

SYRIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. SECURITY AND REGIONAL STABILITY

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH CONGRESS

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2003

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST
AND CENTRAL ASIA,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10 a.m. in Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. The Subcommittee will come to order.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank and welcome Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, John Bolton, a great American, for making himself available this morning to appear before our Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia, in both an open and then, right afterward, a classified session.

Recently, the Subcommittee held an oversight hearing to assess the impact of foreign investment that Iran's energy infrastructure has had on the Iranian regime's ability to finance its nuclear program, its development of long-range ballistic missiles, and its continued sponsoring of terrorist organizations. Unfortunately, we see a similar pattern emerging with respect to Syria.

Foreign investors have readily answered Damascus's call for assistance, pumping billions of dollars into the regime's coffers through investments in the oil and gas sectors, this, in turn, enabling Syria to expand its budgetary resources on its chemical and biological weapons projects, as well as its support for terrorist groups.

Even more disturbing is how Western European companies have directly contributed to Syria's weapons program.

In 1989, former CIA Director, William Webster, told a congressional panel that the CIA had determined foreign assistance was

“. . . of critical importance in allowing Syria to develop its chemical warfare capability. Western European firms were instrumental in supplying the required chemicals and equipment. Without the provision of these key elements, Damascus would not have been able to produce chemical weapons.”

Since then, Syria has increased and indeed diversified its weapons of mass destruction programs to present a serious threat to our allies and our interests in the region.

An unclassified CIA report to Congress, covering the period from January to June 2001, stated that,

“Syria sought chemical weapons and related precursors and expertise from foreign sources, maintains a stockpile of nerve agent sarin and appears to be trying to develop more toxic and persistent nerve agents.”

Syria has reportedly manufactured varieties of aerial bombs containing chemical agents, such as sarin gas. According to Russian intelligence, Syria has stockpiles of thousands of chemical aerial bombs that are carried by various types of planes. Syria also has several thousand tactical munitions, including rockets and artillery shells containing sarin gas.

Syria reportedly has three production facilities for chemical weapons, but more disturbing are reports that Syria is amassing chemical warheads for Scud missiles.

In January 1992, the CIA estimated that, “Syria has developed chemical weapons warheads for its Scuds,” and that the Intelligence Community remains concerned about Syria’s intentions regarding nuclear weapons.

Syria reportedly produces 30 Scud C missiles per year at an underground facility, and many Western analysts agree that these Syrian Scuds Cs, originally purchased from North Korea, are being armed for long-range chemical weapons delivery. Syrian sources have publicly confirmed the test firing of Scud B, and Scud C missiles with weaponized chemical agents.

Further, recent public reports indicate that Syria has purchased and already processes ballistic cruise missiles that can carry warheads with clusters of chemical and biological agents.

In addition to mobile brigades, Syria has reportedly constructed hardened silos and a network of tunnels to hide its longer-range missiles.

With respect to Syria’s biological weapons program, the Center for Scientific Studies and Research in Damascus has been reported to be the primary site for both Syria’s biological and chemical programs, not to mention the procurement of dual-use chemical and biological technology and equipment from various European and South Asia countries.

The Center’s published studies point to work with germs and proteins, and report that the Center’s scientists have trained in France in the fields of toxicology and virology.

Various sources have reported that Syria possesses and can weaponize anthrax and cholera. It has also been reported that the smallpox virus was delivered to Syria from Russia for bioweapons development, and that the Syrian regime is investigating the use of another pathogen related to the bubonic plague.

Scholarly and media sources state that the production facilities for chemical weapons in the Aleppo area and other sites also include biological weapons facilities. While some assessments do not place Syria’s biological weapons program beyond the research and development stage, the intentions of the Syrian regime with respect to its work with biological agents was made abundantly clear in April 1990, in a lengthy article published by the Syrian Defense Minister.

In this article, entitled *Biological Germ Warfare: A New and Effective Method in Modern Warfare*, the Syrian Defense Minister spoke about the military's plan to integrate biological weapons in its tactical and strategic arsenals.

However, the current and potential threats posed by regime at Damascus do not end with chemical and biological weapons. Both Syria's current research reactor, provided by China, and one light water reactor that Russia has reportedly agreed to provide Syria, are under the supervision and scrutiny of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

However, there are reports that Damascus has attempted to obtain assistance on further developing its nuclear infrastructure from Argentina and China. There are persistent rumors of a covert nuclear weapons program, along with reports of planes returning from Syria to Iraq in 2002, with foam-producing systems, which could be used for uranium enrichment.

These, combined with Syria's recent agreement with Russia concerning close cooperation on nuclear power, raise grave questions regarding the Syria regime's true objectives on the nuclear front.

The same linkage that former CIA Director Webster warned us about in 1989, regarding the role of foreign assistance in developing Syria's chemical weapons, applies to Syria's nuclear intentions today. Thus, it is imperative to keep in mind President Bush's statement in his January 29, 2002, State of the Union address. The President declared that the United States would work, "to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction."

In themselves, Syria's nefarious activities pose grave concerns for the U.S. and our allies. However, the magnitude of the threat increases dramatically when placed in the context of Syria's continued support for global terrorism and its relationship with other pariah states.

Public U.S. and foreign sources assess that there has been a qualitative increase in Syria's role in arms supply to terrorist groups such as Hezbollah. There are reports that Syria has recently begun supplying extended-range rockets from its own production to Hezbollah. We have also received information from public sources indicating that Syria is using Lebanon to hide weapons of mass destruction and to serve as a transshipment point for weapons to terrorist groups, given that the coalition victory in Iraq closed many of their usual transport routes.

There is also increased cooperation between Syria and other rogue regimes, such as Iran. Throughout the 1990s, the delivery of missiles and related cargo was done in coordination with the Iranian regime. On May 29, 2003, Syrian deputy prime minister and foreign minister described the bilateral relations between Syria and Iran as being in the best shape ever. He noted that coordination between Syria and Iran is based on long experience and joint interest.

Unfortunately, just as ties between Iran and Syria appeared to be strengthening, governments focused on appeasing these two terrorist regimes are also expanding their ties with Iran and Syria.

As I noted in the beginning of my statement, the scope and the nature of foreign investment in Syria almost directly mirrors the

pattern established with Iran. Perhaps even more disturbing, however, are the investments of U.S. companies in Syria. I am deeply concerned that American companies continue to sign multibillion dollar deals to invest in Syria's oil and gas sector. Worse yet, they are reportedly joining hundreds of other types of U.S. companies doing business in Syria.

We must work to deny Syria all resources and abilities to expand its weapons of mass destruction capabilities. The U.S. must use every tool at its disposal to confront this threat.

I believe that the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, which has accumulated over 250 cosponsors, is such a response. This act represents a long overdue effort to hold Syria accountable for its sponsorship of terrorism, its development of weapons of mass destruction, and its ongoing occupation of Lebanon by toughening economic and other sanctions against Syria.

On May 11, 2002, Secretary of State Powell warned the Syrian leader that he, "will find that he is on the wrong side of history," if he does not, among other priorities, move against terrorism and discourage the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

It appears to me that over the 2 decades, and particularly since the September 11th attacks, Syria's overall actions have not been those of a state that shares our commitment to nonproliferation and combating terrorism. It should be the end of the line for the Syrian regime.

And now I am pleased to yield to the Ranking Member of our Subcommittee, my good friend, Mr. Ackerman of New York.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for your leadership in this Congress in the area of international relations and for calling this very important hearing to examine the state of our bilateral relations with Syria.

This has been a momentous year for our relations with Damascus, and I believe we have come to a point where there can be no substitute for action.

I too want to welcome the Secretary. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration's policy regarding Syria is best characterized as a pattern of rift and drift. We awakened suddenly to a wide range of hostile Syrian policies. We threaten serious consequences. We conduct a round or two of intense diplomacy, and then we allow our attention to wander off.

