CBRNe:
THE ONGOING CHALLENGE

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KINGSTON CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

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Key Insights

Interoperability and coordination across jurisdictions and agencies:

Improving interoperability and coordination between law enforcement agencies across jurisdictional boundaries is a critical element of enhancing capacity to respond to CBRNe threats. Authorities must be able to communicate, share knowledge, and cooperate if they are to provide an effective response to a CBRNe threat or attack, particularly considering how few people are trained to do so. In Canada, there are dozens of organizations tasked with CBRNe-related responsibilities, which are governed by more than thirty acts and regulations, including the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD), the Department of National Defence (DND), the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), Public Safety Canada, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Building and strengthening a normative regime against the use of these weapons:

Building, strengthening, and expanding a normative regime against the proliferation and use of CBRNe weapons requires the strong commitment of countries such as Canada and the United States. For smaller states such as Canada, supporting international norms against these weapons represents an important role where Canada has both capacity and credibility.

Far beyond state-to-state relations:

States are no longer the sole actors in both preventing and responding to CBRNe threats and preventing them. Strengthening the norms against the use of CBRNe weapons requires identifying key non-state actors and regional groupings, which in turn highlights contemporary conflict points, lack of regional trust and capacity, and potential breeding grounds for terrorism. Moreover, regional security challenges are often opaque to those from outside the region, making the combination of non-state actors and regional tensions particularly pernicious.
Means and ends include destabilization and delegitimization:

The objective of destabilizing, delegitimizing local and national authorities, and creating panic may be at the root of CBRNe proliferation and usage, rather than a desire to kill. Fomenting mass panic can be done fairly easily, and, as was seen during the height of Aum Shinrikyo activity, signals of destabilization can encourage panic by suggesting that the government does not have the ability to deliver an effective response to a CBRNe attack.

Diaspora populations are a touchstone of anti-terrorism efforts:

Policy-makers must consider integrating diaspora populations into their efforts to combat CBRNe threats, proliferation and usage. Diaspora communities offer self-policing and other monitoring functions that have proven essential to law enforcement agencies and other authorities.

Our knowledge and understanding of the threat is limited:

Policy-makers and other practitioners must confront their own lack of knowledge on CBRNe threats, including technical capacity, usage, knowledge-sharing across jurisdictions and agencies, and appropriate responses to a possible attack. Gaps in understanding may make it impossible to know if a CBRNe event has even occurred or how to incorporate CBRNe threats into planning at the local, national, and international levels.

Manichean approaches often do not fit:

There are many grey areas in the conversation on CBRNe threats. Moral ambiguities and tenuous alliances make it difficult to determine team players. While policy-makers and CBRNe practitioners often need to consider ambiguous partners and allies, the reality is that the “good guys” need to be successful all the time while the “bad guys” only need to be successful once.

Technological advances are changing the conversation:

Technological developments for some forms of CBRNe threats have made it much easier for terror groups and other illegitimate actors to access and produce CBRNe weapons.
Smaller-scale production of weapons, particularly chemical weapons, can be done in kitchens and garages, making it much more difficult for law enforcement agencies to track. Moreover, weapons inspectors are no longer able to rely on certain revealing signals, making detection that much more difficult.
Overview of Proceedings

The ninth annual Kingston Conference on International Security was held from May 12-14, 2014 in Kingston, Ontario. The conference was organized by the Centre for International and Defence Policy at Queen’s University, the Canadian Army Doctrine and Training Centre of the Canadian Forces, and their partners, the Strategic Studies Institute of the United States Army War College, the Royal Military College of Canada, and the Canadian Defence Academy. The military history of Kingston offered an ideal setting in which to examine the evolution of the CBRNe threat and its manifestation at different levels of analysis. The conference, titled CBRNe: the Ongoing Challenge, focused on the multidimensional challenges to international security posed by chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive threats and the implications for Canada and its allies.

