



2017 Annual Meeting & Federal Policy Briefing
Global Politics, Peace, and Security: Navigating Challenges and Opportunities
May 2-5, 2017
Washington, D.C.

OVERVIEW



The Peace and Security Funders Group (PSFG) held its 2017 Annual Meeting and Federal Policy Briefing in Washington, D.C., with 68 PSFG members from 43 organizations attending. The meeting provided a space for funders to network, engage in conversations about grantmaking strategies, and address the deeper and more complex peace and security issues that inform their work. The full meeting agenda, which includes links to speaker bios, is available [here](#).

Highlights included:

- Two dinners with guest speakers Suzanne Fry (National Intelligence Council), Eliot Cohen (Johns Hopkins University), and Rosa Brooks (Georgetown University/New America)
- Five Working Group meetings: Conflict and Atrocities Prevention; Gender and Conflict; Nuclear; Budget; and Locally-led Peacebuilding
- Lots of networking opportunities, including the ever-popular “speed networking” session, a scavenger hunt at the International Spy Museum, coffee breaks, and an “open space”
- Three workshops, six “power hours,” and two fishbowl sessions (all member-led), including grantmaking in difficult environments, effective collaboration, long-term funding, and building grantee capacity
- An Oxford-style debate on whether it is more effective to change the system from within or by working outside the system
- A rooftop cocktail reception hosted by Open Society Foundations that provided the opportunity for funders to meet with and introduce their favorite grantees to PSFG peers

The biennial Federal Policy Briefing provided an opportunity for members to engage in conversations with policymakers and leading experts, and do outreach to Members of Congress. About fifty PSFG members met with Senate offices on critical PSFG issues, including atrocity prevention and nuclear issues.

OPENING DINNER: THE STATE OF GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Masterfully moderated by [Joe Cirincione](#) (Ploughshares Fund), our opening dinner with [Rosa Brooks](#) (Georgetown University/New America) kicked off the Annual Meeting with an exploration of the current state of peace and security. The discussion revolved around key changes in peace and security over the last few years and how we can operate in an increasingly globalized and polarized world.

Key Takeaways

- Since 9/11, the U.S.'s framework for thinking about challenges has been through a lens of war. The more we think of challenges as war, the more issues become military-focused instead of civilian-focused. This results in increased military budgets and shrinking civilian budgets, thus leaving the military doing tasks previously carried out by civilian agencies. Having the military carrying out civilian tasks can lead to the breakdown of democracy.
- When it gets harder to distinguish between what qualifies as war and what doesn't, it blurs the line between the bodies of law that govern war and peace. Laws governing war, which are becoming more common, have no judicial review and relieves leaders of addressing checks on executive power.
- The best question is not what will happen and what will President Trump do, but what we will do to shape his thinking.

2017 PEACE & SECURITY FUNDING INDEX: WHAT'S NEW



PSFG Program Director Rachel LaForgia gave an update on the new and improved [2017 Peace and Security Funding Index](#). In 2014, 290 foundations made 2,773 grants totaling \$357 million. New features included in the latest *Index* include: an updated taxonomy, 18 additional sub-categories, and a searchable website. For next year, PSFG is requesting its members to submit more detailed grant descriptions that use the PSFG keywords to ensure all peace/security grants are included.

CONCURRENT FISHBOWL SESSIONS

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: PEACE AND SECURITY AT HOME AND ABROAD

During this session, participants reflected on cross-sector engagement and explored the nexus between domestic and international peace and security work. Participants discussed best practices for cross-sector collaboration, grantmaking strategies, and bridging domestic and international work as well as the accompanying challenges.

Key Takeaways

- It is essential to support connections and networks in order to build trust and relationships. When doing that, allow local leadership to lead and support these convening and connections. Make sure relationships are focused on people and their needs, identities, and lived experiences. Ideally, individuals who were victims or targets of oppression are at the center of the campaign and preferably designing the campaign.

- Pay attention to the narrative. If divisive counter narratives arise, respond with a narrative that reorients and opens the space for alternative narratives that break divides. This allows for the peace and security community to be in solidarity with existing movements.
- Funders need to be willing to cede control and re-examine their short timelines and siloed measures of success.

EFFECTIVE GRANTMAKING IN DIFFICULT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENTS

During this session, participants explored how funders can make grants in uncertain environments, challenges they may face, and steps funders can take to overcome these challenges. Participants also shared their own experiences and lessons learned from working in difficult political environments.

Key Takeaways

- It is essential to develop value-led communication plans and effective crisis strategies.
- Flexibility and clear, constant communication with grantees in challenging environments is critical to a project’s success.
- Security—data, communications, cyber—is more important now than ever before and funders have the responsibility to take steps towards protection and security.



CONCURRENT MEMBER-LED WORKSHOPS

GRASSROOTS NONVIOLENT MOVEMENTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON PEACE AND SECURITY

Participants discussed how bottom-up civilian led movements can prevent and counter terrorism, support peacebuilding processes, and reduce casualties in conflict areas.

Key Takeaways

- Addressing and understanding intersectional issues is critical in nonviolent movements. Corruption, poverty, and militarism cannot be ignored in movements.
- Grassroots movements are not just movements, they are a community. Therefore, we need to understand and develop ways to increase the community aspect of movements.
- Providing small “spark” grants (\$2,500 to \$25,000) that are focused on research and education can have a huge impact on building an organization’s capacity.
- With trusting funder-grantee relationships, there’s less need for funders to have a lot of reporting requirements.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO FUNDING LOCALLY-LED PEACE AND SECURITY WORK

This workshop explored legal, organizational, and cultural obstacles that funders face when supporting locally-led organizations outside of the U.S. Participants shared their own experiences and challenges they have faced when funding locally-led organizations.

