

“50 Years of the Non-proliferation Treaty: Strengthening the NPT in the  
Face of Iranian and North Korean Nonproliferation Challenges”

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Chairmen Deutch and Bera, Ranking Members Wilson and Yoho, and members of the Committee: Thank you for holding this hearing, marking fifty years of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). I am honored to join you and my fellow witnesses today, and look forward to a dynamic discussion regarding the opportunities and challenges for tools and systems within our Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD) enterprise.

Across my career, I have been privileged to serve in civilian, defense, public diplomacy, intelligence, commercial, and educational sectors. Through these experiences, I have gained a deep appreciation for the criticality of the full spectrum of CWMD capabilities that the United States and its allies & partners must bring to bear. These remarks are founded on three themes, woven throughout the three sections below: (1) Nonproliferation represents one of many tools that we must continue to apply to effectively counter WMD ideation, acquisition, use, threatened use, or delivery. (2) To successfully apply the NPT or any other CWMD tools, we must bring a united, informed, and coordinated approach. (3) Any tool, whether multilateral or bilateral, or developed in government or jointly with other partners, must evolve.

## CURRENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN CWMD

Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction is a mission that spans all functions of our government, from understanding and assessing the intent of a state or non-state actor; to detecting the testing or use of a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or High-Yield Explosive (CBRNE); and to ensuring that our warfighters can effectively “fight through” such an event. Further, if our preventive efforts fail, we must also be prepared to respond and recover. As many U.S. and global leaders have recognized, CWMD thus requires a “whole of society” campaign, beyond the whole of government.

A WMD attack has long been considered to be of high impact and low-probability. However, events of the past few years demonstrate that state and non-state actors will use WMD, whether in targeted assassinations or in attacks on civilian populations, as we have seen with the Islamic State’s use of chemical weapons.

We face a complex spectrum of attack surfaces, from conventional to cyber, space, and information operations. As a result, fundamental strategic stability precepts such as extended deterrence, mutually assured destruction, and even norms preventing the use of chemical or biological agents are at risk, and potentially already undermined.

Recognizing that my fellow witnesses may address how the Department of State, international bodies, and other key actors operate in this mission, below are two contextual aspects specific to the Department of Defense’s (DoD) approach to CWMD.

First, following several years of internal discussions, in 2016 the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) transferred formal “coordinating authority” responsibilities for CWMD to the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). As a result of this change to the DoD’s Unified Command Plan (UCP), USSOCOM became responsible for coordinating across the joint force to conduct planning, assess execution of the campaign plan, and make recommendations to the Department. USSOCOM’s work is nested under broader strategic and policy frameworks and coordinated with DoD leaders. This enhanced coordination, in turn, enables stronger planning, execution, and assessment of CWMD activities within the Interagency and ultimately with our allies and partners.

Second, DoD recognizes that while individual CWMD programs, operations, or initiatives are of stand-alone value, effectively Countering WMD requires comprehensive use of the resources and authorities available across all Departments and Agencies. Leveraging the strengths of the entire CWMD ecosystem enables us to *assess* whole-of-government capabilities; *sequence and deploy* these against evolving state and non-state threats; and *measure* effectiveness. Treaties are central to a broader set of nonproliferation tools. Nonproliferation, in turn, is one aspect of the greater CWMD toolset. As the DoD continues to focus on enhanced internal coordination, it in turn enables the same with internal and external partners.

A daunting scope of geographical and functional challenges face our nation, ranging from the actions of Iran in the ongoing evolution of its compliance with the Nonproliferation Treaty, to the Democratic Republic of Korea’s (North Korea) withdrawal from the NPT over 17 years ago. Addressing the unique challenges presented by each of these countries demands a full set of tools, of which treaties represents just one. We must assess, and then plan for, how to leverage emerging technologies, new partnerships, the full array of U.S. and allied/partner capabilities, and other assets against these challenges. Importantly, we must not stop with the “use” of these tools, but continually assess and measure success against established metrics and unanticipated contingencies.

