
PLOUGHSHARES FUND

President Obama Embraces 21st Century Nuclear Security Solutions to Keep America Safe

In last night's State of the Union address, President Obama recognized that the greatest threat to American security is nuclear weapons. As a response to this threat, the President articulated a 21st Century nuclear security strategy that begins with ratifying a new agreement with Russia to reduce our mutual nuclear stockpiles.

Now, even as we prosecute two wars, we're also confronting perhaps the greatest danger to the American people, the threat of nuclear weapons. I've embraced the vision of John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan through a strategy that reverses the spread of these weapons and seeks a world without them.

To reduce our stockpiles and launchers, while ensuring our deterrent, the United States and Russia are completing negotiations on the farthest-reaching arms control treaty in nearly two decades.

At April's Nuclear Security Summit, we will bring forty-four nations together behind a clear goal: securing all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in four years, so that they never fall into the hands of terrorists.

A Bipartisan Consensus

President Obama's priorities on nuclear security reflect the growing, bipartisan consensus on how to keep our country safe and how to prevent nuclear weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists. Last week in *The Wall Street Journal*, a bipartisan group of national security statesmen, George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn, **pledged their support** for "a global effort to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, to prevent their spread into potentially dangerous hands, and ultimately to end them as a threat to the world."

These statesmen represent a truly bipartisan consensus that knows we can't fight today's terrorist threat with Cold War strategies; we must safeguard our arsenal and reduce the number of warheads both at home and abroad to prevent these weapons from being used by those seeking to do us harm.

A Strategy for Today's Threats

What if the Christmas Day bomber had tried to smuggle in plutonium instead of conventional explosives? This is the scenario President Obama addressed last night. It is also the scenario that is at the root of a **new report** by a former CIA official, whose findings show that Al-Qaeda still considers acquiring a nuclear weapon to be a "top priority." Reducing the number of nuclear weapons, and employing inspectors to ensure those standards are met, decreases the likelihood that such a weapon could be used by

hostile states or terrorist organizations. We need to pursue a nuclear security strategy that focuses on the types of threats we face today.

A key step in keeping us secure is – as the President mentioned last night – for the United States and Russia to finish and ratify a follow-on to the Strategic Arms Reduction (START) Treaty. As Ronald Regan envisioned when he inspired the first treaty, with the Cold War over, we must prevent these weapons from being used by those seeking to do us harm by reducing our stockpiles.

And, as the President highlighted last night, another key step is “securing all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in four years, so that they never fall into the hands of terrorists.” April’s Nuclear Security Summit will bring forty-four nations together behind this goal.

Today’s security strategy must be one that allows our military to invest in the resources our troops need to fight today’s wars – not the Cold War – and that means nuclear reductions and preventing their proliferation. President Obama’s remarks in last night’s State of the Union are part of a comprehensive national security strategy to address this critical threat.