

EMERGING THREATS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the Cooperative Threat Reduction program.

During the Cold War, I supported the expenditure of billions of dollars on defense and military forces to oppose Soviet forces. As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and as its Chairman, I supported a strong U.S. policy of containment vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. In other words, Mr. Chairman, I was a cold warrior.

When the Soviet Union collapsed just over eight years ago, a new era in world history began. Many suggested that the dangers of nuclear war had been dispelled by the dissolution of the Soviet Union. As our former adversaries began to move toward democracy and market economic systems, many suggested that peace had been secured for our time.

Instead, nearly eight years later, we face a world that is more turbulent, unpredictable, and, in some respects, more violent than the one we left at the beginning of this decade. The hopes of the early 1990's for enduring peace have given way to the reality of disorder and conflict.

During the Cold War, the United States co-existed with the Soviet Union in an environment characterized by the risk of total nuclear annihilation. But because of the unthinkable consequences of total nuclear war, the probability of a ballistic missile exchange between the superpowers at any given moment was low. Since the end of the Cold War, even as the threat of massive nuclear exchange has mercifully declined, the probability that one or several weapons of mass destruction might be used to attack the American homeland or U.S. forces abroad has increased.

As a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet totalitarian command and control society, a vast supermarket of weapons and materials of mass destruction has become accessible. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the subsequent decay of the custodial system guarding the Soviet nuclear, chemical, and biological legacy has eliminated this proliferation choke-point.

Rogue states and terrorist groups can now seek to buy or steal what they previously had to produce on their own.

The prevailing view that there is, today, no immediate nuclear threat to U.S. national security is dead wrong. The danger is here and now. Indeed, the defining danger of proliferation is not Iran's purchase of civilian nuclear reactors that may assist Iranian nuclear ambitions a decade hence. It is the threat, today or tomorrow, that Iran, Libya, or Hamas will purchase nuclear, chemical or biological weapons or delivery vehicles from some fragment of the current or former Russian military.

Let us be clear, Russia is still very important, it is the only nation capable of eliminating life in the United States. This threat lies in Russian nuclear, chemical and biological arsenals and infrastructures, and they are insecure and leaking.

Russia's threat to the United States today is generated by its weakness. The Russian military has deteriorated greatly since 1991. Russian military leaders fail to receive even half of their budget requests.

The Western press has documented the extremely low morale of Russian troops. Stories of Russian soldiers unpaid for months on end and without food rations are commonplace. Incidents involving desertion and suicide run rampant throughout the Russian military forces. Reports indicate that many units have sold valuable military equipment for currency. Others point to a barter system in which troops trade equipment and ammunition for food. In some cases troops have left valuable military equipment in the field unprotected and unguarded as the unit forages for food.

Similar conditions afflict Russia's scientific community and the facilities where nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and material are manufactured and stored. Russian scientific institutions are experiencing severe strain. Dismal conditions exist in the nuclear cities and biological institutes across Russia. These weapons scientists and engineers often are not paid. In some cases their government has abandoned them entirely.

Because desperate people do desperate things, we should pay attention to any region of the world where hunger and economic hopelessness are prevalent. But when desperate people have access to weapons of mass destruction, we must do more than pay attention. We must approach the problem with the same focus and seriousness of purpose with which we approached the Cold War.

I approach the response to these threats to American security through the prism of a defense in depth. There are three main lines of defense against emerging ballistic missile threats and weapons of mass destruction. The first line of defense is preventing proliferation at sources abroad. The second is deterring and interdicting the flow of illicit trade in these weapons and materials. The third line of defense involves our response if an attack does occur. It runs the gamut from domestic preparedness to missile defense. We need to do more in all of these areas.

Mr. Chairman, today we are focusing on our first two lines of defense. It is common sense to address the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction at the greatest distance possible from our borders and at the most prevalent source, the former Soviet Union.

As the Soviet Union began to break apart in 1991, mutual acquaintances on the Russian side, including some from the military, came to former Senator Nunn of Georgia and me and pointed out the dangers of the dissolution of a nuclear superpower. The viability of their entire weapons custodial system was in doubt. Hundreds of tons of nuclear weapons material were spread across multiple sites in Russia and other former Soviet states. Russian leaders requested our cooperation in securing and protecting Russia's nuclear arsenal and weapons-usable materials. This was the genesis of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program.

