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October 04, 2006

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld

SUBJECT: North Korea and Iran's Nuclear Programs

It increasingly appears that it is not only difficult, but possibly impossible to gain sufficient international diplomatic support sufficient to impose leverage on either country sufficient to stop their nuclear programs. It is not certain they will not stop, for example, as Libya stopped. However, it is increasingly clear that they are unlikely to stop. The result of that would be that one or both would have nuclear weapons in the period ahead.

Each of these countries is a supporter of terrorists. Each of these countries is a known proliferator of sensitive technologies related to weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, it is only reasonable to assume that were they able to successfully develop nuclear weapons, that they would could be expected to transfer such technologies to terrorist organizations just as Iran has been the principle supplier of Hezbollah.

That prospect suggests that at some point in the years ahead, a non-state entity with possession of nuclear weapons could threaten and/or use those weapons against the United States or our interests. At that point, the U.S. would be faced with a dilemma. The weapons being used by a non-state entity would leave the nation attacked - - the U.S. or one of our other nuclear allies -- with minimal deterrence and no good, clear targets because of the absence of good targets to retaliate against.

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