The conference brought together a range of military, academic, governmental, private sector, and non-governmental personnel to discuss the CBRNe threat at the global, regional, and local levels, and responses to the that threat. Chemical weapons use in Syria, the Boston Marathon bombings, and the nuclear policies of North Korea have emphasized the immediate pressure that CBRNe threats place on policy-makers, first-responders, law enforcement agencies, armed forces, and governments. The potential of these weapons to unleash devastating and long-term damage obligates international security practitioners to maintain their focus on CBRNe threats. These threats necessitate engagement from all sectors of society and all levels of government, and this added complexity only makes sustained analysis of these issues that much more pressing.

Participants at the conference explored the evolution of the CBRNe threat in contemporary global politics and its management at three different levels: the global level, where the nuclear and chemical weapons programs of some states are deemed to threaten international security and non-state actors have changed the roster of players; the regional North American level, involving trans-border cooperation with the United States against politically-motivated CBRNe acts; and the local level, where coordination with first-responders is crucial for the effective deterrence and management of CBRNe events. Presentations deftly highlighted these key questions and encouraged productive discussions
between panellists and audience members. The collegial atmosphere of the conference facilitated fruitful dialogue on this complex and multidimensional topic.

Day One

Lieutenant-General Marquis Hainse, Commander of the Canadian Army, opened the proceedings by presenting a challenge to participants that set the tone for the remainder of the event. LGen. Hainse suggested that conference participants remember the central question of how Canada and its allies can improve response capacity to the menace of CBRNe regarding preparedness, cooperation, limited resources, and within the North American context. This question of how Canada and its allies collaboratively develop best-practices to respond to and manage these threats was well-received by the audience and coloured much of the next two days’ conversations.

Panel I - From NBC to CBRNe: The Evolution of a Threat

The first panel flowed naturally from LGen. Hainse’s challenge. Its purpose was an examination of the historical evolution of CBRNe over the course of the 20th century, with the intent of providing a backdrop to present concerns. It examined the key historical and technological advancements in the development and deployment of chemical, biological, radioactive, nuclear, and explosive weapons and considered how perceptions of the use of such weapons have changed, particularly within a moral context.

The panel’s chair, Dr. Harry J. Kowal, Principal of the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC), began by reminding participants that the crisis in Syria has reinvigorated interest in and forced a renewed focus on CBRNe threats. Moreover, the escalation of conflict in Ukraine has reminded international security practitioners that CBRNe weapons in Europe, and the implications for NATO, extend far beyond the Cold War context. Panel members included Colonel Jeff Brodeur, Acting Commandant of the CBRN School of the US Army, Dr. Robert Bunker, Distinguished Visiting Professor and Minerva Chair at the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, and Marius Grinius, former ambassador to Vietnam, South Korea, North Korea, the UN and CD, Geneva.

Ambassador Grinius’ presentation concentrated on the evolution of views towards deployment of CBRNe weapons. Among the key points that he drove home was the danger of
non-state actors acquiring these weapons, particularly in regional conflict zones, a point that was echoed as the conference progressed. The ambassador suggested that while nuclear weapons remained the only real weapon of mass destruction, chemical weapons will remain a bigger nuisance for military planners and whole-of-government approach policy-makers. Anti-proliferation efforts through multilateral and bilateral channels are the best means of discouraging the proliferation and deployment of these weapons, both by armed forces and non-state actors. Despite the threats that these weapons pose, the ambassador identified the challenge of cyberterrorism as the battleground of the future.

Col. Brodeur framed his thesis within the context of comfort levels related to these weapons being “just shy of paranoia.” He reminded participants that the decision by legitimate governments to use CBRNe weapons is not a moral one but rather a business decision, highlighting a theme that was woven into much of the conference. Among the significant changes in CBRNe weaponry are the advances in technology that have eliminated the need for inventories or particularly sophisticated labs to prepare chemical and biological weapons, as well as the emergence of innovative products designed to skirt treaties. Furthermore, weapons must be maintained regularly and cannot simply be purchased and stored. As such, from a tactical perspective, sustainment of weapons becomes the real challenge.

