



# HEALTH PHYSICS SOCIETY

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*Specialists in Radiation Safety*

**Oral Testimony to the  
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal  
Workforce, and the District of Columbia**

**Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**

**U.S. Senate**

**presented by**

**Brian Dodd, Ph.D  
President, Health Physics Society**

**at the hearing entitled**

**A Review of U.S. International Efforts to Secure Radiological Materials**

**held in Room 342  
of the Dirksen Senate Office Building**

**on**

**March 13, 2007**

Good afternoon. My name is Brian Dodd. I work as a consultant under BDConsulting and I'm also the President of the Health Physics Society. I want to thank you for holding this hearing and providing me with the opportunity to testify personally as well as on behalf of the HPS.

Information about the Health Physics Society as well as my background and experience with the IAEA and as a consultant are detailed in my written testimony. However, I do need to clarify that I cannot speak for the IAEA, and that I am still bound by my confidentiality agreement.

Having been involved in the field of source safety and security before, during, and after 9/11, I feel that we have achieved a great deal in the years since. As Americans I believe we can be proud of our involvement in helping to secure dangerous sources around the world. I have no doubt that we are safer and securer now than we were then. That being said, there is still much to be done.

Our initial efforts have focused on the high-risk sources, but as these are dealt with and we begin to address those with lower risks the problems grow because their numbers increase by orders of magnitude. The first phase has largely been characterized by short-term 'outside' assistance. We now need to transition to the point where local, internal controls take over.

The issue of self-reliance and sustainability has always been a basic objective of the IAEA. Programs that help countries develop their laws and regulations to implement the Code of Conduct contribute significantly in this

regard. However, there are some fundamental difficulties that are often overlooked.

First there's the issue of ***priority***. Bluntly, these countries do not see themselves as targets of terrorist activity using radioactive sources and have much more basic human needs to focus on. Should the government of a poor country spend its limited resources on source problems or provide running water and sanitation to a village? It's not that they don't care about RDDs, but it's pretty far down their list. To a certain extent, what we're trying to do is to impose our priorities and values on other countries. Sometimes we can gain short-term external conformance with our carrots or sticks, but clearly it's better that they have an internal will to address the issues.

Second, there's the problem of ***personnel***. The IAEA has been attempting to grow national expertise as part of its sustainability effort. However, it seems that it's taking much longer than anyone would have predicted. One of the major reasons is that as soon as a person becomes trained, he or she then leaves for a 'better' position – often in another country where salaries and living conditions are more desirable. It requires a high degree of self-actualization for a highly qualified person to continue to work in appalling conditions with little official government support.

I believe that these two issues of priority and personnel are the major impediment to building the national infrastructure and sustainability necessary to achieve the ongoing level of safety and security that we desire. However, we shouldn't stop trying.

In fact, one of the Health Physics Society's efforts to address the personnel problem is our Radiation Safety Without Borders program. As a society of *professionals*, I think the best thing we can do to help build infrastructure and sustainability is to help our peers in developing countries. In the revitalized RSWB program, an HPS chapter links itself to a country 'for life'...much like the sister city approach. The chapter members will get to know the HPs in that country and how to best support them.

The countries we are pairing with are those without a professional radiation safety society, with the ultimate objective of helping them develop their own. This then would become affiliated with the International Radiation Protection Association perhaps via the stepping stone of becoming a foreign HPS chapter. The desire is to help our fellow HPs get the same level of support that we receive from belonging to a high-quality professional organization. This program has the full support of the IAEA and IRPA, and the Department of State is fully informed of our efforts.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the fact that the HPS has a position paper on radioactive source control. In particular, I would like to point out our recommendations regarding sufficient funding (number 8), and making it an administration mission to recover sources abroad (number 16) instead of it being an ad-hoc process.

I hope that you find these remarks helpful, and once again, I thank you for the opportunity to provide them in this hearing. I shall be pleased to answer any questions.