The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Nuclear Security Initiative – Findings from a Summative Evaluation

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Prepared by ORS Impact

Overview of the Nuclear Security Initiative

The Nuclear Security Initiative (NSI) began as an exploratory effort in 2008 and, as with other Foundation initiatives, was intended to be a time-limited effort (though the timeframe for the Foundation's exit was not specified at the outset). The NSI was extended in 2011 and the last grants were made in 2014. Over seven years, the NSI pursued a number of strategies designed to reduce the risk of a nuclear disaster.

Although security issues have never been a central element in the Hewlett Foundation's main programs, the Foundation does have a history of funding projects in the peace and security space when these issues touched on the Foundation's main focus areas. Re-entry into the nuclear security space was opportunistic; at the time of the NSI's inception, windows appeared to be opening, signaling that near-term gains on pressing policy issues were possible. In 2007, four eminent statesmen (Kissinger, Shultz, Nunn and Perry) authored a provocative Wall Street Journal op-ed calling for "a nuclear-free world" and outlining the policy steps required to achieve it. This was the first such articulation by prominent foreign policy and national security leaders from across the political spectrum. Shortly thereafter came the election of Barack Obama who, as a Senator, had taken interest in advancing nuclear security and nonproliferation and who, when newly elected, began making these issues a first-tier national security concern of his Administration. Finally, there was increasing movement by some growing powers, such as Brazil and Turkey, to explore development of nuclear energy domestically, thereby increasing the risk of global nuclear proliferation.

The evaluation that is the subject of this report revealed that the NSI set in motion new things in the field—including an increased and more intentional focus on advocacy and communications, increased coordination among funders, and increased attention to building the expertise and capacity of states outside of the P5 (United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France) and other established nuclear powers, as opposed to focusing exclusively on US-Russia and US-China relations. The Hewlett Foundation's re-entry into the nuclear security space was seen as bringing "excitement and energy" and "innovation."

NSI Goals and Strategies

The NSI encompassed three main strategy areas (see Figure 1 on the following page):

- Strategic stability among the P5 and their allies
- Prudent development of nuclear power
- Better international rules

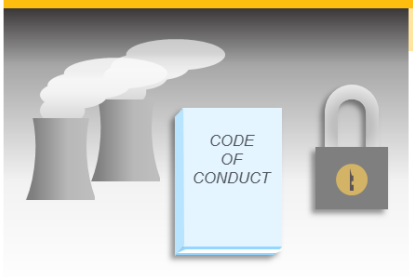
Within each strategy area, goals can be described as broad and aspirational. In addition, within each strategy there were numerous ambitious policy-oriented targets.

Figure 1 | Overview of NSI Strategy Areas

Strategic Stability among the P5 and Their Allies

Aspirational Outcomes	Sample of Grantees
The nuclear powers (P5) and their allies develop or maintain stable bilateral and multilateral strategic relations, and reduce their reliance on nuclear weapons in their defense policies	Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Stanford University The China Institute of International Studies British American Security Information Council Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Center for Public Integrity World Security Institute Center for Strategic and International Studies

Prudent Development of Nuclear Power



Aspirational Outcomes	Sample of Grantees
Where nuclear power is being pursued, it is developed to ensure safety & security of fissile material and with minimal impacts on proliferation	American Academy of Arts and Sciences Center for Strategic and International Studies Arius Association Nuclear Threat Initiative Center for Economic and Foreign Policy Studies Institute for Science and International Security Natural Resources Defense Council Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

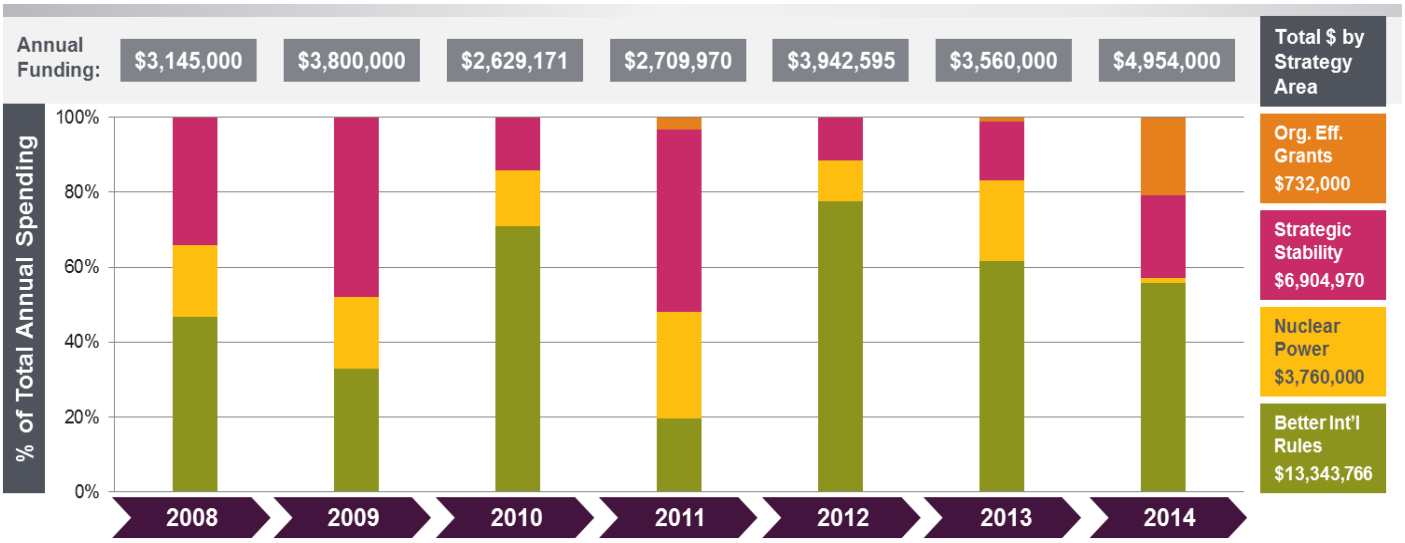
Better International Rules

Aspirational Outcomes	Sample of Grantees
The international nuclear nonproliferation regime becomes more effective, enforceable, and equitable. Non-nuclear emerging states commit to equitable and enforceable nonproliferation policies	Ploughshares Fund National Security Initiative Carnegie Endowment for International Peace The Arms Control Association Center for Economic and Foreign Policy Studies NPSGlobal Foundation Fundacao Getulio Vargas Monterey Institute of International Studies

