

**Statement for the Record by
John S. Pistole
Deputy Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation
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I. Introduction

Senator Graham, Senator Talent, distinguished Commission members, ladies and gentlemen; I am honored to be here today.

We are here to discuss one of the most dangerous and deadly threats we face: the threat of an attack by weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Few threats fall into the same class in terms of sheer devastation, damage, and loss. Few strike such fear in the hearts of the public. And few threats are so appealing to terrorists around the world, for the same reasons.

It has been said that not anticipating the type of attack we saw on September 11th 2001 was a “failure of imagination.” We cannot fail to imagine the consequences of a WMD attack. Nor can we fail to imagine that there are those for whom such an event is the end game.

Prevention must be our end game. I say that not because there is the certainty that we can prevent any attack, any place in the world, at any time. Prevention must be the end game because the alternative is simply not acceptable. That is why we are here.

Today, I would like to highlight the progress we in the FBI have made to keep weapons of mass destruction (WMD) out of the hands of terrorists and criminal organizations. I also want to touch on our collective efforts with our law enforcement and intelligence partners – here at home and around the world – to keep our citizens safe.

II. Assessment of the Threat

Al Qaeda has demonstrated a clear intent to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, Osama bin Laden has stated that it is Al Qaeda's duty to acquire weapons of mass destruction. In 1993, bin Laden attempted to buy uranium from a source in the Sudan. And he has made repeated recruiting pitches for experts in chemistry, physics, and explosives to join his terrorist movement.

Unfortunately, Al Qaeda central is not our only concern. We face threats from other terrorist cells around the world, and from homegrown terrorists who are not affiliated with Al Qaeda, but who are inspired by its message of hatred and violence.

For example, several rogue nations – and even individuals – seek to develop nuclear capabilities.

We have often said that the next terrorist attack is not a question of if, but when. If we up the ante to a WMD attack, we know it is a question of if, but we cannot let it become a question of when. Now is the time to act.

III. The FBI's Capabilities to Combat the Threat of WMD

The FBI serves as the lead agency for preventing and investigating all terrorist threats to the United States, including chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats.

Many of today's counterterrorism efforts began in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001. However, the FBI began to build a mechanism to counter the growing WMD threat well before the September 11th attacks. The chemical attack perpetrated by the Rajneesh Foundation in Oregon in 1984, and the Aum Shinrikyo sarin gas attack in a Tokyo

subway in 1995, made it clear that the FBI needed to develop a capacity to deal with WMD-related activities.

In 1995, the FBI stood up the first units within the Bureau focused solely on WMD. At the time, only specialized military units and fire department HAZMAT teams had CBRN training and capabilities. Rather than re-inventing the wheel, the FBI undertook a "best practices" review of the training, methods, backgrounds, expertise and equipment of military chemical and biological units, HAZMAT teams, industrial accident recovery experts and environmental response units, and relied upon the vast amount of expertise residing with existing agencies and organizations.

For example, we worked closely with the U.S. Army Technical Escort Unit – the lead unit for chemical and biological warfare. We also worked with the U.S Coast Guard Environmental Strike Teams, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency, and various experts and industrial leaders. We also began working directly with the Department of Energy and their network of national laboratories.

As the FBI built its capacity, we saw the need to provide a more comprehensive and consolidated response. Preventing WMD threats and incidents is a special challenge because WMD materials and incidents are unique in character, response requirements, and potential consequences.

To that end, in July 2006, we stood up the WMD Directorate within the National Security Branch. The WMD Directorate coordinates all FBI responses to WMD threats, including investigation of any incident, any necessary response by the Critical Incident Response Group, and any resulting forensic analysis by the FBI Laboratory. In essence, the WMD Directorate integrates and links all of the necessary counterterrorism, intelligence, scientific, and technological components to prevent and investigate any WMD threat or incident.

I would like to provide a snapshot of the FBI's WMD capabilities, from prevention to response.

The FBI leads more than 100 Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) across the country, as well as a National Joint Terrorism Task Force, to leverage the expertise of federal, state, and local law enforcement and intelligence agencies to detect, deter, and disrupt all terrorist threats, including, of course, any WMD threat. The JTTFs and the information they develop on the ground and receive from the FBI's worldwide network are a key trip-wire.

