

September 30, 2009

The President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We appreciate your deeply held commitment to the essential and ambitious objective of protecting the globe from nuclear terrorism as expressed in your address in Prague this April. You stated then that terrorists are “determined to buy, build, or steal” a nuclear weapon and that to prevent this outcome the U.S. will lead an international effort to “secure all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in four years.” We agree both with this assessment of the threat and the policy prescription.

Because of the vital importance of this nuclear security objective, the non-governmental expert community in the U.S. has joined together to create a Fissile Materials Working Group. This working group believes in the Administration’s four-year policy objective and will work to see that it is achieved in the U.S. and internationally. To this end the working group is recommending to the Administration that it implement five high priority policies. The attachment to this letter is a detailed explanation of the working group’s recommendations, summarized here:

- Launch a new “Next-Generation Nuclear Security Initiative” at or before the global nuclear summit that includes a new global nuclear material security roadmap, a plan for broader international scientific cooperation to prevent nuclear theft and terrorism, and a political and technical action plan to achieve the four year goal.
- Accelerate efforts to secure and eliminate global highly enriched uranium (HEU), plutonium, and nuclear weapon stockpiles, including in the U.S., with an immediate focus on minimizing the number of locations at which fissile materials are stored.
- Implement the policy of minimizing HEU use by including in the policy HEU use in all of its manifestations and create a timetable for a ban on the civil use of HEU.
- Request and aggressively pursue sufficient domestic and international funding for removing and securing all vulnerable nuclear materials in four years.
- Extend and expand the G-8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction for another 10 years, reconfiguring it to have a global focus.

The working group believes that the threat to mankind from vulnerable fissile materials and nuclear weapons, especially those posed by terrorists, is equal in international importance to the dangers posed by climate change and other high priority transnational threats, but it is receiving less urgent attention. Therefore, the continual improvement in nuclear security should be acknowledged to be a global priority and specific steps should be taken to ensure that it is achieved as an international imperative. The working group will be closely following the progress of the Administration’s four-year goal and assisting where it can with its implementation. This is an objective we cannot fail to achieve.

Any comments or questions regarding the Fissile Materials Working Group's recommendations can be directed to Kenneth N. Luongo, President of the Partnership for Global Security, kluongo@partnershipforglobalsecurity.org or 215-523-9041.

Most respectfully,

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Danielle Brian, Executive Director
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Enclosure (1)

cc: The Honorable Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

Dr. Gary Samore, Special Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for Arms Control and Weapons of Mass Destruction, Proliferation, and Terrorism

The Honorable John P. Holdren, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, Director-Designate of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Co-Chair of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology

The Honorable Steven Chu, Secretary of Energy

The Honorable Thomas P. D'Agostino, Administrator for Nuclear Security of the National Nuclear Security Administration and Under Secretary for Nuclear Security of the Department of Energy

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, Secretary of State

The Honorable Robert M. Gates, Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Homeland Security