



Carnegie

RESULTS

NUCLEAR THREAT INITIATIVE: Working to reduce nuclear dangers with a goal of ultimately ending nuclear weapons as a threat to the world.

A world where no one has to worry about either intentional or accidental launches of the weapons of annihilation. A world in which the chilling prospect of terrorists building a crude nuclear bomb made from unsecured nuclear material (“loose nukes”) bought on a deadly black market is no longer a possibility. In other words, a world free of nuclear weapons. To some, that may seem impossible, but to others—like those who created the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI)—it is a vision that they believe must ultimately be realized. They have dedicated themselves to making it an achievable goal, while taking key steps to address urgent nuclear dangers.

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CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK

Ten years after its founding by businessman Ted Turner and former Senator Sam Nunn, those involved with the work of NTI, including some former top U.S. officials, say they can look back on a decade's worth of effort and see real results from the organization's activities aimed at making the dangers of nuclear weapons and materials an issue of critical concern for nations around the globe.

Led by Nunn and NTI President Joan Rohlfing, the organization serves as a catalyst for new thinking, takes direct action to reduce the threats from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and works to increase public awareness on these threats and the solutions. NTI's direct action projects have included: facilitating the removal of 2½ bombs worth of highly enriched uranium (HEU) from a nuclear reactor near Belgrade; eliminating up to two dozen bombs worth of HEU in Kazakhstan, leading to Kazakhstan's commitment to eliminate all of its HEU; and the creation of the World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS) to disseminate best practices for nuclear materials security globally.

NTI has "been a huge success," declares ex-Secretary of State George Shultz, who has worked closely with NTI on one of its most high-profile efforts, the Nuclear Security Project, which focuses on galvanizing global action to reduce nuclear dangers and building support for reducing reliance on nuclear weapons, ultimately ending them as a threat to the world.

The Vision and the Steps

In 2007, Shultz, along with Nunn, former Defense Secretary William Perry and former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, wrote a seminal *Wall Street Journal* op-ed that gained significant political traction for the idea that ridding the world of nuclear weapons not only *can* be achieved, but must be. Carnegie Corporation of New York has supported efforts to spread that message, along with NTI's call for a series of practical steps to lay the groundwork toward the long-term objective of eschewing nuclear weapons.

In April 2009, the once unimaginable prospect of a world free of nuclear threats became an official U.S. policy goal. It was announced by President Barack Obama in a landmark speech in which he declared, "Today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

NTI's efforts have flourished even beyond that ultimate endorsement of the organization's vision by the president of the United States. The 2007 op-ed by Nunn, Kissinger, Perry and Shultz, along with two Corporation-supported films produced by NTI, as well as other NTI programs, have helped to spawn international momentum toward creating a world

free of nuclear weapons and agreement on the steps needed to achieve this goal. "I had big expectations or I wouldn't have gotten into this, but my expectations have been greatly exceeded," says Nunn, who served in the Senate as chairman of the influential Armed Services Committee. "These have been very powerful instruments of communication."

Since 2004, NTI has received nearly \$4 million in Corporation grants, and the foundation now helps to support the organization's Nuclear Security Project, designed to capitalize on the worldwide attention garnered by the writings of Nunn, Kissinger, Perry and Shultz. In further op-eds, these four statesmen build on their argument that nuclear weapons are a dangerous anachronism in today's world. Shultz, in particular, says he remembers "a lot of close calls" during years in top government positions, where there was a concern that escalation could lead to a nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. He is now hopeful the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons can eventually be reached.

"We have a long way to go, but it's breathtaking how far we've come," notes the veteran of Cold War brinkmanship. "People say 'you can't get anywhere.' Well, I say the amount of nuclear weapons are about a quarter of what they were at the height of the Cold War, so that's a huge change... It's an idea whose time has come."

Former top Cabinet officials Shultz, Perry and Kissinger and ex-Senator Nunn are now so well known for their nuclear nonproliferation efforts that they are often referred to in policy shorthand not only as The Four Statesmen, but also as the "Gang of Four."

Until the *Wall Street Journal* article, even the thought of ridding the world of nuclear weapons seemed like a pie-in-the-sky idea. And while none of the influential four believes it will happen anytime in the near future, they have made it at least a possibility one day for their children or grandchildren.

"The most important thing is that the Gang of Four legitimized something that seemed impossible up to that point," observes Deana Arsenian, Corporation Vice President, International Program. "To say they actually believed the world could get rid of these weapons and to envision a world without them gave the idea credibility and momentum. Sam Nunn and the other three statesmen went public with a very compelling message: we had to focus on ridding the world of nuclear weapons and we had to start now."