Funding Distribution

The NSI's 128 grants totaled $24,740,736 over seven years (approximately $3 million per year). Figure 2 on the following page shows where investments were concentrated across the three strategy areas over the life of the initiative. An increase in organizational effectiveness grants in 2014 reflects the Foundation's intent to strengthen capability within the nuclear security field as the NSI wound down.

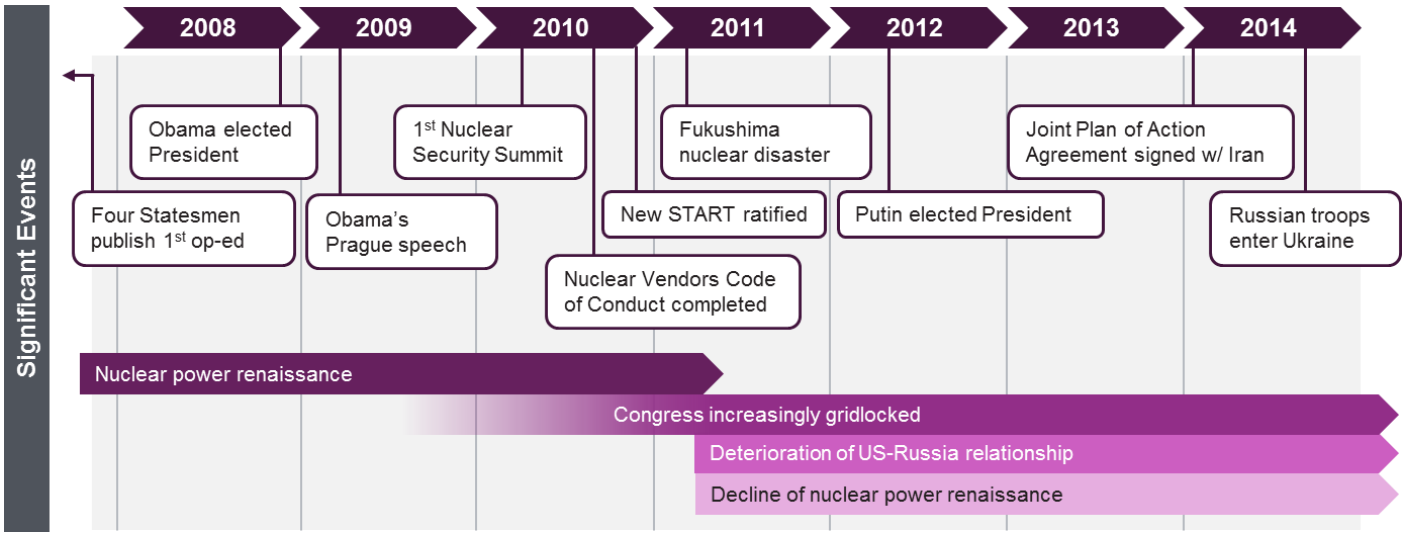
Figure 2 | Overview of NSI Funding Distribution



Notably, over half (53%) of grant dollars were allocated to five organizations. The Foundation referred to three of these organizations as "anchor" grantees: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace ($4.5 million), Ploughshares Fund ($3.3 million) and Stanford University ($3 million). Anchor grantees were viewed as close-in partners in pursuit of the NSI's goals, and program officers remained highly engaged with anchor grantees throughout the life of the Initiative.

Figure 3 shows a timeline of events that occurred during the life of the NSI. The timeline serves as a reminder that significant events had an influence on strategies, grantee efforts and advancement of NSI goals—as evidence will show.

Figure 3 | Timeline of events 2007–2014



Evaluation Methodology & Approach

Methods

The evaluation relied on four sources of data:

- In-depth interviews with a broad cross section of actors in the field, including Foundation staff, grantees, funders, advisors and experts (n=35)[1]
- Analysis of 720 grantee and program officer reports
- Review of selected articles and op-eds, web sites, and grantee and funder publications
- A focus group with four evaluation experts, including those with experience in philanthropy, where the intent was to discuss monitoring and evaluation approaches and inform recommendations

Approach

Traditionally, summative evaluation has been used to retrospectively determine the merits, successes, effectiveness or value for money of a *social program*. In the context of a social program, efforts are typically well-defined in advance, time-bound and stable, making it relatively easier to examine the direct links between program actions and program results, or to make judgments about merit and value. There are significantly different considerations, however, when evaluation is focused on efforts geared toward policy change.

When investments are made in a *program*, there is a degree of certainty regarding the actions to be taken as well as the scale and duration of actions, and how these are expected to generate desired results. That certainty may be grounded in research, experience or a cogent theory of change. Those seeking to affect *policy*, however, often make bets regarding what will be successful actions and what combination of actions will be most impactful; with policy efforts, there is much less certainty about how efforts can generate results. While at a basic level, policy-related efforts are about influencing decision makers, influence may come via any number of different actions that are not and cannot always be well-defined in advance, e.g., public pressure, media advocacy, or direct advocacy with a few key decision makers. Further, the most influential or impactful efforts are just as likely to be determined by external circumstances, which are subject to change and over which organizations may have little or no control (e.g., per Figure 3, above—Japan's 2011 earthquake and subsequent Fukushima reactor meltdown, gridlock in US legislative politics, Russia's aggressive stance in Ukraine, etc.), as via the well-planned, well-executed efforts of grantees. Finally, the timeline for advancing policy change is uncertain, and may be quite long—years or even decades.

