

52nd Strategy for Peace Conference Policy Dialogue Brief: Structuring the U.S. Government to Prevent Atrocities - Considerations for the Atrocities Prevention Board

Stanley Foundation

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In August 2011, the Obama administration mandated the creation of a standing interagency Atrocities Prevention Board

(APB)

to coordinate a whole-of-government approach to mass atrocity prevention and response.

As part of its 52nd annual Strategy for Peace Conference, the Stanley Foundation convened some 30 US government officials and mass atrocity specialists recently to discuss the prospects and challenges confronting the ongoing interagency review that will inform the design and approach of this freshly mandated structure.

The dialogue, chaired by Ambassador David Scheffer, considered immediate and future needs of an Atrocities Prevention Board, as well as ways in which concurrent implementation of the State Department and the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) 2010 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR) might reinforce the Atrocities Prevention Board's broader interagency process. Joining external expertise with perspectives that spanned the US government interagency structure, participants strove to isolate shifts that would most effectively promote US government efforts to prevent mass atrocity crimes.

This policy dialogue brief offers an overview of the conclusions and recommendations of roundtable participants. (...)

Key Recommendations:

- Tailor APB structure and activities to proactively mainstream atrocity-focused policy approaches across government agencies and root atrocity prevention as an instinctive element of day-to-day operations. (...)
- Actively promote expansion of the multilateral architecture for atrocity prevention—not only to build external capacities, multiply impact, and maximize multilateral resources, but also to generate external sources of momentum that can sustain internal focus, energy, and engagement on these issues beyond the current administration.

- Embed APB processes within this multilateral architecture. Focus should be on forging links at the macro level of norms, political momentum, and overarching policy, as well as at the level of operational doctrine and field-based engagement.

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As part of the effort outlined above, channel existing momentum from the APB process into direct support to other governments that seek to coordinate a whole-of-government approach to internal and external mass atrocity risks, such as those which have identified national-level “focal points” to implement the

Responsibility to Protect

principle. Partnerships with governments of the Global South might merit particular focus. (...)

- Undertake concerted outreach beyond the US government and partner with the expert and NGO communities to generate media and public interest in atrocity prevention as a national security priority. (...)

Read the

[policy dialogue brief](#)

and the

[resulting policy memos](#)