

**Nuclear Nonproliferation and Efforts to Help Other Countries Combat  
Nuclear Smuggling  
Statement of Ambassador Norman A. Wulf  
Department of State  
Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
July 30, 2002**

Thank you for inviting a representative of the Department of State to appear before this Sub-Committee today on US efforts to help other countries combat nuclear smuggling. I welcome the opportunity to detail more fully the contribution that the Department of State will continue to make to the global effort to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear smuggling.

Preventing the smuggling of nuclear materials or highly radioactive sources became a high priority with the breakup of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the police state and economic dislocation gave opportunity and motive to those bold or desperate enough to profit from nuclear smuggling. The tragic events of September 11<sup>th</sup> made even clearer the importance of our task. Rogue states seeking nuclear material for covert weapons programs are only part of the problem. We also must guard against terrorist acquisition of nuclear materials or highly radioactive sources.

Unquestionably, the best way to prevent smuggling of nuclear or radioactive materials is to ensure that such materials remain under the control of competent authorities. The bulk of U.S. programs focus on efforts to account for as much of this material as possible and to ensure that such material does not fall into unauthorized hands. This activity is often referred to as the first line of defense. However, there can be no guarantee that these efforts will be 100% effective. Prudence requires seeking to preclude passage of any such materials from one country to the next at borders. This is often referred to as the second line of defense.

First and second line of defense programs and our efforts to strengthen the multilateral nonproliferation regime combine to enhance U.S. and international security against proliferation and nuclear terrorism.

The United States is not the only state threatened by nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. All members of the international community face this threat as well. And the United States is not alone in its response to this

threat. The G-8's \$20 billion initiative to prevent access to weapons and materials of mass destruction by terrorists and those who harbor them illustrates the breadth of international commitment to this problem. Our friends and allies are also working bilaterally and through other mechanisms such as the European Union to provide assistance. In the multilateral realm, the International Atomic Energy Agency is enhancing its efforts to assist Member States to control and protect nuclear and other radioactive materials and nuclear facilities.

Border assistance programs, those detailed in the GAO report, provide assisted states with the equipment and training to detect, interdict, and respond to nuclear smuggling. These programs also assist states in strengthening their legal and regulatory control over the export of nuclear-related equipment and technology. The more than \$86 million spent by State, Energy, Defense, Customs, the FBI, and Coast Guard over the past decade have produced significant results. State, as the report makes clear, plays a central role in these programs.

### **The GAO Report**

Even though we do not agree with every detail of the report, we believe it presents a useful assessment of this issue and especially of areas where we agree improvement is needed. Specifically, the State Department does not agree that coordination among the agencies or even within agencies is as bad as the report suggests, but we agree that it is not as good as it ought to be. The report noted significant improvements that have been made in the management and coordination of our assistance programs. However, other improvements have been made that are not fully reflected in the report. I am prepared to address criticisms raised by the report if the Sub-Committee so desires. However, I propose first to address two of the report's recommendations and briefly discuss some activities that the report does not address.

The GAO recommended that State take the lead in facilitating the development of a government-wide plan to develop an integrated approach to nuclear smuggling. We welcome this recommendation. We have already begun this process recently meeting with the key agencies involved – Defense, Energy, Customs and CIA – to begin developing this plan.

The Departments of Defense, Energy and State all receive direct second-line-of-defense appropriations. The Department of State's responsibility for diplomacy and foreign assistance provides an ongoing role in fostering the relationships that ultimately give us access to borders and potential ports of entry for nuclear materials. We are in a position to coordinate bilateral programs with due regard to local conditions and our broader policy agenda with each country. Relying on the technical resources and expertise of our partner agencies, we believe we now have an effective working framework for interagency cooperation and consultation on the best use of appropriated funds for the prevention of nuclear smuggling.

The State Department's Bureau of Nonproliferation chairs a sub-policy coordination committee on export control assistance that includes Defense and Energy as well as other agencies. This committee meets monthly and operates under the overall guidance of the interagency Policy Coordinating Committee on Nonproliferation Strategy, chaired by the NSC. Its purview includes coordinating the deployment of radiation detection equipment. The committee coordinates not only the activities implemented with State program funds, but also assistance provided by the other agencies related to export controls. The committee strives to avoid duplication, promote synergies, and benefit from each other's experience.

