

## **Working Paper**

### **Integrating Nuclear Security Dialogue into the Broader Non-Proliferation Regime: Need, Feasibility and Potential Risks**

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Having already retreated from its halcyon days during the nuclear security summit process there are concerns that nuclear security will in the coming years not receive the political and diplomatic attention that it has had in the past. Since the nuclear security summits kick-started extensive dialogue and action on nuclear security between 2010 and 2016, the dialogue on nuclear security has mostly taken place at International Conferences on Nuclear Security (ICONS) convened by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) or at meetings connected with the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Amendment (CPPNM/A). With concerns arising about the sustainability of the nuclear security dialogue in coming years, the question arises whether nuclear security would benefit from integration into the broader nonproliferation dialogue. To ensure its salience, it might be argued that nuclear security would be better promoted in the wider nonproliferation framework, which has traditionally been more energetic politically, diplomatically, and operationally. This paper examines the need for such a move, its feasibility, and the potential risks.

#### **The Disparate Nonproliferation and Nuclear Security Communities**

Seeking to integrate the nuclear security dialogue into the broader nonproliferation debate immediately encounters the fact that the nuclear security and nonproliferation communities, broadly defined, have traditionally operated in disparate political, diplomatic, and technical spheres. By ‘communities’ I mean diplomats, other national government officials, national agency technical experts, the IAEA and other international organizations and their staff, academics, and non-governmental organizations. Experts in nuclear weapons, nonproliferation, disarmament, and arms control tend not to be concerned with the details of nuclear security, although there are some exceptions, and vice versa.

The divide between the two communities reflects differences in their historical origins, the political context in which they operate, their different treaty bases, the technical basis of their operationalization, and the resulting organizational cultures. The nonproliferation community is much more extensive than the nuclear security community, including the involvement over decades of non-governmental and academic institutions. Highly politicized nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conferences are a major feature of the nonproliferation regime, placing the issue in the international and media spotlight, even more so now that the conference preparatory committee (Prepcom) meetings are held with greater frequency. Nuclear security and nonproliferation spawn different technical goals; the one requiring measures to stop and deter states from acquiring or diverting nuclear materials, the other measures to stop and deter unauthorized access to nuclear materials by individuals or groups. This results in different operationalization

outcomes: nuclear safeguards and inspections versus ‘guns, guards, and gates’, initially, evolving towards more sophisticated approaches in recent years (Design Basis Threat; insider threats; security culture; IAEA assessments and assistance). Nuclear safeguards, not just applied by the IAEA, but by Euratom and the Argentine-Brazilian Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC), amount to the most mature multilateral arms control verification system ever devised, in the IAEA’s case absorbing the largest share of its budget and resources. Nuclear security measures pale in comparison and they do not qualify as verification.

For those concerned about the future of both areas, it would seem logical for there to be greater integration, cooperation, and mutual support and understanding. After all, both aim to reduce threats to misuse nuclear energy for peaceful purposes with potentially terrifying outcomes for the future of humanity.

### **Current interaction between nuclear security and nonproliferation ‘dialogues’**

Despite their differences, there is some substantive overlap between the two communities or ‘dialogues’ (especially when it comes to attacks on nuclear facilities), and a general recognition by each that both nuclear security and nonproliferation contribute to international peace and security and to the safe, secure and proliferation-resistant peaceful uses of nuclear energy. There is also general awareness in both communities of the existence and concerns of each other. A quick survey also reveals that there is already a notable degree of inclusion of nuclear security in the broader nonproliferation dialogue, depending on the forum and institution, although the obverse is not true (indeed there has been a concerted effort to keep nonproliferation and disarmament from ‘contaminating’ nuclear security debates).

#### ***Diplomatic delegations***

At the diplomatic level, nuclear security and nonproliferation are dealt with in the same multilateral fora, such as the United Nations General Assembly, but usually are considered under separate agenda items. In smaller diplomatic and technical delegations to international meetings (the vast majority), the issues are dealt with by the same delegates, so there will be a natural awareness of the links between the two. Most developing countries will simply adopt the well-practiced positions of the Group of 77 (G-77), with an emphasis on the inequities of the nonproliferation regime, but with scant attention to nuclear security. In the larger delegations there will often be separate delegates for nuclear security matters and nonproliferation matters. But delegation meetings and intra-group consultations, such as the Western Group, create awareness of the linkages between nuclear security and broader nonproliferation issues.

