
PROLIFERATION SECURITY INITIATIVE (PSI)

Announced: U.S. President George W. Bush announced the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) on 31 May 2003.

Participants: 98 (Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Yemen).

Purpose: The primary role of PSI participants is to abide by a [Statement of Interdiction Principles](#) aimed at interdicting illicit transfers of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related 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 via air, land, and sea. Additionally, participating states agree to enact measures to ensure that their national facilities are not utilized to transfer illicit weapon cargoes.

Background: PSI is not a free-standing initiative, but builds on wider efforts by the international community through existing treaties and regimes. The event that is widely considered to have triggered the launch of 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 assis-

tance of a U.S. 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.

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

Developments:

2010: On January 25, U.S. Central Command hosted exercise Leading Edge in Abu Dhabi. The multinational training exercise included 30 states, three of which participated as observers. The exercise involved a tactical phase where boarding teams were given training by the U.S. Coast Guard, an operational phase which addressed customs and law enforcement, and a tabletop strategic discussion about post-interdiction legal and customs issues. U.S. Ambassador Richard Olson delivered [opening remarks](#) at the training in which he stated that there have been over 38 exercises of this type involving 70 countries.

On 9 April Colombia announced its endorsement and participation in the PSI.

On 26 April, the Antigua and Barbuda signed a ship boarding agreement with the U.S., joining the PSI. The same day a new Coast Guard facility at English Harbor in Antigua was dedicated, providing a strategic base from which Antiguan maritime units can work and reducing overall response times to assistance requests and improving anti-drug interdiction capabilities.

On 11 May, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines concluded a ship boarding agreement with the U.S. and announced its endorsement of the PSI, bringing the number of participants in the PSI up to 98.

On 10 May-2 June, Exercise Phoenix Express 10 was conducted in the Mediterranean Sea. Led by the U.S. European Command, the exercise was designed to improve cooperation and interoperability among partners from the United States, Europe, and Africa.

On 14-15 September, a Regional Operational Experts Group Meeting of the Asia-Pacific was held in Cairns, Australia in conjunction with the Exercise Pacific Protector 10 which was held on 16 September.

On 14-15 October the Republic of Korea hosted Exercise Eastern Endeavor. The exercise aimed to prevent illicit weapons of mass destruction proliferation through greater coordination and cooperation between regional partners.

On 28-29 October, the Republic of Korea hosted PSI Regional Workshop with 12 participating states.

On 1-2 November, an Operational Experts Group Meeting was held in Tokyo, Japan, in which 21 states participated.

2009: Exercise Phoenix Express 09, a EUCOM-led maritime interoperability exercise, was held in the Mediterranean Sea from 22 April to 13 May. Fifteen countries participated in the exercise.

On 12-14 May, an Operational Experts Group and Outreach Meeting was held in Miami, Florida.

On 26 May, in response to the North Korean nuclear test the preceding day, the Republic of Korea announced its support for the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles and became a participant in the PSI. Prior to this action, the DPRK had warned that the ROK's joining the PSI would be considered an "act of war."

On 31 May, the United States, Poland, and other partner nations marked the sixth anniversary of the PSI.

On 22-24 June, the European Regional Operational Experts Group met in Sopot, Poland to discuss upgrading European cooperation in countering WMD proliferation and effective implementation of PSI goals and principles. Over 150 participants attended from 39 European countries, the European Union, NATO, and the primary non-European countries.

Exercise PANAMAX 09, a U.S. coordinated maritime exercise with a PSI scenario, is an annual exer-

cise sponsored by U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and is designed to integrate a multinational task force in defense of the Panama Canal. The exercise was held from 11-22 September and included a multinational combined/joint task force of military units and personnel from 20 participating nations and observers from 11 nations. Thirty ships, 12 aircraft, and 4,500 people coordinated their efforts on both the Pacific and Atlantic sides of the Panama Canal.

Exercise Deep Sabre II was held at the Changi Naval Base in Singapore from 27-30 October. Designed to enhance national and international inter-agency coordination and interoperability among the PSI States, the exercise involved approximately 2,000 personnel, 18 ships, and eight aircraft from 19 PSI countries. The participating States include: Argentina, Australia, Brunei, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the United States. In addition, Malaysia, India, and Pakistan, who are not PSI Member States, attended the exercise as observers. The exercise comprised a tabletop exercise on PSI-related issues, a simulated maritime interdiction operation of a merchant vessel suspected of carrying illegal WMD-related materials, and a port search demonstration where the vessel was diverted to shore to be searched by civilian enforcement agencies. This was the second multi-national maritime interdiction exercise held by Singapore under the PSI. The PSI Exercise Leading Edge, a U.S. hosted exercise in the Persian Gulf was also held in October.

2008: On 4-6 February, an Operational Experts Group meeting was held in London.

On 10-12 March, Exercise Guistir 08, a maritime and port interdiction exercise, was hosted by Djibouti and France. The exercise involved Red Sea and Maghreb countries.

On 8-22 April, Exercise Phoenix Express 08, a maritime interoperability exercise, was hosted by the U.S. in the Mediterranean Sea.

On 12-14 May, Exercise Adriatic Shield 08, a maritime and port interdiction exercise was hosted by Croatia. Key participants included the Adriatic Sea countries, Poland, and the United States.

On 28 May, the fifth anniversary of PSI, a Senior Political Level Meeting was held in Washington, D.C. 88 States attended and adopted the "[Washington Declaration for PSI 5th Anniversary Senior-Level Meeting.](#)"

At the Asia Security Summit on 30 May, South Korean Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee stated that the Republic of Korea was considering joining the PSI.

On 11-22 August, Exercise PANAMAX 08 was hosted by the U.S.

Also on 11 August, the United States and Commonwealth of the Bahamas signed a bilateral PSI Ship Boarding Agreement in Nassau. This is the ninth PSI ship boarding agreement signed by the United States. The agreement establishes procedures for obtaining approval for boarding and searching vessels suspected of carrying illicit shipments of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, or related materials in international waters. The Bahamas has the world's third largest ship registry and serves as an open registry for shipowners from dozens of countries.

On 15-19 Sept, Exercise MARU 08 was hosted by New Zealand.

On 25-26 September, an Operational Experts Group Meeting was held in Paris, France.

2007: On 15 March 2007, the Republic of Malta and the United States signed a bilateral PSI shipboarding agreement, which entered into force on 19 December 2007. 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, 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.

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.

Exercise MARU 07 was hosted by New Zealand from 15-19 September. South Korea participated as an observer.

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.

On 23 October, the United States and Mongolia signed a PSI ship boarding agreement, which entered into force 20 February 2008. This was the eighth ship boarding agreement signed by the United States.

2006: In March 2006, Indonesia rejected an express request made by U.S. 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 Defense 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.

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: 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; improving national capacities to interdict shipments of proliferation concern; and 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.

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 counter-proliferation 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 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-U.S. 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.

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.