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U. S. EXPORTING PLUTONIUM

Q. The Washington Post asserts today that the United States has exported enough plutonium in the last 15 years to make more than 200 atomic bombs. Congress has warned that countries may be tempted to follow India's example and develop nuclear warheads from the plutonium from nuclear generators. What is the Administration doing to guarantee proper safeguards for the export of nuclear technology?

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A. Since the President assumed office he has launched a series of initiatives aimed at reducing the risk of further proliferation of nuclear weapons. These include, among other multilateral efforts, --

-- An effort to gain the agreement of the other nuclear suppliers to require new and stricter safeguards on nuclear exports, particularly on those items, such as enrichment and reprocessing technology, which involve the production or handling of materials which could be directly used in nuclear weapons.

The President intends to maintain our vital security assurances in both Western Europe and the Pacific to assure those countries that they do not need to develop nuclear weapons to be secure.

We are encouraged that there is a high level of concern among the other nuclear suppliers on the dangers of nuclear proliferation as well.