



**Bringing business models to our nation's security**

July 16, 2003

Dear (Senator/Representative) (Sent to all House/Senate Armed Services Committee Members):

Enough chemical weapons to kill the world's population thirty times over are stored in wood-and-corrugated-metal sheds in Shchuch'ye, Russia, secured by padlocks with wax seals to detect break-ins. Nearly 2 million shells and warheads of deadly VX and sarin nerve gas still lie in these Soviet-era structures, at risk of terrorist theft or black-market sale. In the recent past, the U.S. has funded some perimeter security upgrades at Shchuch'ye, but security is not the ultimate answer. This arsenal can only be kept out of the wrong hands by eliminating it altogether.

Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) programs are a cost-effective way to destroy these weapons *before* they can be used against us. Business Executives for National Security (BENS), a national non-partisan organization, supports CTR programs as ways to stop these threats at the source. The chemical demilitarization facility planned for Shchuch'ye is in particular need of your attention. As you consider the Fiscal Year 2004 defense authorization, three actions would make a real difference in reducing the chemical weapons threat:

- Fully fund the president's request for Shchuch'ye. President Bush requested just over \$200 million for chemical weapons security and destruction in Russia. The House version of the FY 04 defense authorization moves almost \$30 million to strategic nuclear arms elimination – a program the Pentagon says doesn't need more money. The Senate supports the President's full request.
- Clarify permit requirements. In response to CTR project difficulties in 2002, the House defense language would require Shchuch'ye and other CTR programs to obtain *all* required permits, for any use, before more than 35 percent of total costs can be obligated. The intent is sound, but the broad writing of the provision threatens to derail any progress. Some permits, like occupancy or usage, simply aren't granted until construction is nearly finished. Clarifying the language to specify only those construction-related permits needed at the earliest stage would achieve the same oversight without risking freezes on urgent projects. Alternatively, the permit requirement could be removed altogether.
- Remove the "matching funds" clause. The House proposes to use \$100 million of funding for chemical weapons programs as 2-to-1 "matching funds" from international contributions, but this is an unnecessary complication. Current Russian and Canadian commitments alone – announced before the U.S. legislation – put foreign funding over the needed \$50 million level; more money comes from Britain and Italy to support work at Shchuch'ye already in progress.

Shchuch'ye and the chemical weapons elimination effort deserve America's support. The Russians have shown some of the best transparency of any CTR project at Shchuch'ye, providing access to news crews and Congressional delegations. A March GAO report praised "good access and cooperation from the Russian government" at chemical sites, and President Vladimir Putin has said that chemical weapons destruction is his highest priority. We should capitalize on that cooperation by giving full support to the chemical demilitarization facility at Shchuch'ye. To do anything else only prolongs this threat to America.

Sincerely,

Stanley A. Weiss  
Chairman

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President and CEO