Key Takeaways

- Key challenges to funding locally-led organizations include: lack of accounting and human resources capacity; high cost and manpower associated with small grants administration; and difficulties obtaining paperwork.
- When funding locally, take risks with small grants that may not succeed, provide small grants to test relationships, and adapt grant applications to make them more accessible.

COLLABORATING FOR INCREASED POLICY IMPACT

Using lessons learned from the [Climate Security Working Group](#), participants discussed strategies for funders to support collaborative partnerships between NGOs and policymakers, including bridging the gaps between policymakers, research, and the advocacy community.

DINNER & FIRESIDE CHAT: PEACE & SECURITY IN THE CURRENT GLOBAL CONTEXT

[Eliot A. Cohen](#) (Johns Hopkins University) and [Suzanne Fry](#) (National Intelligence Council) led a discussion on shifts in the peace and security space in the coming months and the challenges/opportunities in light of these changes. This dinner discussion was moderated by Ellen Friedman of the [Compton Foundation](#) and was off-the-record. Please contact PSFG staff for more details and key takeaways.

DEBATE: WORKING FROM WITHIN OR PUSHING FROM THE OUTSIDE?

In this Oxford-style debate, PSFG members debated whether it is more effective to create change from within a system or from the outside. Throughout the debate panelists addressed questions about collaboration within existing structures, using your role within a system as a way to drive change, and embracing civil society to create change from the outside.



Key Takeaways

- Changing a system requires strategies from both the outside and the inside. It is a “both/and” process not an “either/or” process.
- We are living during a time when we need to examine our funding strategies and consider where the power is needed the most; that is where transformative change can happen.
- When changing a system, from within or from the outside, we need to remember the difference between transformative relationships versus transactional ones.
- Whatever strategies are used, the power of people is critical. Those who are the most affected and marginalized should be at the center and leading the way towards change.

POWER HOURS

For the notes and key takeaways, please contact the PSFG members who led the Power Hour (below).

APPROACHING NEW FUNDING AREAS: [Michelle Dover](#), Ploughshares Fund

BUILDING GRANTEE CAPACITY: [Alex Toma](#), Peace and Security Funders Group



FUNDING IN DECADES: LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENTS & THE CAPACITY TO MAKE SYSTEMATIC IMPACT:

[Libby Hoffman](#), Catalyst for Peace

COLLABORATION:

[Jennifer Smyser](#), Stanley Foundation

LESSONS FROM THE COUNTER-LRA PROGRAM FUND:

[Adam Finck](#), Bridgeway Foundation

MEASURING PROGRAM IMPACT:

[Amy Bisno](#), American Jewish World Service

DIGITAL SECURITY BRIEFING

In a briefing led by [John Scott-Railton](#), a Senior Researcher at [The Citizen Lab](#), participants learned about taking measures to mitigate digital security threats. Good “cyber hygiene” is essential not only for individuals and organizations, but for the community as a whole. See the accompanying [Digital Security Guide](#) and the [Digital Security Low Hanging Fruit Guide](#) for simple things you can do to protect yourself!

FEDERAL POLICY BRIEFING



CONGRESS & THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION - NGO PERSPECTIVES

[Mieke Eoyang](#), Vice President, National Security Program, Third Way

[Katherine Kidder](#), Fellow, Military, Veterans, and Society Program, Center for a New American Security

[Colin Kahl](#), Professor, Georgetown University

[Ann Vaughan](#), Director of Policy and Advocacy, Mercy Corps

*Moderated by [Heather Hurlburt](#), *New Models of Policy Change*, *New America**

This session provided an overview of what we can expect to bubble up or simmer down, what the “hot” peace and security topics may be in the coming years, and how our issues will play against others on the congressional agenda. The NGO experts agreed that there is uncertainty about how to effectively influence the White House. However, they also suggested that funders need something to mobilize

behind that has grassroots support. There also needs to be sustained advocacy on the Hill because budget cuts will disproportionately affect “soft power” including peacebuilding.

ISSUES FOR THE 115TH CONGRESS - HILL PERSPECTIVES*

- Paul Arcangeli, Minority Staff Director, House Armed Services Committee
- Minsu Crowder-Han, Congressional Nuclear Security Fellow, Congressman Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN)
- Matt Duss, Foreign Policy Advisor, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT)
- Mike Kuiken, National Security Advisor, Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY)

Moderated by David Abramowitz, Managing Director, Humanity United

** This session was off-the-record.*

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION – EXECUTIVE BRANCH PERSPECTIVES*

- Kristen Cordell, Fellow, Truman National Security Project
- Kristen R. Hajduk, Counterterrorism Fellow, Center for Strategic and International Studies
- Sarah Holewinski, Senior Fellow, Center for a New American Security
- George Selim, Director, Office for Community Partnerships and CVE Task Force, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Moderated by Lora Lumpe, Advocacy Director for Security Sector Governance, Open Society Foundations and Open Society Policy Center

** This session was off-the-record.*

For the key takeaways from the Federal Policy Briefing please contact [Alex Toma](#). In addition to the above panels, PSFG members spent the afternoon visiting with a dozen senior congressional staff across a range of peace and security issues. They also raised the Johnson Amendment, which PSFG’s Cath Thompson has written about in a previous life: <https://www.independentsector.org/news-post/the-johnson-what/>.