WMD Nonproliferation

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains the number one security threat facing the United States and the international community.

The Lugar Center is devoted to the principle that calamities involving weapons of mass destruction are preventable if responsible governments, organizations, and individuals dedicate themselves to the painstaking work necessary to constrain this threat.

The Lugar Center is inspired by the work of Senator Richard G. Lugar, who for more than two decades has been a leader in nearly every important non-proliferation and arms control initiative undertaken by the United States.

Senator Lugar was the co-author of the landmark Nunn-Lugar Program passed in 1991. This program has worked cooperatively with Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus and other nations to safely secure and dismantle vulnerable stockpiles of weapons and materials of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union. It has assisted in the deactivation of more than 7,500 nuclear warheads; the elimination of 2,000 intercontinental missiles; and the destruction of 1,000 missile launchers. The program has helped to secure innumerable biological pathogens, and it is proceeding with a project to destroy almost two million chemical weapons.

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Senator Lugar passed legislation expanding the scope of the original Nunn-Lugar program so that it could meet threats anywhere in the world. For example, Nunn-Lugar has destroyed chemical weapons in Albania, provided security to African research labs studying dangerous pathogens, and facilitated WMD security agreements in East Asia. The Program exists as an important...
resource for responding to proliferation emergencies and building ties to countries that want help contending with WMD stockpiles and infrastructure. Nunn-Lugar also has been a vital component of bilateral arms control agreements between Russia and the United States.

Senator Lugar was at the forefront of efforts to evaluate and pass arms control agreements including the START agreements, the INF Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Moscow Treaty and others. He was the lead Republican fighting for the successful ratification of the New START agreement with Russia in 2010.

Controlling WMD is essential, not merely because of the horrific loss of life that could result from a WMD attack. Such an attack carried out by a terrorist group or nation could shake the global economy, further burden national budgets, constrain investments in human development, and create instability in many parts of the world. This would increase the chances for nuclear proliferation and add disturbing uncertainty to future terrorist threats.

The Lugar Center believes that although the risk of a nuclear weapon being used is the most profound of the WMD threats, the risks associated with biological, chemical, and radiological weapons should not be underestimated. These WMD materials generally are surrounded by less security and are simpler to weaponize.

The Lugar Center seeks to educate citizens, students, and leaders on the risks of proliferation of nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological weapons and materials. The Center emphasizes especially the security of these weapons and the construction of international agreements and norms designed to reduce their numbers and prevent their use. It works to ensure that the international community maintains the technological and human capabilities and political will necessary to peacefully inventory, inspect, safeguard, and deactivate weapons of mass destruction when such opportunities present themselves.

The Lugar Center works with like-minded organizations to develop policy proposals that further these goals. The Center advocates for resources to support non-proliferation objectives and for measures to reduce the bureaucratic and political obstacles that sometimes inhibit national and international efforts to reduce the WMD threat. It fosters bipartisan dialogue on arms control issues and the future of the United States’ own nuclear weapons. It also promotes the U.S. government’s engagement with foreign officials and governments on securing their cooperation for protecting WMD materials.

In partnership with the Arms Control Association, The Lugar Center is conducting the Bipartisan Nuclear and WMD Policy Dialogue Project to overcome the slowing momentum in improving security of nuclear materials and weapons. TLC and the Arms Control Association are producing a series of roundtables on nonproliferation and arms control issues for Congressional staff to stimulate bipartisan dialogue on reinvigorating Congressional leadership on these issues. Learn more about this partnership here.
Bipartisan WMD Dialogue Project

The Arms Control Association and The Lugar Center have partnered to establish the Bipartisan Nuclear and WMD Policy Dialogue Project to help foster bipartisan discussion on timely security issues. The program does not seek any policy outcome or enactment of any legislation. Our mission is to provide a forum where senior national security staff across committee jurisdictions and party affiliations can establish relationships and a basis for working together more effectively, as well as increase the overall knowledge base and awareness of WMD risks and risk reduction strategies.

Established in November 2013, the Project organizes a series of private dinners and congressional briefings on specific topics of interest to Republican and Democratic congressional staff. These events are off the record, emphasize constructive dialogue, and provide a forum for staff to engage high profile speakers. Topics will include:

- Preventing a nuclear-armed Iran
- Preventing nuclear terrorism (Cooperative Threat Reduction)
- Reversing North Korea’s nuclear program
- Nuclear force modernization
- Engaging China and other nuclear armed states in the nuclear risk reduction process
- Controlling the nuclear fuel cycle

For more information, please contact Jay Branegan at jay@thelugarcenter.org.

The project is made possible with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Military Materials Study Group

The Lugar Center Joins Initiative to Address the Security of Military Nuclear Materials

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 18, 2014 -- A high-level group of political and military leaders from nuclear weapons states met today to launch the “Military Materials Security Study Group,” an effort to bolster the security of the nuclear materials under the control of militaries worldwide.

Under the leadership of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), the Study Group is being chaired by NTI Co-Chairman and former U.S. Senator, Sam Nunn, Lugar Center President and former U.S. Senator, Richard Lugar, and NTI Vice Chairman and former U.K. Defense Secretary, Des Browne.

“I am very pleased that The Lugar Center will be a partner in the Military Materials Security Study Group project,” said Lugar. “Over more than two decades, the Nunn-Lugar Program demonstrated that nations could work together to safeguard large quantities of nuclear materials and weapons. We learned a lot from that experience. We need to build consensus about how proven security techniques...
and principles could be applied to military nuclear materials worldwide."

Existing international security standards covering weapons-usable nuclear materials apply only to the 15 percent of materials classified as civilian. The 85 percent under the control of militaries exist outside international controls.

