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Towards Nuclear Nonproliferation: An Evolving Strategy

Editor's Note: Since the 1983 inception of its work in the international security field, Carnegie Corporation of New York has sought to identify and address some of the most pressing challenges to the achievement of a peaceful and secure world. One aspect of these efforts has been a focus on nuclear nonproliferation, which has been addressed through an evolving but interconnected set of strategies aimed at responding to the different problems and dangers presented by changing times. This issue of the Carnegie Results explores how, over more than two decades, the Corporation has honed and refocused its grantmaking in this area—first under its Avoiding Nuclear War program in the 1980s, moving through the Cooperative Security program in the first half of the 1990s, to the Preventing Deadly Conflict program in the second half of the 1990s, and now, under the International Peace and Security program—while retaining a consistent focus on applying its resources to the reduction of grave threats to world peace.

Introduction

Carnegie Corporation of New York's work in the area of peace and security germinated in the early 1980s, a time when the Cold War was still a major factor in international relations and the potential for nuclear confrontation existed between the United States and the Soviet Union, the world's two superpowers. With the breakup of the Soviet Union and a weaker, but still nuclear-armed Russia emerging, the Corporation provided support for the work leading up to the landmark Soviet Nuclear Threat Reduction Act of 1991—renamed the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program in 1993 but commonly known as “Nunn-Lugar” after the bipartisan team of Democratic Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia and Republican Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana who sponsored and vigorously lobbied for the legislation—which helped to safeguard nuclear weapons in that part of the world during this dangerous time. Nunn-Lugar was a major landmark in the Corporation's body of work, but there are other Corporation-supported studies and programs that have greatly added to the depth and strength of activities geared toward promoting nuclear nonproliferation. “Many of the projects don't have the headline-producing effect of Nunn-Lugar, but there is a cumulative body of grantmaking that advanced the cause,” notes Stephen Del Rosso, senior program officer in the Corporation's International Peace and Security program.

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Written by: Barry Rosenberg. Rosenberg has held a variety of editorial positions with Aviation Week & Space Technology, and has written numerous reports for the Carnegie Corporation of New York on subjects such as nuclear nonproliferation, weaponization of space, bio-defense and ethnic conflict. His book on the founding of the U.S. air mail service will be published by William Morrow in 2005.

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Indeed, grantmaking to advance the cause of international peace and security continues through the current day. But in looking back at the Corporation's work in this area over more than twenty years—and noting that the foundation has spent tens of millions of dollars supporting efforts dedicated to finding ways of averting a nuclear confrontation, reducing the spread of nuclear weapons and keeping the threat posed by these weapons at the forefront of public and policy attention—it is important to reflect on what has been accomplished and how the foundation decided to pursue the directions that were followed. What has been the Corporation's strategy in developing and implementing its agenda? Has its grantmaking led to policy decisions? Have its grants contributed to lessening the chance of a nuclear exchange—intentional or accidental—between the United States and Russia? And what directions have two decades of work in this area led the foundation to pursue today? While the answers to these questions may not always seem definitive, it is clear that the Corporation's work was undertaken with an eye to real-world challenges and a concern with developing thoughtful, effective responses using grantmaking tools that included support of research, commissions, public outreach, linkages between policy and expert communities and capacity-building efforts.

The Cold War and Nuclear Nonproliferation: The Avoiding Nuclear War Program

In 1983, the United States, France, Great Britain, China and the Soviet Union were conducting regular tests of nuclear weapons; a radioactive Soviet satellite plummeted into the Indian Ocean; U.S. President Ronald Reagan called the Soviet Union an "Evil Empire" and introduced his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which came to be known as "Star Wars"; anti-nuke demonstrators linked arms in a 14-mile-long human chain in England; India entered the space age by launching its SLV-3 rocket; the Soviet Union admitted to shooting down a Korean airliner; the U.S. placed its first cruise missiles in Great Britain; and the U.S. and Soviet Union continued to aim thousands of nuclear weapons at each other.

