



For Immediate Release  
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## Fact Sheet: Defending Against Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism

*Commission Report Endorses Administration Initiatives and Calls for Continuation of Successful WMD Policies to Address Increasing Threat*

**Today, President Bush was briefed on the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Proliferation and Terrorism report on U.S. progress against the threat of WMD**



**proliferation and terrorism.** President Bush welcomes the Commission's report and findings on the greatest threat to our national security and notes their affirmation of past and current Administration efforts, which provide the foundation on which the next Administration can build. The Administration worked closely with the Commission during the course of its review and agrees that the threat of global terrorist organizations acquiring or developing WMD and using them against our homeland and interests abroad remains dangerously real.

- **After September 11, 2001, the President recognized the need to change our strategy to address the new challenges of terrorism and proliferation.** In 2002, the President put forth a comprehensive strategy to combat WMD, and in 2006, he established objectives tailored to meet the threat of WMD Terrorism (WMD-T):
  - Determine terrorists' intentions, capabilities, and plans to acquire and develop WMD.
  - Deny terrorists access to the materials, expertise, and other enabling capabilities needed to develop WMD.
  - Deter terrorists from employing WMD.
  - Detect and disrupt terrorists' attempted movement of WMD-related materials, weapons, and personnel.
  - Prevent and be prepared to respond to WMD-related terrorist attacks.
  - Develop the capability to determine the nature and scope of a terrorist-employed device.
- **To effectuate this strategy, the Administration launched numerous initiatives including:**
  - The Proliferation Security Initiative;
  - The Global Initiative for Combating Nuclear Terrorism;
  - Threat reduction programs with countries in the former Soviet Union; and
  - Intelligence community reforms.

### The United States Has Made Significant Progress in Implementing Each Pillar Of This Strategy

- **The Administration has reorganized and integrated the Intelligence Community under the Director of National Intelligence to provide a clearer picture of terrorist capabilities and intentions, including with respect to WMD.** The Administration established the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), and it also created a National Counterproliferation Center (NCPC) to cover the entire range of proliferation challenges. At the State Department, the WMD-T office was created to help partner nations assess risks from WMD and work with foreign governments to ensure continuous improvement in our collective capabilities to reduce risks from WMD-T.
- **The Administration is denying access to the materials and capabilities required to develop WMD through unparalleled international outreach and cooperation.** The President has created strong international partnerships such as the 2005 Bratislava Initiative, which accelerated and expanded bilateral nuclear security cooperation in five areas: emergency response, best practices, security culture, conversion of Russian-origin research reactors in third countries, and Russian nuclear security. In addition:

- The Administration provided assistance to Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union to improve security and accounting of nuclear weapons and materials. In addition, U.S. and Russian nuclear stockpiles have been reduced.
  - The Administration has created international partnerships and helped convert 51 nuclear reactors in 29 countries from highly enriched uranium to low-enriched uranium, which cannot be used to produce nuclear weapons. The United States has also secured more than 600 vulnerable sites around the world that together contain enough material to make about 8,000 radiological, or "dirty" bombs.
  - In 2004, the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) was developed, accelerating efforts to identify, secure, and remove high-risk vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials around the world. We have redirected former Soviet biological weapons scientists to peaceful, sustainable employment and reconfigured former facilities to accelerate drug and vaccine development for infectious diseases.
  - In 2006, the United States and Russia launched the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which is helping to build international capacity to prevent, defend against, and respond to nuclear terrorism. Today, 75 nations are working under this initiative.
  - The Administration has been at the forefront of efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The United States has developed an active, "real-world" work plan and developed model legislation on BWC prohibitions and pathogen security.
- **The United States is working to detect and to disrupt terrorists' attempted movement of WMD-related materials, weapons, and personnel through innovative initiatives.** Under the President's leadership, the United States launched:
    - The Proliferation Security Initiative to stem the flow of illicit materials used for weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. More than 90 nations are now partners in this effort.
    - The Container Security Initiative (CSI) to detect the movement of dangerous materials in foreign countries and stop them before they are placed on vessels destined for the United States.
    - The Megaports Initiative to provide key ports around the world with radiation detection equipment.
    - The Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) to improve the Nation's capability to detect and report nuclear or radiological material intended for use against the Nation. As part of a layered defense strategy, the Administration also effectively doubled the national response capacity to disable improvised WMD.
    - The Nuclear Materials Information Program to provide an enduring, centralized, and properly vetted source of information on nuclear materials worldwide.
- **The Administration is employing an effective deterrence strategy tailored to the WMD-T threat by putting the terrorists, their facilitators, and their sponsors on notice of the United States' response in the event of an attack, to include holding any state, group, or non-state actors fully accountable for supporting or enabling terrorist efforts to obtain or use WMD.** The Administration has also established a national technical nuclear forensics center within the DNDO and the National Bioforensics Center within the National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in order to facilitate forensic investigation and attribution of WMD-related materials.
- **The Administration has recognized the need to build our prevention and response capabilities in the event of a WMD-related terrorist attack.** Through new technologies, assistance to State and local health professionals, and an unprecedented Federal funding commitment, the Administration launched the following:
    - The Department of Homeland Security, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) deployed the first ever bioaerosol monitoring system – Biowatch – to more than 30 major metropolitan areas to provide early warning of an attack and enable quick response.
    - HHS created a laboratory response network of approximately 170 public health laboratories nationwide to assist in detecting disease outbreaks that could be associated with bioterrorism attacks.
    - The Defense Secretary has certified 53 National Guard WMD civil support teams stationed across

