

Statement for the Record

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House Committee on Armed Services

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and explain how the Department of Defense Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program is an important element of the broader U.S. strategy to counter WMD.

Countering WMD

Weapons of mass destruction pose a tremendous threat to our nation, our interests and indeed, our way of life. In the Department of Defense we are seized with this challenge and are determined to ensure that we develop and maintain the plans, strategies, capabilities and programs necessary to prevent WMD proliferation wherever possible and respond to WMD threats wherever and whenever necessary. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy has identified four strategic priorities, which, while not comprehensive, do provide the Department with a mechanism for examining WMD challenges and integrating what has worked well in the past with new thinking in the area. These four strategic priorities are:

- 1) increasing barriers to WMD proliferation and use,
- 2) identifying and mitigating emergent WMD threats,
- 3) developing an integrated, layered WMD defense, and
- 4) managing WMD threats emanating from failing or fragile states and ungoverned spaces.

These strategic priorities provide a valuable framework to support the President's ambitious nuclear security agenda as laid out in his April 5th speech in Prague. In addition, within the Department of Defense, these strategic priorities are shaping our efforts to address WMD-related issues within the context of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which is currently underway. The QDR provides an opportunity to look closely at the challenges involved in countering WMD and highlights those programs and initiatives that can help reduce the threat to this country. In addition, the QDR provides an unparalleled opportunity to communicate the importance of these issues to the broader defense community and to establish a common understanding of the threats that we face and steps necessary to overcome them.

Of course establishing a common vision and sense of purpose across the Department of Defense is not enough; we must also build common understanding and approaches across the U.S. government and among our international partners. I am pleased to be joined today by the Department of Energy - an essential interagency partner in our efforts to counter the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction -- to discuss the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. This program plays an essential role in supporting each of the countering WMD priorities, particularly in terms of developing an integrated, layered WMD defense while increasing barriers to WMD proliferation and use. In addition, CTR will play an important role in supporting the President's goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in four years. This "lockdown" of nuclear material highlights the importance of developing strong interagency and international partnerships—a goal that can only be reached through cooperative efforts. Few programs better exemplify the value of interagency cooperation and international collaboration than the CTR program.

I would like to offer the committee a report on current CTR activities and provide our vision for the future of the program as it evolves to meet the WMD challenges of the coming decade. Before I begin, however, I would like to thank the committee for its continued strong support for the Cooperative Threat Reduction program in the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2010. I take this as a vote of confidence in the Department's efforts thus far to implement the CTR Program. Such cooperation on countering WMD is an essential element of our national defense, and CTR is a leading example of DoD's successful efforts in this area.

Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR)

Mr. Chairman, the committee is well acquainted with the history and activities of the CTR Program. Over the years, the Program has led efforts to facilitate secure transportation, storage, safeguarding and destruction of WMD and the means of their delivery and assisted in the prevention of weapons proliferation as authorized by the original legislation.

I would like to bring the committee up to date on the status of current CTR projects, some recent achievements, and then address new initiatives.

CTR Today

CTR today is in a period of transition from a nuclear-centric effort focused on the former Soviet Union to a more expansive effort to counter WMD threats throughout the world. As new security risks emerge, such as genetically engineered pathogens or established actors looking to acquire new weapons types, CTR must maintain its flexibility and agility to ensure continued success. By securing those sites that are most at risk, while maintaining commitments to legacy efforts, CTR will continue to offer viable solutions to pressing problems.

- In FY09 the Department continues to oversee the destruction of strategic weapons delivery systems and associated infrastructure in accordance with all relevant START provisions and agreements.

