



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What is the difference between nuclear security vs. arms control vs. nonproliferation?**
  - Nuclear security is about keeping nuclear bombs and related materials from being stolen and/or falling into terrorist hands.
  - Nonproliferation is about stemming the spread of nuclear weapons to additional states. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty is the major instrument here.
  - Arms control is about reducing the huge stockpiles of nuclear arms that already exist. The new START agreement between the U.S. and Russia is the latest example.
  - All are important objectives and are inter-related, but all are distinct areas where major efforts are required.
  
- **Why is nuclear terrorism a real threat?**
  - Not only is the threat of nuclear terrorism real, but it is the number one threat the international community faces. Over and over, we have seen reports that confirm al-Qaeda is continuing its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. With enough materials available worldwide to build 120,000 nuclear bombs, the possibility that a terrorist network could buy or steal such material is far too high. Failure to recognize the gravity of this threat could have devastating consequences.
  - There are still unsecure nuclear materials around the world - including in the developed world - which terrorists and other non-state actors could potentially gain access to. This underscores the importance for states to secure, reduce, and/or eliminate their stockpiles of weapons and sources of radiological materials, in order to prevent materials/technology from falling into the wrong hands.
  - Ungoverned or poorly-governed areas around the world potentially pose an increased risk of nuclear theft.
  
- **What will the summit accomplish?**
  - One very important accomplishment of the summit is the actual gathering itself. No other U.S. president or other world leader has ever brought together over 40 heads of state to talk about nuclear material security and preventing nuclear terrorism.
  - The summit will also establish a longer-term strategy to deal with nuclear security and counter nuclear terrorism and it will involve all stakeholders at some level including the nuclear industry and the public.
  - The summit will be an important demonstration of a broad multinational commitment to nuclear material security from the highest levels. Such a commitment has not been made to date.
  - One outcome of the summit will be a communiqué explaining what the assembled nations have agreed to. Most of these agreements will likely focus on gaining consensus to participate in existing conventions and nuclear security mechanisms.

- Individual countries are also being asked to provide information on what more they intend to do at home to improve their own nuclear security.
- Likely to be excluded from the summit are a focus on radiological or dirty bomb threats, new initiatives, and new funding commitments.
- **What will constitute success at the summit and on this agenda?**
  - Success should be marked by actionable commitments made by the participants that can be tracked transparently over time and a broad consensus that nuclear terrorism is a real threat to all nations.
  - A pledge to beef up the IAEA's ability to safeguard nuclear materials and facilities around the world and provide best practices and standards for nuclear security that can be made available through information and training to those countries that are embarking on a nuclear energy program.
  - A commitment from all heads-of-state to ratify the necessary international instruments in the nearest future would be a win; without universally-adopted standards, no country is legally obligated to do their share in providing nuclear security.
- **Why aren't North Korea and Iran involved?**
  - North Korea and Iran will not be present at the summit.
  - While Iran likely has minimal stocks of HEU, it is extremely unlikely that it will provide or sell materials to terrorists. It's important to remember that this is a regime intent on maintaining its power, so there is little benefit, if any, to providing materials to terrorists.
  - North Korea has enough plutonium to be a concern, but it is extremely important to the state and is likely well guarded. Like Iran, it is a regime intent on maintaining its power, so there is little benefit, if any, to providing materials to terrorists
  - Iran and North Korea are both under UN sanctions because of their nuclear activities and are being treated on separate negotiation and engagement tracks to get them to eliminate their nuclear material stockpiles.
  - Also, their presence at this meeting could be disruptive and detract attention from the real issue which is preventing nuclear terrorism.
- **What do the U.S. budgets look like on nuclear material security?**
  - The US budget request for FY11, has about \$3.1 billion for WMD security around the globe. Last year it was \$2.8 billion. This year there is a \$320 million increase over FY10 (the current fiscal year) primarily to meet the President's four-year nuclear security goal.
  - But even at this level, it is unlikely that the President will be able to reach his goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear materials worldwide in four years.
  - It is not clear if the U.S. Congress will support this level of funding as some have questioned whether it can all be spent in one year.
  - However, to have any chance of meeting the President's four-year goal the budget needs to be front-loaded and the Congress needs to be a partner in this process.
- **Where does non-U.S. funding for nuclear material security come from?**
  - Primarily from the G-8 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, which has 21 countries and the European Union contributing. The overwhelming majority of this funding is being spent in Russia, with some in the Ukraine.
- **How does the G8 Global Partnership fit?**

