

**“Nuclear Terrorism: Assessing the Threat to the Homeland”**  
**Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee**  
**Chairman Joseph Lieberman**  
**April 2, 2008**

Good morning and welcome to our hearing today. This is the second in a series of hearings this Committee is holding to examine the threat of a nuclear terrorist attack on our homeland, and to ask what the federal government is doing to prevent such an attack, and how well prepared it is to respond to the catastrophic results of such an attack.

In this post 9-11 world, it is our duty as elected officials to think about the previously unimaginable, to ask the previously unthinkable questions, and then to push for unprecedented answers and preventative action.

Our first hearing in this series focused on the important role of the Defense Department, and specifically the National Guard and Reserves, in the event of a nuclear terror attack. My

conclusion from that hearing was that our government is not adequately prepared today to do everything that will need to be done if, God forbid, a nuclear attack on America ever occurs. .

This morning, in this public hearing - we will look at the threat of nuclear terrorism itself – that is, the reality and nature of the threat as defined by the intent and capability of terrorists to acquire nuclear materials and carry out an attack using nuclear weapons. This afternoon, our Committee will reconvene in a closed session to hear classified testimony on this subject.

Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups have made no secret of their desire to destroy us and our way of life. We're going to hear this morning that Al Qaeda has demonstrated a clear intent to develop and use nuclear weapons to achieve its violent jihadist goals. We know, for instance, that Al Qaeda has tried to recruit people with nuclear expertise and Al Qaeda has tried to obtain specialized nuclear materials.

This is daunting and jarring information, but it is our responsibility to bring it forth and do something about it. Our first panel consists of Charles Allen, Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis and the Chief Intelligence Officer at the Department of Homeland Security and Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, Director of the Office of Intelligence and Counter-intelligence for the Department of Energy. Mr. Allen and Mr. Mowatt-Larssen are two of the most respected intelligence experts in our government, and they will discuss their assessment of the current threat and its likely evolution in the coming years. Our country is fortunate to have public servants of your caliber serving us and focused on this issue.

Our purpose today is not to encourage unrealistic fear but rather to confront the fearful realities we face in the world today so that we can then deal with them in defense of our country and people and our way of life. Senator Collins?

## SECOND PANEL INTRO

Next, we will hear from Dr. Matthew Bunn, a Senior Research Associate for the Project on Managing the Atom at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University's School of Government. Dr. Bunn is the author of the “Securing the Bomb” series, a yearly treatise on the supply side of special nuclear materials. Joining Dr. Bunn is Gary Ackerman, Research Director for the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland. Mr. Ackerman is currently working on a project exploring the decision-making processes of terrorist organizations. Dr. Bunn and Mr. Ackerman will provide us with an in-depth view of the overall threat of nuclear terrorism and recommendations on how our nation can reduce this threat.