

Rep. Ellen Tauscher and Sen. Hillary Clinton Reintroduce Legislation to Help Prevent Nuclear Proliferation

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ellen Tauscher and Sen. Hillary Clinton Reintroduce Legislation to Help Prevent Nuclear Proliferation, Safeguard Nuclear Materials Washington, DC – Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher (D-CA) and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) have reintroduced legislation in both chambers of Congress to help prevent nuclear terrorism. The Nuclear Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007, based on research and recommendations by the Nuclear Threat Initiative headed by former Senator Sam Nunn, would devote real resources to combat the threat of nuclear terror and require the President to develop a comprehensive plan to work with the international community to secure nuclear weapons and materials. "Simply put, there is no greater threat to global security than that of loose nuclear materials and know-how falling into the hands of a terrorist group or rogue nation. It is incomprehensible that the Bush Administration repeatedly fails to recognize this threat leaving the Congress to pick up the pieces and fill holes in national security," said Rep. Ellen Tauscher. "This legislation matches our level of commitment and prevention to the threat. It creates the post of Senior Advisor to the President dedicated full-time to preventing nuclear terrorism and requires the administration to finally work with the international community to develop specific universal nuclear safety and accountability standards." "Terrorists are not beholden to borders in trying to acquire and use nuclear weapons – they will go anywhere in search of this capability, and we must put forward an even greater effort to thwart them. The danger is too great to do anything less," said Senator Clinton. The Nuclear Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007 would devote real resources to preventing nuclear proliferation, including increased funding for: U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Global Threat Reduction Initiative to convert research reactors around the world from highly enriched uranium to low enriched uranium and to remove the highly enriched uranium from such facilities, typically repatriating the material back to the U.S. or Russia. DOE's National Technical Nuclear Forensics R&D Program to further ongoing efforts to develop the capability to attribute the origin of a nuclear weapon if there is a nuclear terrorist attack against the U.S., U.S. forces around the world, or U.S. allies. The ability to pinpoint the origin of material could have a deterrent effect on countries that may consider transferring nuclear weapons or materials to terrorist organizations and would encourage countries to do more to lockdown all of their own nuclear weapons and materials against potential theft. The U.S. Department of State for the International Atomic Energy Agency's Office of Nuclear Security to provide international guidelines on nuclear security (including working with the U.S. and other countries to implement the minimum nuclear security standard) and manage the international database of nuclear smuggling incidents. Conditional Authorization for Improvement and Expansion of the DOE's Material Protection, Control and Accounting Program to provide for security upgrades at vulnerable sites and facilities around the world that hold nuclear weapons and materials; to ensure that the security upgrades already in place can be maintained by the host country; and to develop and enforce nuclear security regulations. Funding could be released if the Administration certifies to Congress that diplomatic progress has been made that would enable security upgrades at certain Russian facilities that have not yet received them or at facilities in other countries that possess nuclear weapons or materials. Conditional Authorization for the Expansion and Acceleration of DOE's "Megatons to Megawatts" Program. Funding could be released if the Administration certifies to Congress that Russia acknowledges the need to downblend additional highly enriched uranium that is in excess to its national security needs. Funding would primarily be used to assist Russia to enhance its downblending capacity, which would enable the downblending of more highly enriched uranium each year. The bill also creates the post of Senior Advisor to the President for the Prevention of Nuclear Terrorism. The advisor will be responsible for developing and coordinating implementation of a strategy to prevent nuclear terrorism, coordinating the efforts of the Departments of Energy, Defense, State and other agencies. The advisor will lead efforts to work with the international community to develop specific minimum standards for the security of nuclear weapons and weapons-usable fissile material, to convince other countries to adopt these standards and to assist other countries in meeting and maintaining these standards. The advisor will also be responsible for submission of an annual report to Congress, which will include:

- Lists of all sites worldwide with nuclear weapons and weapons-usable fissile material noting the most vulnerable sites where security upgrades are needed urgently.
- Prioritized diplomatic and technical plans, including measurable milestones, metrics, estimated timetables and estimated costs of implementation, to eliminate, remove or secure and account for all weapons-usable fissile material at these sites and to maintain security at these sites once U.S. assistance ends;
- Progress in implementing the diplomatic and technical plan, including a description of other countries' efforts to secure their own weapons-usable fissile material; and
- Updates on efforts to establish and implement the minimum nuclear security standard.