the United States, including the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories.

- President Bush has expanded funding for anti-bioterrorism research at the National Institutes for Health from \$53 million in 2001 to more than \$1.7 billion annually to study threat agents and other novel or emerging pathogens.
  - Project Bioshield was launched in 2004 with \$5.6 billion in funding over 10 years for the acquisition of medical countermeasures, and in 2006, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority was created to manage the development and acquisition of needed vaccines, drugs, and diagnostic tools.
  - The President revitalized the Strategic National Stockpile, increasing funding more than ten-fold since taking office, from \$51 million in 2001 to more than \$550 million annually, a total investment of more than \$3.5 billion.
  - The Administration has stockpiled enough smallpox vaccine for every American and more than 60 million 60-day courses of preventive antibiotics and 5.6 million vaccines regimens against anthrax.
  - HHS has provided \$5.2 billion in grants to improve State, local, and tribal health preparedness and mass casualty response capabilities and \$3.1 billion in grants to increase hospital preparedness.
- **The Administration has led international efforts to detect, prevent, and mitigate the threat of biological terrorism.** Working with at-risk countries, the United States has improved global capabilities to detect, diagnose, and report bioterror attacks and potential pandemics and consolidate and secure their dangerous pathogen collections into safe national-level facilities. The United States has also worked to improve biosafety and biosecurity worldwide; eliminate biological weapons infrastructure; and focus strategic partnership research to identify and map extremely dangerous indigenous pathogens. In addition, President Bush and his Administration:
    - Expanded efforts to assist countries in the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia that face significant risks from transnational terrorist groups, have poorly secured biological laboratories and culture collections, and experience frequent outbreaks of emerging infectious diseases.
    - Promoted improved diagnostics and biosurveillance in key regions; enhanced U.S. response and host nation capabilities to respond to a biological incident overseas; and trained foreign partners in forensic epidemiology as a key to respond to bioterrorism incidents globally.
    - Eliminated bio-weapons-related infrastructure and equipment in Stepnogorsk, Kazakhstan; Tabakhmela, Georgia; and Vozrozhdeniye Island, Uzbekistan; consolidated dangerous pathogen collections and research in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan, with efforts underway in Kazakhstan and Ukraine. We have also transferred dangerous pathogens from Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan to U.S. biodefense research laboratories.
- **Since 2001, the President has continued to strengthen domestic lab security.** The Administration has instituted laboratory safety and security guidelines to manage the risks posed by accidental infection of researchers, intentional theft, or diversion of materials that could enable a catastrophic bioterrorism attack.
    - HHS and the Department of Agriculture have identified those select agents and toxins that present significant bioterrorism risk and increased security requirements accordingly.
    - The Administration created the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB) to advise the U.S. government on strategies for minimizing the potential for misuse of information and technologies from life sciences research, taking into consideration both national security concerns and the needs of the research community. The NSABB currently is developing recommendations to enhance personnel reliability practices at domestic institutes that store or work with select agents and toxins.
    - Since the inception of the Select Agent Program in 2002, the Centers for Disease Control and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) have executed inspections and re-inspections for all of the approximately 400 registered entities in the United States working with designated Select Agents pathogens and toxins.

### **While Significant Progress Has Been Made, Challenges Remain**

**America must continue to build upon this progress and remain vigilant in our efforts to meet this dynamic threat.**

- The United States must accelerate the implementation of ODNI and NCTC initiatives to refine our intelligence on nuclear and biological WMD terrorism threats, trends, and related issues.
- The United States also must take steps to reinvigorate our aging nuclear expertise and supporting infrastructure to ensure we have an enduring capability to support nuclear intelligence, technical forensics, and attribution activities.
- Through U.S. leadership, we must maintain the world's focus and attention to ensure that WMD and the means to deliver them do not reach the hands of the world's most dangerous enemies.

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