

April 2010

Background on the Nuclear Security Summit

The summit is scheduled to take place on April 12-13 at the Washington Convention Center. President Obama has invited more than 40 nations to participate. The expectation is for the countries to issue a communiqué that pledges to bolster efforts to **secure nuclear materials worldwide**.

The president is using this summit as another vehicle to highlight his call to rid the world of nuclear weapons. As he laid out in his Prague speech last year, nuclear terrorism is the most immediate and extreme threat to global security. The president spoke of the importance of mobilizing *an "international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years."* He hopes to bolster international cooperation in this endeavor, as well as work to disrupt the illicit trade of nuclear materials.

One major challenge the president may face is to galvanize effective action by the invited national leaders. Kenneth Luongo, president of the Partnership for Global Security, highlighted this issue in a recent article in *Arms Control Today*: *"Motivating the international community to effectively face an amorphous but potentially devastating transnational danger, such as the one arising from inadequately protected nuclear materials, presents unique challenges, in part because of the differing perspectives of countries on the priority of the problem."*

The summit will not specifically focus on Iran, but there will be discussion about issues relevant to Iran's nuclear program. The shadow of the A.Q. Khan network and the possibility of Iran providing nuclear technology to its terrorist proxies will hang over the summit. It is also expected that the president will use his private bilateral meetings with several of the world leaders, including Russian President Medvedev and Chinese President Hu, to seek to make progress negotiating the draft of a UN Security Council resolution to impose sanctions on Iran. He is not expected to have a private meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Other goals of the summit will include **ways to improve and strengthen institutions that combat nuclear smuggling**, specifically the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, as well as the Proliferation Security Initiative. The Obama administration hopes to also lay the groundwork for world leaders to fully implement the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), an international agreement to halt the production of bomb-grade uranium and plutonium.

The administration has requested \$559 million for FY 2011 that will fund the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI), which is administered by the Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). The administration also requested \$3 million to support the implementation of **UN Security Council Resolution 1540**. This resolution calls for UN member states to enforce effective measures against the proliferation of WMD, particularly to non-state entities such as terrorist organizations.

The summit will be a run-up for the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference** in May. The conference is held every five years to review the workings of the treaty. This year's conference could focus on finding a mechanism to deal with the emerging threat of nuclear terrorism.

Nonproliferation expert Ken Luongo has noted, “[t]he [NPT] has broad international legitimacy, which is critical, and is tied to the IAEA, an institution on which many countries rely heavily for support and information on best nuclear security practices. Neither, however, was designed to deal with nuclear terrorism.”

Regarding **Israel**, there has been speculation that Jerusalem’s presence would subject it to further questioning of the existence of its own nuclear program, which Israeli leaders have not been open to discuss. However, some experts have argued that Israel’s attendance will be in its interest. Chuck Freilich, a former Israeli deputy national security adviser, was quoted in *Politico* as saying that Israel should be at the summit, especially because of its interest in preventing the larger threat of nuclear terrorism. “If it’s focused primarily on nuclear terrorism, then that’s an issue Israel has interest in. Nuclear terrorism is a danger to Israel more than most other countries,” said Freilich.