Good morning. As some of you know, Senator Lugar and I recently traveled to Russia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan to witness firsthand both the progress we're making in securing the world's most dangerous weapons, as well as the serious challenges that lie ahead.

Now, few people understand these challenges better than the co-founder of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, Dick Lugar, and this is something that became particularly clear to me during one incident on the trip.

We were in Ukraine, visiting a pathogen laboratory in Kiev. This is a city of two and a half million, and in a non-descript building right in the middle of town stood this facility that once operated on the fringes of the Soviet biological weapons program.

We entered through no fences or discernible security, and once we did, we found ourselves in a building with open first-floor windows and padlocks that many of us would not use to secure our own luggage.

Our guide then brought us right up to what looked like a mini-refrigerator. Inside, staring right at us, were rows upon rows of test tubes. She picked them up, clanked them around, and we listened to the translator explain what she was saying. Some of the tubes, he said, were filled with anthrax. Others, the plague.

At this point I turned around and said "Hey, where's Lugar? Doesn't he want to see this?" I found him standing about fifteen feet away, all the way in the back of the room. He looked at me and said, "Been there, done that."

Of course, Dick has been there and he has done that, and thanks to the Cooperative Threat Reduction Programs he co-founded with Senator Sam Nunn, we've made amazing progress in finding, securing, and guarding some of the deadliest weapons that were left scattered throughout the former Soviet Union after the Cold War.

But this is one story that shows our job is far from finished at a time when demand for these weapons has never been greater.

Right now, rogue states and despotic regimes are looking to begin or accelerate their own nuclear programs. And as we speak, members of Al Qaeda and other terrorists organizations are aggressively pursuing weapons of mass destruction, which they would use without hesitation.

We've heard the horror stories - attempts by rogue states to recruit former Soviet weapons scientists; terrorists shopping for weapons grade materials on the black market. Some weapons experts believe that terrorists are likely to find enough fissile material to build a bomb in the next ten years - and we can imagine with horror what the world will be like if they succeed.

Today, experts tell us that we're in a race against time to prevent this scenario from unfolding. And that is why the nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons within the borders of the former Soviet Union represent the greatest threat to the security of the United States - a threat we need to think seriously and intelligently about in the months to come.

Fortunately, the success of Cooperative Threat Reduction - especially in securing nuclear weapons - serves as a model of how we can do this. And so the question we need to be asking ourselves today is, what is the future of this program? With the situation in Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Union so drastically different than it was in 1991, or even in 1996 or 2001, what must we do to effectively confront this threat in the days and years to come?

The answers to these questions will require sustained involvement by the Executive Branch, Congress, non-governmental organizations, and the international community. Everyone has a role to play, and everyone must accelerate this involvement.

For my part, I would suggest three important elements that should be included in such a discussion.

First, the Nunn-Lugar program should be more engaged in containing proliferation threats from Soviet-supplied, civilian research reactors throughout Russia and the Independent States.

The Department of Energy and others have certainly made progress in converting civilian reactors to low-enriched uranium, taking back spent fuel, and closing unnecessary facilities.

Yet, a serious threat still remains. Many of these aging research facilities have the largest, least secure quantities of highly enriched uranium in the world - the quickest way to a nuclear weapon. For a scientist or other employee to simply walk out of the lab with enough material to construct a weapon of mass destruction is far too easy, and the consequences would be far too devastating. Not to mention the environmental and public health and safety catastrophe that could come from a failure to store and transport these materials safely and securely.

In a way that balances the needs of science and security, more needs to be done to bring these materials - as well as other sources that can be used to construct improvised nuclear weapons and radiological devices -- under control and dramatically reduce the proliferation threat they pose.

In the years ahead, this should become an increasing priority for the Nunn-Lugar program, the Congress, and the Russians, who are already taking important steps to help implement these programs.

I want to turn to a second critical area: biological weapons threat reduction programs.

Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union was engaged in a massive undertaking in the field of germ warfare.

At its height in the late 1980's, this program stockpiled of some of the most dangerous agents known to man - plague, smallpox, and anthrax - to name just a few. As one book says, "disease by the ton was its industry."

Besides the devastation they can cause to a civilian population, biological agents can also be effective in asymmetrical warfare against U.S. troops. While they are often difficult to use, they are easy to transport, hard to detect, and, as we saw in Kiev, not always well secured.