The Four Statesmen's Global Momentum

The idea of a powerful joint op-ed by four American dignitaries evolved out of a dialogue among Nunn, Perry and Shultz. A pivotal conference at Stanford University's

Hoover Institution, where Shultz is a Distinguished Fellow, also served as a catalyst for the drafting of an article on how to reduce global nuclear dangers. They later signed up Henry Kissinger to the notion, adding one of America's most famous and pragmatic former Secretaries of State to the mix. "So we put this op-ed together," Shultz said simply.

The backing of these four men, two Republicans and two Democrats, all with a strong national security pedigree, took a seemingly radical idea and put it into the mainstream.

"Before the op-ed, it wasn't really part of the mainstream public discourse," recalls Stephen Del Rosso, International Peace and Security Program Director for Carnegie Corporation. "It was more of a fringe issue among peace activists and some experts with deep knowledge of nuclear matters. It took a Nixon-going-to-China type of action on the part of these former Cold Warriors to grab the attention of both the public and, perhaps most importantly, the foreign policy establishments in the U.S. and abroad with the message that it was high time 'to stop the madness.'"

Part of the attraction was the bipartisan appeal of the plea of the four. "We made a big effort to keep the whole thing out of partisan politics as much as we could," Shultz notes.

In the groundbreaking op-ed, the four statesmen called for "intensive work with leaders of the countries in possession of nuclear weapons to turn the goal of a world without nuclear weapons into a joint enterprise."

The authoritative statement spurred equally impassioned commentary from officials overseas. For example, citing the *Wall Street Journal* piece, Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for the United Kingdom, said in a 2007 speech, "What we need is both vision—a scenario for a world free of nuclear weapons. And action—progressive steps to reduce warhead numbers and to limit the role of nuclear weapons in security policy...."

The success of the op-ed highlighted the need to capitalize on its message, which led to the creation of NTI's Nuclear Security Project, launched by Shultz, Kissinger, Perry and Nunn "to link a vision of a world free of nuclear weapons with urgent steps to reduce the nuclear dangers." One of its central aims is "to promote dialogue, education and action on this vision and steps agenda," explains Isabelle Williams, NTI Senior Program Officer who helps coordinate the project's international strategy.

NTI carries the visionary message and step-by-step ideas of the four statesmen around the world, with "an ambitious suite of international activities," Rohlfing explains. These activities support analytical understanding as well as broader political support.

Partners worldwide address analytical questions, hold dialogues and produce publications—all designed to further both understanding, capacity and technical support for the

vision of a world without nuclear weapons and the steps to achieve it. NTI has partnerships with organizations in countries worldwide, including India, Pakistan, Argentina, the European Union and Australia.

The Project's regional networks help build a more supportive public climate for governments to take action on reducing these dangers. To date, the Project has supported the creation of a UK Top Level Group, the European Leadership Network, and the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network. "What these networks have is the potential to create a force multiplier effect," NTI's Williams says, "because you create a global presence for this issue." In the future, NTI wants to bring a similar type of leadership panel to Latin America.

The Corporation's support helps NTI to quickly capitalize on issues without having to find money for specific activities. Otherwise, "a lot of our time would have been spent trying to raise the funding from other donors—if at all possible," says Williams. But as noted earlier, Carnegie Corporation is only one of several NTI funders. The Corporation, for example, has worked closely with the MacArthur Foundation to maximize the power of their grants. "It leverages our money and it leverages MacArthur's money," notes Arsenian.

Instead of citing as a goal a world without nuclear weapons, NTI takes a pragmatic, step-by-step approach to achieving this seemingly distant goal. Incremental steps include working on ways to change the Cold War posture for warning and decision time for nuclear weapons, to help prevent accidental launch; eliminating short-range nuclear weapons, including those originally deployed for the Cold War European front; implementing higher security standards for nuclear material stored around the world; ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; and halting global production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

On another front, the Project's Statesmen Dialogue program, which receives Corporation support, focuses on promoting education and discussion about nuclear dangers into the international arena. When Nunn, Kissinger, Perry and Shultz travel internationally, they arrange meetings with senior officials to discuss these issues. Because of the prestige of the four former U.S. officials, they are able to reach high-level audiences. For example, a Statesmen Dialogue meeting with Italian officials provided intellectual support for Italy's presidency of the G-8 summit of major nations in 2009. The G-8 nations subsequently committed themselves to "creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons." In that connection, Williams notes, "We like to think that was a result of ideas" raised in the Statesmen Dialogue meeting.

