

COURIER

Provoking Thought and Encouraging Dialogue on World Affairs

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Policy Insights for
the President-Elect:

Roadmap to Peace & Security

INSIDE:

Safeguard the
World's Nuclear
Arsenal

Accelerate Climate
Change Action

Prevent Mass
Atrocities with
Real Action

Meet Genocide
Survivor Author
Luong Ung



Moving Forward Together

By Joseph McNamara, Editor

It was only a presidential election, but the vitriol of its campaign rhetoric and the extreme and sensational nature of its content exhausted me and, I suspect, many Americans. While the election results were a shock to most, our next steps in American democracy are familiar. The people have spoken, and we move forward in transition to a new president and new US leadership, as we have done 45 times in our history. This distinctly American rite of governmental passage once again offers us the opportunity to move forward in the best interests of our nation.

This issue of *Courier* is dedicated to helping refocus our collective thoughts and energy on the immediate tasks our new president should undertake to improve our peace and security in nuclear policy, genocide prevention, and climate change. Here we present insights from three global policy experts on what President-elect Donald Trump and his administration should take to heart and take action on to advance positive US leadership in those issue areas.

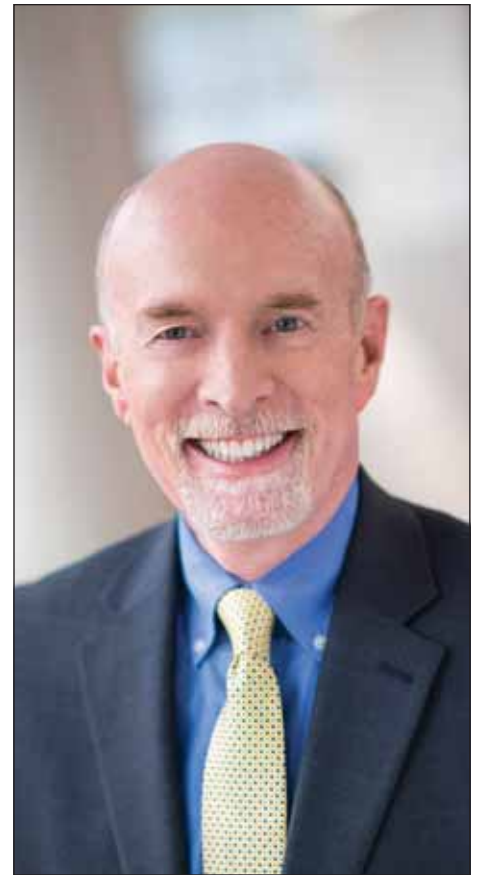
The presidential campaign was traumatic, illustrating a divided America on many issues. The election results did not create the division, they merely reflected it. The election did not solve any problems, but it clears the stage for the new leader to step up and address them. Hopefully, those same election results will enlighten the way to healing the divide.

Now it is time to move on and, hopefully, move forward. Most of all, now is the time for straight talk and real action.

Mr. President-elect, we offer you a special issue of *Courier*—a briefing and insight for leading us forward on three key global threats to our peace and security. Take us to heart as we join you in that quest.



President Barack Obama and President-elect Donald Trump meet in the Oval Office at the White House to begin what both pledge will be an orderly transition of leadership. The meeting was held November 10, 2016, just two days after the general election and marked the official beginning of the transition. (Getty Images/AFP/Jim Watson)



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www.stanleyfoundation.org

The Stanley Foundation

209 Iowa Avenue

Muscataine, IA 52761 USA

563-264-1500

info@stanleyfoundation.org

Twitter: @stanleyfound

www.facebook.com/stanleyfoundation

Keith Porter, President

Joseph McNamara, Editor

Amy Bakke, Creative Director

Francie Williamson, Deputy Editor



Cover photo: The Oval Office awaits the new president, who will lead the United States forward on key global issues. (Whitehouse Flickr)

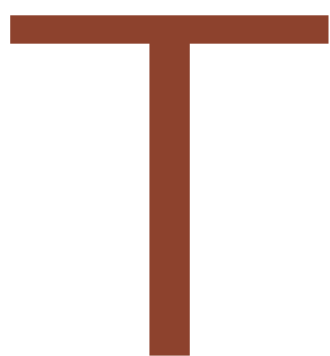


Inside the Situation Room of the White House, the president, his senior staff, and the National Security Council will address global issues via secure videoconference with foreign leaders. (Photo by Brooks Kraft LLC/Corbis via Getty Images)

Safeguard the World's Nuclear Arsenals

Navigate the Policy Landscape with Russia

By Kennette Benedict



he next US president will contend with global nuclear policy trends that are more dynamic and worrying than at any time since the Cold War. These trends show a fraying of commitments to nuclear disarmament, nonproliferation, and nuclear security. How the president exercises US leadership in these areas will have profound consequences. But the challenges are many.

