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Thank you Moderator Jonathan Mann, CNN President Eason Jordan and the CNN extended family, Prime Minister Helen Clark, Ted Turner and fellow panelists. Let me begin by repeating a statement often made, but too often not heard. The most significant, clear and present danger to the national security of the United States and the world is the threat posed by nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Nothing else comes close.

The public perception of the threat is low; the reality of the threat is high. There is a dangerous gap between the threat and our response. To close this gap, we must make a fundamental shift in the way we think about nuclear weapons, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and our national security.

In my view, the most significant national security pledge President Bush made in his remarks in early May did not relate to missile defense, although that is an important subject and received all the news coverage. Most importantly, the President pledged “to change the size, the composition and the character of our nuclear forces in a way that reflects that the Cold War is over.”

If our aim is to reduce the chance that nuclear weapons will ever be used, common sense requires us to recognize that Russia’s weakened economic and security condition combined with continued U.S. capacity for a rapid, massive strike, has increased the risk of a catastrophic Russian mistake. Today, Russian and U.S. current force postures increase the risk they were designed to reduce.

Common sense should require the U.S. and Russia to make changes in how we operate our forces to give each President more nuclear decision-making time, expanding minutes to hours, then perhaps hours to days -- to move our fingers further from the nuclear trigger. As we enter the second decade of the post-Cold War world, common sense should compel us to find ways to move away from a Doomsday posture. Can the United States and Russia at least give our two Presidents time to have a black cup of coffee and a breath of fresh air between their notice and their decision?

Common sense should require that we and other nations urgently find ways to cooperate more effectively to ensure that nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and materials don’t fall into the hands of terrorists and additional nations.

Although missile defense now grabs all of the headlines, common sense tells us that 10 to 20 years from now our nuclear leadership, stewardship and security will not be judged simply on whether we have a 75% chance or a 95% chance of knocking down a missile launched from Iran, Iraq, or North Korea, but on much broader and more fundamental questions:

1. Do we have a world where nations rely on nuclear weapons less, not more?

2. Have the United States and Russia moved beyond a Doomsday posture – where we no longer threaten each other with nuclear annihilation or nation-ending damage?
3. Have we avoided a defensive/offensive strategic nuclear contest with China that sets off a nuclear arms race among China, India, Pakistan and perhaps even Korea and Japan?
4. Have we managed our offensive and defensive nuclear posture and our diplomacy in a way that has not undermined our ability to cooperate with our allies and with Russia and China to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction particularly to groups with nothing to lose and no return address?
5. Have our policies, our strategies and our programs been designed and promoted in a way that enhances the prospects of the world moving toward zero the risk that nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction will ever be used anywhere by anyone – whether by design or by accident?

The answers to these questions will determine the security of our children and grandchildren. We must ask them now.

Supported by the generosity and vision of Ted Turner, and guided by a distinguished board that Ted and I co-chair, the Nuclear Threat Initiative is a foundation dedicated to reducing the global threat from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Our mission is to increase public awareness, encourage dialogue, catalyze action, and promote new thinking about these dangers in this country and abroad.

NTI is currently exploring initial activities in five key areas: 1) U.S. policies and programs; 2) Russia and the newly independent states; 3) Biological programs; 4) Regional activities; and 5) Education and Outreach.

In the final analysis, governments will have to do the heavy lifting if we are to dramatically reduce the risks of weapons of mass destruction use. We hope to help and we hope to be a catalyst for change and for thinking anew, both in this country and abroad.

America has a special responsibility in these matters. But we must do more, and we must encourage and challenge other nations to join us in responding to the challenge. The security of the world is at stake. We must forge a common bond among nations to combat the threat from weapons of mass destruction.

I can think of no area on which international understanding is more urgently required. All of us must think anew.

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