The year seemed to epitomize the decade: international tensions were running high while international dialogue about how to address conflicts hardly rose above a murmur. Taking note of the escalating dangers of confrontation between nations stockpiling ever-increasing

arsenals and publicly musing over the possible scenarios in which they might be used, the Corporation decided, initially, to focus a sizeable portion of its grantmaking activities on avoiding nuclear war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

“In the 1983–1984 timeframe, the prism we had to look through was the U.S.-Soviet relationship,” says Patricia Moore Nicholas, program associate in the Corporation’s International Peace and Security program. “The potential for tensions in that relationship were among the gravest threats to humanity at the time.”

The Corporation responded by developing its Avoiding Nuclear War program of the 1980s, which was designed to help fill the gaps in knowledge about the U.S.-Soviet relationship and nuclear policy. Under the program, the Corporation provided grants related to arms control, supported cooperative U.S.-Soviet linkages and strengthened U.S. institutions working in these areas. The thrust of these grants was to revitalize the study of international security and also to promote a corpus of scholarly and intellectual analysis on nuclear issues and on U.S.-Soviet relations.

In a related effort, the Corporation engaged in grantmaking directed at educating the public about the nuclear threat. For example, Corporation-supported work at the Public Agenda Foundation, Brown University’s Center for Foreign Policy Development, the League of Women Voters, the Foreign Policy Association and the Kettering Foundation’s Domestic Policy Association provided the public with analyses of the opinions and positions of experts on the uses of nuclear weapons and the nature of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. Providing funding for conferences organized by the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies (under the direction of Aspen Institute senior fellow Dick Clark, former U.S. senator from Iowa and member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee) to bring together congressional policymakers and leading authorities on U.S.-Soviet relations was also an important strategy. For the Corporation, helping to build a bridge between the American public and American policymakers and the experts and scholars working on nuclear issues in a time of increasing tensions was—and continues to be—an ongoing consideration of its grantmaking.

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The Avoiding Nuclear War program was launched in 1983, when in the year after David Hamburg became president of the foundation. “The world was in great danger,” he says, looking back. “It was our desire to mobilize the strongest possible talent, draw upon the deepest knowledge and the most rigorous research methods to understand the sources of the danger and ways out of this predicament.”

During his presidency, which spanned the years up to 1997, the avoidance of nuclear conflict became a hallmark concern of both Hamburg and the foundation. Of his leadership on this issue, William J. Perry, U.S. Secretary of Defense in the Clinton administration and currently, co-director of The Preventive Defense Project, a research collaboration between Stanford and Harvard universities, says, “In my opinion, preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons is the single most important security issue we face and I believe that David Hamburg contributed to the most significant and productive work in the field. He did it,” continues Perry, “with his intellectual leadership, by attracting other people to work in that field, by sponsoring first-class studies, and by influencing legislation such as Nunn-Lugar.”

Direct U.S.-Soviet contacts, particularly military-to-military discussions, became of increasing importance in the early-to-mid-1980s as the Corporation focused on the threat to world peace posed by the continuing Cold War stand-off. Grantmaking during this time included major support for multidisciplinary programs (involving the physical, biological and behavioral sciences) aimed at analyzing international conflicts and illuminating policy choices that might reduce the likelihood of nuclear war.

Multi-year, million-dollar-level grants went to such institutions as Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government (for establishing methodology to examine the paths to nuclear war); the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (for its Arms Control and Defense Policy Program); and to Stanford University’s Center for International Security and Arms Control (for a project focusing on U.S.-Soviet crisis management along with a fellowship program to acquaint scientists interested in arms control and security questions with the technical, political, historical, legal and economic aspects of these issues so they would be better able to play a role in shaping effective national policies).

As the decade continued, the Corporation fostered independent research, policy analysis and dissemination among scholars and policymakers that invited both sides of the U.S.-Soviet divide into shared discussions. One such program brought together Soviet and American experts to develop a common crisis prevention framework that would keep a small incident from escalating into a nuclear conflict. Measures to strengthen the “hotline” between the two nations came out of the Corporation’s grantmaking to organizations such as Harvard’s Kennedy School and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Other related programs revolved around informal interaction between U.S. and Soviet military officers about the latest views on nuclear weapons and civilian-military relations.