While much more remains to be done, the Nunn-Lugar Scorecard is impressive. Nunn-Lugar has facilitated the destruction of 362 ballistic missiles, 343 ballistic missile launchers, 49 bombers, 136 submarine missile launchers, and 30 submarine launched ballistic missiles. It also has sealed 191 nuclear test tunnels. Most notably, 4,838 warheads that were on strategic systems aimed at the United States have been deactivated.

To put this into perspective, Nunn-Lugar has dismantled more nuclear weaponry than the countries of Great Britain, France, and China currently possess in their stockpiles and arsenals combined. All of this work has been done at a cost of less than one-third of one percent of the annual U.S. defense budget.

Last year, the world was alarmed to learn that India and Pakistan had tested nuclear weapons. The nuclear aspirations of regional powers and rogue nations highlight the important decisions made in Ukraine, Kazakstan, and Belarus. When the Soviet Union collapsed, these three nations became the third, fourth, and eighth largest nuclear powers in the world. The addition of three more nuclear weapons states would have completely changed the geo-strategic landscape.

Without Nunn-Lugar, Ukraine, Kazakstan, and Belarus would still have thousands of nuclear weapons. Instead, all three countries are nuclear weapons-free. I am proud of the role the United States played in their decisions and the role of the Nunn-Lugar program in facilitating the removal of thousands of nuclear warheads.

The key to the Nunn-Lugar program's success is its flexibility to adjust to different threats. In addition to the daily activities of cutting up bombers, blowing up silos, and turning submarines into razor blades, it has undertaken several previously-classified missions to thwart the proliferation goals of rogue states. Project Sapphire is probably the best known. In November 1994, two U.S. C-5 cargo planes removed enough highly enriched uranium to make 20-30 nuclear weapons from northeast Kazakstan. This operation was launched to prevent nuclear material from falling into the hands of Iranians who had attempted to acquire it. Another mission occurred last year when the U.S. purchased 21 nuclear-capable MiG-29Cs from Moldova. These fighter aircraft were built by the former Soviet Union to launch nuclear weapons. The U.S. was able to prevent these advanced aircraft from falling into the hands of Iranians. These planes were not destroyed, they were disassembled and shipped to Wright Patterson Air Force Base because they can be used by American experts for research purposes. Our military is anxious to study the MiG-29C to learn its capabilities and limitations for operational purposes if and when our country is ever threatened by such aircraft.

Nuclear weapons are not the only proliferation threat from Soviet arsenals. During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union manufactured enormous stockpiles of chemical weapons. The Russian stockpile is stored in seven sites across that country and the security surrounding it is affected by the Russian economic crisis. We cannot permit these weapons to be stolen or sold to the highest bidders. This material was produced for one purpose, to kill American soldiers, airmen, and marines.

Nunn-Lugar is addressing this threat. It has begun construction of Russia's first chemical

weapons destruction facility at one of their largest storage sites where 5,500 metric tons of VX and other nerve agent are stored in artillery rounds. We hope the Nunn-Lugar destruction plant will be completed by 2003. When operational it will be capable of destroying 500 metric tons of chemical weapons per year.

Some observers have criticized the U.S. efforts to destroy older generations of Russian chemical weapons. As far as I am concerned, I don't want our men and women in uniform to face any of these chemicals, old or new. There is little practical difference between those that will kill soldiers in seconds or minutes. It makes sense to destroy those weapons that pose the greatest threat in their current environment. The oldest munitions are leaking and pose a threat not only to the local population but also to American contractors and military personnel on the scene.

In addition to chemical weapons destruction, Nunn-Lugar is also dismantling the facilities that produced the chemical weapons. Two years ago, I spent a Saturday morning in the Kremlin pouring over maps of the Volgograd chemical production plant. Volgograd was one of the largest chemical weapons production facilities in the world. Our discussion revolved around the extent to which American and other foreign chemical companies would be encouraged to invest in the facility. I pointed out that there is one important condition to Western investments and that is the cessation of weapons production. The Nunn-Lugar program will remove and dismantle those pieces of machinery capable of weapons production to ensure that this factory never again produces weapons of mass destruction.