Heightened tensions between the United States and Russia, a failed review conference in 2015 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, no progress on fully implementing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and not a glimmer of hope on negotiating a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty are blights on the nuclear policy landscape. The one bright spot is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that has stopped Iran's nuclear weapons program. Beyond that, however, leaders are making little progress toward a world safe from the dangers of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Disarmament

The United States and Russia still maintain the largest nuclear arsenals by far, and their nuclear postures have changed little since the end of the Cold War even as their arsenals have been reduced. The policies of deterrence, launch on warning, and the readiness to fight a nuclear war at any time place millions of people at risk from the devastation of nuclear weapons. Given the record of accidents, error, and miscalculation in the US and Russian nuclear forces, as well as those countries' current aggressive nuclear postures, these arsenals remain the most dangerous threats to world security. The US president can command within minutes of his decision the launch of missiles with as many as 500 warheads, each with a yield much larger than the Hiroshima bomb. Without question, such a barrage would destroy entire cities and kill millions of civilians. The destruction would not be limited to the countries targeted but would

disrupt the global economy, communications, and travel, and, by cooling the atmosphere, would cause agricultural failure and worldwide famine for years. In its first nuclear posture review, the next administration should reexamine policies that place citizens at such risk. It should be prepared to work with Russia to reduce launch readiness in both countries by decoupling warheads from missiles and reducing tensions that might lead to miscalculation and the use of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, the president should reconsider the current nuclear modernization program. This includes developing more-reliable and more-accurate missile systems, aircraft, and submarines, as well as replacing existing warheads. In addition to their high cost—about \$1 trillion over 30 years in the United States—these changes are reigniting an arms competition that now includes China, India, Pakistan, and North Korea in a chain reaction of vertical proliferation. Rather than modernizing nuclear arsenals to ensure robust capabilities, the president should consider decommissioning and dismantling them.

The next president will lead preparations for the 2020 review conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)—a founding framework for the disarmament and nonproliferation regime. In addition to efforts to strengthen nonproliferation measures, the United States could consider signing the



Russian President Vladimir Putin (left), seen here with Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, has recently had a strained relationship with the United States, leading Russia to withdraw from several nuclear agreements. It is key for the next administration to engage Russia on nuclear issues. (Reuters/Maxim Shemetov)

Humanitarian Pledge, introduced at the end of the 2015 NPT Review conference and endorsed by 114 countries. The pledge grew out of the recognition by nonnuclear-weapons states of the humanitarian catastrophe that would ensue from the use of nuclear weapons. These states, in cooperation with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movements, are calling for a universal prohibition on the possession and use of nuclear weapons, similar to treaties banning landmines, cluster bombs, and chemical weapons. By signing the pledge, the United States would be supporting steps toward prohibiting nuclear weapons possession and use—in keeping with Article VI of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty—and would signal a US commitment to creating a world free of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Nonproliferation and Managing Civilian Nuclear Technologies

The next administration will also need to address major concerns about nuclear weapons proliferation—in particular, nuclear weapons programs in North Korea, Pakistan, and India—as well as the spread of civilian uranium-enriching technology for nuclear power that can be diverted to military use.

North Korea's test of a 10-kiloton nuclear device in September 2016 was its fifth in 10 years. These explosions, along with North Korea's recent test flights of long-range missiles, suggest that this small, isolated country is on track to possess a nuclear weapons capability that might deter others from invading and could be used in attacks on the United States or South Korea. The president will need to address the issue very soon, and the dilemma in dealing with North Korea is clear. Should the United

States and others in a coalition attempt to engage North Korea in negotiations to try to halt its nuclear weapons program and reduce its isolation but in the process appear to reward that country for flouting international norms? Or should they instead continue to increase North Korea's isolation and risk continued development of its nuclear weapons program?