As a discrete issue, nuclear security is vastly overwhelmed diplomatically by the attention paid to nonproliferation, which may actually be an advantage. This has changed somewhat as a result of Russia’s seizure of Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) and the consequent threat to nuclear security that it poses.

In foreign ministries, the handling of nuclear security and nonproliferation issues is mixed. In smaller countries, there may only be one person handling both issues so there is a natural ‘integration’ but also a lack of capacity for substantive consideration of the issues. In larger states, there will be separate officials and sometimes even separate offices and

departments for nuclear security. It is here that bureaucratic and organizational hurdles may arise to prevent proper integration of the two areas, which may in turn be reflected in national statements and position papers. Some middle powers like Australia handle nuclear security and nonproliferation issues in the same office located in the foreign ministry where, presumably, the two are well integrated.

*The UN General Assembly* adopts annual resolutions dealing with a host of nuclear topics, but at the 2023 session only one was devoted to nuclear security, specifically on radiological weapons. Resurrected from decades ago, and tabled by the United States with the support of a large number of Western states and Ukraine, it called on the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva to adopt a work program that includes the commencement of negotiations to conclude, ‘as an initial step’, a legally binding multilateral prohibition of the use of radiological weapons by states.<sup>1</sup> After withstanding a killer amendment by Iran from the floor, it was adopted by a respectable vote of 159-5 (Belarus, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and Syria), with 15 abstentions.

The General Assembly in 2023 also adopted its usual omnibus resolution on ‘Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction’, including illicit access to nuclear material, but also to chemical and biological weapons, as well as nuclear weapons.<sup>2</sup> The resolution is a follow-up to UN Security Council resolution 1540 (SC1540), adopted in 2004, which required all UN member states to implement such measures. Adopted without a vote, a rarity these days, the text takes note of many of the key multilateral nuclear security initiatives, including the summits. It also calls on the UN Secretary-General to compile a report on ‘measures already taken by international organizations on issues relating to *the linkage between the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction* [emphasis added] and to seek the views of Member States on additional relevant measures, including national measures for tackling the global threat posed by acquisition by terrorists of weapons of mass destruction’. The report is due by the General Assembly session in September 2024.

UNGA resolutions dealing with nuclear nonproliferation are much more numerous and contentious, often with multiple votes on both preambular and operative paragraphs. In 2023 such resolutions included: competing resolutions on the NPT, as well as general resolutions on nuclear disarmament, along with specific ones on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), a fissile material cut-off treaty, the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, nuclear weapon-free zones, nuclear disarmament verification, the Convention on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and ‘Strengthening and developing the system of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements’.

Whether one would want to risk a separate General Assembly resolution on nuclear security, with the associated dangers of creating controversy where none currently exists, is questionable. Past attacks on nuclear facilities in the Middle East alone could sully the standard debate on nuclear security. The current dire situation at Zaporizhzhia threatens to do so. One of the beauties of nuclear security is that it tends, as an issue, to fly under the political radar, being considered by many to be largely technical rather than political. In convening the

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Radiological weapons’, First Committee resolution A/78/PV.42, adopted December 4, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction’, Draft First Committee Resolution A/C.1/78/L.36, adopted October 30, 2023.

first Nuclear Security Summit in 2016, President Obama was acutely conscious of the danger of allowing nuclear disarmament issues to intrude. He managed through careful selection of invited states and mindful crafting of the agenda and final documents to avoid such an outcome. Subsequent summits largely avoided persistent attempts by some states to introduce extraneous nonproliferation and disarmament issues into the proceedings.