Over the last few years, we have begun to learn more and more about the former Soviet biological weapons program. I understand that Ken Alibek will testify later, so I will not attempt to describe the enormity of Soviet efforts in this area. But I think it is clear that the products of this program still threaten the United States today.

The Nunn-Lugar program is seeking to address this threat. Last November, in the first such meeting of its kind, Senator Levin, former Senator Nunn and I engaged in a 3-hour discussion with the directors of 13 former civilian biological weapons facilities from across Russia. These men were intimately involved in the Soviet biological weapons program.

They communicated their current predicament of unpaid wages and abandonment by Moscow and their hopes of entering into cooperative relationships with their counterparts in the West. Nunn-Lugar is currently engaged in eight pilot projects at these civilian biological research institutes. These cooperative efforts must continue and expand to prevent the emigration of the finest minds who have been involved in the most deadly weapons programs.

We also visited Obolensk, the premier biological weapons research and development institute for the bacterial pathogens Plague, Tularemia (Tula-ream-ia), and Glanders; as well as the world's leading anthrax research institute. Today, through Nunn-Lugar, the scientists at Obolensk are cooperating in vaccine research with the United States Army and Los Alamos National Laboratory. We were given complete access to the facility; we examined the laboratories, various culture facilities, and observed Nunn-Lugar pilot projects. Unfortunately, we had not received the requisite inoculations to enter the third floor -- one of the largest biological and pathogen-strain libraries in the world. Obolensk has on

file hundreds, if not thousands, of biological pathogens deadly to human beings.

During our visit, the Director of Obolensk pointed out that, without collaborative efforts with the West, he is convinced that institute security will fall to dangerous levels. It is clear that we must not allow unapproved access to this facility. We discussed plans to enhance security for biological weapons materials at Obolensk and for an equally dangerous situation at an institute in eastern Siberia, which we call Vector.

The need for Nunn-Lugar to expand work in the biological field is clear. In addition to the civilian facilities where we are working, there are military facilities in which we have not secured access. The U.S. must continue to work to ensure that biological weapons research is halted in the former Soviet Union.

The Nunn-Lugar program finds itself in a similar position with respect to biological weapons as we did with Russian nuclear systems just a few short years ago. In the early days of the program, seeking access and transparency to nuclear dismantlement operations was troublesome. But as these hurdles were overcome, during the last few years, we have made tremendous strides in securing needed information. We must keep working to open the biological programs. Past experience suggests that we will be successful.

Furthermore, we must attempt to prevent proliferation and reduce the loss of trained biological scientists to rogue nations. We also must increase transparency in these facilities to enhance American military protection and counter-terrorism capabilities. The best way to accomplish these goals is to increase our activities and access to these facilities through Nunn-Lugar.

These weapons scientists and engineers are often not paid. In some cases, their government has abandoned them. Let me be perfectly clear Mr. Chairman, we are working with people whose lives were devoted to the study of organisms that are meant to kill people on a massive scale. Our programs will not be perfect. The sheer size and scope of our endeavors will negate the possibility of a perfect batting average in this regard. But we must get into the game. Of the thousands of people involved in these programs we may lose some. Some may emigrate to rogue nations and continue their former work. But we owe it to our military and the American people to do everything in our power to reduce these threats.

The second line of defense against these threats involves efforts to deter and interdict the transfer of such weapons and materials at far-away borders.

Nunn-Lugar and the U.S. Customs Service is working at the borders of former Soviet states to assist with the establishment of export control systems and customs services. In many cases, these nations have borders that are thousands of miles long. Local governments often do not have the infrastructure or ability to monitor, patrol, or secure them. These borders are particularly permeable, including points of entry into Iran on the Caspian Sea and other rogue nations.

We must continue to plug these porous borders abroad. These nations are seeking our help, and it is in our interests to supply it. Secure borders in this region of the world would strengthen our second

line of defense and serve as another proliferation chokepoint.

Let me take a moment to dispel several myths about the Nunn-Lugar program.

1. Nunn-Lugar is not foreign aid. It is not charity. It utilizes American firms to dismantle former Soviet weapons. Eighty-four percent of Nunn-Lugar funds have been awarded to American firms to carry out dismantlement operations in the former Soviet Union. There are no blank checks being sent to Moscow.