At the same time, the nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan continues to place South Asia at risk of a regional nuclear war. Unfortunately, the United States and international institutions, including the United Nations, seem to have little leverage to ease the conflict between Pakistan and India.

The major recent accomplishment in nuclear nonproliferation is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action signed in July 2015 by Iran and a coalition including the United States, Russia, the European Union, China, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Not only has the Plan of Action halted Iran's nuclear weapons program, it has set a new standard for transparency for controlling civilian nuclear technology. Specifically, oversight by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of uranium isotopes from their introduction into Iranian centrifuges and power reactors to the shipment of used fuel back to Russia is unprecedented, and it sets a new standard that other countries seeking nuclear power generation can emulate to assure the rest of the world that they are not developing nuclear weapons. The major challenge for the next president will be to ensure the successful implementation of the deal. Communicating with US congressional leaders about

stringent verification methods by the IAEA, along with the continued benefits of the plan for nonproliferation, should be at the top of the agenda.

Nuclear Security: Terrorism and Securing Fissile Material

The prospect of a terrorist organization using a nuclear bomb or fissile material in an improvised device has concentrated the efforts of leaders around the world to secure nuclear bomb-making material. Led by President Barack Obama, a set of four nuclear security summits from 2010 through 2016 have raised awareness about the dangers and have resulted in removing, disposing of, and securing highly enriched uranium (HEU) from civilian facilities. Among other accomplishments, 13 countries and Taiwan have rid themselves of HEU, permitting more than three tonnes to be consolidated in secure storage facilities in the United States and Russia, and over 20 countries have had peer-review missions that allow other countries or the IAEA to inspect and make recommendations about securing fissile material. To combat illicit trafficking of nuclear or radiological materials, 328 border crossings have been equipped with radiation detectors.

Although the nuclear summits have ended, country leaders have created a 40-nation contact group of senior officials and agreed to support efforts at the United Nations, the IAEA, INTERPOL, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction to continue the work started by the summits. The next president will need to entrust his best experts with the authority to vigorously pursue an agenda of securing fissile materials. These efforts should include reaching out to other countries to expand the contact group and motivating the process with periodic high-level meetings to assess progress.

On the Horizon

The cascading effects of US policy and actions in Europe and the Middle East, and of Russia's recent moves in Eastern Europe and Syria, have resulted in increasing hostilities between these two key nuclear weapons nations. While they cooperated to reach the recent nuclear nonproliferation agreement with Iran, the relationship between the United States and Russia is deteriorating. Because US-Russia relations are central to worldwide nuclear reductions, this downward spiral does not bode well for progress on nuclear arms control.

Restoring meaningful diplomatic discussions between the United States and Russia is the key to maintaining the

international nuclear arms control regime. At a minimum, the next president should protect the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) and the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty as a way to limit offensive nuclear weapons by these two states. Disagreements over the US ballistic missile defense program on the one hand and the Russian missile development program on the other are major obstacles to substantive progress on future arms reductions and, therefore, need to be addressed head on. In addition, the US president should lead the way by committing to a no-first-use policy and then working with the Russian president to mutually lower the launch readiness of their strategic forces as soon as possible and in a verifiable manner. And finally, the next administration must find channels to work with Russian officials to identify new goals to reduce nuclear weapons after 2020, when New START expires, or, as an interim measure, to extend the treaty for another five years. These next steps must eventually include expanding a reinvigorated bilateral arms control process to include the permanent members of the UN Security Council in multilateral negotiations.

Even during the hostilities of the Cold War, leaders in the United States and Russia acted together with courage and resolution to reduce the dangers from nuclear weapons. Today, that resolute purpose has faded, international agreements and institutions are unraveling, and modes of thinking seem stuck in the distant past. It will require extraordinary courage to bring the two countries together to halt further deterioration in the nuclear arms control regime.

Managing Russian-Western conflict under these circumstances will be of utmost importance. Key steps will include preventing incidents involving military aircraft and naval ships in Europe and Syria; ensuring that channels of communication function properly, including at the military-to-military level; and empowering trusted individuals on both sides capable of engaging in confidential and constructive dialogue on contentious topics and on matters of strategic stability. Russia's alleged attempts to interfere with the US presidential election process may tempt US leaders to retaliate, but they should not lose sight of what's at stake. It will be up to the next US president to focus constructively on this essential relationship—to marshal knowledgeable experts in our country to negotiate with Russia in a renewed focus on the overarching dangers from the largest and most dangerous arsenals in the world.