#### TREATIES: (AN IMPORTANT) ONE OF AN ARRAY OF CWMD TOOLS

The U.S., along with other allies, partners, and global actors, should continue to refine and assess the return on investment of tools that themselves have differing attributes. From the NPT, to the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), to export controls, each tool can enhance strategic stability, reduce illicit trafficking, improve recovery, or meet any number of other critical CWMD requirements. Whether multilateral formal treaties or endorsements of Principles, these tools demand and enable communication, can

advance trust and confidence-building, and play an important role in supporting the transparency and coordination required to effectively counter the development, spread, use, or delivery of WMD.

In an era of great power competition where non-state threats persist, treaties and other agreements or groups, such as the Australia Group or Zangger Committee, are one of the few tools by which we communicate with partners. Further, the role of industry, academia, and other “non-traditional” partners cannot be underrated. As sources of economic, intellectual, and other power shift more fluidly between public and private partners, our understanding of “who” partners are must also evolve. Partnerships connote communication. The absence of communication, even when fraught, can degrade the security environment.

Treaties and tools should be expected to evolve, especially in the face of emerging and converging technology, geopolitical shifts, and other factors such as the role of civil society in Countering WMD. For example, and specific to the theme of today’s hearing, the three “pillars” of the NPT remain as critical today as they did fifty years ago. However, “how” we monitor, enforce, and implement the treaty, will continue to evolve. As the threats themselves morph, so must the types of tools we develop, as well as how we employ them.

## LOOKING AHEAD

In looking to future of Countering WMD, three areas require focus.

First, extended deterrence, as part of our broader deterrence goals: For our partners and allies, and particularly in Asia/Pacific and Europe, the deterrent power of our conventional and nonconventional capabilities is critical. As military and diplomatic leaders have recognized for decades, our deterrent capabilities must be tailored to the threat, continually evolving, and steadfast. In the face of the wide range of threats to U.S. interests, we must redouble our efforts to strengthen and tailor deterrent planning, messaging, actions, and measurements of effectiveness.

Second, building partner capacity: Whether through the Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration or the DoD’s Defense Threat Reduction Agency, whole of government activities focused on building partner capacity, reducing threats, and countering threat networks drive positive impact with host nation partners. Such engagements, through government, academia, think-tanks, and industry, advance our situational awareness. Further, these programs build trust in people, solutions, and communication channels that prove critical whether in steady-state or crisis.

Third, we must improve our approach to understanding and assessing how the emergence or convergence of technology will impact security, in terms of “promise” as well as “peril.” The democratization of technology, which drives unprecedented physical-digital integration, enhances adversaries’ abilities to wield power and inflict casualties – or, importantly, to *threaten* to do so.

The U.S. and our allies and partners, however, can leverage public/private partnerships to powerful effect. Industry can bring competitive advantage to the U.S., and – where appropriate – to our allies and partners. Four examples include: (1) supporting the development of tools to improve strategic messaging; (2) advancing data analytics to transform data into actionable information, such as in augmented or artificial intelligence to enhance indications and warnings; (3) conducting enhanced technology scouting in order to identify emerging and converging disrupters; and (4) applying supply chain analysis to yield targetable nodes in proliferation, whether financial, shipping, knowledge, or component-based.

## CONCLUSION

Countering the acquisition, use, or threat of use of CBRNE is squarely in the interests of the U.S. and its allies and partners, as is ensuring we are resilient and prepared to respond when needed. Treaties are one tool within the broader set of CWMD activities by which we engage and coordinate with our partners as well as our competitors or adversaries. We must support the *sustenance and evolution* of these tools.

As with many other challenges facing our nation, Countering WMD demands joint, all-domain, and transregional action, utilizing tools that are regularly honed and improved to counter the evolving strategies, operations, and tactics of current and future adversaries.