

What is the Proliferation Security Initiative?



Export enforcement Washington field agents search air cargo. (Department of Commerce)

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is a global initiative aimed at stopping shipments of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials worldwide, announced by President Bush, May 31, 2003. It stems from the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of

Mass Destruction issued in December 2002. That strategy recognizes the need for more robust tools to defeat the proliferation of WMD around the world, and specifically identifies interdiction as an area where greater focus will be placed.

The goal of the PSI is to create a more dynamic, creative, and proactive approach to preventing proliferation to or from nation states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. Actions will be taken in support of the PSI consistent with national legal authorities and relevant international law and frameworks. The PSI seeks to use existing authorities – national and international—to defeat proliferation.

In September 2003, 11 countries agreed to and published the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles. Since then many

more countries have endorsed the principles. This set of principles identifies specific steps for effectively interdicting WMD shipments and preventing proliferation facilitators from engaging in this deadly trade. Participation in the PSI is voluntary. PSI partners encourage all states to publicly support the PSI, and to take the steps outlined in the principles, including steps in support of PSI operational activities. Support for the PSI is an acknowledgment of the need for stronger measures to defeat proliferators through cooperation with other countries.

The PSI is part of an overall counterproliferation effort intended to apply intelligence, diplomatic, law enforcement, and other tools at our disposal to prevent transfers of WMD-related items to countries and entities of concern. U.N. Security Council Resolution 1540, adopted unanimously by the Security Council, called on all states to take cooperative action to prevent trafficking in WMD. The PSI is a positive way to take such cooperative action.



U.S. Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton and Panamanian Minister of Government and Justice Arnulfo Escalona, sign the U.S.-Panama PSI shipboarding agreement, May 12, 2004. (U.S. Department of State)

Why Do We Need the PSI?

States have cooperated for many years to prevent specific shipments of WMD, their delivery systems, or related materials from taking place. These efforts, however, have tended to be ad hoc and have mainly focused on items in ports.

Now there is much clearer understanding of the threat of WMD terrorism, and WMD proliferation has become much more of an international security challenge. Consequently, we need higher-priority attention at senior levels of governments and more concerted efforts before and after an illicit shipment leaves for its destination.

In addition to the increasingly sophisticated and aggressive measures taken by proliferators and their facilitators to circumvent export controls, we also are dealing with a relatively new dynamic where proliferators are shipping to proliferators. This trend further limits opportunities to stop shipments before they are en route. The PSI builds on our interdiction experience to date and uses the full range of counterproliferation tools—from diplomacy to intelligence to operations—to stop WMD and missile-related proliferation at sea, in the air, and on land.

How Does the PSI Work?

The PSI is a set of activities, not a formal treaty-based organization. It is best understood as a set of partnerships that establishes the basis for cooperation on specific activities

when the need arises. It does not create formal “obligations” for participating states, but does represent a political commitment to establish “best practices” to stop proliferation-related shipments. PSI interdiction training exercises and other operational efforts will help states work together in a more cooperative, coordinated, and effective manner to stop, search, and seize shipments.

The focus of PSI is on establishing greater coordination among its partner states and a readiness to act effectively when a particular action is needed. Actual interdictions will likely involve only a few PSI participants with geographic and operational access to a particular PSI target of opportunity. By working together, PSI partners will combine their capabilities in a way that adds up to more than their individual efforts.

How Can States Participate in the PSI?

There are many countries that can play a helpful role in building global counterproliferation capabilities. There are also countries—such as flagship, coastal, or transshipment states, or states along major air shipment corridors—whose cooperation is essential to counterproliferation efforts involving cargoes in transit. Since the Statement of Interdiction Principles was agreed upon and made public in early September 2003, many states worldwide have indicated their strong support for these principles and their interest in cooperating actively on PSI efforts.

States are becoming involved in the PSI in varying ways. Some states, for example, have



Australia, the U.S., Japan, and France take part in “Exercise Pacific Protector.” (AP)

attended interdiction training exercises or informational meetings to help build the basis for effective cooperation. Participation in the PSI will continue to expand based on countries’ responses to the initiative. There are also concrete steps that states can take to establish the basis for their participation in the PSI:

- Formally commit to and publicly endorse the PSI and the Statement of Interdiction Principles and indicate willingness to take all steps available to support PSI efforts.
- Undertake a review and provide information on current national legal authorities to undertake interdictions at sea, in the air, or on land. Indicate willingness to strengthen authorities, where appropriate.
- Identify specific national “assets” that might contribute to PSI efforts (e.g., information sharing, military and/or law enforcement assets).
- Provide points of contact for PSI assistance requests and other operational activities. Establish appropriate internal government processes to coordinate PSI response efforts.

- Be willing to actively participate in PSI interdiction training exercises and actual operations as opportunities arise.
- Be willing to conclude relevant agreements (e.g., boarding arrangements) or otherwise to establish a concrete basis for cooperation with PSI efforts.

What is the Future of the PSI?

PSI is a lasting initiative that over time will establish a web of counterproliferation partnerships to prevent trade in WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials. Successful efforts involving PSI partners are a reality.

States need to cooperate to make it more difficult and more costly for proliferators to engage in this deadly trade. Over time, proliferators, and others involved in supporting proliferation activities will learn that there are countries determined to work together to take all possible steps to stop their efforts. PSI is an important contribution to global nonproliferation and is a strong deterrent to proliferation-related trafficking. PSI also seeks enhanced law enforcement cooperation to shut down proliferation-related networks and activities and bring those involved to justice.