Kennette Benedict is a senior adviser to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

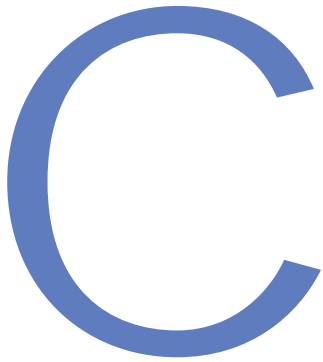


UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and US Secretary of State John Kerry take part in the "Caring for Climate Business Forum" during COP21 in Paris on December 8, 2015. World leaders have begun work to implement the Paris Agreement forged at COP21, and movement is increasing toward more urgent action to limit temperature increases to the 1.5 C target of the Paris resolution. (MEDDE/SG/COP21/Arnaud Bouissou)

Accelerate Climate Change Action

Take Urgent Steps Now Toward 1.5° C Solutions

By Michael Tubman



Climate change is a long, slow process, but it continues—and in many aspects is accelerating. Solutions to climate change also take a long time to develop, and even longer to effect change. While much has been done, all agree that there is much more to do. What should be the role of the new president and other US leaders in global climate change initiatives?

Officials taking office in January who will lead cities, states, and the nation all face the same reality: The climate is changing, and we are already experiencing costly impacts. They also have the same opportunities to grow the clean-energy economy while lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

US leadership has been crucial to making progress in addressing climate change, but all countries have stepped up find common interest. At the international, national, state, and city levels, there have been significant steps to reduce climate-altering emissions over the past year. In the coming years, more progress is needed.

World Stage

The swift entry into force of the landmark Paris Agreement on November 4, 2016, less than a year after the Paris climate conference, is the clearest sign yet that the world is mobilizing to fight climate change. US leadership was essential to delivering the Paris Agreement by showing through action at home that the United States was prepared to do its part. President Barack Obama's personal engagement in diplomacy helped persuade China and others to do their part too. All countries now have a stake in its success, and that transcends any one country.

No one agreement can solve a global challenge as complex as climate change, but Paris has the tools to hold countries accountable and build ambition over time.

Paris isn't the only sign of growing momentum for climate action. Last month, governments agreed on a market-based framework for limiting emissions from international aviation, one of the fastest growing sources of greenhouse gases. Governments also agreed, with the strong support of industry, to phase down use of some of the most potent greenhouse gases affecting the climate, hydrofluorocarbons, which are used in air conditioning and refrigeration.

Although the new administration's implementation of the Paris Agreement is unclear, it is in the United States' interest to continue to be engaged in this process and fulfill our commitments.

Federal Action

The United States set a goal, as its contribution to the Paris Agreement, to reduce emissions 26 to 28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025. Analysis by the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) and other organizations shows following through on existing policies will get close to that goal. Since 2005, US net emissions have declined nine percent, in large part because of growth in renewable energy, level electricity demand, improved vehicle efficiency, and a shift in electricity generation from coal to natural gas. But further actions at all levels of government will be needed to continue to reduce US emissions after 2025.

Transportation and electricity generation are responsible for nearly three-quarters of US energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, and there has been progress in both areas.

Working with the auto and trucking industries, the federal government set new rules that will dramatically increase the fuel economy, and decrease the greenhouse gas emissions, of cars and trucks for decades. The challenge is to expand the deployment of zero-emission vehicles. Electric vehicles make up less than one percent of new US car sales. But as their prices drop and range expands, the adoption rate could accelerate over the next 15 years, spurring important reductions from what is now the largest-emitting sector in the United States.

In the electricity sector, progress is undeniable. Wind and solar generation have grown nearly twelve-fold since 2005. The first new American nuclear generating unit in decades opened this year in Tennessee, and America's first offshore windfarm will come online off the coast of Rhode Island this fall.

Regardless of its future in the next administration, the Clean Power Plan, which sets emissions targets and then lets states determine the best way to reach them, has already brought stakeholders together in state capitals across the country to discuss strategies to reduce emissions. Through modeling and conversation, stakeholders often realized reductions can happen cheaper and faster than they first expected, and the lessons learned from those conversations will add to the momentum for reductions at the state level. Moreover, if the new administration chooses not to go forward with this regulation, the Environmental Protection Agency will still be obligated to address greenhouse gas emissions from power plants under the Clean Air Act.

