



February 2014

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Recommended Citation

Richard G. Lugar, *Nunn-Lugar in the Second Term*, 19 NOTRE DAME J.L. ETHICS & PUB. POL'Y 233 (2005).

Available at: <http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndjlepp/vol19/iss1/9>

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NUNN-LUGAR IN THE SECOND TERM

RICHARD G. LUGAR*

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, vulnerability to the use of weapons of mass destruction has been the number one national security dilemma confronting the United States. After many years, the events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent public discovery of al Qaeda's methods, capabilities, and intentions finally brought our vulnerability to the forefront.

The War on Terrorism proceeds in a world awash with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and materials. Most of these weapons and materials are stored in the United States and Russia, but they also exist in India, Pakistan, Iran, Libya, North Korea, Syria, Sudan, Israel, Great Britain, France, China, and perhaps other nations.

We must anticipate that terrorists will use weapons of mass destruction if allowed the opportunity. The minimum standard for victory in this war is the prevention of any terrorist cell from obtaining weapons or materials of mass destruction ("WMD"). We must make certain that all sources of WMD are identified and systematically guarded or destroyed.

I. THE NUNN-LUGAR PROGRAM

To combat the WMD threat in the former Soviet Union, our country has implemented the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. Since enactment in late 1991, Nunn-Lugar has devoted American technical expertise and money for joint efforts to safeguard and destroy materials and weapons of mass destruction. To date, the weapons systems deactivated or destroyed by the United States under these programs include:

- 6,312 nuclear warheads;
- 537 ICBMs;
- 459 ICBM silos;
- 11 ICBM mobile missile launchers;
- 128 bombers;

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- 708 nuclear air-to-surface missiles;
- 408 submarine missile launchers;
- 496 submarine launched missiles;
- 27 nuclear submarines; and
- 194 nuclear test tunnels.

In addition:

- 260 tons of fissile material have received either comprehensive or rapid security upgrades;
- Security upgrades have been made at some 60 nuclear warhead storage sites;
- 208 metric tons of Highly Enriched Uranium have been blended down to Low Enriched Uranium;
- 35 percent of Russia's chemical weapons have received security upgrades;
- Joint U.S.-Russian research is being conducted at 49 former biological weapons facilities, and security improvements are underway at 4 biological weapons sites;
- The International Science and Technology Centers, of which the United States is the leading sponsor, have engaged 58,000 former weapons scientists in peaceful work;
- The International Proliferation Prevention Program has funded 750 projects involving 14,000 former weapons scientists and created some 580 new peaceful high-tech jobs;
- Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan are nuclear weapons free as a result of cooperative efforts under the Nunn-Lugar Program.

These successes were never a foregone conclusion. Today, even after fourteen years of work, constant vigilance is required to ensure that the Nunn-Lugar Program is not encumbered by bureaucratic obstacles or undercut by political disagreements.

Sam Nunn, the former United States Senator from Georgia, and I have devoted much time and effort to maintaining the momentum of these programs. We have worked in cooperation with uncounted individuals of great dedication serving on the ground in the former Soviet Union and in our own government. Nevertheless, from the beginning, we have encountered resistance to the Nunn-Lugar concept in both the United States and Russia. In our own country, opposition often has been motivated by false perceptions that Nunn-Lugar money is foreign assistance or by beliefs that Defense Department funds should only be spent on troops, weapons, or other warfighting capabilities. We also have encountered latent and persistent Cold War attitudes

toward Russia that have led some Nunn-Lugar opponents to be suspicious of almost any cooperation with Moscow. Until recently, we also faced a general disinterest in non-proliferation that made gaining support for Nunn-Lugar funding and activities an annual struggle.

