



Remarks by Sam Nunn
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NTI Nuclear Materials Security Index Launch
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Thank you for coming today for the release of our Nuclear Threat Initiative’s Nuclear Materials Security Index. The NTI Index is a country-by-country assessment of the status of nuclear materials security conditions around the world. This type of in-depth index has not been produced before: it takes a broad approach in defining nuclear materials security; it’s comprehensive; it’s transparent and now it becomes public.

We hope the NTI Index will help spur dialogue and debate that begins to define the long-term path forward for a safer and more secure world.

Over the past year, our NTI team has been working in close cooperation with the Economist Intelligence Unit. In addition, to ensure that the project maintained an international perspective throughout, we sought guidance and leadership from experts around the world. This included an international panel of highly respected nuclear materials security experts from nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states, from countries with and without materials, and from developed and developing nations.

Why do we need the Index? We must start with the very real threat of nuclear terrorism. Today, it is clear that the elements of a perfect storm are gathering: There is a large supply of plutonium and highly enriched uranium—what we call weapons-usable nuclear materials—spread across hundreds of sites in 32 countries, too much of it poorly secured. There is also greater know-how to build a bomb widely available; and there are terrorist organizations determined to do it. It’s not a piece of cake for terrorists, but it’s far from impossible, and nuclear materials security is our number one defense.

We know that to get the weapons-usable materials that terrorists must have to build a weapon, they will go where the material is most vulnerable. We have a global challenge, and we are in a race between cooperation and catastrophe. As Mohamed ElBaradei, former director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, has noted: “a large percentage of the materials reported as lost or stolen are never recovered” – and, perhaps even more alarming, he added, “a large percentage of materials which *are* recovered have not been previously reported as missing.”

If terrorists succeed in blowing up a large city somewhere in the world, the result would be catastrophic—in the human toll of hundreds of thousands dead and injured, in disruptions to global commerce and global confidence, in long-term environmental and public health consequences, and in probable new limits on civil liberties worldwide.

What can we do to prevent it?

We believe that we are giving an important part of that answer today. We hope that this Index will help individual countries and the international community to set priorities and to determine what steps must be taken to better secure the materials that could be used to build a bomb.

We started by taking a broad view of security. Working with the independent group of international experts, we identified key factors which fundamentally affect a state's nuclear materials security conditions. Then we assessed their relative importance. These factors address the following questions:

- How much weapons-usable material does the state have and at how many locations?
- What kind of requirements for protection are in place?
- What international commitments related to materials security has the state made?
- What is the ability of that state to fulfill those international commitments?
- Finally, could a given country's societal factors—such as corruption or government instability—undermine its security commitments and practices?

Certainly we do not expect every country or every expert to agree with all of our assessment or with the exact order of our priorities. We welcome debate on these essential questions. We also welcome constructive suggestions for improvement.

Here are some highlights of what we found:

First, the good news: we see clear signs that **governments are becoming more engaged** on this issue. There are a number of international initiatives that can be credited for galvanizing actions by governments. As an example, to date 19 countries plus Taiwan have completely eliminated their stocks of weapons-usable materials. I also want to give President Obama and his team credit for elevating this issue to heads-of-state through the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit and to all who have been working hard to make these achievements possible. So progress is being made.

However, we are confirmed that there is not a shared consensus **about what security measures matter most**. The lack of shared priorities undercuts the ability of governments to take urgent and effective action.

Most importantly, to build a framework for assurance accountability and action, government leaders should determine robust new ways to do the following:

- One: Create a global dialogue and build consensus on a new security framework on material security.
- Two: Hold states accountable for their progress.
- And three: Build a practice of transparency that includes declarations and peer reviews. I want to make it clear that we understand that some information must be protected—like specific security practices at individual sites. But there is a lot of information that should be shared with the public and certainly other governments to build confidence and inspire actions by other countries.

When we've briefed governments about the Index, a few questions consistently come up.

First, **“Are governments cooperating with you?”** The answer is a qualified “yes.” In developing the Index, we offered briefings to the 32 countries with weapons-usable nuclear materials, and 28 took us up on it. More than half of those countries also validated the data collected by the Economist Intelligence Unit, to ensure that it was accurate. We've also kept South Korea informed, as host of the Summit in March. In the future, we hope that more governments will engage in this process.

Second: **“Why did you rank 144 countries that don't have weapons-usable materials?”** Even countries without weapons-usable nuclear materials must avoid becoming safe havens, staging grounds, or transit points for illicit nuclear activities. Every country can and must do more to help protect these materials.

Third: **Can the Index help the Nuclear Security Summit process, including the March Summit in South Korea?** Yes, we hope the NTI Index will help shape the discussion at the March Summit—and most importantly, help guide the international community and individual countries as they work to set priorities *beyond the summit*. This is, of course, up to the governments involved.

Let me add one more thought before we move to our other presenters. I want to be clear that the Index is not about congratulating some and chastising others. Instead, it should be used as a tool for initiating discussion, analysis and debate, as well as beginning to help build a consensus. My bottom line: If the world is to succeed in preventing catastrophic nuclear terrorism, all countries can and must do more to strengthen security around the world's most dangerous materials.

The NTI Index challenges governments worldwide to respond to the threat by taking appropriate steps to strengthen security conditions. As citizens and as leaders, we need to ask ourselves this question: If we had a catastrophic nuclear terrorist attack on Moscow or New York, on Tel Aviv or Jakarta, or on any other city in the world, the day after what steps would we wish we had taken to prevent it? Securing weapons-usable nuclear materials is the most critical step, and we hope the NTI Index can make a significant contribution toward this imperative goal.

I'd like to thank the funders who supported this project: the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Peter G. Peterson Foundation. And of course, I must thank Warren Buffett, whose support makes NTI possible.

I'd now like to introduce Leo Abruzzese from the Economist Intelligence Unit to give you more background on how they constructed the Index. Page Stoutland, vice president of NTI's Nuclear Materials Security Program, will then give you more information about our approach and Index results. And he'll be followed by Deepti Choubey, the senior director of Nuclear and Bio-Security at NTI. She'll talk about our findings and recommendations.

We are grateful for your interest and we look forward to your questions. Leo.