Common perceptions are that military nuclear materials are more secure than those under civilian control. But troubling security lapses at military facilities, as well as the vast quantity and diversity of military nuclear materials, underscore that a coordinated effort to establish international standards and improve the security of these materials is urgently needed.

The Study Group will develop recommendations that will be issued next year regarding how nuclear weapons states can cooperate to improve controls on these materials and to build confidence in their security.

See NTI’s press release here.

Media Coverage

US, Russia rewind and rerun their classic thriller
Times Record News, April 13, 2017

Will a new nuclear arms race undo decades of teamwork between the US and Russia?
PRI, December 23, 2016

25 years since program started, Nunn-Lugar program still “key to world’s safety”
Indiana University School of Global and International Studies, December 16, 2016

Security, defense leaders celebrate 25th anniversary of Nunn-Lugar threat reduction program
Financial News, December 14, 2016

Nunn-Lugar 25th Anniversary Shows Cooperative Security Worked
National Security Archive, December 12, 2016

WATCH: Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction 25th Anniversary Symposium
Indiana University School of Global and International Studies, December 9, 2016

Mr. Putin plays troublemaker on nuclear security
The Washington Post, October 23, 2016

Ask an Expert: Senator Richard Lugar on Cooperative Threat Reduction
Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, August 17, 2016

Our Opinion: Nunn, Lugar merit praise
Times-Mail, May 18, 2016
Nunn, Lugar saw beyond Cold War
*The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, May 16, 2016

Cooperative Threat Reduction Program - You want to do WHAT for the Soviet Union?
*DoD News*, May 10, 2016

Secretary of Defense Ash Carter: Threat Reduction Program was Novel Response to Historic Change
*DoD News*, May 9, 2016

How Pentagon Geeks & Russian Generals Plotted in Secret to Take Away Assad’s WMD
*The Daily Beast*, February 20, 2016

Nunn-Lugar mission ends at Shchuch’ye with nerve gas destroyed
*Howey Politics Indiana*, November 21, 2015

Chill With Russia Brings Nuclear Insecurity
*CQ Roll Call*, November 20, 2015

The greatest threat in the world
*Politico*, November 18, 2015

Sam Nunn, Richard Lugar and Des Browne Release Recommendations on Securing Military Nuclear Materials
*Nuclear Threat Initiative*, November 10, 2015

Lugar speaks out in favor of Iran deal
*CNHI*, September 4, 2015

Why a nuclear fuel bank matters
*The Hill*, September 1, 2015

There Are No Perfect Nuclear Deals
*POLITOCO*, August 30, 2015

Lugar Worries A Failed Deal With Iran Will Increase Spread Of Nuclear Weapons
*WFYI*, August 20, 2015

Sen. Lugar discusses the Iran nuclear deal and ISIS on MSNBC
*MSNBC*, August 18, 2015

Why we disagree with Chuck Schumer on the Iran deal
*Reuters*, August 14, 2015

Lugar still pursues nonproliferation, despite setback
*The Indianapolis Star*, March 23, 2015
The United States and Russia must repair their partnership on nuclear security

Senator Lugar comments on U.S.-Russia nuclear security cooperation

Senator Lugar mentioned in article on Defense Secretary nominee Ash Carter
*Politico*, December 4, 2014

Senator Lugar interviewed by Kazakh TV on 20th anniversary of Project Sapphire
*Kazakh TV*, November 18, 2014

Senator Lugar discusses cooperation with Russia on HuffPost Live
August 7, 2014

**Events & Speeches**

WATCH: Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction 25th Anniversary Symposium
December 9, 2016

The Last Nuclear Security Summit: What it is, What to Expect, and What’s Next
March 15, 2016

Reducing the North Korean Nuclear Threat
January 27, 2016

Pakistan and the Nuclear Dilemma in South Asia
November 19, 2015

Remarks by Former Senator Richard Lugar on Military Nuclear Materials
November 10, 2015

Sam Nunn, Richard Lugar and Des Browne Release Recommendations on Securing Military Nuclear Materials
November 10, 2015

Preparing for the next WMD elimination mission - Lessons learned from past experiences
November 9, 2015

Options for Strengthening Nonproliferation After the Iran Nuclear Deal
October 19, 2015

The P5+1 and Iran Nuclear Deal: Implementation of IAEA Monitoring and Sanctions Relief
July 16, 2015
U.S. Policy Regarding Section 123 Agreements
May 28, 2015

The Role of Nuclear Weapons in the U.S.-Russia Relationship
April 21, 2015

Senator Lugar presents former British Secretary of Defense Lord Desmond Browne with the second Nunn-Lugar Award for Promoting Nuclear Security

Senator Lugar participates in nuclear security panel at Georgetown University
March 16, 2015

The U.S. Nuclear Weapons Budget: Fiscal Year 2016 and Beyond
February 10, 2015

Former Senators Lugar and Sam Nunn, former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead discuss nuclear security issues with Congressional lawmakers
February 3, 2015

The P5+1 and Iran Nuclear Negotiation: Status, Propsects, and Congress’ Role
January 21, 2015

President Obama applauds Senators Lugar and Nunn, celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program
National Defense University, December 3, 2012

TLC Experts

The greatest threat in the world
Politico, November 18, 2015

Why a nuclear fuel bank matters
The Hill, September 1, 2015

TLC Senior Fellow Tom Moore comments on ISIS weaponry
October 6, 2014

The Role of Nuclear Weapons During the Crisis in Ukraine
July 29, 2014

Statement Submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
January 30, 2014