*NPT Review Conferences and Prepcoms* have long incorporated nuclear security into their deliberations along with all other NPT-relevant matters, including in final documents. States are of course free to raise any nuclear issues they like, including nuclear security, whether in reference to civilian nuclear materials and facilities or the much-neglected topic of security for military materials. Numerous statements about nuclear security were made at the 2020 Conference, but mainly in the context of the situation in Ukraine and as just one of several concerns (and not necessarily the most pressing). In its draft Final Document (not adopted) the Conference expressed:<sup>3</sup>

... its grave concern for the military activities conducted near or at nuclear power plants and other facilities or locations subject to safeguards under Ukraine's comprehensive safeguards agreement, in particular the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, as well as the loss of control by the competent Ukrainian authorities over such locations as a result of those military activities, and their profound negative impact on safety, **security, including physical protection of nuclear material** [emphasis added], and safeguards. The Conference recognizes that the loss of control over nuclear facilities and other locations prevents the competent Ukrainian authorities and the IAEA from ensuring that safeguards activities can be implemented effectively and safely.

The Conference also reaffirmed that nuclear security – including the physical protection of all nuclear material, cybersecurity, and the protection of nuclear facilities against unauthorized access, theft, and sabotage – ‘supports the objectives’ of the NPT. The Conference acknowledged existing and emerging nuclear security threats and committed states parties ‘to addressing such threats’. There were a further eight paragraphs on nuclear security. It is hard to see how nuclear security could be further integrated into the NPT dialogue and agenda.

The first NPT Prepcom for the 2026 Review Conference, held in July-August 2023, again heard several general debate statements on nuclear security. The US made a general reference to Russia's actions at Zaporizhzhia, while the EU mentioned the importance of the IAEA, including its nuclear security work. The Vienna Group of Ten (Western countries) had the most references to nuclear security, the strongest statement on the implications of Russia's seizure of the ZNPP, and drew a direct link between nuclear security and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT/CONF.2020/CRP.1/Rev.2, August 25, 2020, para. 34.

<sup>4</sup> 2023 NPT Preparatory Committee, General Debate Statement by Australia on behalf of the Vienna Group of 10: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden.

The 2023 NPT PrepCom included working papers on nuclear forensic science for nuclear security tabled by Australia on behalf of several Western states<sup>5</sup> and an omnibus working paper ‘Addressing “Vienna issues”’, including nuclear security, submitted by the Vienna Group of Ten.<sup>6</sup> Finally, a working paper was submitted by France on ‘Nuclear safety and security serving the development of nuclear energy and its applications’, which framed nuclear security, along with safety, as essential for ensuring public confidence in the further development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.<sup>7</sup> Notably though, all working papers were from Western countries.

Nuclear security was well covered in the ‘Draft Factual Statement’ summarizing the 2023 Prepcom. It contained four paragraphs (70-74) specifically on nuclear security out of 122.<sup>8</sup> The first contained the usual caveat that ‘responsibility for nuclear security within a State rests entirely with that State’, but importantly recognized that ‘physical protection and nuclear security measures and agreements are important complementary tools for addressing proliferation threats’. The second paragraph affirmed the ‘central role’ of the IAEA in ‘strengthening an effective and comprehensive global nuclear security framework based on prevention, detection and response, including coordinating international nuclear security activities and facilitating regional activities, and supporting national implementation of IAEA guidance and recommendations’. The remaining paragraphs lauded the nuclear security summits, the IAEA’s International Conferences on Nuclear Security (ICONS), the current Nuclear Security Plan 2022-2025, and UN Security Council Resolution 1540. A further paragraph ‘underscored the existing and constantly evolving and emerging threat of nuclear and radiological terrorism and the risk of acquisition of materials by non-state actors’, as well as encouraging states to become parties to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism as soon as possible. Further paragraphs covering nuclear safety and security together began with the statement that ‘States parties stressed the importance of nuclear safety and nuclear security for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy’ (para.111).

The factual statement therefore appeared to cover the nuclear security ‘waterfront’. No disagreements on core nuclear security issues were registered. Compare this with the nonproliferation agenda, where major political disagreements were registered, including over the Middle East, the failure of the nuclear weapon states to comply with Article VI, and the Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) nuclear-powered submarine plans.