With NTI's nurturing, the "four statesmen" concept has grown rapidly around the world.

"The shift in how individuals talk about nuclear threats and the vision is really quite incredible, and that's one of

the biggest successes,” Williams declares. There are now 13 “teams of four” around the world, including in Britain, France and Russia. The teams are composed of “former senior officials who have come together, across parties, to support this kind of initiative in the spirit of what the four have done,” Williams says, “to raise its aspirations among their own governments.”

Carnegie Corporation’s Leadership

To Nunn, the Carnegie Corporation imprimatur has been perhaps even more critical than its financial commitment in raising other funds and increasing the credibility of NTI’s work over the years. Corporation president Vartan Gregorian has lent his presence to NTI events, even attending international seminars of the Nuclear Security Project. “More important than simply money, it was confidence being expressed by people who were really respected,” Nunn says, “starting with Vartan.”

Gregorian was at the White House last year when President Obama screened NTI’s documentary film, *Nuclear Tipping Point*, for a prominent audience. The film is narrated by actor Michael Douglas and features interviews with Nunn, Kissinger, Perry and Shultz, as well as an introduction by former Secretary of State, General Colin Powell.

Vartan Gregorian—along with his predecessor, David Hamburg, who served as Corporation president from 1982 to 1997—has long seen the nuclear nonproliferation issue as central to Carnegie Corporation’s mission. “Nuclear weapons and their proliferation to states and nonstate actors remain, arguably, the biggest threat to humanity,” Gregorian noted in his 2007 essay, *Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century*. “While the potential use of nuclear weapons by a major nuclear state has diminished with the end of the Cold War, the nuclear threat has not disappeared but has splintered into many separate threats, some of them even more difficult to discern or address.”

Gregorian cited factors that range from the lack of actual movement to eliminate nuclear weapons by major world powers to increased momentum toward nuclear energy. “All of these factors heighten prospects that nuclear weapons may proliferate and be used, and make it both logical and imperative that nuclear security remain a central feature” of the Corporation’s International Program.

A Long History on Nuclear Control

“My relationship with Carnegie Corporation goes way back,” Nunn points out. “There’s a lot of history

there,” including links between the Corporation’s nuclear control efforts and the Nunn-Lugar legislation, created with his partner Republican Senator Richard Lugar, aimed at safeguarding nuclear material in the former Soviet Union. In fact, he notes that a Corporation-sponsored meeting of the Aspen Institute Congressional Program¹ served as the catalyst for Nunn-Lugar. Nunn was meeting Russian lawmakers in Budapest in August 1991 when the Soviet Union underwent a coup attempt against then-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. (By the end of that year, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and independence for many of its republics was a reality.) Nunn flew to Moscow to see the situation firsthand and realized the world would face a frightening situation once the disparate states that comprised the Soviet Union split apart. Such a situation—which soon came to pass—would result, said Nunn, in “a huge, unregulated storehouse of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. I realized that material represented a tremendous danger,” remembers Nunn. “I came right back and introduced Nunn-Lugar” as a response to the threat.

But the legislation stalled until Corporation-sponsored research and analysis, which included work by Ashton Carter, “helped us get it passed,” according to Nunn. Carter currently serves as U.S. Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology & Logistics. Among his other positions, Carter previously served as chair of the International and Global Affairs faculty at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and Co-Director (with Perry) of the Preventive Defense Project, a research collaboration of Harvard and Stanford Universities.

“When we ran into a huge amount of opposition” on the legislation, Nunn recalls. “Ash Carter had looked at the whole question of the Soviet Union and its nuclear material. We got Ash down to help us brief senators about the real threats. We were able to turn this around—and the analytical work played a very big role.” Among Carter’s contributions was a report he co-authored entitled *Soviet Nuclear Fission: Control of the Nuclear Arsenal in a Disintegrating Soviet Union*, which presented a clear 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,

¹ The Aspen Institute Congressional Program, established in 1983 by former U.S. Senator Dick Clark, with support from the Corporation, is a nongovernmental, nonpartisan educational program for members of the United States Congress. It provides lawmakers with a stronger grasp of critical public policy issues by convening high-level conferences in which legislators from both parties and both houses are brought together with internationally recognized academics, experts and leaders.

republican secession and widespread civil chaos, resulting in nuclear weapons, fissile material or nuclear know-how falling into dangerous hands.