This pattern describes perfectly the brief period of intense engagement with Syria followed by the end of major combat in Iraq. By now, it seems clear that the energy and insistence demonstrated during Secretary Powell's May visit to Damascus has dissipated to no effect whatsoever.

During combat operations in Iraq, there was credible evidence of arms and people moving from Syria into Iraq. Today, there is no question that Syria is directly responsible for providing safe passage and transit documentation to many of the terrorists now seeking to undermine our relief and reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

Syrian cooperation in battling al-Qaeda has also waned dramatically. According to Ambassador J. Cofer Black, the State Department's Counterterrorism Coordinator, and I quote him:

"We clearly don't have the full support of the Syrian Government on the al-Qaeda problem. They have allowed al-Qaeda

personnel to come in and virtually settle in Syria with their knowledge and support.”

Moreover, as it has for decades, Damascus is continuing its active opposition to U.S. efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through its ongoing aid and support for Hezbollah. Hezbollah, of course, is continually seeking to increase its presence in the West Bank and Gaza in order to facilitate and support, at ever greater levels, Palestinian terrorism against Israel.

Damascus is also recently reported to have, and again supplemented Hezbollah’s arsenal with weapons from Syria’s own depots, filling in for the Iranian weapons that can no longer transit through Iraqi airspace. There is no question that the recent escalation of tensions on Israel’s northern border could not have taken place without Syria’s approval.

On July 22nd, President Bush said, and I quote the President:

“Syria continues to harbor and assist terrorists. This behavior is completely unacceptable, and states that support terror will be held accountable.”

So said the President. To date, we have done nothing to hold them accountable, and subsequently there has been no positive change in Syria’s behavior nor has there been any indication at all that Damascus is prepared to change its offensive policies.

I fail to understand why there has been no action on the part of the Bush Administration. The Baathist regime in Damascus has made it indisputably clear that they will not be an ally in the war on terrorism and that they are, in fact, deeply committed to sponsoring, supporting, facilitating and underwriting international terrorism directed at the United States, at Israel, and at Iraq.

Syria continues to illegally occupy Lebanon and is an active threat to peace in the Middle East and vital U.S. security interests. Damascus has been given every opportunity for rapprochement, and it is now clear these chances were wasted on the al-Assad dictatorship. There is nothing left to say to a regime that repeatedly chooses to support terror.

As President Bush told Congress and the American people only days after September 11th, and again I quote the President:

“Every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists,”

said the President.

Syria is with the terrorists. They have made that perfectly clear. Now it is time for the Bush Administration to match its bold words with action.

By coincidence, both the United States and Syria are in between ambassadorial appointments. Both countries are currently represented by a charge d’affaires.

Today, I call upon the Bush Administration to maintain the status quo and to downgrade our diplomatic relations with Syria until Damascus breaks its ties with terrorism and demonstrates its readiness to behave as a civilized nation. Unless Syria changes its policies, no United States Ambassador should be sent to Damascus, and the President should refuse to accept the credentials of any proposed Syrian Ambassador to the United States.

Secretary Bolton, I have a letter to the President and to the Secretary of State, reiterating the points that I have just made, and I would ask you to carry these to the President and to the Secretary.

Again, I want to thank Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen for calling this very important hearing, and I look forward to hearing from you today, Under Secretary Bolton.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Ackerman.

I would like to now recognize Mr. Pitts for an opening statement.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

First of all, thank you for convening this hearing today to assess and examine Syria's weapons of mass destruction programs and state-sponsored terrorism. This is very important.

Over the last 30 years, Syria has developed chemical weapons and ballistic missiles, and has reportedly even conducted research and development on biological weapons. Syria has one of the largest ballistic missile inventories in the Middle East, comprised of several hundred short-range ballistic missiles and cruise missiles.

In a speech to the Heritage Foundation on May 6, 2002, our distinguished witness today grouped Syria with Libya and Cuba as "rogue states" that support international terrorism and are pursuing the development of mass destruction weapons. U.S. officials are rightly concerned that Syrian acquisition of additional weapons, including improved missiles, will cause further regional tensions, increase the potential threats to Israel, and undermine arms control efforts.

Additionally, since 1979, Syria has appeared regularly on a list of countries which the State Department identifies as "supportive of international terrorism." According to the State Department's most recent annual report on global terrorism, Syria has continued to provide support and safe haven for Palestinian groups that have committed terrorist acts.

The report states that Syria has continued to facilitate resupply of the militant Lebanese Shiite organization, Hezbollah. While Syria claims that such operations constitute legitimate resistance activity, as distinguished from terrorism, many people fail to see a distinction.

On May 3, 2003, Secretary Powell visited Damascus to discuss a range of issues with Syrian leaders, including President Bashar al-Assad. Since this meeting, Secretary Powell has expressed dissatisfaction with Syria's failure to take meaningful steps against terrorism.

At a press conference on June 20th, he said, "The Syrians took limited steps; those limited steps are totally inadequate." And, he went on to say that the United States will continue to press Syria on the issue of terrorism and make clear to them that until they move in a more positive direction, there will not be a better relationship with the United States. Ultimately, this will have a negative affect on their interests. He said that Syria can either be a contributing member to this process, that is, the peace process in the Middle East, or continue to be a terrorist-supporting regime that does not want to be a partner in peace, in which case, there will be consequences.

As the United States is closely working with the Israelis and the Palestinians to implement a roadmap to peace and bring about the peaceful coexistence of the two states, we cannot afford to have a sovereign state with weapons of mass destruction, inclined toward terrorism, perched on Israel's doorstep. If Syria does not take more concrete and verifiable steps to end its support of terrorism and abandon its weapons of mass destruction programs, then I am sure that there will be consequences.

I look forward to and welcome the testimony of Under Secretary Bolton and his views on how sanctions can be used as a tool to force the Syrian Government to make those changes.

Madam Chair, thank you again for convening this hearing today. I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Pitts.

And now I am so proud to recognize my colleague from New York, Mr. Engel, with whom I am so proud to be a cosponsor of the Syrian Accountability Act, to talk about one of those tools that we can use.

Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I want to thank you for holding this hearing. And I especially want to thank you for all of your hard work as the lead Republican sponsor of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act.

As we know and as our colleagues know, our bipartisan bill currently has 262 cosponsors in the House, and 71 sponsors in the Senate. It has the majorities of both parties in both bodies, and majorities in the House International Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

So it truly is a bipartisan bill, it is truly a consensus bill; and I believe very strongly that the best thing that this Congress can do in order to tell Syria that her conduct is unacceptable is to pass the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, have the President sign it, and give the Administration another tool that it can use to fight the war on terror, and give the Administration a tool that it can use to tell Syria that their behavior is not acceptable.

And President Bush did say, You are either with us or with the terrorists.

I am delighted that Under Secretary John Bolton is here. I want to personally thank him. I have been an admirer of his work for many, many years. I want to say for the record that his strong leadership and language in dealing with Syria in the past is very, very important. And I want to, Secretary Bolton, recall your excellent past efforts at removing Zionism as racism language at the United Nations. I think that should be stated.

You have long been a stalwart, a fighter for peace and justice in the Middle East and elsewhere. I look forward to hearing your testimony today.

Over the weekend an article in *Sunday's Times* of London reported that there were guerilla camps in Lebanon training terrorists entering Iraq to kill American forces.

I would like unanimous consent, Madam Chairwoman, to—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection.

Mr. ENGEL [continuing]. Enter this in the record, the article from *The London Times*.

And it is my understanding, Secretary Bolton, that in your testimony today you will confirm that Syria is permitting the entry of terrorists into Iraq from Syria. I have often said, and I say it again, that Syria's record on terrorism, in my estimation, is even worse than Iraq's. And Syria's strong and active opposition to our efforts in Iraq, and their support of terrorism should be enough, I believe, to pass the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act.

Syria also, as we said, is a major state sponsor of terror. Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and other organizations are headquartered in Damascus and also get active support from the government in Damascus.