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Shortly after President Reagan's 1983 announcement of plans to launch the space-based Strategic Defense Initiative, the Corporation underwrote a scientific study of its feasibility, assisting the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the University of California at San Diego to explore the cost, legality, effectiveness and international implications of space-based weapons. The Corporation also sponsored a study by the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University on the effect of emerging space technologies on the chances of nuclear war.

Support from the Corporation also led to one of the most influential studies of SDI and directed-energy weapons, which was undertaken by the American Physical Society (APS). This was the first major independent study of the feasibility of lasers or particle beams as a defense against ballistic missiles. APS's study group concluded that it would take at least 10 years of research to develop the technical knowledge required to make an informed decision about the effectiveness and survivability of such weapons. The study, which was also supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, received full cooperation from what was then known as the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, created to oversee SDI, and from the U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy, and has had a lasting impact on strategic defense policy.

In a related effort that acknowledged the need for greater understanding of how developments in science and technology could affect the future of the nation—and the world—the Corporation established the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government (CCSTG) in 1988. Its aim was to assess the mechanisms by which federal and state authorities could incorporate scientific and technological knowledge into policies and administrative decision making and to develop strategies for improving the expertise available to all branches of government in these areas. Many of CCSTG's recommendations—such as upgrading the president's science advisor to Cabinet-level status—have been acted on, particularly in the area of creating new linkages between science, technology and government.

Promoting U.S.-Soviet Security
Collaboration:
The Cooperative Security Program

When the Soviet Union broke apart and the Cold War was declared over in the early 1990s, the Corporation reassessed the priorities of its work in the area of promoting international peace and security. The initial emphasis on reducing the danger of a nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union “shifted toward exploring opportunities for global engagement with Russia and promoting democracy and civil society in the newly independent post-Soviet states,” explains Deana Arsenian, chair of the Corporation’s International Peace and Security program, “as well as direct U.S-Soviet collaborative research on security issues.” Another concern was that thousands of nuclear weapons and tons of fissile material that were formerly under the command and control of one nation—the Soviet Union—were now dispersed across three countries, besides Russia: Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus, which then, respectively, had the third, fourth and eighth largest nuclear arsenals in the world.

The fall of the Soviet Union left the region in disarray. Looking back, nuclear nonproliferation experts say that this period, because of the potentially catastrophic loss of control over so many nuclear weapons (the “loose nukes” concern), and the possibility that former Soviet satellite states would use the weapons as bargaining chips, was one of the most dangerous times for world peace and security in the past 50 years. The changing focus of the Corporation’s work in this area was signaled by renaming the Avoiding Nuclear War program: through much of the 1990s it was known by a title that more aptly described its main concern—the Cooperative Security program, an idea reflective of new post-Cold War realities and aspirations developed by Corporation grantees William Perry of Stanford University, Ashton Carter of Harvard University and John Steinbruner of the Brookings Institution.

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During the 1990–1994 period, the Cooperative Security program made a number of grants to facilitate the convening of high-level experts concerned with nuclear nonproliferation issues in a post-Soviet climate. The first such effort was the Committee on Reducing the Nuclear Danger, formed at the request of Carnegie Corporation and spearheaded by McGeorge Bundy, a former advisor to President John F. Kennedy, Sidney Drell of New York University and William Crowe, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The formation of a Prevention of Proliferation Task Force followed, funded through grants to the Brookings Institution; it was this task force that produced a report instrumental in the development of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. Entitled *Soviet Nuclear Fission: Control of the Nuclear Arsenal in a Disintegrating Soviet Union*, the 1991 report shook up the policy establishment with its explanation of how the Soviet Union's system of control—weak to begin with, and riddled with problems—for its nuclear weapons could break down under political revolution, republican secession and widespread civil chaos, resulting in nuclear weapons, fissile material or nuclear know-how falling into dangerous hands. Many agree that Nunn-Lugar was essential in turning the potentially disastrous situation in the former Soviet Union into a victory for nuclear nonproliferation activists.