Three paragraphs of the Draft Factual Statement were devoted to the implications of the situation at Zaporizhzhia, but from a much broader perspective than nuclear security alone. In this sense, the issue of military control of and attacks on nuclear facilities was

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<sup>5</sup> Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, First session, Vienna, 31 July–11 August 2023, ‘Nuclear science for nuclear security forensics’, Working paper submitted by Australia, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.7, 13 June 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, First session, Vienna, 31 July–11 August 2023, Working paper submitted by Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Norway and Sweden (the Group of Ten), NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.17, 15 June 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, First session, Vienna, 31 July–11 August 2023, Working paper submitted by France, ‘Nuclear safety and security serving the development of nuclear energy and its applications’, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.33, 3 August 2023.

<sup>8</sup> Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Draft Factual Statement, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/CRP.3, 10 August 2023.

integrated into the nonproliferation dialogue at the Prepcom, but also into an even wider debate over the safety and security of Ukrainian personnel at ZNPP, international security generally, international humanitarian law and compliance with the UN Charter. Paragraph 67 of the statement recorded that states parties had expressed strong support for and commended the efforts of the IAEA Director General in seeking and maintaining access to enable the IAEA to undertake ‘urgent safeguards activities to verify the status of the reactors and inventories of nuclear material in armed conflict areas and to ensure the non-diversion of nuclear material from peaceful activities at those locations.’ This was obviously focused on safeguards rather than nuclear security. Later paragraphs in the safety and security section<sup>9</sup> melded the two issues together, mentioning the Director General’s Seven Indispensable Pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security in armed conflict zones and the IAEA’s Five Concrete Principles<sup>10</sup> to help ensure nuclear safety and security at Zaporizhzhia.

Although the Factual Statement was not an agreed document, it is hard to see how much more one would envisage for an agreed statement. Most delegations are in practice unlikely to notice the difference and will use them as reference points for future work.

While the Zaporizhzhia situation might be considered an ideal one for demonstrating the value of nuclear security, it has such wider implications for nonproliferation, European security, and international law and global security generally that nuclear security considerations get swamped. Since it involves an attack on a nuclear facility, the ZNPP situation also feeds directly into a complicated and controversial debate, stretching back to the 1980s, about whether there is a need for a discrete treaty to ban such attacks or whether it should be incorporated into a radiological weapons convention.

These are strikingly different approaches that would complicate any attempt to integrate them into the normal nuclear security dialogue. Those who deal with nuclear security issues of the ‘guards, gates and guns’ school or are dedicated to improving the IAEA’s nuclear security role and national capacities are not well versed in such a debate, which has taken place in the CD for decades.

Another mooted solution outside the CD is to add new measures to existing multilateral treaties, including the Amended CPPNM and/or the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT), but such ideas are likely to be considered to be stretching the scope of such treaties beyond credulity.

While there is certainly a possibility here for integrating new elements into the nuclear security dialogue, they run the risk of undoing the relative clarity and simplicity of the nuclear security agenda and jeopardizing the relatively uncontroversial day-to-day work to strengthen nuclear security at the IAEA and in the field.

***The Conference on Disarmament*** has never had nuclear security *per se* on its agenda, although delegations do of course mention it in their plenary statements. The closest the CD has come to nuclear security is, as mentioned, an old item on radiological weapons (RW) in the early 1980s which led to unsuccessful negotiations on a convention banning such

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<sup>9</sup> Paragraphs 111, 112, 113, 115, 116 and 117.

<sup>10</sup> See IAEA Director General Statement to UN Security Council, 30 May 2023, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/statements/iaea-director-general-statement-to-united-nations-security-council-30-may-2023>.

weapons. Apart from the challenge of defining a radiological weapon that did not also include nuclear weapons, the negotiations were scuttled by the debate over whether attacks on nuclear plants should be included in the scope of the convention, dealt with in a protocol, or covered in a separate legal instrument.<sup>11</sup> Closer attention has been paid to this issue in CD plenary statements since Russia's seizure of Zaporizhzhia, due to the possibility of a military strike, either accidental or deliberate, that essentially turns the complex into a radiological weapon. But despite the UNGA resolution last year, there is little chance that the CD will resume RW negotiations or talks on a separate treaty. It has been completely unsuccessful in negotiating on any of its agenda items since concluding the CTBT in 1996, almost 30 years ago. One would not want a dysfunctional body like the CD to come anywhere near the nuclear security agenda.

