GOF: analysis of current policy landscape

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1. Biosafety, not biosecurity, is the major driver of risks.

- Biosecurity risks are plentiful and growing, however there are many more actionable paths for deliberate misuse than GOF.
- Little agreement about the threat, but in our recent study, experts rated risks of misuse of synthetic pathogens lower than unmodified bacteria, viruses, toxins.
- Policy options should not stem from security concerns. (i.e. should not be made a select agent or subject to export control regulations.)

2. Policy options need to be inclusive and adaptive.

- Dual-use and biosafety concerns are longstanding, and well-captured by Fink report/NSABB's experiments of concern.
- Recommendations for future GOF funding reasonable, and bolstered by USG actions (Monaco, Holdren 2015 "A National Biosafety and Biosecurity System in the United States). Additional measures to broaden biosafety knowledge and understanding needed.
- Precautionary approach is shortsighted, and will not advance international governance.

3. Raising nations' biosafety levels should be a USG priority.

- What constitutes effective national governance and adequate funding for biosafety is not well defined; biosafety guidance has been concentrated on user level/institutions and through GHSA to focus donor country efforts.

- There are many drivers for governments to fund research, some will be controversial, internationally. Yet even in future controversies, common ground can be found in ability to contain and manage risks, and minimize consequences.

For further information

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