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HEARING STATEMENT OF U.S. SENATOR DANIEL K. AKAKA CHAIRMAN OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, PROLIFERATION, AND FEDERAL SERVICES, COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

"Cruise Missile and UAV Threats to the United States"

June 11, 2002

Good morning. I would like to thank our witnesses for being with us today to discuss the cruise missile and unmanned aerial vehicle, or U-A-V, threat to the United States.

During the early days of Operation Enduring Freedom, U.S. and coalition troops found in an al Qaeda safe house in Afghanistan an American manual on how to operate a remotely controlled unmanned helicopter. And just two weeks ago, the intelligence community issued a terrorist alert to the airline industry because of a portable shoulder-launch missile casing that was found abandoned outside an airfield in Saudi Arabia. While remotely controlled helicopters and so-called "man-pads" are not cruise missiles, they demonstrate the threats we face, both at home and abroad, from cheaper, easier-to-use, and long ignored alternatives to ballistic missiles.

During the Subcommittee hearing on the National Intelligence Estimate on Foreign Missile Developments, we learned that between one and two dozen countries will possess land attack cruise missile capability by the year 2015 through indigenous development, acquisition, or modification of other systems such as antiship cruise missiles or UAVs.

In fact, in every hearing I have chaired in the past year on weapons of mass destruction proliferation, the subject of cruise missiles was raised. For this reason, I believe it necessary to examine the cruise missile threat to America and the extent of cruise missile proliferation. I have included UAVs both because of the apparent interest by al Qaeda terrorists and because an armed UAV technically is a type of cruise missile.

Cruise missiles are any unmanned, self-propelled, and guided vehicle whose primary mission is to place a special payload on a target. Cruise missiles vary greatly in their speed and range and are often an afterthought to ballistic missile concerns.

In many ways, cruise missile proliferation is more difficult to tackle than ballistic missiles. They share many features with commercial aircraft, which have been around for years, have legitimate uses, and are less expensive to build. These similarities make it difficult to inhibit cruise missile proliferation without impacting the aircraft industry.

The Missile Technology Control Regime, or M-T-C-R, was established by the United States and our G-7 partners in 1987 to restrict the proliferation of long range ballistic and cruise missiles and delegitimize their sale. Currently, 33 nations belong to the MTCR. However, the MTCR is only as effective as the effort member nations put into implementing it and ensuring it is comprehensive in the technology it controls.

During our Subcommittee hearing last week on Russian export controls, we learned that Russian officials drafted license requests so that cruise missile sales intended for India would fall just under the MTCR guidelines. India has the capability and history of modifying these missiles to then exceed the range and payload limits.

This practice, which is not limited to Russia, shows that unlike ballistic missiles, there is not strong consensus between MTCR member states that cruise missiles are sufficiently dangerous to warrant tighter controls. There is not even agreement on which items or technologies need to be controlled.

The willingness of member states to export cruise missile and UAV technology is proof of this. The United States also is caught between national security concerns and the profitable world of cruise missile and UAV sales.

The Administration has asked the producers of the Predator UAV for a new version for export to non-NATO allies. The new version would have modifications that would make it impossible for the buyer to arm or augment it into a system that would violate the MTCR. But do MTCR limitations on cruise missiles address our security concerns, and are other MTCR member making similar efforts in their exports of cruise missiles and UAVs?

I look forward to discussing these important questions with our witnesses. I welcome Mr. Vann Van Diepen, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Non-Proliferation, our first panel's sole witness. He will discuss the global interest in cruise missiles and UAVs, how the MTCR addresses this threat, and what measures the Administration is pursuing other than the MTCR to stem cruise missile proliferation.

Mr. Van Diepen has returned recently from the April MTCR working group meeting held in Paris. I hope he will share with us the discussions on cruise missiles and whether our MTCR partners share our concerns.