

PROJECT GLOBAL SHIELD

SUBJECT: Support National Security through the Reduction of Global Catastrophic Risk

To Whom It May Concern:

As bipartisan leaders in national security, we write to express to you the importance of the U.S. government assessing and mitigating a growing set of low probability, extremely high consequence threats. Greater attention to these risks is of tremendous importance to our national defense, security, and national welfare. Recent events in the last few years, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, have highlighted that some of the gravest man-made and natural risks to U.S. national and homeland security may be unanticipated or underappreciated by the federal government.

The mitigation of global catastrophic and existential risks, regardless of from where and how the threats arise, is an essential mission of the national security enterprise. These risks are wide-ranging and relatively unstudied by the U.S. government. As we look prospectively to the future, we whole-heartedly agree with the assessment of the U.S. National Intelligence Council, provided in the Global Trends 2040 report, that:

Technological advances may increase the number of existential threats; threats that could damage life on a global scale challenge our ability to imagine and comprehend their potential scope and scale, and they require the development of resilient strategies to survive. Technology plays a role in both generating these existential risks and in mitigating them.

Anthropomorphic risks include runaway AI, engineered pandemics, nanotechnology weapons, or nuclear war. Such low-probability, high-impact events are difficult to forecast and expensive to prepare for but identifying potential risks and developing mitigation strategies in advance can provide some resilience to exogenous shocks.

A variety of agencies within the federal government are charged with assessing and addressing these risks. For *example*, the Department of Health and Human Services is charged with preparing for pandemics even worse than COVID-19; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration tracks asteroids and considers technical means of deflecting them; the Department of State has a particular focus on weapons of mass destruction arms control; and the Department of Defense is increasingly developing expertise on the risk of emerging technologies.

However, these efforts differ in terms of agency priority, resources allocated, and the urgency with which the programs mitigate the risk of the threat. Further, there has been no comprehensive, whole-of-government assessment of global catastrophic risks facing the country, or a plan developed to reduce them synergistically. Given the potential national security consequences of these kinds of threats, we



urge Congress to direct the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security to lead a broad, intragovernmental assessment of the full threat landscape to conduct a strategic assessment of global catastrophic risks to the U.S. After this intragovernmental risk analysis, **we recommend the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security lead a comprehensive review of our nation’s continuity of operations and continuity of government planning (COOP/COG) to survive these risks.** COOP/COG planning is effectively our “last line of defense” in our darkest hour of need to maintain the basic functions and constitutional nature of our great nation. As a vital component of this review, the government should redouble its efforts to develop and incorporate a Continuity of Economy Plan into COOP/COG planning, as already required by law (6 U.S.C. §322). Both the risk assessment and COOP/COG reviews would be critical steps toward reducing global catastrophic risks to the country.

On behalf of the undersigned, please contact info@projectglobalshield.org to answer any questions you may have and arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Brad Carson
Former Under Secretary of Army and former
Member of Congress

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Former Chairman, House Intelligence
Committee

The Honorable Michael Lumpkin
Former Acting Undersecretary of Defense for
Policy

Ambassador Paula J. Dobriansky
Former Under Secretary of State for Global
Affairs

The Honorable Andy Weber
Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense
Programs

Lieutenant General (Ret.) Tom Trask
Former Vice Commander,
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Major General Mark (Ret.) “Droopy” Clark
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