Not only is the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program one of the most notable results of Corporation funding during the latter half of the 20th century, it is also, arguably, the most important nuclear nonproliferation step taken by the world up to that point. Since its 1991 inception it has deactivated 5,990 nuclear warheads, destroyed 479 ballistic missiles, 435 ballistic missile silos, 97 bombers, 336 submarine-launched missiles, 396 submarine missile launchers, and 24 strategic missile submarines. It has sealed 194 nuclear test tunnels and also helped more than 22,000 scientists formerly working on programs relating to weapons of mass destruction find employment in other fields.

These accomplishments have been achieved by establishing a cooperative presence in the former Soviet Union, where American firms carry out a large proportion of program-related work. A side benefit of the program has been the development of many and varied ties between Russian and U.S. military officials and government entities.

The Nunn-Lugar program also has facilitated several politically sensitive operations in the former Soviet Union. In 1994, Project Sapphire removed 600 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from Kazakhstan. The amount of material was sufficient to make between 20 and 30 nuclear weapons. In 1997, 21 nuclear-capable MIG-29C attack aircraft were acquired from Moldova before they could be purchased by another country. In 1998, Operation Auburn Endeavor removed 8.8 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from the former Soviet state of Georgia.

“[Nunn-Lugar] was clearly a huge victory,” says Ashton Carter, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy in the Clinton administration and currently, co-director of the Harvard-Stanford Preventive Defense Project, a Corporation grantee. He adds, “If you are familiar with the current leadership of Belarus, it is clearly a place that today would not have given up those nuclear weapons. But instead of facing that situation, we successfully de-nuclearized the Soviet states,” notes Carter, who was principal author of the *Soviet Nuclear Fission* report when he was director of the Corporation-supported Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University.

During this period, additional grants were made to organizations that had begun to analyze and understand the potential for and the structure of an international cooperative security regime. The Brookings Institution took the lead in this Corporation-supported program, with Columbia University looking at the future of European security and the Washington, D.C.-based Henry L. Stimson Center (established with Corporation funding in the late 1980s) working on the verification of compliance with multilateral arms control agreements.

The notion of a culture of nonproliferation evolved and took root at the Corporation in the 1990s, prompting grants to the Monterey Institute in California and to the Stimson Center for research and education in this area. A few years later, funding was aimed at stimulating the nonproliferation culture in Russia through the Center for Policy Studies in Russia, a Monterey Institute “spin-off.” Integral to the Corporation’s focus on cooperative threat reduction has been the work of the Russian American Nuclear Security Advisory Council, which worked with Russia and other former Soviet states to develop programs aimed at preventing breakdown in the Russian nuclear complex. The grant supported efforts to develop new and peaceful pursuits for the scientists and technicians engaged in the nuclear field and enabled outreach activities aimed at policymakers in the United States and Russia, journalists, national laboratories and foreign governments to draw international attention to the issue.

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Preventing Deadly Conflict: New Concerns Come to the Fore

In the years immediately following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation dominated the security agenda both in the U.S., Western Europe and in Moscow. But the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of a bi-polar world also ushered in an age of ethnic strife around the globe. While supporting efforts to reduce the nuclear danger was still a priority for the Corporation, like non-governmental organizations worldwide, it was also grappling with the challenge of confronting ethnic conflicts.

Given accelerating political changes in the Soviet Union and its satellite regimes, the Corporation moved to study and consolidate gains and identify new opportunities to promote nonproliferation. Once again responding to changes on the international scene, the Corporation developed new strategies to contend with an increasingly complex and fracturing global community; manage the downsizing and conversion of military entities and industries; prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and forge enduring partnerships to integrate the post-Soviet states. With this shift in emphasis, in 1994 the Corporation also retired its Cooperative Security program designation and renamed it Preventing Deadly Conflict. In addition to nuclear nonproliferation, there were two main funding thrusts under this new rubric: examining the causes of ethnic conflict and strengthening democratic institutions as a means of coping with conflict.

