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THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

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WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Hagan, Ranking Member Fischer, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to testify today about several of our ongoing efforts to counter the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The pursuit of WMD and potential use by actors of concern pose a grave threat to the security of the United States as well as our allies and partners around the world. Throughout the Department of Defense (DoD), and in concert with our interagency and international partners, we are continuously innovating to counter new and evolving threats with military and civilian solutions to ensure that we are neither attacked nor coerced by actors with WMD.

As the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction, I am responsible for establishing policies and guidance to protect U.S. and Allied armed forces against a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) attack from a State actor or terrorist. I also represent the Department's interests on counterproliferation and non-proliferation policy issues, including the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), as well as the DoD Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program.

In this role, my office develops policy and guidance for DoD CTR programs and activities which are implemented by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), under the direction of Mr. Myers. We also work in close coordination with the National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, Ms. Anne Harrington, on a number of nuclear security and nonproliferation projects around the globe. I am pleased to be here today with these colleagues, both of whom are integral to countering the threats that I will be addressing.

CWMD CHALLENGES

A number of State and non-State actors continue to pursue WMD, posing a persistent threat to the security of the United States, as well as our allies and partners. In addition, the constant evolution of weapons, materials, tactics and technologies will continue to challenge our ability to dissuade, detect, deter, and defend against these threats. Finally, the interconnectedness of global communities means that WMD threats can proliferate at the speed of an airliner, a missile, or even the internet. Countering such complex and dynamic threats requires flexible, innovative, and agile responses. Twentieth Century solutions are not sufficient to meet the WMD challenges of the Twenty-first Century.

Our war fighters play a large part in countering WMD, but we must consistently look beyond military solutions and take maximum advantage of diplomatic and non-kinetic tools available.

Countering the proliferation or use of WMD requires flexible and agile responses, capable partners, as well as “whole-of-department,” “whole-of-government,” and even “whole-of-international-community” solutions. In these times of fiscal austerity, we must make full use of partnerships, contributing where we can and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Cooperation is a force multiplier, enabling swift and comprehensive action to respond to existing and emerging WMD threats.

The extraordinary effort to deal with Syria’s chemical weapons (CW) program in the face of instability, civil war, humanitarian disaster, and an influx of terrorist elements is a great example of how each of these communities has banded together to employ these principles and address an emergent threat rapidly.

As the crisis unfolded, we sought to reassure close partners and reduce the risk of cross-border proliferation of CW assets. We also started to work with several of Syria’s neighbors to enhance their ability to mitigate the risk to their populations of possible CW use near their borders. More specifically, in addition to the prudent planning that is part of DoD’s genetic coding, the authority granted by the Secretary of Defense, with concurrence of the Secretary of State, to expand our work into the Middle East, enabled growing work with Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, and even Lebanon and facilitated new partnerships and collaboration across DoD’s communities to support both civilian and military requirements to reduce CW proliferation risks. Anticipating the potential need for eliminating Syria’s CW program led to the rapid development and acquisition of key capabilities, particularly with respect to transportable neutralization of bulk chemical agents.

After the August 21, 2013, use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against its population led to the threat of military intervention, the United States and Russia forged the September 14, 2013, Geneva framework, which – together with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118 and decisions by the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) – launched the international effort to eliminate Syria’s CW program. This effort is unprecedented in scale, speed, and complexity. Although much remains to be done, it is extraordinary how much has already been accomplished through DoD, interagency and international partnerships.

Today, thanks to the tremendous efforts of so many contributors, Syria’s CW program is on the path to elimination, albeit slower than desired. The international coalition to remove and destroy Syria’s chemical weapons program is prepared and in place. The maritime task force spearheaded by our Danish and Norwegian colleagues and supported by the United Kingdom, Finland, Russia, and China has enabled the removal from Syria of almost half of the chemicals associated with the Syrian CW program. The centerpiece of the U.S. contribution, the motor vessel (M/V) CAPE RAY, is ready to neutralize the most dangerous chemicals in the Syrian arsenal. This maritime Ready Reserve Force vessel is outfitted with DoD’s recently-developed Field Deployable Hydrolysis Systems and manned by the finest experts from our operational and technical communities. This unprecedented international effort demonstrates the ability of DoD,

other U.S. departments and agencies, and our international partners to develop innovative solutions to complex problems.

