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Policy Memo

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SUBJECT: Strengthening WMD Security: A “Whole of Society” Approach

By virtually any measure over the past quarter century, the international system has been revolutionized by the forces of globalization. Foreign Direct Investment rates have skyrocketed. The volume and speed of global trade has reached unprecedented levels. Private companies seeking to maximize profit and efficiency through outsourcing, off-shoring, supply-chaining, and other activities have helped to drive intellectual and technical capacity around the planet leading to a blossoming of innovative and manufacturing capacities in regions of the world once thought incapable of competing in modern marketplace.

Globalization has thereby facilitated the transfer of more technologies into more hands in more countries and regions of the world than at any other point in human history. Economists and development specialists alike rightly celebrate these trends. But for security specialists—and particularly those focused on nonproliferation and related transnational criminal activities—these developments tell a very different story. Not only have they systematically moved sensitive technologies into weak and fragile states that continue to represent regulatory vacuums, but globalization has also enhanced the authority of an exponentially growing consortium of private sector actors with the capacity to directly facilitate the proliferation of nuclear, biological, radiological, and chemical weapons of mass destruction. As such, the mission to diminish the threat of proliferation has evolved and become even more complex.

Fortunately, the United States has a long and storied history of implementing a broad array of nonproliferation engagement activities—particularly in the states of the former Soviet Union. Of course, these Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) programs are an instructive but ultimately imperfect template when translating nonproliferation to the very different threat environment found today in a wide array of geographic contexts. Nonetheless, as nonproliferation engagement is expanded geographically and functionally via UNSCR 1540, the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, as well as bilaterally, it is important to learn the lessons of that history as we seek to develop new preventive strategies:

- Unique role of interest for Congress: The early days of CTR witnessed a reversal of roles between the executive and legislative branches in which Congress assumed the role of developing innovative new mechanisms to deal with an urgent threat. Today the role of

Congress is less evident but not less critical to the long-term success of US nonproliferation strategy.

- The value of free thinking: The early days of US nonproliferation engagement were situated as an urgent response to a clear and present threat. As such, they were given great leeway in their implementation. Over time, as restrictions were placed upon their execution, programs became increasingly unable to adapt quickly to changing circumstances.
- Value of host country buy-in: While the states of the former Soviet Union were at times imperfect partners, their shared sense of need greatly facilitated effective implementation of the CTR programs. Today, as the programs are expanded to meet varied functional and geographic challenges, partner governments are displaying equally varied levels of receptivity that will impact long-term sustainability of effort.
- The collapse of the Soviet Union was a significant catalytic event that forced new thinking. A decade after 9/11, nonproliferation mandates lack a singular event that focuses congressional and international support. Critical to the future of these programs will be our collective ability to describe, justify, and market their utility to US national security.
- Initial focus of the CTR programs was decidedly state-based: They prevented the world's largest WMD arsenal from sliding into anarchy and spawning a new era of state-based proliferation. Today, while state-based proliferation remains a global challenge, a new and potentially more complex era of proliferation to nonstate actors dominates the global security agenda.
- Key to success of the CTR legacy programs is the importance of relationship building—both scientist-to-scientist as well as at the political level. These relationships not only sustained effective programming but also provided a platform upon which to expand that programming as security circumstances on the ground changed. Recognizing and valuing these personal relationships will be key to long-term success.
- While the metrics used to gauge the relative success of US nonproliferation programs have been narrowly defined by Congress, in fact, the true value of these programs to US foreign policy more generally should not be understated. Moving forward, building a wider spectrum of metrics to evaluate success will be central to maintaining domestic political support for these efforts.

At the Stanley Foundation's 52nd Strategy for Peace Conference, participants examined how governments, particularly the US government, utilize nonproliferation assistance and other multilateral assistance mechanisms to meet evolving international security objectives while bolstering capacity-building efforts in the developing world through a "whole of government" and indeed "whole of society" approach. The goal was to build upon past successes and devise a template for a modern nonproliferation strategy. To that end, roundtable participants made the following key recommendations:

Democratize nonproliferation outreach: Just as the strategy to manage the nonproliferation challenge in a networked and globalized world must evolve, so too must the US government become more inclusive in building an array of internal partnerships with other, sometimes unorthodox, partners within the USG and beyond. US government coordination efforts should reach beyond the Departments of State, Defense, and Energy to include USAID, USDA, DHHS/CDC, NRC, MCC, the National Academies of Science, NDU, and the FBI among others. This outreach should begin in the earliest planning stages to ensure that programming meets mutually identified objectives that may extend beyond immediate nonproliferation objectives.