Intelligence is key to our prevention efforts. The FBI's Directorate of Intelligence has embedded intelligence analysts within the WMD Directorate to collect, analyze, and disseminate intelligence related to the WMD threat. Field Intelligence Groups in each of the FBI's 56 field offices assess the risks and vulnerabilities of the communities in which they live, to include the threat of a WMD attack.

Furthermore, we are committed to disseminating that intelligence to the larger law enforcement and intelligence communities. We have produced numerous classified and unclassified products for our intelligence community partners. FBI Intelligence analysts have participated in and made formal presentations in more than 20 conferences at the federal, state, local, academic, and private sector level.

For example, several analysts provided WMD threat briefings for the Australia, United States, Canada, and United Kingdom Quadrilateral Group conference. The FBI also hosted the International Symposium on Agricultural Terrorism in 2008 in support of the "farm to fork" program, which is designed to ensure the safety of our nation's food supplies. The symposium attracted more than 500 attendees from law enforcement, government, and private industry.

We have at least one Weapons of Mass Destruction Coordinator in each field office, to coordinate with federal, state, and local partners in their communities, and to properly respond to any threat or incident. They share intelligence and training with Special Agent Bomb Technicians in each office. They work shoulder to shoulder with local law enforcement bomb squads and hazardous materials teams.

Each WMD Coordinator has full access to the assets at the WMD Directorate and the FBI Laboratory, including our national response teams that will be sent to any mission that exceeds the capabilities of the field office

Should a WMD device be discovered, the FBI has built the capacity to respond to such an event through our Critical Incident Response Group. The Critical Incident Response Group (CIRG) maintains the capability to conduct “render safe” operations and operates aviation assets deployable on short notice and tactical assets to create safe environments in which technical experts may operate.

With regard to the FBI’s forensic capabilities, the FBI Laboratory has created an extensive network of state and federal laboratories to provide sample screening services for matters with a potential WMD nexus and “best in class” forensic laboratories for analysis of WMD materials. For example, the FBI has specially trained laboratory personnel called HEAT (Hazardous Evidence Analysis Team) Examiners who have access to these facilities and the appropriate equipment and training to process this evidence. The Laboratory Division also provides technical experts in the field of CBRN materials, as well as hazardous materials, to assist federal, state, and local counterparts with WMD threats and incidents.

IV. Our Collective Efforts to Prevent WMD Terrorism

I want to talk for a moment about our collective roles to combat a WMD attack.

To further enhance our joint efforts, both the New York and Los Angeles metropolitan areas have formally agreed to conduct joint bioterrorism investigations if and when necessary, to include public safety and public health agencies. These formal agreements detail information-sharing protocols and procedures for conducting joint threat assessments and interviews during any incident with a possible nexus to a bioterrorism event.

We are also working closely with our partners in the intelligence community, to include the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the vast network of national laboratories, and other key federal partners, to ensure a coordinated approach to any WMD threat.

In an effort to protect the United States from a WMD-related terrorist attack, the WMD Directorate is concentrating its efforts on sources of WMD materials already in the United States. For example, in May 2007, we held a two-day Regional FBI WMD and Chemical Outreach Workshop in an area containing a large number of chemical and petroleum facilities. A total of 224 industry, law enforcement, military, first responders, and FBI personnel attended this conference.

The WMD Directorate also supports the Global Initiative (GI) to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, a joint initiative between Russia and the United States to combat the threat of nuclear terrorism. As part of this effort, the FBI hosted an International Nuclear Terrorism Law Enforcement Conference in Miami, Florida, in June 2007. This conference was the first major event in support of the GI and was attended by more than 500 participants, including representatives from 28 nations and key U.S. Government agencies.

But we must not limit our collaborative efforts to our partners in law enforcement and intelligence. We must also work closely with academia and with our private industry partners, for they may be the first to note any unusual behavior. For example, we created the National

Security Higher Education Advisory Board in 2005, to identify and address the diverse threats faced by college campuses across the country. Presidents and chancellors from a wide variety of college campuses meet regularly to share their concerns and their collective expertise, from the theft of sensitive research to computer intrusions. And agents and analysts in each of our field offices are reaching out to key private sector partners in their own communities to share information about potential risks and vulnerabilities.