And let's also mention again that Syria occupies a sovereign state, Lebanon. They are not a stabilizing force in Lebanon. Syrian troops may initially have gone into Lebanon ostensibly to be a stabilizing force, but right now they are an occupation force.

And I want to say for the record, in terms of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, we hear very, very often that the Palestinian people are entitled to a state. I want to state here loudly and clearly that the Lebanese people are entitled to a state, not a state that is a puppet state, not a state that is occupied and essentially run by Syria, but a free Lebanese state run by the Lebanese people.

The Lebanese people are a charter member of the United Nations, and Lebanon deserves its independence and its state, and it deserves to be freed from Syrian oppression and occupation.

Let's also say, and let's also take note of the fact that Syria has massive stocks of chemical weapons and the ballistic weapons to deliver them. They have weapons like sarin gas. They are developing an offensive biological weapons capability and hundreds of Scud missiles to deliver them. That is unacceptable; massive stocks of chemical weapons and ballistic weapons to deliver biological weapons is unacceptable.

Today, we are focusing on Syrian weapons of mass destruction. President Bush has rightfully characterized the greatest threats as emanating from terror-supporting regimes like Syria, which possesses weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Secretary, much of the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act is based in its findings on public CIA and State Department reports about Syrian support for terror, weapons of mass destruction, and ballistic missiles programs.

I want to state again that back in 1979, the U.S. State Department put forward a list of countries which support terror. Syria is a charter member of that list. Syria has been on that list for 24 years, since the inception of the list, from 1979 to the present day; and yet Syria is the only nation currently on that list with which we have normal and full diplomatic relations. I don't understand it. I don't think it makes sense. I think it is time to stop the charade.

During the war in Iraq, we know that weaponry passed through Syria into Iraq to challenge and kill U.S. forces. We know that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction, and had weapons of mass destruction. We are trying to find them. It would not surprise me if

those weapons of mass destruction, that we cannot find in Iraq, wound up and are today in Syria.

Secretary Powell in May went to Damascus, talked about the Syria Accountability Act, talked about using it, saying that Congress may force his hand; came back, spoke on Meet the Press and many other programs, and again talked about the Syria Accountability Act. It makes sense to me to have the Administration use this tool as a carrot-and-stick approach with Syria.

There was a lot of tough talk about Syria during the war, and Secretary Rumsfeld came to the Congress and briefed the Congress; Secretary Powell after the war, but lately we haven't heard it.

I think what Syria is getting from us is inconsistency and realizing that we are going to mouth off and talk, but we are not putting our force behind our rhetoric.

I believe a way we can do that again is to pass the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act. It is long stated that Syria has been against U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East, and has really been on the opposite side of virtually everything that we have tried to do to bring stability to that region.

So, Mr. Secretary, I look forward to your comments today to fill the gaps in the public reports of the CIA and State Department reports and to bring the Subcommittee up to date since these reports were released. And I look forward to working with the Administration to pass the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act.

And I yield back my time. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Engel. It is a pleasure working with you on that bill.

I would like to recognize Mr. Chabot of Ohio.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I would waive an opening statement so that we can get to the testimony.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. That is the reason I recognized you. But thank you, all of our Members, for being here today.

I would like to take this—I am sorry, Nick. I had not looked over there. Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Madam Chairwoman, Syria's open state sponsorship of terrorism and, if you will, destabilizing impact on the Mideast peace process and regime, I think, are quite clear.

Since 1979, Syria has been included in the State Department's list of countries that support terrorism. I think if we are going to be serious in winning the war on terrorism, it means the United States has got to be even more aggressive in challenging these countries with the economic benefits of sending their products to the United States.

I think Syria certainly—like countries such as Libya—needs special attention and, if you will, a situation where the United States gets very tough in insisting that they not be detrimental in terms of our winning the war on terrorism.

Since the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom, President Bashar al-Assad has been visited by Secretary Powell, but has—according to reports I read, has failed to heed advice on severing ties

with terrorism and helping the United States find key Saddam Hussein officials.

And in conclusion, Madam Chairwoman, I just think that the United States and the United Nations need to be very tough on countries like Syria. And I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Smith. I apologize for not seeing you earlier. I was busy trying to practice how to say the word "precursor" in my opening statement.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our witness this morning. Under Secretary John Bolton was sworn in as Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security on May 11, 2001. Prior to his appointment, Secretary Bolton was Senior Vice President of the American Enterprise Institute. Previously, Secretary Bolton served as Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs at the Department of State from 1989 to 1993; Assistant Attorney General at the Department of Justice from 1985 to 1989; Assistant Administrator for Program and Policy Coordination at the U.S. Agency for International Development from 1982 to 1983; and General Counsel for the U.S. Agency for International Development from 1981 to 1982.

We thank you so much for being here today. Mr. Bolton.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN R. BOLTON, UNDER SECRETARY OF ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. BOLTON. Thank you very much to the Chair and Members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to appear before you today. Since we have two sessions, one unclassified and open and one classified and closed, as you know, I have two separate statements, the unclassified statement and a written text that is classified, about twice as long.

With your permission, what I would like to do here is just give an abridged version of the unclassified testimony, and then I would be pleased to answer questions before—that may be possible before we go into closed session.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Correct. Without objection. Thank you.

Mr. BOLTON. Thank you.

Syria remains a security concern of the United States on two important counts, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. I will focus on the latter although the potential linkages are obvious.

Specifically, our coalition's operations in Iraq showed that this Administration and the international community take the link between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction most seriously. There is no graver threat to our country today than states that both sponsor terrorism and possess or aspire to possess weapons of mass destruction. Syria, which offers physical sanctuary and political protection to groups such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and whose terrorist operations have killed hundreds of innocent people, including Americans, falls into this category of states of potential dual threat.

While there is currently no information indicating that the Syrian Government has transferred WMD to terrorist organizations or would permit such groups to acquire them, Syria's ties to numerous terrorist groups underlie the reasons for our continued anxiety.

Without question, among rogue states, those most aggressively seeking to acquire and develop weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and which are therefore threats to our natural security, are Iran and North Korea, followed by Libya and Syria. It is also the case that these states are among those we identify as state sponsors of terrorism.

We aim not just to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, but also to roll back and ultimately eliminate such weapons from the arsenals of rogue states and ensure that the terrorist groups they sponsor do not acquire weapons of mass destruction. As President Bush has said repeatedly, we will stress peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the proliferation threat. However, in order to roll back proliferation and protect innocent American citizens, as well as our friends and allies, we must allow ourselves the option to use every tool in our nonproliferation toolbox.

Nonproliferation standards are all too often ignored and flagrantly violated by governments that view weapons of mass destruction as a means of enhancing their security and international influence. Many of these governments are resistant to conventional diplomatic dialogue. While we pursue the diplomatic track whenever possible, the United States and its allies must be willing to deploy more robust techniques, such as economic sanctions, as well as interdiction and seizure or other means.

The pursuit of WMD and ballistic missile defense delivery systems, especially by state sponsors of terrorism, must be neither cost free nor successful. Proliferators and, especially, states still deliberating whether to seek weapons of mass destruction must understand that they will pay a steep price for their efforts. In short, if the language of persuasion fails, these states must see and feel the logic of adverse consequences.

Moreover, adverse consequences must not only fall on the states aspiring to possess such weapons, but also on the states supplying them. In situations where we cannot convince a state to stop proliferant behavior, we must also have the option of interdicting shipments to ensure the technology does not fall into the wrong hands. These interdiction efforts are key to a comprehensive nonproliferation strategy.

Interdiction involves identifying an imminent shipment or transfer, and working to impede the shipment. As the President noted in his national strategy to combat weapons of mass destruction, we must enhance the capabilities of our military, intelligence, technical and law enforcement communities to prevent the movement of WMD materials, technology and expertise to hostile states and to terrorist organizations.

On May 31st, President Bush announced the Proliferation Security Initiative, a global multilateral arrangement to seize sensitive cargos that may be in transit to or from states and nonstate actors of proliferation concern. Since then, we have worked with 10 other countries to develop a set of principles that identify practical steps necessary to interdict shipments of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials at sea, in the air or on land.