In the nonproliferation arena, the latter half of the 1990s saw a concern with export controls move onto the Corporation's grantmaking agenda, with support being provided to projects such as at the Center for International Trade and Security at the University of Georgia relating to effective methods of containing dual-use equipment and applications as well as monitoring trade in nuclear-related materials. This remained a component of the Corporation's grantmaking for a over decade, until the issue eventually got the notice of the U.S. Congress and moved to the forefront of international peace and security efforts, where it remains today.

The Corporation also continued to provide support for the policy-relevant research of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in the area of nuclear nonproliferation and for the Carnegie Moscow Center, which had been established with Corporation support as the first U.S. institution working in Russia on security issues. A nonproliferation culture *was* beginning to take root, at least in Moscow.

Additional Corporation grants funded large-scale studies in major American universities on arms control agreements, compliance monitoring and international cooperation for security. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Corporation sponsored a Columbia University study on issues related to the future structure of European politics, such as a unified Germany; relationships with and among the republics of the former Soviet Union; and on ways to strengthen democratic institutions in these areas of the world. At Stanford University, national security advisor-to-be Condoleezza Rice received a Corporation grant to organize and draw together faculty resources for a project on security in the new Europe.

In related work (that actually began in the 1980s, continued under the Preventing Deadly Conflict program and extended on to the late 1990s), the Corporation funded efforts to organize Western support for nascent democratic institutions in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government used Corporation support for a project to strengthen democratic leadership in Eastern and Central Europe while educating Western scholars about the impact of privatization and other reforms in the region.

Throughout the decade, the Corporation continued to sponsor Aspen Institute seminars aimed at educating U.S. Congressmen about changes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The Corporation also made grants to Human Rights Watch for activities such as establishing links with civil society organizations throughout the former Soviet space.

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The 21st Century: International Peace, Security and New Nonproliferation Challenges

In 1997, Vartan Gregorian became president of the Corporation; in early 1999—when the Preventing Deadly Conflict program was rechristened International Peace and Security (IPS), indicative of a once-again widening set of global concerns—he published *New Directions for Carnegie Corporation of New York*, an essay in which he considered the foundation’s history, mission and direction in light of the current world situation. Noting that two additional nations—India and Pakistan—had joined the “Nuclear Bomb Club,” that Russia, with its interlocking economic, political, military, and social crises was still in a precarious state, and that the presence and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, along with chemical and biological weapons still posed a grave threat to international peace, he wrote: “In view of these looming problems, it is both logical and imperative that the Corporation continue its decade-long policy of making nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as developments in Russia and other former Soviet states, central features of the IPS program. Building on our past experience in arms control and nonproliferation, the program will pay particular attention to the secure storage of nuclear weapons and weapons-grade materials and the safety of their command-and-control systems. Concerning Russia and other post-Soviet states, we will concentrate on the sharing of experience and expertise on critical problems between high-level groups there and in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere.”

In recent years, as Gregorian indicated, though the Corporation has reassessed some of its nuclear nonproliferation efforts, it has remained focused on the issue because it has far from disappeared; in fact, once again, it has taken on new dimensions. North Korea, for example, has indicated it has nuclear capability and recent revelations bring the news that Pakistan has sold nuclear know-how to countries such as Iran and Libya. As for the United States, it has revitalized its programs to develop and test “bunker-buster” and battlefield nuclear weapons.

And of course, in the post-September 11th era, there is now the looming menace of terrorism, and the potential of both terrorists and “rogue states” such as Iran to obtain nuclear materials and for North Korea to

employ its nuclear potential. With the specter of non-state threats as well as traditional state-to-state concerns, projects that the Corporation currently supports go beyond official efforts to develop nonproliferation treaties and agreements. Grants, for example, that funded a series of projects focused on exploring the nuclear future in South and Northeast Asia turned out to be enormously relevant as the nuclear face-off heated up in India and Pakistan, and more recently, as the North Korean nuclear situation became threatening.

The Corporation has also supported unofficial diplomatic (Track II) consultations between governmental and private experts; as well as efforts to promote greater transparency among regional adversaries and rogue states through the adoption of confidence-building measures in Northeast and South Asia adapted from the U.S.-Soviet experience during the Cold War; plus non-treaty-based agreements among groups of states to address specific threats such as recent efforts by the U. S. to seek the cooperation of other states in interdicting North Korean ships suspected of transporting nuclear weapons or material.

