

Rep. James P. McGovern (Democrat of Massachusetts)
Opening Remarks
Briefing: Global Security Priorities in the 21st Century
1116 Longworth House Office Building
Wednesday, February 6, 2008
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

OPENING REMARKS

GOOD AFTERNOON –

I'M CONGRESSMAN JIM McGOVERN – AND ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND CONGRESSMAN DAN LUNGREN, WHO I HOPE WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN US LATER THIS AFTERNOON – HIS PLANE IS TOUCHING DOWN AT DULLES RIGHT ABOUT NOW – I WANT TO THANK EVERYONE FOR COMING AND TAKING TIME OUT OF WHAT I KNOW IS A VERY BUSY AFTERNOON TO ATTEND THIS SPECIAL BRIEFING.

I DO NOT INTEND TO TAKE UP TOO MUCH TIME, AS WE HAVE SIX SPEAKERS – AND I'M SURE, LIKE ME, YOU ARE FAR MORE INTERESTED IN WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY.

BEFORE WE START, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK A FEW PEOPLE IN THE ROOM AND ON THE PANEL FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN PULLING THIS EVENT TOGETHER – **ARNOLD KOHEN**, **MARTY RENDON**, **DOMENIC STORELLI** **WITH CONGRESSMAN LUNGREN'S** OFFICE, AND **CINDY BUHL** IN MY OWN OFFICE.

EVERY YEAR – AS CONGRESS WORKS FIRST ON THE BUDGET RESOLUTION AND THEN ON APPROPRIATIONS BILLS – LIKE MANY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, I ASK MYSELF, “WHAT ARE WE DOING TO MAKE AMERICA SAFER AND THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE?”

THESE ARE NOT SIMPLE QUESTIONS. THEY DO NOT HAVE SIMPLE ANSWERS. AND I DO NOT ASK THEM LIGHTLY.

IT'S REASSURING TO KNOW THAT MANY OTHER PEOPLE, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT HAVE ALSO BEEN ASKING THEMSELVES THESE QUESTIONS.

AND TODAY WE WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR FROM A VERY DISTINGUISHED PANEL ABOUT THEIR THOUGHTS AND PRIORITIES ON THESE VERY SERIOUS MATTERS.

IT WAS ALSO HELPFUL FOR ME TO DISCOVER THAT CONGRESSMAN DAN LUNGREN OF CALIFORNIA HAS ALSO BEEN ASKING HIMSELF THESE SAME QUESTIONS BECAUSE IT UNDERLINED THE FACT THAT THESE ARE BIPARTISAN CONCERNS, NOT CONFINED BY PARTY OR IDEOLOGY.

HE AND I FOUND THAT WE HAVE COMMON GROUND WHEN WE THINK ABOUT THE NUMBER OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS THAT EXIST IN THE UNITED STATES, IN RUSSIA, AND IN OTHER STATES.

WE BOTH WORRY HOW WE CAN BEST SECURE THESE WEAPONS SO THEY DO NOT FALL INTO THE HANDS OF TERRORISTS, LET ALONE BE WIELDED BY THEM.

WE WONDERED HOW THE UNITED STATES CAN MORE AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE GREATER REDUCTIONS IN OUR NUCLEAR ARSENALS – REDUCTIONS WE HAVE AGREED TO IN TREATY AND IN LAW.

COULD THE SAVINGS THAT MIGHT ULTIMATELY ACCRUE FROM SUCH REDUCTIONS BE USED TO FURTHER SECURE OTHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND MATERIALS AROUND THE WORLD? THEREBY MAKING OUR OWN NATION MORE SECURE?

COULD THOSE SAVINGS BE TARGETED AT FURTHER LIMITING THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND MATERIALS?

AND COULDN'T THOSE SAVINGS ALSO BE TARGETED AT PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH, NUTRITION AND EDUCATION, REDUCING GLOBAL POVERTY AND HUNGER?

WOULDN'T SUCH INVESTMENTS INCREASE THE STABILITY OF MANY VULNERABLE NATIONS, AND FORGE PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITIES AND FAMILIES AROUND THE WORLD THAT COULD ONLY STRENGTHEN OUR OWN SECURITY?

FOR THESE REASONS, CONGRESSMAN LUNGREN AND I ARE WORKING WITH THE RELIGIOUS AND DEFENSE POLICY COMMUNITIES ON DRAFTING A RESOLUTION TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE GLOBAL PRIORITIES AND AMERICA'S NEED TO TAKE ACTION AND INVEST IN THEM NOW.