Policy change work is both *complicated* (there are often multiple possible pathways to advance goals) and *complex* (strategies and goals may evolve in response to changing circumstances).[2] Given the nature

[1] 15 grantees, 7 advisors and Foundation staff, 4 funders and 9 key informants (included experts and recognized leaders in the field)

[2] See Coffman, J. and Beer, T. (2011). Evaluation to Support Strategic Learning Principles and Practices. Paper published by the Center for Evaluation Innovation. Available at: http://www.evaluationinnovation.org/sites/default/files/Strategic%20Learning%20Coffman%20and%20Beer.pdf

of policy change work, ORS Impact did not focus inquiry on determining the NSI's impact within a narrow "success/failure" framework, nor did we focus on the "end game"—the extent to which the NSI advanced policy wins. Instead, we sought to answer the following questions:

- Where and how did the Foundation's investments and actions via the NSI make a difference?
- Where did meaningful progress occur over the seven years of investment?

Analysis focused on identifying particular themes where data offered a weight of evidence. And, rather than seeking "hard truths," we employed a "sense making" approach.[3] We interpreted data and linked patterns to create plausible explanations and lift up insights to guide future strategic choices. An aim of the evaluation undertaking was to inform the Hewlett Foundation's efforts and investments, as well as those of the nuclear security field as a whole.

Notable Impacts

Data pointed to three notable impacts to which the NSI's investments and efforts contributed.

1. The NSI addressed shortcomings in the field and thereby developed a strong and sustained campaign mentality.

Grantees, funders and advisors pointed to development of campaign mentality as a fundamental factor in securing adoption of the New START treaty in 2010. New START was widely hailed as a key "win" for the field writ large. To be clear, it is unlikely that the Hewlett Foundation's efforts and investments were the sole impetus for adoption of the treaty. Notably, however, the Foundation made intentional investments and worked closely with Ploughshares Fund, an NSI anchor grantee, as well as other grantee organizations and took other concrete actions that promoted the campaign infrastructure and mentality to successfully advance New START.

While emergence of a strong campaign mentality was not specifically articulated in NSI's strategy targets, evidence indicates that this development directly contributed to a significant international policy win (New START), and has been transformative for the field.

The NSI spurred the emergence of a "three-legged stool," and this campaign-style approach reflected a new way of operating for the field. "Three-legged stool" refers to intentional integration of elements that altogether provide a sound campaign operating structure (i.e. the "legs") for advancing policy change. The three legs of the stool are: (1) strong and relevant research and analysis, (2) effective advocacy and communications, and (3) seamless coordination among multiple actors, some of whom might specialize in either research or advocacy. The NSI's efforts included funding more advocates, providing training and technical assistance to enhance communications, coordinating with other funders and encouraging more streamlined, collaborative operations—all of which fueled a strong campaign approach in the nuclear security field.

Shifting assets to people and organizations most focused on making policy change, the NSI supported an expansive group of grantees, including organizations that were described as "new

[3] See: Coffman, J. and Beer, T. (2011). Ibid.

voices, new players" in the nuclear security space. Across the board, interviewees credited the Hewlett Foundation with proactively and intentionally leading the effort to build advocacy capacity within the field, noting that previous to the NSI, grant support in the field was overly tilted towards research. As one interviewee noted, "[to advance policy solutions] you want to have a set of grants that goes at the drivers of [nuclear security] policy." Interviewees pointed to the Hewlett Foundation's vison and leadership in this area. Besides offering grant support to advocacy organizations, the NSI fueled stronger relationships with key champions—high-ranking/ex-military officials and faith leaders among them. These two groups in particular served to broaden outreach and improve overall messaging of the campaign.

NSI investments led to clear improvements in communications across the field. Program officers called attention to the need for better communications, and the NSI issued a special grant to ReThink Media, an organization that provided technical assistance and communications support to numerous grantee organizations. Many grantees expressed that they'd been hungry for communications training, and the increased focus on communications was seen as important and timely.[4]

NSI program officers regularly convened funders and implementers to discuss strategy and share best practices, which contributed to improved coordination and greater alignment in the field. NSI program officers were described as "bridge builders," who "fused together old guard organizations and newcomers to the field" in order to create cohesion and a sense of collective work. Program officers also led efforts to better define roles, decrease duplication of efforts, and ensure productive cooperation among the many and varied organizations that make up the nuclear security community. NSI-sponsored convenings were, as one interviewee put it, valuable opportunities for "cross pollination." Many felt that cross pollination helped fuel a stronger collective campaign effort. Program officers also engaged closely with grantees, acting as a sounding board and sometimes weighing in on strategy.

NSI investments and efforts improved trust and relationships among groups in the field so they could, en masse, operate as a well-coordinated team of actors. Previous to the emergence of this campaign-style approach, it was more common that organizations independently produced reports, regardless of whether the particular issue was being considered in the policy sphere. Further, there was minimal advocacy, weak communications, and very little coordination. The NSI's contribution was to offer a holistic, balanced point of view. Recognizing the critical importance of research and deep analysis, this work is foundational to advancing nuclear security. However, analysis alone is unlikely to advance policy change. Additionally, advocacy and communications need to be more than a late-stage add-on; these components need to be strong and well-integrated.