This type of creative, collaborative approach to a WMD challenge shouldn't be the exception – it must become the rule. As we look to two other high priority counter-WMD issues – countering biological threats and enhancing global nuclear security – we are seeing the payoffs from such national and international-level collaborations.

BIOLOGICAL THREATS

Biological threats pose a serious risk to the United States due to the emergence and spread of new pathogens; the globalization of travel and the food supply; the rise of drug-resistant pathogens; the advancement of biological science capabilities; and the risk of unsecured pathogens of concern. These developments could create dangerous opportunities for State and non-State actors that seek to do us harm – with the potential for truly catastrophic consequences and strategic impacts.

These concerns are reflected in our recently-released 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), which specifically notes the confounding challenge of advancing biotechnology and the potential for use of agents that evade detection and countermeasures. This is a complex, global problem that can threaten our forces anytime, anywhere. The QDR acknowledges this challenge, directing us to pursue global prevention, detection, and response efforts.

DoD is executing a strategy to prevent and dissuade the malicious use of biological agents by working with partners to secure and consolidate collections of pathogens of security concern, establish biosafety measures to prevent accidental release, inculcate norms of responsible behavior to identify security breaches and potential internal threats, and institute force health protection measures such as vaccinations. Should prevention fail, we understand that we must be prepared to respond and mitigate threats from the use of biological agents quickly. This requires proactive development and fielding of novel therapeutics; biosurveillance systems that integrate health, environmental, and intelligence data; and detection and diagnostic systems that leverage advancing technology to detect and identify not only traditional threats, but also novel, emerging, and potentially engineered agents.

To succeed against the biological threat, in which prevention, detection, and response rely heavily on public health infrastructure, we have had to forge new relationships with health partners, academia, and industry. Holistic approaches that leverage interagency partnerships and international collaborations are the most efficient and pragmatic way to address the biological threats we face today.

NUCLEAR THREATS

Nuclear threats also remain a prominent concern. Unless arrested and reversed, the nuclear ambitions of countries like North Korea and Iran can imperil interests of the United States and our allies and partners around the world, create instability, and increase the likelihood that other nations will seek to become nuclear-armed States. In addition, the significant number of nuclear-armed States increases the chances that terrorists may acquire nuclear materials, or even weapons.

Moreover, despite two dozen countries having completed the elimination of their weapons-useable nuclear material in the last couple of decades – half of them doing so since the President’s 2009 speech in Prague – the remaining availability of such material provides additional opportunities for terrorists to obtain material to produce a nuclear weapon. Continued reports of nuclear material trafficking and insufficient security standards at nuclear sites demonstrate that threats are still present; this combination of vulnerable nuclear materials and non-state actors seeking to acquire WMD capabilities presents a grave threat to U.S. security and that of our allies and partners.

The ongoing spread of nuclear knowledge, fuel cycle technologies, and improved weaponization and delivery capabilities also could contribute to new types of challenges, especially when coupled with long-range ballistic missile capabilities. Unlike biological threats, however, preventing access to essential materials and technology significantly inhibits the ability of State and non-State actors to acquire nuclear capabilities. This underscores the importance of reducing the availability and accessibility of weapons-usable nuclear materials worldwide, along with the technologies required to produce them, promoting a culture of security, and sustaining robust interdiction efforts, to ensure that the nuclear weapon ambitions of State and non-State actors will remain difficult to realize.

DoD is taking action to reduce nuclear threats by working with partner countries, in close coordination with NNSA and the Department of State, to secure nuclear weapons and vulnerable nuclear materials and equipment, contributing to the Nuclear Security Summit process, and by promoting global best practices in nuclear security. DoD will continue to build on its partnerships with other U.S. government agencies, support critical international organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, and collaborate with countries that can contribute resources and expertise--all to help build a more robust, comprehensive global nuclear security system.

