

Fact Sheet

Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation (ISN)

Washington, DC

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50th Anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Fifty years ago, on July 29, 1957, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was created by a group of states that shared President Eisenhower's vision of a body to "devise methods whereby nuclear materials could be allocated to serve the peaceful purposes of mankind." President Eisenhower sought to create an agency that would "apply atomic energy to the needs of agriculture, medicine and other peaceful activities," as well as work toward providing "abundant electrical energy in the power-starved areas of the world." Fifty years after Eisenhower articulated this vision, the IAEA has grown to play a major role in preventing the misuse of nuclear technology for non-peaceful purposes, the safe use of nuclear energy for electricity generation, and other development and medical objectives.

Nuclear Safeguards

Through its role as the world's nuclear inspectorate under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the IAEA applies nuclear safeguards at over 900 facilities in more than 145 countries, performing an indispensable role in global efforts to further nuclear non-proliferation and strengthen international security. The Agency is facing new, unexpected challenges in applying safeguards. Its inspectors now play a more prominent role in investigating illicit nuclear supply networks and detecting potential undeclared nuclear activities. Agency inspectors are working to address, and keep the international community apprised of, these proliferation threats in places like Iran and North Korea.

Nuclear Security

The IAEA furthers efforts to strengthen security for nuclear materials, reducing the risk that such materials will fall into the hands of terrorists and other state and non-state actors seeking to acquire or facilitate the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Through its Nuclear Security Plan, the Agency bolsters nuclear security by providing guidance to States on means to strengthen their nuclear security plans and capabilities. Additionally, the IAEA helps the international community verify the peaceful use or storage of nuclear material from dismantled weapons and surplus military stocks of fissile material. Within this context, the United States has placed substantial amounts of highly enriched uranium (HEU) and weapons-grade plutonium declared excess

for national security purposes under IAEA safeguards. Moreover, the United States has downblended 97.3 metric tons of HEU to low enriched uranium for use in civil nuclear power reactors.

Health and Development

The IAEA helps improve human health around the world through important nuclear medicine assistance and agricultural programs. Through its Technical Cooperation program, the IAEA provides more access to peaceful nuclear technologies (approximately \$70 million to over 100 Member States annually).

United States and International Support

The United States is committed to working with the international community to sustain the technical expertise and work of the IAEA, which it has demonstrated over the past half-century. In recognition of its many humanitarian and security contributions, the IAEA was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. The United States continues to support the IAEA's mission, contributing 25% of the IAEA annual budget as well as additional funding to support the IAEA's crucial safeguards mission. In a 2004 speech at the National Defense University, President Bush noted the need to "ensure that the IAEA has all the tools it needs to fulfill its essential mandate." On the Agency's 50th anniversary, the United States calls upon the international community to redouble its effort to ensure that the IAEA can continue to address the threats and challenges of our time, continue to respond to its Member States' needs, and continue to operate in an efficient and effective manner. For its part, the United States remains dedicated to supporting the IAEA in meeting the principles embodied in its Statute to verify that nuclear materials are not diverted away from legitimate peaceful uses for military purposes; to promote nuclear safety and security; and to foster the peaceful role of nuclear science and technology, including nuclear power in support of sustainable development.

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