Ambassador Grinius noted that the Boston Marathon bombing was a devastating reminder that practitioners must pay more attention to the small-e in CBRNe, a challenge that Dr. Bunker undertook during his presentation on the ‘e’ in CBRNe – explosives. Echoing Ambassador Grinius’ concern, he presented several phrases in the evolution of suicide bombings, noting that it is a co-evolutionary process between suicide bombings and government countermeasures. The current phase of such weaponry is the body cavity bombs that were first seen in 2009, a weapon with terrifying potential. As was noted by an audience member and mentioned several times during the remainder of the conference, the most concerning element of these weapons might not be the potential for mass casualties, but rather the fallout from mass panic.
Panel II – The Current Threat: Global

From the broader overview of the evolution of CBRNe in the first panel, the remainder of day one focused on global, regional, and local threats. The chair of the second panel, Major-General (retd) John Adams, of the School of Policy Studies at Queen’s University, grabbed the attention of the audience with a simple axiom: the good guys need to be lucky all the time, while the bad guys only have to be lucky once.

The panel presenters, Dr. Erika Simpson of Western University, Dr. Amy Smithson, a Senior Fellow at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation, and Chrystiane Roy, the Deputy Director of the Chemical and Biological Weapons division at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, deftly integrated Maj.-Gen. Adams’ point into their presentations. The panel aimed to provide an overview of the threats to Canada and its allies from CBRNe at the global level. It focused on the continued existence of uncontrolled CBRNe materials, weapons, and capability, the problem of “loose nukes”, and the role of non-state actors.

Dr. Simpson began by suggesting that biological weapons are the most pressing contemporary security challenge, even when considering the possible impact of nuclear weapons and the potential collapse of the NPT. Compelling evidence for this perspective included the capacity of biological weapons to be used multiple times and clandestinely, as well as their intensity and lethality. Dr. Smithson explained that like biological weapons, effective chemical weapons production can be concealed and only small amounts are required to have considerable effect. Dr. Smithson also noted that new micro-process technology has the potential to be a game-changer as it is much faster and more cost-efficient. Such threats also highlight the need for global governance initiatives since they transcend borders.

Dr. Smithson also noted that the danger of chemical weapons is two-fold in that there are state-level concerns regarding their usage by governments such as North Korea and Syria, but also their appeal to terrorists and other non-state actors such as Aum Shinrikyo. Furthermore, technological advances have made obsolete the signals that weapons inspectors normally consider. Ms. Roy also narrowed in on chemical weapons, but expressed that the track record of usage is poor, and that while they have a massive potential for casualties, agents need to be highly toxic and stable and they are difficult to control. Dr. Smithson
acknowledged Ms. Roy’s concerns, but asked that the audience recall the damage that Aum Shinrikyo was able to inflict even with inferior chemical weapons. That group had attempted to obtain power through traditional electoral channels, but was soundly defeated and resorted to terror attacks that were designed to destabilize and delegitimize Tokyo.

As the Canadian government expert on the panel, Ms. Roy emphasized that novichoks continue to be a significant threat for Canada and its allies, while IEDs have emerged as a weapon of choice for terrorist groups. Ms. Roy explained that for Canada, key threats still centre on Iranian proliferation, security in Northeast Asia, and chemical weapons in Syria.

Panel III – The Current Threats: Regional

Professor Stéfanie von Hlakty, Director of the Centre for International and Defence Policy at Queen’s University, set the tone for this panel by asking how severe a regional threat would need to be in order to solicit an international response. The question was posed within a framework of CRBNe threats at the regional level, particularly for the states that Ms. Roy highlighted in the previous panel, namely Iran, North Korea, and Syria. The panel included presentations from Dr. Bruce Bechtol of Angelo State University in Texas, Dr. Peter Jones of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Ottawa, and Dr. Roger Kangas, the Dean of the NESA Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University.

