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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

January 6, 2006

KENNETH A. MYERS, JR., STAFF DIRECTOR
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The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

On November 1, 2005, we introduced S. 1949, the Cooperative Proliferation Detection, Interdiction Assistance and Conventional Threat Reduction Act. The Lugar-Obama legislation launches two major weapons dismantlement and counter-proliferation initiatives. Modeled after the successful Nunn-Lugar program to dismantle former Soviet weapons, our new legislation seeks to build cooperative relationships with willing countries to secure vulnerable stockpiles of conventional weapons and strengthen barriers to prevent weapons of mass destruction from falling into terrorists' hands.

A thorough, multi-faceted nonproliferation strategy is essential to defend fully the American people. The Nunn-Lugar program has provided a solid foundation, valuable experience and measurable results. We intend the Lugar-Obama legislation to take the next critical step forward to reshape, refocus and reinvigorate our country's non-proliferation mission.

As you complete the Fiscal Year 2007 budget request, we urge you to keep these critical initiatives foremost in importance and funding allocation. The Committee on Foreign Relations will hold a hearing on these important efforts on January 25. We propose to invite Under Secretary Joseph to appear and share the State Department's views on our bill.

Our bill would strengthen and energize the U.S. program against unsecured anti-aircraft missiles and other conventional weapons, a program that is woefully underfunded. There may be as many as 750,000 man-portable air defense systems in arsenals worldwide. The State Department estimates that more than 40 civilian aircraft have been hit by such weapons over the past three decades. In addition, loose stocks of small arms and other weapons also help fuel civil wars in Africa and elsewhere and provide ammunition for those who attack peacekeepers and aid workers seeking to stabilize and rebuild war-torn societies. Our bill would also seek to get rid of artillery shells like those used in the improvised explosive devices that have been used to attack U.S. forces in Iraq. In many circumstances, these are the weapons of choice for terrorists.

Some foreign governments have already sought U.S. help in eliminating their stockpiles of man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) and excess weapons and ammunition. But low budgets and insufficient attention have hampered destruction efforts. Our legislation would require the Administration to develop a response commensurate with the threat, consolidating scattered programs at the State Department into a single Office of Conventional Weapons Threat Reduction. It also calls for an increase in spending in this area, to \$25 million – a relatively modest sum that would offer large benefits to U.S. national security.

The other part of the Lugar-Obama legislation would strengthen the ability of America's friends and allies to detect and interdict illicit shipments of weapons and materials of mass destruction. Stopping these weapons and materials of mass destruction in transit is an important complement to our first line of defense, the Nunn-Lugar program, which eliminates weapons of mass destruction at their source.

We cannot do this alone. We need the vigilance of like-minded nations, and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) can enlist their help. But while PSI has been successful at creating cooperative arrangements, many of our partners lack capabilities to detect illicit WMD cargo and to interdict such shipments. Lugar-Obama seeks to address this gap by establishing a coordinated effort to improve the capabilities of our foreign partners by providing training, equipment and other support for interdiction of illicit cargo in transit. Examples of such assistance may include maritime surveillance and boarding equipment; provision, installation, and training for portal monitoring systems, hand-held detection equipment and other sensors; as well as aerial detection and interdiction capabilities.

The legislation would create a new office at the Department to support WMD detection and intervention. The bill authorizes \$110 million to start up the program and proposes an innovative use of current foreign military financing (FMF). Under Lugar-Obama, the President would have the authority, in cases he deems important to national security, to request that countries receiving FMF use 25 percent of such funds to purchase interdiction-enabling and related equipment. This offers a potent but flexible tool to build a robust international network for WMD detection and interdiction.

We look forward to working closely with you and the Department to address these important national security areas.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama



Richard G. Lugar
Chairman