

Making a Difference

Leadership, Service, and Network

An Interview with Maurice R. Greenberg, Starr Companies,
and Emma Sky, Director, Maurice R. Greenberg World Fellows Program

EDITORS' NOTE Maurice Greenberg is the founding Chief Executive Officer of American International Group, Inc. (AIG). Under his leadership, AIG became the largest insurance company in the world and generated unprecedented value for AIG shareholders. During the nearly 40 years of his leadership, AIG's market value grew from \$300 million to \$180 billion.



Maurice R. Greenberg

Greenberg is Honorary Vice Chairman and Director of the Council on Foreign Relations and sits on the board of numerous other organizations. He received his pre-law certificate from the University of Miami as well as a law degree from New York Law School. Greenberg has been admitted to practice law in the courts of the State of New York and has been granted honorary degrees from a number of institutions, including New York Law School, Brown University, Middlebury College, and The Rockefeller University.

Emma Sky is a Senior Fellow at Yale University's Jackson Institute, where she teaches Middle East politics. She is the author of *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq*. Sky served as advisor to the Commanding General of U.S. Forces in Iraq; advisor to the Commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan; advisor to the U.S. Security Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process; and Governorate Coordinator of Kirkuk for the Coalition Provisional Authority. Prior to that, she worked in the Palestinian territories for a decade, managing projects to develop Palestinian institutions and to promote co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians. In addition, she has provided technical assistance on poverty elimination, human rights, justice, and public administration reform, security sector reform, and conflict resolution in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa. Sky was educated at Oxford (U.K.), Alexandria (Egypt), Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel), and Liverpool (U.K.) and is an Officer of the British Empire.

COMPANY BRIEF Starr Companies (starrcompanies.com) is a global, privately held insurance and investments organization. Through its operating insurance companies, Starr Companies provides commercial property, casualty, and accident and health insurance products worldwide. Starr Companies underwrites a wide variety of specialty and international lines of insurance including aviation, marine,



Emma Sky

energy, environmental, crisis management, excess casualty, accident and health, and political risk. Starr Companies also provides a broad spectrum of insurance-related services, including claims handling and settlement, reinsurance, risk assessment, loss control, and worldwide travel assistance service.

Yale's Maurice R. Greenberg World Fellows Program (worldfellows.yale.edu) is Yale's premier leadership program – a place to experiment. They bring innovative, multidisciplinary thinkers and doers from around the world to Yale for four months and give them the space and time to step back from the intensity of their work to reflect, learn, and be challenged both academically and personally. Fellows also contribute greatly to Yale through teaching, collaboration, research, and more. After their time at Yale, they join a growing network of 291 World Fellows working across the world. They stay connected to the university and to each other.

What makes the Greenberg Fellows program at Yale so important?

Greenberg: At Starr companies, we do business in many countries around the world – with AIG, we were in 137 countries. We are a bit shy of that with Starr right now, but we're catching up.

In many countries, there is a need for a leadership group to emerge, and it is happening in many parts of the world. It's good to get potential leaders from the United States and other countries to Yale where they can mingle with each other and with professors.

They go back home much richer because of that experience, and in many cases, these are mid-level individuals, some who are going to rise within the political systems in their countries and some who might even end up leading their countries. They will have a different view of the U.S. as a result of their experiences here; others will be in business and will feel good about the U.S.

They will come back together periodically to renew their relationships both at Yale and with each other, so it's a great way of achieving what we like to do politically and economically.

Emma, what do you look for in potential candidates, and how hard is it when there are so many qualified applicants?

Sky: We get thousands of applicants applying to be World Fellows, so it's very competitive. Initially, it's easy to see that many of them are not up to the right level. However, there are always 100 or so who are really top quality, and that is when the challenge comes in.

We look to have geographical representation of people from all different regions of the world; we look for rising stars from different disciplines.

It is challenging to find those people who have never had an opportunity in the U.S. before.

That is where we go that extra mile to identify people for whom this experience will be life changing.

You touch on leadership, service, and network. Are those three areas the core of the program?

Sky: Every week, there are seminars that the cohorts take together, and these seminars address issues benefiting the good of society.

Monday evening, we hold a dinner where we invite key Yale faculty to talk about what they're working on. Wednesday mornings, the fellows and staff lead seminars discussing what they do that contributes to the good of society.

They work closely with the students mentoring them and conducting roundtables. Mentoring is key, because good leaders need to mentor others.

Many Yale students say the most inspiring thing they ever did at Yale was be a liaison to a World Fellow. They describe how it gave them a whole new outlook on life and exposure to issues they had never thought about before.

While they're here, we also encourage them to do public service, whether it's speaking at public schools, working in soup kitchens for homeless people, or helping with refugees.

Everybody who comes through this program is a friend of the U.S. and an advocate around the world. They join a network of World Fellows and are welcomed by each other wherever they are.

How important is it to select a diverse group to participate?

Sky: These fellows know nothing about one another other than nationality at the beginning, so they're only aware of what is different about each other. Because they have to work and live together, bonds build, so by the end of the semester, the differences they perceive are tiny. They realize that by being open and engaged, they can build a sense of family among any group.

This program shows that what we have in common is so much greater than what divides us. ●