In the case of the New START campaign, well-coordinated actors with a greater range of expertise were well positioned for success. As a collective, actors could better leverage work and resources, recalibrate quickly, and nimbly respond to changing dynamics on the ground. The NSI led with a viewpoint that balanced investment in analysis, advocacy and field-level coordination would most effectively advance policy change, and this viewpoint proved fruitful in the case of New START. There is also evidence that ongoing balanced investment helped to ensure actors were prepared and well-positioned for future campaign efforts—e.g., US-Iran negotiations, and nuclear budget reductions.

[4] See: *Evaluation of Nuclear Security Communications* (July 2014). Report prepared by ORS Impact and Joy Drucker for the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Colombe Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The three-legged stool structure that grew out of the NSI's investments contributed to the adoption of New START and remains important to the current work on Iran negotiations. While the NSI was not the sole reason for New START's adoption, interviewees were also quick to point out that the treaty's passage was by no means assured. The Hewlett Foundation was given credit for understanding what the field most needed and for implementing a responsive funding approach. NSI's grantees were viewed as directly and substantially influential to the emergence of a campaign structure—the three-legged stool—which was a key factor in securing New START's adoption. Furthermore, Interviewees remarked that the campaign mentality and structure has lasted. The visibility, effectiveness and influence of grantees' current work on US-Iran issues is in large part due to the infrastructure created in the lead-up to New START.

2. The NSI improved nuclear governance.

Over the life of the NSI, one of the strategy areas was to create or strengthen international rules and governance structures to address weapons proliferation, prudent development of nuclear power, and safe handling of nuclear materials. The Foundation's grantmaking in this area spanned numerous wide-ranging targets, including pursuit of nonproliferation and disarmament agreements within NATO, committed agreements to combat the threat of nuclear terrorism among 40 states participating in the Nuclear Security Summits and adoption of a code of conduct governing nuclear exports. Reflecting on targets, there was evidence of progress—e.g. perceptions that grantees positively influenced debate at the NPT Review Conference, and generated increased understanding within NATO about the need to address these issues and increased capacity of policy leaders to operate more effectively in this arena. A prominent international policy win arose via partnership with one of the NSI's anchor grantees, the Carnegie Endowment—namely, the creation and adoption of the Nuclear Vendors Code of Conduct.

Adoption of the Vendors Code of Conduct was described as "unique" to the Hewlett Foundation and "a great accomplishment." Via the Code of Conduct, the NSI aimed to ensure a more standardized set of rules for any would-be nuclear energy manufacturer. Via agreement about the Code of Conduct, civilian nuclear power providers adopted the principles of corporate responsibility, best practices, and oversight vis-a-vis nonproliferation goals and environmental protection. The Code created a sensitivity toward the need for rules and standards governing the proper manufacture, storage, and transport of nuclear materials where there had previously been none.

The Code expanded support from nuclear power vendors for the nuclear security agenda more generally; as one grantee observed, "It used to be that [to those in industry], non-pro people were [considered radical]; you couldn't be pro-nuclear energy and pro-nonproliferation. [As a result of discussions about the Code], that has now evolved." Negotiations and adoption of the Code of Conduct also brought additional resources to address nuclear security challenges, galvanized existing nuclear energy states while setting an important guardrail for those thinking about developing nuclear energy.

Finally, development of the Code helped states without a nuclear program understand the costs associated with ensuring safety and thus discouraged some from pursuing nuclear energy programs because of the political and economic ramifications.

While some may question whether achieving a single policy win qualifies as a notable impact for the NSI, it is important to recognize that this was a significant multi-national, cross-sector agreement that resulted

from strenuous negotiations. As one key informant put it, "this was the Hewlett Foundation punching above their weight."

3. The NSI infused the field with innovation.

Throughout the NSI, the Hewlett Foundation showed a willingness to embrace new, potentially high value investment areas that were not receiving significant attention from other funders in the nuclear security space. An example of an innovative investment that showed success is the NSI's work in "emerging power states." Investment in the Nuclear Innovation Collaborative is an example of the Foundation's leadership regarding new ideas.

The NSI made investments in both Turkey and Brazil that generated important successes. The Hewlett Foundation was credited with being a leader and main funder of this work, and those knowledgeable about the effort described the impacts as "huge." Early in the NSI, there was concern that certain states that were increasingly playing a role in the global nuclear security debate also lacked a cadre of government and civil society leaders with sufficient knowledge, expertise, influence, relationships—or funding—that would enable them to participate more effectively. Building the capacity of both government and civil society actors to develop localized solutions to nuclear challenges, enhance oversight, and bring their influence to bear at home or on behalf of their countries on the international stage is critical to improving global dialogue. In turn, this helps generate sound international rules or governing mechanisms to ensure nonproliferation and the safe storage, transport and disposal of nuclear materials.

Grantees and key informants familiar with the NSI's work in Turkey and Brazil saw significant gains in both states in terms of knowledge and expertise, improved visibility into nuclear security policy making, improved relationships between governmental and civil society actors, and improved clarity and transparency of nuclear policy, as the field in each country was tiny or non-existent prior to the Foundation's investment. Regarding Brazil, one observer noted that NSI grantees had "the best contacts and the best understanding of the situation." In Turkey, through a variety of grants, an independent research center (EDAM) was strengthened and now serves as a key resource in engaging the Turkish government on the safe development of nuclear power. This is key, as discussion between the government, the public and civil society has shifted from whether Turkey should develop nuclear power to how to develop it safely.

The Foundation also made investments to help the Israeli nuclear community return to a previous level of capacity by engaging and encouraging young researchers to develop expertise in nuclear security issues.

In the NSI, many interviewees perceived the Hewlett Foundation's brand as synonymous with innovation; the Foundation had a reputation for being willing to try new things. During the final years of the NSI, the Hewlett Foundation sparked a partnership with four other nuclear security funders (the Carnegie Corporation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ploughshares Fund and the Skoll Global Threats Fund) to form the Nuclear Innovation Collaborative. A charge of this group is to bring "positive disruption" to the arena of nuclear security in order to identify new ideas and approaches. The ultimate aim is to effectively move nuclear security beliefs and policies out of a Cold War framework,

and address the fading salience of nuclear weapons in modern civil society and political debate.[5] Although the collaborative is still in its infancy, one of its major areas of focus will be bringing together innovators from different backgrounds to pursue high impact collaborations and bring more active and effective people into the field.

