

Statement by the Source Security Working Group (SSWG): GAO report on securing significant quantities of high-risk radioactive material

We are pleased GAO confirmed the existing expert consensus that the risk to the public of injury or death from radiation caused by a radiological dispersion device (a.k.a. dirty bomb) are unlikely to occur.

However, we strongly disagree with GAO's recommendation that the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) should use so-called "socioeconomic factors" in determining the appropriate level of regulatory oversight and security requirements. This change would unnecessarily politicize an independent regulatory agency that should be making decisions solely on the basis of sound science.

Source-based radiation technologies have been used safely and securely for decades. They save countless lives each year by destroying cancerous tumors and making sure our medical supplies are free from bacterial contamination and our roads, bridges, and pipelines are structurally sound.

These technologies are subjected to stringent government regulations, and the men and women who use them are committed to maintaining a strong culture of safety and security.

The SSWG stands ready to work with Congress and the administration in support of common sense policies that effectively balance the risks of radiological sources with their societal benefits.

About the SSWG: The Source Security Working Group (SSWG) is an alliance of industry sectors, including energy, health care, oil and gas applications, and industrial radiography, who seek to ensure safe and secure access to radiological sources. The SSWG supports the orderly transition to technologies which do not use radiological sources, provided they are equivalent in their efficacy and cost-effectiveness.