Dr. Bechtol began with a spirited analysis of the nuclear threat posed by North Korea. This presentation served as a warning not to underestimate the nuclear capacity of the North Koreans or Pyongyang’s duplicity. The statistic that 40% of the North Korean economy is comprised of weapons proliferation provided a startling reminder to many in the audience of how much weapons of mass destruction, the platforms to carry them, refurbishment of old weapons, and technical and military support are critical for the survival of the regime. As such, for Dr. Bechtol, the most logical means of halting the Kim Jong Un is to halt the flow of money, which all must be laundered through foreign banks.

Dr. Bechtol also explained that the North Korea threat extended far beyond East Asia to the Middle East, where they are cooperating with both the Iranian and Syrian governments. This dovetailed nicely into Dr. Jones’ presentation of CBRNe threats in the Middle East and
specifically Iran. Both Drs. Jones and Kangas echoed Ambassador Grinius’ concerns over regional threats, with Dr. Kangas reminding the audience that key obstacles to non-proliferation include a complete lack of regional trust in the Middle East and a lack of regional capacity. Strengthening the normative regime against CBRNe proliferation was encouraged during the question and answer session of this panel as a means of combatting such distrust.

As Dr. Jones stated, the Middle East is the only region where these weapons have been applied repeatedly and on a large scale, which makes the issues discussed at the conference much more tangible than only an academic exercise. The complexity of the Middle East goes far beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict to encompass sub-regional issues. Dr. Jones’ suggested that the dynamics of Arab-Arab or Arab-Persian conflicts would likely be the impetus for Middle Eastern states to acquire nuclear materials, rather than the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Moreover, the failure of western academics to understand the severity and longevity of the impact of the Iran-Iraq War emphasizes the need for analysis that goes beyond classical security concerns to incorporate a reflexive or critical lens to reveal a more complete picture of the motivations of Tehran. Dr. Jones made the comparison between Iran in the late 1980s and early 1990s to Belgium in the 1920s to illustrate the effect of the war on Iranian society. The importance of the Middle East and Iran was also taken up by Dr. Kangas, who noted that despite the so-called pivot to Asia, Washington’s security focus is still the Middle East. Dr. Kangas applied a classical security approach to the Middle East, explaining that these conversations are all about national security and state survival.

Panel IV – The Current Threats: Local

Chaired by Dr. Bill Bentley, Director of the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute of the Canadian Defence Academy, the purpose of the session was to survey the CBRNe threat in Canada. Discussion centred on how exposed Canada actually is, from where the threat might emanate, and who might perpetrate such attacks. Domestic radicalization and the recruitment of Canadians by radical movements overseas have clear and complex implications for Canada and for cross-border security. These questions were examined in presentations by Professor Richard Parent of the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University, Inspector Ken
Faulkner, Officer in Charge of CBRNe Operations at the RCMP, and Dr. Christian Leuprecht of RMC.

Professor Parent explored radicalization and homegrown extremism in Canada, with a focus on right-wing extremism and domestic radicalization. The bizarre “sovereign citizens” movement is but one example of local groups dedicated to resisting government authority. The murder and attempted murder of police officers in Canada and the United States illustrates how far right-wing extremists are willing to go. Early intervention is critical for intercepting and preventing radicalization, as is engaging with diaspora communities and those in the prison system.

Dr. Leuprecht also explored the local threat and emphasized the need to differentiate between violent extremism and radicalization. He generated much interest among the audience by warning against conflating radicalization and violence extremism, suggesting that radicalization has nothing to do with violence as 99% of those with radical opinions never act. Like Professor Parent, Dr. Leuprecht expressed the need to draw on the capital of diaspora communities, as strong ethnic and family ties combined with extremist positions have the potential to facilitate terrorist networks.

Inspector Faulkner changed tacks by focusing on Canada’s preparedness to respond to a CBRNe threat, rather than those who might perpetrate it. Canada’s national CBRNe response team is composed of the Public Health Agency of Canada, the RCMP, which would lead the response, and the Canadian Joint Incident Response Unit. The mandate of the team is to conduct high risk searches, stabilize a CBRNe event, and provide advanced CBRNe defence. The developments that Inspector Faulkner outlined include mobile forensic labs, 24-hour support for major events, and an integrated program between the RCMP and the Ottawa police force to overcome jurisdictional problems.