Finally, even as we focus on the highest priority nuclear threats, we must remain mindful of the potential for radiological dispersal and exposure devices that may become increasingly attractive to actors of concern. Although these devices do not generate the same destructive effects associated with nuclear weapons, they can produce significant health, psychological, and economic effects and increase the cost of addressing them due to the wide areas they may affect.

COOPERATIVE THREAT REDUCTION

Founded in 1992 to mitigate the WMD proliferation threats emanating from the breakup of the Soviet Union, the DoD CTR Program has been at the forefront of our efforts to meet these challenges. Over the last year, the Program has continued to lead our response to the dramatic changes in the international security environment, proving its ability to be a flexible, adaptable tool for cooperating with a range of partners to implement solutions that mitigate WMD threats.

The DoD CTR Program's contributions to the international effort to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons program is a case in point, as the DoD CTR Program became the primary means through which the U.S. Government could provide funding, expertise, and resources to shape and implement the CW destruction plan spearheaded by the OPCW. Without question, much of our effort would not have been possible without the active support of Congress. DoD's CTR Program has worked hard in recent years to become more agile and able to respond rapidly to shifting requirements and threats worldwide. Syria represents the best example of these efforts, and Congressional support has played a significant role in enabling its success.

The DoD CTR Program's success is due largely to Congressional authorization of three-year funding and the ability to realign money internally when necessary. To date, the DoD CTR Program has notified Congress that it has allocated approximately \$160 million to support the Syria elimination effort, including by providing equipment to the United Nations/OPCW Joint Mission that is necessary to remove the chemicals from Syria, as well as to support the vast majority of the effort to prepare, use, and then decommission the M/V CAPE RAY for the mission to neutralize Syria's most dangerous chemicals. I want to thank Congress for their support suspending the cap on funds for Fiscal Years 2014 and 2015 which will enable the DoD CTR Program to spend the necessary funds to support this effort. Congressional support for the DoD CTR Program's ability to accept contributions from foreign partners has enabled us to allow international partners to share the financial burden for these considerable efforts. In fact, in 2013 and 2014, the DoD CTR Program has received more than \$19 million in combined contributions from Germany, the United Kingdom and Canada to assist in our threat reduction efforts in Syria, Libya, Jordan, Iraq, and Georgia, and we will seek additional contributions this year from our international partners for these efforts.

Beyond rolling back the Syrian chemical weapons program itself, we continue to advance our efforts to mitigate proliferation threats within the greater Middle East. The DoD CTR Program's Proliferation Prevention Program (PPP) has led this effort, which has focused on enhancing detection and interdiction capacity in Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey, all of which share a border with Syria. This support has drawn on expertise from across the Department to provide both training and equipment. A cornerstone of these efforts is the Jordan Border Security Program (JBSP), which builds on a prior DoD effort along Jordan's north-western border with Syria, and will be

an approximately \$90 million effort to enhance Jordan's command and control over its borders with Syria and Iraq, and to prevent proliferation through enhanced awareness, coordination, and training.

Another successful effort spearheaded by the DoD CTR Program is the destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile that Libya's new government discovered after the ouster of Moamar Qaddafi. Following nearly two years of close cooperation with the Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was responsible for fulfilling Libya's commitments under the CWC, Libya announced in January of this year that it had completed destruction of the CW munitions it declared in 2011 and 2012. This success was due in large part to the DoD CTR Program's provision of \$52 million for training, security upgrades, advice, equipment, and destruction support in concert with the Government of Germany, which used our external contributions authority to assist with this effort.

These efforts are critical not just in responding to today's crisis, but to prepare to respond to future threats. Success in the destruction of the Libyan and Syrian CW stockpiles will not eliminate the WMD proliferation risks in the Middle East. We must continue to leverage the capabilities and partnerships we have both established and are now building to respond more effectively to the next challenges that emerge.

It is important to recognize that many of these requirements were not, and could not have been, predicted in advance, but rather were addressed rapidly as they emerged. Internally reprogramming money and support to the Syria effort would have been much more difficult in any previous year, and may not have been possible if the requirement had not coincided fortunately with a decreasing requirement in Russia.