## **Diplomacy and operations at the IAEA**

The IAEA General Conference (GC) is constantly 'seized of' the nuclear security issue and naturally aware of its implications for the broader mandate of the Agency. Annual resolutions on nuclear security at the GC provide exhaustive detail on the subject and since they are debated and adopted in the context of a panoply of other resolutions, including those on nonproliferation and safeguards, they are certainly 'integrated' into the broader GC debates. The annual resolution specifically inserts nuclear security into the broader nonproliferation context by noting its contribution to 'international peace and security' and by referencing the need for follow-up actions on nuclear security emanating from the 2010 NPT Review Conference.<sup>12</sup> Unlike safeguards and other resolutions, the nuclear security resolutions are now relatively uncontroversial, with standard wording tinkered with periodically but which otherwise endure from year to year. This does not mean they are free of controversy and that delicate and painstaking wordsmithing is not required but they are invariably adopted in the end. A separate nuclear security resolution continues to be a useful device for maintaining a firewall from more controversial nonproliferation issues with much broader ramifications for the Agency than nuclear security and which could derail the Secretariat's substantive work on nuclear security if allowed to infect or quash the annual GC resolution.

For its part, the IAEA Secretariat has traditionally treated nuclear security and safeguards as separate realms, with distinct organizational, management, and operational approaches, despite occasional rhetorical acknowledgement of the '3Ss' approach. Originally, the IAEA's nuclear security office was in the Safeguards Department, an implicit recognition of the linkage between them and their joint contribution to nonproliferation. In 2002, the then Office of Nuclear Security (ONS) was moved to the Department of Nuclear Safety, where it was helpfully reunited with radiological security, which had previously been considered a

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<sup>11</sup> Further attention was paid to RW in related ad hoc committees as late as 1992. For background on RW see William Potter, Sarah Bidgood, Samuel Meyer, and Hanna Notte, *Death Dust: The Rise, Decline and Future of Radiological Weapons Programs* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2023). For background on the RW negotiations in the 1980s see 'Radiological Weapons', *UN Disarmament Yearbook 1982*, Chapter 16 (New York: United Nations, December 1982), pp. 350-362.

<sup>12</sup> IAEA, General Conference, Nuclear Security, Resolution adopted on 29 September 2023 during the 13<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting, GC(67)/RES/8, September 2023, preambular paras d and w.

safety matter. But the move also severed it from safeguards. In 2013, the ONS was upgraded to a division in the renamed Department of Safety and Security.

While to some extent nuclear security and nonproliferation remain bureaucratically and culturally ‘stovepiped’ in the Agency, the Secretariat has increasingly recognized the nexus between nuclear security and nonproliferation, specifically safeguards (as well as the nexus of both with safety). There is no question of ‘integration’ of nuclear security into safeguards, not least due to likely overwhelming member state opposition. The idea of nuclear security inspections, alongside or even separately from safeguards inspections has always been a non-starter. Rather there has been a growing awareness that the different aspects of the Agency’s work need to be complementary and not operate at cross purposes. However, unlike nuclear safety, for which mechanisms have been established to link it to nuclear security through what the Secretariat calls ‘nuclear security interfaces’, there is no such explicit interface with safeguards.<sup>13</sup>

There are, however, two areas where there is an explicit overlap between nuclear security and safeguards. The first is the effort to enhance nuclear security using State and Regional Systems of Accounting and Control, that were originally designed for safeguards purposes.<sup>14</sup> This effort involves national and international training courses and the preparation of relevant guidance documents, including through consultancy meetings.

The second area of convergence is a newly emergent interface relating to Small Modular Reactors (SMR). The Agency is drafting a technical report on safety, security, and safeguards by design for SMRs to guide member states considering adopting such technology. A Technical Meeting and virtual consultancy meeting were held in 2022 to help the Secretariat prepare the document.

