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# **Beyond the Axis of Evil: Additional Threats From Weapons of Mass Destruction**

**By**

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[The following are the remarks presented to the Heritage Foundation Washington, D.C. May 6, 2002.]

I am pleased to be able to speak to you today about the Bush Administration's efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to state sponsors of terrorism and terrorist groups is, in my estimation, the gravest security threat we now face. States engaging in this behavior, some of them parties to international treaties prohibiting such activities, must be held accountable, and must know that only by renouncing terrorism and verifiably forsaking WMD can they rejoin the community of nations.

## **The New Security Environment**

Eight months into the war on terror, the United States and its partners have made great strides. We have helped the Afghan people overthrow an oppressive, terrorist-harboring regime in Afghanistan, foiled terrorist plots in places such as Germany, Yemen, Spain and Singapore, and stanching the flow of funds that allowed al-Qaeda's schemes to come to fruition. We have captured the number three man in al-Qaeda, and will bring him to justice. And this is just the beginning.

The attacks of September 11 reinforced with blinding clarity the need to be steadfast in the face of emerging threats to our security. The international security environment has changed, and our greatest threat comes not from the specter of nuclear war between two superpowers, as it did during the Cold War, but from transnational terrorist cells that will strike without warning using weapons of mass destruction. Every nation, not just the United States, has had to reassess its security situation, and to decide where it stands on the war on terrorism.

In the context of this new international security situation, we are working hard to create a comprehensive security strategy with Russia, a plan President Bush calls the New Strategic Framework. The New Strategic Framework involves reducing offensive nuclear weapons, creating limited defensive systems that deter the threat of missile attacks, strengthening nonproliferation and counterproliferation measures, and cooperating with Russia to combat terrorism. It is based on the premise that the more cooperative, the post-Cold War relationship between Russia and the United States makes new approaches to these issues possible.

Accordingly, President Bush has announced that the United States will reduce its strategic nuclear force to a total of between 1,700 and 2,200 operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads over the next ten years. President Putin has made a similarly bold and historic decision with respect to Russian strategic nuclear forces.

In preparation for the summit meeting in Moscow and St. Petersburg later this month, we have been working closely with the Russians to embody the reductions in offensive warheads into a legally-binding document that will outlast the administrations of both Presidents. We are also working to draft a political declaration on the New Strategic Framework that would cover the

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issues of strategic offensive and defensive systems, nonproliferation and counterproliferation. We are optimistic that we will have agreement in time for the summit in Moscow, May 23rd to 25th.

Strengthening the U.S.-Russian relationship has been a priority of the Bush Administration, even prior to the September 11 attacks. In the current security climate, cooperation with Russia becomes even more important, so that we can work together to combat terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, which threaten both our countries.

### **Preventing Terrorism's Next Wave**

President Bush believes it is critical not to underestimate the threat from terrorist groups and rogue states intent on obtaining weapons of mass destruction. As he said on the six-month anniversary of the attacks, "Every nation in our coalition must take seriously the growing threat of terror on a catastrophic scale terror armed with biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons." We must not doubt for a moment the possible catastrophic consequences of terrorists or their rogue state sponsors who are willing to use disease as a weapon to spread chemical agents to inflict pain and death, or to send suicide bound adherents armed with radiological weapons on missions of mass murder.

Every nation must commit itself to preventing the acquisition of such weapons by state sponsors of terrorism or terrorist groups. As President Bush said: "Our lives, our way of life, and our every hope for the world depend on a single commitment: The authors of mass murder must be defeated, and never allowed to gain or use the weapons of mass destruction." To this end, we use a variety of methods to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction, including export controls, missile defense, arms control, nonproliferation and counter-proliferation measures.

In the past, the United States relied principally on passive measures to stem proliferation. Arms control and nonproliferation regimes, export controls, and diplomatic overtures were the primary tools used in this fight. But September 11, 2001 the subsequent anthrax attacks, and our discoveries regarding al-Qaeda and its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) aspirations has required the U.S to complement these more traditional strategies with a new approach. The Bush Administration is committed to combating the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, missiles, and related equipment, and is determined to prevent the use of these deadly weapons against our citizens, troops, allies, and friends. While diplomatic efforts and multilateral regimes will remain important to our efforts, we also intend to complement this approach with other measures, as we work both in concert with like minded nations, and on our own, to prevent terrorists and terrorist regimes from acquiring or using WMD. In the past, we looked at proliferation and terrorism as entirely separate issues. As Secretary Powell said in his Senate testimony April 24, "There are terrorists in the world who would like nothing better than to get their hands on and use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. So there is a definite link between terrorism and WMD. Not to recognize that link would be foolhardy to the extreme."

