

**Opening Statement**

**Of**

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**U.S. Department of State**

**Before the House Committee on Homeland Security**

**Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, Cyber security, and Science and Technology**

***“National Technical Nuclear Forensics Center”***

**October 10, 2007**

Acting Director Andrew Grant, WMDT  
Hearing before the House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on  
Emerging Threats, Cyber security, and Science and Technology  
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### **Introduction**

Good afternoon Chairman Langevin, Ranking Member McCaul, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide remarks on the Department of State's role in supporting the U.S. government's nuclear forensics program. As others have noted, the U.S. government is working to develop the appropriate cooperation with international partners so that each day we are improving our ability to conduct effective nuclear forensics when and where it is needed.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The U.S. government aims to establish global capacity to conduct pre-detonation and post detonation nuclear forensics anywhere necessary to support U.S. interests. The Department of State supports this in a variety of ways. The Department of State has always contributed to the policy and program development of the U.S. nuclear forensics effort and State Department personnel also work at the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office and assist in operations at the National Technical Nuclear Forensics Center. The Department of State supports the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to integrate and coordinate the full spectrum of U.S. nuclear forensic activities, as well as efforts to develop and advance nuclear forensic capabilities for pre-detonation nuclear materials. Also, the Department of State interacts regularly with the IAEA through participation in the Illicit Trafficking Database Program. Finally, the Department of State leads many U.S. government efforts overseas for nuclear forensics, which include building international support to improve nuclear forensics and, where necessary, coordinating for deployment of U.S. technical or investigative teams for nuclear forensics.

The President has made clear his view of the importance of building international partnerships to carry out nuclear forensics with specific commitments in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Bratislava Initiative. These initiatives highlight the need to improve capabilities for response, mitigation, and investigation, including the development of technical means to identify nuclear material or other radioactive materials and substances that are, or may be, involved in a nuclear incident. Through the Global Initiative, over sixty partner nations have committed to this objective as a key element of global capabilities to combat nuclear terrorism.

Supporting our political commitment to strengthen nuclear forensics, the Department of State chairs the interagency Nuclear Trafficking Response Group, or (NTRG). The NTRG coordinates the U.S. government's response to international nuclear and radioactive material trafficking incidents. If deemed necessary, the Department of State also leads coordination for the Foreign Emergency Support Team (FEST), an interagency team that can quickly deploy anywhere in the world to assist U.S. embassies in our

responses to acts of terrorism, including incidents involving nuclear or radiological material.

### **International Coordination to Combat Nuclear Smuggling**

Although nuclear forensics is often associated with activities conducted in post-detonation environments, nuclear forensics is extremely important to combat nuclear smuggling. As part of a shared commitment with our international partners to improve control of nuclear materials, shut down trafficking networks and routes, and prosecute nuclear smugglers, we are assisting other governments to strengthen their own nuclear forensics capacity and thus, strengthen our collective nuclear forensics effort. Our work with the Georgians in the successful prosecution of the 2006 case involving highly-enriched uranium (HEU) is a noteworthy example. This month a U.S. team went to Georgia to help the Georgian government align its nuclear forensics procedures with recent International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) guidance on Nuclear Forensics, which we helped create. The U.S. government also coordinates with the international community on technical nuclear forensics activities through the International Technical Working Group, or ITWG. The ITWG also works closely with the IAEA to provide member countries with support for forensic analyses. Priorities include the development of common protocols for the collection of evidence and laboratory investigations, organization of forensic exercises, and technical assistance to requesting nations. Through the International Technical Working Group, the U.S. can provide technical assistance on nuclear forensics to countries in response to specific requests.

### **Conclusion**

The Department of State will continue to support and lead in many areas to further develop our nuclear forensics capacity. We will also continue to identify and maximize opportunities where our partners can assist us in our efforts to strengthen our nuclear forensics capacity. In doing so, we save lives and strengthen our chances to identify threats.

This concludes my prepared statement. With the committee's permission, I request that my formal statement be submitted for the record. Chairman Langevin, Ranking Member McCaul, and the other distinguished members of this Subcommittee, I thank you and I am happy to answer any of your questions.