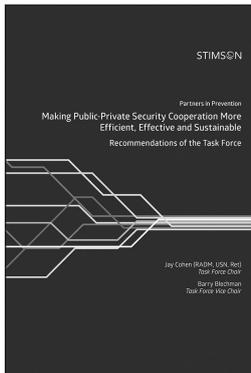


Book Review



Partners in Prevention: Making Public-Private Security Cooperation More Efficient, Effective and Sustainable. Recommendations of the Task Force

Rear Adm. (Ret.) Jay Cohen and Barry Blechman

The Stimson Center, Washington, D.C., 2014, 50 pp.

Reviewed by Gary Hobin

- Assistant Professor

U.S. Army Command and General Staff College

Before addressing the Stimson Center report, *Partners in Prevention: Making Public-Private Security Cooperation More Efficient, Effective and Sustainable. Recommendations of the Task Force*, it may be worthwhile to review a few statistics to place the topic in context. U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Michael Froman, writing in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, provided some numbers to emphasize the importance of global export trade to the United States. “Last year [2013],” he wrote, “the United States exported a record \$2.3 trillion in goods and services.”¹ According to the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative website, this export trade alone “supported an estimated 11.3 million jobs” in the same period.² Statistics on U.S. imports and related job figures are less easily isolated, but given the United States’ current balance of trade deficits, are likely to exceed export figures. Exports in the trillions of dollars and domestic jobs numbering more than 11.3 million underscores the significance of the global export trade to the United States. Protecting that trade from a variety of security threats is both a full-time job and the subject of the Stimson Center’s project.

Partners in Prevention summarizes the work of a panel of fourteen current and former leaders of government and industry deliberating on major security challenges facing their constituencies. The report begins by framing the challenge to the U.S. export business community: “A global economy has empowered criminals and terrorists on a global scale.”³ Similarly, Thomas Friedman in *The World Is Flat* and some of his other works argued that globalization has resulted in “super-empowered individuals.” Cohen and Blechman, authors of the Stimson Center report, have applied the same conclusion to criminal and terrorist networks.

Having established a broad view of the challenge; Cohen and Blechman argue that business and government must develop “a more integrated, proactive, network-like response.” The Stimson Center’s report provides the study group’s recommendations on how to structure that response.

The group’s recommendations are comprehensive. They include identifying “trusted exporters” and rewarding them for pro-active security procedures; leveraging the expertise of logistics service providers to improve oversight of sensitive technology; modernizing information sharing technologies to enhance risk management; and improving terrorism risk insurance, among others. For each recommendation, the authors provide background to the problem and facts bearing on the

problem, providing a strong argument in each case.

Partners in Prevention conceptualizes the process of improving security in the realm of U.S. global trade. From a security management perspective, however, the study group's recommendations for security cooperation are long on concepts, but relatively short on concrete steps that would translate recommendations into actions. Having worked for a few years as a corporate security manager, my experience indicates that many of these recommendations would have a significant effect on corporate profits. This, conceptually, could undermine the very partnership the report seeks to enhance.

While it is likely quite true that resources expended to enhance protection as recommended in the report would prevent corporate losses in the long term, the corporate paradigm of making all aspects of operations into profit centers to improve the short term bottom line tends to limit security programs. Security managers, especially in small to mid-sized corporations, often have a difficult time selling security improvements if they cannot point to specific instances where an improved security measure prevented an incident. It is much easier to "sell" security enhancements after a loss has occurred, but by then it is too late.

Partners in Prevention also seems to pay scant heed to the on-going efforts of professional organizations like the American Society for Industrial Security, International (ASIS) to develop industry-wide standards and "best practice" data bases for improving all aspects of security for specific industries. ASIS working groups focusing on manufacturing, transportation, logistics services, and other industries (broadly defined) provide specific actions, tailored to the needs of each industrial category. Many of the recommendations found in *Partners in Prevention* have their antecedents in work done by these ASIS committees.

On the other hand, the Stimson center report is a conceptual document. One can argue that sound concepts, broadly shared, can lead to better actions and more comprehensive results. And, the report does a commendable job of framing the problem. As stated in the Foreword, the effects of globalization, specifically, "transnational threats to our physical and economic security," require revision in the ways governmental and commercial actors approach security, broadly defined. Traditional approaches, by either governmental agencies or corporate security managers, no longer suffice; there must be an integrated approach. Given the focus of the report on security cooperation relating to transnational threats, its concentration on global import and export trade is certainly appropriate. The challenge, however, remains: translating these broad concepts into actions. Unfortunately, the transnational criminal and terrorist actors threatening U.S. global trade are not likely to await our revised approaches to integrated security. Alas. **IAJ**

NOTES

- 1 "The Strategic Logic of Trade," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2014, 111.
- 2 <http://www.ustr.gov/about-us/benefits-trade> Accessed on 10 Dec. 2014.
- 3 Cohen and Blechman, *Partners in Prevention*, 13.