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Combating Nuclear Terrorism and WMD Proliferation

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Thank you for that kind introduction.

Today's Threats

Terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including the danger that terrorists may succeed in their effort to acquire these incredibly lethal weapons, represents the defining threat of our age.

Irresponsible states are pursuing the capacity for weapons of mass destruction. North Korea has conducted a nuclear test, launched long-range ballistic missiles, and engaged in the proliferation of ballistic missiles and nuclear capabilities to other rogue states. Iran continues to support terrorist group, to engage in sensitive nuclear activities in defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions, and to aggressively develop ever more capable ballistic missiles. Syria also sponsors terrorism and came very close to completing a clandestine nuclear reactor, in violation of its IAEA obligations, that appeared designed specifically to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons.

As these repressive governments pursue weapons of mass destruction and missile delivery systems, responsible states in their regions may be tempted to pursue their own weapons programs in self-defense, raising the specter of a cascade of proliferation. Clearly, the Nonproliferation Treaty regime that has served us well for almost 40 years is under great strain.

Severe though the threat from state proliferation is, the one from non-state actors is equally daunting. On the supply end, despite our success in shutting down the A.Q. Khan network and in strengthening international tools against non-state proliferators, many continue to ply their deadly trade wherever and whenever they can, through both illicit activities and manipulation of the legitimate worldwide economic and financial system. We also continue to work hard to deal with the aftermath of Khan's activities through support for prosecutions of key network figures by a range of countries and other efforts to mitigate the threat posed by the spread of equipment and knowledge by that network.

Meanwhile, on the consumer end of the supply chain, terrorist groups continue to seek weapons of mass disruption or mass destruction, including the ultimate threat of nuclear weapons. That threat would only be compounded if leading state supporters of terrorism like Iran or Syria succeed in their own proliferation efforts.

The Response

The terrorist attacks on September 11th underscored the new threats we face and that the institutions of the Cold War were not sufficient to provide security. Nowhere is that more evident than in meeting the threat posed by proliferation of WMD and terrorism.

I am pleased to say that the international community has made major strides since September 11th in combating WMD proliferation and nuclear terrorism. We have strengthened long-standing nonproliferation tools like the International Atomic Energy Agency and assistance programs to reduce and secure weapons of mass destruction, related materials and technologies. We have also made new use of traditional international instruments, enlisting them for the first time in the fight against weapons of mass destruction proliferation and terrorism. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, the strong Council resolutions against Iran's and North Korea's programs, and the General Assembly's International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, are good examples.

Finally and most notably, we have developed new instruments, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative, the G-8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Under their auspices, the vast majority of the international community has united to counter proliferation and nuclear terrorism through innovative action that takes advantage of existing legal authorities and growing cooperative relationships.

Despite that progress, much more remains to be done by the international community to prevent irresponsible states and terrorists from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction. We must continue to strengthen existing tools and develop new ones. We must also recognize that proliferation is truly a global threat; no region is immune.

In countering the threats posed by WMD proliferation and potential terrorist use of these weapons, we need to employ a systematic approach of "defense in depth" involving:

- Securing the potential sources of weapons of mass destruction;
- Dismantling the facilitating networks that could supply dangerous weapons to rogue states and terrorists;
- Interdicting illicit transfers of dangerous weapons, materials, technology and knowledge as they move through the avenues of global commerce: land, sea, air and cyberspace;
- Disrupting terrorist efforts to acquire WMD materials and to turn them into weapons of terror;
- Strengthening our defenses against a potential WMD attack; and
- Deterring the use of these weapons against any of our nations.

Let me now discuss briefly each of these elements.

Reducing and Securing Weapons of Mass Destruction

At the end of the Cold War, former Soviet weapons of mass destruction, materials and expertise appeared to present the greatest proliferation threat. Through the U.S. programs initially sponsored by Senators Nunn and Lugar, and subsequently through partners' efforts under the G-8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, the United States, Russia and other partners have marked major achievements in reducing former Soviet weapons of

mass destruction, delivery systems and related materials, and securing those which remain. The United States and Russia are on track to meet the goals set in 2005 by Presidents Bush and Putin at Bratislava, to complete security upgrades at all identified Russian nuclear warhead and fissile material facilities by the end of this year.

Since its inception in 2002 at Kananaskis, the G-8 Global Partnership has been central to expanding and accelerating our work to reduce, and prevent the proliferation of, former Soviet weapons of mass destruction, related materials, equipment and expertise. While that work is not yet finished, the Global Partnership must now address global WMD threats. Expanding the scope of the Global Partnership to address WMD threats worldwide is among our highest nonproliferation priorities for the upcoming G-8 Summit. By doing so, the G-8 will provide concrete resources toward our shared objective to fight terrorism and proliferation around the world, including our commitments under the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. We hope that the G-8 Leaders will explicitly expand the Partnership at next month's Summit, so that we can work together in 2009, under Italy's G-8 leadership, to attract new Global Partnership partners and resources and to better coordinate our global activities.