Other ways to continue reducing emissions through federal action include research and development programs and incentives for infrastructure modernization, renewable energy deployment, and carbon capture and storage. Even better would be for Congress to resume the conversation on pragmatic approaches to fight climate change and establish an economy-wide, market-based program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Local Leadership

The progress that has occurred at the national and international levels would not have been possible without leadership from state and city stakeholders.

Ten states that are home to a quarter of the US population already have a price on carbon, and another state, Washington, plans to start a market-based mechanism to reduce emissions across its economy in January 2017.

Nineteen states and the District of Columbia have set greenhouse gas reduction targets, and 29 states require electric utilities to deliver a certain amount of electricity from renewables or alternative sources. New York, which gets a third of its in-state electricity from nuclear power, recently approved a Clean Energy Standard to spur new renewables deployment while also preserving existing zero-carbon nuclear generation.

Many cities are taking steps to improve building efficiency, incentivize smart development, promote electric vehicle adoption, and deploy clean energy. C2ES has partnered with the US Conference of Mayors in a new alliance to encourage city and business leaders to work together on concrete approaches to reduce carbon emissions, speed deployment of new technology, and implement sustainable development strategies.

Policies and actions by states and cities will continue providing us with examples of success—blueprints for the future that can later be adopted on a larger scale.

Conclusion

US leaders, from the president and Congress to states and cities across the nation, have the opportunity—the responsibility—to grow the clean energy economy while lowering emissions.

The world is moving in the right direction, and now it's up to new leaders at all levels of government to build on and accelerate this progress.



Michael Tubman is director of outreach for the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES) and manages the center's engagement with the federal government, state governments, and key constituencies. He has more than a dozen years of experience advancing environmental policy and specializes in finding common ground between solutions that work between diverse stakeholders.

A photograph showing three women from behind, walking away from the camera in a migrant camp. They are pulling large suitcases. The woman on the left wears a purple headscarf and a black coat. The woman in the middle wears a black coat and a tan knit hat. The woman on the right wears a black coat with a fur collar and a bright pink skirt. They are walking on a dirt path with makeshift tents made of tarps in the background. The scene is brightly lit, and the ground is wet, reflecting the women and their suitcases.

Prevent Mass Atrocities and Genocide with Real Action

Increasing Threats Force Victims to Flee

By Allyson Neville

Migrants pull suitcases through the "Jungle" migrant camp before authorities demolish the site on October 23, 2016, in Calais, France. President-elect Donald Trump needs to pursue protection of civilian populations in places such as Syria, Myanmar, and Burundi. (Getty Images/Christopher Furlong)

The question is not if President-elect Donald Trump will be faced with atrocities and genocide, but how will he respond in the face of violence and navigate existing and future political challenges, and—perhaps most importantly—to what extent will preventing conflicts before they begin be a policy priority?

Trump will face significant policy and political challenges related to mass atrocities and genocide immediately upon taking office in January 2017. In addition to ongoing violence and risks to civilian lives in places like Iraq, Syria, the Central African Republic, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Yemen, he will need to address transnational challenges like the unprecedented global humanitarian and refugee crises that are a direct result of this violence, and the rise of violent nonstate actors.

This is a unique moment. Thanks to major bipartisan and interinstitutional policy initiatives like the 2008 Genocide Prevention Task Force—whose report, *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers*, made specific and practical policy recommendations to contribute to atrocity prevention—the current administration has made some significant headway in implementing policy recommendations that have worked to improve US government structures, tools, and resources to better prevent and respond to genocide and other mass atrocities. The next president will either seize upon this foundation as an opportunity to build on the existing atrocities-prevention framework or choose to turn away from these hard-won investments in favor of late, less effective, and more costly responses.

US moral obligations and national security interests related to early prevention of mass atrocities and genocide have long been recognized. However, advancing these efforts will not

be without challenges. To provide the next president with a clear road map on how to advance atrocities prevention in 2017 and beyond, the Prevention and Protection Working Group—a coalition of nongovernmental organizations dedicated to improving US policies and civilian capacities to prevent mass atrocities—convened a group of experts from across the political spectrum to develop specific policy recommendations, which are detailed in the *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers*.