America is determined to prevent the next wave of terror. States that sponsor terror and pursue WMD must stop. States that renounce terror and abandon WMD can become part of our effort. But those that do not can expect to become our targets. This means directing firm international condemnation toward states that shelter and in some cases directly sponsor terrorists within their borders. It means uncovering their activities that may be in violation of international treaties. It means having a direct dialogue with the rest of the world about what is at stake. It means taking action against proliferators, middlemen, and weapons brokers, by exposing them, sanctioning their behavior, and working with other countries to prosecute them or otherwise bring a halt to their activities. It means taking law enforcement action against suspect shipments, front companies, and financial institutions that launder proliferator's funds. And it requires, above all,

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effective use, improvement, and enforcement of the multilateral tools at our disposal, both arms control and nonproliferation treaties and export control regimes.

### **The Problem of Noncompliance**

Multilateral agreements are important to our nonproliferation arsenal. This Administration strongly supports treaties such as the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the *Biological Weapons Convention*. But in order to be effective and provide the assurances they are designed to bring, they must be carefully and universally adhered to by all signatories. Therefore, strict compliance with existing treaties remains a major goal of our arms control policy.

This has been our aim in particular with the *Biological Weapons Convention* (BWC). In 1969, President Nixon announced that the United States would unilaterally renounce biological weapons. The U.S. example was soon followed by other countries, and by 1972 the BWC was opened for signature. This international treaty, to which more than 140 countries are parties, prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition or retention of biological and toxin weapons.

While the vast majority of the BWC's parties have conscientiously met their commitments, the United States is extremely concerned that several states are conducting offensive biological weapons programs while publicly avowing compliance with the agreement. To expose some of these violators to the international community, last November, I named publicly several states the U.S. government knows to be producing biological warfare agents in violation of the BWC.

**Foremost is Iraq.** Although it became a signatory to the BWC in 1972 and became a State Party in 1991, Iraq has developed, produced, and stockpiled biological warfare agents and weapons. The United States strongly suspects that Iraq has taken advantage of more than three years of no United Nations inspections to improve all phases of its offensive BW program. Iraq also has developed, produced, and stockpiled chemical weapons, and shown a continuing interest in developing nuclear weapons and longer range missiles.

**Next is North Korea.** North Korea has a dedicated, national-level effort to achieve a BW capability and has developed and produced, and may have weaponized, BW agents in violation of the Convention. Despite the fact that its citizens are starving, the leadership in Pyongyang has spent large sums of money to acquire the resources, including a biotechnology infrastructure, capable of producing infectious agents, toxins, and other crude biological weapons. It likely has the capability to produce sufficient quantities of biological agents for military purposes within weeks of deciding to do so, and has a variety of means at its disposal for delivering these deadly weapons.

In January, I also named North Korea and Iraq for their covert nuclear weapons programs, in violation of the *Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty*. This year, North Korea did not meet Congressional certification requirements because of its continued lack of cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, its failure to make any progress toward implementing the North-South Joint Denuclearization Declaration as called for under the Agreed Framework, and for proliferating long-range ballistic missiles. Finally, we believe that North Korea has a sizeable stockpile of chemical weapons, and can manufacture all manner of CW agents.

**Then comes Iran.** Iran's biological weapons program began during the Iran-Iraq war, and accelerated after Tehran learned how far along Saddam Hussein had progressed in his own program. The Iranians have all of the necessary pharmaceutical expertise, as well as the commercial infrastructure needed to produce and hide a biological warfare program. The United

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States believes Iran probably has produced and weaponized BW agents in violation of the Convention. Again, Iran's biological weapons program is complemented by an even more aggressive chemical warfare program, Iran's ongoing interest in nuclear weapons, and its aggressive ballistic missile research, development, and flight testing regimen.

President Bush named these three countries in his State of the Union address earlier this year as the world's most dangerous proliferators. "States like these, and their terrorist allies," he said, "constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger."

### **Trouble Ahead**

Beyond the axis of evil, there are other rogue states intent on acquiring weapons of mass destruction particularly biological weapons. Given our vulnerability to attack from biological agents, as evidenced recently in the anthrax releases, it is important to carefully assess and respond to potential proliferators. Today, I want to discuss three other state sponsors of terrorism that are pursuing or who have the potential to pursue weapons of mass destruction or have the capability to do so in violation of their treaty obligations. While we will continue to use diplomatic efforts and multilateral regimes with these countries, it is important to review the challenges we face and to underline the issues that these states must address. As the President has said, "America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security. We will be deliberate. Yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer."