Following the June 2013 expiration of the Umbrella Agreement with Russia, Fiscal Year 2013 activities in Russia such as intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) and ICBM launcher elimination came to a halt. Support to nuclear weapons transport and technical support for chemical weapons destruction also were stopped. Russia and the United States agreed to continue two already agreed upon projects: to dismantle a Delta III strategic submarine and to fund transport of highly enriched uranium (HEU) submarine spent fuel from less secure to much more secure locations in Russia. Even as the traditional DoD CTR Program of assistance that has operated in Russia for the last 20 years draws to a natural conclusion, the United States and Russia agreed to continue a number of important efforts on a collaborative basis through the Framework Agreement and Protocol on a Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation (MNEPR), on which we partner with NNSA. Of course, given the unfolding events in Ukraine and the Crimea, we are carefully evaluating our activities in the region to ensure consistency with Presidential guidance. We are mindful, however, that the DoD CTR Program has a history of continued cooperation on vital threat reduction matters even through difficult periods in U.S./Russian relations. We hope that this will continue to be the case.

Meanwhile, the Middle East is not the only area in which the DoD CTR Program is expanding. The PPP started by working to build land and maritime capacity in non-Russia former Soviet Union countries to detect, interdict, and report on the smuggling of WMD and related materials. In December 2011, the Secretary of Defense determined, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, that PPP funds were authorized for use in Southeast Asia. This transition from the former Soviet Union to Southeast Asia was accompanied by a shift from its traditional emphasis on land borders to maritime surveillance. Our new focus in Southeast Asia is to enhance our partners' maritime domain awareness capabilities by providing to them the ability to detect illicit transfers of WMD materials and strategic delivery systems. In the coming months, we will be engaging with the Philippines to assist in the development of a fully operational National Coast Watch System and with Vietnam to improve logistics and maintenance as well as provide infrastructure and equipment and to develop a training center to enable the Vietnamese Coast Guard to thwart illegal smuggling of WMD and related equipment.

In addition to legacy partnerships with several countries of the former Soviet Union, the Cooperative Biological Engagement Program (CBEP) now includes active engagements in Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East to address the diverse and rapidly changing global biological threat.

Although the potential for State-based biological threats remains, the DoD CTR Program is now primarily concerned with terrorist organizations that are seeking to acquire pathogens of security concern for use in biological attacks. CBEP is, therefore, focused on enhancing partner countries' capability to identify, consolidate, and secure collections of pathogens of security concern as well as strengthening their capability to survey, detect, diagnose, and report rapidly and accurately biological terrorism and outbreaks of diseases caused by pathogens of security concern. As an example of the holistic, whole-of-government approaches that CBEP is utilizing, the Program will partner with the Malaysian government, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and U.S. academic partners this spring to conduct one of a series of intersectoral workshops on building a robust bio-risk management system for the country of Malaysia. Malaysia, as a leader in supporting the BWC, plans to invite participants from other countries in the region.

Consistent with other proactive steps we are taking to reduce WMD threats, we cannot wait for an act of nuclear terrorism before working together to improve our collective nuclear security culture, share our best practices, and raise our standards for nuclear security. Through its Global Nuclear Security (GNS) program, the DoD CTR Program is the Department of Defense's primary mechanism to support all three approaches of our strategy to support and implement President Obama's objectives for nuclear security, at a: site-level, country-level, and global-level. The GNS program conducts projects and activities to increase the nuclear security of partner nations. The program also works to decrease the vulnerability of nuclear weapons-usable material based upon the latest threat assessments.

The DoD CTR Program is partnering with NNSA to establish nuclear security Centers of Excellence (CoEs) in key locations around the globe to exchange nuclear security best practices and contribute to national and regional training programs. Our joint work with China is a case in point.