Foremost, the next president must recommit to atrocities prevention as a national security priority. Without presidential leadership, policy advancements around structures, tools, and resources will mean very little. There must also be increased emphasis on early prevention, work to address related policy challenges like limited funding and the role of nonstate actors, and implementation of agency-level changes that can improve atrocities-prevention tools and increase capacities.

In addition to the prevention and mitigation of mass atrocities, there must also be a longer-term focus. Early prevention—what the report defines as “initiatives that aim to reduce social marginalization and conflict; strengthen legitimacy, accountability and resilience; and promote respect for human rights”—must also be prioritized and institutionalized. All of this work will require funding. While Congress is critical to providing resources, the next president must

exhibit leadership in support of funding for early prevention in addition to an expansion of existing conflict- and atrocities-prevention accounts like the Complex Crises Fund.

While atrocities prevention has gained traction, it remains a niche issue that is not effectively connected to a broader national security framework, despite its elevation to coordination by the new Atrocities Prevention Board out of the National Security Council at the White House. When up against competing interests or urgent response needs, atrocities prevention is often sidelined.

Marginalization of the issue area has also increased in light of emerging policy prioritization on countering violent extremism (CVE) to address violence by nonstate actors. While there is significant overlap between the goals and approaches of atrocities prevention and CVE, stovepiping has prevented more-effective connections between these streams of work. For example, when atrocities are committed by extreme Islamist groups, US responses tend to fall under CVE, which too often prioritizes military action over civilian tools that can most effectively address root causes. The atrocities-prevention toolkit should be expanded to better address violence by nonstate actors.

The current landscape requires that the next president demonstrate leadership to engage meaningfully with the American public and Congress in order to move the

atrocities-prevention agenda forward. The 2016 election has brought up significant questions, including what should be done about ongoing atrocities, the role of the State Department in conflict contexts post Benghazi, issues surrounding masses of refugees fleeing violence, and US engagement in the world more broadly. Expanding violence in places like Syria and Iraq clearly demonstrates why the prevention of atrocities is a worthy and imperative goal.

The next president does not need to reinvent the wheel on atrocities prevention. However, presidential leadership is critical to making the case for prevention as a renewed and expanded priority.

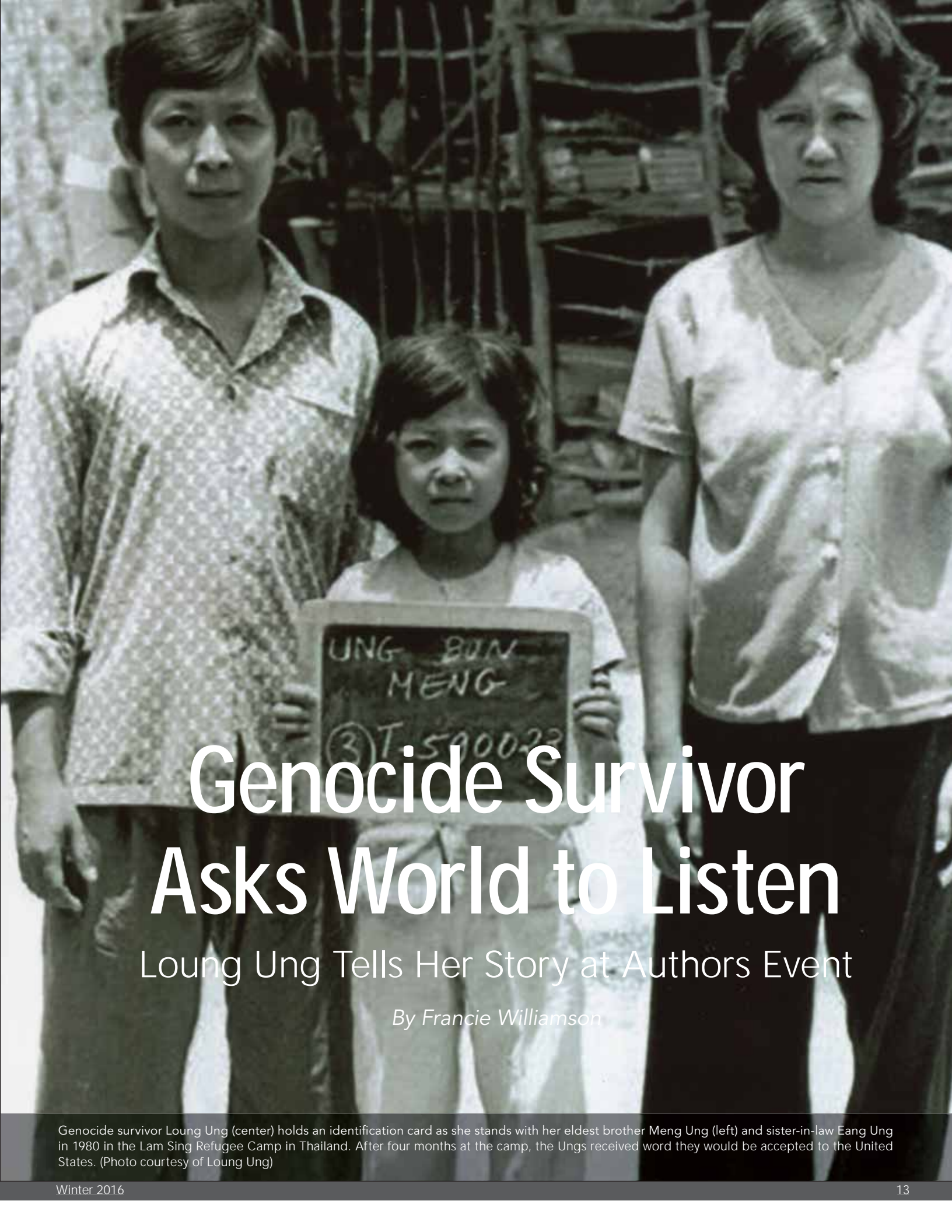
Finally, there must be recognition that despite its best efforts, the United States may not be able to prevent all violence. And the ultimate success—the prevention of atrocities—is difficult to prove. The next president will have to address these fundamental political challenges so that they do not cast a shadow that hinders effective prioritization of and policy implementation for prevention.