Moreover, no one state—even one with vast resources such as the United States—can hope to manage today’s complex proliferation challenges alone. As such, innovative partnerships beyond the US government will be critical to success. These partnerships must include a breadth of international, regional, and even local entities such as the World Customs Organization, the World Trade Organization, the IAEA, UNODC, INTERPOL and its regional partners, associations of law enforcement at the national and local levels, and regional and sub-regional organizations (such as ASEAN, OAS, CARICOM).

Finally, a “whole of society” outreach effort should incorporate a subset of private interests that can either directly or indirectly facilitate proliferation (private technology innovators, manufacturers, shipping companies, finance and insurance interests, etc.) as well as nongovernmental interests. Both can help not only coordinate global agendas but also directly facilitate long-term planning and provide critical assistance.

Defining threats, vulnerabilities, and new partners—Task Force 2020: Cataloging threats and vulnerabilities in a rapidly evolving and increasingly complex and interconnected world will continue to be a significant challenge for the US government. The US administration, under the direction of the White House, should consider facilitating a special task force that incorporates not only relevant US agencies but also NGOs and private sector interests. Their goal should be to build a “CTR collective” that would develop a new strategy of embedded and sustained engagement and would mutually validate the interests of collaborating partners in the United States and abroad.

Develop durable coordinating mechanisms: Developing coordinative mechanisms that facilitate the freer flow of information will be increasingly critical as the number of relevant actors grows and the availability of dedicated resources diminishes. The US government should consider undertaking a global mapping of all international assistance programming, not only in the immediate field of nonproliferation but also in parallel and interconnected spheres such as the countertrafficking of small arms, drugs, humans, and counterfeit intellectual property. In addition, a regularized electronic system should be developed in which pertinent programmatic information can be shared and tracked. This process must be designed such that it will provide value to all contributors in order to ensure sustainability over the long term.

Modernize the global nonproliferation strategy: New foreign nonproliferation partners may lack even imperfect shared threat assessment as did the states of the former Soviet Union—particularly in the early days of the post-Cold War era. New partners are less likely to sufficiently prioritize nonproliferation, particularly in the face of other more immediate challenges to

their economic development and human security. New initiatives must be made relevant to their priorities. They must address real needs on the ground. They must be coordinated with a wider assortment of interests, and they should include collaborations at both the technical and political levels in order to ensure the development of durable relationships that will help programs sustain their benefit.

Utilize broad soft power tools to support global nonproliferation: As proliferation threats evolve and necessitate the expansion or redefinition of our efforts, the US government should think inventively about the broad spectrum of tools in the nonproliferation toolkit available to ameliorate these challenges. This need does not always necessitate the growth of newly funded activities. The size of the US economy, for example, provides Washington with a unique ability to influence adherence to nonproliferation norms and objectives even without leveraging formal nonproliferation programmatic resources (through sanctions, for example). Using this authority, along with civil litigation and other innovative mechanisms such as market-based collaborations with the private sector, can yield unique opportunities to prevent proliferation in an era of declining budgets.

Continue to sell accomplishments on Capitol Hill and beyond: US nonproliferation programs are perhaps the most successful US foreign policy program in a generation. Yet in the face of evolving threats and the need for constant vigilance among program managers, US nonproliferation entities rarely reinforce their successes by marketing them back to congressional appropriators and the American public. The White House and executive agencies must do a better job of sharing good news stories, marketing their successes, and highlighting the remarkable value these initiatives afford US national security.

Full Report to Follow

A more comprehensive report about this conference and its major recommendations will follow in a few weeks.

The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Memo do not necessarily reflect the view of the Stanley Foundation or any of the roundtable participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all of its recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

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About The Stanley Foundation

The Stanley Foundation seeks a secure peace with freedom and justice, built on world citizenship and effective global governance. It brings fresh voices, original ideas, and lasting solutions to debates on global and regional problems. The foundation is a nonpartisan, private operating foundation, located in Muscatine, Iowa, that focuses on peace and security issues and advocates principled multilateralism. The foundation frequently collaborates with other organizations. It does not make grants. Online at www.stanleyfoundation.org.