Despite these advances, Dr. Leuprecht noted that as a result of intergovernmental coordination problems and resentment on the part of municipalities, municipalities increasingly doubt that they should be investing in first-response capacities. There was general agreement that there is a disconnect between Public Safety Canada and first-responder agencies at some level. The necessary training among first-responders and coordination with federal agencies is too often lacking. As the conference progressed, insufficient training and
limited capacity of first-responders and first-receivers emerged as a common concern among participants.

Keynote Address: Dr. John Barrett, President and CEO of the Canadian Nuclear Association

Global Governance of Nuclear Technology - An Insider’s View

Following the dynamic and enthusiastic discussion of the first day of the conference, participants were treated to a keynote address by Dr. John Barrett, President and CEO of the Canadian Nuclear Association. Dr. Barrett’s focus was the global governance regime regulating and monitoring nuclear proliferation outside of enforceable compliance measures. Building on the earlier discussion of the day related to strengthening the normative regime against use of these weapons, Dr. Barrett considered the current climate related to proliferation of nuclear technology and the role that Canada has in fostering nuclear security.

Although the volume of the voices discussing nuclear proliferation has diminished in recent years, the question that has remained most pertinent in the last decade is how the international community can enforce compliance when a particular state undermines the normative regime against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The three options Dr. Barrett proposed, cajoling, begging, and forcing, seemed straight-forward, but as his talk developed, the audience began to form a clearer understanding of the complexity of the themes of the talk, namely safety, security, and non-proliferation.

Dr. Barrett opened his remarks by making the striking statement that far too few policy and decision-makers are talking about arms control, including in Ottawa, which shuttered the verification unit at the former Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Dr. Barrett’s overall thesis demonstrated that there is an on-going shift in nuclear technology whereby leadership is moving to China, Russia, and India away from the North Atlantic states and there is growing debate on proliferation for civilian purposes. The United States has decided that nuclear technology is simply too expensive and Canada has completed its involvement in nuclear programming. By abdicating from the nuclear game, states such as Canada are losing opportunities to control and influence the trajectory of the conversation on nuclear safety and security, which may result in a national security crisis.
Regional conflicts and the introduction of experts that have a political rather than a technical background has left the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) without the teeth to make meaningful constitutional changes to reflect contemporary realities. The seemingly intractable dynamics of the Middle East infiltrate almost every conversation, and some nuclear states perceive unfair expectations and standards being levied against them in comparison to other states such as Canada and the United States. For instance, there are 14 permanent members of the IAEA, including Canada, but South Korea is left without a seat even though it has a larger nuclear capacity than Canada. Case studies such as Iran illustrate the current state of the IAEA and the nuclear non-proliferation regime, particularly the stasis of negotiations and the unwillingness of some states to stir the pot.

Dr. Barrett explained that the dilution of the 12-point action plan following the Fukushima disaster also provides an apt illustration, if a disconcerting one, of the structure of the current regime. States pledged to increase safety but the agreement included no compliance or enforcement mechanisms. There was a push by some states and organizations to hammer out a binding agreement that incorporated a certain level of transparency and accountability, but other states invoked concerns of national sovereignty to water down the agreement. As a result, the final agreement that emerged included provisions for peer review, but also stipulated that any public report would need to be approved by a host state.

Dr. Barrett concluded by suggesting that such consternation adds up to weak global governance in the nuclear security sector. He presented three take-home points: firstly, there must be a willingness to build a robust architecture for nuclear governance; secondly, it might be time to return to square one in the field of multilateral confidence-building and compliance; and thirdly, it is necessary to consider these developments in the context of a larger geographic shift in leadership and the national security dimensions that accompany such a shift. Canada, as the only country that does not have its national government engaged in these discussions, is left trying to maintain influence and credibility even as it is pulling back from its own nuclear program.
Day 2

Major-General Stephen Bowes, Commander of the Canadian Army Doctrine Training Centre, opened the day’s proceedings by reminding participants of the need to acknowledge personal biases in analysis. Developing strong analytical capacity requires an understanding of the imperfect nature of security intelligence and recognition of the limits of available knowledge. The audience nodded as the Major-General stated that while those in the security business are not supposed to be surprised by what they encounter, surprise often occurs. Improving communication between governments and military personnel is key to addressing intelligence shortfalls at both ends. These two themes of improved communication and understanding the extent of available information framed much of the day’s discussion.