Explaining and promoting the Nunn-Lugar Program has been complicated by the fact that most of its accomplishments have occurred outside the attention of the media. Although progress is measurable, it does not occur as often as dramatic events that make good news stories. At Surovatikha, for example, Russian solid fuel SS-18 and SS-19 missiles are being dismantled at a rate of four per month. This facility will grind on for years, until all the designated missiles are destroyed. At Shchuchye, the United States and Russia are building a chemical weapons destruction facility that will become operational in 2007. It will destroy about four and one-half percent of Russia's currently declared chemical weapons stockpile per year. This is a painstaking business conducted far away from our shores. As such, building a knowledgeable coalition in favor of non-proliferation programs has never been easy.

II. NUNN-LUGAR IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

Presidential campaigns are one of the best barometers of public and media interest in a particular issue. By this measure, non-proliferation enjoyed very little cachet prior to the September 11 attacks.

In 1995 and 1996 when I was running for the Republican Presidential nomination, I made combating nuclear terrorism a centerpiece of my campaign. On the campaign trail, I spoke of the risks of nuclear proliferation and explained what we were doing with the Nunn-Lugar Program. For example, like the other Republican presidential candidates, I traveled to Dallas in August 1995 to bid for the backing of activists at the "United We Stand America" Conference—a convocation of the independent political movement begun by Ross Perot during his 1992 presidential candidacy. I delivered a twenty minute speech on non-proliferation, saying, "Nothing threatens the lives of American citizens more than unsecured nuclear materials and weaponry in the hands of Third World fanatics and terrorist groups."

I found that this was not an issue that moved voters or generated media interest. In December 1995, I ran a four-part series of television ads dramatizing the dangers of nuclear terrorism. In those ads I stated: "Ready or not, the next president will be forced to deal with (nuclear terrorism)." Some observers

denounced the ads as “fear-mongering.” More charitable commentators described my focus on non-proliferation issues as an eccentric preoccupation of a candidate who was too interested in foreign affairs.

The 1996 Presidential campaign provides a benchmark of the slow evolution of public attention to catastrophic terrorism. We had already seen the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, the March 1995 sarin gas attack in a Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyo cult, the April 1995 Oklahoma City truck bombing, and the November 1995 incident in which Chechen terrorists threatened to detonate a package containing radioactive Cesium 137 in a Moscow park. Despite these frequent reminders of our vulnerability, neither the public nor the media paid attention to proliferation issues.

The general disinterest in this topic was underscored by an April 11, 1996, Pew Research Center poll entitled “Public Apathetic About Nuclear Terrorism.” The poll found that 59 percent of Americans surveyed professed “not to be worried” about nuclear terrorism. Only 13 percent “worried a great deal” about the prospect. The summary of the poll stated: “Most Americans acknowledge the fact that terrorists could strike a U.S. city with nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, yet few worry about the possibility The poll confirms the lack of public engagement on this issue experienced by Senator Richard Lugar, who made this the central issue of his unsuccessful Republican presidential campaign.”

Even by 2000—two years after the embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania—the presidential campaign was almost devoid of discussion of nuclear terrorism and non-proliferation. In three extensive Presidential debates, the issue of non-proliferation never came up except for brief mentions of the need to contain Iraq by then Governor George W. Bush. A comprehensive feature on the candidates on the CNN website cataloged 121 stated positions of Al Gore and 105 of George Bush. None of these 226 positions dealt with nuclear terrorism or non-proliferation strategies. The only mentions of nuclear issues were the opposing positions of the candidates on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and Missile Defense and Vice President Gore’s statement that he would continue the Clinton policy on North Korea.

I recall this history to illustrate how much political discourse has changed since the September 11 attacks. We have turned a corner—the public, the media, and the candidates are paying more attention now. Not only were both major 2004 Presidential candidates supportive of the Nunn-Lugar Program, they delivered major speeches on counter-proliferation and their repre-

sentatives sparred over who would be more capable in this area. During the most recent Democratic primary season, we even experienced a bidding war in which candidates competed to offer the most effusive endorsements and the largest funding increases for the Nunn-Lugar Program and other non-proliferation efforts. Howard Dean and John Edwards called for a tripling of funds devoted to Nunn-Lugar, while John Kerry called for a "major" increase in funding without specifying an exact amount. The 9/11 Commission Report weighed in with another important endorsement of the Nunn-Lugar Program, saying that, "[p]reventing the proliferation of [weapons of mass destruction] warrants a maximum effort—by strengthening counter-proliferation efforts, expanding the Proliferation Security Initiative, and supporting the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program."

