



## Keeping Nuclear Arms Out of Wrong Hands

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We live in dangerous times and perhaps the greatest threat we face is the potential for nuclear terrorism. The specter of a mushroom cloud over a city or the casualties and chaos from explosion of a radioactive dispersal device is what has led more than 50 countries over the past year to join the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which recently held its third meeting.

The technology, expertise and material needed to produce a nuclear weapon have become more widespread. The break-up of the A.Q. Khan network was critical in stemming the spread of the know-how and equipment needed to produce fissile material and nuclear weapons. But regrettably, proliferation of these sensitive technologies occurred before Khan and his associates were stopped.

Terrorists and their supporters continue to try to acquire nuclear material on the black market. This requires us to remain vigilant. Fortunately, most of the hundreds of cases over the past decade involved hoaxes or material unsuitable for a radioactive device. But there have also been troubling cases like the recent seizure in Georgia of highly enriched uranium (HEU) usable in a nuclear weapon.

Against this backdrop, the desire of al Qaeda and other terrorist groups to gain nuclear weapons or improvised nuclear devices is a grave threat that we must urgently address.

Since 9/11, the Bush administration has actively responded to these threats.

For example:

- **In 2005**, President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to accelerate security upgrades for Russian nuclear sites to be completed by the end of 2008. They also stepped up conversion of research reactors worldwide to no longer use HEU, thereby reducing vulnerability of this bomb-grade material to theft by terrorists;
- **We have worked** closely with Russia in securing and eliminating nuclear materials as part of the Cooperative Threat Reduction programs and expanded the program to countries beyond the former Soviet Union.
- **Under the Global** Threat Reduction Initiative, the Department of Energy has secured more than 540 vulnerable radiological sites overseas, containing more than 7.7 million curies -- enough for approximately 7,700 dirty bombs.
- **Nuclear material** detection programs -- including the Container Security Initiative, Megaports, the Second Line of Defense and the Secure Freight Initiative -- strengthen the capacity of nations to screen cargoes for radiological material, and the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office was created to put detectors around the United States.
- **The International** Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1540 create additional legal authorities and obligations for nations to bring to justice those facilitating nuclear trade.
- **More than 80 countries** are now participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative to interdict trade in WMD and missile technologies.

Yet more was needed, which is why Bush and Putin launched the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism one year ago. With this initiative, we have brought together a diverse group of nations committed to countering nuclear terrorism.

On June 11-12, I co-chaired with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak the third meeting of the Global Initiative hosted by the government of Kazakhstan, which set the course for the next year of activities. At the same time, FBI Director Robert Mueller has hosted an important conference in Miami under the Global Initiative that brought together more than 500 law enforcement officers from 20 countries. The FBI conference in Miami is one of almost 20 activities that participating states have agreed to host over the next two years to build capabilities and cooperation.

To be sure, the challenge of nuclear terrorism will not be met alone by these meetings. But by bringing together the international community around a common goal, improving the ability of states to take concerted action and creating synergies, we will take important strides toward effectively addressing perhaps the greatest threat of the 21st century.

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