The 11 countries met in Madrid in June and in Brisbane in July, and on September 4th, in Paris, we reached agreement and an-

nounced the statement of interdiction principles. This represents the shared political commitment of these countries to strengthen efforts to combat the proliferation threat. The United States welcomes support for the PSI principles from all states that share our concerns about proliferation and our resolve to take new and active measures to defeat this threat.

Proliferators are using increasingly sophisticated and aggressive measures to defeat export controls and obtain technologies for their WMD or missile programs. We need to enhance our ability to prevent them from making these acquisitions. There exists a widespread consensus that this menace, together with terrorism, constitutes the greatest challenge to international security generally and to our national security in particular.

Before I address the specifics of a series of WMD programs, let me first discuss press reports that Iraq covertly transferred weapons of mass destruction to Syria in an attempt to hide them from U.N. inspectors and coalition forces.

We have seen those reports, reviewed them carefully, and see them as cause for concern. Thus far, we have been unable to confirm that such transfers occurred. We are continuing with the full breadth of resources at our command to seek conclusive evidence that any such transfer has taken place. We have raised with the Syrians on numerous occasions, even before taking military action against Iraq, the seriousness with which we would view any transfer of Iraqi dual-use or military-related items into Syria.

We have seen Syria take a series of hostile actions toward coalition forces in Iraq. Syria allowed military equipment to flow into Iraq on the eve of and during the war. Syria permitted volunteers to pass into Iraq, to attack and kill our service members during the war, and is still doing so.

Syria continues to provide safe haven and political cover to Hezbollah in Lebanon, which has killed hundreds of Americans in the past. Statements from many of Syria's public officials during this time vilified the coalition's motives in seeking to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Indeed, the United States, portrayed as an enemy, is a consistent theme found in newspapers and public statements in Syria, as it is in other states in the region.

Although Damascus has increased its cooperation regarding Iraq since the fall of the Iraqi regime, its behavior during Operation Iraqi Freedom underscores the importance of taking seriously reports and information on Syria's WMD capabilities.

Now, on those capabilities. On the nuclear side, we are concerned about Syria's nuclear R&D program and continue to watch for any sign of nuclear weapons activity or foreign assistance that could facilitate a Syrian nuclear weapons capability. We are aware of Syrian efforts to acquire dual-use technologies that could be applied to a nuclear weapons program.

In addition, Russia and Syria have approved a draft program on cooperation on civil nuclear power. Broader access to Russian expertise could provide opportunities for Syria to expand its indigenous capabilities should it decide to pursue nuclear weapons.

Syrians have a Chinese-supplied "miniature" research reactor under IAEA safeguards at Dayr Al Hajar. Syria is a party to the Nonproliferation Treaty and has a standard safeguards agreement

with the IAEA, but, like Iran, has not yet signed or, to our knowledge, even begun negotiations on the IAEA Additional Protocol.

The Additional Protocol is an important tool that, if fully implemented, could strengthen the IAEA's investigative powers to verify compliance with NPT safeguards obligations and provides the IAEA with the ability to act quickly on any indicators of undeclared nuclear materials, facilities and activities. We believe the Additional Protocol should be a new minimal standard for countries to demonstrate their nonproliferation bona fides.

Since the 1970s, Syria has pursued what is now one of the most advanced Arab state chemical weapons capabilities. It has a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin that can be delivered by aircraft or ballistic missiles, and is engaged in the research and development of more toxic and persistent nerve agents such as VX.

Syria is fully committed to expanding and improving its CW program, which it believes serves as a deterrent to regional adversaries. Syria continues active chemical munitions testing, although it has not used chemical agents in any conflicts. Although Syria is more self-sufficient than most other Third World CW-capable states, foreign assistance has been a key element in the establishment and operation of Syria's chemical weapons program. In particular, Syria remains heavily dependent on foreign sources for key elements of its CW program, including precursor chemicals and key production equipment. As a result, Syria will need to continue foreign procurement activities, something the PSI is designed to counter, in order to continue its CW program. Syria is not a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We believe that Syria is continuing to develop an offensive biological weapons capability. Syria has signed, but not ratified, the Biological Weapons Convention. These "poor man's nuclear weapons" do not require a large production capability, and depending on the agent and dissemination method, can be extremely lethal.

I also discuss in the statement, Madam Chairwoman, the Syrian ballistic missile capability, which relies heavily on North Korean and Iranian entities' participation in the program; and also Syria's advanced conventional weapons capability, which depends on a number of critically important Russian-supplied systems.

Of course, I will have much more to say on all of these subjects during the closed hearing. And I look forward to a more specific and detailed discussion than we can have in an open hearing. As we all recognize, the importance of protecting and preserving vital intelligence sources and methods necessarily and properly restricts what we can say publicly.

Nonetheless, the conduct of national security requires that we take all available information into account, which I believe we will be able to do in a classified session.

When the world witnessed the destructive potential of terrorism on September 11th, we were reminded of the need to remain steadfast in recognizing emerging threats to our security. In Syria we see expanding WMD capabilities and continued state sponsorship of terrorism.

As the President said, we cannot allow the world's most dangerous weapons to fall into the hands of the world's most dan-

gerous regimes, and we will work tirelessly to ensure that this is not the case for Syria.

Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.
[The prepared statement of Mr. Bolton follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN R. BOLTON, UNDER SECRETARY OF ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Syria's weapons of mass destruction and missile development programs. I understand that we will have a brief open hearing now and a closed session later today.

Syria remains a security concern on two important counts: terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. I will focus on the latter, although the potential linkages are obvious. Specifically, our Coalition's operations in Iraq showed that this Administration and the international community take the link between terrorism and WMD most seriously. There is no graver threat to our country today than states that both sponsor terrorism and possess or aspire to possess weapons of mass destruction. Syria, which offers physical sanctuary and political protection to groups such as Hizballah, HAMAS, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and whose terrorist operations have killed hundreds of innocent people—including Americans—falls into this category of states of potential dual threat. While there is currently no information indicating that the Syrian Government has transferred WMD to terrorist organizations or would permit such groups to acquire them, Syria's ties to numerous terrorist groups underlie the reasons for our continued anxiety.

Without question, among rogue states, those most aggressively seeking to acquire or develop WMD and their means of delivery, and which are therefore threats to our national security, are Iran and North Korea, followed by Libya and Syria. It is also the case that these states are among those we identify as state sponsors of terrorism. We aim not just to prevent the spread of WMD, but also to "roll back" and ultimately eliminate such weapons from the arsenals of rogue states and ensure that the terrorist groups they sponsor do not acquire weapons of mass destruction. As President Bush has said repeatedly, we will stress peaceful and diplomatic solutions to the proliferation threat. However, in order to roll back proliferation and protect innocent American citizens, as well as our friends and allies, we must allow ourselves the option to use every tool in our nonproliferation toolbox.

Obviously, many of you share these concerns. Members of this committee have sponsored the Syria Accountability Act, which would impose restrictions on the export of U.S. goods to Syria, as well as other measures. However, we already possess a broad mandate to sanction countries like Syria for proliferation activities under Executive Order 12938. This Executive Order, promulgated in 1994, requires the imposition of sanctions against foreign countries that have used chemical or biological weapons in violation of international law or have developed, produced, stockpiled or otherwise acquired chemical or biological weapons in violation of international law. The Executive Order requires denial of foreign assistance; denial of credit or financial assistance from U.S. Government agencies; U.S. opposition to multilateral development bank assistance; denial of defense exports and national security-sensitive exports; restrictions on imports into the U.S.; and a termination of aircraft landing rights. Many of these same penalties are duplicated in the proposed Syria Accountability Act.