As one of the founders of the Program, I am gratified that it has become a featured issue in the debate over national security policy. Although resistance to the Program still exists in the U.S. government, we have achieved a rough political consensus on the need for Cooperative Threat Reduction Programs. Perhaps as important, a much higher percentage of policymakers are taking an interest in the Nunn-Lugar Program and other non-proliferation efforts.

III. NUNN-LUGAR ON THE GROUND

But this emergence from relative obscurity has been accompanied by misconceptions. Exuberant calls to triple funding for Nunn-Lugar are appreciated for their enthusiasm, but they do not reflect how the Program works or what is needed most.

In particular, observers of the Program must understand that in our immediate future, funding is only one of the limitations on our non-proliferation progress. I support all the funding for the Nunn-Lugar Program that can be used effectively. Nunn-Lugar represents an enormous value for our national security dollar. But in the short run, increasing funding does not ensure that Russia's vast WMD arsenal will be reduced faster or more efficiently than current capabilities.

At this stage, diplomatic breakthroughs with resistant Russian authorities are almost a prerequisite to putting major funding increases to work. Although the Russian government has opened a remarkable number of facilities to the Nunn-Lugar Program, others remain closed. Convincing Russia to accelerate its dismantlement schedules, to conclude umbrella agreements that limit liability for contractors, and to open its remaining closed facilities are the most immediate challenges for Nunn-

Lugar. President Bush must make the removal of these roadblocks a priority. As the roadblocks are removed, Congress and the President, as well as our allies, must commit the funds necessary to exploit the openings.

Another limitation on the usefulness of increased funding in Russia is the engineering dynamics of assembly line dismantlement. Every project has its own engineering challenges that require a specialized infrastructure. In cases where that infrastructure is mature, incremental increases in funding may be hard to absorb productively. For example, the only way increased funding could be useful to the dismantlement of SS-18s and SS-19s at Surovatikha would be to construct additional dismantlement capacity to complement the current infrastructure that can destroy four missiles a month. But at this stage, Russian authorities have indicated that they are not prepared to deliver more than four missiles a month to Surovatikha. Russian agreement would be necessary both to construct a new facility and to make such a facility worthwhile by supplying it with missiles at a faster rate.

Complicating our efforts is the fact that the Russian government is not a monolith. The President, the Foreign Ministry, the military, local base commanders, and even local governments near dismantlement sites all exert influence on the cooperation and access that we receive. In my travels in Russia, I have often encountered situations where Russian authorities have blocked or complicated visits to sensitive sites. For example, in 2002, I led a small delegation to the city of Kirov, to meet with personnel of a nearby biological weapons facility. We had obtained permission to visit Kirov from the Foreign Ministry. But after boarding our twelve-seat aircraft in Moscow, we were informed that we could not take off because the runway at Kirov had not been inspected to determine if it could handle our plane. We knew that the runway at Kirov routinely accommodated airliners the size of 737s. Unnamed officials somewhere in the Russian bureaucracy had tried to shut down our visit. We eventually reached Kirov, but we were not allowed into the biological weapons facility.

This fragmentation of government, however, also has worked in our favor. I visited the Perm missile base in the foothills of the Urals in 2003 to attempt to build support for the destruction of liquid fueled SS-24s and SS-25s. The Governor of the Perm region, Yuri Trutnev, has been a vocal advocate of using the missile base as a dismantlement facility for the ICBMs. During my visit, I witnessed an example of the evolution of Russian democracy. Governor Trutnev arranged for a joint press

conference with me at the airport that was designed to underscore the regional economic benefits of a missile dismantlement facility and to address environmental concerns raised by local interest groups. Like most politicians, he is hoping to draw jobs and money to his region, and he sees a Nunn-Lugar dismantlement operation as a source of steady work for his constituents.

