

“Weapons of Mass Destruction: Threats and Possible Solutions”

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Foreign Relations Committee
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The last few years have been a time of unprecedented success in arms control. Over this period, we have seen the cornerstone of our efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons -- the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) -- indefinitely extended. A significant step towards reducing the overarmament of the Cold War was taken when START II was ratified by the U.S. Senate. The signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) ended the era of nuclear explosive testing, a goal that had been sought for more than forty years. And most recently, President Clinton and President Yelstin agreed on a framework for even more reductions in nuclear weapons when they agreed to a framework for START III after START II enters into force. Despite this string of successes, the world remains a dangerous place. The spread of technology has made it possible for dozens of states, many of whom view the United States as an enemy, to possess or seek nuclear, biological or chemical weapons capability.

Ironically, the collapse of the Soviet Union has in some ways made us less safe. When the Soviet Union disintegrated in the early 1990's, it was not readily apparent that this historic transformation would pose such a potentially dangerous situation. However, the change from a police state, where crime was virtually non-existent and movement was tightly controlled, to an environment where organized gangs are a major societal force and some military officers engage in corruption, has made the once unthinkable suddenly possible: the so-called “loose nukes” scenario wherein nuclear materials or the weapons themselves are stolen and sold to a pariah state, terrorist group, or organized crime.

The end of the Cold War left Russia with a huge surplus of nuclear weapons and material -- approximately 1,200 metric tons of highly-enriched uranium and 200 metric tons of plutonium, translatable into scores of thousands of potential nuclear weapons. This amount can be expected to grow as Russia continues to dismantle nuclear weapons. Whereas this material was once kept under tight control, the reorganization of its armed forces and its struggling economy have left Russia's nuclear stockpile less well guarded than it should be.

Personnel from the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) who visited Russia in 1995 found that some facilities did not have a comprehensive inventory of their nuclear materials on hand and, incredibly, the visitors were in one instance able to gain access to fissile material without even showing identification to the lone unarmed security guard in the building. During the investigation in 1993 of a theft of enriched uranium used as fuel for naval propulsion reactors, a Russian military prosecutor reported that at the time of the theft, potatoes were guarded better than nuclear fuel. Preventing the theft of nuclear materials from facilities in the former Soviet Union is one of the most important problems facing the world today, and it is crucial that we keep uranium and plutonium from falling into the wrong hands.

I'm sure we all remember the day three and a half years ago when a group of terrorists exploded a van filled with explosives under the World Trade Center in New York and the realization it brought that American soil was not immune to the plague of international terrorism. Following in the wake of that stunning realization was a chilling question asked by many: what if, instead of a mixture of fertilizer and fuel, the van had held a crude nuclear device containing a few kilograms of plutonium? The World Trade Center and everything for blocks in every direction would have been completely destroyed and the death toll would have been in the

hundreds of thousands. Radiation would have hampered rescue efforts and much of New York City would have been contaminated by fallout.

Similar scenarios have been used in movies and books over the years, but only recently have we begun to understand how real the threat of a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction -- nuclear, biological or chemical weapons -- has become.

While the collapse of the Soviet Union created new fears about nuclear materials leaking out to terrorists or criminals, the efforts of rogue states such as Iran and Iraq to acquire weapons of mass destruction is an old danger that continues to threaten regional and global security. Few rational people believe that these states will develop a strategic missile force capable of threatening the United States in the foreseeable future, but their history of supporting and sponsoring terrorist activities makes the possibility of their possession of weapons of mass destruction troubling. It is easy to imagine Iraq or Libya, frustrated by their inability to defeat the U.S. militarily, deciding to smuggle a nuclear, chemical or biological weapon into the United States or near our armed forces abroad as a means of seeking revenge. Press reports of Iran's attempts to buy fissile material on the black market and their continuing efforts to develop nuclear technology are reason for alarm. We know now how close Iraq was to building a nuclear weapon just prior to the Gulf War, and Saddam Hussein continues to hide information concerning the Iraqi chemical, biological and nuclear weapon programs from UN inspectors. In Libya, construction has ceased for the time being on what we think is a massive chemical weapons plant at Tarhunah, but who knows how long this halt will last? These states, and several others, who have time and again shown that they operate outside the circle of civilized nations by supporting terrorism, must be prevented from acquiring weapons of mass destruction

at all costs.

One reason the possibility of a terrorist group using a nuclear, chemical, or biological weapon has increased is simply because terrorism itself seems to have changed. Terrorists no longer single-mindedly seek publicity, as they did in the 1970's and 80's. Many of today's terrorists remain anonymous and attempt to kill as many people as possible, with seemingly no rhyme or reason. For example, the Aum Shin Rikyo cult in Japan, who in 1995 unleashed sarin gas on unsuspecting subway passengers, was trying to bring about the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and made no attempt to claim responsibility or publicity for their actions. The perpetrators of the Oklahoma City bombing had no compunctions about killing hundreds of innocents merely because they happened to work in a federal building. The modern breed of terrorist seeks only to kill. If such terrorists gain access to a nuclear device, or chemical or biological weapons, they will likely seek to use them.