With Russia funding its own nuclear security and CW destruction, most of the Category 1 weaponized CW stockpile in Libya that caused a security concern destroyed, and funding in place to meet the current requirements to destroy Syria's CW, the DoD CTR Program has requested a smaller but sufficient budget for Fiscal Year 2015. The DoD CTR Program's Fiscal Year 2015 request for \$365.1 million includes \$256.8 million to secure biological pathogens of security concern and facilitate sustainable capabilities for countries to diagnose accurately and report rapidly disease outbreaks caused by pathogens of security concern. These efforts are for projects and activities in Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The funds also continue efforts in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. The Fiscal Year 2015 request also includes \$40.7 million for PPP efforts that are focused on working with countries in key areas of the world to be able to detect and interdict WMD on the move. The Program is building sea-lane surveillance and interdiction capabilities in the South China Sea. These funds also complete border detection efforts in Armenia, Moldova, and countries bordering Syria. Finally, the Fiscal Year 2015 budget requests \$20.7 million for GNS in order to continue to expand their nuclear security activities outside of Russia and the FSU by providing support to the China Nuclear Security Center of Excellence, the Kazakhstan Nuclear Security Training Center, and Indian Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership, while maintaining the flexibility to meet new challenges should they arise.

With the DoD CTR Program, we have seen an enormous transformation at an unprecedented rate. We have established strategic guidance and a mechanism for assessing and establishing appropriate legal or political frameworks for conducting DoD CTR Program activities based on the scope of the Program and dynamics of the partner, and are looking towards "right-sized" solutions to future threats. The DoD CTR Program will remain one of DoD's most prominent efforts to achieve comprehensive, coordinated, collaborative, and rapid reduction of WMD threats, and we want to ensure that it continues to be able to flex to meet the needs.

As mentioned earlier, countering the proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction is not just a DoD or even a U.S. Government responsibility. It is a global responsibility to be shared across the international community, especially as we live in a period of fiscal austerity. U.S. efforts to reduce and eliminate these threats must harness the power of international partnership and collaboration, and the President's approach does just that through the Nuclear Security Summit process, the Global Health Security Agenda and sustained support for PSI.

NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT

World leaders have now gathered for three Nuclear Security Summits to collaborate on preventing nuclear terrorism by strengthening nuclear security. The broad goals of the Nuclear

Security Summit process are for participating countries and international organizations to come to a common understanding of the threat posed by nuclear terrorism, to agree to effective measures to secure nuclear material, and to prevent nuclear smuggling and terrorism. The Departments of State, Defense, and Energy work closely together to support the White House's objectives for U.S. Government engagement in the Nuclear Security Summit process. Although DOE/NNSA plays a significant role in the implementation of many of the Summit commitments, DoD also plays an important role. For example, at the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, Republic of Korea, President Obama announced that, through an unprecedented partnership with Russia and Kazakhstan and with support from DOE's Los Alamos National Laboratory, the DoD CTR Program secured more than a dozen weapons worth of nuclear material at the former Soviet Semipalatinsk Test Site in Kazakhstan. The DoD CTR Program has collaborated and continues to collaborate with partner governments on projects like this to account for, secure, and safeguard WMD and WMD-related material. DoD actively supported President Obama's participation at the March 24-25, 2014 Summit in The Hague, Netherlands, and will now work with our interagency partners to follow through on commitments made during last week's event.

Since the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit, DoD has participated in at least seven domestic exercises to increase nuclear preparedness, response, recovery, and resilience. We intend to continue to conduct safe and secure shipments of spent nuclear fuel containing highly enriched uranium for disposition and storage, as well as modify casks to use to transport the fuel from submarines with unique reactor designs.

GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY

Harnessing the power of the international community to reduce biological risks can only be done by building bridges between the security and public health sectors. In June of last year, the interagency agreed upon and the Administration released a Global Health Security (GHS) Agenda, outlining nine priority objectives for U.S. Government departments and agencies, with the goal of working with international partners to accelerate progress in improving capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of infectious disease threats, no matter the source. In addition, the Obama Administration hosted an international launch event this February to bring together like-minded nations to discuss their commitments to achieving global health security.

