



Report on Wilton Park Conference W1016

G-8 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP APPROACHES TO COMBATING THE GLOBAL BIOLOGICAL THREAT

Monday 1 – Wednesday 3 February 2010

Wilton Park is one of the world's leading institutions for in-depth discussion of policy challenges. It is a non-profit-making, academically independent, Executive Agency of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Our conferences bring together senior policy practitioners, politicians, business people, academics and other opinion formers, from a range of countries for informal, off-the-record debate. Numbers are restricted to provide a highly participative framework with ample opportunity for networking. The conference's overall aim was to set out, and seek feedback on, the planned next stages for the G8 Global Partnership, as part of the lead-up to the Partnership's Working Group meeting in March, and then to the full G8 conference in Mukoska this June. In that way, it was designed to feed directly into the planning process for a major international counter-proliferation programme. It was run in partnership with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, the UK Ministry of Defence, and the US Department of State.

The conference was invitation-only, and we worked closely with the partners to identify prospective participants. 40 of the 58 present contributed directly to the discussions on presentations, and there was an excellent level of debate around the table. We had participants from 19 countries and institutions. The United Nations, the World Health Organisation, the EU, and the World Organisation for Animal Health were represented. Participants from Afghanistan, the Philippines (including the Director General of the National Security Council), Kenya, Mexico and South Africa were all planning to come but had to withdraw. The conference was therefore less multinational than we hoped, but the presence of participants from Indonesia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Iraq gave a strong presence beyond the G8

states. The conference programme was developed in close collaboration with the partners, and closely followed the planned programme of work for the next stage of the GP. Notable speakers and participants included the current and previous British Chief Scientific Advisors; the British Surgeon-General; the Director-General of the Global Partnership Programme in DFAIT; the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs in the Pentagon; the Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health; the Chief Executive of the Veterinary Laboratories Agency, the Chief Advisor to the UK Health Protection Agency; and the Director of Global Alert & Response at the WHO.

At the concluding session, Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins of the US State Department and Liane Saunders of the FCO set out the shape of the next stage of the Global Partnership and invited comments and reflections from participants. To enable further reflection, we have now contacted all participants asking for their views on:

1. The five key programmes of Global Partnership work, identified at the conference;
2. Projects that are of potential interest to participant's home country;
3. The values they feel should guide the Partnership on future biosecurity and biosafety projects (e.g. sustainability).

Reflections on these issues are to be sent to Trevor Smith at DFAIT by March 5th, after which they will be collated and passed to the Global Partnership Working Group meeting that month. In this way, the participants can, after pondering the discussions at WP, have a direct input into the planning process. In order to obtain input from those states invited but unable to join us, we have contacted these individuals to ask for their reflections. We will contact the partners after the Working Group meeting, and again after the June meeting of the G8 in Mukoska, to ascertain how the conference and the subsequent feedback process impacted on the Global Partnership plans.

Dr Mark Smith
Programme Director, Defence & Security
Wilton Park
February 2010