- Security systems at 24 nuclear weapons storage sites in Russia have been upgraded in partnership with DOE, with the final upgrades completed in late 2008. DoD and DOE are now coordinating closely with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MOD), the Russian Navy and the Strategic Rocket Forces to structure a system that gives the Russian military the means to sustain operational readiness of these security systems far into the future.
- Under the Nuclear Weapons Transportation Security Program, DoD continues to work with the Russian MOD to ship nuclear warheads to dismantlement locations or secure storage sites pending dismantlement. In FY09, DoD plans to transport approximately 48 trainloads of nuclear warheads (1000 to 1500) from deployed locations to enhanced security storage sites or dismantlement facilities. In addition, the program is providing maintenance and certification for MOD railcars, procuring 17 additional cargo railcars, and providing communications equipment or security upgrades to 9 railcars.
- On March 5, 2009 the first chemical munitions were destroyed in the Shchuch'ye Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility (CWDF). The U.S. has committed close to \$1.04 billion to the creation of the CWDF, which is designed to destroy entire stockpile at the nearby Planovy military base of chemical agent-filled small and medium-sized rocket and tube artillery, and large rocket and missile warheads by the end of 2012. The Shchuch'ye CWDF project directly supports the Russian Federation's treaty commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention.
- CTR has continued to improve the capabilities of Azerbaijan's Coast Guard to interdict WMD smuggling in the Caspian Sea. We are in the final stage of installing a comprehensive surveillance system that will cover the major shipping lanes in the Caspian.
- WMD-Proliferation Prevention projects in Ukraine continue on track. Working with the DOE, we are installing a surveillance and command, control and communications system to complement DOE's radiation portal monitor installations. We are additionally providing enhanced WMD detection and interdiction capabilities to Azeri maritime Border Guard forces on the Black Sea.
- The Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP) continues its work in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan to consolidate pathogen collections, provide security for extremely dangerous pathogens, develop a capability for disease detection, diagnostics, and reporting and enhance strategic research partnerships. The Department has negotiated an implementing agreement with Armenia, which is pending signature. Construction is progressing on 12 facilities for biological threat agent detection and response in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Construction of the Central Reference Laboratory (CRL) in Tbilisi, Georgia, which began in 2007, is on track to be completed this year. At the request of the Georgian government, CTR is working to make the CRL a joint U.S.-Georgia disease surveillance and research center.

The Future of CTR

Mr. Chairman, I have outlined above some of the many achievements of the CTR Program over the past 17 years. We have developed important partnerships with leaders in each country, which remain strong and effective. We worked – and continue to work – on the sustainment of our operations, with the goal that each country will be able to take full ownership of the threat-reduction capabilities we have worked with them to build.

The world today is very different from the world of 1992. The WMD proliferation threat has evolved rapidly, and the CTR Program has been successful in keeping pace with those changes. CTR activities must remain directed solely at countering the WMD threat –no other purpose. However, as we look ahead, we need to think “globally” rather than just nationally, about these efforts. Today’s challenges today range from unprotected nuclear weapons and materials in established nuclear states, to the capacity for extremist groups in unstable or failing states to develop lethal chemical or biological agents, to the capabilities of organized networks to transfer WMD building blocks across unsecure regions. We are now in an important state of transition, and while CTR must continue to build upon its past successes, it must also remain flexible and adaptable to address complicated WMD threats of the future. The result will be a CTR Program that looks very different from the CTR Program of the past.

First, we must continue to have a strong CTR presence in Russia. CTR has been instrumental in helping Russia meet its START requirements. CTR has also been a stable force through both the calm and turbulent years in U.S. – Russia relations. As the President attempts to reset our relationship with Russia and reduce the number of strategic missiles and nuclear warheads under a START follow-on treaty, the CTR Program should be a central part of the process. Russia takes international agreements seriously, as do we. The history of CTR efforts on strategic nuclear arms reduction has demonstrated this commitment to Russia.

As I mentioned earlier, the CTR Program is participating in an interagency forum tasked with developing strategies to meet the President’s goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear material in the world within four years. This interagency group is currently assessing known locations of nuclear material in order to determine the best way to work with international partners to reduce or eliminate vulnerabilities associated with this material. This initiative is a high priority for the President and CTR looks forward to assisting in this effort.

In addition, the CTR Program is bracing for a wide range of emerging WMD threats beyond the FSU. A recent National Academy of Sciences report on the future of the CTR Program notes that “[i]gnoring globalization is not an option, whether in economics, public health, combating terrorism, or reducing the threat of WMD,” and that “engagement” is “one of the most important tools in the national security arsenal” for dealing with the more elusive WMD threats. The report recommends that the CTR Program expand and evolve in form and function to confront these threats and be used as an active tool of foreign policy.