AND IT'S THESE ISSUES THAT OUR PANEL WILL ADDRESS –

INTRODUCTIONS

I COULD TALK FOR HOURS ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE, BACKGROUND AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF EACH OF OUR PANELISTS –

SO I'M DETERMINED TO KEEP IT BRIEF –

LET ME INTRODUCE EACH OF THEM, IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY WILL BE SPEAKING –

- FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE **RETIRED U.S. ARMY MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM F. BURNS**. GENERAL BURNS WAS THE DIRECTOR OF THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY FOR PRESIDENT REAGAN, AND HE SERVED AS PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO RUSSIA AND OTHER FSU NATIONS, NEGOTIATING THE TERMS OF U.S. AID FOR DISMANTLING SOVIET-ERA NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HE CURRENTLY SERVES ON THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE OF THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS. GENERAL BURNS HAS ALSO BEEN AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE TO CONGRESSMAN LUNGREN AND ME IN UNDERSTANDING THESE KEY ISSUES. HE WILL BE SPEAKING ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTROLLING THE PROLIFERATION OF WEAPONS AND REDUCING EXISTING STOCKS.
- OUR SECOND SPEAKER IS **DR. LAWRENCE KORB**, A NAVY VETERAN, WHO SERVED AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE IN THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION. MANY OF YOU KNOW DR. KORB FOR THE WORK HE HAS BEEN DOING AT THE CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS AND THE CENTER FOR DEFENSE INFORMATION ANALYZING AMERICA'S CURRENT MILITARY POSTURE, AND THE STATUS AND NEEDS OF OUR ARMED FORCES. IT SEEMS I CAN'T PICK UP A COPY OF THE BOSTON GLOBE WITHOUT READING ANOTHER OP-ED BY LARRY KORB. DR. KORB WILL TALK ABOUT THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ADDRESSING GLOBAL POVERTY AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM.
- **DR. STEPHEN COLECCHI** IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE AND PEACE WITHIN THE U.S. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE - DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WORLD PEACE. HE WILL SPEAK ABOUT THE CHURCH'S LONG ENGAGEMENT ON THE ISSUES OF REDUCING AND ELIMINATING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, THE SECURING OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS, AND ADDRESSING CHILD SURVIVAL AND GLOBAL POVERTY.
- **SULLIVAN ROBINSON** IS THE FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CONGRESS OF NATIONAL BLACK CHURCHES. SHE BRINGS OVER 25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN FAITH-BASED WORK, INCLUDING

THE DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN AID TO REFUGEES IN SOMALIA, ETHIOPIA AND KENYA DURING THE 1993 CRISIS IN SOMALIA. SHE WILL BE FOCUSING HER REMARKS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SUCH BIPARTISAN AND ECUMENICAL INITIATIVES IN ADDRESSING THE MANY UNMET HUMAN NEEDS FACED BY SO MANY VULNERABLE CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD.

- I HAVE KOWN **DENNIS FRADO** FOR A LONG TIME. HE IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE LUTHERAN OFFICE FOR WORLD COMMUNITY OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA. DENNIS WILL DESCRIBE THE ECUMENICAL EFFORT TO ADVANCE THESE GLOBAL PRIORITIES AND THE NEED TO FORGE A BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS AND CAMPAIGN TO ACHIEVE THEM.
- OUR FINAL SPEAKER – AND I HOPE EVERYONE STICKS AROUND BECAUSE WE’RE SAVING THE BEST FOR LAST – IS **MARTY RENDON**, WHO IS THE VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY FOR THE U.S. FUND FOR UNICEF, A POSITION HE HAS HELD SINCE 1995. SOME OF YOU MAY REMEMBER MARTY FROM HIS TIME ON CAPITOL HILL WHEN HE WORKED FOR CONGRESSMEN BILL GREEN AND TONY HALL, AND WAS THE STAFF DIRECTOR OF THE HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HUNGER. I REMEMBER HIM FROM THE HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE, AS WELL. MARTY WILL TIE UP THE LOOSE ENDS AND LAY OUT FOR US THE OPPORTUNITIES AND VALUE OF ADDRESSING GLOBAL CHILD SURVIVAL ISSUES.

THIS IS A PACKED AGENDA. I’VE ASKED EVERYONE TO STICK TO 5 MINUTES – AND I’M SERIOUS – SO THERE’S TIME FOR QUESTIONS AND DIALOGUE. WHEN **CONGRESSMAN LUNGREN** ARRIVES, HE WILL ALSO BE ADDING HIS REMARKS TO THOSE OF OUR PANELISTS.

SO – WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, I TURN THE PODIUM OVER TO GENERAL BURNS