As I noted earlier, DoD recognizes that addressing biological threats requires global prevention, detection, and response, which aligns directly with the Administration's GHS Agenda. The Department of Health and Human Services is the U.S. interagency lead for this Agenda and DoD supports the GHS Agenda through existing missions and activities, such as force health protection, threat reduction, and biodefense. These activities, resourced and conducted to meet DoD's military objectives, provide benefit toward the achievement of GHS Agenda objectives while we continue to prioritize capabilities that counter operationally significant risks to our forces.

One example of a program that supports the GHS Agenda is DoD CBEP, which I described to you previously. The capability of this program to enhance biosecurity and detection not only directly supports our threat reduction mission, but also contributes to the achievement of Agenda objectives. Indeed, CBEP capabilities will be leveraged to support DTRA's Fiscal Year 2014 collaboration with the CDC in 12 countries. This collaboration is an innovative whole of Government solution that leverages our relationships, access, and resources in areas where we have shared objectives.

On the force health protection side, the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center/Global Emerging Infections Surveillance and Response System Division also benefits the GHS Agenda by conducting worldwide infectious disease surveillance and providing biosurveillance systems and laboratory training to partners. And, our Defense Medical Research and Development Programs conduct infectious diseases research and development encompassing diagnostics and therapies for antimicrobial resistant infections and protection of forces from insect-borne diseases.

Finally, the Chemical and Biological Defense Program develops and fields diagnostic devices that benefit both U.S. forces and GHS partners in improving detection of and response to infectious disease outbreaks. Additionally, it is developing several medical countermeasures and improved electronic surveillance tools that will enable better protection against, detection of, and situational awareness of infectious disease outbreaks, which support key objectives of the GHS Agenda.

PROLIFERATION SECURITY INITIATIVE

The third national-level effort to highlight is the Proliferation Security Initiative, which continues to be an innovative way to build global, whole-of-government resolve and capacity in the face of vexing proliferation challenges. PSI is among our enduring efforts, just reaching its 10th anniversary last May, and remains a vital part of the international tapestry of countering WMD programs that enhance global security. Interdiction is a tool that can only have a strategic effect if States around the world cooperate, and that is why PSI's growth from 11 States upon its founding to 102 endorsing States today is so significant.

In 2003, when the Initiative was first established, revelations of a secret North Korean nuclear program had come to light, the A.Q. Khan network had enabled significant nuclear proliferation, and fears of "loose nukes" from the former Soviet Union continued to persist. Meanwhile, the attacks of 9/11 had highlighted the massive disruptive power of a few individuals. With the combination of WMD-related technologies becoming increasingly available and increasing exploitation of global shipping, the circumstances for the relatively easy acquisition of WMD

seemed at hand. Yet even in the face of an increasingly clear threat, most nations' resolve to act was unclear.

In the eleven years since PSI began, it has had a real, practical, and significant impact on interdiction. From the beginning, DoD has played an important role by serving as the U.S. Government lead to the Operational Experts Group (OEG); supporting PSI-related exercises and other engagements; and providing technical advice and assistance to endorsing nations as appropriate. Since its inception, PSI has convened 56 exercises and 34 experts and political-level consultations, demonstrating the enormous amount of energy and commitment resident within the Initiative. PSI exercises demonstrate the will of the PSI community to take action to prevent and, if necessary, to stop illicit shipments. The operational aspects of these exercises, with ships maneuvering at sea and aircraft above, are the most visible portions and have strong signaling and deterrence value.

In addition to operational-level collaboration, PSI has had a significant impact on international cooperation and norms in this area. PSI created the conditions for new international legal instruments, from UN Security Council Resolutions to Ship Boarding Agreements, and their operational implementation.

In his 2009 Prague speech, the President called for PSI to become a more "durable international" effort. DoD, working closely with the State Department and other interagency counterparts, has since worked to implement efforts to strengthen the Initiative, including through building consensus for and establishing a new annual PSI exercise hosting rotation among key PSI partners in the Asia Pacific. Since the beginning of PSI, our partners in this region have demonstrated their commitment to the Initiative and to regional cooperation by hosting many activities. The new annual exercise rotation among New Zealand, Australia, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, and the United States demonstrates PSI nations' long-term commitment to countering proliferation, makes planning and budgeting for exercises more efficient, and sends a consistent deterrence signal to proliferators. It is also an ideal burden-sharing construct. In August 2014, the United States will host the first exercise in this rotation, FORTUNE GUARD 14 at U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), which has made the new Asia Pacific Exercise Rotation (APER) its foremost tool for building counterproliferation capacity in the Asia Pacific.

