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NATIONAL SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE BRIEFING
*"International Perspectives
on Strengthening the Nonproliferation Regime"*

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, the National Security and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee held a briefing entitled, "*International Perspectives on Strengthening the Nonproliferation Regime.*" This briefing provided a rare opportunity to hear from top foreign experts (including from France and Russia) on a variety of ideas to strengthen global non-proliferation efforts.

A copy of Chairman Tierney's opening statement as prepared for delivery is below:

**Statement of Chairman John F. Tierney
National Security and Foreign Affairs Subcommittee
House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
Briefing on "International Perspectives
on Strengthening the Nonproliferation Regime"
As Prepared for Delivery
June 27, 2007**

Good morning, and welcome to everyone.

Today's briefing on international perspectives to strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime provides a unique opportunity for the U.S. Congress and Members of this Subcommittee.

We rarely get a chance to hear from international government officials and experts who help to draft and shape the very treaties, bilateral and multilateral agreements, and norms of behavior that encompass our combined international nonproliferation efforts.

I am truly delighted that all of our panelists are able to join us today. Thank you for sharing your experiences and expertise.

Your voices are critical, because while there are many unknowns facing us in the 21st century, two things are certainly true: 1) the nonproliferation challenges during this

century will only be larger and more complicated than those of the last century; and 2) these challenges will only be overcome with all of us working aggressively and cohesively together.

In the 21st century, we are no longer simply talking about disarmament of the two huge nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union. Instead, now we face potential regional disputes among nuclear powers. We face more countries seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. We face the fracturing of a consensus among the nuclear states against the transfer of nuclear weapons technologies to other states. And, we live in a world where nuclear terrorism – whether state-sponsored or by an Al-Qaeda type radical group – potentially threaten all peaceful nations.

That is why expanding and strengthening the existing nonproliferation regime is imperative to not only the United States' national security, but that of the entire world.

I firmly believe that the United States must be a constructive partner in strengthening nonproliferation regimes. We must encourage multilateral cooperation, and actively and fully participate in nonproliferation efforts. The strength of global nuclear security is directly proportional to how much effort and resources we – and other countries – invest in it.

And, unfortunately, it seems that in many ways we are currently heading in the exact opposite direction. While rogue regimes and terrorist groups work fervently to acquire nuclear weapons and technology, the current nuclear weapon states – including the United States – seem hesitant to step up to the plate to fulfill our responsibility to strengthen the regime.

At a recent Subcommittee hearing I held on the potential weaponization of space, it was plainly evident from the State Department witness that this Administration has almost an allergic reaction to the mere mention of new or expanded treaties.

And actions are even more important than words. Too often recently the United States' actions are not sending helpful or constructive messages to our international partners and to the world community. For example, what is the rest of the world supposed to make of the Administration's request building the so-called the Reliable Replacement Warhead and for Complex 2030, which would build-up the U.S.'s nuclear arsenal instead of disarming it?

A few years ago, Senator Lugar surveyed nearly a hundred top experts asking them, "Have international non-proliferation efforts improved, stayed the same or regressed during last year?" 44 percent answered that things had regressed, 32 percent said efforts had improved, and 21 percent responded that efforts were about the same.

The Nuclear Threat Initiative, spearheaded by former Senator Sam Nunn, concluded that 2006 marked, and I quote, "one of the worst years in the history of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control."

And just this month, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace released its 2007 report card for nonproliferation efforts. The world overall got a D+. The Carnegie Endowment specifically noted: "The United States has strongly affected the outcomes on which these grades are based because it is the most powerful actor in the international system and the historic leader of the nonproliferation regime." The report goes on to also stress, that there's plenty of blame to go around, and I quote: "Responsibility for the rather dismal performance reported here is ... widely shared."

The main author of this report is with us today to more fully explain what they found and why, but a few points are worth emphasizing. Carnegie gave a "D" to international efforts to make nonproliferation irreversible, and an "F" – a failing grade – on efforts to devalue the political and military currency of nuclear weapons.

These grades are alarming, and indicative of both the lack of political will by nuclear states as well as the gaps in the current nonproliferation regime. In its conclusion, the report shares this dire warning, and I quote, "The world needs better than near-failing performance if it is to be spared a nuclear disaster."

As an oversight and investigatory Subcommittee of the United States Congress, we must ensure that nonproliferation efforts get the attention and support they critically need and deserve.

By early 2009 – as the Carnegie report notes – at least four of the five veto members of the United Nations Security Council will have new leaders. Other current nuclear powers such as Pakistan are also facing potential major shifts in government over the next several months

This emergence of new leadership in key countries will hopefully yield new possibilities for progress, but only if the emerging world leaders have the foresight and courage to seize these opportunities.

Thank you. I now yield to the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee for opening remarks.

