



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20319-5066**

Friends and Colleagues,

As we continue to implement collective measures to decrease COVID-19 transmission rates and mitigate the adverse health effects of the virus on our communities, the Center for Study of WMD has decided to deliver portions of its Annual Symposium online. Our plan was to conduct the symposium at National Defense University (NDU) on 17-18 June 2020. We now plan to host a number of virtual symposium events on these and follow-on dates and are looking at how best to present selected panel discussions and senior leader remarks in easily accessible virtual forums. In addition to these virtual events, we remain hopeful that the Center will be able to host a one day symposium-related event featuring classified content later in the year, contingent upon the relaxation of required social distancing measures at NDU and elsewhere across the region and country.

With this year's theme – "WMD 2020: Great Power Competition and Technology Challenges" – our focus has been on critical issues such as nuclear competition, conventional and nuclear integration, eroding international norms for WMD use, biotechnology in defense innovation, the impact of emerging technologies on strategic stability, disinformation and WMD, among others. We continue to see value in addressing these topics as a community. We know that the pandemic and its effect on the joint force and other government operations parallels what could occur if a biological weapon were intentionally or accidentally released. This should remind us of the need for increased attention to WMD deterrence, detection, force protection, and response. With that in mind, we will provide updates to the Countering WMD community as we adapt planned symposium content to the virtual domain in the coming months. We hope that you will be able to join us at these virtual events.

Thank you for your patience and understanding at this time of immense disruption and uncertainty. We will continue to provide you and your organizations with knowledge and expertise as we strive to engage and support the CWMD community in new and innovative ways.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B. Melley".

BRENDAN G. MELLEY
Director, Center for the Study of
Weapons of Mass Destruction