Perceptions about the Hewlett Foundation as an Actor in the Nuclear Security Space

Perceptions about the Hewlett Foundation's role as an actor in the nuclear security arena highlight its unique and valued contributions, and point to some challenges and takeaways, as summarized below.

There was a mismatch between the timeframe of the NSI, the mix of funded strategies and the established targets.

The NSI was overly focused on the "end game." The NSI's focus on multiple ambitious targets suggests that perhaps expectations about what could be accomplished within given grant cycles and via the NSI's funded strategies were higher than was warranted. During seven years of grantmaking, the NSI set over 100 specific policy-oriented targets that spanned numerous issues, including agreements between the US and Russia, US-China relationship building, strategic developments within NATO, the specific actions of certain states, perceptions and norms regarding nuclear issues within the US, fair consideration and adoption of treaties and agreements by the US Senate (e.g., New START, CTBT) and adoption of agreements among nuclear power vendors.[6]

Evaluation of policy impact is challenging because policy impact is affected by a multitude of factors, including the evolving dynamics and complexities inherent in the policy decision-making environment and the types, scale or combination of funded strategies.[7] Reflecting on global and domestic events and circumstances during the life of the NSI (see Figure 3, above), it may have been overly optimistic to expect the Initiative to advance the multiple ambitious targets without more concentrated and sustained investments. For example, grantees and key informants noted that policy targets related to US-China cooperation and adoption of specific agreements within NATO will likely require years, if not decades, of sustained dialogue, exploration and negotiation. To be clear, it is not that the NSI's efforts in these areas were ineffective or not valuable; in fact, quite to the contrary, interviewees described several examples of significant progress in terms of US-China relations and within NATO. However, the focus on defining the

[5] See: http://www.ploughshares.org/nations-largest-nuclear-security-funders-hire

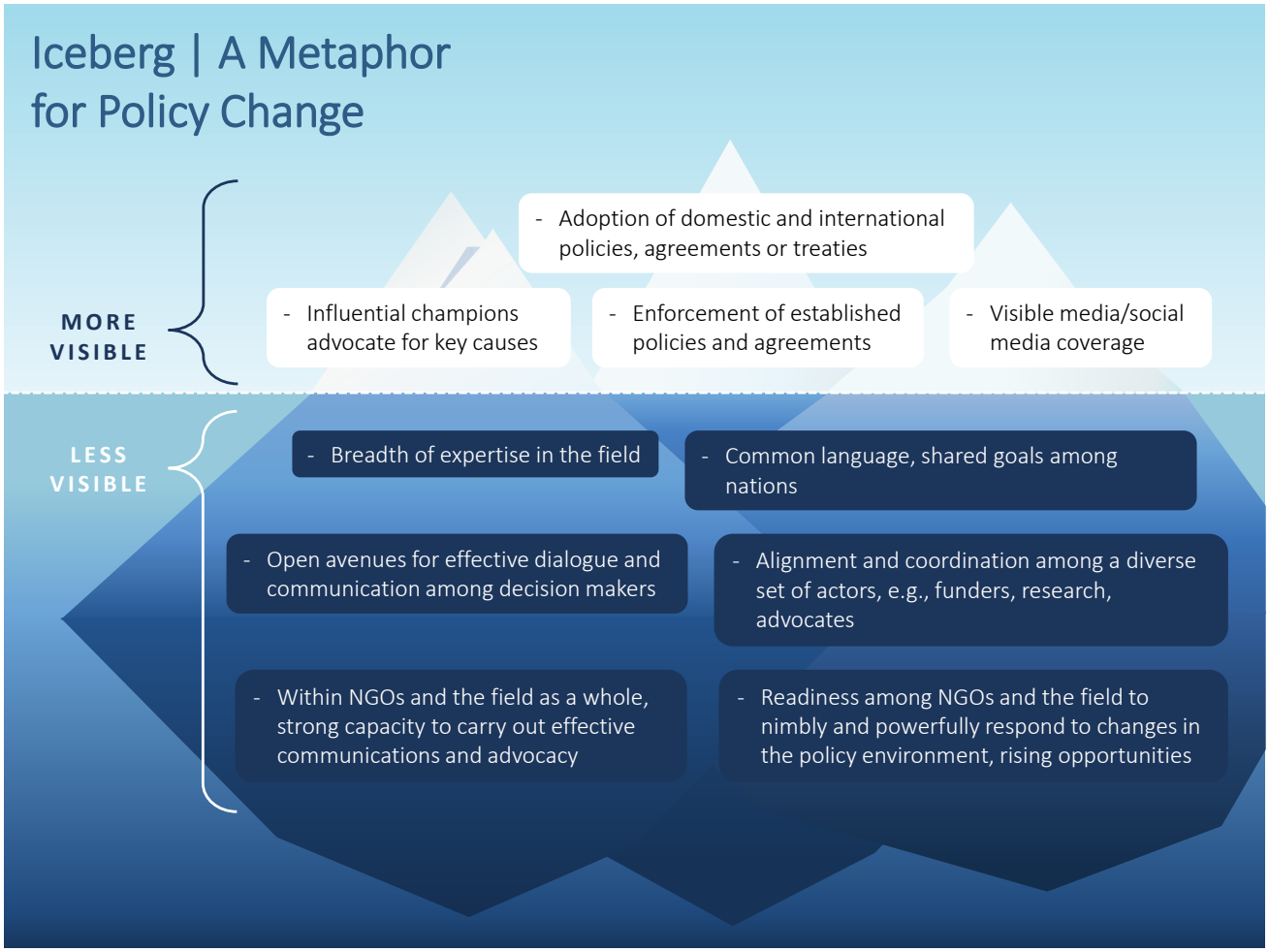
[6] Although some of NSI's targets may reflect the passage of legislation (based on inputs from grantees and experts in the field), the Hewlett Foundation does not lobby or earmark its funds for prohibited lobbying activities, as defined in the federal tax laws. The Foundation's funding for policy work is limited to permissible forms of support only, such as general operating support grants that grantees can allocate at their discretion and project support grants for nonlobbying activities (e.g., public education and nonpartisan research).