As its name implies, the U.S. Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) is already very active in reducing and securing nuclear and radiological materials worldwide. GTRI has returned to Russia over 500 kilograms of Soviet-origin highly enriched uranium from vulnerable sites around the world. It has also shut down four civilian research reactors using highly-enriched uranium, and converted another 13 to operate on low-enriched uranium. Further, GTRI has upgraded physical security at 600 facilities in over 40 countries that contain high-risk radioactive material, containing over 9 million curies.

In addition to securing nuclear and radiological materials at their source, we are also working with other nations to improve our capability to detect and therefore better prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear materials through programs like the Second Line of Defense, which has put in place detectors along the southern tier of the former Soviet Union, and the Megaports and Container Security Initiatives, which put detectors at major ports. We have also deployed nuclear material detectors at ports, airfields, and land crossings into the U.S.

As an increasing number of states turn to nuclear energy in light of the growing cost of other energy sources and growing concerns about avoiding greenhouse gas emissions, we must play an active role to ensure that states pursuing the economic and environmental benefits of peaceful nuclear energy are moving forward in a manner that does not increase proliferation risks.

Almost one year ago, Presidents Bush and Putin issued a Joint Declaration on Nuclear Energy and Nonproliferation that aims at assisting states to acquire safe, secure nuclear power, encouraging proliferation-resistant nuclear technologies, and presenting viable alternatives to the spread of enrichment and reprocessing. Ambassador Berdennikov has been working closely with the U.S. Special Envoy for Nuclear Nonproliferation, Ambassador Jackie Wolcott, to implement the ideas set forth in the Joint Declaration.

A key element in this effort is persuading states not to pursue enrichment and reprocessing. In this regard, the United States, Russia, other partners, and the IAEA are all working on means to ensure reliable access to nuclear fuel should there be a disruption in supply – in order to encourage states to choose the international fuel market in lieu of acquiring indigenous enrichment and reprocessing technologies. The United States recently signed Memoranda of Understanding with Jordan, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, in which each of those governments set themselves as counter-examples to Iran by expressing their intent to choose the international market rather than pursue enrichment and reprocessing. We are also seeking to set tough criteria on enrichment and reprocessing transfers at the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Stymieing Proliferation

A key requirement for the international community is to interdict proliferation shipments before they reach their intended destination. A landmark in that effort was the creation five years ago of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). As you know, PSI is designed to be a flexible complement to formal treaties and nonproliferation regimes.

In five years, PSI has grown substantially — both in terms of the number of nations participating and in the depth and sophistication of activities. Just last month, I was pleased to host a meeting of the group in Washington, which included over 90 partner nations. A declaration was adopted that notes the developments of the last five years and reaffirms the commitment of the PSI participating states to respond to new proliferation challenges. These meetings also served to share information about the PSI and revitalize states' active participation in it.

Since its inception, PSI partner nations have successfully conducted dozens of interdictions of sensitive materials for nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and ballistic missiles en route to countries like Iran and Syria. And they have done so in a manner that is consistent with national legal authorities and relevant international law and frameworks. PSI nations continue to build the capacity of partners to act in a coordinated fashion. For example, PSI partners have conducted 35 exercises involving over 70 nations to improve interdiction capabilities around the world.

Much PSI activity is very quiet; successful interdictions are usually not publicized. A major exception was the October 2003 interdiction of the BBC China, carrying A.Q Khan-supplied centrifuge components destined for Libya. That cooperation, involving the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Italy, was an important factor leading to Libya's abandonment of its weapons of mass destruction and longer-range missile programs and to the dismantling of the A.Q. Khan proliferation network. Today, Libya has come full circle abandoning WMD and long-range ballistic missiles as well as support for terror. In fact, Libya is now a participant in PSI.

The activities of the A.Q. Khan network also highlighted the importance of global economic, financial and law enforcement action to counter the global sources of support to proliferation. One response was United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, requiring all member states to criminalize proliferation by non-state actors and to adopt and enforce effective export controls. The recent renewal of Resolution 1540 for another three years, with a focus on international financial transactions, demonstrates its continued importance. In Resolutions 1718, 1737, 1747 and 1803, the Security Council has also acted to deny international financing to North Korea's and Iran's WMD and missile programs. The United States and several friends and allies have also taken firm national action to disrupt the financial flows that feed proliferation. With the adoption of Executive Order 13382 in 2005, the President authorized targeted financial sanctions against proliferation networks, modeled on those against terrorist networks. To date, the United States has designated 52 entities and 12 individuals under this Executive Order.

Countering Nuclear Terrorism

Recognizing the need for a multilateral approach to countering the threat of nuclear terrorism, Presidents Bush and Putin launched the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism in July 2006. Less than two years later, the Initiative has grown to include 73 partner nations, including all 27 member nations of the EU, as well as both the IAEA and EU as observers. Member states are committed — on a voluntary basis — to countering nuclear terrorism by building partner-nation capacity across the elements of physical protection, detection, search and confiscation, denial of safe haven, law enforcement, response, and investigation.