Additionally, Section 4 of E.O. 12938, as amended in 1998, authorizes penalties against entities that have "materially contributed or attempted to contribute materially to the efforts of any foreign country, project, or entity of proliferation concern to use, acquire, design, develop, produce, or stockpile weapons of mass destruction or missiles capable of delivering such weapons . . ." Penalties can include a ban on imports into the U.S. of goods, technology, or services produced by the sanctioned entity; a ban on U.S. procurement from these entities; and a ban on U.S. assistance. In addition, we have frequently augmented these penalties with a ban on defense exports to the entity in question.

The standard for acts triggering these measures under the Executive Order is very broad, and gives the decision-maker wide scope in punishing entities that choose to engage in proliferant behavior. Just in this year, we have imposed E.O. 12938 sanctions five times, including on the Chinese entity, North China Industries Corporation (NORINCO), and the Iranian entity, Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group. This Administration views sanctions as a useful tool for furthering our nonproliferation objectives and is determined to enforce existing sanctions laws to the fullest extent. [ar1] The existing sanctions laws and the Executive Order, when properly ap-

plied, give the Administration the authority and flexibility to use sanctions to deter proliferation activity by rogue states and serial proliferators. Since I began serving in my present position, I have insisted on using the mandatory sanctions laws in the manner Congress intended.

Nonproliferation standards are all too often ignored and flagrantly violated by governments that view WMD as a means of enhancing their security and international influence. Many of these governments are resistant to conventional diplomatic dialogue. While we pursue the diplomatic track whenever possible, the United States and its allies must be willing to deploy more robust techniques, such as economic sanctions, as well as interdiction and seizure, or other means. The pursuit of WMD and ballistic missile delivery systems, especially by state sponsors of terrorism, must be neither cost free nor successful. Proliferators—and especially states still deliberating whether to seek WMD—must understand that they will pay a steep price for their efforts. In short, if the language of persuasion fails, these states must see and feel the logic of adverse consequences. Moreover, adverse consequences must not only fall on the states aspiring to possess these weapons, but also on the states supplying them.

In situations where we cannot convince a state to stop proliferant behavior, we also have the option of interdicting shipments to ensure the technology does not fall in to the wrong hands. These interdiction efforts are key to a comprehensive nonproliferation strategy. Interdiction involves identifying an imminent shipment or transfer and working to impede the shipment. As the President noted in his National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, we must enhance the capabilities of our military, intelligence, technical, and law enforcement communities to prevent the movement of WMD materials, technology, and expertise to hostile states and terrorist organizations.

On May 31, President Bush announced the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a global multilateral arrangement to seize sensitive cargoes that may be in transit to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. Since then, we have been working with ten other countries—Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and the UK—to develop a set of “principles” that identify practical steps necessary to interdict shipments of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, and related materials at sea, in the air, or on land. The eleven countries met in Madrid in June, and in Brisbane in July. On September 4 in Paris, we reached agreement and announced a Statement of Interdiction Principles. This represents the shared political commitment of these countries to strengthen efforts to combat the proliferation threat. The United States welcomes support for the PSI Principles of all states that share our concerns about proliferation and our resolve to take new and active measures to defeat this threat. Proliferators are using increasingly sophisticated and aggressive measures to defeat export controls and obtain technologies for their WMD or missile programs; we need to enhance our ability to prevent them from making these acquisitions. There exists a wide-spread consensus that this menace, together with terrorism, constitutes the greatest challenge to international security generally and to our national security in particular.

It is important to stress that all interdiction activities conducted by PSI partners will be consistent with relevant national and international authorities. Importantly, substantial national and international authorities for interdiction already exist. In the event that a proliferator succeeds in circumventing export controls and a shipment of WMD or missile-related technology is discovered to be en route, PSI participants will explore how best to use the full range of counterproliferation tools—from diplomatic, to intelligence, to operational—to stop proliferation at sea, in the air, and on land. Properly planned and executed, interception of critical technologies while en route can prevent hostile states and non-state actors from acquiring these dangerous capabilities. At a minimum, interdiction can lengthen the time that proliferators will need to acquire new weapons capabilities, increase the cost, and demonstrate our resolve to combat proliferation.

The Paris meeting also continued work on the modalities for interdiction, in particular effective information sharing and operational capabilities for interdictions. Efforts to enhance our collective operational capabilities for action are essential. In support of this goal, PSI participants have agreed on a series of ten sea, air, and ground interdiction training exercises to occur into 2004. Australia just organized and executed one such exercise a few days ago in the Coral Sea, called “Pacific Protector,” that involved both military and law enforcement assets. Four PSI partners, including the United States, sent vessels to the exercise, and all PSI partners were involved in some capacity.

Our long-term objective with the Proliferation Security Initiative is to create a web of counterproliferation partnerships that will impede trade in WMD, delivery

systems, and related materials. To do so, we seek eventually to broaden participation in the PSI to include all like-minded countries that want to cooperate and can contribute actively to interdiction efforts. WMD and missile proliferation is a global problem that requires a global effort, and this initiative is not directed at any one country or region. It is global in scope. A robust interdiction effort requires cooperation with all like-minded countries—those who are leaders in nonproliferation as well as those who may have a direct relationship with proliferation activities. We want to ensure that countries make full use of their capabilities and authorities to interdict shipments. By working together, the combined sum of our efforts will be greater than the individual parts. I am encouraged by our progress on the PSI, and know that the PSI will be an important tool that we can use to counter the efforts of countries such as Syria that are often dependent on foreign suppliers in their quest to possess WMD.

Before I address the specifics of Syria's WMD programs, let me first discuss press reports that Iraq covertly transferred weapons of mass destruction to Syria in an attempt to hide them from UN inspectors and Coalition forces. We have seen these reports, reviewed them carefully, and see them as cause for concern. Thus far, we have been unable to confirm that such transfers occurred. We are continuing with the full breadth of resources at our command to seek conclusive evidence that any such transfer has taken place. We have raised with the Syrians on numerous occasions, even before military action against Iraq, the seriousness with which we would view any transfer of Iraqi dual-use or military related items into Syria.

We have seen Syria take a series of hostile actions toward Coalition forces in Iraq. Syria allowed military equipment to flow into Iraq on the eve of and during the war. Syria permitted volunteers to pass into Iraq to attack and kill our service members during the war, and is still doing so. Syria continues to provide safe haven and political cover to Hizballah in Lebanon, which has killed hundreds of Americans in the past. Statements from many of Syria's public officials during this time vilified the Coalition's motives in seeking to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Indeed, the United States portrayed as an enemy is a consistent theme found in newspapers and public statements in Syria as it is in other states in the region. Although Damascus has increased its cooperation regarding Iraq since the fall of the Iraqi regime, its behavior during Operation Iraqi Freedom underscores the importance of taking seriously reports and information on Syria's WMD capabilities.

Nuclear

As I informed Congress last fall, we are concerned about Syria's nuclear R&D program and continue to watch for any signs of nuclear weapons activity or foreign assistance that could facilitate a Syrian nuclear weapons capability. We are aware of Syrian efforts to acquire dual-use technologies—some, through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Technical Cooperation program—that could be applied to a nuclear weapons program. In addition, Russia and Syria have approved a draft program on cooperation on civil nuclear power. Broader access to Russian expertise could provide opportunities for Syria to expand its indigenous capabilities, should it decide to pursue nuclear weapons. The Syrians have a Chinese-supplied "miniature" research reactor under IAEA safeguards at Dayr Al Hajar.

Syria is a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and has a standard safeguards agreement with the IAEA but, like Iran, has not yet signed or, to our knowledge, even begun negotiations on the IAEA Additional Protocol. The Additional Protocol is an important tool that, if fully implemented, could strengthen the IAEA's investigative powers to verify compliance with NPT safeguards obligations and provides the IAEA with the ability to act quickly on any indicators of undeclared nuclear materials, facilities and activities. We believe the Additional Protocol should be a new minimal standard for countries to demonstrate their nonproliferation bona fides.