- It is the multilateral corollary to the U.S. effort and is supposed to be contributing \$1 billion per year of non-US contributions + \$1b from U.S. for this purpose, but in reality it is less.
  - Most of its funding is for nuclear submarine dismantlement, and chemical weapons destruction.
  - The hope is that, if given a more global mandate, the G8 Global Partnership will be extended for another decade, more global focus, with renewed financial commitments at the G-8 summit in Canada in June.
- **What countries should we pay particular attention to during and after the summit?**
    - In addition to the countries which have large stockpiles of nuclear materials, we must also be sure to engage countries whose territories can be, or are, used for smuggling or trafficking in nuclear materials. Many of these countries are attractive havens or transit routes for criminal groups and terrorist organizations.
    - Arguably, Pakistan, Russia, and HEU-fueled research reactors around the world generally are the highest priorities because Pakistan is in a very dangerous neighborhood, Russia has the largest stockpile, and research reactors tend to not be adequately secured. In the research reactor category, the places in developing or transition countries with the most substantial stocks are South Africa, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. But wealthy countries can often have security that needs improvement as well, because of complacency rather than lack of resources (such as the minimal Nuclear Regulatory Commission's rules for U.S. research reactors).
- **What will the opposition's position be on this?**
    - The goal of securing all vulnerable nuclear materials in four years received a bipartisan standing ovation at the State of the Union address. So, it is not clear that there is any serious opposition to the goal in the U.S.
    - However, there is some concern about the budget in the Congress and whether all the funds being requested can be spent as quickly as needed. This shortsighted perspective fails to acknowledge reality of costs associated with preventing a nuclear threat versus those for responding to a nuclear terrorist attack.
    - On matters of nuclear security, there has long been bipartisan cooperation.
      - In Congress, starting with the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) efforts, authorization and appropriations for nuclear security programs have had broad support and champions on both sides of the aisle.
      - The past three Administrations have all considered nuclear materials security to be a top priority. The legacy of enduring programs to address the concern, including Global Partnership, CTR, Global Threat Reduction Initiative, etc., reflect this commitment by both parties to safeguard our national security by ensuring that nuclear materials are properly accounted for and controlled.
- **How do you reconcile Obama's push for reviving nuclear energy construction in the U.S., his opposition to the geological repository at Yucca Mountain for waste, and his four year effort to secure nuclear materials?**
    - Most nuclear power reactors do not use weapons-grade fuel.
    - Any growth of nuclear power throughout the world will require greater attention to the security of the materials and technologies.

- There could be a conflict between nuclear power and securing nuclear materials but there doesn't have to be. While the nuclear fuel cycle produces many of the same materials used to make nuclear bombs, the fuel cycle can be designed to eliminate such a danger if we use imaginative approaches like international monitoring of uranium enrichment facilities. The danger coming from the cancellation of the Yucca Mountain spent-nuclear storage facility is that it might revive plans to reprocess used nuclear fuel, which could create new proliferation possibilities.
- **Can you give us an update on the global store of nuclear materials and their security?**
  - Roughly 1600 metric tons of highly enriched uranium and 500 metric tons of plutonium have been produced around the globe.
  - In particular, the U.S. is working closely with a number of nations to ensure that the security of stockpiles is high, that excess HEU is downblended, and that materials that are not needed are returned to the country of origin and secured.
  - Most of the U.S. focus has been on working with Russia; and U.S. officials have stated that about 92% of the work in Russia has been completed to date.
- **How easy is it for al-Qaeda to get their hands on this stuff?**
  - The tighter the security – both inside and outside the facilities - the less likely acquisition of material by terrorists is. . This means protecting against both the insider threat (from a plant worker, for instance) and the outsider threat of use of force against a facility.
  - Still, al-Qaeda has repeatedly stated that it is actively seeking nuclear capability.
  - If they do get it then they need to get enough of it (25+kilograms of HEU for example) and then machine it and configure it so that it will explode, and then transport it to the target. None of this is easy.
- **Is it possible that al-Qaeda already has some stuff and is just waiting for the right time? How come they (al-Qaeda) haven't already set one of these dirty bombs off? (If nuclear terrorism is the number one threat and there's all this stuff out there, how come something hasn't already happened?)**
  - It is possible. But there have been no public reports of al-Qaeda having access to nuclear materials or stockpiling them. But the intelligence capability in this area is not infallible.
  - Some argue that al-Qaeda will wait until it can strike dramatically again; others argue that the organization has been splintered and is focusing on smaller level attacks. However, al-Qaeda did call off an attack on the NYC subway because they did not consider it to be a large enough event.
- **Is there a worldwide accounting systems/database of the materials and do we have examples of when stuff has "gone missing" or was stolen?**
  - The IAEA is responsible for accounting for nuclear materials in non-nuclear weapons states that are party to the NPT. Nuclear weapons states, declared and undeclared, can accept IAEA inspections but usually only on a limited basis.
  - Individual countries keep track of their own nuclear materials production but most do not declare the total and the record keeping has been imperfect.
  - We do not know with convincing certainty the global stockpile of HEU and plutonium.