These two areas demonstrate that it is possible, at least at the technical level, to create useful, practical links between nuclear security and safeguards, if not at the broader nuclear security/nonproliferation level.

Unexpectedly, the Ukraine crisis has brought together safety, security, and safeguards in an unprecedented fashion, illustrating graphically the nexus between all three.<sup>15</sup> The Director General’s report on Ukraine is titled ‘Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards in Ukraine’, the first time such a ‘3S’ report has been done on a member state.<sup>16</sup> Notwithstanding this development, the Ukraine issue, as already stressed, raises controversial

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<sup>13</sup> Interface activities include development of a document called Management of the Interfaces Between Nuclear and Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security, including through state consultants and a regional workshop in 2022. An international Workshop on Managing the Interface Between Nuclear Safety and Security was held in Jordan in 2022. For details see IAEA, *Nuclear Security Review 2023*, GC(67)/INF/3, August 2023, p. 24. The Agency’s Advisory Group on Nuclear Security (AdSec) and the International Nuclear Safety Advisory Group (INSAG) have also collaborated on joint projects. A Coordinating Committee on Safety Standards and Nuclear Security Series Publications and an Interface Group, comprising the chairs of the Safety Standards Committees and the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee, seek to ensure that the safety-security nexus is covered in all IAEA publications. For commentary see Trevor Findlay, ‘The IAEA’s Critical Role in Nuclear Security’ in Christopher Hobbs (ed.) et al, *The Oxford Handbook of Nuclear Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023).

<sup>14</sup> IAEA, *Nuclear Security Review 2023*, GC(67)/INF/3, August 2023, pp. 14-15.

<sup>15</sup> IAEA General Conference, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards in Ukraine: report by the Director General, GC(67)/10, 14 September 2023.

<sup>16</sup> IAEA, Nuclear Safety, Security and Safeguards in Ukraine: Report by the Director General, GC(67)/10, 14 September 2023.



issues well beyond safety, security, and safeguards. In addition to the complicating implications for European and global security already mentioned, the Russian seizure of the ZNPP raises fundamental nonproliferation issues, as the armed conflict is between a non-nuclear weapon state and a nuclear weapon state, both party to the NPT, but with only Ukraine under comprehensive safeguards and Russia free to make increasingly unsubtle threats to use nuclear weapons.<sup>17</sup> The inherent discriminatory nature of the nonproliferation regime has once more been exposed, along with second-guessing about Ukraine's decision in 1994 to surrender its nuclear weapons (to Russia) and become a non-nuclear weapon state. The nuclear security community for such reasons alone needs to tread carefully in seeking to integrate the Ukraine issue into the broader nonproliferation dialogue.

### **Potential Solutions, if Needed**

In theory, the nuclear security and nonproliferation spheres should be a natural fit. Both are designed to prevent the potential catastrophic misuse of nuclear materials that may harm human beings and the environment. In practice, though, seeking a closer relationship between the two and their respective communities and an integrated dialogue may not always be in the best interests of nuclear security. One of the strengths of the nuclear security field is that it has not been politicized to the same degree as nonproliferation, presumably because the NPT and other elements of the nonproliferation regime are directed at stopping states from a certain undesirable activity—namely the acquisition of nuclear weapons—while nuclear security aims to stop other actors from acquiring and misusing fissile material for nefarious purposes. While states need to be held accountable for slack nuclear security practices, they are not generally under scrutiny because they plan to use nuclear or radiological material for a 'dirty bomb' or radiological weapon. One of the encouraging features of the movement for enhanced nuclear security since the summit process was launched is its avoidance of the stultifying political rifts that plague nonproliferation and which are worsening, not least over the Middle East question and widespread accusations of discrimination within the regime. Nuclear security does not exhibit the same great divide over nuclear 'haves' and 'have nots', although some developing countries do allege, unjustifiably, that strengthened nuclear security measures may impinge on their right to the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. What then would be useful in fostering greater consideration of nuclear security within the broader nonproliferation context but without harming the cause?