Encouraging these positive forces within Russia is one of the reasons why I have traveled frequently to Nunn-Lugar sites. Russian military and political leaders as well as local economic interests want to know that the U.S. is engaged in and committed to the Program. The appearance of American officials strengthens the hand of Russians who have embraced the Nunn-Lugar Program and improves our chances of gaining access to new dismantlement opportunities.

IV. TAKING NUNN-LUGAR GLOBAL

The Nunn-Lugar Program has established a deep reservoir of experience and talent that could be applied to non-proliferation objectives around the world. The original Nunn-Lugar bill was concerned with the former Soviet Union, because that is where the vast majority of weapons and materials of mass destruction were. Today, we must be prepared with money and expertise to extend the Nunn-Lugar concept wherever it can be usefully applied.

I can attest to the energy and imagination of technicians, contract supervisors, equipment operators, negotiators, auditors, and many other specialists who have been willing to live in remote areas of the former Soviet Union to get this job done. This is an instrument begging to be used anywhere that we can achieve diplomatic breakthroughs.

The utility of the Nunn-Lugar concept rests not only with raw numbers of weapons destroyed. It also has been an important vehicle for communication and cooperation. The Nunn-Lugar Program continued as a constant in the U.S.-Russian relationship even when other aspects of the relationship were in decline. It has improved military-to-military contacts and established greater transparency in areas that used to be the object of intense secrecy and suspicion.

During the last Congress, I introduced the Nunn-Lugar Expansion Act, which allows fifty million dollars in Nunn-Lugar funding to be used outside the former Soviet Union. President Bush signed the legislation into law in 2003. This Act allows us to take advantage of non-proliferation opportunities wherever they may appear.

We have already been able to record one success with this new law. In October 2004, President Bush approved the expenditure of Nunn-Lugar funds in Albania, the first use of the Nunn-Lugar Program outside the former Soviet Union, to help safeguard and destroy a stockpile of sixteen tons of deadly chemical weapons left over from the Cold War. The Albanian government, following a visit I made to the capital Tirana, appealed to us for aid in dealing with this previously unrevealed store of chemicals, which posed a significant threat because it was not well secured.

While Nunn-Lugar officials are working closely with Albanian leaders to destroy their dangerous stockpile of chemical weapons, the experience also is illustrative of the need to reduce bureaucratic delays. The package of documents to be reviewed by the President took some eleven weeks to be finalized and readied for President Bush. From beginning to end, the bureaucratic process to authorize dismantlement of chemical weapons in Albania took more than three months. Fortunately, the situation in Albania was not a crisis, but we may not be able to afford these timelines in future nonproliferation emergencies.

As a result of the situation in Albania, I introduced the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 2005 on February 8, 2005. This legislation would underscore the bipartisan consensus on Nunn-Lugar by streamlining and accelerating Nunn-Lugar implementation and grant more flexibility to the President and the Secretary of Defense to undertake nonproliferation projects outside the former Soviet Union. It also would eliminate congressionally-imposed conditions on Nunn-Lugar assistance that in the past have forced the suspension of time-sensitive nonproliferation projects. The purpose of the bill is to reduce bureaucratic red tape and friction within our government that hinder effective responses to nonproliferation opportunities and emergencies.

President Bush has embraced the Nunn-Lugar concept and has endorsed efforts to apply it worldwide. Russia will continue to be a major focus but emerging risks must also be addressed in the Middle East and Asia. In addition, Nunn-Lugar concepts and experience may be valuable in addressing specific vulnerabilities involving radiological material that could be used in dirty bombs. Nunn-Lugar has developed a unique capability to meet a variety of proliferation threats. But the Program needs firm policy guidance and aggressive diplomacy to engage potential partners.