The Dangers of a New World

Sam Nunn is viewed by many as the engine behind NTI's success in directing worldwide political and public attention to the long-term, longstanding dangers posed by nuclear weapons, materials and facilities. Nunn is among the most respected and well-known individuals identified with nonproliferation efforts. It was among his highest priorities during the twenty-four years that he served in the Senate.

"It's very important that Senator Nunn is leading NTI," says Igor Ivanov, the former Russian foreign minister who is a member of the NTI board. "Senator Nunn is known globally as a leader in the effort to eliminate nuclear weapons."

Such issues continued to be critical to Nunn after he left the Senate and served on the Carnegie Corporation Board of Trustees, explains Susan King, the Corporation's Vice President of External Affairs. "When he was a Corporation trustee, Sam often talked about the need to keep concerns about nuclear proliferation front and center in terms of public understanding and U.S. policy focus and about the importance of controlling the amount of nuclear material, particularly in the former Soviet Union and in the U.S.," she says. "The majority of these weapons and other fissile materials are leftover remnants of the Cold War. After 9/11, Sam felt the issue had to be much higher on the international agenda, as well. Terrorism really put a new threat on the table in terms of nuclear material, so he discussed the nuclear problem with great passion at our Board meetings."

A Private Organization Making A Difference

The idea for NTI surfaced after media magnate Ted Turner was looking for a way to address the nuclear weapons issue. As NTI president emeritus and former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Charles Curtis explains, "Turner had been provoked by a *60 Minutes II* segment showing that some nine years after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War both the Russians and the U.S. still kept large numbers of nuclear weapons on prompt launch posture and decided he wanted to do something about it."

Turner wanted an influential partner to head the enterprise and Curtis suggested that he talk to Nunn. When the two men got together, remembers Curtis, they agreed "to do a study and determine if a private organization can make a

difference here." They concluded that yes, it could, if it combined influential voices with direct action projects.

The two could be viewed as an odd couple in terms of strategy. Turner, known for bold actions, wanted to immediately aim at ridding the world of nuclear weapons. Nunn wanted to focus on the more realistic goal of taking practical steps toward reducing nuclear dangers. The cerebral Nunn tempered the audacious Turner. "Ted was the vision guy," observes Curtis. "Sam was the next-steps guy."

NTI was founded with what seemed like a very large commitment of \$250 million in AOL stock from Turner. Originally, the idea was for NTI to fund work done by others and remain in existence for five years.

"When NTI was launched in January of 2001, we envisioned ourselves as a limited-life organization," explains Joan Rohlfing, the current president and chief operating officer of NTI. "The intent was to spend down the funds that Mr. Turner committed. We thought of ourselves as a traditional grantmaking organization. In our first year, we committed about \$35 million in grants and contracts."

But AOL stock collapsed when the Internet stock bubble burst. Turner's stock commitment was now worth a fraction of the original \$250 million. And much of that money had been spent. "We were basically facing a wind-down if we weren't able to scramble to obtain additional support," Curtis recalls.

Along with the Corporation, investor Warren Buffett has become an important source of funding for NTI. As part of another NTI project, he pledged \$50 million toward the creation of an international nuclear fuel bank, as a way to discourage the spread of technology that could be used to make nuclear weapons. This initiative was approved by the IAEA in 2010.

"Ever since August 1945, we've been in a new world," says investor Warren Buffett, referring to the first use of the atomic bomb. "The planet is struggling with this incredible capacity for self-destruction."

Innovative Public Education

In 2005, Nunn found a way to focus the attention of a mass audience on the issue of how terrorists might make use of nuclear material. A noted policy wonk, Nunn surprisingly pushed for making *Last Best Chance*, a movie that greatly raised NTI's profile. By all accounts, the cerebral Nunn is not given to drama, yet he turned to a Hollywood-style film to dramatize the issue. It starred former senator and actor Fred Thompson as the U.S. President confronted by a crisis brought about by terrorists intent on obtaining and weaponizing nuclear materials.

“With several years under our belt at NTI, we realized that a large part of the challenge in getting government to take steps to reduce danger was that we needed to raise awareness about the threat, both in and out of the government,” Rohlffing recalls.

The movie *Last Best Chance* was an effective tool for increasing public education on nuclear threats. “The idea was not just to publicize the issue, but to also have a vehicle that would dramatize, for real people, the threat of nuclear material falling into the wrong hands,” observes the Corporation’s Susan King. “And also to help policymakers understand that this wasn’t just some esoteric kind of national security issue but that in the age of terrorism, ‘loose nukes’ are a destabilizing factor that could present opportunities to greatly harm the United States as well as other nations.”