Allyson Neville coordinates the Prevention and Protection Working Group (PPWG), a coalition of human rights, religious, humanitarian, and peace organizations dedicated to the prevention of deadly conflict and protection of civilians. She joined the Friends Committee on National Legislation in March 2014.

In 2011, when violence broke out in Cote d'Ivoire many people, including this girl, fled to a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) camp in Liberia. The 2016 US presidential election brought up a number of questions, including what should be done about masses of refugees fleeing violence. (© USAID/Micah Clemens)





Genocide Survivor Asks World to Listen

Loung Ung Tells Her Story at Authors Event

By Francie Williamson

Genocide survivor Loung Ung (center) holds an identification card as she stands with her eldest brother Meng Ung (left) and sister-in-law Eang Ung in 1980 in the Lam Sing Refugee Camp in Thailand. After four months at the camp, the Ungs received word they would be accepted to the United States. (Photo courtesy of Loung Ung)

Loung Ung was five years old when the Khmer Rouge stormed her native city of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in 1975. Four years later, roughly two million out of seven million Cambodians were dead. Loung lost her parents, two sisters, and 20 other relatives in the genocide. In 1979, the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and put an end to the terror.

In 1980, 10-year-old Loung and her older brother and sister-in-law escaped to Thailand. Eventually, they relocated to Vermont through sponsorship by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Holy Family Church parish.

On October 6, 2016, Loung spoke at the International Women Authors event, cosponsored by the Stanley Foundation and the Women's Connection of the Quad Cities. Before the event, she spoke with the foundation's Francie Williamson about her experiences in Cambodia.

The Stanley Foundation: Your first book, *First They Killed My Father*, details the brutality of life under the Khmer Rouge, the deaths of some of your family members, and your eventual escape to Thailand, then America. Do you think what happened then could ever happen again in Cambodia? Why or why not?

Loung Ung: Well I certainly hope not, and it's disheartening to see it happening in other countries. I'm hoping that it won't because there are so many great people in Cambodia working to make sure and to keep that hope alive. It is people doing the grunt work of mapping the 20,000 mass graves, it is people putting together the curriculums to teach students, people gathering stories and documentations.... If it does not happen, it is because of the hard work and the big hearts and all the generosity of all these people doing this work to make sure it doesn't happen again.

TSF: We talk a lot with our partners about early warning signs of atrocities. Do you think there were signs that the Khmer Rouge was going to be so brutal, and what do you think the world could have done to intervene earlier?