V. SEEKING BREAKTHROUGHS IN NON-PROLIFERATION

So what is the non-proliferation agenda for President Bush for his second term? In my view, he must bring the full weight of U.S. diplomatic and economic power to bear on pursuing at least the following twelve breakthroughs. Admittedly, this is a daunting list. No President could achieve every objective enumerated here. He will have influence over all of them, but he will have absolute power over none of them. The list illustrates that the uncertain work of non-proliferation requires flexibility, persistence, creativity, and allied cooperation. It also illustrates how many different areas present grave risk to our national security.

A. *Achieve the Complete, Verifiable, and Irreversible Dismantlement of North Korea's Nuclear Program.*

North Korea must be the number one non-proliferation priority. It may have as many as six nuclear weapons, and Pyongyang is notorious for selling its weapons technology to anyone with ready cash. To achieve a complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of its nuclear program, the North must freeze and disable all its nuclear weapons, components, and facilities and place all of its fissile material under safeguards. We must also pursue a phased, verifiable agreement to eliminate the weapons program and terminate its export of ballistic missiles. In doing so, we should insist that an exhaustive and creative verification methodology is at the heart of any agreement. Realistically, I do not expect North Korea to immediately embrace an intrusive inspections and dismantlement program. But the Bush administration has done the right thing by suggesting using the Nunn-Lugar Program as a model for future action.

B. *Establish International Will To End Iran's Nuclear Program.*

Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapons program, no matter how loudly they may deny it. Our challenge is to rally the international community, which largely shares our views on that fact, to apply significant pressure on Tehran to verifiably abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions. If Iran does not immediately change course, we should insist that the issue, now before the International Atomic Energy Agency, be referred to the United Nations Security Council for action. To compel Iran to abide by its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which includes submitting to full inspections and safeguards, the Security Council must be prepared to impose the entire range of sanctions—diplomatic, economic, and military.

C. *Bring Russian Tactical Nuclear Weapons into the Nunn-Lugar Program.*

For all the successes we have had in dismantling Russian intercontinental missiles and strategic warheads, Moscow refuses even to discuss the issue of tactical nuclear weapons, which in many ways may be even more dangerous. They are more portable, and they are usually stored closer to potential flashpoints. Moscow should fully account for its stocks of tactical nukes as a first step toward bringing them into Nunn-Lugar.

D. *Control Nuclear Materials Worldwide.*

The United States must lead a new effort to contain the weapons grade material outside the former Soviet Union that poses a threat to international security. We must help develop a comprehensive program that will address each facility that possesses high-risk material, eliminate stockpiles of spent reactor fuel that can be reprocessed, make a risk assessment of the world's scores of research reactors and their vulnerability, and promote efforts to convert research reactors to low-enriched uranium fuel. The Bush administration has made an important start with Energy Secretary Abraham's announcement in May 2004 of the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, which is aimed at securing a broad range of vulnerable nuclear and radiological materials around the world. This will compliment the Proliferation Security Initiative, which expands our ability to interdict illegal shipments of such materials.

E. *Win India and Pakistan Nuclear Agreements.*

The border between India and Pakistan has been called the most dangerous place in the world. We must devote sustained efforts to promote confidence-building measures and to support the encouraging steps these two nuclear-armed foes have already taken on their own. We can promote exchanges between Pakistani and Indian security experts and offer assistance on export controls, border security, and the protection, control, and accounting of nuclear arsenals. This will require some diplomatic and administrative skill to stay within our NPT obligations.

F. *Open Russia's Biological Weapons Facilities.*

We are making progress in converting Russia's biological weapons facilities to peaceful uses and in employing its former bioweapons scientists. But there is a major gap in the Program:

four former Soviet military facilities have not opened their doors to inspection. We must make it a priority to close that gap.

G. Secure Full Russian Disclosure of Its Chemical Weapons Stockpile.

While we have made hard-won progress in preparing for the destruction of Russia's 40,000 ton stockpile of known chemical weapons, Russian obstinacy has slowed the process. At Shchuchye, where destruction will not begin until 2007, I saw nearly two million warheads and artillery shells, many of which were so compact they could easily be concealed in a briefcase. But Moscow refuses to disclose the full extent of its chemical weapons stocks, casting a shadow over the Program. It makes certification under the Nunn-Lugar Program problematic and has required new legislation and presidential waivers to keep funding on track.

