



Remarks by Chris Kojm, Chairman, National Intelligence Council

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Background: The US Holocaust Museum and the Council on Foreign Relations' Center for Preventive Action sponsored an event in cooperation with CNN, "Imagining the Unimaginable: Ending Genocide in the 21st Century." Following the keynote address by Secretary Clinton, Mr. Kojm presented on a panel discussion, "Over the Horizon—Global Trends Driving Genocide."

Thanks to the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Council on Foreign Relations' Center for Preventive Action for the invitation to speak today. The Committee on Conscience has done important work focusing on cases of extreme violence against civilians. At the National Intelligence Council, we as well look out over the horizon at factors that could contribute to instability, the outbreak of conflict, mass atrocities and genocide.

The National Intelligence Council under the Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, is charged with providing strategic assessments on future threats and trends—as well as opportunities—to senior policymakers. As Secretary Clinton noted, quoting the President, preventing mass atrocities is a "core national security interest."

Therefore, we have been directed to work on the first-ever National Intelligence Estimate on the global risk of mass atrocities and at the prospects for responses by the international community. The timeframe will focus on the period out to the year 2018. National Intelligence Estimates are comprehensive undertakings and represent the best information and analysis available to the Intelligence Community and draw on research, analytic approaches, and insights from experts both inside and outside government. We will do our best to meet the task we have been assigned—Support our policymakers, provide them timely information, and help them make the best possible decisions.

The study of genocide and mass violence suggests that the factors contributing to horrific violence do not suddenly appear two weeks or two months before an event happens. As Secretary Clinton noted, there are slow motion crises that develop over time, long before videos posted on social media go "viral."

We can identify factors—we often refer to them as drivers—that over time can lead to increased risk. We believe that monitoring atrocities drivers will enable Secretary Clinton and the Atrocities Prevention Board to more closely monitor risks and develop initiatives to address root causes earlier -- and break a cycle that could lead to the unimaginable.



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- Long-range analysis of risks can lead to a re-examination of assumptions underpinning policies, and help in thinking ahead. We want our analysis to inform government budget cycles, which requires anticipating future requirements. Our analysis can identify opportunities for assistance and US action can help mitigate risk.

- Prediction of where and when violent conflict will erupt is among the toughest analytic challenges that governments, analysts, and researchers face. The National Intelligence Estimate is part of a broader effort and process aimed at early identification of risk factors that have the potential to lead to mass atrocities. We work continuously at trying to refine and improve our efforts to identify risks, including those triggering events cascading into crises, violence, and mass atrocities.

Past vs. Future

The study of the past—embodied in this museum and informed by some of the world’s brightest scholars, researchers, and advocates, some of whom are here today—will help us think about the future. In past mass atrocities, contributing factors have included—but most certainly are not limited to—rule by authoritarian or hybrid political regimes, underdevelopment and economic crisis, state policies of discrimination against groups within societies, and conflict in bordering areas.

- Other factors include the recent outbreak or high risk of violent or regime-threatening stability, a history of ethnic conflict, prior loss of territory or authority, and persistent, intractable conflict between groups.

Yet we must remain open to the possibility that past is not necessarily a predictor of where and when mass atrocities will occur, and the means by which they will be perpetrated. They may involve nation states but could also occur between non-state groups. Looking to the future, it will be important to understand “transboundary” risks that do not fit neatly within the classic nation state map of the world.

Political, Social, and Economic Drivers

The National Intelligence Council is currently working on Global Trends 2030, the fifth in a series



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began in 1996 to take a look at what the world may look like in the future. We will complete our report late this year.

We see a growing nexus among energy, water, and food. Demand for resources will increase, owing to an increase in global population from 7.1 billion today to about 8 billion by 2030. Demand for food could rise by 50 percent and energy needs will sharply increase. Nearly half of the world population will live in areas with severe water stress.

Many of the same countries that will have limited natural resources—such as water and arable land—will also have disproportionate numbers of young men—particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and parts of the Middle East, and those factors together will increase the risk of intrastate conflict. Most intrastate conflicts will remain in the form of irregular warfare, but spread of precision weaponry may change the character of some of these conflicts.

Demography also helps us look over the horizon. The good news global deaths from communicable diseases are projected to drop by more than 40 percent. So people will be living longer lives. More complicated demographic facts include increased transboundary migration, spreading not only to the developed world but to emerging powers as well. And urbanization of humanity is set to reach 60 percent by 2030.

Rapid political and social changes may drive increasingly serious deficits in governance. And societies moving from autocracy to democracy have a track record of instability. About 50 countries fall into this major risk group. However, economic progress could improve their ability to govern.

Role of Technology

Technology is likely to play an increasing role, and we are examining not only today's technology but what technologies will emerge over the next three to five years. The Holocaust Memorial Museum and Harvard's Carr Center have examined the role of satellite imagery analysis, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles, and innovation in novel use of information and communications technology.

- As the Secretary noted, these technologies can be used for early identification and warning, shaping global opinion, and mobilizing local, regional, and global responses. And of course, these technologies also help us gather useful intelligence.



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- We also see that technological capacities are not the sole province of governments. Many innovative uses are coming from multilateral organizations, NGOs, and individuals who want to make a difference. These are important efforts and these capabilities increasingly will add to the picture. Imagery analysis, more broadly geospatial intelligence, is a sophisticated art of interpretation and it is by complementing it with other sources of information that we can reach informed judgments.

While there is reason for optimism on the technology front, technology will also pose new challenges—ethical, legal, and moral—for warning, sharing information, and international responses.

- For example, if people use social media platforms to share videos and observations of violence on the ground, they will have an increasingly hard time assuring their anonymity, and their video may provide openings for perpetrators to identify, detain, and torture them.

- We will face challenges in authenticating videos and with analytic questions on the size, severity, and scope of the threat that cannot be instantly gleaned from YouTube video postings.

The characteristics of today's communications technology use—multiple and simultaneous action, near-instantaneous responses and feedback loops, and mass organization across geographic boundaries—increase the potential for positive outcomes but also the potential for discontinuities and shocks. The applications of communications technology will also give governments an unprecedented ability to monitor their citizens. How these uses of communications technology play out is one of the topics we will be addressing in the Estimate.

Thank you. I look forward to our discussion.