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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Thursday, May 03, 2007 Rep. Markey and Dr. Hans Blix, former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), at a discussion of nuclear weapons issues in Iran and Iraq hosted by the Bipartisan Task Force on Non-Proliferation.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today Congressmen Ed Markey (D-MA) and Chris Shays (R-CT), co-chairs of the Bipartisan Task Force on Non-Proliferation, hosted a discussion of "Nuclear Weapons: Resolving Iran, Reviewing Iraq" featuring Dr. Hans Blix, former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Ambassador Thomas Graham, Jr., President Clinton's Special Representative for Arms Control, Non-proliferation and Disarmament, and Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute.

At the event, Rep. Markey made the following opening statement:

Welcome to the Bipartisan Task Force on Non-Proliferation. The Task Force was formed in 1997 to provide a forum in the Members and staff of the House of Representatives to investigate, debate, and enunciate policy options regarding one of the most critical issues of our era: the proliferation of

chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

Our topic today is "Nuclear Weapons: Resolving Iran, Reviewing Iraq." As the United States and the international community continue to press Iran to come clean about its nuclear program, it is essential that we consider the lessons of Iraq. We must prevent an Iranian nuclear weapon, but in light of the failures of intelligence and the political manipulations that we now know occurred in the run up to the war in Iraq, how can the Congress and the American people reestablish confidence in what we are told about WMD programs? This is a problem that we must confront and solve.

We find ourselves today hearing frightening statements about Iranian progress towards acquiring a nuclear bomb, but just like the villagers in the parable, we are extremely wary of the warnings from the boy who has already falsely cried wolf. There is absolutely no question that Iran must not be allowed to control a nuclear arsenal. Across the political spectrum, there is total agreement that such an outcome is unacceptable and will not be permitted to occur. It is unfortunate in the extreme that the credibility of our intelligence community, our government, and especially our President, has been so thoroughly damaged by our rush into an unnecessary, unfounded, and ultimately disastrous war.

After the debacle of Iraq, a responsible Congress has no choice but to greet new pronouncements about weapons of mass destruction with greater skepticism. At the same time, we cannot allow this newly necessary skepticism to get in the way of U.S. action to stop the real proliferators.

Today we have the great pleasure of welcoming back one of the world's foremost authorities on the subject of nonproliferation and inspections, Dr. Hans Blix. Dr. Blix served as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency from 1981 to 1997 and as Executive Chairman of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission from March 2000 to June 2003. In that capacity, Dr. Blix was responsible for the UN inspections in Iraq prior to the Iraq war – inspections which did not find evidence of the stockpiles of WMD which the Bush Administration told the world Saddam Hussein was hiding.

We also welcome Ambassador Thomas Graham. Ambassador Graham was involved as a senior U.S. diplomat in the negotiation of virtually every major international arms control and nonproliferation agreement of the past 30 years. As President Clinton's Special Representative for Arms Control, Non-proliferation and Disarmament, he led the successful U.S. government effort to indefinitely extend the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Finally, we will also hear from Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute and Co-Chair of the American Bar Association Blue Ribbon Task Force on Nuclear Nonproliferation.



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