Panel V – The International Challenges

Chaired by Lieutenant-General Stuart Beare, Commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command, this panel considered the response of the international community to CBRNe threats, with a particular focus on global governance. Flowing from Dr. Barrett’s comments from the previous evening, questions of compliance, enforcement mechanisms, and other means of controlling proliferation were considered. The technological advancements of CBRNe weapons and the politics of multilateral and bilateral engagement make it all the more challenging for global governance initiatives to keep pace. The panel featured Lieutenant-Colonel (retd) Wolf Rauchalles, the Managing Director of the German Association for Defence Technology, Michael Collins, Chief of Staff for JTF-Civil Support at NORTHCOM, and Major Michael Blanchette of the Joint Counter Explosive Threat Task Force of the Canadian Army.

Lt.-Col. Rauchalles delivered a fascinating presentation outlining the European and German perspectives on CBRNe, a topic that was not part of the previous day’s conversation. Noting that an international order rooted in multilateralism is an important plank in Europe’s strategic objectives, he laid out the EU CBRN Action Plan and other programs designed to improve and implement security standards. The research programs, structures, means, and civilian side of the program revealed an increased emphasis on research and education through well-placed institutes and centres of excellence.
Returning to North America, both Michael Collins and Major Michael Blanchette focused on areas of responsibility, noting the complexity of managing responses to CBRNe events across jurisdictions. The management chain that begins with local forces and continues to the state level and national level requires a rate of coordination that may be inappropriate for authorities such as the US military, which is difficult to mobilize due to its size. Networks and supply chains that are rooted domestically force authorities to take both narrow local perspectives and broad global perspectives simultaneously. Mr. Collins emphasized that communication between levels of government is particularly critical in the vast geographic space of the United States and Canada. Integrating programs and improving communication has the potential to make responses to CBRNe threats much more efficient.

Looking at the issue from a largely Canadian perspective, Major Blanchette noted that there is considerable fatigue regarding explosives, particularly regarding IEDs and Afghanistan. Recalling Ambassador Grinius’ remarks from day one, he emphasized the need to change the narrative around explosives and reorient our focus to consider how explosive weapons are deployed specifically in Canada. Many in the audience appeared to be surprised to learn that there is a bomb incident every other day in Canada, which has required coordination between law enforcement agencies across jurisdictions and forced interagency teams to look beyond the silos of their immediate responsibilities to achieve tangible progress. Progress requires looking beyond an aggressive militaristic approach to consider a more comprehensive strategy that integrates all the available tools to create resilient organizations. The common denominator between all three panellists was the importance of high-readiness, not just at the national level, but also among first-responders on the ground and those at the local level tasked with initiating management chains up to the national or even international level.

Panel VI – The Domestic Challenges

Continuing with Major Blanchette’s Canadian focus, this panel examined some of the challenges of coordinating domestic responses to potential CBRNe events in Canada. Chaired by Major-General Christopher Coates, Deputy Commander Continental in the Canadian Joint Operations Command, the panel asked presenters to explore the current CBRNe framework in Canada across levels of government, departments, and agencies. Panellists included Janet
Davis, the Deputy Planning Lead of the Pan/Parapan AM Games Integrated Security Unit, Jean-François Duperré, the Director of Emergency Response Services at the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Rockland Presser, the Director of Protection Services at Kingston General, Providence Care, and Hotel Dieu Hospitals.

