

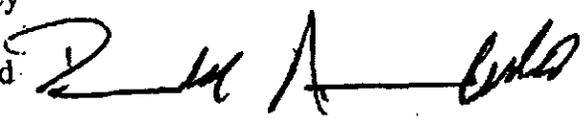
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October 5, 2006

TO: President George W. Bush

CC: Vice President Richard B. Cheney  
Stephen J. Hadley

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld 

SUBJECT: Declaratory Policy and the Nuclear Programs of North Korea and Iran

Increasingly, it appears that it is not only difficult, but possibly impossible, for the US to gain the international diplomatic support sufficient to impose the leverage on Iran and/or North Korea required to cause them to discontinue their nuclear programs. While one or both conceivably might stop, as did Libya, for example, it seems probable that neither will stop. Therefore, we need to face the reality that one or both likely will have nuclear weapons sometime before or in the next decade.

It is reasonable to assume that when one or both successfully develop nuclear weapons, they could transfer those technologies to terrorist organizations, just as Iran has so aggressively been supplying Hezbollah. Each of these countries is a supporter of terrorists. Each is a known proliferator of sensitive technologies related to lethal weapons.

Given the above, it is possible that, at some point in the years ahead, a terrorist or non-state entity with nuclear weapons could threaten and/or use those weapons against the US and/or US interests. Deterrence against a nation state with nuclear weapons is today reasonably well understood, in that a nation state has something at risk -- national leadership, population, an industrial base, etc. Conversely, the threat or use of WMD by a non-state entity leaves the nation at risk -- the US or a US interest -- with no high value targets to threaten with retaliation and therefore little deterrent leverage. Further, it must be noted that deterrence against a state led by a leader with a religiously-based millenarian ideology is, at the minimum, questionable.

Classified by: Donald H. Rumsfeld  
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### Declaratory Policy

Given this new circumstance, I believe it is appropriate to consider fashioning a new US declaratory policy. An illustrative example follows:

*It is the declared policy of the US that it will hold fully accountable any nation that supplies WMD support – e.g., expertise, technology, materials – to a non-state entity or a terrorist organization that uses them against the US and/or US interests. The US will determine the source of the weapons. The US will act appropriately to defend its interests.*

Possible advantages of such a declaratory policy include:

- It could have the effect of deterring an Iran or a North Korea from supplying weapons of mass destruction to non-state entities.
- It would widely publicize what increasingly appears to be the fact that North Korea and Iran are going to eventually have nuclear weapons, and thereby caution the world that it should either get used to that unpleasant reality, or start getting serious in their diplomacy to put leverage on North Korea and Iran to stop their nuclear programs and to stop dealing with terrorists.
- Next, it would warn the international community that, because of their lack of cohesion and their failure to put sufficient pressure on North Korea and Iran to discontinue their programs, they are, in effect, contributing to a world where there is a growing likelihood that nuclear weapons will be used against them or their interests, and, further, that the world nuclear threshold will be lowered because of the declared policy of retaliation against any nation that is the source of nuclear weapons used by a non-state entity or terrorist organization. In addition, there would be an increased need for pre-emptive actions – nuclear or conventional – by the US or others.
- In addition, as the prospects for North Korea and Iran gaining nuclear weapons become more apparent, as they will, it seems likely that other nations will make a decision that they can no longer afford to not develop their own nuclear weapons, thereby further increasing the likelihood of the spread of such weapons.

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- Further, a declaratory policy could increase the likelihood that populations in North Korea and Iran might increase their opposition to the development, use, or proliferation of such weapons.

Disadvantages of such a declaratory policy:

- In the event of a nuclear weapon being used against the US or its interests, the US would have little choice but to respond promptly or lose its credibility.
- Second, there is no guarantee that any declaratory policy would deter a leader or state that embraces martyrdom.

The world has been enormously fortunate that nuclear weapons have not been used in anger since 1945. I cannot think of another time in history where a major new weapon came on the scene, was used, and then not used for a period of 60+ years.

NOTE: It might be useful to refine these thoughts, and carefully study the pros and cons to see if something along this line might be not only refreshing in its truthfulness, but usefully disturbing to the international community, given the obvious current ineffectiveness of international diplomacy.

The international community should be forced to face the reality that either they pull up their socks and become cohesive and effective, or, by their lack of cohesion and their fecklessness, continue contributing to the certainty that North Korea and Iran will have nuclear weapons, that those weapons will eventually find their way into the hands of a terrorist non-state entity, and that thereby they are contributing to the likelihood that other nations will see the obvious and feel they must develop their own nuclear programs to survive – whether Japan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, Turkey, or others.

Respectfully,

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