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Press Statement

Richard Boucher, Spokesman

Washington, DC

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Proliferation Security Initiative

Following is a Statement by Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John R. Bolton on this week's Proliferation Security Initiative meeting in Washington, D.C.:

We are very pleased with the success of this week's meeting of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Operation Experts here in Washington. This was the fifth meeting of operational experts held since President Bush announced the PSI in Krakow at the end of May and reflects our continued efforts to enhance collective capabilities for interdiction. The meeting was intended to enhance the operational capability of PSI participants to undertake air, maritime and ground interdictions of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials

The U.S. and its PSI partners discussed issues related to interdiction operations across the spectrum of possibilities as described in the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles (available on the State Dept website) agreed to in Paris this September. Four exercises have been held to date; several more are planned for 2004.

On Tuesday, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice personally welcomed the participants and reemphasized the President's commitment to the PSI. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz addressed the participants today to reiterate this commitment.

Participants included representatives from the original eleven PSI participating countries - Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Consistent with decisions from the October PSI Plenary Meeting in London, the meeting also involved additional participants: Canada, Denmark, Norway, Singapore, and Turkey.

For additional details, please contact the Department of Defense, which hosted this week's meeting.

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