First, it would be useful for the nuclear security community to pay greater attention to debates, resolutions, and mechanisms that deal with nuclear security in the broader Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) dialogue. While WMD-oriented approaches include chemical and biological weapons issues, with which nuclear security experts are even less familiar than nuclear weapons issues, all WMD proliferation types have certain common features that have an impact on nuclear security, including the increasing challenges of artificial intelligence (AI) and cyberwarfare techniques, illicit trade and smuggling, and new delivery technologies. Injecting nuclear security issues into the broader WMD realm would give it greater

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<sup>17</sup> As a non-nuclear weapon state party to the NPT Ukraine has a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA for the application of nuclear safeguards to all its nuclear materials and facilities. Russia, as a nuclear weapon state, is under no such obligation.

prominence and elicit potential synergies but not leave it exposed in a purely nuclear nonproliferation debate.

Second, regional approaches to creating links between nuclear security and nonproliferation are likely to be less risky politically and more productive than high-profile multilateral approaches. In the Asia-Pacific region, for instance, the safeguards, safety, and nuclear security communities are quite separate, with separate, under-resourced regional bodies for each, with widely varying memberships, none of them universal.<sup>18</sup> Other regions have the same challenges. Nuclear weapon-free zone organizations may be a venue for greater dialogue between the nuclear security and nonproliferation communities. Only the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone mentions nuclear security in its founding document, the Treaty of Pelindaba, but other zone agencies may be open to greater attention to nuclear security, including those for the Southeast Asian and South Pacific zones.

Third, while this brief survey reveals that diplomats who deal with nuclear issues are largely aware of the nexus between nuclear security and nonproliferation, if the products of their conference labors are anything to go by, it is in the technical area where more dialogue and awareness could be encouraged between delegations and their experts. This is increasingly happening at the IAEA's ICONS gatherings.

Fourth, if the nuclear security and nonproliferation communities at the governmental level tend to be disparate and uninterested in each others' concerns, the non-governmental community is even worse. Most NPT-oriented NGOs, such as Reaching Critical Will and the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), appear to have little or no interest in or knowledge of nuclear security, seeing a ban on nuclear weapons as their singular goal. Their attitude appears to be that nuclear security is a technical issue. This mirrors the attitude of many NGOs towards monitoring and verification. Many also have shown little interest in or knowledge of nuclear safeguards, seeing it as a barrier to the negotiation of declaratory-style treaties, like the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. NGOs could contribute to rectifying this by encouraging a more integrated civil society dialogue about the various approaches to nuclear challenges.

Finally, holding side events on nuclear security at the variety of nuclear conferences to educate delegations without parachuting nuclear security into official nonproliferation dialogues (and controversies) and pointless drafting exercises would seem to be of value, not least to smaller delegations that lack the capacity to cover all nuclear issues effectively. Nuclear security should have intrinsic appeal to all states as all of them have at least some radiological materials, if only for medical purposes, that need to be secured.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, any attempt to inject nuclear security considerations into broader, inevitably more politicized nuclear nonproliferation dialogues at the multilateral level, should be approached with caution. If designed to counter declining interest in a continuing

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<sup>18</sup> See Trevor Findlay, 'The Asia-Pacific Nuclear Governance Architecture Part 1: Assessing the Need' and 'The Asia-Pacific Nuclear Governance Architecture Part 2: Shaping Regional Governance to Meet Regional Needs', Asia-Pacific Leadership Network, Seoul and Canberra, 2017.

international dialogue about nuclear security such a move may have the effect of muddying the waters and detracting from efforts to strengthen nuclear security at the operational level. Other means should be sought to sustain and increase interest. In any case, a declining interest in a general nuclear security dialogue, if it is indeed happening, may be a sign of success. Cadres of officials and experts in nuclear security now exist, where none existed before, with a vested interest in advancing the subject. The IAEA is now permanently ‘seized’ of the issue where its previous involvement was minimal. Nuclear security has arrived as a mature subject of international concern and measures are being taken, progressively, albeit too slowly, to meet the challenge, without disabling political controversy.

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