**First, Libya.** There is no doubt that Libya continues its longstanding pursuit of nuclear weapons. We believe that since the suspension of United Nation sanctions against Libya in 1999, Libya has been able to increase its access to dual use nuclear technologies. Although Libya would need significant foreign assistance to acquire a nuclear weapon, Tripoli's nuclear infrastructure enhancement remains of concern. Qaddafi hinted at this in a recent (25 March) interview with Al-Jazeera when he said, "We demanded the dismantling of the weapons of mass destruction that the Israelis have; we must continue to demand that. Otherwise, the Arabs will have the right to possess that weapon."

Among its weapons of mass destruction programs, Libya which is not a party to the CWC, continues its goal of reestablishing its offensive chemical weapons ability, as well as pursuing an indigenous chemical warfare production capability. Libya has produced at least 100 tons of different kinds of chemical weapons, using its Rabta facility. That facility closed down after it was subject to media scrutiny, but then re-opened as a pharmaceutical plant in 1995. Although production of chemical agents reportedly has been halted, CW production at Rabta cannot be ruled out. It remains heavily dependent on foreign suppliers for precursor chemicals, technical expertise, and other key chemical warfare-related equipment. Following the suspension of United Nations sanctions in April 1999, Libya has reestablished contacts with illicit foreign sources of expertise, parts, and precursor chemicals in the Middle East, Asia, and Western Europe.

Conversely, Libya has publicly indicated its intent to join the CWC. While our perceptions of Libya would not change overnight, such a move could be positive. Under the CWC, Libya would be required to declare and destroy all chemical weapons production facilities and stockpiles, make declarations about any dual use chemical industry, undertake not to research or produce any chemical weapons, and not to export certain chemicals to countries that have not signed the CWC. Libya would also be subject to challenge inspections of any facility, declared or not.

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Significantly for predictive purposes, Libya became a State Party to the BWC in January 1982, but the U.S. believes that Libya has continued its biological warfare program. Although its program is in the research and development stage, Libya may be capable of producing small quantities of biological agent. Libya's BWC program has been hindered, in part, by the country's poor scientific and technological base, equipment shortages, and a lack of skilled personnel, as well as by United Nations sanctions in place from 1992 to 1999.

Libya is also continuing its efforts to obtain ballistic missile related equipment, materials, technology, and expertise from foreign sources. Outside assistance particularly Serbian, Indian, North Korean, and Chinese critical to its ballistic missile development programs, and the suspension of United Nations sanctions in 1999 has allowed Tripoli to expand its procurement effort. Libya's current capability probably remains limited to its Scud B missiles, but with continued foreign assistance it may achieve an Median Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBM) capability a long desired goal or extended-range Scud capability.

Although Libya is one of seven countries on the Department of State's list of state sponsors of terror the U.S. has noted recent positive steps by the Libyan government that we hope indicate that Tripoli wishes to rejoin the community of civilized states. In 1999, Libya turned over two Libyans wanted in connection with the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, for trial in the Netherlands. In 2001, it condemned the September 11 attacks publicly and signed the twelve terrorist conventions listed in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1273. And, as I have already mentioned, Libya has also announced its intention to accede to CWC.

However, as I have also said, words are not enough. The key is to see clear, hard evidence that Libya will, in fact, live up to the public standards it has set for itself. Libya can make a positive gesture in this regard by fulfilling its obligations under WMD treaties and becoming a party to the CWC. Moreover, Libya must honor the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions relating to the resolution of Pan Am 103, arguably the worst air terrorist disaster prior to September 11, 2001. Libya has yet to comply fully with these resolutions, which include accepting responsibility and paying compensation. It is past time that Libya did this.

The United States also knows that Syria has long had a chemical warfare program. It has a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin and is engaged in research and development of the more toxic and persistent nerve agent VX. Although Damascus currently is dependent on foreign sources for key elements of its chemical warfare program, including precursor chemicals and key production equipment, we are concerned about Syrian advances in its indigenous CW infrastructure which would significantly increase the independence of its CW program. We think that Syria has a variety of aerial bombs and SCUD warheads, which are potential means of delivery of deadly agents capable of striking neighboring countries.

Syria, which has signed but not ratified the BWC, is pursuing the development of biological weapons and is able to produce at least small amounts of biological warfare agents. While we believe Syria would need foreign assistance to launch a large-scale biological weapons program right now, it may obtain such assistance by the end of this decade.

