



INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Seminar on Innovative Approaches to Nuclear Non-Proliferation and the Nuclear Fuel Cycle

C07IV, IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, 5-6 February 2004

RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT¹

Introduction

On 5-6 February 2004, 27 experts from research institutes and academia and some 15 journalists met at the Headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna to participate in a *Seminar on Innovative Approaches to Nuclear Non-Proliferation and the Nuclear Fuel Cycle*.

The seminar was organized by the IAEA's Office of External Relations and Policy Co-ordination and was intended to provide a forum for an exchange of ideas and discussion between and among the participants and Agency staff on the question of verification in a non-cooperative environment; the prospects for multinationalizing the front and back ends of the nuclear fuel cycle; and on strengthening nuclear security and assessing the current threat of nuclear terrorism.

The seminar also included a media panel in which both experts and journalists participated, and which focused on engaging the media on nuclear non-proliferation issues.

All participants took part in their personal capacity and on the basis of "non-attribution by name".

¹ This rapporteur's report summarizes most of the main themes discussed. It does not purport to capture the full scope of the discussions at the Seminar. All participants attended and spoke in their personal capacity and their comments were "off the record". For questions or comments, please email f.simpson@iaea.org.

THURSDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2004

Opening Remarks: The Opening Remarks focused on a general overview of the current state of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and challenges to it. It was noted that some 5-8 countries still have nuclear weapons and that the genie of nuclear-weapon knowledge is out of the bottle. It was also noted that the increasing access to nuclear-weapon-technology and the evident failure of nationally-based export control regimes to prevent such access had created a dangerous situation. Regarding the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), it was pointed out that an unwelcome precedent had been set wherein a State – having previously acquired proliferation sensitive technology as a member of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) – then “breaks out” of the NPT before going on to develop a nuclear-weapon capability very quickly. The importance of the Additional Protocol to IAEA safeguards agreements in increasing the assurances the Agency can provide to the international community was underscored. With the Additional Protocol in force, the Agency is able to provide greater assurances not only with regard to the non-diversion of safeguarded nuclear material but also regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and facilities.

However, nuclear weapons continue to be viewed by many States as instruments of power and prestige and as symbols of technological progress and development. In addition, the need to examine the reasons for the political insecurities that lie at the heart of nuclear weapon development was highlighted: States that possess such weapons, or that live under the protection of a nuclear umbrella, could not expect this discriminatory situation to be accepted for much longer – i.e., a situation where the security of some States is guaranteed by nuclear weapons, while others live in varying degrees of insecurity or in conflict prone regions.

Given these limitations and trends, it is critical to move forward on the negotiation of a Fissile Material (Cut-off) Treaty (FM(C)T). It is equally vital to examine new methods of limiting the further proliferation of nuclear weapons in ways that would complement and reinforce the unavoidable limitations of safeguards and export controls. In this respect, it would be useful, firstly, to explore the prospects for the multinationalization of the nuclear fuel cycle and to assess whether – given today's context – an initial examination of this concept might not begin to bear fruit. A note of caution was sounded in that the Agency could not always act as a “fire-brigade”, retroactively addressing proliferation problems that had already developed.

Recent events have shown that intelligence-sharing does not work well, and that it is no longer feasible to have a “gentleman's agreement” of nuclear suppliers to curb nuclear exports. Secondly, therefore, the time has come to universalize export controls in the form of a universal, multilateral, treaty-based agreement. Greater national controls need to be exerted over equipment and technologies relevant to the nuclear fuel cycle while continuing to preserve the rights of all states to peaceful nuclear technology.

Panel I: Nuclear Verification in a Non-Cooperative Environment: The first session of the seminar focused upon general principles of verification, as well as

lessons from the 1990s – with particular reference to the cases of Iraq and the DPRK. Current concerns over “breakout” scenarios and the limitations of the safeguards system were also discussed, as were the future prospects for nuclear verification in light of the events of the past year.

