

United States has designated it as a state sponsor of terrorism. The Second Circuit effectively read into the tort exception an exception for terrorist-related torts. Even the Solicitor General, who has adopted an unduly restrictive interpretation of the FSIA's exceptions, concluded that the Second Circuit misread the statute on this critical point.

The Second Circuit's and other lower courts' decisions on these seemingly technical jurisdictional points not only deprive the victims of terrorism the compensation to which they are entitled but also remove a powerful weapon in our arsenal against foreign terrorism. We can no longer wait for the Supreme Court to correct these errant decisions. The Court's refusal earlier this year to hear the plaintiffs' appeal of the Second Circuit's decision in *In re Terrorist Attacks*, despite the importance of the case and the conflicts among the lower courts on the key issues it presents, suggests that the Court may well never do so.

That is why I have introduced the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act. The act's main provisions would amend FSIA to make clear that, as Congress originally intended, a foreign state may be sued under the torts exception if it sponsors terrorists who commit terrorist attacks on our soil, without regard to whether it is a state-designated sponsor of terrorism, and amend the ATA to ensure that its anti-terrorism provisions, like FSIA's, are given the meaning Congress intended. I urge my colleagues to support these modest, but critical, amendments.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 23, 2009, at 2 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Marques Chavez be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of today's session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NUCLEAR FORENSICS AND ATTRIBUTION ACT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 244, H.R. 730.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 730) to strengthen efforts in the Department of Homeland Security to develop nuclear forensics capabilities to permit

attribution of the source of nuclear material, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Nuclear Forensics and Attribution Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) *The threat of a nuclear terrorist attack on American interests, both domestic and abroad, is one of the most serious threats to the national security of the United States. In the wake of an attack, attribution of responsibility would be of utmost importance. Because of the destructive power of a nuclear weapon, there could be little forensic evidence except the radioactive material in the weapon itself.*

(2) *Through advanced nuclear forensics, using both existing techniques and those under development, it may be possible to identify the source and pathway of a weapon or material after it is interdicted or detonated. Though identifying intercepted smuggled material is now possible in some cases, pre-detonation forensics is a relatively undeveloped field. The post-detonation nuclear forensics field is also immature, and the challenges are compounded by the pressures and time constraints of performing forensics after a nuclear or radiological attack.*

(3) *A robust and well-known capability to identify the source of nuclear or radiological material intended for or used in an act of terror could also deter prospective proliferators. Furthermore, the threat of effective attribution could compel improved security at material storage facilities, preventing the unwitting transfer of nuclear or radiological materials.*

(4)(A) *In order to identify special nuclear material and other radioactive materials confidently, it is necessary to have a robust capability to acquire samples in a timely manner, analyze and characterize samples, and compare samples against known signatures of nuclear and radiological material.*

(B) *Many of the radioisotopes produced in the detonation of a nuclear device have short half-lives, so the timely acquisition of samples is of the utmost importance. Over the past several decades, the ability of the United States to gather atmospheric samples—often the preferred method of sample acquisition—has diminished. This ability must be restored and modern techniques that could complement or replace existing techniques should be pursued.*

(C) *The discipline of pre-detonation forensics is a relatively undeveloped field. The radiation associated with a nuclear or radiological device may affect traditional forensics techniques in unknown ways. In a post-detonation scenario, radiochemistry may provide the most useful tools for analysis and characterization of samples. The number of radiochemistry programs and radiochemists in United States National Laboratories and universities has dramatically declined over the past several decades. The narrowing pipeline of qualified people into this critical field is a serious impediment to maintaining a robust and credible nuclear forensics program.*

(5) *Once samples have been acquired and characterized, it is necessary to compare the results against samples of known material from reactors, weapons, and enrichment facilities, and from medical, academic, commercial, and other facilities containing such materials, throughout the world. Some of these samples are available to the International Atomic Energy Agency through safeguards agreements, and some countries maintain internal sample databases. Access to samples in many countries is limited by national security concerns.*

(6) *In order to create a sufficient deterrent, it is necessary to have the capability to positively identify the source of nuclear or radiological material, and potential traffickers in nuclear or radiological material must be aware of that capability. International cooperation may be essential to catalogue all existing sources of nuclear or radiological material.*

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS FOR FORENSICS COOPERATION.

It is the sense of the Congress that the President should—

(1) *pursue bilateral and multilateral international agreements to establish, or seek to establish under the auspices of existing bilateral or multilateral agreements, an international framework for determining the source of any confiscated nuclear or radiological material or weapon, as well as the source of any detonated weapon and the nuclear or radiological material used in such a weapon;*

(2) *develop protocols for the data exchange and dissemination of sensitive information relating to nuclear or radiological materials and samples of controlled nuclear or radiological materials, to the extent required by the agreements entered into under paragraph (1); and*

(3) *develop expedited protocols for the data exchange and dissemination of sensitive information needed to publicly identify the source of a nuclear detonation.*

SEC. 4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF DOMESTIC NUCLEAR DETECTION OFFICE.

(a) **ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES.**—Section 1902 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as redesignated by Public Law 110-53; 6 U.S.C. 592) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (9), by striking "and" after the semicolon;

(B) by redesignating paragraph (10) as paragraph (14); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (9) the following:

"(10) lead the development and implementation of the national strategic five-year plan for improving the nuclear forensic and attribution capabilities of the United States required under section 1036 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010;

"(11) establish, within the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, the National Technical Nuclear Forensics Center to provide centralized stewardship, planning, assessment, gap analysis, exercises, improvement, and integration for all Federal nuclear forensics and attribution activities—

"(A) to ensure an enduring national technical nuclear forensics capability to strengthen the collective response of the United States to nuclear terrorism or other nuclear attacks; and

"(B) to coordinate and implement the national strategic five-year plan referred to in paragraph (10);

"(12) establish a National Nuclear Forensics Expertise Development Program, which—

"(A) is devoted to developing and maintaining a vibrant and enduring academic pathway from undergraduate to post-doctorate study in nuclear and geochemical science specialties directly relevant to technical nuclear forensics, including radiochemistry, geochemistry, nuclear physics, nuclear engineering, materials science, and analytical chemistry;

"(B) shall—

"(i) make available for undergraduate study student scholarships, with a duration of up to 4 years per student, which shall include, if possible, at least 1 summer internship at a national laboratory or appropriate Federal agency in the field of technical nuclear forensics during the course of the student's undergraduate career;

"(ii) make available for doctoral study student fellowships, with a duration of up to 5 years per student, which shall—

"(I) include, if possible, at least 2 summer internships at a national laboratory or appropriate Federal agency in the field of technical