2. Nunn-Lugar is not lining the pockets of Russian organized crime leaders nor does it end up in Swiss bank accounts. To ensure that Nunn-Lugar funds are being utilized for the proper purposes, over 70 audits and examinations by the General Accounting Office, the Congressional Budget Office and independent, private firms have been completed. They all report that funds are being used for approved dismantlement operations. Over the life of the program, that means nearly 10 audits have been performed per year.

3. Some suggest that some weapons systems may just rot and decay due to a lack of maintenance, and thus it is a waste of money to dismantle them. But, I'm not willing to bet American lives on that fact. Some cite Russian strategic nuclear submarines as an example of systems that are being dismantled that are in disrepair. The critics are correct that many of these submarines will never go to sea again. The Typhoon missile submarine will never again lie off our eastern seaboard. Unfortunately their seaworthiness has little to do with the current threat they pose to the U.S. These submarines do not have to submerge or go to sea to launch 200 warheads at the U.S. They are able to do so in their current location, tied up at the docks.

4. U.S. dismantlement efforts are not assisting Russia in nuclear modernization. Although the dismantlement program provides equipment for removing or cutting up missiles, submarines, and bombers, it does not enable a Russian force buildup or modernization program. In short, it is difficult to imagine how a power saw provided by Nunn-Lugar to cut up Russian strategic bombers can be used to modernize the Russian strategic nuclear force.

5. I have heard some suggest that Nunn-Lugar only makes sense if Russia maintains parity in the obligation of resources to dismantlement operations. Tell that to American personnel who might face these weapons in the hands of terrorists or rogue states. Obviously, we would prefer to spend as little as possible, and we should push for Russian monetary or in-kind contributions. But we must not allow this to stop our important work. If the result of debates over cost is that weapons remain on station and a threat to the American people, we will have missed an extraordinary opportunity. Contributions to dismantlement operations pale in comparison to expenditures to purchase and maintain weapons systems needed to deter these Soviet weapons.

As I have explored the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, one point has become increasingly clear. If the United States is to have any chance of stopping the detonation of a weapon of mass destruction on our soil, prevention and deterrence must start at the source **B** the weapons and materials depots and research institutes of the former Soviet Union. Only by shoring up

these first two lines of defense abroad can we hope to prepare successfully for the threat at home. We must eliminate these weapons and materials so that they do not become an "emerging threat" in the hands of a terrorist or rogue state. This is what an integrated defense-in-depth against this threat is all about.

I fully support our country's third line of defense. Senators Nunn, Domenici and I offered in 1996 the legislation that established our country's domestic preparedness efforts in the area of weapons of mass destruction. I am also an original co-sponsor of the Cochran-Inouye missile defense bill. But these efforts are not enough.

Mr. Chairman, dangerous activities still proceed in Russia. But would we rather be working in the Russian missile fields, submarine bases, and biological facilities interacting with their engineers and scientists or would we rather be outside, wondering what was going on. We must be on the inside. Each day that we work with these institutes and their scientists, we learn more about the weapons and toxins our soldiers may face in the future.

The Administration's plans to increase funding for Nunn-Lugar and its companion programs by some sixty-five percent over the next five years is a testament to its value and its contributions to U.S. national security. The reason for these increases is clear. Conditions in Russia are worse. The Russian economic collapse in August has exacerbated many problems.

The fundamental question is whether there exists sufficient political will, particularly in the Congress, to devote requisite resources to these programs. If we are not willing to devote the requisite resources, the time, and the international leadership necessary to controlling, regulating, and otherwise circumscribing this threat, then the task of defense at home is made far more difficult and probably ultimately impossible.

I believe the United States has a window of opportunity to reduce the threat of former Soviet weapons of mass destruction. We cannot afford to squander this opportunity. Historically, no great military power has ever possessed the opportunity to work with a former adversary in removing the threat that confronts them. Bipartisan vision, statesmanship, and patience will be required over many years. For the sake of our children and our hopes for normal life in our country, we must be successful.

Mr. Chairman, I know that you share my concerns in these areas, and I look forward to working with you, Senator Bingaman, and members of this committee to ensure that Nunn-Lugar continues to serve the national security interests of the United States.