

February 7, 2008

Vardan Oskanian  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Yerevan, Armenia

References:

A. Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Armenia Concerning Cooperation in the Area of the Counterproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, dated July 24, 2000 (Umbrella Agreement).

B. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Note No 8/13401 transmitting Minister of Health Kushkyan's request for Cooperative Threat Reduction Assistance, dated October 23, 2007.

C. Ambassador Eric Edelman's Response to Minister of Health Kushkyan, dated November 14, 2007.

Dear Minister Oskanian:

I want to thank your government for its interest in our Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP) under the Department of Defense's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. As Ambassador Edelman stated in his November 14, 2007 letter, the Department welcomes the opportunity to partner with your government in the fight against bioterrorism and the threat of potential pandemics.

Through the BTRP, the Department works with various ministries, including the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, government agencies, and organizations to consolidate and secure dangerous pathogen collections and research, improve biosafety and biosecurity, enhance capacity to detect, diagnose, and report bioterror attacks and potential pandemics, and establish strategic research partnerships. The BTRP establishes a network of disease monitoring and diagnostic centers throughout each country linked to a safe, secure designated location. The Department envisions that these individual country networks will be linked with their regional partners to enhance disease monitoring, reporting and containment.

The first step in initiating the BTRP in the Republic of Armenia is to conclude an implementing agreement pursuant to Article III of the Reference A Agreement. I have included a text

of the biological threat reduction implementing agreement for your consideration. Your government will need to determine the appropriate executive agent for this work. As the program involves multiple ministries, we have found the most effective executive agency is one that has authority over these ministries to ensure cooperation and coordination across the BTRP.

I am prepared to send a delegation to the Republic of Armenia during the week of March 10, 2008 to familiarize representatives of the Government of the Republic of Armenia with the BTRP, finalize this agreement, and conduct initial site visits to assess the requirements for implementation of the BTRP in the Republic of Armenia.

The Department looks forward to working with you on this very important new program.

Sincerely,

//signed//

Richard Douglas

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

for Counternarcotics, Counterproliferation and Global Threats

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Attachment: Draft Biological Threat Reduction Implementing Agreement

cc: Minister of Health

Minister of Agriculture