I just arrived from Madrid, Spain, where I led the United States delegation to the fourth meeting of Global Initiative partner nations on June 16-18. Over 50 partner nations participated.

At that meeting, we discussed the program of work activities that have been conducted to date on subjects like regulation and detection of smuggling of nuclear and radiological materials, law enforcement cooperation, and conversion of reactors from

highly-enriched uranium and can be used in a nuclear weapon to low-enriched uranium. We also reviewed the first two exercises conducted to date under this initiative: a table-top exercise conducted by Spain simulating an RDD attack on a city, and a large-scale field exercise in Kazakhstan involving over 900 troops, intelligence, law enforcement and other officials.

Another key theme discussed at the meeting was enhancing public and private-sector cooperation to mitigate the risk of nuclear terrorism. The private sector controls and operates the bulk of the facilities and technology for the movement of people and material around the globe.

This supply chain includes airports, ports, railroads, telecommunications, banking and finance networks and other key infrastructure that terrorists might exploit. In Madrid, we hosted a panel with private-sector and local government representatives on ways to integrate the private sector into ongoing efforts to combat nuclear terrorism through a variety of activities. Partner nations agreed to develop additional plan of work activities and exercises that promote private-sector cooperation with national, state, and local governments in combating nuclear terrorism.

Looking ahead, the partner nations will expand the counterterrorism work of the Global Initiative. Morocco has done excellent work in the Global Initiative on denial of terrorist safe haven and countering the root causes of terrorism. Partner nations in Madrid committed to deepening participation by further integrating the counterproliferation and counterterrorism communities. Partner nations will also strive to develop additional robust capabilities for attribution, nuclear forensics, and detection of nuclear materials.

Defending Against WMD Proliferation and Nuclear Terrorism

Even as we expend maximum effort at denying irresponsible states and terrorists access to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, we must be prepared to defend ourselves if they should succeed. Improved chemical and biological defenses are essential.

Another central requirement to defend against potential WMD attack is effective missile defenses. Such defenses discourage proliferation, give us an important tool to deter a WMD attack delivered by missile, and give us a means to defeat an attack if necessary.

The number of states possessing ballistic missiles has nearly tripled in the last three decades, from nine in 1972 to over two dozen today. The presence of missile defenses undermines the ability of irresponsible states to use the threat of ballistic missile attack to coerce states and actually makes it far less likely that an adversary would ever use missiles during a conflict. We are working closely with NATO, and particularly with Poland and the Czech Republic, to augment cooperation on missile defense.

We are pleased that the NATO Alliance has reached a consensus on this important issue as embodied in the communiqué from the recent NATO Summit in Bucharest of Heads of State and Governments which recognized:

1. The threat facing the Alliance from WMD and ballistic missiles;
2. That missile defenses are an important element of a broader strategy to counter this threat;
3. That the U.S.-led system offers substantial protection of Allies; and
4. That the Alliance should explore options for expanding coverage for NATO member states.

North Korea and Iran

Lastly, let me touch on the challenges posed by North Korea and Iran.

In the case of North Korea, we are pursuing implementation of agreements we have reached at the Six Party Talks calling for North Korea to abandon all existing nuclear programs and its nuclear weapons. We have made progress through the disabling of facilities at the Yongbyon nuclear complex. The tough work of verifying North Korea's declaration and proceeding to dismantle its nuclear programs remains ahead.

In Iran, we are also pursuing diplomatic action within a group of 6 nations, the P5+1. This group recently made a renewed offer of incentives to Iran. We continue to urge Iran's leaders to accept this generous offer, meet the requirements of the UN Security Council Resolutions, and sit down to negotiations with these six countries. If Iran does not accept the proposal, we will pursue the other track of our dual-track approach and increase pressure on the regime, including through sanctions. The possibility of a nuclear-armed Iran represents a profound threat to the security of the United States and other nations around the globe. We therefore continue to encourage nations to re-evaluate their dealings with Iran. Now is not a time for business as usual. Given the stakes and the commercial risks posed by Iran's deceptive financial and trade practices, countries should carefully scrutinize their financial and other commercial dealings with Iran.

Conclusion

We can take considerable pride in all we have done collectively over the past few years to combat the threats of WMD proliferation and nuclear terrorism. But pride must never mean complacency or satisfaction with the status quo. Even as we have strengthened international norms and actions against proliferation and terrorism, state and non-state proliferators have reacted with defiance and efforts to devise new proliferation pathways to replace those that we have cut off. They must not succeed.

I would like to end by recalling words from President Bush from 2002, which remain as true today as they were then -- and will surely continue to remain true for the foreseeable future:

“Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination. ... History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.”



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