Statement by President Bush on 15th Anniversary of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program

15th Anniversary of the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program

Today is the 15th Anniversary of the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program, established in 1992 under the leadership of President George H. W. Bush and Senators Richard Lugar and Sam Nunn. CTR programs are a critical tool used to address one of the gravest threats we face -- the danger that terrorists and proliferators could gain access to weapons or materials of mass destruction.

Under the CTR program, thousands of nuclear warheads have been deactivated and thousands of delivery systems -- including missiles, strategic bombers, and strategic ballistic nuclear submarines -- have been eliminated. Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine are free of nuclear weapons and strategic delivery systems. The CTR program is working to complete security upgrades to Russian nuclear warhead storage sites under the Bratislava Nuclear Security Cooperation initiative announced by President Putin and me in 2005. To date, over 75 percent of the Russian warhead sites and 160 buildings containing hundreds of metric tons of weapons-usable nuclear material have been secured. Work is underway at the balance of the warhead and material sites, to be completed on an accelerated basis by the end of 2008 under the Bratislava Initiative.

We have also achieved nearly 75 percent completion toward our goal of shutting down two of the last three remaining Russian weapons-grade plutonium production reactors by the end of 2008, and nearly one-third completion toward shutting down the last reactor by the end of 2010, thus eliminating approximately 1.2 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium per year. Through the CTR program, several large-scale Soviet biological and chemical production facilities have been safely dismantled in Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Georgia.

By working to secure, eliminate, and account for weapons and materials of mass destruction, the CTR program supports the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction and remains the cornerstone for U.S. funding of the G8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction.

Another important accomplishment of CTR is the redirection of thousands of former weapons scientists in the former Soviet Union, Libya, and Iraq into commercial or other non-military pursuits. In addition, the CTR program has helped Albania destroy all of its chemical weapons.

As the threat continues to evolve elsewhere, U.S. CTR efforts are expanding to include the work of securing dangerous biological pathogens, rapidly detecting disease outbreaks, and improving export controls and border security to stop the movement of materials of mass destruction worldwide.

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