Chemical

Since the 1970s Syria has pursued what is now one of the most advanced Arab state chemical weapons (CW) capabilities. It has a stockpile of the nerve agent sarin that can be delivered by aircraft or ballistic missiles, and has engaged in the research and development of more toxic and persistent nerve agents such as VX.

Syria is fully committed to expanding and improving its CW program, which it believes serves as a deterrent to regional adversaries. Syria continues active chemical munitions testing, although it has not used chemical agents in any conflicts. Although Syria is more self-sufficient than most other third-world CW capable states, foreign assistance has been a key element in the establishment and operation of Syria's CW program. In particular, Syria remains heavily dependent on foreign sources for key elements of its chemical warfare program, including precursor chemicals and key production equipment. As a result Syria will need to continue for-

eign procurement activities—something the PSI is designed to counter—in order to continue its CW program. Syria is not a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Biological

We believe that Syria is continuing to develop an offensive biological weapons capability. Syria has signed, but not ratified, the Biological Weapons Convention. These “poor man’s nuclear weapons” do not require a large production capability, and depending on the agent and dissemination method, can be extremely lethal.

Missiles

Syria has a combined total of several hundred Scud and SS-21 SRBMs, and is believed to have chemical warheads available for a portion of its Scud missile force. Syria has also developed a longer-range missile—the Scud D—with assistance from North Korea. Syria’s missiles are mobile and can reach much of Israel from positions near their peacetime garrisons and portions of Iraq, Jordan, and Turkey from launch sites well within the country. Damascus is pursuing both solid- and liquid-propellant missile programs and relies extensively on foreign assistance in these endeavors. North Korean and Iranian entities have been most prominent in aiding Syria’s recent ballistic missile development. Syrian regional concerns may lead Damascus to seek a longer range ballistic missile capability such as North Korea’s No Dong MRBM.

Advanced Conventional Weapons

Damascus has sought to acquire Russian SA-10 and SA-11 air defense systems, MiG-29 and Su-27 fighters, and T-80 or T-90 main battle tanks, as well as upgrades for the aircraft, armored weapons, or air defense systems already in its inventory. But its inability to fund large purchases and its outstanding debt to Russia have curbed substantial upgrades and acquisitions.

Conclusion

Of course, I will have much more to say on all of these subjects during the closed hearing and I look forward to a more specific and detailed discussion than we can have in an open hearing. As we all recognize, the importance of protecting and preserving vital intelligence sources and methods necessarily and properly restricts what we can say publicly. Nonetheless, the conduct of national security requires that we take all available information into account, which I believe we will be able to do in a classified session.

When the world witnessed the destructive potential of terrorism on September 11, we were reminded of the need to remain steadfast in recognizing emerging threats to our security. In Syria we see expanding WMD capabilities and continued state sponsorship of terrorism. As the President has said, we cannot allow the world’s most dangerous weapons to fall into the hands of the world’s most dangerous regimes, and will work tirelessly to ensure this is not the case for Syria.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. Thank you so much, Secretary Bolton, again, for appearing before our Subcommittee.

Given Syria’s WMD capabilities and potential threat to U.S. interests in the region, do you believe that Syria’s so called “cooperation” with respect to certain terrorist groups is sufficient to shield them from punitive action by the U.S.?

Mr. BOLTON. Well, as you know, Secretary Powell has been engaged in some very intensive diplomacy with the Government of Syria, and several Members of the Subcommittee have mentioned that. He said, just as recently as yesterday, that “the Syrian leadership has not responded as forcefully and as thoroughly as I would have liked.” He refers to the fact that you are holding this hearing today on the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Restoration Sovereignty Act.

I think it is fair to say that the Secretary has very eloquently and forcefully explained to the Government of Syria what our view is on this range of concerns, from sponsorship of terrorism to cooperation with the former Iraqi regime, and the concern that I have expressed about the transfer of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

And he is engaged, even as we speak, in some very delicate balancing of a variety of factors, diplomatic and political.

So I think it is important that all of us who are concerned about stability in the region, the outcome of the Middle East peace process, the successful reconstitution of a representative Iraqi government, support the Secretary at this delicate time in his efforts, and give him the discretion that he needs to act, to what we hope will be to bring this to a successful diplomatic conclusion.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Syria relies heavily on foreign sources for its chemical and biological weapons program. Of the foreign entities subject to proliferation sanctions, which, if any, have been sanctioned for contributing to or assisting Syria's WMD program? Have any—Pakistani, North Korean, Chinese or Russian—entities been sanctioned for their assistance to the Syrian regime?

And, further, what steps are being undertaken to prevent such transfers of technology and material or assistance from being fulfilled?

Mr. BOLTON. Well, a number of entities from the countries you mentioned have been subject to sanction, and we are in a continuing process of reviewing transfers to Syria of components, production equipment, precursors for weapons of mass destruction and, indeed, under the applicable statutes, for certain kinds of conventional lethal military equipment.

This is something that we have been pressing both our European allies, and countries like Russia and China generally, on the export of materials to rogue states, to try and strengthen the national and multilateral export control regimes that almost all of these countries have, at least on a declaratory basis.

But I think we have also acknowledged that the multilateral export control regimes and the treaty regimes themselves are not sufficient, because we can still see international commerce in these commodities. And, as I think the prepared testimony lays out, Syria is a perfect example of a country that basically does not have the capacity to produce many of these elements necessary for a weapons of mass destruction program domestically. It has to rely on purchases from abroad and other kinds of assistance. And that is one reason why we have developed, under the President's leadership, the Proliferation Security Initiative; that where the export control regimes break down, consistent with our other national and international authority, we want the ability to cut those shipments off.

If you deny Syria and other would-be proliferants the components they need to construct weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, you can prevent them, or at least materially delay their achieving that status. And that is a very, very high priority for us.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

As an NPT signatory, does Syria have the full-scope IAEA safeguards implemented on its nuclear research center? And is Syria in compliance with its obligations under the NPT?

And how you would you interpret the statement by Syria's foreign minister in April of this year that Syria won't allow any in-

spections on its soil? Do you believe this to be an indication of its nuclear intentions?

Mr. BOLTON. Well, Syria does have a safeguards agreement. Whether it is in—we don't have any evidence at the moment whether it is in noncompliance. But this really underlines the importance of the full implementation of the Additional Protocol that I referred to, because as it is now—I think one of the lessons that we all learned in the aftermath of the first Persian Gulf War, was that the IAEA safeguards program, commendable as it was, was not strong enough to detect a determined effort to circumvent the agreement and produce nuclear weapons or have a nuclear weapons program done in a clandestine fashion.

And Syria's unwillingness to adopt and implement the Additional Protocol is extremely troubling, as in the case of Iran, which is also refusing so far to sign and implement that protocol.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much for testifying, Mr. Bolton.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, your testimony, written testimony, the unabridged, unclassified version, states that we must allow ourselves the option to use every tool in our nonproliferation toolbox. I am wondering exactly what you mean by that.

You cite Syria among the world's greatest threats to America's national security. Are we talking about regime change in Syria if they do not voluntarily rid themselves of whatever it is we are saying they have, or do, that threatens our national security?

Mr. BOLTON. Mr. Ackerman, as the President has made clear and as we are directed, our preference is to solve those problems by peaceful and diplomatic means. But the President has also been very clear that we are not taking any options off the table.

As I mentioned a moment ago, Secretary Powell is conducting very intensive efforts on this front. It is a delicate moment. He has spoken to the subject—yesterday—and I am sure you will understand, I don't really have anything to add to what he has to say on the subject.

But the level of attention that he and the President are directing to this problem is quite high. They understand the significance and the risk posed by the weapons of mass destruction and the role that Syria can play, positively or negatively, in the region.

And I think that is why I urge and hope that the Committee will continue to support the Secretary in these very critical times.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I think there is no question but that this Committee and the Congress supports the pursuit of every peaceful means of resolving any kind of conflict, especially one as serious as the one that exists in our bilateral relations with Syria. But the question remains, with the background of Iraq, what do we do, when?

