

# WHEN REGIMES FALL: THE CHALLENGE OF SECURING LETHAL WEAPONS

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM,  
NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

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## WHEN REGIMES FALL: THE CHALLENGE OF SECURING LETHAL WEAPONS

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THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2012

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM,  
NONPROLIFERATION, AND TRADE,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 o'clock p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Edward R. Royce (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. ROYCE. This hearing will come to order. Today we examine the challenge of securing lethal weapons as regimes fall, and the cases of Libya and Syria are the primary focus here because they highlight this challenge. The Syrian regime could be imploding as we speak.

When we think about the weapons at their disposal, the chemical and biological weapons, you think back from what we know in our conversations with the Soviets, the former Soviet Union in the 1980s, they helped put together a very robust program from the Syrians. Iran, today, has been helping Syria with this respect, so they have long had an active chemical weapons program. We know they have mustard gas. We know they have sarin, VX, which is certainly the most lethal of nerve agents. So some of the most dangerous chemicals on the planet have been weaponized, most of it to put into artillery shells, and that is why in the proliferation community they call Syria a chemical weapons "superpower." And the question is, what is to be done?

For months, we have heard from the administration that these chemical weapons are secure. But yesterday there was a report that weapons were being moved to the field. And one U.S. official has said, to quote him, "this regime has a plan for ethnic cleansing." Now we don't know exactly what the intentions are with respect to the way they are moving these weapons, but one Syrian Ambassador who defected said that he was "convinced" that Assad would use these weapons against the population.

I think there are several possible scenarios here, but one is that Assad loses control over his chemical weapons, and the question is, if that happens, do they come into the hands of looters, do they come into the hands of opposition groups? Are there terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda that are searching for these weapons? Al-Qaeda's interest in obtaining chemical and biological weapons is pretty well documented. Others believe that Hezbollah could be on the hunt for chemical weapons that might fall into their hands.

Certainly, they would have the means of obtaining them. Iran also has an interest.

With the scope of Syria's chemical and biological program, Defense Secretary Panetta testified that the situation in Syria is "100 times worse" than the challenge of securing weapons in Libya. Some are concerned that the administration has been slow to the game here, and as we will hear today there are critical steps the United States could be taking.

Reaching out to elements of the Syrian Army that have control over the chemical weapons is one of these steps. Let them know they will be rewarded if they keep them under wraps. Let them know that they could be punished if they do not. And sending the same message, frankly, to the opposition. Working closely with regional allies on contingency plans, working with Turkey and Jordan and other countries in the region. Intelligence sharing, military training, so that they are in the lead, so they are able to take decisive action should Syria implode. Building up our intelligence gathering network inside Syria, making it clear to any future Syrian Government that recognition and support is going to depend upon these weapons being controlled and being destroyed, and being prepared to act decisively. One way to do that is to use surrogates. But if we know of these weapons falling into hostile hands there has to be a plan of action given their lethal nature.

Given the magnitude of this challenge, it is discouraging that one witness with firsthand experience in tackling these kinds of problems will testify that it isn't just the chaotic situation in Syria that presents a challenge, but in his view, our inefficient government bureaucracy. In his view, and I am going to quote him, "years of adding more and more offices, ranking positions and staff results in a slower and more cumbersome decision process" and it impacts effectiveness.

This subcommittee has spent a good amount of time focused on loose shoulder-fired missiles, which terrorists have used against commercial aircraft in the past. Earlier this year, the top U.S. official charged with tracking them in Libya was pretty blunt, and I will quote him: "How many of these shoulder-fired missiles are still missing? The frank answer is: We don't know and probably never will." Well, we know from our experience that they are likely in the thousands, and a point of this hearing is to learn from the Libya experience. After the Assad regime falls, let us not be hearing from the administration that we weren't very effective securing these weapons under what, admittedly, are difficult circumstances.

And I will now turn to the ranking member, Mr. Sherman of California, for his opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Royce follows:]

**Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade**  
*When Regimes Fall: The Challenge of Securing Lethal Weapons*  
 Opening Statement - Chairman Ed Royce  
 July 18, 2012

The Subcommittee today examines the challenge of securing lethal weapons as regimes fall. The cases of Libya and Syria highlight this challenge. Indeed, the Syrian regime is imploding as we speak.

Helped by the Soviet Union in the 1980s --and Iran today-- Syria has long had an active chemical weapons program. This includes mustard gas, sarin and VX, some of the most dangerous chemicals on the planet, much of it weaponized. Syria has been called a chemical weapons "superpower."

For months, Administration officials have told Congress that these chemical weapons are secure. But now there are reports that they are being moved. This week, a Syrian ambassador who defected said he was "convinced" Assad would use these weapons against the population.

Also possible is a scenario in which the Assad regime loses control over its chemical weapons, leaving them susceptible to looters, opposition groups, or terrorists. Al-Qaeda's interest in obtaining chemical and biological weapons is documented. Others believe that Iranian agents or Hezbollah could be in the hunt for Syria's chemical weapons.

With the scope of Syria's WMD program, Defense Secretary Panetta has testified that the situation in Syria is "100 times worse" than the challenge of securing weapons in Libya. Some are concerned that the Administration has been slow to the game. As we will hear today, there are critical steps the United States should be taking:

- Reaching out to elements of the Syrian army that have knowledge of or control over the chemical weapons – let them know they'll be rewarded if they keep them under wraps, or punished if not. And sending that same message to the opposition;
- Working closely with regional allies on contingency plans, intelligence sharing and military training so that they are in the lead;
- Building-up our intelligence-gathering network inside Syria;
- Making it clear to any future Syrian government that recognition and support will depend upon these weapons being controlled and destroyed; and
- Being prepared to act decisively if we know of these weapons falling into hostile hands.

Given the magnitude of this challenge, it is discouraging that one witness with firsthand experience tackling these issues will testify that it isn't just the chaotic situation in Syria that presents challenges, but our inefficient government bureaucracy too: "Years of adding more and more offices, ranking positions and staff...results in a slower and more cumbersome decision process..." and impacts effectiveness.

This Subcommittee has spent a good amount of time focused on loose shoulder-fired missiles, which terrorists have used against commercial aircraft. Earlier this year, the top U.S. official

charged with tracking them in Libya was blunt: “How many are still missing? The frank answer is: We don’t know, and probably never will.” Well, it’s likely in the thousands.

A point of this hearing is to learn from the Libya experience. After the Assad regime falls, let’s not be hearing from the Administration that we weren’t very effective securing these weapons, under what admittedly are difficult circumstances.

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Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I think you have summarized well why this hearing is so important.

As terrible as MANPADs are, as terrible as chemical weapons are, nuclear weapons are an entirely different order of magnitude—and so let me mention Iran. It is so critical that we are able to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons now, so when that regime falls we are not having a hearing not about what happens to Syria’s chemical weapons, but what happens to Iran’s nuclear weapons.

We all looked at the short Iranian Spring of June 2009, and we all pray for the day, Insha’Allah, when there are 1 million people in the streets of Tehran and this regime realizes it has to yield to democratic forces. But when that happens, will they have nuclear weapons? Instead of fearing that chemical weapons will be used against a Syrian population, will we be talking about the possibility of nuclear weapons being used against some city in Iran? Instead of chemical weapons perhaps falling in the wrong hands, will we be talking about how many nuclear weapons does Iran have and what is going to happen to them?

The solution is to act now over the next year to prevent Iran from having nuclear weapons, rather than to think that the low-risk approach is to sit back, do nothing or do only as much as won’t aggravate the business community, won’t aggravate our European and Asian friends. It may be bureaucratically low risk to advocate only sanctions within the realm of the conventional, but that may be low risk for an individual career. It is not low risk for this country.

As for Syria, we are of course alarmed that they are moving these weapons, and we are alarmed by where they might be used or who might get their hands on them. The Libyan MANPADs pose a risk to aviation around the world. Some have estimated that Qadhafi had 20,000. We have accounted for and recovered 5,000, and that is certainly a risk.

The State Department’s Nonproliferation and Disarmament Fund is a key tool in our emergency nonproliferation efforts, however, funds are limited, and the requested amount for the NDF for fiscal 2013 is only \$30 million. It was through the NDF that the U.S. led much of the effort to secure the MANPADs in Libya, or at least secure those that we have been able to secure. I would like our witnesses to comment on the effectiveness of this and other

governmental programs and particularly whether they are sufficient to deal with the Syria challenge and other challenges.

Also what should be our contingency plans for preventing Syria's weapons from falling into the hands of al-Qaeda-affiliated groups or Iran or Hezbollah? The worst possible outcome is that Assad uses these against his people, but perhaps just as dangerous he sells them to Hezbollah or Iran in return for weapons he is willing to use.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses. I yield back.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. We will go to Mr. Duncan from South Carolina, okay. And Mr. Connolly from Virginia?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I am glad we are having this hearing. And I want to welcome our panel. I particularly want to welcome Mr. Spector. He and I worked together as staffers on the Hill some time ago, and for some reason he has less gray hair than I do. I am not quite sure how that happened but welcome, Leonard, glad to have you here today.

According to recent news reports, Syria has begun moving some of its chemical weapon stockpiles out of its storage facilities. One article chillingly states the situation, Syria never signed the 1992 Chemical Weapons Convention and is believed to have among other things, mustard gas, a sarin nerve agent and even VX. The article goes on to say that analysts and officials believe Syria has ballistic missiles that can be fitted with chemical warheads, and tens of thousands of shoulder-fired missiles terrorists could use to target civilian aircraft. The Syrian Government denies that it is moving the weapons, though that government's affiliation with terrorist groups question credibility of such a claim. It is unclear what the movement of these weapons means. Last Thursday's Wall Street Journal cited the fact that some have said Assad is using the weapons in a high-stakes game of chicken. He may be moving them as feint, hoping the threat of a chemical attack could drive Sunnis thought to be sympathetic to the rebels, back to their homes or from their homes. That is a grisly strategy that shines a light on how depraved the regime really is.

So I look forward to hearing from this panel, Mr. Chairman, and the suggestions of our panelists in terms of what are the options available to the United States. And I thank the chair.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Connolly.

Let us introduce the distinguished panel of expert witnesses at this time. We have Ambassador Lincoln Bloomfield, Jr., chairman of the Henry L. Stimson Center. Ambassador Bloomfield served as Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs from '01 to '05. From '08 to '09, as special envoy he worked to reduce the threat from the proliferation of shoulder-fired missiles. Throughout a distinguished career dating back to '81, Ambassador Bloomfield has held positions in the Department of Defense, and State, and at the White House.

Dr. Steven Bucci is a senior research fellow for Defense and Homeland Security at the Heritage Foundation. In three decades of service, Dr. Bucci has served as an Army special forces officer and top Pentagon official. He has led deployments in Africa, South Asia, and the Persian Gulf. On September 11th, he was working

directly for the Secretary of Defense. He is a recognized expert on the interagency process.

And Sandy Spector is the deputy director of the Monterey Institute of International Studies James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies. He previously served as the Assistant Deputy Administrator for Arms Control and Nonproliferation at the National Nuclear Security Administration. He has written several articles on Syria's chemical weapons program over the last year.

All of the witness' complete written testimony will be entered into the record, and I will remind each of you that if you can keep your oral presentation to 5 minutes that is very much appreciated. We will start with Ambassador Bloomfield.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE LINCOLN P. BLOOMFIELD, JR., CHAIRMAN, HENRY L. STIMSON CENTER (FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL-MILITARY AFFAIRS)**

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members. It is an honor to be invited to testify before you.

As I looked at the agenda for today, one could have talked about whether we have the best information on Syria that would be the work of an analyst or a journalist. We could have talked about the technical aspects of their program, and my fellow panelists are probably far more expert than I. The way I looked at it is someone who has had the privilege of serving in five administrations doing all sorts of jobs, starting my career as the desk officer for Lebanon in the Pentagon at a time when they blew up our Embassy twice, they blew up the Marines, Hezbollah was formed, and Syria was behind a lot of the trouble. And so I have to tell you that in 30 years I have never taken my eye off Syrian politics. It has a certain quality to it that maintains your interest through thick and thin.

I have also had the opportunity as the chairman of Stimson to participate in a study which took seven scholars to Damascus, and the week before President Obama was inaugurated I had the opportunity to sit with President Assad and talk to him for over 2 hours, and probe in my own mind, how does he talk about Iran, how does he talk about religious issues, how does he talk about territorial issues with Israel, threat issues? Just to take his pulse and get a feel for that was quite interesting.

Mr. ROYCE. We would like to hear about that.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Well, obviously everything has changed. He was trying to say he was ready for peace and no holds barred. And Senator Kerry and Chairman Berman, at the time, went to Damascus and heard the same message. That has all changed. It is by the boards. It is over for the Assad regime. His presidency was an accident of history. His older brother was groomed to be the leader and he was killed in a car crash, and the eye doctor from London came back and was groomed for this position.

So I have always looked at Syria as somewhat of an oligarchy. You have to look at the money, who controls all the businesses, who controls the franchise, if you will, who controls the security. And that has been mapped out, I am sure. As I looked at this, the

question I asked myself was kind of a Monday morning quarterback question. I am not in the ring trying to solve this problem, I am on the outside. So I have great regard for everyone on the inside, let me start with that.

But the question is, what would you do if it were up to you to address this problem? And I can't get away from the quote that you cited, which was mine, and it is not political. It is Republicans. It is Democrats. It is Congress. It is the administration. But we used to have a much leaner national security bureaucracy where individual big thinkers drove the train. We have gotten away from that and we have taken very talented people and we have put them into such small silos that they are very territorial, they have very little budget—you just mentioned money, Mr. Sherman. And so I posed the question to myself, what would an all-star effort look like? And I have tried to lay that out in my prepared testimony.

It involves a lot of excellent offices inside the U.S. Government, probably none of which have ever been put into one operation and certainly not under the command of a civilian. And I have been privileged to talk to our senior leadership at DoD over the years, and they always talk about whole of government. Once the troops remove themselves from the field of battle the civilians need to move in, in a whole of government effort. We talk about that. I am not persuaded that we have moved very far toward being able to do "whole of government." And I would commend the Syria example as a great place to try and make it work. It would take a top-down push. It would take principal-level authority from the White House, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence, and some of the combatant commands to allow certain pieces of their resource pool to be put under a single, unified team effort.

And I ask this question: What would happen if there were an American school in Damascus and 50 young American children were abducted and spread out all over the country? I don't think anyone in Washington would stand in the way of an all-points dragnet where no one would care whose bureau is in the lead or whether it was State or Defense in charge. Everyone would get on the same communications net and try to find these children as fast as possible. My question is, how important are these chemical weapons? If it is that important, can we not simply look past all of the lines of authority and resources and pull them into a special task force to take on this problem?

Another point I would like to make and I will stop, is that there is no need to wait for the regime to fall. I would like to see the logistical aspects of this fused into the political strategy. To take Mr. Sherman's point, Iran may use nuclear weapons against Israel. That would be a nightmare. But even if they don't, it will be a way of enforcing what they are doing right now, today, which is exerting radical influence throughout the Levant. And that is what we should be mobilizing against. This is a strategic defeat in the making for Iran as well as Syria. I think we should have an all-star effort to try to make sure that it comes out that way. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bloomfield follows:]

Ambassador Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr.  
Chairman, Stimson Center

July 19, 2012 hearing on "When Regimes Fall: The Challenge of Securing Lethal Weapons"  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade

My thanks to the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade for inviting me to testify today, and to Chairman Royce in particular for his leadership and support over many years on the category of problems to be discussed today.

For a former US Government official, now in private life, to comment on operational challenges facing today's policy officials is a little like a retired athlete watching the action on the field from the comfort of the broadcaster's booth. It is a lot easier to talk about what others ought to be accomplishing than to have to do it one's self.

But the Subcommittee is right to be exercising its oversight function now, when planning for future contingencies in Syria is most timely and appropriate. The Congress is also right to invite outside perspectives, and I am honored to have been asked to offer mine.

I know and respect many of the senior policy officials who will lead US Government efforts to secure dangerous weapons as conditions permit in Syria. For the American people, the good news is that we have no shortage of highly capable and motivated people in the State Department and other agencies who could contribute to the task.

The bad news is that chaotic and potentially risky conditions in Syria will not be their only barrier to success. In my view, there are significant structural and cultural impediments inside the U.S. policy bureaucracy that must be overcome if this effort is to be maximally effective.

Issue One – Breaking Through the Structural Impediments within the Policy Bureaucracy

By impediments I am referring to multiple organizations with overlapping jurisdictions, each cooperating superficially with the others but in fact operating separately, with all competing for authority and resources. Over the years, the number of bureaus led by Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretaries of State has increased steadily, as has the number of higher-level Under Secretaries. The Secretary of State now even has two Deputy Secretaries. As a general matter, it is not at all clear to me that more decision-makers improves the speed or quality of decisions.

Consider the search for Libyan weapons after the fall of Qadhafi. Since Libya had previously given up its WMD program, the focus here was conventional weapons, principally MANPADS (shoulder-fired missiles). The lead task was assigned to the Political Military Affairs Bureau.

Syria, however, has WMD, notably chemical weapons. Thus, the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation will assert the lead role; it is unclear whether the Political Military Bureau will migrate any field capabilities from Libya into Syria, or simply stay out because they do not 'own' this issue. The recently-created Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations has as a primary mission today to influence the conflict in Syrian working through the refugee population across the border in Turkey. The Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration may have a role there as well in providing humanitarian support to displaced Syrian civilians.

With at least two of these four 'functional' bureaus expected to be directly active in Syria after the regime falls, one should remember that the primary bureau managing Syrian policy issues in the State Department is the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.

That makes five State Department bureaus, each with some claim of responsibility for addressing US interests as Syria undergoes a violent political upheaval, before we even address the essential support elements of intelligence and logistics to support field operations. Some of these bureaus may turn to private contractors to provide specific field services. Because such matters are handled as administrative and budgetary matters, a different set of specialists in the State Department, separate from the policy experts, will take the lead in the interest of assuring fair competition and transparency.

My advice – and I have no personal stakes in any contracting process – is that the policy experts play a direct role to ensure that before any contractors, and particularly foreign contractors, are selected, experts are convinced that these companies will fit best within, and be the most likely to contribute to, the overall US Government effort in Syria. Similarly, if the officials leading the effort decide they want the services of particular individuals outside of government such as former officials or well-connected Syria experts, the contract paperwork and basic security clearances should be sped through the bureaucracy in a few days, not months as is the norm.

Intelligence support is crucial. The State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research is very good; but among the sixteen other intelligence agencies, some could play a vital role in locating and securing loose weapons in Syria. Yet, coordination among disparate intelligence elements can be a challenge in a fast-moving operation, as I experienced when I was a US Envoy. If, for example, the Defense Intelligence Agency has the best assessment of the organizational structure of military and paramilitary entities in Syria and estimates of the quantities and locations of their weapons, DIA's experts should become an integral part of the operational effort. The Pentagon and intelligence community have offices focusing on foreign weaponry; ensuring that they too are fully coordinated with – and in any case not operating independently from – the post-regime operation in Syria is important.

As for logistics, the State Department has often turned to the US military for airlift and protection on the ground in less-than-permissive environments. Planners should know now whether the State Department has sufficient organic assets to provide mobility and protection, or failing that, ready access to military or contract assets. Communications is also a vital element in a fast-moving effort to secure weapons. Do any of these State Department bureaus have field communications assets? I have become familiar with the very impressive Communications branch of USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, which has deployable teams and communications gear at the ready, including some at prepositioned sites overseas. Yet, under our bureaucratic system, it is hard to imagine assigning an OFDA capability to support a weapons collection operation run by entities external to USAID.

U.S. Special Operations Command is another organization with highly-developed capabilities in planning rapid response operations; could SOCOM work directly as a partner in a State Department-led operation?

'Whole of Government' and the need for a civilian-led Task Force

If this problem were mine to manage, I would create the civilian equivalent of a military task force commander leading the entire effort, with delegated authority and control over the funding, logistical assets and people from all Departments and agencies. As logical, even obvious as this may seem, in today's bureaucracy a true 'whole of government' operation would have to overcome deeply entrenched resistance in many quarters.

Nor would a successful effort be limited to our government. Syria was previously part of the French mandate, and the French government has maintained a strong interest in Syrian affairs as have other governments such as Syria's neighbors Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and particularly Israel. Robust collaboration with these and other governments could only benefit the mission.

With high-level endorsement, a truly empowered U.S. weapons security effort might even consider soliciting Russian cooperation, as Moscow would have a strong incentive to work with the Americans to gain some leverage over potentially highly prejudicial media exposure, and to mitigate the risk of compromising sensitive weapons technologies it has provided to Syria.

Beyond the US interagency, contractors and foreign governments, there is also the significant advantage of working with non-governmental parties inside Syria, including journalists and NGOs. This community of people may provide the most ready access to opposition militia leaders who might be expected to secure regime weapons for their own use. A lesson learned from the Libya experience is that accessing information about the Syrian armed resistance and mapping out known information on these groups should be happening now.

If stringing together and leading as an integrated unit all of these State Department bureaus, Defense and intelligence agencies, contractors, foreign governments and non-governmental organizations and individuals seems overly ambitious, my response would be that it depends on the importance one attaches to securing Syria's conventional and unconventional weapons.

Imagine if there were an American school in Syria from which 50 young American children were abducted and thought to be dispersed throughout the country. No one in Washington would question the need to pull all possible assets together, share communications links widely and stand up a country-wide, real-time dragnet without any concern for bureaucratic turf or who might access the assigned radio frequency. The sole focus would be the race to find and secure the children.

Is the task of finding and securing Syrian WMD and its large store of sophisticated conventional weapons any less urgent? That is for the Administration and Congress to decide.

Is Weapons Collection a Custodial Task, or a Key Element of post-regime Policy?

All of the foregoing presumes that after the regime has fallen, one or more functional bureaus at the State Department will be called into action to begin the active search for Syrian weaponry. With the regime out of power, the focus can shift to spotting trucks, inspecting facilities and collecting hardware. This is not unlike what was done in Iraq in 2003.

Recall that the US in Iraq chose to disassociate itself from any military entity affiliated with the Ba'ath Party, including not just the elite forces surrounding Saddam Hussein's regime, but the regular Iraqi Army in its entirety. The strategic unwisdom of that approach has been much discussed, as all organized armed elements turned hostile to the U.S. stabilization effort. Is the plan for Syria any different?

If one were to draw lessons from the Iraq experience, the alternative approach would be to explore whether overtures could be made now, through any credible intermediaries, to leaders of Syrian army and intelligence units, pointing to modalities for defection and also identifying weapons and sites to be turned over to the US or other friendly governments. Their incentive to cooperate would clearly be the fear that these deadly weapons could otherwise fall into the hands of opposition elements bent on exacting large-scale revenge against regime strongholds and Alawite population centers. To pursue not just the Syrian weapons but rather the influential figures who now control or can later help locate them would be to integrate fully the functional mission of securing these Syrian weapons with the policy effort managing the political end game in Damascus.

Secretary Clinton has recently described Iran's role as helping to "stage-manage repression" in Syria. I want to see the U.S. at least try to 'stage-manage' an acceptable end-state to the Syria

crisis wherein the Assad regime relinquishes power, a political process is organized without a sectarian bloodletting, and Iran's influence in Syria is lost. But whether or not our leaders harbor strategic ambitions in Syria commensurate with those of our adversaries, they should at least aspire to success in locating and securing the regime's most deadly weaponry.

Can we conceive of a top-down mandate to overcome bureaucratic stovepipes and rapidly merge administrative authorities with logistical, intelligence and diplomatic assets into an agile, unified operation under a strong civilian 'commander'?

I would not ask this question if I did not think it possible; yet I conclude by warning that years of adding more and more offices, ranking positions and staff to our national security bureaucracy has meant slicing areas of responsibility into ever-narrower portfolios competing for influence and support. The result is a slower and more cumbersome decision process, weaker strategic consensus across the bureaucracy, and uncertain operational effectiveness in the civilian policy sector.

One day perhaps there will be a serious effort to streamline, revitalize and empower our national security sector end to end. For now, it would be a significant accomplishment to organize our Syria planning effort by combining the best of our interagency capabilities into a highly effective operational task force, led by a qualified civilian, in which logistical tasks support larger policy objectives. Syria is the right place to mount a true whole-of-government operation that will give the U.S. the strongest chance of securing our considerable interests in a country whose role will be central to the future security of the Middle East.

I thank the Subcommittee and look forward to responding to any questions.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Ambassador Bloomfield.  
Doctor?

**STATEMENT OF STEVEN P. BUCCI, PH.D., SENIOR RESEARCH  
FELLOW FOR DEFENSE AND HOMELAND SECURITY, THE  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

Mr. BUCCI. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to testify this afternoon. I would like to make three main points very quickly and then hit some recommendations on possible actions for the United States. The first point is that we need to keep in mind, Syria today is not Iraq in 2003, and it is not Libya in the last incursion. And I can go into details as to why I feel that way during a Q&A if you would like, but we cannot use those two events for too much analogous lessons because it will lead us down false paths.

The second point is probably more important. Today there are no good military options here. A full-scale effort to control all 50 sites, whether we do it before the regime falls or immediately afterwards has been pointed out it would take about 75,000 troops to do that. By anybody's definition that is an invasion. And I fear that if we try to do something like that we would get a negative response from both sides of this conflict if we came into that country.

The next option that has been bandied about is using air strikes to destroy all 50 sites. That is another false trail to go down. The amount of collateral damage of an operation like that would be astronomical. The strikes themselves would kill civilians, it would release agent into the air, and frankly, all it would do would be to basically unlock the gates to allow people to get into those facilities to loot them.

And the last option, which is the least bad, is to come up with some use of special operations forces to possibly go in and do a one-off operation should there be an imminent potential release of chemical weapons against the population or some knowledge of an immediate transfer of some of those weapons to people we don't want to have them. You could possibly use SOF there, but again that is a very dangerous and tricky thing. And remember, we are talking about stuff in these sites that are measured in tons not in, go in and come out with a couple of briefcases full of agent. SOF going in there is not going to get it all out and they can't stay there and protect themselves.

The last point is that to do any of these things we have got to utilize our friends in the region from the intelligence and the surveillance standpoint, and building a regime around Syria to try and monitor anything moving out, we have got to use all their neighbors. Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, everyone has to be involved in helping us with this. And then if we do take any action, we need to drop Israel out of that equation and really depend on some of our friendly Muslim countries in the area, predominantly Turkey and Jordan. Perhaps get some of the Gulf states who have some pretty good special operations forces, and perhaps get them involved as well.

If we take any actions at all, they should be the continued ramping up of all of our intelligence and surveillance, which I would hope the administration is already maxing out today, but we

need to make sure that is happening. We need to be prepared and have planned for one of those one-off events if something does break and we get intelligence of it that we could go in and try and use SOF to perhaps stop that from happening. We need to build that security paradigm today with the neighbors, making sure we are all on the same sheet of music and we have all come to an agreement as to what we are going to do with any WMD that falls into anybody's hands, which one would hope would be to turn it over to us for destruction.

We should warn the Assad regime today, and all of the members of the resistance that if they use any of this stuff there is going to be some retribution. Specifically and publicly we should warn them that anyone who comes into possession of any WMD and turns it over to al-Qaeda, Hezbollah or Iran that there would be a kinetic response to stop that from happening.

And then lastly, we do need to plan for some sort of big control event, using Muslim forces as I have mentioned, and perhaps, and this would be the most U.S. involvement directly, would be the use of U.S. special forces, perhaps Army Chemical Corps, Marine Corps CBIRF, or even some of the National Guard WMD Civil Support teams as potential advisors, so when we send forces in there they actually have some technical capability to deal with the things that are in those sites.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bucci follows:]



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*CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY*

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**Counter-Proliferation Contingency Planning Is  
Needed for Syrian WMD**

Testimony before  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade  
United States House of Representatives

July 19, 2012

**Steven P. Bucci, Ph.D.**  
Senior Research Fellow, Defense and Homeland Security.  
Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for  
Foreign Policy Studies  
The Heritage Foundation

My name is Dr. Steven P. Bucci. I am a Senior Research Fellow for Defense and Homeland Security in the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own, and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation. Prior to coming to The Heritage Foundation I served as an Army Special Forces officer for three decades and led deployments to eastern Africa, South Asia, and the Persian Gulf. I have participated in joint exercises with regional militaries in the geographic vicinity of Syria. I also oversaw operations dealing with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) while serving in the Army and at the DoD level.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee and address this vital subject. My responsibilities at The Heritage Foundation involve research and analysis for the foundation's public policy work concerning defense and homeland security. Since at least 1985, Heritage has put forward policy proposals for U.S.-Syrian relations and broader U.S.-Middle East policy. In my testimony today, I would like to address the need for counter-proliferation contingency planning in the U.S. to address the threat of WMD in Syria.

It is my view that the situation in Syria could collapse into chaos at any moment with many dangerous consequences for the surrounding region. A major concern is that chemical and biological weapons, or possibly even radioactive material from Syria's nuclear program, could fall into the hands of terrorists. The U.S. needs to be planning for the worst-case scenario. Washington must closely monitor the evolving situation in Syria and make contingency plans in cooperation with allies to prevent the proliferation of such dangerous weapons.

#### **Maintaining Situational Awareness**

Syria's Baathist dictatorship developed and stockpiled a lethal arsenal of chemical weapons including blister agents such as mustard gas and even more dangerous nerve agents (VX and Sarin), according to chemical weapons experts.<sup>1</sup> These chemical munitions can be delivered by artillery, rocket launchers, Scud ballistic missiles, and aircraft. Damascus also cooperated with North Korea (and probably Iran) to develop a covert nuclear program, which Israel partially destroyed in a 2007 air strike.<sup>2</sup> Radioactive materials from this program could become ingredients for a "dirty bomb" if they fall into the hands of terrorists.

While little is known about the status of Syria's nuclear facilities, U.S. officials believe that there are at least 50 chemical weapon production and storage facilities inside Syria.<sup>3</sup> In February of this year, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper testified before Congress that the Syrian regime has maintained security at these sites, many of which are located in rural areas away from the urban areas that have seen the bulk of the fighting. Pentagon officials reportedly

<sup>1</sup> "Experts Highlight Technical Challenge in Dealing With Syrian Chem Arsenal," NTI.org, June 21, 2012, <http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/syrian-chemical-munitions-are-serious-concern-experts/> (accessed July 13, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> "Background Briefing with Senior U.S. Officials on Syria's Covert Nuclear Reactor and North Korea's Involvement," April 24, 2008, <http://www.cfr.org/syria/background-briefing-senior-us-officials-syrias-covert-nuclear-reactor-north-koreas-involvement/p16105> (accessed July 13, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Bilal Y. Saab, Chen Kane, and Leonard Spector, "Assad's Toxic Assets," Foreign Policy.com, March 13, 2012, [http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/13/assads\\_toxic\\_assets](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/13/assads_toxic_assets) (accessed July 13, 2012).

assess that the regime has shown no sign that it is considering the use of chemical weapons, nor has it relaxed its guard over WMD assets, which are the crown jewels of the regime's arsenal.<sup>4</sup>

As the situation inside Syria deteriorates, however, there is a growing possibility that the regime could lose control over facilities as its chain of command breaks down and weapons or dangerous materials fall into the hands of defectors, looters, various rival opposition groups, or terrorists.

Those initially at risk would probably be local populations exposed to the haphazard handling of hazardous materials. The most significant danger for the U.S. and its allies is that these materials might be removed from the country and fashioned into improvised explosive devices in the United States, Israel, Afghanistan, or elsewhere. Many believe that would require a degree of organization and infrastructure normally found in a nation-state, but some non-state actors could also leverage these materials. Iran already has the means and capability to do this, using Revolutionary Guards from the Quds Force or Hezbollah, its Lebanese terrorist surrogate. Al-Qaeda, which has a front inside Syria, and an expressed interest in conducting these kinds of attacks, could seek materials in Syria as well.

This threat is not analogous to concerns during the run-up to the Iraq War. Then, the primary concern was that Saddam Hussein's regime would use weapons against another country or deliberately transfer them to a terrorist group. Further, it was suspected at the time that Iraq might have far greater WMD capabilities and means to employ them than Syria currently has. The Syrian threat is different, and the U.S. response needs to be calculated according to a different set of risks and U.S. interests. Here, the principal danger is that the regime might lose control of materials and that they could find their way to terrorists if the regime were to collapse.

The potential worst-case scenario is more like that which occurred in Libya, where the Qadhafi regime lost control of mustard gas supplies and huge stockpiles of modern weapons. While the mustard gas, stored in bulk containers, reportedly was secured, large numbers of arms, including Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS), were seized by many different groups. Some reportedly may have been smuggled out of the country and could pose a threat to civil aviation.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Military Intervention Would Be Costly and Difficult**

While similarities exist between the situation in Syria and what occurred in Libya, the conditions for an outside military intervention in Syria are far different. Syria would be a much more difficult military intervention because of the greater size and capabilities of the Syrian armed forces, which have remained relatively intact, unlike in Libya. Moreover, Syria's Assad regime has more foreign allies than the isolated Qadhafi regime. Damascus can rely on Moscow to block U.N. efforts and Iran and Hezbollah to help it resist a foreign intervention.

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<sup>4</sup> Claudette Roulo, "Little: Syrian Chemical Weapons Appear Secure," Armed Forces Press Service, July 13, 2012, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=117118> (accessed July 13, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Chutter, "5,000 Libya MANPADS Secured: Some May Have Been Smuggled Out," Defense News, April 12, 2012, <http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120412/DEFREG04/304120002/5-000-Libyan-MANPADS-Secured> (accessed July 13, 2012).

Such differences would make any military intervention in Syria a much riskier and potentially costly exercise. Pentagon officials reportedly estimate that it could require more than 75,000 ground troops to secure Syria's chemical warfare facilities.<sup>6</sup> It is clear that even such a limited intervention, much less a full-blown humanitarian intervention launched amid a civil war, would be an enormously difficult.

While the potential for hazardous materials being smuggled out of the country is a legitimate concern, the risks associated with deploying U.S. troops inside Syria currently are greater. There are however prudent measures that the U.S. can take to mitigate the risk that hazardous materials will "leak" out of the country without putting U.S. boots on the ground.

#### **A Prudent U.S. Policy**

Washington should privately warn the Assad regime not to use its chemical weapons and that such a move will trigger much greater U.S. support, possibly including arms, for the opposition. This declaration should be a private warning, possibly delivered through Syria's U.N. ambassador, in order to increase the chances that the Assad regime might take heed. A public warning could cause Syria to react provocatively as a show of strength against the U.S.

Washington separately should make it clear to all Syrian opposition groups that they will be held responsible for securing any chemical weapons, radioactive materials, or MANPADS that fall into their hands. They should know that they will be rewarded if they turn these over to the U.S. or allied governments and punished if they retain them or pass them on to terrorists.

The U.S., its allies, and the "Friends of Syria" contact group, an umbrella organization composed of over 100 nations dedicated to finding a solution to the violence in Syria, should establish an intelligence-sharing mechanism to monitor Syrian WMD sites and track the movement of loose weapons in an effort to intercept them before they can be transferred to terrorist groups. The United States is already using satellite intelligence and drones to monitor Syrian military activities and should build up its intelligence-gathering network inside Syria. Other countries may be able to contribute important human intelligence that the U.S. lacks. Every WMD storage site must be positively identified and its location certified.

It is especially important to coordinate counter-proliferation and counterterrorism efforts with Syria's neighbors to prevent terrorist groups or smugglers from moving dangerous weapons out of the country. Turkey, which has extensive ties with the Syrian opposition, can play a critical role. Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq could also make important contributions in detecting and intercepting weapons leaking out of Syria. Particular attention should be paid to preventing them from being transferred to Hezbollah and Iran or falling into the hands of al-Qaeda. Washington should also develop contingency plans with these countries and the Syrian opposition to prepare both to receive these weapons in the event they fall into their hands, and to respond to possible use or accidental detonation of chemical or radiological weapons. Positive intelligence is vital to this effort.

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<sup>6</sup> Barbara Starr, "Military: Thousands of Troops Needed to Secure Syrian Chemical Sites," CNN Security Clearance blog, February 22, 2012, <http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2012/02/22/military-thousands-of-troops-needed-to-secure-syrian-chemical-sites/> (accessed February 24, 2012).

**Rapid-Response Plans Needed**

Air strikes against chemical weapons facilities are not a wise idea. They could produce collateral damage through the attacks themselves or by releasing toxic plumes that would threaten nearby civilians. Such a strike would have an unpredictable result. Simply, bombing would be a desperate and dangerous means to attempt to prevent proliferation. If the U.S. receives actionable intelligence that terrorists have obtained or are about to obtain WMD materials, then a better plan would be to launch a targeted CIA or military operation, if practical. For example, the Pentagon should prepare to act on contingency plans for the rapid insertion of Special Operations Forces to secure, remove, or disable hazardous materials that might fall into terrorist hands. This could be costly in the lives of our most highly trained military assets, but it is the only sure way of eliminating such a threat. Given the potential costs, such a plan should be exercised very sparingly.

The U.S. government should also plan to help a Syrian successor government secure, destroy, and disable the Assad regime’s WMD stockpile and production facilities, along with loose conventional weapons such as MANPADS.

**Bottom line**

The key to minimizing this danger is prior coordination with all parties, implementing the best intelligence resources available, and a willingness to commit Special Forces to stop specific burgeoning threats from reaching fruition. The commitment of masses of U.S. ground forces (75,000) to secure all sites that might contain WMD is not a viable option. Beyond the modest specifics noted above, the only “big” option would have to involve soldiers from Muslim countries (Turkey, Jordan, maybe a few from Iraq) either on their own, or maybe (at most) with U.S. Special Forces, U.S. Army Chemical Corps, or National Guard Civil Support Team advisors.

Controlling this threat will require continued funding to both our intelligence and special operations capabilities. Decrementing these forces will have a direct and negative effect on U.S. ability to respond to the general or a pinpoint threat from the WMD in Syria.

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Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Dr. Bucci.  
Mr. Spector?

**STATEMENT OF MR. LEONARD S. SPECTOR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, JAMES MARTIN CENTER FOR NONPROLIFERATION STUDIES, MONTEREY INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Mr. SPECTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Ranking Minority Member Sherman. It is a pleasure to be here and to speak on these issues.

As I said in my written remarks, I think we need to look at different classes of weapons and try to have a differentiated policy, because there is a good deal of variation. We have to worry about light arms, heavy arms, weapons of particular interest to terrorists, ballistic missiles, and then chemical weapons. And I will just say a few words on a number of these.

I think the biological weapons situation seems to be very opaque. No one seems to know if they exist, so I will put those aside for the moment, but obviously they would be of great concern. And nuclear weapons and fissile material are not known to be present in Syria, but certain sites, however, are suspected of potentially contributing to this and they are still to be fully understood.

Our goals, I think, in my testimony, very much are similar to what we have heard about the importance of maintaining positive control, avoiding use and avoiding leakage out of the country. But I think one measure that should be implemented immediately, and I believe it was noted in the chairman's remarks as he introduced us, was a need to let the guardians, the custodians of these weapons, know that if they stand by the weapons, protect them or hold them close that that will be taken as good behavior. It will be recognized in some fashion, and that these forces do not need to worry about the fact that they were associated with these weapons, being held against them, provided of course there is no use and there is sort of holding in place. And in a sense, I think that is one model for trying to keep our hands around this, which is to use the experts that they have that may be prepared in this time of turmoil to sort of sit tight if they know they will be safe.

One concern I have had is that as the lines in the country shift, a certain of these chemical sites will fall behind the front lines, so to speak, and will be under the nominal control at least of the Free Syrian Army. I think in settings like this we have to worry about how the guardians will behave. Will they run off because they want to escape the Free Syrian Army? And again, it is very important to give them an understanding that they do not have that to fear.

Another point that I tried to make in the testimony was the importance of using the moment of recognition as a tool for trying to persuade the new Syrian Government to relinquish these weapons. This has happened in the past in Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, with some variation, where this leverage that the outside powers have has been used to sort of make a precondition. If you want these external support opportunities, you must renounce some of these weapons that are in such bad odor, so to speak, internationally. Qadhafi did this both for chemical and for nuclear weapons.

So I think we have some good examples of how this tool can be used. And therefore, I think the Syrian Government that replaces Assad must be pressed to take very similar conditions. It is going to be harder for them because these weapons have been part of some anti-Israel bulwark that Syria has portrayed itself as representing, but I think we have ways of trying to get our hands around this, in particular during the period of turmoil. Finding a way to get international monitors, perhaps, at some sites where the Free Syrian Army has some control, and starting a process in which there is sort of an international coloration placed on the chemical weapons so that the default is that the weapons are given up and the country signs the Chemical Weapons Convention.

One matter that hasn't come up here previously is the issue of the Scuds and the legacy of these missiles. There are a couple of hundred of them. They are very dangerous from the standpoint of Israel. They perhaps even represent a threat to Iran if we have a Sunni, anti-Iranian government in Syria. And I think we need to be looking for ways to diminish this capability. Again, we have had precedents in eastern Europe and with Libya. We were able to persuade countries, at the time that they were getting recognition and assistance as the governments were being formed, to renounce these weapons that are over a threshold in which we say they are capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction. It is also possible that these weapons may become targets for the Free Syrian Army as symbols of the regime or maybe targeted by others.

The nuclear legacy is also one we want to deal with. If some of these sites that are suspected of having nuclear activities, but where the IAEA is not permitted in, we may want to, and we really should, press the Free Syrian Army as they gain control of them to authorize at least informal inspections by Western specialists, if not also by the IAEA until a later time.

Finally, a few words about the resources. It is not only the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Fund which is potentially available, it is also the Cooperative Threat Reduction monies at the Defense Department which could be of extremely valuable use here for control purposes and also for training and sort of bringing the new government into sort of the, accept the norms that we all accept on the weapons of mass destruction issue. My understanding is the Defense Department is not able to use its CTR money in the Middle East at this time, but that they are seeking the certification to do so, which I believe would be a very urgent priority.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Spector follows:]



**James Martin Center for  
Nonproliferation Studies**  
Monterey Institute of International Studies  
*A Graduate School of Middlebury College*

**Minimizing Dangers Posed by Syria's Military Assets  
During and After  
The Current Civil Turmoil**

**Testimony  
of  
Leonard S. Spector  
Deputy Director  
James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies  
Monterey Institute of International Studies  
Before  
the  
Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
July 19, 2012**

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## **Minimizing Dangers Posed by Syria's Military Assets**

### **During and After**

### **The Current Civil Turmoil**

Leonard S. Spector<sup>1</sup>

Chairman Royce and Ranking Minority Member Sherman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee.

Minimizing the dangers posed by Syria's military assets is a challenge of considerable complexity. In thinking about this threat, we must start by appreciating a number of parameters.

#### **Classes of Military Assets**

First, we need to differentiate among at least five classes of assets:

- Small arms and light weapons (e.g., automatic rifles, light machine guns, mortars, and rocket propelled grenades)
- Heavy weapons (e.g., tanks, artillery, aircraft)
- Weapons of particular danger if acquired by terrorists (MANPADS, high explosives, land mines, unguided rockets)
- Ballistic missiles, and
- Chemical weapons

(Biological weapons may also be at issue, but little is known about Syria's possible program. Nuclear weapons and fissile material are not known to be present in Syria. Certain sites, however, are suspected of having equipment or facilities that could be relevant to their production.)

As I will discuss in a moment, each of these categories of weapons may require a distinctive approach.

#### **U.S. Goals Outside Syria and within the Country**

U.S. goals are a second parameter to bear in mind as we think about the future of Syria's military assets. What dangers, specifically, that arise from Syria's military holdings do we hope to minimize?

Outside Syria, I believe our core objective is to ensure that Syria's various assets do not find their way to parties, such as Hezbollah, anti-government insurgents in Iraq, the Taliban, or al-Qaeda; in any of these cases, the added military capabilities could create immediate new dangers for the United States or our allies. We also want to take steps to keep these assets from being used in local

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed are those of the witness. The James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies does not take institutional positions on matters of public policy.

conflicts outside Syria, such as those in Africa, even when we are not directly involved, a problem that developed in Chad, after Gaddafi's regime in Libya collapsed.

Within Syria, our goals are very diverse. It is not clear, for example, that during the current turmoil, we would like to see all classes of weapons remain under the control of the Assad regime. Presumably, we would be pleased to see the Free Syrian Army capture stocks of Assad's small arms and light weapons; indeed we are currently facilitating the provision of weapons in this category to these fighters. I assume we would also be pleased to see defections by large, heavily armed units of the Syrian military to the side of the insurgents, as well as defections of units responsible for Syria's arsenal of several hundred SCUD and other guided missiles. Such defections would erode Assad's claim to leadership and, in the case of heavy weapons, deprive him of at least some of the capabilities he has turned so viscously and indiscriminately against civilians.

Where easily portable weapons of particular interest to terrorists, are concerned, however, continued positive control by government forces is probably safest, since terrorist groups are known to be operating in the country in parallel with the Free Syrian Army. While the latter can probably maintain positive control over pieces of large, high-value equipment it acquires, such as howitzers, aircraft, and guided missiles, the Free Syrian Army might have greater difficulty maintaining effective custody of hundreds of easily pilfered and concealed items, like MANPADS and land mines.

As for Syria's chemical weapons here our most urgent goal is to ensure, for humanitarian reasons, that these weapons are not used in the current conflict. As the Obama Administration reiterated yesterday, Assad has been warned not to take this step, which would certainly lead to calls for military intervention against him that even Moscow would find hard to oppose.

Our second goal with respect to Syria's chemical weapons, of course, is to ensure that positive control over these weapons is maintained and that chemical agent and munitions are not transferred to others. Readily transported chemically-armed artillery shells would be the easiest to divert and could be used by Hezbollah or another group possessing standard artillery pieces of the type found in Syria's armory. Even limited numbers of chemical munitions transferred to Hezbollah could notably worsen the threat to Israel and reinforce deterrence against future Israeli retaliation for conventional rocket and missile attacks. As noted, Al Qaeda also operates in Syria. Terrorist detonation of even a handful of chemical munitions in a Western city could wreak havoc. Adding to concerns, the loss of control over the vast Syrian chemical arsenal could make it impossible to establish that none of it had passed into new hands.

The United States and its allies in the region are developing plans to address such contingencies, in particular, preventing the large-scale transfer of chemical arms out of Syria. Indeed the recent Eager Lion 12 exercise in Jordan, involving 19 nations and more than 12,000 participants, is said to have included this scenario among others.

#### **Time and Geography**

Timing is another key parameter to bear in mind as we develop strategies to reduce the risks from Syria's arsenals. Broadly speaking, we need to think in terms of three time frames: the current period of increasingly violent hostilities; the period of transition to a post-Assad government of one type or another; and the period after the authority of that government has been established within

Syria. As I will discuss in a moment, certain opportunities to reduce risks may arise in the two earlier phases that may dissipate once a new government takes control.

Geography is closely linked to timing. By this I mean that if current trends continue, increasing portions of Syria will come under the control of insurgent forces, as the period of transition nears. Already some reports are suggesting that Assad is focusing on maintaining control the country's major cities, while the Free Syrian forces are increasingly taking over in the countryside.

It is my understanding that CW storage facilities were deliberately built outside major population centers, probably to enhance secrecy and as a safety precaution. Production facilities are likely outside city centers. Thus it is possible that as the current phase of the conflict unfolds, such facilities may fall within insurgent-controlled territory. Although it has been reported that Syria has recently moved some of its chemical weapons, possibly to more secure locations, some chemical assets, such as large stocks of bulk agent may be difficult to relocate and may remain *in situ* and at risk of diversion. (Airfields, missile storage and production sites, and other fixed military assets could also fall behind the insurgents' lines.)

Under a number of scenarios, the expansion of insurgent controlled territory could lead to loss of control over portions of Syria's chemical arsenal by the elite troops entrusted to secure these assets. For example:

- Custodians could be pulled out of such locations and reassigned to the front lines of the unfolding civil war, much as Assad recently pulled troops from the Golan Heights area to protect Damascus.
- Custodians could desert their posts to return to and protect their families as domestic turmoil continues.
- Depending on the ebb and flow of battle, Assad could abandon chemical weapon sites and their custodians if it were not possible to maintain lines of supply and communication with them.
- Custodians could defect to the rebel cause, transferring control over chemical weapon stocks to the Free Syrian Army, which is noted for its confused lines of authority and whose plans to manage such materials are likely non-existent.
- Custodians, weakened by isolation, could be overrun by insurgent troops, if the Free Syria Army leaders sought to demonstrate, through capture of a site symbolizing Assad's military strength, that the Syrian leader was losing his grip on power.
- Or, in the unfolding chaos, bribery, bargaining for passage out of the country, or ideological commitment could lead guardians to offer up assets under their control to Hezbollah, al-Qaeda, or other non-state actors.

One measure that should be implemented immediately is to make clear that chemical weapon custodians who find themselves behind insurgent lines and who peacefully relinquish formal control over these stockpiles and then stay in place to protect them from misadventure, will be protected, and even rewarded, by the post-Assad government.

#### **Special Weapons Legacy**

We must also look ahead to the aftermath of the current conflict and think about what assets the post-Assad government will inherit and how these will be managed.

The transition period is likely to be particularly chaotic. Small arms and light weapons, for which there is a ready and lucrative international market, will likely be extensively pilfered. Given the scale of Syria's arsenal and the likely dispersion of its armories, this may be all but impossible to prevent. Heavy weapons (including aircraft), missiles, MANPADS, bulk explosives and land mines may be stored in fewer locations, more rigorously inventoried, and thus more easily controlled. Planning for international support to assist in this control mission is needed now, with due consideration to including Russian participation to avoid the appearance of Western intervention.

There are several weapon types that we would *not* want to see in the arsenal of the next Syrian government, however: Assad's existing chemical weapon production capabilities and stocks; his inventory of 300- and 500-kilometer-range Scud missiles and shorter range, but more accurate SS-21 missiles; and such remnants of his apparent nuclear weapon program as may exist. We should take steps now and during the fluid transition period to shape the future of these systems.

#### *Chemical legacy*

Syria's chemical weapons fall into a special category – the only weapons currently in Syria's possession considered innately abhorrent by the international community. Syria is one of a handful of states that have not joined the 1997 Chemical Weapon Convention, which prohibits parties from possessing these weapons and requires parties to destroy existing stocks. A key goal for the United States, which would be widely supported by other nations, would be to orchestrate Syria's commitment to eliminating its chemical arsenal and joining the Convention.

Washington and its friends in Europe and in the region will have powerful inducements. For governments coming to power through revolution, civil war, or secession, gaining international recognition and legitimacy are crucial, immediate goals, as are integration into the world economy and, depending on the circumstances, obtaining significant outside economic assistance. Renouncing weapons of mass destruction by terminating suspect activities, eliminating stocks, and subscribing to key nonproliferation treaties has repeatedly been made a requirement for such benefits. Argentina, Brazil, South Africa, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine all took these steps, focused on renunciations of nuclear weapons or nuclear-weapon programs, in the 1980s and 1990s.

Libya did so, as well, in 2003, following a sudden *volte-face* decision to seek accommodation with the international community following decades of rogue behavior. Indeed, Libya abandoned its nuclear weapon program and also joined the Chemical Weapon Convention, agreeing to destroy its sizeable chemical arsenal after placing it under the monitoring system of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). By the time the Libyan civil war erupted in February 2011, it had destroyed more than half of its stocks of chemical warfare agent. The new government in Tripoli has pledged to continue this process.

The Syrian government that replaces Assad must be pressed to take similar steps as a condition for recognition and sustained support. Unfortunately, unlike Libya and the other previous renouncing states, which faced no external antagonists when they abandoned their WMD, any government that takes power in Damascus can be expected to consider itself the heir to Syria's decades-long confrontation with Israel. In these circumstances, Syria's chemical arsenal may be seen both as an essential deterrent to counter Israel's nuclear capability and as a valuable bargaining chip, to be relinquished only in return for a significant concession from Israel, such as return of the Golan Heights.

To avoid such a relapse to the status quo, as the Free Syrian Army seizes territory where chemical facilities are situated (see map attached to this testimony) in coming weeks and, thereafter, as the Assad regime approaches collapse, with neither the regime nor the insurgents fully controlling the state apparatus, Washington and its allies must take steps to negotiate international monitoring and security arrangements for these sites. It may be best for us to do this with another country taking the lead, such as Turkey, the Netherlands (home of the OPCW), or Sweden. Access to sites would be negotiated with the Free Syrian Army for facilities within territory it controlled and, clandestinely, with site managers for facilities nominally remaining within Assad's chain of command. If successfully executed, conditions on the ground will establish the presumption that the arsenal must be eliminated before a new government can revert to Syria's traditional stance.

Because the moment will pass quickly, the United States must begin planning now to seize this opportunity. Otherwise, Syria's chemical armaments could continue to cast their shadow over the region for decades to come.

#### *Scuds and SS-21 Missile Legacy*

The United States and other Western states should also use the leverage of recognition and assistance to demand the elimination of Syria's WMD-capable missiles and associated production facilities. Washington followed this approach in gaining the elimination of Scud and more powerful missiles in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union, and Gaddafi also accepted destruction of his Scuds as part of his accommodation with the international community.

It is also possible that these systems will become targets for the Free Syrian Army or other insurgent elements now operating in Syria. Destruction of such potent symbols of Assad's power would deal his regime a grievous political blow. In addition, these systems and production capabilities could prove to be attractive targets for commando operations by a number of states in the region. Unlike attacks on chemical sites, attacks on missile sites would risk only limited off-site damage.

#### *Nuclear Legacy*

Here, the United States should also use its leverage and take advantage of shifts in territorial control and the flux of the transition period to resolve outstanding questions regarding Syria's apparent nuclear weapon program, whose centerpiece, a nearly operational North Korean-built reactor near al-Kibar, was destroyed by Israel in September 2007. Although Syria is a party to the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and is obligated to place all of its nuclear facilities under monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Assad government has refused to permit international inspectors to visit three sites suspected of being part of the Syrian nuclear program.<sup>2</sup> If the sites come under insurgent control, the Free Syrian Army should be pressed to authorize such inspections, perhaps starting with an informal visit by a team of international experts to these locations (akin to visits of this kind to Libyan WMD sites in 2003) to begin resolving these issues concerning their nature and purpose.

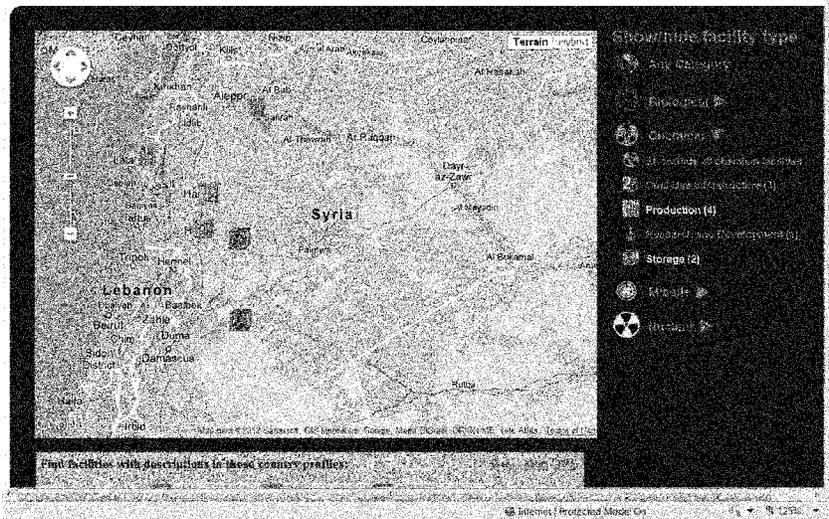
<sup>2</sup> According to press reports, the sites are located near Masyaf, the village of Marj as-Sultan near Damascus, and Iskandariyah. See, David Albright and Paul Brannan, "Satellite Image Shows Syrian Site Functionally Related to Al Kibar Reactor," Institute for Science and International Security, December 1, 2010, [http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/Syria\\_Masyaf\\_Report\\_1Dec2010\\_1.pdf](http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/Syria_Masyaf_Report_1Dec2010_1.pdf). A map from this analysis is attached at the end of this testimony.

**Resources and U.S. Programs**

In the past, funds from the State Department's Nonproliferation and Disarmament fund have been used to support extraordinary engagements of this kind aimed at reducing risks from weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related high-end terrorism threats. Preparing now for use of such funds in the case of Syria is most desirable, starting with any necessary authorizations in appropriate legislation. Considerably greater funds would also be available through Department of Defense Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, once it is certified to operate in the Middle East. Obtaining this certification, which I believe is now in process, should be an urgent priority.

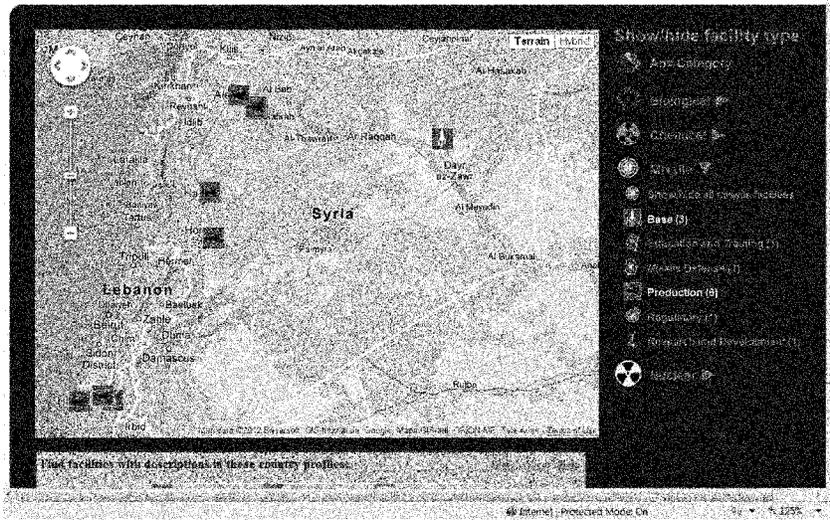
### Syrian Chemical Weapon Storage and Production Sites

Source: Nuclear Threat Initiative  
[http://www.nti.org/smap/?place=34.786738,2983.7&layers=chemical\\_storage,chemical\\_military\\_organizations,chemical\\_production,chemical\\_education\\_and\\_training,chemical\\_regulatory](http://www.nti.org/smap/?place=34.786738,2983.7&layers=chemical_storage,chemical_military_organizations,chemical_production,chemical_education_and_training,chemical_regulatory)



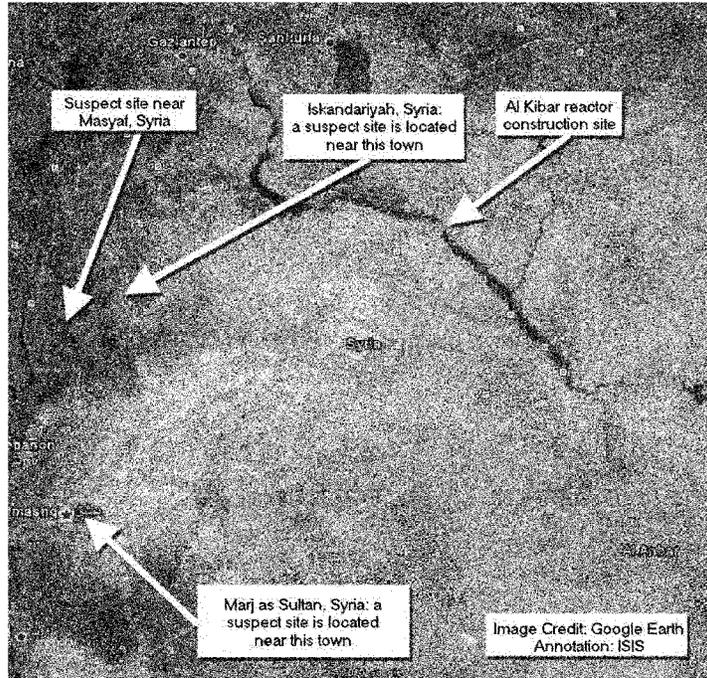
### Syrian Missile Bases and Production Sites

Source: Nuclear Threat Initiative  
[http://www.nti.org/gmap/?place=34.7867,38.2983,7&layers=missile\\_base,missile\\_production](http://www.nti.org/gmap/?place=34.7867,38.2983,7&layers=missile_base,missile_production)



### Syrian Suspected Nuclear Sites

Source: Institute for Science and International Security,  
[http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/Syria\\_Masyaf\\_Report\\_1Dec2010\\_1.pdf](http://isis-online.org/uploads/isis-reports/documents/Syria_Masyaf_Report_1Dec2010_1.pdf)



Mr. ROYCE. Thank you very much, Mr. Spector. Let me ask a couple of quick questions here, first to Dr. Bucci.

The United States has been reportedly, from what is in the papers, in discussions with Turkey and with Jordan, on contingency plans for loose chemical weaponry. Based upon your knowledge, having worked with both countries, what are their capabilities in this regard and what advantages do they bring?

Mr. BUCCI. Both have very mature militaries. Turkey, their military is huge, first of all. They definitely have the capability to provide the manpower to do things, and they are actually quite disciplined for a conscript-based army because they are fairly draconian with their methodologies. They could definitely provide the bulk of the forces to provide security around any of these sites. The problem there is again their Turkish vice Arab and that causes some friction. Now they are a Muslim country so that gives them certain advantages, but not as much as we sometimes think it would. The Jordanians better thought of as far as being fellow Arabs, and actually a very, very capable Army, particularly their special operations forces. Not near as big and neither of them have the kind of technological capabilities of dealing with these weapons systems because neither of them has a chemical capability. So from a technological standpoint they would have to be augmented by some technical experts as they do it, but as far as the military discipline, their positive association with us and experience working with us, they could handle this kind of thing very well. But again, if you do it in a nonpermissive environment it is going to get dicey very, very quickly.

Mr. ROYCE. I have got a quick question for you though, because some years ago when the PKK leader, Ocalan, was being held or being protected by Syria, I remember the Turks were very, very close to taking military action. And I would anticipate that because they have mobilized, because it was only at the last minute that the Syrians gave them up because they thought they would be attacked. And my presumption was that the Turkish military would have done some due diligence in terms of being prepared to deal with chemical weapons given the fact that they were prepared to go in.

Might that cause you to conclude that perhaps they have looked at this scenario and might be better prepared?

Mr. BUCCI. They clearly have a defensive capability. I mean they have American protective masks, for instance, so they have the very basic capability to operate in a chemical environment. So they are not totally neophytes in the area, but I don't really feel—

Mr. ROYCE. Then let me ask you another question. Last week 11 Russian warships that we saw that were dispatched to a Syrian port, whole battalions of Russian marines aboard.

I remember a trip I took once to Russia where we listened to the gentleman who was called the "Father of the Plague" explain about what they had developed in Russia but that some of their scientists were missing. And from what we know about Syria's chemical weapons program it seems that some of the advances came with Russian assistance, right?

Mr. BUCCI. Absolutely.

Mr. ROYCE. In the event of a security vacuum in Syria, could the Russians play a role with respect to these 50 sites?

Mr. BUCCI. They hopefully could. My guess is those marines are primarily there to protect that port base which is very, very important to the Russian navy. But my guess is there is also some elements in that force that is there to probably clean up some of the evidence, if you will, of the Russian collusion with the development of this program in the first place. One would hope that the Russians would be willing to cooperate with an international effort to keep these things from getting out of hand. But given the Russian intransigence in the U.N. as of this morning, I would not put too much faith in the Russians being very, very cooperative, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROYCE. Let me turn to Ambassador Bloomfield for my last question, which goes to the phenomenal amount of information that you see on the front pages of the newspapers these days which are in the form of leaks about our intelligence operations. And it is across the board, everything from the details of those who assisted in the capture of Osama bin Laden to the details of the attacks on Iran's computers.

You served in government in many different positions over the years. Are leaks more prevalent and more dangerous these days, as it seems to me, given the issues that we are talking about and given the things that we keep discovering on the front page?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Mr. Chairman, in my opinion they are. And it is a function of a cultural change, I would say. Because we had so many journalists embedded with our troops going into Iraq, there was naturally a far more granular amount of information that was clearly revealed about how we do our business. And you have journalists now who have suffered in the field. They have taken casualties as part of the effort to report on our interventions, and they enjoy the high trust of the intelligence community and the military. So I just think it is a natural evolution.

Does that mean I approve of all the leaks? I certainly don't. Somebody is making a judgment that they want it out there for some, perhaps, deterrence purposes or to advertise their skill and capability. Those judgments should all be made at very high levels. This isn't the first generation of government that has leaked, but it is on a higher and more sensitive scale in my opinion.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you. Let me turn to our ranking member, Mr. Sherman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

There is a tendency in all of these conflicts for us to think that because the bad guys are bad the opponents must be really, really good. And there are shades of gray. And because we assume that those trying to overthrow the bad regime must be very, very good, we don't bother to use our leverage to get some promises and enforceable promises up front.

Has any element for the Free Syrian Army or the various groups trying to overthrow the Assad regime stated publicly that they are committed to Syria signing the Chemical Weapons Convention and adhering to it?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Not to my knowledge.

Mr. SHERMAN. And yet we play the critical role for them while not asking them to even issue a press release. This is a repeat of our desire so much that they be successful that we ask them to do nothing that will help us. Assad has these chemical weapons, and I think he would use them if he thought they were helpful. Is there anything he can do with these weapons that he can't do with conventional shelling, conventional explosive devices dropped from airplanes?

He is moving them for some reason. One possibility, he plans to use them in a worst case scenario for him, whole areas of his country will be under the control of rebel forces, but is there anything he can do with these chemical weapons that he can't do with more conventional weapons?

Doctor?

Mr. BUCCI. Well, sir, primarily, I mean you are going to kill people. The chemical weapons would kill them far more efficiently, would kill them far faster and would cause a great deal of panic among both the opposition forces and the rest of the civilian population.

There has been some talk about the regime trying to carve out a rump Alawite state toward the coast, trying to get the Sunnis to move out of that area. Even the threat of something like this could cause people to start to move if that is their actual stated intentions. So there is a use for them, a very nefarious use, granted, beyond conventional weapons.

Mr. SHERMAN. And that is a use that couldn't be achieved just with strategic bombing capacities that the Syrian air force has?

Mr. BUCCI. You could do it with either one, but the fear factor that comes in when you begin using chemical weapons is astronomical and should not be discounted.

Mr. SHERMAN. Now Assad is moving his chemical weapons. Is he moving them to areas of the country that he feels he will always control, or there is a lot of discussion he is moving them, is he moving them to protect them and make sure they are not behind the lines of the rebels, or is he moving them consistent with future use?

Mr. BUCCI. At this point, sir, I don't know, and I am not sure if our intelligence community knows either. That is what they are trying to determine, what exactly is the purpose for this alleged movement? And to be honest with you, I am not even sure if the movement itself has been confirmed, let alone the intention.

Mr. SHERMAN. The intention is hard to determine, but we don't even know to which locations he has moved or even, I guess, it may be classified, but I haven't seen any reports indicating he moved them from here that is a predominantly Sunni area where he may lose control, or he moved them to here that is an Alawite area where he is confident he will retain control.

Ambassador, I see you nodding in agreement with our lack of knowledge.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. My only surmise, Mr. Sherman, is that he is trying to hang onto power and shoot his way out of trouble; it is a failed strategy and everything is in the context of survival. It could be a Plan B to take the offensive, but obviously it is something that should be tracked closely and we will never know.

Mr. SHERMAN. Does anyone else have a strategy for comments on getting the rebel groups, particularly the Free Syrian Army, to agree now when they need us the most to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention and otherwise act responsibly toward these weapons?

Mr. SPECTOR, I don't know if you had a comment on that.

Mr. SPECTOR. I thought the leverage was, possibly, greatest when they are seeking formal international recognition, but whenever we do it, it is going to be difficult because there will be a domestic audience they have to play to as well. So what I was proposing is that we sort of start the process de facto during this strange period, the interregnum, by trying to get some international oversight at least on some of the sites and that creates a sort of atmosphere or environment in which the expected outcome is, yes, they will join the treaty and so forth. So I think if you go about this head on it may be not quite as effective as a gradual approach, but I am not disagreeing with you.

Mr. SHERMAN. I think we sell our support too cheaply when we don't insist on this, Ambassador. And then I realize my time is up.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Congressman, I would just point out that in Iraq in 2003, the policy team of which I was a part, part of that team decided that anyone who had been affiliated with the Baath Party in the regime should not be given a second chance. And indeed, the entire Iraqi army was put outside the door, at which point all of the competent military talent in the country turned against our stabilization effort.

In Syria, unless we intend to repeat that mistake, not only could we be communicating with the opposition, but we should be communicating with people who in a dictatorship aren't making decisions anyway; so we are not blaming the mid-level of military except for those who are particularly aggressive in shooting up Daraa and Homs and places like that. We should be trying to peel off the regime as well as the opposition, and so I would say that across the board to anyone who has military competency.

But secondly, I would beg the question of how we message this. Those countries are dense with information operations coming from adverse sources. Hezbollah, Iran and others broadcast heavily into that information space. I am not sure what the U.S. Government is doing, but this is an opportunity for us to decide what messages should be making the rounds in Syria so people know that there are war crimes for the worst offenders, there is salvation for those who mark weapons and get in touch with the right places. In other words, the technological equivalent of the leafletting and collecting effort we did in Iraq before we fired the Iraqi army.

Mr. SPECTOR. Can I just add a point which is that we haven't obtained "nothing" at this stage. My impression is we have received assurances that the Free Syrian Army won't use the weapons and will try to keep track of them as soon as they gain some control. So I don't think it is a zero kind of commitment on the chemical weapon front, but it certainly hasn't gone as far as your suggestion.

Mr. ROYCE. Let us go to Mr. Duncan of South Carolina.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the problems that the United States has faced in the past is good intel coming from the region of the Middle East especially in closed countries.

So Dr. Bucci, based on your experience with intelligence, and honestly, how good is the intel that we are getting or that we have already? How good is it?

Mr. BUCCI. It is at best, or should be, suspect. We have proven in two different situations both in Iraq and then in Libya that our intel about weapons of all sorts has been somewhat less than it needed to be. Now we are looking at the country of Syria which has been even more closed and done more things behind the curtain than those other two countries. So our knowledge of exactly how many of what type of weapon they have at each site is pretty ethereal. They are doing the best they can. They are working all the partners in the region who do have human sources inside those countries, and we are trying to milk as much intel out of those sources as possible. But anyone who tells you it is complete and 100 percent accurate is dreaming. It is at best incomplete. I wish I could give you a more accurate answer than that and I wish I could give you a more positive one, but I think that is about the best we are going to do.

Mr. DUNCAN. That is not comforting. It is not comforting us at all.

Mr. BUCCI. No sir, it is not.

Mr. DUNCAN. In 2007, the Israeli attack on the nuclear facilities in Syria took out the reactor. But we are talking a lot about chemical weapons here today in this very, very concerning area, but just as concerning should be the nuclear capability and components within Syria that could fall in the hands of, say, Iran who is actively searching for a nuclear capability. So can you talk, any of you really, but I will address it to Dr. Bucci first, can you talk about the centrifuges and any of the ability to enrich uranium and other things that are used in the nuclear capacity that weren't destroyed in '07? Do we have a handle on what is there and what is happening to that technology?

Mr. BUCCI. We do not have a perfectly accurate handle on what was there. To be honest with you, I am guessing what the Iranians have today is probably better than what the Syrians had in 2007, so I don't think having a yard sale in Syria is going to bring up too much from the equipment standpoint.

Of more concern is any possible fuel that was left over, just radioactive material that would probably be of less interest to Iran but would be of interest to Hezbollah or al-Qaeda for use in a radiological dispersal device, a dirty bomb. That would be a concern and we don't have a good handle on how much of that was left, what was destroyed, what wasn't destroyed during that raid. So again, an incomplete picture but there are some things that we need to keep track of or be trying to find out before they start walking over any borders.

Mr. DUNCAN. How difficult would it be for Hezbollah to take that across the Lebanon border?

Mr. BUCCI. Into Lebanon, probably not too difficult, sir.

Mr. DUNCAN. I just want to shift gears here in my remaining time and talk about shoulder-fired missiles. Ambassador, you had talked about that I think, but do we have a handle on how many, I have read different numbers, tens of thousands of shoulder-fired MANPADs basically, in Syria. Do we have a handle on where those

are? And do we have an adequate defense for that in this nation if those fall into the hands of the terrorists?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Well, sir, on the latter question, we don't. All it takes is one passenger aircraft to trigger a lot of consequences that would be difficult and adverse, as 9/11 did with TSA and everything that has happened because of airline security. So the best strategy is to try to do our best so that the nightmare never happens.

It has been a long time since I worked in the Pentagon. I was there for 8 years. DIA would normally have had a very good lay-down of where the weapons stores and sites should be, which units would be capable of air defense and what reactions they had to the previous encounters with Israel in particular, and so I would expect there is a very strong air defense component to their regular military. There may be special forces as well that are Alawite and loyal to the regime.

I personally am not up on the intelligence but that is where I would look. I would try to piece together the best map I could, and again try to reach out to those individuals at this time and tell them how to defect and how to secure them and how to make sure that those don't become a factor in the aftermath.

Mr. DUNCAN. Yes, we are concerned about Hezbollah and Hamas, but what about the Palestinian that would be very capable of using a MANPAD due to their proximity to Ben Gurion Airport?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. When you mention the Palestinians, I immediately think they are Sunni. And so Damascus gave a home to Khaled Meishal, the radical Hamas leader, who then started to look around and see that his people were being killed by the regime. They were being shot up. Those were Sunnis being killed by the Syrian regime. So I think that there is a potential split there, and I don't know if that is a tactical or even a strategic opportunity for the United States, and I am not flagging a desire to try to embrace radical Palestinians. But clearly, you want to peel off radicals from each other, and so I would have a political working group looking very long and hard about how to exploit that in the information space, to create mistrust.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Connolly from Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And actually if I could pick up, Ambassador Bloomfield, on what you were just saying. I mean one of the complications obviously in the Syrian situation is that it is an Alawite-dominated government and military, and Sunnis are definitely in a second tier and watched carefully at all levels.

Would it be fair to say that when it comes to chemical weapons storage that storage is also very much in the control of the Alawite minority? In the power structure, I mean.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Congressman Connolly, I would expect so. I go back to Hafez al-Assad, when there was a whole battalion of T-72 tanks under tarpaulins sitting outside the apartments in Damascus where the regime figures lived. And this was during the Muslim Brotherhood episode that led to the Hama Massacre where 20,000 were killed. The Syrian army would not do the job, so he turned to an Alawite army, his brother, this is Bashar's uncle, Rifat, took in the Defense Companies and they moved in under

threat of their own death according to our attache on the scene at the time, who witnessed it and said these guys were scared for their lives unless they went in and killed everyone and put it down. So I would expect there would be extreme loyalty attached to those assets.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Following up on that logic, would it also be fair to say that until and unless this fracturing among the Alawite elite, if ever, or their defeat that control of the chemical weapons stockpiles is unlikely in the short term to get in the hands of others that worry us too?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. I have never lived through a revolution. And when your spouse and kids and relatives are all jumping in cars as happened in Iraq, stuffing cash in the trunk and racing down for the nearest border, I would not have much comfort about any particular—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Chaos ensues and—yes.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. That is right.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Saddam Hussein, in fact, Sandy Spector, used chemical weapons against his own population. Has either of the Assads been known ever to deploy chemical weapons within Syria?

Mr. SPECTOR. Not that I am aware of, but what they have done just recently in terms of the wholesale slaughter in some of these cities indicates that they are pretty prepared to take extremely harsh and coercive measures. And so you wonder how big a threshold they perceive they would be going over if they were to take this additional step. I think there has been enough international focus on this to at least etch the threshold a little deeper than it might otherwise be, but I don't think there is any kind of moral compunction. I think it is more kind of practical tradeoffs.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Dr. Bucci?

Mr. BUCCI. Sir, the fact that this regime has been using not just small arms and not even just heavy machine guns but, literally, anti-aircraft machine guns that one of those shells, I mean it is against the Geneva Convention to use those against personnel and he is gunning down civilians with them. So the step from that to using a chemical weapon against your civilian population, if you feel that threatened in your survival as a regime, is a very small one for somebody like Assad. So I would not be surprised at all if he made the decision to use those chemical weapons against his own people unless he gets sufficient messaging to deter him from doing it, and if he thinks there is some other way out or some other way of survival. It is very likely that we could see the use of those weapons against the civilian population of Syria.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, okay. I am hearing both of you say, I wouldn't count on Assad to have some moral compunction or some special abstract line beyond which he will not go, because after all these are chemical weapons. That is a different order of magnitude. But on the international level and here in the West, do we, should we have such a line that says, we deplore and we call for your ouster, regime change, based on what you have already done, but if you cross that line, what?

Mr. BUCCI. Sir, I think that is a very thin line and a very artificial one. I think the decision needs to be made; you are either an

abhorrent leader doing war crimes against your population or you are not. What color of war crime it is, is a little hard to define.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I understand and sympathize with that point of view up to a point, but the consequence of that point of view or the logic of that point of view gets us to the point where we stop distinguishing among weapons. And as a matter of fact, under international law we do, we do have a special understanding with respect to chemical weapons. And so conflating these, in looking at the horrors of the regime could have an unintended consequence of, frankly, diluting the international regime we have created around and to control and regulate chemical weapons.

Sandy?

Mr. SPECTOR. Yes, my sense is that we were all hesitant to imagine intervention because of the experience in Libya and in Iraq. But this is a level of intensity which we would not have seen before, and I think the other side appreciates it also. In other words that there is a presumption to be overcome that we are not going to intervene, but chemical weapons would overcome the presumption. And I think that is what we want to make clear, and I think we are doing it. It has been repeated at least twice in the last week by the administration. They haven't used the word, we are going to intervene, but they have said that this is a major red line. So I think it is being treated differently, and I—

Mr. CONNOLLY. And should be?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. It should be different.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I am asking, and it should be?

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. I think in the political circumstances in which we find ourselves after the history of Iraq and Libya, we have been sort of hamstrung in terms of doing what we might have done otherwise in Syria, so I think treating chemical weapons as the next threshold and an important one is appropriate.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, my time is up but I do see Ambassador Bloomfield wanting to also weigh in on this, if the chair would so indulge. I thank the chair.

Ambassador BLOOMFIELD. Obviously, Congressman Connolly, you are on to an important point. I share it. There is a difference. The tradecraft that any administration would exercise is to make sure that they are not setting a special status on chemical weapons that sends a message that everything else short of that is somehow okay. And so I think one way to differentiate it is to message, first of all, we know what you are doing—even if we don't—and secondly, if there is any use of these banned weapons or major use of conventional weapons, I mean Hellfire-type missiles from helicopters, that the people who are actually commanding those units will be on the list that ends up in the docket of international law. They will never have a life outside of jail, to the end of the earth. So you begin to say, if you sit down and just ride it out and if you work with us you are not on the list. But if you start to do these other things, the list grows.

Mr. ROYCE. Let me conclude by thanking our panel of expert witnesses for their excellent testimony, and also the members of the committee. Our staff, I think, would like to follow up with each of the three of you, if that is all right, to further explore some of these ideas. And I am particularly interested in Ambassador Bloomfield's

task force recommendations here, and so we will be in touch with each of you. But again, we thank you for taking the time and preparing this testimony.

We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:04 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



# A P P E N D I X



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*WASHINGTON, D.C.*

**Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade**  
**Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman**

July 12, 2012

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live via the Committee website at <http://www.hcfa.house.gov>)**:

**DATE:** Thursday, July 19, 2012

**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**SUBJECT:** “When Regimes Fall: The Challenge of Securing Lethal Weapons”

**WITNESSES:** The Honorable Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr.  
Chairman  
Henry L. Stimson Center  
*(Former Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs)*

Steven P. Bucci, Ph.D.  
Senior Research Fellow for Defense and Homeland Security  
The Heritage Foundation

Mr. Leonard S. Spector  
Deputy Director  
James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies  
Monterey Institute of International Studies

**By Direction of the Chairman**

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**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade HEARING

Day Thursday Date July 19, 2012 Room 2172

Starting Time 2:05 pm Ending Time 3:04 pm

Recesses N/A ( to ) ( to )

Presiding Member(s)

*Rep. Ed Royce*

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session

Executive (closed) Session

Televised

Electronically Recorded (taped)

Stenographic Record

TITLE OF HEARING:

*"When Regimes Fall: The Challenge of Securing Lethal Weapons"*

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Reps. Ed Royce, Brad Sherman, Jeff Duncan, Gerald Connolly*

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: (Mark with an \* if they are not members of full committee.)

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes  No   
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

*Reps. Ted Poe, Gerald Connolly*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE \_\_\_\_\_  
or  
TIME ADJOURNED \_\_\_\_\_

  
Subcommittee Staff Director

Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee  
Member Attendance

**Republicans**

- Rep. Edward Royce (Chair)
- Rep. Ted Poe
- Rep. Jeff Duncan
- Rep. Bill Johnson
- Rep. Tim Griffin
- Rep. Ann Marie Buerkle
- Rep. Renee Ellmers

**Democrats**

- Rep. Brad Sherman (Ranking Member)
- Rep. David Cicilline
- Rep. Gerry Connolly
- Rep. Brian Higgins
- Rep. Allyson Schwartz

Congressman Ted Poe- Statement  
TNT Subcommittee Hearing  
“When Regimes Fall: The Challenge of Securing Lethal Weapons”  
July 19, 2012

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Syria is a mess. On Sunday the Red Cross declared what most of us already knew: Syria is in a civil war. There have been lots of calls for the US to get involved. But we should be careful. Intervention in another country's war can be tricky.

This Administration has been trying to work through the UN. But no surprise here, they aren't getting very far. The fact is, Russia would like nothing better than for the United States to get bogged down in another war. Russia knows that with a distracted United States, it would have even more freedom to reassert its influence over its neighbors.

Another problem in Syria is we don't know who the rebels are. If we start stepping in to support them, what happens if the government falls? How do we know al Qaeda and other evildoers are not ready to take over?

The fact that Syria has chemical weapons, at least according to most intelligence reports, is another tricky part of this. I wouldn't be surprised if it turns out a lot of their chemical weapons came from Iraq. The point is no one really knows a whole lot about these chemical weapons. We don't know how much they've got or exactly where they are. We're not even sure if they have other sorts of WMD.

One possible help to his mess could be the Arab League. They are the ones in the area. They have the relationships with the major players. They have a lot to lose if Syria descends into further chaos. If anyone is thinking about stepping in, it should be them.

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)  
**TNT Subcommittee Hearing**  
**When Regimes Fall: The Challenge of Securing Lethal Weapons**  
**Thursday, July 19, 2012; 2pm**

With regard to Syria, the United States has been working toward a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) document that would endorse the Geneva Action plan and “impose real consequences for non-compliance.”<sup>1</sup> Negotiations include the use of an American-British proposal at the United Nations to impose Chapter 7, Article 41 of the UN Charter, which does not include armed interference but cites measures such as “complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.”<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, UN envoy Kofi Annan is in Moscow and Syrian forces have surrounded rebel fighters in Damascus. Many describe this siege as one of the worst since the conflict began 17 months ago. Most policy discussions have revolved around when and how Assad will go. But this hearing explores a key issue that we ought to examine—what will the aftermath be, and in whose hands will Syrian chemical weapons fall?

For more than a decade, the body of literature regarding U.S. national security strategy has adopted the axiom that weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) ought to be controlled and kept out of the hands of terrorist groups and rogue states. Given the asymmetric nature of threats to the United States and its allies, and the instability that may follow in the aftermath of a toppled government, the importance of this axiom ought not to be understated. We have seen this scenario play out in real life. In January, the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention<sup>3</sup> found chemical munitions in Libya including stocks of “sulphur mustard agent.”<sup>4</sup>

According to recent news reports, Syria has begun moving some of its chemical weapons stockpiles out of its storage facilities. One article chillingly states the situation—Syria “never signed the 1992 Chemical Weapons Convention, [and] is believed to have, among other things, mustard gas, a sarin nerve agent, and even VX.” The article goes on to say “analysis and officials also believe Syria has ballistic missiles that can be fitted with chemical warheads, and tens of thousands of shoulder-fired missiles that terrorists could use to target civilian aircraft.”<sup>5</sup> The Syrian government has denied it is moving the weapons, though that government’s affiliations with terrorist groups do not lend credibility to such a claim. It is unclear what the movement of these weapons means. Last Thursday’s *Wall Street Journal* cited the fact that some have said Assad is using the weapons in a high-stakes game of chicken. He “may be moving them as a feint, hoping the threat of a chemical attack could drive Sunnis thought to be sympathetic to the rebels from their homes.”<sup>6</sup> This is a grisly strategy that shines the light on how depraved Assad really is.

As the people of Syria continue to fight the Assad regime, it behooves the United States and its allies to have a dynamic contingency plan that takes into account the realities on the ground in Syria. This is a complex and serious issue. I look forward to hearing the panel’s thoughts on how best to move forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Ventrell, Spokesman for the US Department of State, July 1, 2012 press briefing.

<sup>2</sup> Article 41 states “The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.”

<sup>3</sup> Formally called the the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

<sup>4</sup> *BBC News*, “Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi had chemical weapon cache,” January 20, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Both quotes are from Sara Sorcher, “Deadly Uncertainty: The Reason Syria’s Chemical Weapons are So Dangerous,” *The Atlantic (online)*, July 16, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Julian E. Barnes, Jay Solomon, & Adam Entous, “U.S. Concerned as Syria Moves Chemical Stockpile,” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 13, 2012.