Mr. Duperré initiated the session by asking the question that motivated much of the discussion during the entire conference, namely, “are we prepared?”. Noting the progress that has been made, he explained that while there are still gaps in capacity and planning, some of these gaps reflect deliberate decisions to accept risk based on limited resources. Public health is a shared responsibility across jurisdictions, but there is a lack of national standards that reflect that preparedness is not a health system priority. The barriers to mutual assistance across jurisdictions and agencies may seem minor, including licencing, liability insurance, and disability protection, but represent a major obstacle to building a framework for mutual assistance. Mr. Duperré concluded with a firm recommendation to eliminate federal response teams to enable resources to move freely across jurisdictions as part of an overall effort to generate, train, and prepare additional resources.

Shifting gears, Ms. Davis explored the many lessons learned during the 2010 G8/G20 Summit, which represents the largest deployment of domestic police resources in Canadian history, and how these lessons can be applied to the preparation for the Pan/Parapan AM Games. Among the most consequential was the need for a whole-of-government-approach that encouraged partnerships across organizations, and coordination through a dedicated planning office. For Ms. Davis, the biggest challenge in the Ontario Fire Marshall-led mission is sustainability and coordination, themes that were repeated throughout the two-day conference. As Ms. Davis stated and as was reflected in Mr. Duperré’s outline of the roles of Health Canada and the following discussion by Mr. Prosser, the most potent legacy of the G8/G20 in the context of CBRNe was the improved ability of various organizations to collaborate.

Mr. Prosser noted Mr. Duperré’s distinction between first-responders and first-receivers in his presentation on the readiness of hospitals in the Kingston region. During the G8/G20, for instance, one of the most pressing concerns was that a sizeable hospital would be incapacitated, depriving the response team of key first-responders and first-receivers.
Moreover, whatever the crisis may be, hospitals also must continue with their regular operations. While hospitals are fairly well-prepared from a treatment perspective, there remains a need to continue to dismantle silos between organizations and jurisdictions and integrate community planning and hospital planning. Municipalities, as all three panellists and several audience members noted, can be easily overwhelmed by CBRNe response requirements.

Panel VII – Policy Implications

The final panel of this year’s KCIS considered the policy implications for policy and decision-makers at national and local levels. Chaired by Professor Kim Richard Nossal, Director of the School of Policy Studies at Queen’s University, the presentations considered the diplomatic measures governments should be implementing to support the anti-proliferation efforts of like-minded states, as well as the implications of global CBRNe challenges for defence and security policy. The three panellists, Yves Goulet, the Director of Strategic Analysis and Assistant Deputy Minister at the Department of National Defence Canada, Dr. Anna Gray-Henschel, Senior Director of the National Security Policy division at Public Safety Canada, and Professor Frank Harvey, the Eric Dennis Chair of Government and Politics at Dalhousie University, generated timely and to-the-point policy implications of both domestic and global challenges.

Mr. Goulet initiated the discussion by presenting the defence policy implications of the CBRNe threat. He framed his presentation within the complexity of creating defence policy when a threat is low-probability but high-impact. Policy-makers are forced to confront a complex and overlapping web of threats of that call to mind Cold War era dynamics but also include contemporary challenges involving fragile states, regional conflicts, and non-state actors, among others, in tandem with structural changes that are reshaping the world order away from the North Atlantic. The questions Mr. Goulet and his colleagues are asking at DND include the evolution of the strategic environment, the future CBRNe-response toolkit, improving quotidian operations, cooperation and integration with Canada’s allies, and prioritization of resources and issues. Again recalling Ambassador Grinius’ early remarks, Mr. Goulet suggested that Canada has been too slow to respond to cyberterrorism and cyber threats.
Dr. Gray-Henschel focused on Canada’s non-proliferation efforts more broadly, explaining that there are over a dozen Canadian organizations that have responsibilities in this area that are governed by more than 30 acts and regulations, including DFATD, DND, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, CBSA, Public Safety Canada, and the RCMP. The threat does not begin when an enemy acquires a weapon, but rather begins with the decision to pursue a weapon. Monitoring these decisions and keeping CBRNe weapons out of Canada continue to be key priorities for Ottawa. Because Canada may be used as a source or transit point, Dr. Gray-Henschel explained the need to identify unlawful non-state actors and discern illegal activities from legitimate trade activities.

