

---

## PROLIFERATION SECURITY INITIATIVE (PSI)

**Announced:** US President George W. Bush announced the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) on 31 May 2003 in reaction to the pursuit of new agreements on the search of planes and ships carrying suspect cargo and to seize illegal weapons or missile technologies.

**Core Member States:** Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

**Purpose:** The primary role of PSI participants is to abide by a [Statement of Interdiction Principles](#) aimed at interdicting certain WMD-related weapons and materials. The initiative seeks to develop partnerships of states working together, employing their national capabilities to develop a broad range of legal, diplomatic, economic, military, and other tools to interdict threatening shipments of WMD and missile-related equipment and technologies via air, land, and sea. Additionally, participating states undertake to enact measures to ensure that their national facilities are not utilized to transfer illicit weapon cargoes.

**Background:** The PSI is not a free-standing initiative, but builds on wider efforts by the international community, including through existing treaties and regimes. The event that triggered the launch of the PSI occurred in December 2002 when a Spanish destroyer observed a suspicious vessel in the Arabian Sea. The Yemen-bound vessel—a Cambodian registered freighter with a North Korean crew—was not flying a country flag indicating its country of registration. The Spanish crew requested the assistance of a US naval vessel and boarded the ship, whereupon they found “15 North Korean-made Scud missiles with conventional warheads and the chemical propellant needed to launch them.” Since this discovery was not found in breach of any national or international law or agreement (North Korea, Cambodia, and Yemen are not members of the Missile Control Technology Regime), the Cambodian vessel was allowed to continue on its route with its cargo.

The goal of PSI is pre-emptive interdiction, which includes detaining and searching ships and aircraft as soon as they enter PSI members’ territorial waters or national airspace; denying suspicious aircraft overflight rights; grounding planes when they stop to refuel in member countries or in states willing to cooperate on a case-by-case basis; and boarding and

searching ships registered in a PSI member nation or operating under a “flag of convenience” of another state prepared to authorize an interdiction in a particular instance.

US officials emphasize that PSI is intended to enhance existing export control enforcement mechanisms, rather than to re-write international law.

### Developments:

**2007:** There was no plenary meeting held in 2007. In October 2007, the Operational Experts Group (OEG) convened a meeting in Greece. There was also an Experts Meeting in Auckland, New Zealand, from 26 to 28 March 2007 as well as a Proliferation Finance Workshop held in Washington, D.C. from 31 January to 1 February 2007.

In October 2007, seven states participated in “Pacific Shield ’07” hosted by Japan. The nations participating in the exercise were Australia, France, Britain, New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, and the United States. The exercise involved 10 vessels and four aircraft. Senior officials from more than 40 countries, including India and Oman, were also on hand to observe the exercises. South Korea and China refrained from participating in the exercise, reportedly due to concerns of antagonizing North Korea. The aim of the exercise was to facilitate a real life ship interdiction of a vessel suspected of carrying WMD-related material. This was the second time Japan hosted a PSI exercise.

From 27 to 29 May 2007, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia hosted a PSI exercise “Adriatic Gate ’07” at the Port of Koper. The exercise simulated intercepting suspicious cargo en route to Slovenia. Three Adriatic countries—Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Croatia—also participated in the exercise, which also included representatives from the United States. An additional 40 countries were invited to observe the exercises. Lithuania hosted the PSI exercise “Smart Raven” from 26-27 April 2007. The exercise addressed the challenge of interdicting shipments of WMD by air. Twenty-two countries participated in the drill, which focused on enhancing the interoperability of PSI member states in order to combat the proliferation of WMD-related materials.

On 15 March 2007, the Republic of Malta and the United States signed a bilateral PSI shipboarding

agreement. This is the seventh PSI shipboarding agreement signed by the United States. The United States had already signed bilateral PSI shipboarding agreements with Belize, Croatia, Cyprus, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, and Panama. These PSI shipboarding agreements provide authority on a bilateral basis to board sea vessels suspected of carrying illicit shipments of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, or related materials. Under the agreements, a vessel registered in the United States or the partner country suspected of carrying WMD-related cargo can upon request be confirmed, searched, and if needed detained by either party.

**2006:** The sixth plenary meeting took place on 23 June 2006 in Warsaw. The participants noted the achievements of the PSI, and the continuing priority placed by each on preventing the proliferation of WMD.

During the meeting, PSI participating states focused on deepening their on-going efforts in the three primary areas of activity: firstly, providing an effective platform, consistent with national and international law and frameworks, for impeding and stopping the trafficking in WMD and their means of delivery; secondly, improving national capacities to interdict shipments of proliferation concern; thirdly, expanding the network of participating states (75 states expressed support for active participation by June 2006).

At the meeting, participating states stressed the importance of maintaining the operational focus and nature of the PSI Operational Experts process and further developing its regional dimension. They also discussed the efforts of several PSI participating states to disrupt the financial mechanisms that support proliferators. They concluded that each participant should consider how its own national laws and authorities might be utilized or strengthened to identify, track, or freeze the assets and transactions of WMD proliferators and their supporters. In addition, the PSI participating states undertook to explore how PSI states can work cooperatively to prevent and disrupt proliferation finance, in furtherance of their obligations under UNSCR 1540 and 1673.

In March 2006, Indonesia rejected an express request made by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to join the PSI, stating that the PSI contravenes provisions of the United Nations Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In June 2006, the Indonesian Defence Minister announced that his government was considering the possibility of Indonesia's partial and ad hoc adherence to the PSI on a case by case basis.

