

**Fact Sheet**

Bureau of International Organization Affairs  
Washington, DC  
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**UN Security Council Resolution on Non-Proliferation**

On April 28, 2004, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted [Resolution 1540](#). This resolution responds to President Bush's call to action at the UN General Assembly in September 2003:

*"Because proliferators will use any route or channel that is open to them, we need the broadest possible cooperation to stop them. Today, I ask the UN Security Council to adopt a new anti-proliferation resolution. This resolution should call on all members of the UN to criminalize the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to enact strict export controls consistent with international standards, and to secure any and all sensitive materials within their own borders."*

**What the Resolution Achieves: Stopping the Proliferation of WMD**

The fundamental objective of this resolution is to prevent proliferation involving non-state actors and to keep weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery out of the hands of terrorists and rogue regimes. All agree that this poses a serious and growing threat and that prompt action by the international community is needed. By calling on all UN member states to improve their legal and regulatory standards for impeding proliferation, it raises the bar for all of us to address this threat.

**Why the Security Council Acted: A Threat to International Peace & Security**

WMD proliferation represents a clear threat to international peace and security. It is an appropriate subject for the Security Council, which -- acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter -- has the responsibility to maintain and restore international peace and security.

**What States Are Called On To Do: Taking "Effective and Appropriate Measures"**

*The resolution aims to improve the capacity of all states to counter proliferation.*

- It requires states to refrain from providing support to non-state actors attempting to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use chemical, biological or nuclear weapons and their means of delivery. It requires states to adopt and enforce effective laws prohibiting non-state actors from pursuing these activities.
- It also requires states to take and enforce effective measures of domestic control in order to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their means of delivery, including by establishing appropriate controls over related material-developing and maintaining physical protection measures, border controls, and national export and transshipment controls.

*States can implement its provisions domestically through a variety of mechanisms. The United States stands ready to assist any state that seeks assistance in implementation.*

**Endorses Cooperative Action**

The resolution calls on states to take cooperative action to counter the threat posed by proliferation, consistent with national legal authorities and international law. We believe the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), announced by President Bush in Krakow, Poland on May 31, 2003, almost one year ago, is a valuable initiative in this regard. We are pleased that so many states are working with us to interdict shipments of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, their means of delivery, and related materials. No one nation can meet this challenge alone. We hope that all states will join us in the PSI and other cooperative efforts to stop the flow of these deadly weapons and materials.

**Complements Existing Nonproliferation Regimes**

The steps to be taken by states do not affect or alter commitments made in connection with existing regimes. The resolution explicitly states that it will not alter the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, or the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. The Security Council reaffirms its support for existing multilateral treaties and calls on states to renew their commitment to multilateral cooperation in the framework of the IAEA and other bodies. It does not compel member states not parties to those treaties to adopt them.

**Looking Forward: A Page-Turning Event Toward a Safer World**

The resolution's focus is forward-looking. It sets a standard for how nations should act in the future, rather than judging past actions. It reinforces our shared objectives of controlling the spread of WMD and their means of delivery, and preventing them from falling into the hands of those who would seek to harm states and their citizens.

*"There is a consensus among nations that proliferation cannot be tolerated. Yet this consensus means little unless it is translated into action. Every civilized nation has a stake in preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction."*

President George W. Bush,  
February 11, 2004

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