In addition, the Department's Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia has statutory authority to coordinate all U.S. assistance to the countries of Europe and Eurasia. The Coordinator ensures that there is no duplication of assistance and that assistance supports U.S. policy. Nearly all of the recipients of radiation detection equipment fall within Europe and Eurasia.

Finally, the Department of State has a network of program advisors assigned overseas. These advisors are uniquely able to assess on a daily basis the effectiveness of radiation detection programs. They regularly visit foreign border checkpoints and within countries – virtually anywhere an attempt at nuclear smuggling might occur. Through these advisors, State is advantageously positioned to bring together U.S. technical experts and host government employees who will be trained to use this equipment. We must not underestimate the value of training. The most sophisticated technology often fails when infrastructure is very basic. In such places, appropriate training in searching for and handling the hazards of radioactive materials

are key to successful and sustained interdiction and deterrence of nuclear smuggling.

State, Defense, Energy, CIA and Customs have begun to work toward the implementation of this GAO recommendation. The group agreed on a strategic goal: **“To develop an integrated interagency approach to detection and interdiction of special nuclear or radiological materials overseas.”** We adopted the elements recommended in the GAO report as the outline for developing that approach. These elements include defining:

- (1) a unified set of program goals and priorities, including participating agencies’ roles and responsibilities;
- (2) overall program cost elements;
- (3) time frames for effectively spending program funds;
- (4) performance measures;
- (5) strategies to maintain and sustain the operation of the equipment, including cost estimates; and
- (6) an exit strategy for each country receiving assistance, including a plan for transferring responsibility for equipment maintenance to the host country.

The group adopted a name, the International Nuclear Detection Interagency Working Group. It has identified participating agency roles and responsibilities for nuclear detection. Energy agreed to undertake a draft global nuclear smuggling threat assessment as part of this effort, with intelligence community input. As part of its compliance report due to the GAO on August 15, 2002, the group hopes to include a draft strategic plan.

I would also like to report progress on a second issue raised by the GAO report: problems with equipment, which undermine U.S. assistance efforts. The State Department’s Bureau of Nonproliferation manages the implementation of radiation detection projects overseas through its technical partners at Energy and Defense. Recently, the Department of Energy’s Second Line of Defense (SLD) program agreed to take on the repair and replacement of a large array of detection equipment overseas on a global basis. This equipment includes portal monitors, hand held isotopic identifiers and radiation pagers, and x-ray vans equipped with gamma detectors. With the transfer of this vital maintenance and upgrade program to SLD, repairs will be made more swiftly than in the past and obsolete or marginal equipment overseas will be systematically upgraded to the highest state of the art technology appropriate for the particular country.

Before closing, it needs to be made clear that second line of defense programs go beyond the provision of equipment, training, and assistance detailed in the GAO report. They also include the tracking of and response to reported incidents of illicit trafficking of nuclear materials and radiation sources. The Department of State leads the interagency in these efforts. Drawing principally from intelligence, official IAEA trafficking reports and other sources, responsible offices in the State Department evaluate specific incidents and direct our embassies and other posts in aiding host governments in their response.

Given the serious consequences that could flow from trafficking in nuclear materials, the Department of State has recently issued revised guidelines to all diplomatic and consular posts in reporting and handling smuggling incidents. The Department convenes monthly meetings of an interagency working group that includes representatives from Energy, Defense, CIA, Customs, NRC and FBI to discuss specific trafficking incidents in an effort to eliminate duplicative investigation while improving information-sharing.

## **Conclusion**

Smuggling of nuclear and radiological materials can lead to proliferation of nuclear weapons or to the acquisition of a so-called "dirty bomb." As my testimony emphasizes, the best way to prevent nuclear smuggling is to prevent these materials from falling into the hands of smugglers. The serious efforts that are being devoted to these tasks must be reinforced in case, despite these efforts, smugglers nevertheless obtain nuclear or radiological materials. The border assistance programs conducted by State, DOE, Defense, Customs and other agencies are designed to deter or to intercept passage of such materials across borders. The implementation of these programs by the various federal agencies is improving. The GAO report and the interest of this Sub-Committee have contributed to those improvements. The result will be a strengthened U.S. second line of defense program and enhanced global efforts to protect against proliferation and nuclear terrorism.