



**JAMES MARTIN CENTER FOR  
NONPROLIFERATION STUDIES**

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**Vienna Center for Disarmament  
and Non-Proliferation**

**FACT SHEET #3**

*Information Relevant to the IAEA General Conference*

## **Topic: IAEA and Nuclear Security**

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### **WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE IAEA IN NUCLEAR SECURITY?**

The IAEA plays an advisory role on issues related to nuclear security, providing member states with assistance in developing and implementing nuclear security programs. There is no international regulatory body for nuclear security; responsibility for protecting nuclear material and facilities lies with states. The IAEA attempts to coordinate international efforts, but can only make recommendations, not regulations. The Agency's work in nuclear security has focused on: raising awareness among member states about potential threats and need for active nuclear security; providing advisory services, training, and education to improve security programs; and promoting adherence to international instruments to secure nuclear materials.

The IAEA's responsibilities expanded following reports of nuclear smuggling in the late 1990s and after the September 11, 2001 attacks, when concerns were raised that terrorists could purposefully sabotage nuclear facilities, steal nuclear material for use in improvised nuclear explosive devices, or steal radioactive material for dispersal or exposure devices. The Board of Governors adopted the first "Nuclear Security Plan" in March 2002, a three-year plan to expand the Agency's activities to help member states prevent, detect and respond to malicious acts (such as sabotage, illicit trafficking, and theft) involving nuclear and radioactive material and related facilities. Since then two more plans have been issued, with the current one running through 2013. Overall, IAEA activity in nuclear security tends to focus on education and training in member states, providing advisory and assessment services per request from member states, promoting adherence to related international legal instruments, establishing voluntary guidelines and other recommendations, addressing cyber security and nuclear information concerns, and providing upgraded nuclear security hardware and software to member states.

In March 2012, the IAEA Board of Governors established a Nuclear Security Guidance Committee (NSGC) as a standing body of senior experts in the area of nuclear security, open to all member states. The NSGC will make recommendations on the development and review of the Nuclear Security Series publications. The objective of the NSGC is to significantly contribute to greater transparency and consensus by engaging more member states in the development of international publications for nuclear security.

The Agency has also increased its visibility in nuclear security through participation at the 2010 and 2012 Nuclear Security Summits. Both summits highlighted the role the IAEA plays in promoting best practices in nuclear security and called for a strengthened role for the Agency. They have also helped encourage more countries to invite the Agency to review their nuclear security practices. It is not clear whether the Nuclear Security Summit will continue past the next summit in the Netherlands in 2014. As a result, some



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governments, including the United States, are looking to the IAEA to shoulder greater responsibility for this issue while some nongovernmental experts would also like to see the IAEA's security reviews and standards become mandatory. A July 2013 International Conference on Nuclear Security in Vienna to discuss the Agency's next four year Nuclear Security Plan (2014-2017) is also likely to serve as a trial run for greater IAEA leadership in this area.

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## WHAT IS THE NUCLEAR SECURITY FUND?

The Nuclear Security Fund (NSF) is a voluntary funding mechanism that supports the implementation of IAEA programs to prevent, detect, and respond to nuclear terrorism. The Agency's nuclear security programs are largely supported by the NSF and other extrabudgetary and in-kind contributions, though there is a small contribution from the mandatory Regular Budget. In both 2012 and 2013, almost €18.7 million from the NSF will be required to implement planned activities. Despite increased support for nuclear security among member states, nuclear security is not considered a high priority by many countries. In 2010, for instance, only 18 countries and the European Commission made contributions to the NSF. An additional country, India, has pledged to contribute \$1 million over the next two years but has yet to formalize its intentions at the IAEA.

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## WHAT IS THE AMENDMENT TO THE CPPNM? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano will once again push member states to ratify the amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM). Signed in 1980, the CPPNM required that states parties ensure the physical security of nuclear material during transport. States parties must also establish measures to detect, prevent, and punish offenses related to nuclear material. The 2005 amendment additionally requires States Parties to protect nuclear facilities and material in all stages, including in peaceful domestic use and storage. It also provides for expanded cooperation between States Parties to recover stolen or smuggled material and to respond to sabotage.

The amendment was adopted by the states parties to the CPPNM by consensus in July 2005, and was welcomed by the Board of Governors in September 2005, who urged all states parties to ratify it. Currently only 55 states have ratified the amendment, while two-thirds of the underlying convention's 145 states parties are needed to bring the amendment into force. Countries that have not ratified the amendment include the United States, France, South Korea, Canada, and Japan. However, all of these countries as well as 15 other non-ratifying states participated in the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul whose final communiqué said that member states would seek to bring the 2005 amendment into force by 2014. In addition, the agency plans to hold four regional seminars later this year to promote adherence.

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