.
- Ukraine's fortitude over four years of relentless attacks warrants respect and support. Ukraine's land area is almost the size of Texas, and Russia realistically does not have the sheer number of troops to ever control an area the size of Texas with a population of 40 million people (TX has 31 million).
- North Korea has 26 million inhabitants (not citizens with rights) a huge military, and nuclear weapons. However, North Korea is roughly the size of Mississippi. When thinking what the combined military power of the U.S., South Korea, and potentially Japan could do to the state of Mississippi, it is clear that North Korean leadership will never agree to denuclearization.

Guest Columnist Continued

When Hamas attacked Israel in 2023, they killed 1,200 and took 250 hostages. When comparing Israel's population to the U.S., this would have been the equivalent of an armed group crossing over from Mexico, killing 40,000 Americans and taking 8,000 hostages back into Mexico. With this comparison one can imagine the response of the U.S. under those circumstances, and therefore better understand the fury that arose in Israel.

Media reports rarely offer these types of comparisons to help people intuitively grasp the scale and impact of international events. It is a simple way to gain a different perspective. Websites like this one make it easy to determine geographic and population comparisons <https://www.worlddata.info/america/usa/states.php> (note option in yellow bar for sq. miles or sq. kilometers)

Explaining the logic of such comparisons to others will also help people analyze international issues effectively and consider proportional impact.



Tony Heard
TNWAC Advisory Board

FEBRUARY EVENT RECAP



GLOBAL AFFAIRS KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

1 Which world leader has been engulfed in a scandal after it was exposed that a political ally of his leaked sensitive information to Jeffrey Epstein?

- A** German Chancellor Friedrich Merz
- B** Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney
- C** British Prime Minister Keir Starmer

2 Which Latin American nation is nearing total collapse after a US-imposed oil blockade?

- A** Cuba
- B** Venezuela
- C** Nicaragua

3 What was the main condition for the reduction in US tariffs on Indian goods?

- A** Ceasing the import of Russian oil
- B** Domestic economic reforms
- C** A new Trump golf resort

4 Which Asian leader recently won a strong parliamentary mandate with a constitutional majority?

- A** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- B** Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi
- C** Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto

5 Xi Jinping recently ordered the arrest of People's Liberation Army General Zhang Youxia. What is the widely suspected but still unofficial reason for this purge?

- A** Slow-walking Xi's Taiwan invasion plans
- B** Bribery and Corruption
- C** Plotting a Military Coup against Xi Jinping

Find the answers to the quiz on the last page of the newsletter



TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES



UMBRIA, THE GREEN HEART OF ITALY

Apr 21 - Apr 29



PASSAGE FROM DAKAR TO CASABLANCA: A VOYAGE EXPLORING SENEGAL, MAURITANIA & MOROCCO

Apr 29 - May 8

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 2026!

3

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



MAR 18

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

U.S. Combat Operations in Iran: The Latest Example of America's Asymmetric Advantage of Immediate, Global Maneuver

Air Force Major General Corey Martin



APR 2

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

Cold War Foreign Policies and Lessons for Today

Frank Lavin

SAVE THE DATE



Ambassador Georg Sparber

April 23, 2026

Answers to the Knowledge Quiz

- 5/5 – Your global knowledge is amazing. You're truly on top of world affairs!
- 4/5 – Impressive! You have strong global awareness.
- 3/5 – Not bad! You're well-informed, with room to grow.
- 2/5 – A good start! Keep exploring global issues.
- 1/5 – You're just getting started – stay curious!
- 0/5 – TNWAC brings knowledge and understanding through in-person events, webinars, and our newsletter.

1)C 2)A 3)A 4)B 5)A