Frighteningly, it is not difficult to gain access to these weapons. The complexities involved in obtaining and handling fissile material have thus far put nuclear devices beyond the capability of terrorist groups, but chemical and biological weapons are surprisingly easy to manufacture or buy. Law enforcement officials investigating the Aum Shin Rikyo compound after the subway attack found that this secretive group had a stockpile of chemical warfare agents and was attempting to develop biological weapons as well. Investigators also discovered that the group had in fact actually staged a few previous small scale chemical attacks that went unnoticed. Most frightening of all, it does not take a group as large or well-funded as Aum Shin Rikyo to gain access to such weapons. In March, 1995, a man with ties to the white supremacist group Aryan Nation purchased an organism that causes bubonic plague from a medical supply

company in Rockville, Maryland. Fortunately, because of our domestic implementing law for the Biological Weapons Treaty, the company also notified the authorities and the vials were recovered unopened. Also in 1995, authorities apprehended and convicted two members of a Minnesota militia organization for the possession of ricin, a poisonous protein which they had produced by themselves. The Oklahoma City tragedy proved to us that terror is as likely to come from individuals or small groups of people born and raised in this country as it is from a foreign band of religious extremists or political radicals.

To sum up, then, both the supply of weapons of mass destruction and the terrorist demand for them seem to have increased over the last decade. In addition to the somewhat new danger of terrorist acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction, we must also face the more traditional danger represented by large nuclear, biological and chemical weapon stockpiles left over from the Cold War. As frightening as the thought of a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction is, it pales in comparison to the devastation that could result from a war between states involving nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. Although we need to continue taking steps to fight terrorism, we must also continue to pursue agreements aimed at maintaining security and stability among states. Clearly, much more remains to be done to reduce the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. As President Clinton has noted, we are engaged in “the most ambitious agenda to dismantle and fight the spread of weapons of mass destruction since the dawn of the nuclear age.” On this agenda ^{lie} ~~lay~~ several important items that will reduce this threat and hopefully, the next few years will bring as much success and security as have the last few.

The primary areas of concern in the next year will be the ratification and strengthening of

existing treaties. Most of these agreements have as their goal the reduction of states' stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction or preventing their spread. For example, we expect and hope that the Russian Duma will soon ratify START II, thus bringing the strategic nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and Russia down two-thirds from their Cold-War high and allowing the two nations to begin negotiations on a START III Treaty. Decisions must also be made on how to effectively implement the strengthened NPT review process and negotiations must also continue on how to enhance the BWC. It is also vital that the ratification process of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) move forward so as to bring this landmark treaty into force as soon as possible. And perhaps most importantly, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which addresses countries' stockpiles of chemical weapons and includes provisions for fighting the threat of terrorist use of such weapons, must be ratified by the United States-soon to ensure continued U.S.

leadership in the fight against the spread of chemical weapons. *The vote on the CWC in the Senate is scheduled for Thursday.*
START II

I will address each of these agreements in turn, but let me first begin with START II. Although the Soviet Union has collapsed and the United States no longer views Russia as an enemy, the huge nuclear arsenals left over from the Cold War pose a serious potential threat. The United States and Russia have attempted to ameliorate this threat through the negotiation of bilateral disarmament treaties such as START I and START II. The START I Treaty, which mandated reductions in the total number of deployed strategic warheads to 6,000 on each side (roughly a one-third cut), entered into force on December 5, 1994. The United States Senate gave its advice and consent to the START II Treaty in January 1996. Unfortunately, over a year later, we are still waiting for the Russian Duma to follow suit. Building on the disarmament progress

made under START I, START II will leave each side with 3,500 deployed strategic warheads. Entry-into-force of START II will also facilitate negotiation of further reductions -- leading to a START III. The goal of START III as outlined by President Clinton and President Yeltsin at the Helsinki summit last month will be to establish by December 31, 2007, a ceiling of 2,000 - 2,500 strategic nuclear warheads for each Party. Such reductions would represent an 80 percent cut in the nuclear arsenals of the two nations from their Cold War high.

CTBT

A Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is a bulwark against the spread and further development of nuclear weapons capabilities. A CTBT places a profound and permanent new constraint upon nuclear weapons capabilities, with particular impact on the nuclear weapon states. It will constrain any nation from improving its existing arsenal and prevents the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons. It also keeps new states from becoming nuclear powers by preventing them from testing in order to learn how to build nuclear weapons more efficiently, or to make more advanced weapons. Both of these results ensure that the arms race is over once and for all and are essential prerequisites to further progress toward nuclear disarmament. As President Clinton recently remarked, the CTBT points us "toward a century in which the roles and risks of nuclear weapons can be further reduced, and ultimately eliminated."