In your oral testimony, the abridged version before the Committee, you stated that—let me back up.

In the full text, you state with great detail, at least 25 percent of your testimony is about, you know, you need no additional tools from the Congress to deal with Syria—this specifically in response

to the Congress' attempt, at least by many in the Congress, to put an additional arrow in your quiver.

And explain at least with the citing of Executive Order Number—Section 4 of Executive Order 12938, as amended in 1998—you cite that quite extensively, as to what we can do with States such as Syria. And then you list all of the penalties that can be imposed upon Syria. It is unclear to me if those penalties, under the executive order cited, indeed have been brought to bear; and if any of those sanctions in that specific executive order that you cite—and you list all of those things in your testimony—have actually been imposed on Syria.

Mr. BOLTON. Well, the executive order sections of the testimony are intended to show that even without the provisions of the Syria Accountability Act, we do have authorities, at least with respect to WMD issues, to impose sanctions.

When the Administration took office, we found that executive order had essentially lain fallow. And we have applied it vigorously, not specifically in the context of Syria, because other legislative enactments have been used.

Mr. ACKERMAN. But not in the case of Syria?

Mr. BOLTON. Not to my knowledge at this point. I can check on this.

Mr. ACKERMAN. If Syria poses among the greatest of threats, and you hear for the first time, and I understand from the story that is in the *New York Times* today that somebody leaked, giving all of your testimony, basically, and the summary of it—there seems to be somewhat of a squabble going on within the Administration. But it does cite that your testimony has been cleared and vetted by everybody at this point, including the Intelligence Community and the White House.

That being said, you say in your testimony that has been—if the *New York Times* article that was leaked is accurate, that the President and the White House indeed have signed off. You have now for the first time, this Administration, linked Syria with those countries in the “axis of evil”—absent, of course, Iraq, which we presume no longer poses an immediate threat to the security of the United States.

Having so linked Syria at this point in that group, and in your testimony, having in great detail listed the disastrous, devastating, horrible, horrendous things that Syria has done, including being responsible for the taking of U.S. lives, why do we continue at this point to have rhetoric, rather than see any kind of action whatsoever?

Response to the rhetoric has been made clear by the Foreign Minister of Syria, who said that we have the stupidest Administration in history. That is their response.

Do you expect them to revisit that—their viewpoint?

Mr. BOLTON. Well, that is certainly not an endearing comment, but I can tell you that Secretary Powell is very cognizant of all of the considerations that have been mentioned, and, as I say, in his judgment now the policy that he is pursuing is one that is still designed and hopefully will result in the outcome we want from Syria.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Has any of the discussions over the years with Syria to date resulted in any change in the perspective of Syria in their pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and all the things you charge in your testimony?

Mr. BOLTON. None that I am aware of, but I would expect additional dialogue.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Why would we expect additional dialogue to do something if we don't take the minimalist—

Mr. BOLTON. Because the circumstances in the Middle East have changed dramatically with the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, and that was the purpose of the Secretary's mission to Damascus, to tell the Syrian regime in unmistakable terms, which he did, what their choices were. And the question which I think you are asking, Mr. Ackerman, goes to the issue of when in the Secretary's judgment, the Administration's judgment, he has done all that he can and that there is no further response forthcoming. It is not, in his view, the moment we are at yet, and that is why I think it is important to allow him to play this out, until we—

Mr. ACKERMAN. My time has run, but just if I might, is there anything that the Secretary has heard—and if you can't tell us here, we have another session—anything he heard in his discussions with the Syrians that would indicate that we should be hopeful that there might be a change?

Mr. BOLTON. Well, I think we are still waiting for more, and I would like to discuss the specifics in the closed.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Yes. Thank you.

I would like to ask the Members to please stick to the clock for questions, and suggest to our Members that those questions that they cannot get to in the open hearing, that they be posed in the classified portion, because the Under Secretary must leave for Moscow immediately following his congressional appearance.

Mr. Smith—no. Mr. Pitts.

Thank you.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, could you confirm or deny public reports which cite that Syria has hired Russian experts to help cultivate biological material to be used for insulation of missile warheads?

Mr. BOLTON. I am not aware of information on that. I would be happy to discuss the BW program and Syria's external efforts to gain external assistance for it in the closed session, Congressman.

Mr. PITTS. Okay. Can you comment on the extent to which Syria might have used the pharmaceutical industry as a cover for purchases related to its CW program?

Mr. BOLTON. I am sorry, I think that is another one I would prefer to answer in the closed—

Mr. PITTS. All right. What about the impact of the Syrian-North Korean agreement on scientific/technological cooperation which could entail collaboration on ballistic missile technology and non-conventional arms? Do you believe that Syria is making a concerted effort to reach out to nations that the President has named as members of axis of evil?

Mr. BOLTON. The subject of North Korea's ballistic missile cooperation with states like Iran and Syria and others is of the

gravest concern for us because the North Koreans have had and continue to have a very active program to expand their ballistic missile capability, extend the range and accuracy of their missiles, and their work with other countries may provide them with—the countries involved with mutually reinforcing assistance.

For example, the North Koreans currently have a moratorium on launched testing of ballistic missiles from the Korean Peninsula, but if other countries with which they are engaged in technical cooperation themselves are conducting ballistic missile test launches or are sharing telemetry and other information, that is obviously something that could benefit the North Koreans despite the moratorium. So these linkages between Syrian and North Korea, Iran, are linkages which concern us very considerably, no question about it.

Mr. PITTS. And is there cooperation between Syria and Iran on the chemical front?

Mr. BOLTON. That is another one I think I would have to ask to answer in the closed session.

Mr. PITTS. Has any evidence surfaced that shows Syria has transferred conventional weapons or any types of weapons to its terrorist proxy, such as Hezbollah?

Mr. BOLTON. Congressman, as I said in the prepared statement, we don't have evidence of that. What we have is a record on the part of the Syrian Government of extensive support of many kinds of terrorist groups over the years and the sorts of WMD capabilities that I have described, and whenever you have both of those pieces of evidence in the hands of the same government, it has to be an element of concern.

Mr. PITTS. You are the point person at the Department of State on Russian assistance to certain states. Do you have any indication that the Russians would consider reducing or eliminating this aspect of their relationship with Syria?

Mr. BOLTON. Well, we have had extensive discussions with Russia during the Administration about that subject specifically and also about the broad subject of Russia becoming more closely integrated into Western security systems, and one of the things that President Bush has stressed to President Putin repeatedly, and I think will do so again at Camp David in just a few days, that part of drawing closer to Western security structures necessarily has to involve Russia accepting and implementing the same kinds of norms on nonproliferation that we and other Western countries have established. That is a very, very important element of the bilateral relationship with Russia and one that the President and all of us stress repeatedly.

Mr. PITTS. You said that there had been some sanctioning of entities that were working with Syria on WMD programs. How many entities are currently under review for proliferation sanctions?

Mr. BOLTON. Well, there are a number of entities, for example, Russian entities that are under sanctions for the supply of lethal military equipment, typically high-end conventional weapons. I would be happy to supply you with a complete list of that.

I might say, Congressman, that the decision on imposing sanctions, whether under the executive order or under the several authorizing statutes that Congress has passed, can be a very arduous

process with extensive interagency deliberations and competing concerns, sometimes operating on the basis of information that is less than complete, and it is something that really would be, I think, useful to review in a closed session. It is not a snap decision. We don't make decisions on sanctions in an offhand fashion, and, in fact, I think one of the issues about sanctions is there may be many cases where the evidence points in the direction of an improper arms transfer, but where, for a variety of reasons, different agencies decide that it is just not appropriate to impose sanctions. So it is a complex process, but one that I can assure you we have under continuing review, both as to the substance of the sanctions and how we can improve the decision-making process.

Mr. PITTS. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. And to close our hearing, I want to recognize Mr. Engel for his 5 minutes of questioning, and then I'll ask the Members to meet in the side room, and they will be escorted for the classified briefing. Thank you.