NTI’s Effectiveness

In addition to Nunn, other NTI officials have worked in government, which increases their effectiveness in Washington. NTI president Rohlffing ran the U.S. Department of Energy’s nonproliferation program and counseled three Secretaries of Energy on nuclear issues. The agency connections bolster NTI’s overall effectiveness, she notes.

Others among the 30-person staff have had appointments at the White House, Energy Department, U.S. Department of Defense, Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, as well as other governments and international organizations.

“We know whom to talk to,” Rohlffing says. “We know how the process in government and between government agencies works. Quite a few of us here at NTI have experience in government. I think that enhances our ability to work with officials on the inside of government. It’s enabled us to be more effective because people, for the most part, trust our judgment.”

Several NTI staff members have now gone on to fill critical positions in the Obama administration, demonstrating the reach of the organization. Brooke Anderson is Chief of Staff at the White House National Security Council. Another former NTI staff member, Laura Holgate, is the Senior Director for Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism and Threat Reduction at the National Security Council. And Margaret Hamburg is a physician who served as Vice President of NTI’s biological program. An expert on public health and bioterrorism, she is now the Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Her father, former Corporation president David Hamburg, is a member of NTI’s advisory board.

Nonpartisan Support for Reducing Nuclear Dangers

NTI’s outreach in presidential election cycles has helped keep nuclear dangers, and the solutions to address them, in the minds of voters. In the 2008 presidential campaign, both Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama held positions that dovetailed with the ultimate vision of a world without nuclear weapons. Senator McCain said on the campaign trail, “A quarter of a century ago, President Ronald Reagan declared, ‘Our dream is to see the day when nuclear weapons will be banished from the face of the Earth.’ That is my dream, too.”

But with Obama’s election, the notion moved forward with a leader who had been intrigued by the issue since well before he even occupied a Senate seat. Obama “was already interested in the subject before he got elected” to the Senate, notes Nunn. Shortly afterward, “he called me up when he was still in the basement and did not have a permanent office” on Capitol Hill. The two men talked for over an hour about a range of issues, including the weapons issue. Nunn advised Obama to work with his former colleague and legislation co-author Senator Richard Lugar “because of his keen interest in this whole area of nuclear risk reduction.”

President Obama’s interest in the issue actually started much earlier. His senior thesis at Columbia University was on Soviet nuclear disarmament. So, the new president already held longstanding views on the danger of nuclear weapons. Yet, it is arguable that even if Obama was already inclined toward a new approach on the nuclear issue, the bipartisan approach of the four statesmen gave the administration needed support in highlighting the pursuit of the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons as a centerpiece of its agenda on the issue.

The strong defense credentials of the four statesmen were a great help in that regard, notes Arsenian. Otherwise, the president might “have been way ahead of the American public” in calling for the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons. In that connection, Nunn observes, “Perhaps the greatest thing we have been able to contribute is freeing up the political space” for Obama in defining the dangers of a nuclear world.

The no-nuclear weapons goal has also reverberated internationally. Russia’s former top foreign policy official Ivanov notes the two major nuclear powers, Russia and the U.S., have signed on to the notion advanced by the NTI and the four statesmen. “I think that this initiative has had strong repercussions in many decisions taken by the United Nations and by a number of countries,” Ivanov says. One indication that Ivanov’s supposition is correct was on display

during talks toward a new START agreement to reduce nuclear weapons. “[Russian President Dmitry] Medvedev and Obama, in their negotiations, also supported the idea of a world without nuclear weapons,” Ivanov notes.

The White House has recognized the actions of the four statesmen both in Washington and at the United Nations.

In 2009, the four were invited to a special summit of the U.N. Security Council, chaired by President Obama, and focused on nuclear issues. At the meeting, UNSC Resolution 1887 was passed “underlining the need to pursue further efforts in the sphere of nuclear disarmament.” Noting the Security Council was “gravely concerned about the threat of nuclear terrorism,” the U.N. resolution called for many of the steps set out by the four and NTI’s agenda.

Earlier in 2009, President Obama invited Nunn, Kissinger, Perry and Shultz to discuss nuclear nonproliferation with him at the White House, saying he was “very grateful” for their leadership. “I don’t think anybody would accuse these four gentlemen of being dreamers,” Obama told the White House press corps afterwards. “They’re hard-headed, tough defenders of American interests and American security. But what they have come together to help galvanize is a recognition that we do not want a world of continued nuclear proliferation. . . America has to take leadership in this area.” Obama noted that he would remain in touch with the four on these critical issues. “This is an ongoing collaboration,” the president promised.

