The AAAS Center for Science, Technology, and Security Policy tackled security-related issues in 2010 through events tailored to engage leading experts and solicit innovative ideas. The Center organized efforts to improve global security through collaborative science, led researchers and security experts to productive dialogue, and engaged in numerous interactions with government policymakers.

International Engagement for Safe and Secure Science

In October 2010, the Center for Science, Technology and Security Policy co-hosted a meeting with the Jordan University of Science and Technology to explore international collaboration among biological scientists from the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) region and the United States. Such partnerships play an essential role in advancing biological sciences in the BMENA countries, and progress in the biosciences is key to improving societal conditions in such crucial sectors as health and agriculture. In addition, scientific collaboration can strengthen shared principles and practices in biosafety, biosecurity and bioethics, and it builds transparency and trust among the participating countries.

Report: Biological Research and Security

Concerns about securing laboratories that conduct research on harmful pathogens and toxins have prompted numerous policy responses—in the form of guidelines, regulations and laws—with which research institutions must comply. Guidelines and regulatory requirements to address safety and security risks of biological research should be developed in ways that ensure their effective implementation, and they should be built on existing institutional oversight mechanisms, concluded a 2010 report. The report was based on a meeting, co-sponsored by AAAS, the Association of American Universities, and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, which brought together
university administrators, scientists and representatives of the national security community.

Public, Press and Policy Events
In April 2010, AAAS organized a workshop on how to meet the demand for a valuable isotope known as helium-3. With special properties that make it valuable in medicine, industry, physics research and national security (in the detection of smuggled nuclear materials), helium-3 is in increasing demand as its supply dwindles. This workshop, requested by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and the U.S. National Security Council, was but one of many critical interactions the Center for Science, Technology and Security Policy coordinated in 2010 with policymakers and other key stakeholders on a broad range of security-related topics, including among others nuclear disarmament, cybersecurity and biosecurity.

Neureiter Gets Award; Hamburg Joins AAAS
Norman P. Neureiter, the first director the security policy center and now its senior advisor, received one of the highest honors awarded by the Japanese government, the Order of the Rising Sun, for his many years of work promoting science and technology cooperation between Japan and the United States. For much of his career, Neureiter devoted himself to his belief that science and technology collaboration can play a very constructive role in foreign policy.

Also in 2010, David A. Hamburg, winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996 and former president of AAAS and the Institute of Medicine, accepted an invitation to sign on as a visiting scholar with the center and the AAAS International Office.

Science, Law Enforcement and Biotech
In an effort to encourage collaboration between the science and security communities to reduce the risk of bioterrorism and related dangers, AAAS works with the FBI and other government agencies to build trust between the scientific community, policymakers and law enforcement. Better ties will promote communication among these sectors, and may lessen the likelihood of, or improve the response to potential terrorist attacks, whether aimed at researchers or research institutions (such as animal rights extremism), or at the nation as a whole (large-scale bioterrorism). “Collaboration,” said AAAS biosecurity expert Kavita Berger, is “ultimately going to be a lot more productive and useful in reaching the end goals of both security and science.”

Steve Fetter, Assistant Director at Large in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, participated in a workshop on helium-3. A variation of the helium used in balloons, helium-3 can reduce temperatures to nearly absolute zero, provide non-radioactive medical lung imaging, detect neutrons emanating from smuggled nuclear devices, and perhaps even be an element of a clean energy source.