Here in Washington, we saw what happened when just two letters filled with just a few grams of Anthrax were sent to the U.S. Senate. Five postal employees were killed and the Senate office buildings were closed for months.

This was two letters.

Fortunately, however, we've made some good progress on this front. For years, Nunn-Lugar programs have been effectively upgrading security at sites in six countries across the former Soviet Union. And the Kiev story is heading in the right direction - while we were in Ukraine, Dick, through his tireless and personal intervention, was able to achieve a breakthrough with that government, bringing that facility and others under the Cooperative Threat Reduction program.

But because of the size, secrecy, and scope of the Soviet biological weapons program, we are still dangerously behind in dealing with this proliferation threat. We need to be sure that Nunn-Lugar is increasingly focused on these very real non-proliferation and bioterrorism threats.

One of the most important steps is for Russia to permit the access and transparency necessary to deal with the threat.

Additional steps should also be taken to consolidate and secure dangerous pathogen collections, strengthen bio-reconnaissance networks to provide early warning of bio-attack and natural disease outbreaks, and have our experts work together to develop improved medical countermeasures. As the Avian Influenza outbreak demonstrates, even the zealous Russian border guard is helpless against the global sweep of biological threats.

My third recommendation - which I'll just touch briefly on and let Senator Lugar talk about in more detail - is that we need to start thinking creatively about some of the next-generation efforts on nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.

On our trip, we saw two areas where this is possible: elimination of heavy conventional weapons, and interdiction efforts to help stop the flow of dangerous materials across borders.

In Donetsk, I stood among piles of conventional weapons that were slowly being dismantled. While the government of Ukraine is making progress here, the limited funding they have means that at the current pace, it will take sixty years to dismantle these weapons. But we've all seen how it could take far less time for these weapons to leak out and travel around the world, fueling insurgencies and violent conflicts from Africa to Afghanistan. By destroying these inventories, this is one place we could be making more of a difference.

One final point. For any of these efforts that I've mentioned to work as we move forward, we must also think critically and strategically about Washington's relationship with Moscow.

Right now, there are forces within the former Soviet Union and elsewhere that want these non-proliferation programs to stop. Our detention for three hours in Perm is a testament to these forces. Additionally, in the last few years, we've seen some disturbing trends from Russia itself - the deterioration of democracy and the rule of law, the abuses that have taken place in Chechnya, Russian meddling in the former Soviet Union - that raise serious questions about our relationship.

But when we think about the threat that these weapons pose to our global security, we cannot allow the U.S.-Russian relationship to deteriorate to the point where Russia does not think it's in their best interest to help us finish the job we started. We must safeguard these dangerous weapons, material, and expertise. .

One way we could strengthen this relationship is by thinking about the Russians as more of a partner and less of a subordinate in the Cooperative Threat Reduction effort.

This does not mean that we should ease up one bit on issues affecting our national security. Outstanding career officials who run the Nunn-Lugar program -- people like Col. Jim Reid and Andy Weber who are here this morning -- will be there every step of the way to ensure that U.S. interests are protected.

Time and time again on the trip, I saw their skill and experience when negotiating with the Russians. I also saw their ability to ensure that shortcomings were addressed and programs were implemented correctly.

But thinking of the Russians more as partners does mean being more thoughtful, respectful, and consistent about what we say and what we do. It means that the Russians can and should do more to support these programs. And it means more sustained engagement, including more senior-level visits to Nunn-Lugar program sites.

It's important for senior officials to go and visit these sites, to check their progress and shortcomings; to see what's working and what's not. But lately we haven't seen many of these visits. We need to see more.

We also need to ensure that the Cooperative Threat Reduction umbrella agreement, due to expire in 2006, is renewed in a timely manner.

And we need to work together to obtain a bilateral agreement on biological threat reduction.

There is no doubt that there is a tough road ahead. It will be difficult. And it will be dangerous.

But, when I think about what is at stake I am reminded by a quote from the late President Kennedy given in a speech at American University in 1963 about threats posed by the Soviet Union. "Let us not be blind to our differences--but let us also direct attention to our common interests and to the means by which those differences can be resolved...For in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal.''

Much of what President Kennedy described in 1963 remains true to this day - and we owe it to ourselves and our children to get it right.

Thank you.