

**The Associated Press**  
**March 28, 2007**

**Richardson: 'Nuclear 9 - 11' Is Possible**  
by The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Democratic presidential candidate Bill Richardson said the United States needs to do more to prevent a "nuclear 9-11," a threat that he argues has been neglected because the Bush administration has been consumed with Iraq.

The New Mexico governor said the United States must lead an effort to secure nuclear materials in Russia and dangerous areas of the world so they can't get into terrorists' hands. "If al-Qaida obtained nuclear weapons, they would not hesitate to use them with the same ruthlessness that allowed them to fly airplanes filled with people into buildings," he said in a speech to the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

"It took a Manhattan project to create the bomb," Richardson said. "We need a new Manhattan project to stop the bomb -- a comprehensive program to secure all nuclear weapons and all weapons-usable material, worldwide."

Asked why he doesn't support a nuclear-free world like former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and other Cold War leaders have promoted, Richardson replied, "I'm a pragmatist."

"I believe what the world needs to do is nuclear arms reductions," Richardson said. He recalled that it didn't work when President Reagan and Soviet Prime Minister Mikhail Gorbachev agreed in 1986 to renounce all nuclear weapons "for about 10 minutes."

Richardson worked on securing Russian nuclear weapons when he was energy secretary in the Clinton administration. But he accused the Bush administration of underfunding their programs.

"Meanwhile, we are spending \$10 billion a month on Iraq," he said. "Of the many ways in which the Iraq war has distracted us from our real national security needs, this is the most dangerous."

In the question-and-answer period after his speech, Richardson laid out the plans for his first days in the White House. The first day, he would get out of Iraq. The second, he would announce a plan to drastically cut U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

On the third day, the issue would be global warming. Richardson gave former Vice President Al Gore credit for spreading knowledge about the issue through his Oscar-winning film. But he wasn't encouraging Gore to enter the 2008 race.

"I like Al Gore, he looks very healthy and prosperous," Richardson said with a laugh. "He should stay where he is."