A U.S. Marine Corps nuclear, biological and chemical assessment team conducts tests on a simulated suspicious crate aboard Saturn to determine its contents. Sponsored by Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and Commander, U.S. 5th Fleet, “Sea Saber” in the Arabian Sea was the fifth in a series of exercises based on the Proliferation Security Initiative. (USMC)



Japanese helicopters prepare to board a U.S. military ship during "Exercise Pacific Protector." (AP)

The Proliferation Security Initiative: Statement of Interdiction Principles (adopted in Paris, September 4, 2003)

The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is a response to the growing challenge posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials worldwide. The PSI builds on efforts by the international community to prevent proliferation of such items, including existing treaties and regimes. It is consistent with and a step in the implementation of the UN Security Council Presidential Statement of January 1992, which states that the proliferation of all WMD constitutes a threat to international peace and security, and underlines the need for member states of the UN to prevent proliferation. The PSI is also consistent with recent statements of the G8 and the European Union, establishing that more coherent and concerted efforts are needed to prevent the proliferation of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials. PSI participants are deeply concerned about this threat and of the danger that these items could fall into the hands of terrorists, and are committed to working together to stop the flow of these items to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern.

The PSI seeks to involve in some capacity all

states that have a stake in nonproliferation and the ability and willingness to take steps to stop the flow of such items at sea, in the air, or on land. The PSI also seeks cooperation from any state whose vessels, flags, ports, territorial waters, airspace, or land might be used for proliferation purposes by states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. The increasingly aggressive efforts by proliferators to stand outside or to circumvent existing nonproliferation norms, and to profit from such trade, requires new and stronger actions by the international community. We look forward to working with all concerned states on measures they are able and willing to take in support of the PSI, as outlined in the following set of "Interdiction Principles."

PSI participants are committed to the following interdiction principles to establish a more coordinated and effective basis through which to impede and stop shipments of WMD, delivery systems, and related materials flowing to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern, consistent with national legal authorities and relevant international law and frameworks, including the UN Security Council. They call on all states concerned with this threat to international peace and security to join in similarly committing to:

1. Undertake effective measures, either alone or in concert with other states, for interdicting the transfer or transport of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. "States or non-state actors of proliferation concern" generally refers to those countries or entities that the PSI participants involved establish should be subject to interdiction activities because they are engaged in proliferation through: (1) efforts to develop or acquire chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons and associated delivery systems; or (2)

transfers (either selling, receiving, or facilitating) of WMD, their delivery systems, or related materials.

2. Adopt streamlined procedures for rapid exchange of relevant information concerning suspected proliferation activity, protecting the confidential character of classified information provided by other states as part of this initiative, dedicate appropriate resources and efforts to interdiction operations and capabilities, and maximize coordination among participants in interdiction efforts.

3. Review and work to strengthen their relevant national legal authorities where necessary to accomplish these objectives, and work to strengthen when necessary relevant international law and frameworks in appropriate ways to support these commitments.

4. Take specific actions in support of interdiction efforts regarding cargoes of WMD, their delivery systems, or related materials, to the extent their national legal authorities permit and consistent with their obligations under international law and frameworks, to include:

- a. Not to transport or assist in the transport of any such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern, and not to allow any persons subject to their jurisdiction to do so.

- b. At their own initiative, or at the request and good cause shown by another state, to take action to board and search any vessel flying their flag in their internal waters or

territorial seas, or areas beyond the territorial seas of any other state, that is reasonably suspected of transporting such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern, and to seize such cargoes that are identified.

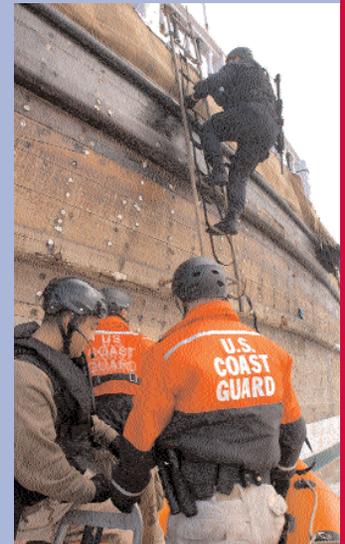
c. To seriously consider providing consent under the appropriate circumstances to the boarding and searching of its own flag vessels by other states, and to the seizure of such WMD-related cargoes in such vessels that may be identified by such states.

d. To take appropriate actions to (1) stop and/or search in their internal waters, territorial seas, or contiguous zones (when declared) vessels that are reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern and to seize such cargoes that are identified; and (2) to enforce conditions on vessels entering or leaving their ports, internal waters or territorial seas that are reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes, such as requiring that such vessels be subject to boarding, search, and seizure of such cargoes prior to entry.

e. At their own initiative or upon the request and good cause shown by another state, to (a) require aircraft that are reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern and that are transiting their airspace to land for inspection and seize any such cargoes that are identified; and/or (b) deny aircraft reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes transit rights through their airspace in advance of such flights.

f. If their ports, airfields, or other facilities are used as transshipment points for shipment of such cargoes to or from states or non-state actors of proliferation concern, to inspect vessels, aircraft, or other modes of transport reasonably suspected of carrying such cargoes, and to seize such cargoes that are identified.

Photos, Front Cover: top, an Italian Air Force F-16 intercepts a U.S. Navy P-3C during "Exercise Air Brake 04," a multi-lateral aviation interdiction training exercise in the Mediterranean Sea in February 2004. (U.S. Navy); center, Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski, right, applauds President Bush after his speech at the Wawel castle in Krakow, Poland, May 31, 2003, announcing the Proliferation Security Initiative. (AP); bottom, U.S. Coast Guard team climbs aboard a cargo dhow in the Arabian Gulf. (USCG)



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