

Session 6: Europe and Nuclear Security

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Summary

Panelists on the Europe and Nuclear Security panel discussed a wide range of issues under the banner of nuclear security. As Benjamin Hautecouveture, the panel moderator, noted, the IAEA defines nuclear security as the prevention and detection of, and response to, theft, sabotage, unauthorized access, illegal transfer or other malicious acts involving nuclear material, other radioactive substances or their associated facilities. Nuclear safety, on the other hand, involves the achievement of proper operating conditions, prevention of accidents and mitigation of accident consequences, resulting in protection of workers, the public and the environment from undue radiation hazards. The panelists discussed a wide range of additional issues, including nuclear terrorism and trafficking, tactical nuclear weapons, NATO alliance dynamics, missile defense, the Fukushima accident and other tangential topics like the Arab Spring and the potential impact of the Stuxnet attack on Iran's centrifuge program.

Vicente Garrido Rebolledo of the International Affairs and Foreign Policy Foundation opened the panel with a discussion on the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and related working groups. Spain is a regional leader for implementing the GICNT framework, which focuses on areas such as accounting, control and physical protection systems; the ability to detect nuclear and other radiological materials; the capability to search for, confiscate and establish safety controls; and other information and intelligence sharing. Other working groups focus on nuclear forensics and assisting GICNT partners in effectively combating nuclear terrorism. South Korea will host a Sherpa meeting at the end of June to review what progress has been made thus far. This meeting follows successful meetings in Madrid, Holland and Abu Dhabi.

Hans- Joachim Schmidt of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt focused on the tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe and their security. He noted that despite the general unity among NATO members, perceptions of challenges of security in Europe vary because of different historical experiences. He also focused on the prospects for NATO-Russia missile defense cooperation and its impact on a future bilateral arms control agreement. Schmidt also pointed out that 2012 will be an interesting year given the elections in the United States and Russia and a leadership change in China and elsewhere.

Henry Sokolski of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center posited that a discussion on Europe and nuclear security is incomplete without focusing on events that have unfolded over the past six months. He noted that the Fukushima incident in Japan, the Arab Spring and the Stuxnet computer attacks in Iran all have security implications for Europeans. Sokolski also noted that Turkey's reaction to the discussion surround the possibly removal of tactical nuclear weapons from Europe is important to monitor given the ambiguity surrounding its ambitions for its nuclear program.

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