[7] See the following: Guthrie, K., Louie, J., David, T., and Foster, C.C. (2005). The Challenge of Assessing Policy and Advocacy Activities. Prepared for The California Endowment.
Reisman, J., Gienapp, A. and Stachowiak, S. (2007) Guide to Measuring Advocacy and Policy. Prepared for the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
Morariu, J. and Brennan, K. (2009) Effective Advocacy Evaluation: The Role of Funders. Foundation Review, Vol 1:3, pp. 100-108.

"end game" via ambitious targets likely obscured what was actually meaningful progress throughout the seven-year initiative.

Policy change is like an iceberg; it's not always easy to see it in its entirety.[8] Achievement of a significant policy target is typically visible—like the tip of the iceberg—but typically reflects only one component of a much greater set of achievements. A policy "win" nearly always rests on a deep, wide base of related impacts that are much less visible—like the part of the iceberg lying beneath the surface of the waterline. Examples of the less visible changes that signal progress towards policy targets (especially within the typical timeframe of a grant cycle) include strengthened relationships with decision makers, strengthened alliances, a strengthened base of support, shifts in prevailing beliefs and norms and improved organizational capacity to produce strong, relevant research or engage in effective communications—see Figure 4. These types of interim changes establish the right conditions for a highly visible policy win, and it is important to bring them to light.[9] As noted earlier, there is evidence that the NSI influenced these types of interim changes.

Figure 4 | Iceberg: A Metaphor for Policy Change



[8] See: Schlangen, R. and Coe, J. The value iceberg: weighing the benefits of advocacy and campaigning. Available at: http://betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/Advocacy%20and%20the%20value%20iceberg.pdf

[9] See: Reisman, J., Gienapp, A., and Stachowiak, S. (2007). Ibid.

If the Foundation had focused more on interim outcomes, it may have been better able to track progress, make adjustments to strategies or capitalize on near term opportunities. Within the NSI there appeared to be a mismatch between numerous far-reaching targets, the wide variety of strategies and tactics employed, and the initiative's timeframe. Targets that focused on important interim wins or establishing the necessary pre-conditions for advancing policy changes would have been more reasonable and "right sized" given the breadth and timeframe of the NSI, and may have better contributed to the Foundation's mid-term decision making.

For example, adoption of the CTBT[10] was a long-held NSI target though some interviewees reported that at some point, the political window had closed and neither an Administration push nor Congressional consideration was expected. Interviewees noted that despite this, the Foundation remained committed to the policy target rather than looking at what could be done "below the surface," either to respond to emerging issues or to prepare for the future.

Similarly, during interviews grantees initially reported that the results of US-China relationship building and the development of agreements within NATO had been "stalled" or not successful. However, when questioned further, interviewees revealed that in fact efforts in these areas had generated "below the surface" wins (e.g., the US and China progressed toward a common language for discussing nuclear security, increased agreement within NATO about the need to address nuclear security issues). Because these types of changes had not been clearly identified as targets, grantees didn't immediately identify these changes as signals of progress even though changes were described as significant.

Funders can maximize their effectiveness when they understand what "below the surface" changes are necessary to achieve a particular policy target, and to set "right-sized" and reasonable expectations about what can be accomplished within the timeframe of a grant cycle.

There was proven value in both the Hewlett Foundation's grantmaking approaches and its non-grantmaking roles.

Numerous grantees commented that the Hewlett Foundation was the rare funder in the nuclear security space that made general operating grants; these were viewed as key for at least two reasons. First, general operating grants gave organizations maximum flexibility to adjust and tailor their efforts and address the most pressing issues in the public policy sphere, rather than being "locked in" to a certain programmatic path. For those operating in the policy landscape, it is often difficult to forecast when a grant is awarded what will be the most salient near-term opportunities. NSI grantees reported that flexible grantmaking allowed them to adjust their efforts in response to emergent issues and capitalize on near-term opportunities. By doing so, NSI grantees were therefore able to build stronger relationships with those inside government, thereby improving the community's overall influence in the nuclear policy debate as a whole. Thus, flexible grantmaking was a factor in enhancing grantees' potential to have impact.

[10] Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

When the focus is policy change, grants that help organizations sustain non-programmatic work such as communications are key. A second advantage of general operating grants is that they allow organizations to put resources towards core activities that are not tied to a specific program, e.g., communications and advocacy. As a grantee reported, the NSI grant allowed his organization to have a half-time communications staff person who not only attended to the organization's media output on behalf of nuclear issues, but also served to "force multiply" by recruiting new organizations into the New START campaign and significantly enhancing collective efforts. This has continued, and even become stronger, in follow-on campaigns such as those to advance nuclear negotiations with Iran and defense budget reductions. Others noted the flexibility the Foundation's funding gave them to enhance advocacy efforts, for example by helping them to create a social media presence where they did not previously have one.