**2005:** There was no plenary meeting held in 2005. There was a series of expert meetings throughout the year, and an air cargo workshop held in Los Angeles.

In September 2005, the People's Republic of China announced that it would not be participating in the PSI because of concerns over the initiative's legality.

**2004:** From 4-5 March, the fifth plenary meeting took place at Palácio Foz, Lisbon. This meeting built on previous meetings and was attended by representatives from Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Participants reaffirmed their determination to respond effectively to the threat represented by the proliferation and trafficking of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials worldwide. The participants also welcomed the commitments of Canada, Norway, and Singapore to the PSI.

The participants welcomed the call by President Bush to expand the role of the PSI to not only interdict shipments of WMD, their delivery systems, and related materials, but to cooperate in preventing the proliferation of WMD facilitators, such as companies, individuals, or rogue nations, from participating in proliferation activities. They also recognized the contributions of other participants, namely the United Kingdom, which agreed to pursue greater cooperation through military, intelligence services, and law enforcement to shut down proliferation facilitators and bring them to justice.

Participants explored key steps necessary for the new, expanding role of the PSI, including identifying national points of contact and internal processes developed for this goal; developing and sharing national analyses of key proliferation actors and networks, their financing sources, and other support structures; undertaking national action to identify law enforcement authorities and additional tools or assets that could be used to stop proliferation facilitators.

Participants also agreed that while outreach was a necessary role, attention should be paid to flag states, transshipment states, overflight states, transit states, and coastal states, as these states have the potential to make significant contributions to counterproliferation efforts by PSI members.

The proposed amendments to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA) were also discussed. They would criminalize the transportation of WMD,

their delivery systems, and related materials on commercial vessels at sea.

The participants noted that the PSI is operationally active, as six exercises took place around the world since the launch of the PSI. Several exercises were planned for 2004, including a US-led maritime interdiction in the Arabian Sea, a ground interdiction led by Poland, a maritime interdiction in the Mediterranean Sea, headed by Italy, a French-led simulated air interdiction, and a German-led exercise, dubbed "Hawkeye", at the Frankfurt International Airport.

The First Anniversary Meeting of the PSI convened from 31 May to 1 June in Krakow, Poland. Attended by representatives of more than 60 States and hosted by Polish President Aleksander Kwaoniewski, the meeting sought to increase international support for the PSI and promote wide-ranging cooperation in PSI efforts. It included several presentations regarding the status of the initiative and its future, as well as discussion of the various exercises that PSI states have taken part in. Those in attendance also addressed their broad goals for the PSI, emphasizing that its activities should not contradict national and international legal frameworks. Also at the conference, on 31 May, Russia announced that it would become a PSI member state.

**2003:** The Paris Meeting of Core Participants, held 3-4 September, focused on "the further development of a statement of interdiction principles that will enable countries to better work together within the framework of domestic and international law to enhance and expand efforts to prevent the flow of WMD, missiles, and related technologies to and from countries of concern." A key outcome of the meeting was the adoption of a [Statement of Interdiction Principles](#), which clearly identifies concrete actions for interdicting shipments of WMD and their delivery systems and also binds participants to act within international and their own domestic law. Participants reaffirmed the importance of involving as many countries as possible to work towards stemming the flow of WMD and their delivery systems.

Participants at the Paris meeting also agreed to a series of maritime, air, and land interdiction training exercises. The first exercise, "Operation Pacific Protector," was led by Australia from 12 to 14 September in the Coral Sea. The exercise involved a US ship posing as a commercial Japanese flag vessel suspected of trafficking WMD-related material. Officials said the ship was tracked, boarded, and searched on the high seas by law enforcement and military participants. France provided military assets, Japan

provided Coast Guard and law enforcement capabilities, Australia and the United States supplied military equipment, and other PSI nations participated solely as observers. The United Kingdom will host the next PSI meeting in October.

The first meeting of the 11 nations involved with PSI was held on 12 June 2003 in Madrid, Spain. The Madrid meeting was unanimous on the "need to take active measures to stop the flow of WMD, missiles and related items to and from proliferators." This reflected the international concern over the increased "trade in WMD, missiles and related items," including the risk that these weapons "might fall into the hands of terrorists."

The 11 PSI participants held a second meeting in Brisbane on 9-10 July in order to "move quickly on direct practical measures to impede the trafficking in weapons of mass destruction (WMD), missiles and related items." The meeting was chaired by the deputy secretary of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Paul O'Sullivan, and built on the results from the Madrid meeting. It moved forward in translating the collective political commitment of PSI members into practical measures. The meeting defined actions necessary "to collectively or individually interdict shipments of WMD or missiles and related items at sea, in the air or on land." The participants emphasized their willingness to take "robust and creative steps to prevent trafficking in such items," while also emphasizing the need to "be consistent with international law."

According to the chairman's summary, PSI members agreed to effectively share information that they considered to be "vital to interdiction." They also agreed to "strengthen and improve capabilities for the exchange of information and analysis between participants as a basis for cooperative action to impede WMD and missile trade." The summary also stated that PSI members "supported the strengthening of the existing framework on national laws and export controls, multilateral treaties, and other tools that remain the international community's main mean for preventing the spread of WMD and missiles."

PSI participants considered the question of state and non-state actors of proliferation concern. They referred to the relevant statements of the G-8 Evian Summit on 1-3 June and the EU-US Joint Statement on the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction on 25 June, which addressed countries of proliferation concern and non-state actors with particular reference to North Korea and Iran. PSI members have acknowledged that the PSI is a fast-track initiative that will require continued interaction among experts and policymakers.