General principles of international nuclear verification in both cooperative and non-cooperative environments were discussed, as was the need for good and reliable information. It was also considered important to avoid jumping to conclusions and making premature judgments. Furthermore, it is important to make use of the full set of verification tools. One comment noted that high level political support had to be built in order to “back up” verification. There was a suggestion of the possibility of an annual “State of Proliferation Report” by the United Nations (UN) Secretary General and an annual debate of the subject in the UN Security Council (UNSC). Institutionalizing UNSC involvement would, one participant proposed, make it easier for the international community to deal with new threats in this area. One participant underlined that verification should be used to further both nuclear non-proliferation (Article III of the NPT) *and* disarmament (Article VI), and another cautioned against using the “rogue state concept” – focusing solely on countries of concern – saying that the system must be universal, not targeted only on the activities of selected states

The differences between Iraq, the DPRK, Libya and Iran were also discussed, and concerns were expressed that the current verification system, comprising both safeguards agreements and the Additional Protocol, could not of itself detect violations in a timely manner. It was also asserted that the Agency’s task, to provide “timely warning of diversion”, does not work with respect to certain elements of the nuclear fuel cycle, and that the “minimalist approach” to national sovereignty should be re-evaluated and resource allocation rethought. The logic of deterrence assumed that violators would be deterred by the costs of being caught, but this no longer held. The current verification system was based upon the assumption of a cooperative environment and a culture of trust. One participant remained unconvinced that the recent events in Iraq had demonstrated that inspections worked and that the Agency would be able to provide “timely warning of diversion”. Another participant noted that the notion of “timely *warning* of diversion” does not appear in Agency literature, which refers instead to “timely *detection*”, adding that it was important to bear in mind that the IAEA is a part, albeit an important part, of a bigger non-proliferation picture. It was pointed out that the discussion of limitations had taken place only with reference to the Agency, but that the distinction between the IAEA and the nuclear non-proliferation regime as a whole needs to be reasserted.

A number of conclusions were offered: first, the burden of proof should be shifted from the Agency to the States Parties; the Agency should adopt a new corporate culture; it should be recognized that multilateralism had limitations and that regional models – along the lines already in place in the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) – might be a useful tool. It was further concluded that the Agency must continue to investigate ways further to improve the safeguards system. One participant noted though that it would be impossible for a

verification system to provide 100% assurance either of compliance or non-compliance.

The cases of the DPRK and Iraq were also compared, and it was proposed that prior to 1994, the system – improved by the lessons learned in Iraq – had worked and generated a warning that all was not well. From thereon in, a new system was put in place with the 1994 Framework Agreement. It was observed that the framework was “a partially implemented, limited agreement”, which had therefore led to “partial, limited success”. Another participant stated that the Agreed Framework, with all its flaws, had been the best available option at the time. The Iraqi experience, on the other hand, had demonstrated that the IAEA was able to perform “search-and-destroy” missions in a non-cooperative environment. It had also shown the necessity of full political support and had been aided by the threat of the use of force.

Turning to the question of “breakout” scenarios, it was noted that while the Agency can serve as an alarm, this is no replacement for ensuring that sensitive technologies and materials are secure and are not proliferated. Therefore, it is time to re-evaluate the question of what constitutes a “significant quantity” (SQ) –the approximate amount of nuclear material for which the possibility of manufacturing a nuclear explosive device cannot be excluded. It was suggested that a new approach to the threat of “breakout” might be one which obliges a State to forfeit the nuclear materials, equipment and technology it had acquired as a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the NPT if it later decided to withdraw from that Treaty.

It remained unclear as to how to encourage States to rethink their rights as currently articulated under Article IV of the NPT, which provides for the “inalienable right of all Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes”, and the form of assurances of guaranteed supply of nuclear fuel. One participant recommended that any nuclear cooperation/transfers be made conditional on the importing State’s commitment to keep all nuclear materials and facilities under highest standards of security, and the use of security assurances or some form of guaranteed supply were also proposed.

Noting that by its very nature verification was an adversarial act, one participant argued that there is no such thing as a “cooperative” verification environment. Some warned, however, that non-cooperation was part of a broader problem and it was suggested that the adoption of a no-trust culture would serve only to make adversarial interactions between the Agency and the State more prevalent. There is a connection between the level of trust or mistrust and the corresponding levels of cooperation. There was yet another view according to which a state’s willingness to cooperate, or its lack thereof, was in itself an indicator of its intentions.

A number of suggestions were made for the future, including that future verification would benefit by focusing on and developing remote monitoring, environmental sampling, nuclear forensics and the tagging of sensitive nuclear materials and technologies. The proposal was made for an IAEA research and development working group, focusing on Evolving Nuclear Arms Control Technologies. In addition, the international community could help by promoting and sharing

verification technology and by beginning to question “decades of nuclear autonomy and sovereignty”.

The use and benefits of open source information were also touched upon, and it was commented that its use should be supported and expanded, particularly by governments. One participant noted that in order for information to be useful it had to be given to good analysts, who are in short supply. One participant also pointed out the importance of “societal verification” – such as that which occurred in Iran – wherein opposition parties provided some accurate new information on the Iranian nuclear program. On a more general note, it was also suggested that it could be useful to analyze the multilateral environments in which the Agency could play a role, for example in the G-8. There was also agreement on the need to prioritize efforts to increase the number of States with the Additional Protocol in force.