Also noted in the report, the CTR Program of the future will need to be more agile, versatile, and responsive to WMD threats across a wider geographical landscape. CTR will continue to focus on the development of strong and lasting partnerships with our foreign

counterparts, however, future requests for assistance will likely be more varied in scope and require DoD to respond more quickly. As recommended by the National Academy of Sciences, CTR has worked hard to integrate into the broader threat reduction and proliferation prevention community, including government, academe, industry, non-governmental organizations, and individuals.

While there have been no requests outside the FSU for CTR assistance with nuclear nonproliferation projects to date, CTR is prepared to assist if asked. However, with regard to chemical weapons elimination, in April 2009, the Government of Iraq sent a request to the Department of State for assistance with meeting Iraq's commitments under the Chemical Weapons Convention. CTR is retaining the capability to partner with the Iraqis and provide assistance with destruction of chemical agents if our help is required.

Within the past year, both Pakistan and Afghanistan have requested assistance with biological threat reduction efforts. CTR, as a member of the National Security Council Interagency Policy Committee on International Bio-Engagement, had previously identified Pakistan and Afghanistan, as well as Kenya and Uganda, to be potential partners for bio-engagement efforts. CTR looks forward to partnering with these strategically important countries on biological threat reduction efforts.

Today, the Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP) accounts for more than half of the CTR budget. The National Research Council recently issued a report on BTRP, noting that countries which lack the public health infrastructure necessary to detect, diagnose, and report naturally occurring disease outbreaks are at a greater risk of succumbing to a bio-terror attack. The report further states that the infrastructure required to conduct a bioterrorism attack is relatively small. CTR has concluded that the best way to assist our partners prepare for a biological attack is to help them build sustainable infrastructure.

The ease with which dual use technologies, materials, and expertise flow across international borders is particularly relevant with respect to bioterrorism. Dangerous pathogens exist in nature and can be weaponized with readily available materials and few technical skills. Although the recent H1N1 outbreak was not the result of a deliberate or malicious act, it clearly demonstrates the potential impact such a biological event could have. Dangerous pathogens know no borders. A biological attack of greater magnitude than the H1N1 virus could be unleashed against a human or animal population with relative ease. In a region where the infrastructure for detecting, diagnosing, and reporting on dangerous outbreaks is underdeveloped, the consequences could be severe -- for the country, the region and potentially the world.

The H1N1 flu outbreak demonstrates that countries which have the infrastructure and capability to report and track the spread of a virus would be able to save more lives in the event of a more virulent outbreak. The threat of animal-to-human transfer of pathogens, such as H1N1 and H5N1 (avian influenza) underscores the importance of reporting on animal disease outbreaks as well as human. A biological attack against an animal population could have a devastating impact on a nation's economy and/or food security. To meet this threat, BTRP-built facilities

such as the joint U.S.–Georgia disease surveillance and research center will have the unique capability of conducting research on both human and animal especially danger pathogens.

DoD looks forward to continuing its work with the interagency, its partner agencies in the US government, its collaborators, and international partners to address the biological WMD threat. Future Program efforts will focus on assisting in the identification of dangerous pathogens, and with the establishment of infrastructure to detect, diagnose, and report on disease outbreaks in accordance with the World Health Organization’s International Health Regulations, and the World Organization for Animal Health’s reporting guidelines.

Finally, I would like to endorse the new legal authorities, recommended by the National Academy of Sciences study, that this committee has included in the markup language for the National Defense Authorization Act, granting limited “notwithstanding” authority and creating a CTR Partnership Account that will permit DoD to accept funds from any person, foreign government, or international organization. “Notwithstanding” authority is an instrument that will enable the CTR Program to become more flexible and respond to a broader range of threats beyond the former Soviet Union. The CTR Partnership Account, together with exemption from the Miscellaneous Receipts Act, will allow DoD to receive contributions from other countries and organizations for existing and planned projects.

I wish to emphasize to the committee that DoD understands the sensitivities associated with the use of these authorities, particularly “notwithstanding” authority. As outlined in the legislation, we will only utilize these authorities with the concurrence of both the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State. Furthermore, DoD looks forward to openly engaging interested members of Congress when developing plans to exercise these authorities.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, CTR is one piece of an overarching national strategy to counter WMD. We have made significant progress over the history of the program. We have more to do across the spectrum of WMD threats. The Department of Defense looks forward to continued close coordination with Congress as we address the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction.

Thank you.