



Bringing business models to our nation's security

May 3, 2004

The Honorable John Warner
The United States Senate
225 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-4601

Dear Chairman Warner:

"The greatest threat before humanity today is the possibility of secret and sudden attack with chemical or biological or radiological or nuclear weapons," President George W. Bush said in a February 2004 speech on the dangers posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. He went on to praise the U.S. Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program – aimed at securing and destroying Russia's vast Cold War arsenals of these weapons – as an important element of U.S. nonproliferation efforts.

Business Executives for National Security (BENS), a national non-partisan organization, strongly agrees with these assessments. We support CTR efforts to eliminate deadly weapons at the source, *before* they can be stolen by or diverted to terrorists. In particular, the chemical weapons destruction facility CTR is constructing in Shchuch'ye, Russia, will forever eliminate the threat posed by millions of poorly guarded nerve gas shells and warheads. CTR is also cost-effective, consuming only 1/10th of 1 percent of total defense spending – truly good security on the cheap. As you consider the Fiscal Year 2005 defense authorization bill, we ask you to strengthen CTR in the following ways:

- Fully fund CTR in FY 2005. Full funding of CTR's budget request is vital to the program's continued effectiveness. The Shchuch'ye project also deserves its full share of the total request. According to the Defense Department, the fiscal 2005 budget, though reduced from the previous year, will put Shchuch'ye well on track to its planned completion in 2008. A cut in that budget request could delay completion and the destruction of chemical weapons.
- Grant permanent waiver authority for Shchuch'ye. Past defense authorizations have recognized the need for presidential waiver authority on conditions linking Shchuch'ye funding to Russian cooperation. BENS supports making that authority permanent, on two grounds. First, having to renegotiate temporary waivers every year subjects the project to further annual risk; even unrelated delays to the defense bill can block funding well past the start of the fiscal year. Second, progress on Shchuch'ye has been positive: Russia has met four of the six requirements and generally shown good cooperation and good faith. BENS agrees with Senator Richard Lugar that, while the conditions' policy goals are important and some concerns remain, "elimination of weapons of mass destruction must be our top priority." BENS is encouraged to see the Senate has introduced a permanent waiver in its defense bill and urges you to support it in markup and in conference.
- Eliminate the "or expended" clause. Current language prohibits the Defense Department from expending Shchuch'ye funding in the absence of a waiver – even if that money was already obligated and authorized by Congress or otherwise "in the bank" from a prior year. We support the Senate's proposal to strike this ban.

By strengthening CTR, you strengthen one of the most cost-effective and bipartisan weapons America has to combat proliferation and eliminate grave threats to our national security and "the greatest threat before humanity today."

Sincerely,

Charles G. Boyd
General, USAF (Ret)
President and CEO

Stanley A. Weiss
Chairman

(Note: This letter was sent to all members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees)