

Council for a Livable World

To Eliminate Weapons of Mass Destruction

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In its ongoing efforts to reduce the danger of nuclear weapons and promote international peace and security, Council for a Livable World submitted seven critical questions on national security issues to all declared presidential candidates from both parties. Joseph Biden, Hillary Clinton, Christopher Dodd, John Edwards, Barack Obama, and Bill Richardson responded to the Council's questionnaire. Their responses exhibited noteworthy unity while differing on some important details.

The seven questions were on reducing nuclear weapons stockpiles, new nuclear weapons, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, Iraq, space weapons, nuclear non-proliferation, and negotiating with Iran and North Korea.

Dodd endorsed all of the Council's positions with one word responses, choosing neither to explain nor equivocate. The other candidates offered detailed explanations, leaving numerous shades of gray that offer valuable insight into the priorities they may choose to pursue if elected.

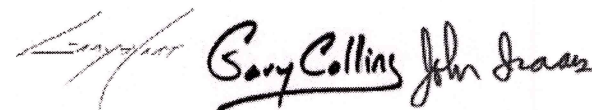
Democratic candidates Dennis Kucinich and Mike Gravel, along with all of the Republican candidates, chose not to participate and did not return the Council's questionnaire.

Below is some analysis of the candidates' responses followed by the full text of the candidates' responses. This entire resource is available on the Council's website: www.clw.org/elections/2008/presidential/2008_presidential_candidates_questionnaire_responses

Repairing the damage wrought by the Bush administration over the past seven years will be no easy task, but the responses provided by these presidential candidates offer a starting point for formulating a new vision of national security for the United States.

We hope you will join Council for a Livable World to ensure that the policy proposals and commitments outlined in these responses are carried out if one of these candidates becomes the next President of the United States in January 2009.

Sincerely,



Gary Hart
Chairman

Gary Collins
President

John Isaacs
Executive Director

Seven Key Questions: Summary and Analysis

Question #1 - Reducing Nuclear Weapons Stockpiles

A January 2007 op-ed in the Wall Street Journal by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Senator Sam Nunn, and former Secretary of Defense William Perry called for moving toward a "world free of nuclear weapons" and urged the United States to lead an international effort to reduce nuclear weapons stockpiles. Do you support or oppose their proposal?

All of the candidates called for moving toward a "world free of nuclear weapons" and reducing nuclear weapons stockpiles, but Biden and Clinton qualified their responses. Biden noted the difficulty of implementing several of the recommendations and Clinton committed only to working "to implement the sensible near-term steps" described by Kissinger, Shultz, Nunn, and Perry.

Question #2 - New Nuclear Weapons

Do you support or oppose researching, building, and possibly testing a new generation of nuclear weapons, including the so-called Reliable Replacement Warhead?

Most candidates expressed support for reductions in the number of nuclear weapons and the need to de-emphasize the value of these weapons.

Obama was less clear than the other candidates on opposing the Bush administration's plan to build a new generation of nuclear warheads, saying he did not support "a premature decision to produce the RRW." Other candidates were more clear-cut.

Biden commented that "the RRW concept has been hijacked" and that the Department of Energy was using it "as an excuse for maintaining a wastefully large nuclear weapons establishment." Richardson remarked that to see a nuclear weapon "is to be astounded that millions of deaths can be compressed into such a tiny package. To know intimately our nuclear arsenal is to know intimately how our species could destroy itself."

Question #3 - Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Would you make a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty a priority of your first term in office?

The candidates voiced unanimous support for making a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty a priority in their first-term in the White House. Clinton, Edwards, and Richardson expressed their support for the test ban treaty in terms of restoring U.S. leadership in the world.

Biden pointed out that "securing 67 votes in the Senate won't be easy" and also expressed a desire to "find a means of assuring that any undetectable cheating will not pose a military threat to the U.S." In addition to leading a bipartisan effort to ratify the test ban treaty, Clinton committed herself to "a continued moratorium on nuclear weapons

testing" if ratification could not be secured. Obama suggested that until it ratifies the treaty, the least the U.S. can do is fully pay its contribution to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).

Question #4 - Firm Date for Withdrawal from Iraq

Do you support or oppose setting a firm date for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq?

The war in Iraq is likely the most controversial issue the candidates are facing, and their responses reflected the fact that they have been asked "What are you going to do about Iraq?" many times and will continue to be asked the same question over and over.

Richardson and Edwards differentiated themselves from the other candidates by endorsing plans to withdraw all American military forces from Iraq within six months (Richardson) to a year (Edwards) and not leaving a residual force in place, as was proposed by Biden, Clinton, and Obama.

Richardson's answer was very clear: "I believe that we need to withdraw all of our troops within six months...Other than the customary Marine contingent at the embassy, I would not leave anyone behind. And if the embassy isn't safe, they're coming home too. No airbases. No troops in the Green Zone. No embedded soldiers training Iraqi forces, because we know what that means. It means our troops would still be out on patrol - with targets on their backs." Richardson also criticized by name Clinton, Obama, Dodd, and Biden for voting "for timeline legislation that had deliberate loopholes."

Biden continued to endorse a decentralization plan for Iraq, furthering his long-held belief that the U.S. should "separate the warring factions into regions...with a limited central government to distribute oil revenues and oversight by the U.N."

Question #5 - Space Weapons

Do you support or oppose a multilateral international ban on placing weapons in space?

The candidates were the most divided on the issue of weapons in space. Dodd, Edwards, and Richardson endorsed a multilateral international ban on space weapons with no qualifiers.

Clinton supported the multilateral international ban but committed herself only to constraining testing and deployment of weapons in space "as much as possible, while continuing to protect our satellites from any threats that remain."

Obama said a treaty increasing space security, while "a good idea," would "take a long time to negotiate" and therefore suggested a "simpler and quicker" alternative: a "Code of Conduct for responsible space-faring nations."

Biden was the only candidate to answer "It Depends," explaining that he opposed space weapons "designed to cause damage on the ground" and supported "a carefully crafted ban on destroying or disabling another country's satellite," but remained wary of any

treaty that aimed to "ban space stations or require international inspection of space payloads."

Question #6 - Nuclear Non-Proliferation Efforts

Do you support or oppose proposals for a major expansion and acceleration of nuclear non-proliferation efforts, including the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program, designed to ensure that weapons of mass destruction and their essential ingredients around the world are secured and accounted for as rapidly as possible?

All of the candidates demonstrated that they understood progress on threat reduction has been slow and that nuclear terrorism is one of gravest threats to U.S. security. Since more than half the work to secure vulnerable nuclear weapons material remains to be done, all expressed a sense of urgency in expanding the funding and scope of Nunn-Lugar and related programs and accelerating nuclear non-proliferation efforts.

Both Clinton and Obama committed to the goal of entirely securing all nuclear material in vulnerable sites within four years. Clinton focused her response on the threat of nuclear terrorism, calling for the creation of a Senior Advisor to the President for the Prevention of Nuclear Terrorism, an idea she first introduced in the Nuclear Terrorism Prevention Act earlier this year. Obama included "negotiating a verifiable global ban on the production of new nuclear weapons material" as an element of his four-year goal.

Obama and Richardson both mentioned the need to deal with Russia, and Obama highlighted the delays and disputes that have hindered progress on securing Russian nuclear weapons and material.

Biden voiced support for his previously articulated "nuclear forensics" initiative that would "determine the origin of nuclear materials so that we can bring deterrence into the 21st century." He also drew attention to the "low-end of proliferation: buy backs of handguns and automatic weapons in troubled countries."

Edwards suggested convening a summit of leading nations to form a new Global Nuclear Compact, which would aim to provide "access to fuel for peaceful nuclear programs" while limiting the capabilities of states to make such materials and providing for "strict monitoring to ensure that materials are not being diverted."

Richardson noted his relevant experience as Secretary of Energy and said that "Pakistan's weapons are the most likely to fall into the wrong hands," calling for cooperation with Pakistan "to ensure that, in the event of a coup, Jihadists would not be able to use the Pakistani nuclear arsenal."

Question #7 - Direct Negotiations with Iran and North Korea

Do you support or oppose direct negotiations with Iran and North Korea that would include incentives for Iran not to build nuclear weapons and North Korea to eliminate verifiably its nuclear weapons program?

The candidates all endorsed negotiations with Iran and North Korea and demonstrated an awareness of the value and importance of diplomacy and international engagement in solving some of the toughest nuclear non-proliferation problems. Biden, Clinton, Edwards, and Richardson all made clear that negotiations are required to achieve a successful outcome and are a necessary part of leadership, not some sort of capitulation or concession.

Biden said that direct talks "could add to, not take away from" the Six-Party talks with North Korea and EU-3 talks with Iran.

Clinton referred to her engagement strategy as "robust diplomacy" and contrasted it with the "cowboy diplomacy of the Bush-Cheney administration."

Edwards called for cooperating "with other great powers to isolate Iran and to offer Iran economic incentives." On North Korea, Edwards said that "We must engage the country directly, through the Six Party framework, placing economic and political incentives on the table."

Obama was the only candidate to explicitly state that he "will not take the military option off the table" in confronting these threats, but he reiterated that "our first measure must be sustained, direct, and aggressive diplomacy."

Richardson mentioned that "no nation has ever been forced to renounce nuclear weapons," but rather that "many nations have been convinced to renounce them." He explained that "meaningful sanctions accompanied by positive incentives and security guarantees" were the right approach. Richardson also cited his personal experience in negotiating with troublesome regimes, adding that "When the North Koreans want to re-engage the U.S., they call me, because they trust me."

2008 Presidential Candidates' Full Responses

Question #1 - Reducing Nuclear Weapons Stockpiles

A January 2007 op-ed in the Wall Street Journal by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Senator Sam Nunn, and former Secretary of Defense William Perry called for moving toward a "world free of nuclear weapons" and urged the United States to lead an international effort to reduce nuclear weapons stockpiles. Do you support or oppose their proposal?

JOSEPH BIDEN: Support

The WSJ op-ed is a vitally important statement. It defines a new center in American politics, where realist conservative Republicans and tough minded Democrats find common ground. It reminds us that America must listen to the concerns of other countries regarding nuclear weapons if we expect their cooperation in preventing proliferation. Some parts of the op-ed may prove difficult in practice - I look forward to the authors' follow up conference this fall to hear them talk about how they would implement their ideas and I've invited all four to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

HILLARY CLINTON: Support

I believe the United States must lead a global effort to reduce the terrible dangers of nuclear weapons - a goal shared by every President from Truman to Clinton. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration's policies have led us in the wrong direction. President Bush's years-long refusal to conduct talks with Iran and North Korea left those states free to build more dangerous nuclear capabilities. At the same time the Bush administration's rejection of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty weakened our country's leadership in strengthening the global effort to reduce nuclear weapons and stem their spread. I opposed the Bush administration's proposals to cut back Nunn-Lugar funding, and I supported expanding the program's mandate to extend beyond the former Soviet Union. As President, I will work to implement the sensible near-term steps Secretaries Schultz, Kissinger, Perry and Senator Nunn described: increasing nuclear warning time, reducing the danger of accidental or unauthorized launch; substantially reducing nuclear arsenals in all states that possess them; working with the Senate to build bipartisan support for approving the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; providing the highest possible standards of security for nuclear stockpiles worldwide to keep them out of terrorist hands; controlling the spread of uranium enrichment, including by offering countries assured nuclear fuel supplies so they will not need their own enrichment plants; ending production of nuclear materials for weapons and removing potential bomb uranium from civil commerce and from vulnerable sites around the world; and redoubling our efforts to resolve the regional conflicts that fuel nuclear weapons ambitions.

CHRISTOPHER DODD: Support

JOHN EDWARDS

I support this proposal. We should aspire to a nuclear-free world. Working with the international community to reduce nuclear weapons stockpiles will be one of my top priorities as president. The very existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility that new states might acquire them presents one of the greatest threats to international

peace and stability. States like Iran and North Korea can sell dangerous technologies to terrorists intent on doing us harm. Nearly two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, hundreds of tons of nuclear materials - enough material to produce over 60,000 Hiroshima-size bombs - and 20,000 nuclear warheads remain at risk in Russia. A recent study concluded that 60% of the country's nuclear materials have not been secured. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has failed to address this challenge in any serious, sustained way - a policy failure that must be reversed.

BARACK OBAMA

I believe that the United States must play a leadership role in reducing the roles and risks of nuclear weapons around the world. Every president has affirmed the long-term goal of achieving a world free of all nuclear weapons - and this remains an important goal as George Shultz, Henry Kissinger, William Perry, and Sam Nunn recently reiterated. I agree with them that it isn't enough to proclaim long-term goals - that we need to take active steps to reduce nuclear dangers. In the past, the U.S. has always led this effort and American leadership is essential today to confront the most urgent threat to the security of America and the world - the spread of nuclear weapons, materials and technology and the risk that a nuclear device will fall into the hands of terrorists. As Shultz, Perry, Kissinger and Nunn have warned, our current measures are not sufficient to meet the nuclear threat. As president, I will take the lead to work for a world in which the roles and risks of nuclear weapons can be reduced and ultimately eliminated, and I will start by leading a global effort to secure all nuclear weapons and material at vulnerable sites within four years - the most effective way to prevent terrorists from acquiring a bomb. At the same time, I will work with Russia to update and scale back our dangerously outdated Cold War nuclear postures and deemphasize the role of nuclear weapons. I will also work to negotiate a verifiable global ban on the production of new nuclear weapons material. We must stop the spread of nuclear weapons technology and ensure that countries cannot build - or come to the brink of building - a weapons program under the auspices of developing peaceful nuclear power. Finally, we must develop a strong international coalition to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

BILL RICHARDSON: Support

Yes, I support this proposal. We know that Al Qaeda wants nuclear weapons. We also know that Pakistan's A.Q. Khan sold nuclear materials to rogue states. We know that parts of the former Soviet nuclear arsenal still are not secure, and that there are poorly-secured nuclear materials around the world. This is an existential problem. It is urgent. We need to free humanity from the threat of nuclear destruction. America cannot achieve this task alone, but it certainly cannot be done without American leadership, and this means a renewed U.S. commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty commits non-nuclear states to forego nuclear weapons, and it also commits the nuclear weapons states to the goal of nuclear disarmament. Too often, this aspect of the Treaty is forgotten. In order to get others to take the NPT seriously, we need to take it seriously ourselves. We should re-affirm our commitment to the long-term goal of global nuclear disarmament, and we should invite the Russians to join us in a moratorium on all new nuclear weapons. And we should negotiate further staged reductions in our arsenals, beyond what has already been agreed, over the next decade.

In a world in which nuclear terrorism rather than war with Russia is the main threat, reducing all nuclear arsenals, in a careful, orderly way, makes everyone safer. Moreover, negotiations to reduce our arsenal also represent our diplomatic ace-in-the-hole. We can leverage our own proposed reductions to get the other nuclear powers to do the same - and simultaneously get the non-nuclear powers to forego both weapons and nuclear fuel enrichment, and to agree to rigorous global safeguards and verification procedures.

Question #2 - New Nuclear Weapons

Do you support or oppose researching, building, and possibly testing a new generation of nuclear weapons, including the so-called Reliable Replacement Warhead?

JOSEPH BIDEN: Oppose

I support the Stockpile Stewardship program to maintain the reliability of our nuclear weapons. I also support changes at the margin to improve their reliability. But the RRW concept has been hijacked by people who would push the envelope of changes that can be made without new nuclear testing and the Department of Energy is using it as an excuse for maintaining a wastefully large nuclear weapons establishment. We should scrap RRW and go back to first principles: how many nuclear weapons do we really need? How can we most efficiently maintain their reliability, with no testing unless a catastrophic failure in those current weapons forces us to make changes that require new testing to certify repairs? How can we reduce the status that accrues to nuclear weapon, while maintaining enough weapons to deter an attack? Only when we answer these questions can we consider any changes to current weapons designs.

HILLARY CLINTON: Oppose

The Bush administration has dangerously put the cart before the horse, planning to rush ahead with new nuclear weapons without any considered assessment of what we need these weapons for or what the impact of building them would be on our effort to stop the spread of nuclear weapons around the world. That is why I oppose the Bush Administration's plans for the Reliable Replacement Warhead and that is why I have voted consistently to block funding for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, "bunker buster," warhead. As President I will seek bipartisan support for a comprehensive nuclear weapons policy that takes into account the need to maintain a safe and reliable nuclear deterrent and the critical importance of restoring American leadership on nonproliferation.

CHRISTOPHER DODD: Oppose

JOHN EDWARDS

Stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and technology is one of our most important international goals, and we need to do much more to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and keep these weapons out of terrorists' hands. Instead of producing new nuclear weapons, we need to focus our attention on keeping America on the offensive against terrorists and the conditions that cause them, securing the existing stockpile of weapons and ensuring that terrorists are denied access to them, strengthening America's force structure, and investing in maintenance of our equipment and weaponry after the disastrous war in Iraq.

BARACK OBAMA

Before we consider developing new nuclear weapons we need to consider what the role of these weapons should be in our national security policy. As I said in my speech before the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, I believe the United States should lead the international effort to deemphasize the role of nuclear weapons around the world. I also believe that our policy towards the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) affects this leadership position. We can maintain a strong nuclear deterrent to protect our security without rushing to produce a new generation of warheads. I do not support a premature decision to produce the RRW.

BILL RICHARDSON: Oppose

We do not need a new generation of nuclear weapons. I was Energy Secretary under President Clinton. My department was responsible for the design, manufacture, and maintenance of our stockpile of nuclear weapons. These weapons are not abstractions to me: to see one of them is to be astounded that millions of deaths can be compressed into such a tiny package. To know intimately our nuclear arsenal is to know intimately how our species could destroy itself. Under my administration, we will lead the world toward the reduction of nuclear arsenals, not their augmentation.

Question #3 - Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

Would you make a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty a priority of your first term in office?

JOSEPH BIDEN: Yes

I led the fight for CTBT ratification in 1999 and I will lead it in 2009. But securing 67 votes in the Senate won't be easy. We must convince doubters of the reliability of our weapons. And we must find a means of assuring that any undetectable cheating will not pose a military threat to the U.S. We can't wish these issues away. As President, I will work to resolve them so that the next Senate debate on CTBT produces a better result.

HILLARY CLINTON: Yes

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is a critical non-proliferation tool. U.S. ratification is also essential to restoring American leadership in this area, and more broadly. As President, I will work to build the bipartisan support that would be needed to get it approved and ratified. As part of that, I will continue vigorous support for stewardship programs for our existing arsenal to ensure that the arsenal is safe, secure, and reliable. In the absence of a CTBT, I am strongly committed to a continued moratorium on nuclear weapons testing. The Bush Administration's refusal to support the CTBT and flirtation with resuming nuclear testing has weakened our nation's ability to get global support for new steps to strengthen nonproliferation efforts and thereby weakened our nation's security.

CHRISTOPHER DODD: Yes

JOHN EDWARDS

Yes, I would. In 1999, I voted to adopt the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. As President, I will refocus attention on this important priority. The U.S. needs to set a clear example for the rest of the world that it is serious about an international regime which controls, limits, and restricts the testing of nuclear weapons. Doing so would push other

nuclear-capable countries that have not signed the treaty, such as India and Pakistan, to take similar steps.

BARACK OBAMA: Yes

As president, I will make it my priority to build bipartisan consensus behind ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. In the meantime, the least we can do is fully pay our contribution to the CTBTO.

BILL RICHARDSON: Yes

The United States should ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, not only because it is good policy, but also to send a signal to the world that America has turned a corner. We will once again be a global leader, and not a unilateralist loner.

Question #4 - Firm Date for Withdrawal from Iraq

Do you support or oppose setting a firm date for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq?

JOSEPH BIDEN: Support

I support transitioning our troops in Iraq to a much more limited mission, to get them out of policing a sectarian civil war and to refocus them on targeted counter-terrorism operations, training Iraqis and force protection. If we do that, we should be able to begin withdrawing combat forces not necessary for the limited mission by the end of the year, and get all combat forces not necessary for the limited mission out by next spring. But while getting most of our troops out of Iraq is necessary, it is not enough. We also have to have a plan for what we leave behind so that we do not trade a dictator for chaos. If that happens, we may get our kids out, only to send their kids back in. I have proposed a detailed plan that offers the possibility of leaving behind stability in Iraq, based on the reality that Iraq cannot be governed from the center absent a foreign occupation or a dictator. My plan is a little like what we did in Bosnia. It would separate the warring factions into regions, as Iraq's constitution call for, with a limited central government to distribute oil revenues and oversight by the U.N. For those interested in the details, please go to my website: www.joebiden.com.

HILLARY CLINTON: Support

I am committed to ending the war in Iraq. I have been a consistent champion for the phased redeployment of troops out of Iraq. I have introduced legislation to begin bringing our troops home within 90 days. And I have joined other Democrats to add provisions to the defense authorization bill that would force the President to abandon his failed policy in Iraq. Among those provisions is legislation I am sponsoring with Senator Robert Byrd to de-authorize the war - legislation that would actually eliminate the President's authority to conduct the war. I have voted for Democratic proposals to set a date for withdrawal as well as to cut off funds because we need to send a message to this President to change course. While I hope that a bipartisan majority of the Congress will be able to persuade the President to abandon his failed policy, if he continues to refuse to do so, I am prepared to end the war myself as President.

CHRISTOPHER DODD: Support

JOHN EDWARDS

I announced my plan for Iraq more than a year ago. It would require the immediate

withdrawal of 40,000 - 50,000 troops, a funding cap for 100,000 troops that would stop the President's escalation policy, and the withdrawal of all troops from Iraq within about a year. Congress recently backed down to the President after he vetoed the supplemental appropriation that included a timetable for withdrawal. This was terrible for the country. Congress can still pass a law that would cap funding at 100,000 troops to stop the "surge," and that's exactly what it should do. As many times as the President vetoes that bill, they should send it back to him. The message must be clear - that the President can no longer reject the will of the overwhelming majority of American citizens, who want to bring a close to the disastrous war in Iraq.

BARACK OBAMA: Support

I advocate a phased redeployment of U.S. troops out of Iraq with the goal of removing all combat forces from Iraq by March 2008; my plan would have begun removing troops in May 2007. My plan allows for a limited number of U.S. troops to remain as basic force protection, to engage in counter-terrorism, and to continue the training of Iraqi security forces. I also voted for the Reid-Feingold amendment that would end funding for U.S. military operations after March 31, 2008, with some limited exceptions.

BILL RICHARDSON: Support

I believe that we need to withdraw all of our troops within six months. That's all of our troops. Other than the customary Marine contingent at the embassy, I would not leave anyone behind. And if the embassy isn't safe, they're coming home too.

No airbases. No troops in the Green Zone. No embedded soldiers training Iraqi forces, because we know what that means. It means our troops would still be out on patrol - with targets on their backs.

A regional crisis is worthy of military intervention. A true threat to our country's security is worthy of war. But a struggle between a country's warring factions, where both sides hate the United States, is not worthy of one more lost American life.

With all due respect to my Democratic colleagues, Senators Clinton, Obama, Dodd, and Biden have all voted for timeline legislation that had deliberate loopholes. Those loopholes allow this president, or any president, to leave an undetermined number of troops in Iraq indefinitely for the purposes of training Iraqi security forces and providing force protection. Troops protecting troops training troops? We've heard this before - it sounds a lot like Iraq today.

For those who believe that we should leave behind a residual force, one question must be answered: how long does that force need to be in place before we can leave? One year? Two years? Ten?

There is not a single sign that Iraq is improving. To the contrary, every indication is that it's getting worse, and a smaller force will do nothing to change that.

How many more Americans must die before we leave an Iraq that will be no better off than it is today? And in a war where American troops are the number one target, who are the poor souls being left behind?

Congress should use its authority under Article One of the Constitution to de-authorize the war and require the president to withdraw ALL troops - and the President cannot veto that. If they don't do it, I'll issue the order on January 20th, 2009.

Question #5 - Space Weapons

Do you support or oppose a multilateral international ban on placing weapons in space?

JOSEPH BIDEN: It Depends

I support a ban on any weapons in space designed to cause damage on the ground, to supplement the existing ban on space based nuclear weapons. I also support a carefully crafted ban on destroying or disabling another country's satellite. But we must guard against treaties that could ban space stations or require international inspection of space payloads. I doubt that a ban on a space based missile defense would be approved by the Senate.

HILLARY CLINTON: Support

The United States is more dependent on space than any other nation - both to support our military forces and for civilian uses from communications to remote monitoring of the Earth's surface to weather forecasting. It is therefore in our national interest to negotiate to restrain the growth of threats to our space capabilities. Here, too, the Bush administration has led us down a dangerous path, pursuing space weapons and refusing any negotiations. This is leading to a more dangerous world. In particular, space debris from anti-satellite testing may become a serious threat to all of humanity's use of space. As President, I will reverse the Bush administration's dangerous course, seeking to negotiate verifiable agreements that will constrain testing and deployment of weapons in space as much as possible, while continuing to protect our satellites from any threats that remain.

CHRISTOPHER DODD: Support

JOHN EDWARDS

I support such a ban. The United States should be a leader in keeping weapons out of space. Working with our friends and partners, America must work to promote the peaceful use of technology in space, not open a new battlefield. At the same time, we must ensure that our satellites and other assets in space are secure and have the proper defensive counter-measures.

BARACK OBAMA

Weapons in space are a bad idea. A treaty that increases space security is a good idea but is likely to take a long time to negotiate. There is a simpler and quicker way to go: a Code of Conduct for responsible space-faring nations. One key element of that Code must include a prohibition against harmful interference against satellites.

BILL RICHARDSON: Support

I support a multilateral international ban on placing weapons in space. The last thing we need today is an arms race in space or a new Cold War with China. As with the CTBT, we need to demonstrate to the world that we have turned a corner, and that once again we will work with all nations to prevent wars and to build the architecture of peace. Prior to the George W. Bush administration, all U.S. Presidents from both parties understood

the importance of arms control agreements and international law to preventing arms races. We need to return to that tradition.

Question #6 - Nuclear Non-Proliferation Efforts

Do you support or oppose proposals for a major expansion and acceleration of nuclear non-proliferation efforts, including the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program, designed to ensure that weapons of mass destruction and their essential ingredients around the world are secured and accounted for as rapidly as possible?

JOSEPH BIDEN: Support

I have been a leading supporter of non-proliferation programs since 1991 and I have worked to protect and increase their funding, broaden their scope and relieve certification requirements that diverted them from the mission of dismantling WMD capabilities, securing dangerous materials and finding productive careers for former WMD personnel. Right now, I am pressing for improved IAEA safe guards at nuclear facilities; improved capability to determine the origin of nuclear materials so that we can bring deterrence into the 21st century; increased funding for ex-weapons scientists in the FSU; repeal of Nunn-Lugar certification requirements; destruction of chemical weapons in Libya; a program to allow Iraqi ex-weapons scientists to come to the U.S. (instead of Syria or Iran); a fund for implementing future nuclear agreements with Iran or North Korea; and increased funds for the very important low end of non-proliferation: buy backs of handguns and automatic weapons in troubled countries.

HILLARY CLINTON: Support

Nuclear terrorism is one of the greatest national security threats the United States faces today, and there remains a dangerous gap between the urgency of the threat and the scope and pace of our nation's response. As President, I will do everything in my power to make sure that nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and the materials needed to make them are kept out of terrorist hands. My goal will be to eliminate the nuclear material entirely from the world's most vulnerable nuclear sites and ensure that effective security is put in place for the remainder during my first term in office. As a Senator, I have made this issue one of my top priorities and would continue to do so as President. I opposed the Bush administration's efforts to cut Nunn-Lugar funding, and voted to redirect funds from national missile defense to Cooperative Threat Reduction and other programs. I introduced the Nuclear Terrorism Prevention Act to accelerate and reinvigorate U.S. efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism by eliminating, removing, and/or securing and accounting for weapons-usable nuclear material around the world. My bill would authorize up to \$400 million in additional funding next year for programs to secure and eliminate nuclear materials at vulnerable sites around the world. It is unfortunate that there is no senior official of the U.S. government who has full-time responsibility for leading the many efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism, or that there is no global standard specifying how secure nuclear bomb material should be. To fix that, my bill would require the President to work with the international community to establish and implement a stringent standard for nuclear security at all facilities worldwide that hold nuclear weapons or weapons-usable fissile material. My bill would establish a Senior Advisor to the President for the Prevention of Nuclear Terrorism, who would make sure that stopping nuclear terrorism stayed on the front burner at the White House every day. All of this builds on the inspiring bipartisan leadership Senators Nunn and Lugar showed in launching the Cooperative Threat Reduction effort.

CHRISTOPHER DODD: Support

JOHN EDWARDS

I support the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which is the bedrock of our efforts to secure and account for existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons. But we must go further and do more. Within six months of taking office, I will convene a summit of leading nations to develop a new Global Nuclear Compact. I envision a plan that will: increase the international community's role in providing access to fuel for peaceful nuclear programs and for reacquiring and storing the dangerous wastes produced by them; limit the capabilities of states to make such materials; increase security for existing stocks of dangerous nuclear materials; and enforce strict monitoring to ensure that materials are not being diverted and facilities not being misused.

We spend about \$2 billion a year on efforts like Nunn-Lugar - less than half a percent of total defense spending. For such a vital national security concern, more financial and political resources are necessary. As president, I will direct efforts to increase funding of programs designed to secure and account for nuclear weapons and other WMD.

BARACK OBAMA: Support

In August 2005, I traveled with Senator Richard Lugar to get a first-hand look at this critical issue. There are still about 50 tons of highly enriched uranium - some of it poorly secured - at civilian nuclear facilities in over forty countries around the world. In the former Soviet Union, there are still about 15,000 to 16,000 nuclear weapons and stockpiles of uranium and plutonium capable of making another 40,000 weapons scattered across 11 time zones. There are nuclear weapons materials in more than 40 countries. And people have already been caught trying to smuggle nuclear materials to sell them on the black market.

We can - and must - do something about this. As president, I will lead a global effort to secure all nuclear weapons and material at vulnerable sites within four years. This is the most effective way to prevent terrorists from acquiring a bomb.

We know that Russia is neither our enemy nor close ally right now, and we shouldn't shy away from pushing for more democracy, transparency, and accountability in that country. But we also know that we can and must work with Russia to make sure every one of its nuclear weapons and every cache of nuclear material is secured. And we should fully implement the law I passed with Senator Dick Lugar that would help the United States and our allies detect and stop the smuggling of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world. The Appropriations Committee recently provided \$48 million to implement the Lugar-Obama initiative.

While we work to secure existing stockpiles of nuclear material, we should also negotiate a verifiable global ban on the production of new nuclear weapons material.

BILL RICHARDSON: Support

I strongly support proposals that would expand and accelerate non-proliferation efforts. The Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI), for example, has been successful in speeding the removal of nuclear materials from sites around the world, yet huge security gaps still remain. Indeed, two-thirds of U.S.-supplied highly enriched uranium (HEU) still is not covered by the U.S. take-back offer, and there are too many reactors in the world still using bomb-grade fuel.

To be sure, a lot of good has already been accomplished. The 1992 Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Program has deactivated and destroyed hundreds of missiles and thousands of warheads, and has improved security for much of the former Soviet arsenal. And the Bush administration has done some good things in addition to the GTRI, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the 2005 Bratislava accord between Bush and Putin on nuclear security.

When I was Energy Secretary under President Clinton, DOE did many things to secure Russian nukes. We increased funding - from \$85 million to \$138 million - for DOE's Material Protection, Control and Accounting program, (MPC&A) to protect Russian nuclear warheads and weapons-grade fissile material from falling into the hands of terrorists or black market dealers. I also signed the implementing agreement for the MPC&A program, which put the program on a secure footing with the Russians. We procured an emergency \$200 million supplemental to dispose of Russian weapons-usable plutonium. We worked closely with the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy to determine how to use these funds to eliminate 34 tons of Russian plutonium.

I am, however, sorry to say that the Bush Administration became entangled in delays and conflicts with the Russians - and still has not spent this \$200 million. Those 34 tons of plutonium are still there. While I was heartened recently to see that the Democratic Congress has increased nonproliferation spending, we must keep the pressure up in order to make sure that the Administration disburses those funds and gets back to work eliminating that plutonium.

During my tenure at DOE, our Nuclear Cities Initiative (NCI) actually got the Russians to agree to close down their Avangard nuclear weapons plant, as we funded the transition of displaced weapons workers to non-military jobs. This was money well spent to protect America and the world. We should have expanded this program, but instead the Bush Administration allowed the NCI agreement to lapse when it came up for renewal in 2003.

Indeed, before 9-11 the Bush administration even planned to kill both the plutonium disposition program and the Nuclear Cities Initiative, and to this day they continue to under-fund both programs.

Meanwhile, we are spending \$10 billion a month on Iraq. Of the many ways in which Mr. Bush's ill-conceived war has distracted us from our real national security needs, this is the most dangerous.

We must do more - much more - to secure Russian nuclear materials. At the end of FY 2005, U.S.-funded security and accounting upgrades had been completed for barely half of former Soviet at-risk sites - leaving many sites vulnerable even to relatively unsophisticated terrorists or traffickers. And even the upgraded buildings remain vulnerable to well-trained attackers - of the sort we have seen in action in Russia in recent years. We need more rapid progress in consolidating nuclear weapons and materials into a smaller number of sites, and in making sure that every site is secure.

The situation in some other parts of the world is even more dangerous than in Russia. In several countries, civilian nuclear facilities often are less secure than a grocery store, and even weapons-grade nuclear materials are vulnerable to theft. Pakistan's weapons are the most likely to fall into the wrong hands. They could be raided by Al Qaeda groups or sold by insiders. And we cannot exclude the possibility that Jihadists could

come to power. We need to work with Pakistan to insure that, in the event of a coup, Jihadists would not be able to use the Pakistani nuclear arsenal.

There is much work to be done in the field of counter- and non-proliferation, and that work will be a priority in the Richardson administration.

Question #7 - Direct Negotiations with Iran and North Korea

Do you support or oppose direct negotiations with Iran and North Korea that would include incentives for Iran not to build nuclear weapons and North Korea to eliminate verifiably its nuclear weapons program?

JOSEPH BIDEN: Support

The United States should never be afraid to talk to anyone. They can help us make very clear to both countries what they stand to gain by doing the right thing and what they will forfeit or risk if they do not. They also make it more likely our partners will stand with us for tougher action if diplomacy fails. Direct talks could add to, not take away from, larger negotiations like the 6 Party Talks with North Korea and the EU3 talks with Iran. Let our adversaries choose confrontation to practical cooperation.

HILLARY CLINTON: Support

Engaging with America's adversaries to reduce the threats they pose is an essential part of leadership. President Bush has abdicated this responsibility, sitting back and doing nothing while North Korea walked across every red line we had set, kicking out inspectors, pulling out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, reprocessing 6-10 bomb's worth of plutonium, and ultimately testing a nuclear weapon. Engagement that leads to an enforceable agreement will allow us to reverse the dangerous course set out by the Bush Administration. Only after North Korea had tested a nuclear weapon did the Bush Administration belatedly wake up to the reality that it must chose action over inaction.

The same is true for Iran. The Bush administration initially refused to work with our allies to increase pressure on Iran or to engage with the country at any level. And now it opposes talks with Iran on the nuclear issue. An Administration's willingness to directly engage will send two important messages: first, the Iranian people will see that our dispute is with their leaders, not with them; and second, the international community will see that we are pursuing every available peaceful avenue to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power.

I believe that we have to get away from the cowboy diplomacy of the Bush-Cheney administration. I would engage in robust diplomacy, and I would do it right. I would plan carefully, and lay the groundwork, and make sure that we achieve meaningful progress.

CHRISTOPHER DODD: Support

JOHN EDWARDS

I support direct negotiations with both countries. We need to contain Iran's nuclear ambitions through diplomatic measures that will, over time, force Iran to finally understand the international community will not allow it to possess nuclear weapons. Every major U.S. ally agrees a nuclear Iran is unacceptable. We should continue to work with other great powers to isolate Iran and to offer Iran economic incentives. At the same

time we must use much more serious economic sanctions to deter Iran. To do this, we will have to deal with Iran directly. But diplomacy is not a gift; it is not itself a concession. The current Administration recently managed to have a single-level meeting with Iran to discuss Iraq. One can only wonder what might have been if the Administration had chosen this course six years ago.

With North Korea, the recent agreement to shut down the Yongbyon reactor in exchange for the release of frozen assets is encouraging, and a sign that the carrots-and-sticks approach can work. North Korea's words, however, are not enough. We must require a plan based on commitment to a future of action, not just rhetoric and gestures. We must engage the country directly, through the Six Party framework, placing economic and political incentives on the table in exchange for the verified elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons capabilities. Such efforts have worked in the past, including when the community of nations forced South Africa to give up its nuclear capabilities.

BARACK OBAMA

We must develop a strong international coalition to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Iran and North Korea could trigger regional arms races, creating dangerous nuclear flashpoints in the Middle East and East Asia. In confronting these threats, I will not take the military option off the table. But our first measure must be sustained, direct, and aggressive diplomacy - of the kind the Bush administration has been unable and unwilling to engage in.

BILL RICHARDSON: Support

The task of halting nuclear weapons proliferation is urgent and immediate - precisely because we are on the edge of a precipice with North Korea and Iran. If we do not stop them, several other nations, especially their neighbors, may decide to go nuclear as well. And the more states that have nuclear weapons, the greater the risk that terrorists will acquire them.

In dealing with difficult regimes like Iran and North Korea, we must remember that no nation has ever been forced to renounce nuclear weapons - but that many nations have been convinced to renounce them. If we unite the world behind the right carrots and sticks, and provide the North Koreans and the Iranians with face-saving ways to step back from the nuclear brink, we will prevail. Some good steps have been taken recently, and there are signs that we may succeed. Meaningful sanctions accompanied by positive incentives and security guarantees lessen the paranoia and strengthen the pragmatists. The key is convincing these regimes that they will be more secure without nuclear weapons than with them.

To convince them, however, we absolutely need Russia and China. To implement the recent agreement with North Korea, and to get them to dismantle the devices they already have, China is the key. To stop Iran from enriching uranium, it's Russia. Whenever the UN Security Council is involved, we need both Russia and China. This is why the current administration's allergy to strategic diplomacy has been so destructive. If we had threatened the Iranians and North Koreans less, talked to them more, and built stronger relations with the other great powers, the world would be a safer place today. We need to get back on the diplomatic track, and stay there, if we are to prevent further nuclear proliferation.

In relation to Iran specifically, I believe that peace comes to those who have the courage to learn from their own errors. We should recognize that US support for the Shah's repressive regime, and then for Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s - and our silence when Saddam used chemical weapons against Iran - were wrong. These and other mistakes on our part - like the many mistakes Iranians have made - have left wounds that are still deeply felt in both societies. Both we and the Iranians need to acknowledge this difficult shared history, and we need to work to get beyond it.

The road to peace is hard: it is difficult to forgive past injustices and outrages. But for the good of America and for the good of Iran - and for the sake of peace - both nations must focus not on the past, but on the future.

As for North Korea, I have been six times now to the Hermit Kingdom. When the North Koreans want to re-engage the U.S., they call me, because they trust me. I know how to negotiate. I know that the act of negotiating does not automatically imply concessions. Much of what the North Koreans do is based on fear and uncertainty. When I am President, however, there will be an instinctive trust, and we will be able to put the nuclear genie back in the bottle - stabilizing that part of the world and removing a rogue source of nuclear technology for other rogue states. That would be a major improvement, and allow us all to sleep much more soundly. This is not wishful thinking. This is what will happen in a Richardson Presidency.