

# Policy Memo

**DATE:** December 7, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Controlling and Securing Nuclear Materials: Multilateral Approaches

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Given the importance of securing and controlling vulnerable nuclear materials worldwide, the Stanley Foundation convened about 35 governmental and nongovernmental officials in Washington on December 2, 2009, to examine practical steps toward meeting this goal. Participants included leading experts and diplomats from a number of countries (Brazil, Canada, China, India, Israel, Japan, Jordan, South Korea, Pakistan, Russia, and the United States) plus ranking UN officials and nongovernmental analysts.

Highlights and key observations from the discussion include:

- Participants agreed on the importance of making nuclear security a higher global priority and that global nuclear security challenges cannot be met without ongoing multilateral action.
- The April nuclear security summit of more than 40 heads-of-state in Washington, DC, will be a key opportunity for progress. Specific follow-on steps to ensure needed action will be vital.
  - One step would be a summit mandate for regular implementation meetings, perhaps twice a year, of nuclear security specialists from participating summit delegations in addition to technical experts. In this context, it will be important for heads-of-state to empower their specialists and enforcement personnel to cooperate as effectively as possible.
- While the April summit is an opportunity to make serious progress on nuclear materials security, it is equally important to ensure subsequent efforts are seen as truly international and not primarily as a US agenda.
- Strengthening the fundamentals of the nonproliferation regime, including the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, is important as a solid foundation for multilateral action.
- Participants acknowledged the central role of the IAEA in global nuclear security, but some said the agency may not be capable of fulfilling increased demands within current budgets. A major overhaul of the IAEA may be required, according to some. Others disagreed with this assessment.

- Suggestions for summit actions to strengthen the IAEA:
  - Major nuclear nations should increase their voluntary contributions over the next three years and earmark increased funding specifically for nuclear security. The goal would be to double the current IAEA nuclear security budget of about \$150 million per year.
  - Participating nations agree to train a certain number of nuclear security specialists annually for assignment at the IAEA to meet expanding demands.
  - Ensure funding for regional and bilateral meetings as complementary to broader IAEA strengthening efforts.
  - Focus on consolidation of fissile materials locations and increased IAEA safeguards inspections.
- Transparency in intentions and actions will be important before the summit, at the summit, and in follow-up activities.
  - Some warned that transparency measures could encourage “grandstanding” which can work against actual progress in improving nuclear security of vulnerable materials.
- One specific suggestion was that all participating nations come to the April summit with a clear commitment to secure radiological sources and materials in their hospitals.
- Most agreed that there is an important international private sector role in effectively securing nuclear materials.

### **Collaborators**

Collaborators for substantive agenda purposes were the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Princeton University’s Program on Science and Global Security, the Connect U.S. Fund, Partnership for Global Security, and the Chicago Council on Science and Technology.

### **Full Report to Follow**

A more comprehensive report about this conference and its major recommendations will follow in a few weeks.

The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Memo do not necessarily reflect the view of the Stanley Foundation or any of the conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all of its recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

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