



Bringing business models to our nation's security

May 11, 2005

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

Dear Chairman Warner:

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in terrorist hands are the single greatest threat to America's security today. Both President George W. Bush and Senator John Kerry concurred on this point in the 2004 presidential election, and the findings of a recent State Department report give it greater urgency: not only does al Qaeda remain "the primary concern regarding possible WMD threats, the number of groups expressing an interest in such materials is increasing." Even as these dangers grow, a proven defense exists: the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program.

Business Executives for National Security (BENS), a national non-partisan organization, strongly supports CTR as one of the most cost-effective weapons in the nation's arsenal against proliferation. For more than a decade, it has secured and destroyed the weapons, delivery systems, and storage sites of the former Soviet Union – for as little as one-tenth of 1 percent of the Pentagon's annual budget. CTR remains a vital means of reducing the dangers posed by Russian WMD; at the same time, it holds great potential to meet new challenges worldwide. As you consider the Fiscal Year 2006 defense authorization bill, we ask you to support the following measures to strengthen and expand CTR:

- Fully fund CTR in FY 2006. Full funding of CTR's budget request is vital to the program's continued effectiveness. Any cuts could delay completion of the Shchuch'ye chemical weapons destruction facility, jeopardize new plans to secure Russian nuclear warheads, or otherwise limit CTR's efforts to make this nation more secure.
- Remove conditions on CTR funding. Proposals in both the House and the Senate would lift general conditions on CTR funding and specific clauses on chemical weapons destruction activities. BENS supports these measures out of both common and business sense. Russia has met five of six requirements on chemical destruction, and although concerns remain over its full compliance with arms control obligations, Congress has annually and correctly judged that sustaining CTR activities is the top priority. Even though conditions can be waived, doing so diverts time and effort that could otherwise be used to meet proliferation challenges. Relying on waivers also preserves the risk that funding delays could threaten existing projects and investments.
- Make CTR a global tool. Current law limits the ability of CTR to work outside the former Soviet Union, with funding on such activities capped at \$50 million per year. But CTR is too valuable a tool to be confined to only one region; its expertise should be available to meet any challenge, of any size, anywhere. BENS supports language by Senator Richard Lugar and others to remove the annual cap on spending outside the FSU, with the clear provision that those monies be made available only to CTR activities.

By improving CTR, you strengthen one of the most cost-effective and bipartisan weapons America has to combat proliferation and eliminate the gravest threat to our national security.

Sincerely,

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

Stanley A. Weiss
Chairman