Now that the CTBT has been opened for signature and 142 countries have signed the treaty, we must begin work to secure ratification by the required parties to bring the treaty into force. [The goal of the Clinton Administration is to work towards achieving entry-into-force of the CTBT at the earliest possible date: September 1998. Of the 44 countries whose ratification is necessary for entry-into-force, 41 have already signed the treaty, including all five of the declared nuclear weapon

states, as well as Israel. While it is obviously of extreme importance that the remaining three countries -- India, Pakistan and North Korea -- sign and ratify the CTBT, it is crucial that the other signatories begin the ratification process as well.] A strong international consensus against nuclear explosive testing already exists, but each signature and ratification serves to codify this international norm and make it stronger.

Here in the United States, the CTBT likely will be submitted to the Senate in a few months, and although the treaty will be subject to serious debate, I am confident that the Senate will give the CTBT its advice and consent to ratification. The day all states are legally bound to forego nuclear weapon testing is a day which will see the world become a much safer place.

NPT

The indefinite extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in May 1995 was a significant step forward in fighting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. With 185 countries party to the now-permanent NPT, it is clear that the international community has taken a stand against the further spread of nuclear weapons. Before the NPT entered into force in 1970, the acquisition of nuclear weapons capability had often been a point of national pride. The NPT has made it tantamount to a violation of international law and has added immeasurably to the security of the United States and of the entire world.

As we look ahead to further strengthen the NPT regime, verification must be enhanced. Such efforts are underway at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna pursuant to the "93+2" program. By adding new technologies and access, such as environmental monitoring, we can add to our confidence that nuclear weapons programs are not being concealed from inspectors.

[It is obviously desirable to have as many countries as possible become parties to the NPT,

and in this regard, we have been very successful. One hundred and eighty-five countries have become Parties to the NPT, leaving only five countries outside the NPT regime: Brazil, Cuba, India, Israel and Pakistan.

The enhanced verification measures and strides toward NPT universality I've just mentioned, plus others, such as the achievement of a CTBT and the expansion of nuclear-weapon-free-zones, were specifically mentioned in a document on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament" agreed at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. The implementation of so many of these "Principles and Objectives" clearly illustrates that the NPT regime is growing stronger and that the United States is committed to fighting the proliferation of nuclear weapons.]

BWC

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) entered into force in 1975, and has 138 parties who have pledged under any circumstances not to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes. The United States has passed legislation making violation of the BWC a criminal offense, and the Anti-terrorism Act of 1996 improves controls over potential biological warfare agents. However, unlike other regimes, the BWC contains no provisions for on-site compliance activity, a source of increasing criticism in recent years. In an effort to strengthen the BWC, the United States is currently actively participating in an effort to draft a legally binding protocol that will enhance openness and transparency and thereby improve compliance. [This instrument will hopefully set forth measures that provides for off-site and on-site inspection activities and should

strengthen compliance by making certain national information declarations mandatory. By 1998, well before the Fifth Review Conference in 2001, we hope to achieve such a legally binding instrument in the form of a Protocol to the BWC.]

CWC

Last but definitely not least, we come to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) of 1993, which will ban the stockpile, transfer, and production of chemical weapons, eliminate stockpiles now in existence, and require parties to submit to intrusive on-site inspections. Due to its comprehensive verification regime, this treaty, which was drafted in consultation with representatives from our chemical industry, is a landmark in the struggle against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Convention will make it tougher for rogue states to acquire chemical weapons and will reduce the threat to our citizens at home as well as our troops in the field.

With more than the 65 states necessary to trigger the 180-day countdown toward entry-into-force now having ratified the CWC, the Convention will enter into force at the end of this month. As I'm sure many of you know, certain individuals on Capitol Hill are not fond of this treaty, and as a result, the United States has not yet ratified the CWC. Despite their opposition, President Clinton has vowed that the U.S. "will join the ranks of nations determined to prevent the spread of chemical weapons." I hope that ^{the vote on Thursday} ~~soon there~~ will be favorable ~~Senate action~~ to permit the United States to ratify this important treaty.

[One of the most oft-heard criticisms of the CWC in Washington is that rogue states have no intention of signing the treaty, and that therefore, the United States should not, either. This is a most unconvincing argument. The United States is already committed under laws passed by Congress in 1985 and 1992 to destroying its chemical weapons. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

General John Shalikashvili testified, "Desert Storm proved that retaliation in kind is not required to deter the use of chemical weapons . . . Our ability to deter the use of chemical weapons in a post-Cold War world will be predicated upon a robust chemical weapons-defense protection program and the ability to rapidly bring to bear superior and overwhelming force in retaliation against a chemical attack...". Since the U.S. has already decided to destroy its own chemical weapons, the rationale that we should refrain from ratifying the CWC because a few nations may continue to pursue them is illogical. The CWC will make it harder for those countries to acquire the ingredients they need for chemical weapons.

