



Senator Feinstein Offers Legislation to Prevent Terrorists from
Obtaining Nuclear Materials
April 8, 2004

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today introduced legislation to keep the radioactive materials necessary to create nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists. The bill is cosponsored by Senators Bill Nelson (D-FL) and Jack Reed (D-RI).

“This legislation will give our government the direction, tools, and resources necessary to remove nuclear materials from around the world in an expeditious manner,” Senator Feinstein said. **“There are hundreds of facilities around the world that store plutonium or highly enriched uranium, including 24 sites that the State Department has identified as high priority sites. We must begin a comprehensive effort to secure these sites and ensure that terrorists cannot access them.”**

“Removing vulnerable nuclear materials from around the world is a critical security issue that we face in the post-9/11 world. Keeping Weapons of Mass Destruction out of the hands of terrorists is at the top of our foreign policy agenda, and ensuring the protection of materials used to make these weapons should be at the top of our national security agenda.”

At present, there is no single, integrated U.S. government program, with a defined budget and resources, to facilitate the removal of these materials.

Senator Feinstein’s legislation would:

- Establish a presidential task force in the Department of Energy on nuclear removal;
- Provide a mandate and specific direction to the presidential task force to work with other countries to remove nuclear materials from vulnerable sites around the world as quickly as possible; and
- Authorize \$40 million in FY 2005 to cover the costs associated with securing nuclear materials, including:
 - Purchasing, transporting, and managing nuclear material;
 - Providing interim security upgrades;
 - Converting high-enriched uranium sites to the use of low-enriched uranium fuels;

- Assisting in the closure and decommissioning of such sites; and
- Providing incentives to facilitate the removal of such materials from vulnerable facilities.

The Bush Administration has focused its efforts on removing vulnerable international nuclear materials. However, the Administration's projects will take 10 to 20 years to complete -- at the rate of one facility per year.

“I am deeply concerned that the Bush Administration’s efforts do not adequately address the seriousness of the issue,” Senator Feinstein added. **“We must do everything in our power to prevent terrorists from ever getting their hands on nuclear material and developing nuclear weapons.”**

A report released last year from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University described a scenario in which a 10-kiloton nuclear bomb is smuggled into Manhattan and detonated resulting in the loss of 500,000 people and causing \$1 trillion in direct economic damage.

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