Because the urgency of the proliferation threat not only remains but is evolving, cooperation through PSI is more relevant than ever. As States assess their own capacities to counter proliferators' increasingly sophisticated techniques, the OEG within PSI has created a more systematic means of increasing partners' ability to act. This is another way the United States is working with international partners to make PSI a more durable effort, and it was exactly what was needed as the predominant question transitions from being whether to take action to how to take action. The Critical Capabilities and Practices effort brings important, tangible tools to bear, and PSI partners' willingness to create, evaluate, and offer tools is yet another measure of the dynamism of the Initiative.

Agencies from across the U.S. Government work with partners every day to foster a PSI that continues to be innovative and adaptive in the context of evolving threats. Continued success in promoting broad U.S. nonproliferation objectives hinges on the U.S. Government's ability to support foreign partners in all phases of an interdiction case – not just the inspective and seizure phase, but also storage and ultimate disposal of the seized cargo. A persistent challenge in interdiction involves States' capacities to take post-interdiction actions, including disposition of controlled commodities. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs Madelyn Creedon announced at the PSI's 10th anniversary meetings in Warsaw last year that in order to help address some of the complexities associated with the disposition of interdicted WMD-related cargo, the DoD CTR Program now has the authority to assist foreign partners by providing, where possible, technical advice in the safe handling and disposition of interdicted WMD-related materials. This announcement not only demonstrated DoD's ability to look holistically across its tools to develop solutions that meet the evolving nature of WMD-related threats, and challenges, but also illustrated yet another way in which the DoD CTR Program has proven its agility as a countering WMD tool. The United States believes that it is vitally important to work through, and help resolve, these disposition challenges together with States acting in accordance with their PSI commitments. DoD is pleased that it now has a means to help do so.

FUTURE THREATS

Despite progress over the last year, much work remains to ensure our continued security. Syria and other recent events have given us great insight into how we may have to look at problems differently, enabling us to prepare for and tackle these and other threats more effectively as they emerge. But at the same time, we must recognize that the Syrian WMD program represents only a fraction of the risk directly posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) WMD program. The DPRK's pursuit of nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles poses one of the most critical security challenges for the United States and our Allies and partners. We will continue to manage the risks through close coordination and consultation with the international community and remain steadfast in our commitments to Allies in the region, including the security provided by extended deterrence commitments through the nuclear umbrella and conventional forces.

Although an initial first step towards a comprehensive deal has been struck with Iran, the threat has not been eliminated and we must remain prepared for the possibility that a long-term, comprehensive agreement is not reached. Diplomacy remains the preferred means to resolve international concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program, but as the President has consistently reaffirmed, all options remain on the table in order to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

In the increasingly interconnected global environment, the threat from WMD extends well beyond State actors and we cannot take our eye off the terrorism threat. Although the threat to the Homeland from core al-Qa'ida has been degraded in recent years, there has been an increase in threats by networks of like-minded extremists. The battlefield in Syria is generating new extremists who could eventually turn their glare elsewhere. As the diffusion of threats continues, the challenges we face will only increase, and terrorist networks continue to demonstrate interest in obtaining WMD. We must continue our vigilant efforts to prevent the proliferation of WMD, including by expanding adherence to international agreements and norms, dismantling State programs where possible, and interdicting transfers when necessary.

With our Countering WMD efforts, it all comes back to preparing and posturing to address future challenges that may emerge and escalate quickly. We must bring these programs I have described and other solutions to bear as new challenges surface, leveraging partnerships and lessons learned to respond quickly and decisively. I thank you for your support for our Fiscal Year 2015 budget request and look forward to our continued partnership.