In addition, the Corporation has funded the Center for Strategic and International Studies for its work on nuclear (and biological and chemical weapons) cooperative threat reduction. The center led a consortium of 15 influential policy research organizations in Europe, North American and Asia as part of a three-year project to bolster the commitment of the G-8 nations, which have promised \$20 million over the next ten years for threat reduction measures in Russia, with the possibility of expanding the commitment to other countries.

Though much remains to be done in these areas, some lessons have created their own lasting legacy. One example is the success of Nunn-Lugar: the nonproliferation community is now calling upon Congress to authorize expansion of the program, for example, to be used outside the former Soviet Union. Language in the last Senate Defense Authorization bill would allow the administration to use up to \$50 million a year for emergency nonproliferation missions around the world, such as an accelerated effort to begin destroying chemical and biological weapons in Russia. And the program to eliminate nuclear weapons must continue, as only about half of the declared Russian stockpile has been destroyed.

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Towards the Future

The Corporation's support of work supporting nuclear nonproliferation initiatives has made significant contributions to the storehouse of ideas on the subject. Through four program iterations, each of which built upon the prior program's strategies, the foundation's grantmaking brought focused on bringing together policymakers, academics and the scientific community in pursuit of common goals, sought out the best and the brightest, the most thoughtful ideas and directions and helped to nurture them. In its time, these efforts each made a contribution to strategies that made their way into public policy. And, as Patricia Rosenfield, chair of the Corporation's Scholars Program and special advisor to the vice president and director for strategic planning and program coordination, notes, "In terms of the foundation world, I think we have not only been at the forefront of the nuclear nonproliferation effort, but over the years, we have brought others along."

A number of present-day efforts to promote nuclear nonproliferation are direct follow-ups to previous Corporation-funded work. An example is the establishment, in 2001, of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), an organization created by CNN founder Ted Turner and former Senator Sam Nunn (who joined the Corporation's board of trustees in 1997), to reduce the global threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. The organization is international in scope, serving as both a catalyst for action and a sponsor of pilot projects that could be replicated on a larger scale. It builds on Corporation-supported efforts in areas such as generating greater public support, understanding and governmental attention around the subject of threat reduction and in bringing greater resources to bear both domestically and internationally to meet these challenges; improving the safety, security and accountability for weapons of mass destruction, materials and know-how, particularly in Russia and the former Soviet states; and in dealing with the problem of Russian and other nuclear weapons experts whose skills could be used for the benefit of terrorist groups.

Turner has termed NTI's mission "urgent," given the continued risk of a nuclear exchange through accident or miscalculation, compounded by "serious concerns about the security of [stockpiled] weapons and bomb-making materials."

And the American Physical Society, building on its earlier Corporation-funded study raising uncertainties about President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, released an influential report in mid-2003 that threw doubt on plans for a ballistic missile defense shield against missile launches from rogue states like North Korea by questioning the technological capabilities of such a system.

Nuclear threats and nuclear security are topics that we all see in a different light now, illuminated by the threatening glare of terrorism. But the old dangers remain, as well. Not long after becoming president of the Corporation, Vartan Gregorian wrote in *New Directions*, “All the declared nuclear powers—the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France and China and now India and Pakistan (Israel is an undeclared nuclear power)—insist they possess nuclear weapons only to deter others from using them. Yet there have been times in the past, and there will surely be occasions in the future, when major powers have used their nuclear capability to gain some political end by intimidation.”

The ability to respond on many fronts, to develop strategies for facing new challenges while at the same time continuing to promote innovative and creative efforts to deal with issues that loom large over time, is the hallmark of an organization that can make an impact. The Corporation’s work in the area of nuclear nonproliferation is ongoing, subject to review and course adjustments, and has been refocused more than once, but is always grounded in the idea that its grantmaking should add knowledge and understanding to the cause of international peace and security. It has, therefore, been able to imbue its program strategies with the flexibility to change in order to meet, head-on, the most critical and pressing problems of the times.

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