Within the NSI, the Hewlett Foundation's non-grantmaking efforts stood out. In a broad initiative such as NSI, foundations can play other roles beyond grantmaker. One way NSI program officers did this is by adopting a "whole field" perspective, assessing where there were gaps, capacity needs and/or opportunities for greater coordination and alignment and then responding to what they saw. Program officers also took an active role in convening the field, and fostering exchanges and collaboration among both funders and NGOs. The NSI program officers were credited for their policy and strategic insights, and for their recognition of and subsequent action on field-level opportunities—e.g., recognizing the need for more advocacy and enhanced communications, and establishing concrete opportunities for grantees to develop communications skills and infrastructure. Grantees and funders felt the Foundation had directly helped to reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts, increase information sharing, and enhance collective strategizing and execution.

In interviews and via Grantee Perception Reports, grantees reported that program officers were responsive. Anchor grantees reported that program officers engaged as partners—an approach that was seen as useful and productive. In addition, grantees, funders and key informants noted that NSI program officers held a unique set of relationships with decision makers and at times drew on those relationships to advance particular issues or solutions. The weight of evidence indicates that the Foundation's "whole field" vantage point and corresponding philanthropic approach provided tremendous value to other funders, and to the implementing organizations.

The Hewlett Foundation's brand generated excitement—and also outsized expectations.

The Hewlett Foundation's entry into the nuclear security space was universally well-received—one interviewee remarked that the Foundation "breathed life into the field." As a Silicon Valley-rooted West Coast foundation, The Hewlett Foundation's brand was seen as more open, forward-thinking and strategic than established East Coast foundations—evidenced in part by the Foundation's willingness to fund advocacy, its focus on field-building, and the fact that the NSI offered general operating support. The Foundation's active leadership was also seen as an indicator of its brand—engaged, nimble, and willing to throw its weight behind its goals when needed.

While the Hewlett Foundation's (and particularly the NSI program officers') efforts were recognized as valuable, findings revealed perceptions that the Foundation could have been even more of a visible thought leader, could have done more in the space, and could have brought more of the Foundation's full

resources—i.e. its people, evaluation learnings, convening power, and capital—to bear to benefit the nuclear security field and advance policy debate. Given that the NSI was intended to be a time bound special initiative, there may have been outsized expectations among both funders and grantees about what it meant for the Hewlett Foundation to be in this space.

The Hewlett Foundation maintained a low profile.

Findings indicate that throughout the life of the Initiative, the Foundation maintained a low profile, which may have had strategic advantages, though presented a challenge in terms of identifying the Foundation's unique contributions and successes. The "low profile" approach is not necessarily unique, but also not universal among philanthropic organizations. Some foundations are very keen to promote and be recognized for successes. By contrast, NSI program officers did not seek nor claim direct attribution for NSI efforts and investments, and those in the field did not always distinctly recognize the Hewlett Foundation's investments and efforts in the field nor where they had made a difference.

The Hewlett Foundation's approach was to support anchor grantees whose own organizational goals were highly compatible with the NSI. Grantees noted that behind the scenes they received significant input from NSI program officers though anchor grantees took the lead role in advancing the work. For example, Ploughshares as an anchor grantee had close and regular contact with the NSI program officer during the New START campaign, but also functioned autonomously as the main coordinating organization. The fact that the Foundation did not always have its name or brand front and center meant it was sometimes difficult to see the NSI's unique contribution versus what developed in partnership with others. In the case of the New START campaign, many of those interviewed did not realize that grants from the Hewlett Foundation allowed Ploughshares to assume the campaign coordinating role.

The NSI sparked stronger partnerships among nuclear security funders, but what happens now?

As an initiative of the Hewlett Foundation, internal expectations were that the NSI would be a time-limited endeavor. Interviews revealed that this expectation was not always shared by grantees and funders. In interviews, the Hewlett Foundation's funder peers shared their surprise and disappointment regarding the Hewlett Foundation's exit from the nuclear security space—an exit that funders perceived as abrupt and opaque, and at odds with Hewlett's actions as a peer and partner throughout the life of the NSI.

Over the course of the NSI, the Hewlett Foundation brought energy and leadership to the nuclear security funders group and its efforts were credited with helping to enhance trust and coordination. Funders felt that the lack of transparency around the exit was in high contrast to the openness, frankness and spirit of collaboration that had characterized the Foundation's involvement in the nuclear security space. While funders were generally understanding about the Hewlett Foundation's desire to embrace other priorities, they felt blindsided regarding their complete exclusion from the exit decision. As one funder said, "we had spent so much time collaborating, and being as open as possible, that it would have been useful for us to have been involved earlier on before [the Hewlett Foundation's] decision to completely pull out was made."

The Foundation's exit from the nuclear security space leaves unanswered questions regarding whether and how certain efforts will be sustained (e.g., work in emerging states). The Hewlett Foundation made targeted grants to enhance the field, and it is not clear who can and will step in to take leadership regarding field building and ongoing field-level coordination, and whether the field will even be able to maintain the capacity and level of coordination that has developed to date.

Implications for Philanthropic Practice

Notable themes that inform philanthropic practice are described below.

Non-grantmaking roles are influential

In any policy change endeavor, the importance and effectiveness of a foundation's non-grantmaking roles should not be underestimated.

The Foundation's *non-grantmaking roles*, e.g., convener, partner, advocate, field builder and thought partner were seen as equally if not more effective than its grantmaking roles. Findings indicate that the Foundation's non-grantmaking roles were influential in part because of the strength of its brand, and in part because of the effectiveness of the two NSI program officers. Both NSI program officers were viewed as strong conveners, valued thought partners and effective field builders. While some cited their youth as a potential limiting factor, interviewees noted that both program officers brought a well-informed and strategic point of view about the field, the ability to form good relationships across the full spectrum of people and organizations in the nuclear security space, and the savvy to be able to push the field in promising new directions.