The Convention will also require those states who become party to it to adopt domestic legislation making the manufacture or possession of chemical weapons illegal. Currently, many states lack such laws. It is worth pointing out that within weeks of the sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway, Japan quickly ratified the CWC and approved accompanying domestic legislation. The Administration's proposed CWC implementing legislation, which must accompany ratification of the Convention, will significantly improve U.S. ability to investigate and prosecute those who try to produce chemical weapons.

As a nation whose interests are truly global in nature and whose troops serve all over the world, we stand to gain the most from making outlaws out of those states who refuse to follow the international norm against chemical weapons. If we fail to ratify this treaty, we miss out on a chance to help banish poison gas and make our own military forces and citizens much more secure.

Conclusion:

The next few years will see movement occurring on all fronts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction -- nuclear, chemical, and biological. The CWC, I believe, will enter

into force; the BWC and NPT will be strengthened; nuclear stockpiles will continue to shrink; and the CTBT will near entry into force. These issues will represent the “big ticket” items for the near future in terms of legally binding controls on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It is vital that we establish as many such controls as possible.

Of course, since terrorists do not respect treaties, other measures besides treaties are needed to fight the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. These include bilateral efforts to improve the safety and security of nuclear material in the former Soviet Union, informal international cooperation aimed at preventing rogue states from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, and improving our own ability to deal with these threats if and when they occur.

An example of bilateral cooperation is the Cooperative Threat Reduction program (CTR), created in 1991 through legislation sponsored by Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar. CTR has already made progress in improving the security of Russian nuclear materials and the United States has set aside more than \$1 billion for CTR projects. The CTR program has contributed to the dismantlement and destruction of thousands of missiles, silos and missile launchers, and helped relocate nuclear weapons from Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine to Russia territory where they will be dismantled. CTR has also provided equipment to improve the safety and security of nuclear weapons in transit, such as conversion kits to upgrade the safety and security of nuclear weapons rail cars.

If all other measures fail and terrorist groups manage to acquire nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, it is important that we have a robust law enforcement and intelligence capability to combat terrorist attacks. Fortunately in the United States, we already possess a strong capability in this regard. Our intelligence and law enforcement officials prevented attacks on the United

Nations and the Holland Tunnel in New York and also prevented an attempt to bomb American passenger planes over the Pacific Ocean. Those responsible for the World Trade Center bombing were convicted and suspects in the Oklahoma City have been taken into custody. These successes send an important message to would-be terrorists: that the United States is ready, willing and able to fight them. However, despite these achievements, we must work even harder and make sure our law enforcement and intelligence communities continue to improve their capability to defeat terrorism in whatever form it takes. In this regard, I am glad to note that under the leadership of Senators Nunn and Lugar, the Senate last year agreed to legislation mandating \$150 million to strengthen our ability to detect terrorist attacks before they happen and to improve our capability to deal with such attacks if they occur.

I would like to stress the importance of combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the need to continue to improve our capability to prevent, detect, and deal with the threat of weapon of mass destruction terrorism before we are forced to do so by an unimaginable tragedy. The attacks that occurred in New York, Oklahoma City and Tokyo were horrible, but they have given us some powerful lessons. I fervently hope it does not take yet another terrible incident to move us to action.

It was Edmund Burke, the famous British Parliamentarian and political philosopher, who said the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. If we do not redouble our efforts to develop and sustain international norms of arms control between states and to prevent terrorists from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction, then I am afraid it is only a matter of time before we will be witness to another triumph of evil.

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April 4, 1997

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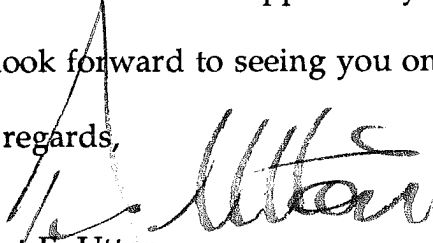
Dear Ambassador Graham:

We are delighted that you can speak to the Albuquerque Committee on Foreign Relations on Monday, April 21st. The occasion will be a dinner meeting at the Albuquerque Petroleum Club beginning at 6:30 p.m. for drinks and 7:00 p.m. for dinner. We suggest a talk of around 25 to 30 minutes with an equal time left for questions.

The Committee is made up of a cross-section of the community and political opinion. We have academics, businessmen, and professionals, and will be honored to have the opportunity to have you as our guest.

We look forward to seeing you on the 21st.

Best regards,


Albert E. Utton
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