For Dr. Gray-Henschel, the imperative comes down to creating an urgency to act now, an imperative also expressed by LGen. Beare in his concluding remarks following the panel and Professor Harvey in his presentation on comparing deterrence-by-denial and deterrence-by-punishment. Recalling Dr. Bechtol’s disquieting analysis on North Korea, Professor Harvey demonstrated how the North Korea crises have reinforced the logic of deterrence-by-denial, as well as the US and NATO ballistic missile defence (BMD) projects. He asserted that the Obama administration’s strategic patience approach has failed as North Korea becomes more dependent on fabricated irrationality and unpredictability. As such, the deterrence strategy also includes deterrence-by-punishment, which has a spotty track record. Professor Harvey’s ultimate thesis suggested that the declining credibility of US deterrence-by-punishment increases the need to embrace and invest in mechanisms to enhance deterrence-by-denial through US BMD and global BMD cooperation. Professor Harvey concluded that Ottawa’s BMD policy is nothing short of troubling as it leaves Canadians vulnerable to attack.

There was broad agreement among the panellists that the case against the status quo, as Professor Harvey stated, has been made. The machinations of domestic and electoral politics should not prevent progress in Canada’s non-proliferation policies and contributions to the international non-proliferation regime. Broad policy implications of CBRNe threats include the need to reinforce the international normative regime against these weapons, strengthening Canadian involvement in multilateral non-proliferation activities and
agreements, increasing awareness of the threat itself, and continuing to hinder illegitimate proliferation efforts.

Concluding Remarks – Lieutenant-General Stuart Beare, Commander of the Canadian Joint Operations Command

To conclude this year’s KCIS, LGen. Beare deftly incorporated conclusions from all seven panels, while also addressing the challenge that LGen. Hainse posed at the beginning of the conference. LGen. Beare summed up much of the proceedings by reminding participants of the aphorism “prevention or prevention fails.” The key questions that emerged from the conference centre on how to develop a shared understanding of the CBRNe threat and shared expectations about the problems that need to be addressed. Furthermore, the question of why we care must weigh heavy on our minds as we confront these issues to deliver unity of thought and purpose, and ideally unity of action.

Recalling each of the presentations, LGen Beare expressed that we care because CBRNe threats have the capacity to terrorize and paralyze populations and civil authorities with very little effort on the part of perpetrators. The credibility to combat CBRNe threats is built on relevant, meaningful mandates, appropriately equipped toolboxes, and the will to take action. Demonstrating that authorities understand the responsibility to plan and practice accordingly can serve to galvanize and reinforce confidence in decision-makers. As LGen. Beare emphasized, leadership, engagement, coordination, and cooperation speak to the need to recognize that combatting CBRNe threats is not just a tough fight but a team fight.

Conclusion – Adapting to changing demands and priorities in the contemporary CBRNe era

LGen. Beare’s words prompted much discussion as panellists and participants began to make their exit from the conference. Around the room, casual discussion developed that touched on the themes of the past two days. Communication and organization between jurisdictions, agencies, and across state governments seemed to be a key take-home point for many participants. At the same time, many recognized that beyond multilateral initiatives and bilateral communication, the role of non-state actors must be better understood. Others spoke of means of encouraging partnerships between non-state actors, non-central governments, and national governments to strengthen the normative regime against the use of CBRNe weapons.
The potential chaos and casualties of the technologically advanced CBRNe weaponry of today demands a sustained commitment, and yet our intelligence and knowledge only goes so far. Few aspects of international security are black and white. The international community of scholars, practitioners, policy-makers, law enforcement, military personnel, civil society groups, and community members must remember that its commitment to combat the use of these weapons demands analysis that is prepared to be self-critical, that is prepared to ask difficult questions, and that is prepared to explain why we care.

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2014