H. Transform the Russian Bureaucracy To End Roadblocks to Non-proliferation Cooperation.

Even with adequate funding and high-level agreements, the Nunn-Lugar Program still faces roadblocks erected by Russian bureaucrats and military officers. They have denied access to sites, refused to provide tax-free status to participating countries, and failed to extend the necessary liability protections to G-8 partners, all of which stymies progress. Russia still has 340 tons of fissile material that has not been adequately secured and 70 warhead sites that need more protection. Our government must keep pressure on President Putin to demand action and make the changes necessary to get it.

I. Win Focused Commitment from U.S. and European Companies To Engage Weapons Scientists.

We have long recognized that economic hardship and desperation could drive some weapons scientists into the arms of well-financed rogue states or terrorist organizations. The tens of thousands of scientists we have employed are mostly working at government-sponsored or government-subsidized jobs, but a number of American companies have shown the way forward by employing some of these well-trained individuals. We must capitalize on this success by commercializing the process and move many more of these men and women into sustainable private sector jobs where they can put their skills to profitable civilian use.

J. *Secure Russian Ratification of the Nunn-Lugar Umbrella Agreement.*

This agreement underpins all U.S. threat reduction programs in the former Soviet Union. It protects contributions to weapons clean-up from being taxed by Russian authorities and protects U.S. contractors—who are doing much of the most difficult work—from liability in case of an accident or other mishap. Without these guarantees, work would halt. We have negotiated an extension of the agreement, successfully fending off Russian attempts to weaken it. Ratification by the Duma is critical to maintaining a solid foundation for this complex effort, and early in 2004 Senator Joe Biden of Delaware, the ranking member on the Foreign Relations Committee, and I wrote a letter to Russian leaders urging quick action. Yet President Putin has so far failed to present the extension for a vote.

K. *Finalize a Plutonium Disposition Agreement.*

Russia has a stockpile of 134 metric tons of dangerous, long-lived plutonium that is not currently covered by any cooperative threat reduction program. An effort to destroy this material is still blocked by the same issues of liability, accountability, and access that once hindered the Nunn-Lugar Program on weapons dismantlement.

L. *Ensure the Fulfillment of Global Partnership Pledges.*

At the Bush administration's urging, the G-8 summit in 2002 formed the Global Partnership Against Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, nicknamed "10 Plus 10 Over 10." The United States agreed to provide ten billion dollars in cooperative threat reduction funds over the next ten years if our partners would add another ten billion dollars. We have done our share, and many of our allies are off to an excellent start. But overall, our partners' pledges are three billion dollars short. Moreover, not enough of the money that has been pledged has been allocated for actual Global Partnership projects. We have identified important dismantlement objectives, such as chemical weapons stocks and non-strategic nuclear submarines, which need this funding. Our allies must turn pledges into projects.

Based on the election results, I am confident that President Bush will find substantial public support for this set of initiatives. The American public wants the President to engage in foreign affairs to improve the security of the United States. A June 2004 New York Times/CBS poll found that 38 percent of Americans surveyed said that foreign policy was "the issue they most wanted

to hear the candidates discuss during the campaign.” This compared to corresponding polls by the same polling organization that found only 1 percent of Americans in 1996 and 3 percent in 2000 viewed foreign policy as the most important problem facing the country.

The American people expect their government to be working day and night to find and eliminate weapons of mass destruction. So do I. Our political leadership and non-proliferation experts must engage Russia to unlock the last doors to the dismantlement of its weapons programs. Further, they should scour the globe to identify and create opportunities to dismantle dangerous weapons programs outside the former Soviet Union. Persistent diplomacy at the highest levels of our government is needed each day if we are to succeed.