Training is vital to our cooperative efforts. We need to know how best to respond to a pending threat **before** a real need arises. To that end, we routinely train with federal, state, and local agencies and first responders.

The FBI's Hazardous Devices School provides bomb disposal training, using state-of-the-art equipment. In the past 36 years, we have trained more than 20-thousand first responders, and nearly 3,000 bomb technicians stand ready to respond if we are threatened with a nuclear terrorist attack.

The International Counterproliferation Program is a partnership of the FBI, the Department of Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and the Department of Homeland Security. Together, we are training our foreign partners in WMD detection, border security, undercover investigations, nuclear forensics, and crisis management. To date, we have trained more than 5,000 participants from more than 23 countries.

In addition, we have worked with several international partners, including Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Georgia, as part of integrated WMD exercises. Together, we have run hypothetical WMD threats from start to finish, to determine where our joint responses are solid, and where we need to improve.

By training together, we can better work together. In recent years, we have worked with many international law enforcement and intelligence partners on highly sensitive matters related to the trafficking and threatened use of WMD material.

In October 2005, for example, a radiation sensor at the Port of Colombo, in Sri Lanka, triggered an alarm for an outbound shipping container. The container was sent to sea before it could be examined.

Working with their Sri Lankan counterparts, personnel from the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Energy determined that the suspect container could be on one of six ships, three of which were bound for New York.

Officials around the world, from Italy to India, screened various containers on these ships as they moved from port to port. Scientists from Lawrence Livermore Nuclear Laboratory worked with FBI experts to analyze why the sensor may have been triggered, and whether any of the containers held weapons-grade nuclear material. FBI agents and analysts searched computer databases for criminal or terrorist ties to the ships in question.

We worked with our state and local counterparts in New York and New Jersey to put response plans into place. As three of the ships pulled into the Port of Newark, FBI personnel and officials from the United States Coast Guard, and Customs and Border Protection, screened and secured several containers. Although this investigation turned out to be nothing more than the disposal of scrap metal mixed with radioactive material, it illustrates the need for a quick and coordinated response.

In another example, in December 2006, our partners in the United Kingdom requested assistance in an investigation involving Polonium 210 (Po-210). The FBI's WMD Directorate sent a team of experts to London to meet with New Scotland Yard. Not only did we provide

valuable assistance to our British counterparts, we identified issues concerning our capabilities to handle a similar incident. When an associate of the London victim became ill with similar symptoms in Boston, Massachusetts, just months later, we were able to put those lessons to work on U.S. soil and quickly determine that his symptoms were unrelated to Polonium-210 poisoning.

The mere existence of these cases illustrates the size and the seriousness of the threats we face. These cases also illustrate the continued need for information sharing and collaboration.

IV. Conclusion

We all face the prospect that at some point in the near future, a terrorist will steal, smuggle, buy, or build a weapon of mass destruction. We must focus on **prevention**; we cannot afford to wait for a calling card to announce an attack.

The FBI is pursuing a layered response to counter the threat of weapons of mass destruction, from the training of the first responders, the WMD Coordinators and Special Agent Bomb Technicians in every FBI field office, to the regional teams and laboratories to the vital partnerships with local law enforcement. We are utilizing every existing technique, skill, and resource to prevent the use of a weapon on our own soil, and to make sure that we are in a position to respond immediately and with the right resources if it does.

Our greatest weapon is unity. That unity is built on intelligence and interagency cooperation. It is built on the idea that, together, we are smarter and stronger than we are standing alone.

No person, no FBI agent, no police officer, no agency, and no country can prevent a WMD attack on its own. There are too many unlocked doors and unknown players, too many

ports and porous borders. Yet together, we can stop those who seek to buy such material on the black market. We can halt the development of dangerous biological and chemical weapons. And we can stop terrorists from using this technology to threaten our citizens. We **can**, and we **must**.

Thank you for having me here today. I would be happy to take your questions.