



Congress Approves Domenici-Feinstein Amendment Seeking
to Prevent Terrorists from Obtaining Nuclear Materials
October 11, 2004

Washington, DC – The U.S. Congress has approved a proposal by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Pete Domenici (R-NM) to help keep radioactive materials necessary to create nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists.

The measure was included in the Senate-House Department of Defense Authorization reauthorization conference report. It was approved by both the House and Senate on Saturday. It now goes to President Bush for his signature.

“There are hundreds of facilities around the world that store plutonium or highly enriched uranium, including 24 sites that the State Department has identified as high priority sites,” Senator Feinstein said. **“Yet, there is no single, integrated U.S. government program to facilitate the removal of these materials.”**

“This amendment would help secure these sites and ensure that terrorists cannot access them. It would give our government the direction and resources necessary to remove nuclear materials from vulnerable sites around the world in an expeditious manner.”

The measure, first approved by the Senate in May as an amendment to the Defense bill by Senators Feinstein and Domenici:

- Urges the President to establish a task force, in the Department of Energy, on nuclear materials removal;
- Provides a specific mandate for a program to remove the nuclear material from vulnerable sites around the world as quickly as possible, whether the nuclear material was supplied by the U.S. or the Soviet Union;
- Provides authorization for funding to begin these efforts; and
- Provides specific direction to provide flexible approaches tailored to each site to get them to give up their nuclear material.

The Bush Administration's current efforts to remove vulnerable international nuclear materials will take 10 to 20 years to complete -- at the rate of one facility per year.

“I am deeply concerned that the Bush Administration's efforts do not adequately address the seriousness of the issue,” Senator Feinstein said. **“We must do everything in our power to prevent terrorists from ever getting their hands on nuclear material and developing nuclear weapons. We have little time to spare.”**

A report released last year from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University described a scenario in which a 10-kiloton nuclear bomb is smuggled into Manhattan and detonated resulting in the loss of 500,000 people and causing \$1 trillion in direct economic damage.

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