Mr. Engel.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, in your testimony you discussed several penalty sanctions and tools which the President has to use against Syria and other proliferating states. You also said that the Administration supports the use of these tools to hold accountable states, especially those supportive of terror. Our bill, the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act, merely expands the tools at the disposal of the President. Other than a ban on the sale of dual-use items, it contains sanctions not contained elsewhere in U.S. law or executive orders.

I also want to say that the high administration official in the Middle East has said to me privately that our bill would be useful in changing Syrian behavior. Although you have given no position on the bill, wouldn't you agree that the provision of additional tools for managing Syrian proliferation, occupation of Lebanon and terrorism would be helpful to U.S. policy?

Mr. BOLTON. Congressman, specifically on the bill, the Administration has not taken a position, and we have it under continuing review. As I have indicated to you personally, I am prepared to work with you and the other cosponsors to see what might be possible. I won't rehearse because I know you know the traditional Executive Branch view on these matters as well as I do. It is something that—it is one of the reasons that we have the executive order and the authorities that it provides. But where we are as of this moment is we do not have a position on the bill, but I am prepared to continue to carry on the discussions that we started and see what might be possible.

Mr. ENGEL. Well, I would like to carry on those discussions because, as you know, we discussed—there was tremendous support for the bill in Congress, bipartisan majorities in both the House and the Senate.

I agree with everything you have said in your testimony. I want to just highlight some of the things you said in your written testimony which you also mentioned today. You said, let me first discuss press reports that Iraq covertly transferred weapons of mass destruction to Syria in an attempt to hide them from U.N. inspec-

tors and coalition forces. We have seen these reports, reviewed them carefully, and see them as cause for concern. You have also said, we have seen Syria take a series of hostile acts toward coalition forces in Iraq. Syria allowed military equipment to flow into Iraq on the eve of and during the war. Syria permitted volunteers to pass into Iraq to attack and kill our servicemembers during the war, and then you added: And is still doing so. I want to highlight that.

Syria continues to provide safe haven and political cover to Hezbollah in Lebanon, which has killed hundreds of Americans in the past.

Those were excellent statements, they are true, and I agree with them, but the frustration we have is here it is 24 years after Lebanon was on the list of the State Department's own list of countries that support terrorism, and we are still playing the same old game with Lebanon—with Syria, I am sorry. We talk tough, but then when the moment of truth comes, we back off, and then we talk tough again, and then when the moment of truth comes, we back off. So Syria thinks it never really needs to respond because it is the same old game we have been playing for 24 years. There is never any kind of consequences to their actions. So I think you can understand the frustration that we feel.

Mr. BOLTON. Now, I understand, and I don't purport to be here representing 24 years of American policy, but what I think is that Secretary Powell, who has been deeply involved on the precise points that you are raising and has made, back in May and subsequently—made it very clear how strongly we feel about all of these issues, is working this problem aggressively. I think it is interesting that when he was interviewed yesterday in Kuwait, he again made mention of the fact that the Committee would be considering your bill. I think that is a clear signal to the Syrians that there is a limit to our patience on this.

I would just simply say the Secretary would very much appreciate being given the support he needs while he carries this through. It is not something that he has undertaken lightly or that he is not acutely aware of the considerations you are raising, but we are at a delicate moment here, and it is his judgment that it is continuing to be worth pursuing on the diplomatic front. And I obviously concur with that, and I hope Members of the Committee will as well.

Mr. ENGEL. I want to just ask one last question about the occupation of Lebanon. I really believe that, for far too long we have acquiesced in the Syrian occupation of Lebanon. Without any justification, we have sometimes seen Syria as a force for stability there, and in my mind it is absolutely crazy. Syria has permitted Palestinian terror groups to run amuck in Lebanon and allow Hezbollah to menace northern Israel and further rather than reduce tensions in Lebanon. I believe it only plays off one faction against another, creating more strife.

The former Prime Minister of Lebanon, General Michel Aoun, rightfully, in my opinion, calls Syria, and I am quoting, "the arsonist and the fireman," because Syria puts out fires it starts to falsely appear responsive to American and Western concerns.

So I want to ask you in relation to that, is it U.S. policy that Syria must withdraw from Lebanon; and if not, when are we going to draw the line that Syria must end its occupation of Lebanon; and if so, under what grounds must they withdraw from Lebanon, the TAIIF Accord, the U.N. Security Council Resolution 520, the U.N. charter? And I mentioned before that it breaks my heart that Lebanon, a charter member of the U.N., is currently occupied and really has no sovereignty. So I would like to ask you that about the occupation.

Mr. BOLTON. Well, it certainly remains the Administration's position that Lebanon should have its full sovereignty restored and that all of those agreements have to be complied with. The subject of Syrian forces in Lebanon, the subject of Syrian support for terrorist groups with bases in Lebanon, all of those things were raised by Secretary Powell and were put very directly to the Syrian leadership, remain on the table, as I have said before.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, and now for our last round of questioning, Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Mr. Secretary, relative to your statement, which, of course, has been reported on the news a number of times, about Syria permitting volunteers to pass into Iraq to attack and kill our servicemembers, could you expand upon that and tell us any additional details that you could in this open environment?

Mr. BOLTON. Well, I am afraid there is really not much more I can say here in the open session. This is something, as you know, Secretary Rumsfeld and others have been quite concerned about because of the obvious risk to coalition forces and indeed to international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, private businesses operating in Iraq today, and it is a very high priority. It is one of the most important elements of Secretary Powell's presentation to the Syrians back in May.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Relative to Hezbollah and the Lebanese connection and support, I mean, there is no question that the stability and peace in the Middle East and specifically with respect to Israel and the Palestinians affects not only that region, but the whole world, and I think Syria's continued support of Hezbollah has been particularly unhelpful in that area.

Are there any positive things that can be said relative to Syria getting the message that they need to stop that support, or does it continue to occur as it has for years and years now?

Mr. BOLTON. Well, I think the response from Syria on a variety of fronts to what Secretary Powell has said has been disappointing, and there is no question about that, but he continues to pursue the possibility of getting additional Syrian action and as long as that possibility is there. As I say, it is not conducive to the continuing playing out of those efforts that we say anything more on a public basis about what the Syrians are up to, but the Secretary was unambiguous in his conversations with the Syrian leadership on this point.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. Thank you. I am going to save the rest of my questions for the closed session. Thank you.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. And in the typical New York way, he runs over his 5 minutes, and then he insists on having the last 5 minutes anyway.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Briefly, but continuing this ongoing discussion, there has been a lot of criticism and questioning about the level of intelligence, the quality of intelligence, and the massaging of intelligence vis-a-vis Iraq, and I believe everybody presently here at this panel has been supportive of the President and so voted.

How certain are we of the things that you have told us, without getting into it at this meeting, specific intelligence, that the reports are accurate, not exaggerated, the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, et cetera?

Mr. BOLTON. In Iraq or in Syria?

Mr. ACKERMAN. In Syria.

Mr. BOLTON. I can assure both with respect to the unclassified testimony which I have delivered and the prepared classified statement which has been delivered to the Committee that the judgments that are expressed there have been reviewed and commented on by everybody with a stake in the issue within the Executive Branch. And there are frequently difficult judgments that we have to make based on incomplete information, but what I have said, both in public session and what I will say in more detail in the private session, is that Syria's weapons of mass destruction program is something that there is very broad and deep agreement on in both the policy and intelligence communities of our government.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary and Madam Chair.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Bolton. We will go to our classified hearing, and the Subcommittee is now adjourned.

Mr. BOLTON. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:20 a.m., the Subcommittee proceeded in Closed Session.]

A P P E N D I X

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

[NOTE: The report submitted for the record entitled "The Syrian Threat: Syria, A United States Enemy With Impunity," a study by the Lebanese Information Center, September 2002, is not reprinted here but is available on the Worldwide Web at the time of this printing at: <http://www.lebanese-information-center.org>. It is also available in the records of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and the Pacific.]