Program officers served as strategic advisors to grantee organizations and other funders—which helped to bring about needed transformation and evolution in the nuclear security space. One of the NSI program officers had good relationships with policy makers; she was able to be a source of helpful insight to other foundations that have little presence on Capitol Hill, and interviewees acknowledged that her relationships benefitted the whole field and, ultimately, contributed to the adoption of New START.

M&E is most useful when it is well matched to advocacy and policy change work.

As part of the NSI summative evaluation, ORS Impact was asked to assess and provide recommendations about the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy employed by the Foundation and to make recommendations about future M&E approaches, particularly those that are well-suited to advocacy and policy change efforts, for the Foundation to consider in the context of its full body of work.

The NSI's M&E approach included

- targets which formed the basis for grantee monitoring and reporting,
- two mid-term "strategic reviews" that assessed the NSI strategies' promise for creating impact and made recommendations regarding strategy adjustments, and
- the retrospective summative evaluation.

It is unclear how useful monitoring was for the development and ongoing improvement of the NSI. Monitoring occurred primarily via grantees reports submitted to the Foundation. In reports, grantees reflected on their achievements against established targets and provided views about progress that was unanticipated or outside the bounds of the grant agreement. When reviewed by program officers, over 80% of grants were found to have met their targets. However, it is unclear the extent to which grantee reports contained candid assessments of progress since admitting that targets were not met could have negative consequences on continued funding. Therefore, it is unclear how grantee reports informed strategic decision-making.

By focusing grantee reporting on whether targets were met/not met, there was a missed opportunity for deep and productive reflection on questions that could inform ongoing advocacy and policy work. Such questions might include: how are opportunities changing? How are the politics changing? How do original plans need to be adjusted? Are grantee capacity and available resources sufficient to respond to the changing environment or to implement adjusted plans? Are the right partners on board? What can the Foundation do either via grantmaking or non-grantmaking roles to support current efforts?

Monitoring that emphasizes reflection in order to support real-time decision-making is a better match for advocacy and policy change initiatives. For advocacy and policy initiatives, a narrow focus on reporting on targets diminishes the potential value of monitoring data. If monitoring could integrate deeper questions and reflection, and involve intentional, collaborative learning by both the funder and grantees, monitoring data would likely feed decisions about strategy and tactics, and facilitate effective responses to emergent opportunities. The ability for both funders and grantees to shift tactics quickly is paramount to success in policy change initiatives.

In terms of evaluation efforts, retrospective methods that emphasize merit and worth are not very well-suited to the complexities of advocacy and policy change efforts as real-time methods that emphasize learning.[11] These types of approaches take the position that evaluation is an organizational development and leadership activity, and the evaluator is a thought partner who can help users apply data, rather than an outside observers who delivers summative judgments. For a policy change initiative such as NSI, the M&E efforts that are most likely to generate future successes are those present data to show where strategies are making a difference, where efforts are not going well or not productive, and what adjustments are needed. Experts that participated in a focus group for this evaluation agreed that when M&E integrates solid learning habits, it is more likely to provide value than when M&E is focused on measuring grantee accomplishments against pre-established targets, or is used solely to justify certain investment decisions.

When assessing impact, look "below the water line."

Earlier, the image of an iceberg was presented as a metaphor for policy change efforts. When advancing policy change, there are many important inputs and interim changes that are keys to success though

[11] See: Guthrie, K. et al (2005). Ibid.; Reisman, J. et al. (2007). Ibid.; Coffman, J. and Beer, T. (2011) Ibid.

these are not always visible—e.g., stronger organizational capacity to influence decision makers, strengthened alliances, better relationships with decision makers, changes in public opinion.[12]

When aiming to understand the impact of a policy change effort, it is important to pay attention to the part of the iceberg that lies below the surface of the water and recognize certain kinds of achievements that may be the crucial but less visible early successes to set the stage for an eventual policy win. This is especially important when achieving a policy win is likely to be a long-term endeavor. For funders, this relates directly to the question of what can be reasonably accomplished in a grant cycle, typically one to three years. If a policy target cannot reasonably be achieved in that timeframe, then it is important for a foundation to: clearly identify what its efforts and investments can do to establish the conditions for achievement within a grant cycle, set appropriate targets, and gauge its own success by how the "interim" targets are creating the conditions for policy wins.

Conclusion: What is the legacy and what is left on the table?

Findings indicated that the NSI had at least one significant policy win, along with meaningful "below the surface" wins. Beyond the NSI's impact, the evaluation also explored perceptions about the Hewlett Foundation's departure from the nuclear security space, and findings point to what could be considered the Foundation's legacy, as well as what is being left on the table.

A clear element of NSI's legacy is the energy and innovation that the Hewlett Foundation brought to the nuclear security space, which contributed to rejuvenation of the field. As an interviewee remarked, at the inception of the NSI, the nuclear security field was "moribund." Via its grantmaking, the Foundation brought in both new voices and new ideas. Via non-grantmaking roles, program officers helped to build a more cohesive field. Both of these efforts were seen to have strengthened and moved the field forward.

Another aspect of the Foundation's legacy is enhanced partnerships. In addition to being a great partner, the Foundation's efforts to convene, build a sense of field identity and cohesion, and encourage collaboration contributed to the development of increased and stronger partnerships across the nuclear security field.

While these kinds of efforts are rarely splashy or exciting, they were productive and the result of the Hewlett Foundation's dedicated investment. The Foundation was given strong credit for understanding the importance of field building, and for instituting a responsive strategy.

In terms of what is left on the table, many see the Hewlett Foundation's exit coming at a time when meaningful progress has only just begun. While certain small gains—e.g., in US-China relations and NATO dialogue—may seem insignificant, these are in fact important steps forward. While recognizing the challenges, interviewees see nuclear security goals as being imminently achievable though only with sustained effort and the kind of coordinated field-level strategy that had begun to emerge in the past seven years.

[12] See: Reisman, J. et al. (2007). Ibid.