Syria has a combined total of several hundred Scud B, Scud C and SS-21 SRBMs. It is pursuing both solid-propellant and liquid-propellant missile programs and relies extensively on foreign assistance in these endeavors. North Korean and Russian entities have been involved in aiding Syria's ballistic missile development. All of Syria's missiles are mobile and can reach much of Israel, Jordan, and Turkey from launch sites well within the country.

In addition to Libya and Syria, there is a threat coming from another BWC signatory, and one that lies just ninety miles from the U.S. mainland, namely, Cuba. This totalitarian state has long

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been a violator of human rights. The Department of State said last year in its *Annual Report on Human Rights Practices* that “the Cuban government continued to violate systematically the fundamental civil and political rights of its citizens. Citizens do not have the right to change their government peacefully. Prisoners died in jail due to lack of medical care. Members of the security forces and prison officials continued to beat and otherwise abuse detainees and prisoners. The Cuban government denied its citizens the freedoms of speech, press, assembly and association.” Havana has long provided safe haven for terrorists, earning it a place on the Department of State’s list of terrorist-sponsoring states. The country is known to be harboring terrorists from Colombia, Spain, and fugitives from the United States. We know that Cuba is collaborating with other state sponsors of terror.

Castro has repeatedly denounced the U.S. war on terrorism. He continues to view terror as a legitimate tactic to further revolutionary objectives. Last year, Castro visited Iran, Syria and Libya, all designees on the same list of terrorist- sponsoring states. At Tehran University, these were his words: “Iran and Cuba, in cooperation with each other, can bring America to its knees. The U.S. regime is very weak, and we are witnessing this weakness from close up.”

But Cuba’s threat to our security often has been underplayed. An official U.S. government report in 1998 concluded that Cuba did not represent a significant military threat to the United States or the region. It went only so far as to say that, “Cuba has a limited capacity to engage in some military and intelligence activities which could pose a danger to U.S. citizens under some circumstances.” However, then-Secretary of Defense William Cohen tried to add some balance to this report by expressing in the preface his serious concerns about Cuba’s intelligence activities against the United States and its human rights practices. Most notably, he said, “I remain concerned about Cuba’s potential to develop and produce biological agents, given its biotechnology infrastructure”

Why was the 1998 report on Cuba so unbalanced? Why did it underplay the threat Cuba posed to the United States? A major reason is Cuba’s aggressive intelligence operations against the United States, which included recruiting the Defense Intelligence Agency’s senior Cuba analyst, Ana Belen Montes, to spy for Cuba. Montes not only had a hand in drafting the 1998 Cuba report but also passed some of our most sensitive information about Cuba back to Havana. Montes was arrested last fall and pleaded guilty to espionage on March 19th.

For four decades Cuba has maintained a well-developed and sophisticated biomedical industry, supported until 1990 by the Soviet Union. This industry is one of the most advanced in Latin America, and leads in the production of pharmaceuticals and vaccines that are sold worldwide. Analysts and Cuban defectors have long cast suspicion on the activities conducted in these biomedical facilities.

Here is what we now know: The United States believes that Cuba has at least a limited offensive biological warfare research and development effort. Cuba has provided dual-use biotechnology to other rogue states. We are concerned that such technology could support BW programs in those states. We call on Cuba to cease all BW-applicable cooperation with rogue states and to fully comply with all of its obligations under the *Biological Weapons Convention*.

## **Conclusion**

America is leading in the fight to root out and destroy terror. Our goals are to stop the development of weapons of mass destruction and insure compliance with existing arms control and nonproliferation treaties and commitments, which the Bush Administration strongly supports, but experience has shown that treaties and agreements are an insufficient check against state sponsors of terrorism. Noncompliance can undermine the efficacy and legitimacy of these

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treaties and regimes. After all, any nation ready to violate one agreement is perfectly capable of violating another, denying its actual behavior all the while. And so I close with four fundamental conclusions. First, that global terrorism has changed the nature of the threat we face. Keeping WMD out of terrorist hands must be a core element of our nonproliferation strategy.

Second, the Administration supports an international dialogue on weapons of mass destruction and encourages countries to educate their public on the WMD threat. We must not shy away from truth telling.

Third, the Administration will not assume that because a country's formal subscription to United Nations counterterrorism conventions or its membership in multilateral regimes necessarily constitutes an accurate reading of its intentions. We call on Libya, Cuba, and Syria to live up to the agreements they have signed. We will watch closely their actions, not simply listen to their words. Working with our allies, we will expose those countries that do not live up to their commitments.

Finally, the United States will continue to exercise strong leadership in multilateral forums and will take whatever steps are necessary to protect and defend our interests and eliminate the terrorist threat.