LU: There were definitely signs that there were massacres of people in the Khmer Rouge zones. They were telling lies. I think they started building one lie upon another. They weren't really thinking of what's best for the people. They didn't have the best interests of the people at heart. And nobody knew who they were. Who do you fight if you don't know who you're fighting against? They were known as Angkar, literally translated in English as "the organization." For a year into their regime, we had no idea who the leaders were. Can you imagine a government running the US today where we didn't know the name of the president? When you are hiding in plain sight and ... you have bred so much fear that people can't even protest against your faceless, nameless, ruthless regime.... They didn't come in and take all our rights away from us instantly. Through all these years, one by one, they took our rights away. And we were too afraid to speak up. Even that made you a target for arrest or imprisonment or executions. And all those were warning signs leading up to how brutal they became.

TSF: In terms of memory and reconciliation, is the Khmer Rouge period talked about more openly in Cambodia today? What more could be done?

LU: Many people are starting to tell their stories. The healing journey is an individual journey for everybody, and the time and place when the person is able to share is different for everyone. But we are finding that a lot of people now, close to 40 years later, are starting to speak out. And it's because they're believed and it's because the tribunal happened and stories were being told in newspapers and on radios and books and magazines and movies that people are starting to believe that it really happened. And because the next generations are now curious and are asking questions, like what are the big holes in the ground? I think people are now starting to feel safe to speak, and I think just as important to know that when they do speak, they are believed.

TSF: What has changed in Cambodia since the early 2000s, which is where you leave off in your second and third books, *Lucky Child* and *Lulu in the Sky*?

LU: Cambodia is a country the size of Oklahoma and now populated by just a little over 15 million people. We bring in approximately four million tourists in a year. So Cambodia is opening up. And I think what's changed for the positive is that people are now seeing Cambodia's beauty, seeing Cambodia's wonders and magic and colors and people and food and restaurants and roads and the spirituality and the 2,000-year-old culture. We are now growing beyond what was the four-year blip that was the genocide. It's part of our history. But it is not the whole of our history. So as more and more people come to Cambodia and the country opens, people are seeing that, and that makes us proud.

The land itself is being demined on a daily basis and therefore allowing access to farmers to work and for children to walk to school and for people to grow food. So all those are really wonderful developments in Cambodia.

The hard part is there's so many outside influences coming in, and the change is happening very, very quickly. I think sometimes you don't really know what the results of the changes are going to be.



The "Killing Tree," against which children were smashed and killed during the Khmer Rouge regime is located on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Loung Ung was just five years old when the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975 and was forced to flee her home in Phnom Penh. Ung now lives in Cleveland, Ohio, with her husband. (Reuters/Samrang Pring)

TSF: And how is your family now?

LU: My sister Chou in Cambodia has five kids and is a grandmother for the fourth time, and my brother Khouy in Cambodia has six kids and is about to have his first grandchild. So the trees of life continue to grow and extend. [My brother] Meng is doing really well; he lives in Vermont and his two daughters, one of them is a chemistry teacher and the other is an architect intern. And [my brother] Kim is doing really great; he is a baker in Los Angeles and has two kids.

TSF: What do you tell people who want to help those suffering from atrocities?

LU: If you want to help, first you choose to help. You have to make that choice. It's not enough to want. Want is a great motivator, but it's just not enough. If all we do is want, it's never going to get done. Once you make that choice, then you can go on to the next step. Whatever you are able to do is perfectly fine because activism is a muscle. The more you use it the stronger it will get. So you've got to start using it.

If you encounter someone who has experienced atrocities, first, you listen. And then you ask questions. And you believe. Should there be any discrepancies in the stories, you don't automatically judge. Sometimes your mind can't accept what's happened. And when that happens, you weave new narratives for yourself. But there's truth in their stories, and it may not be the version you want to hear, but it's there.



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2016 ESTIMATED GLOBAL NUCLEAR WARHEAD INVENTORIES

The world's nuclear-armed states possess a combined total of roughly 15,500 nuclear warheads; more than 90 percent belong to Russia and the United States. Approximately 10,000 warheads are in military service, with the rest awaiting dismantlement.



Source: Hans M. Kristensen, Robert S. Norris, and U.S. Department of State, Updated: July 22, 2016.

Arms Control
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