At the 2010 White House screening of *Nuclear Tipping Point* at the White House, notable current and former U.S. dignitaries attended, including the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, current senators, and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Albright and a large number of former top officials from both political parties have endorsed the call for eliminating nuclear weapons and NTI’s proposed companion steps. “I think we were able to list about three-quarters of the living Secretaries of State, Defense and National Security Advisers as signing onto the goals of the op-ed,” Shultz notes. “A big constituency developed from this.”

Recently, in March 2011, NTI held a screening of *Nuclear Tipping Point* at the Library of Congress for members and their staff.

Rep. Howard Berman, ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was so moved by the screening that he referred to it afterward in congressional testimony. “Last week, I watched a very important documentary, the *Nuclear Tipping Point*, which I recommend to my colleagues and everyone viewing this hearing today. In this film, four of our most respected statesmen on national security, William Perry. . . George Shultz, Sam Nunn, and

Henry Kissinger, discuss the terrifying prospect of terrorists obtaining nuclear material for a nuclear weapon or for use in a radiological bomb,” Berman said.

Unfortunately, recent events such as the radiation concerns arising from the nuclear power reactor accident after the earthquake in Japan have lent grave reality to worries about nuclear dangers. “The catastrophe in Japan serves an important reminder for people,” says Rohlifing, “and will catalyze a conversation that’s much needed around the world about the challenges of making the nuclear fuel cycle safe and secure.”

Ivanov observes that NTI board members “started to discuss the issue before what happened in Japan.” But the radiation concerns that now affect Japan “reinforce the necessity” to act to ensure safety as the world increasingly turns to nuclear power, notes Ivanov. “Japan only demonstrated how dangerous that situation is,” the former Russian official says. The 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in South Korea is expected to address both nuclear safety and nuclear security.

The Mountaintop

It’s clear that few are under any illusion that the no-nuclear goal will come easily. As President Obama has said, “This goal will not be reached quickly—perhaps not in my lifetime.”

Even supporters acknowledge there is a worldwide sentiment that nuclear weapons will long be needed to provide deterrence against potential enemies. So Nunn frequently uses an analogy for the no-nuclear weapons effort, describing that seemingly far-off goal as the “mountaintop.” Nunn says it is important to “set up a base camp” to begin the climb to the summit with practical steps to limit nuclear weapons dangers, even if that very tall mountaintop is not yet even in sight. “If we ever want our children and grandchildren to see the mountaintop,” Nunn urges, “our generation must begin to address this issue.”

NTI has also won the attention and respect of those outside the national security community. Warren Buffett, for example, known for his economic forecasting ability, declares “the problem of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons being used by rogue organizations or rogue states, I think, is the most important problem civilization faces over the next century. It’s very difficult to figure out ways to reduce the probability of something happening,” notes Buffett. “On the other hand, even a small reduction is important for the human race. Because of Sam Nunn’s involvement, NTI is probably as effective an organization as you can have to reduce those probabilities.”

NTI’s extraordinary success was beyond imagination

CARNEGIE CORPORATION OF NEW YORK
437 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

Phone: (212) 371-3200
Fax: (212) 754-4073
Web site: www.carnegie.org

Vice President, External Affairs

Director, Journalism Initiative, Special Initiatives and

Strategy: Susan Robinson King

Editor; Director, Publications

and Public Affairs: Eleanor Lerman

Manager, Strategic Communications: George Soule

Editor/Writer: Karen Theroux

Manager, Dissemination Projects: Ambika Kapur

Communications Coordinator: Adrienne Faraci

Public Affairs Assistant: Patricia Pagnotta

Researcher: Ronald Sexton

Administrative Assistant: Max Falkowitz

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when the organization was founded just a decade ago, notes former NTI president Curtis. "I would not have expected we'd find ourselves in this position," he observes. "It's a real lesson in the power of big ideas."

Written by: Lee Michael Katz. Katz is a Washington, D.C., area freelance writer. He won a Stanley Foundation Reporting Project Journalism Award in 2007. Katz's work has appeared in *Carnegie Results*, the *Carnegie Reporter* and numerous magazines and web sites, as well as *The Washington Post* and through The New York Times Syndicate. Previously, Katz was national reporter and Senior Diplomatic Correspondent at *USA Today* and Managing Editor/ International of UPI.




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