Panel II.1: Innovative Approaches to Managing the Nuclear Fuel Cycle (Part I):

Overview and Enrichment: The second session focused on the management of the nuclear fuel cycle, with particular reference to the prospects for multinationalization. In order to give the necessary attention to the subject, the panel was divided into two parts, the first of which gave a general overview and discussed uranium enrichment.

The participants were provided with an overview and assessment of the history behind such efforts, including the Baruch Plan, the concepts articulated in Atoms for Peace, the creation of the NPT and the efforts in the mid to late 1970s to move ideas forward under the auspices of the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation (INFCE) programme. Events in recent years were also discussed, as was the renewed interest in such ideas and their potential for addressing the problems that continue to plague the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The questions of deception/ambiguity; the nuclear fuel cycle; Article IV; and the multinational proposal were examined. It was noted that while any State seeking to develop nuclear weapons would engage in deception and ambiguity, from the 1960s until quite recently there had been a “reluctant degree of tolerance” for such behavior and a fear of confrontation. Now, however, this appears to have changed.

One participant stated that the nuclear industry was possibly the least dynamic industry today, suggesting that there is no economic justification for plutonium reprocessing and limited reason for investment in new enrichment capabilities. It was suggested that the traditional interpretation of Article IV of the NPT as providing an inalienable right for the State to decide what constituted a justifiable investment in this area appears to be under attack – particularly in the United States. With respect to the multinationalizing of the nuclear fuel cycle, it was stated that such a venture must not be used to justify further investment and development in certain technologies which otherwise have no economic justification.

Regional approaches such as that of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABAAC) were identified as justifying favorable consideration when exploring new methods for managing the enrichment-related aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle. These could constitute a means by which to include

those States that are not NPT members. The need to take into account the economic aspects of each region, both those currently prevailing and those that may come about in the future, was also emphasized.

As a precedent for multinationalization, however, URENCO had been – for the most part – a commercial success story. One participant recalled that, at the time, Germany had been motivated chiefly by its own desire to demonstrate its good faith and peaceful intentions. Another participant, however, suggested that there is no reason to assume that multinational cooperation in this area is innately good, recalling that proliferation had occurred as a result of URENCO's operations. It was also suggested that the recent tendency towards unilateral approaches to the problem of terrorism could have a negative effect on the potential for and appeal of multinationalization in this context. It was emphasized that such a project should not be based upon a separation between “good” and “bad” countries.

A number of questions were raised, including whether multinationalization would involve the construction of new facilities or the conversion of existing facilities. It was noted that the detection of a clandestine enrichment capability was markedly more difficult than the detection of reprocessing. It was suggested that while “transparency and knowledge” would be improved under multinational control, confidentiality could suffer as well. Concerns were also expressed regarding the possibility of technology transfer under multinational control.

One participant raised the possibility of incorporating the concept of a multinationalized fuel cycle into a FM(C)T. Commenting on this prospect, was another participant suggested that while joining the two would be complicated, it would not be beyond imagining, as many “idealistic” possibilities have later come to be seen as realistic. One participant recalled that Article IV, like Articles V and VI, was not in the initial draft of the NPT. In the mid-1960s, it was easier to understand the importance and necessity of Article IV, but in today's context it was suggested that this Article was much less relevant. It was further suggested that the primary problem centres on how to dissuade States from wanting to acquire centrifuge enrichment capability and how to create a norm against certain technologies and activities. It was proposed that it might be possible to multinationalize a nuclear power plant and have some States financially “buy” into it.

However, one participant wondered on what basis it would be possible to deny States rights that are enshrined in the NPT. Another participant stated that nuclear energy has great potential for the future and arrangements should ensure that it might still be pursued, particularly in developing States. Another recalled that Article V of the NPT enshrines the right to conduct peaceful nuclear explosions, but it is considered to be a “dead” article. Thus there is a better precedent for attempting to change the NPT (i.e. Article IV) politically, rather than legally, although it was also noted that efforts to reinterpret the NPT were often dangerous.

Scepticism was expressed that weaponization had occurred as a consequence of the nuclear fuel cycle, which is itself neutral. It was commented that uranium enrichment could indeed be economically justifiable, not just in terms of cost, but in terms of

nuclear energy security. Others raised the question of how one would deal with the possibility of withdrawal from such consortia or what would happen in the event of seizure of the facilities by the hosting State or with regime change.

The policy of technology denial, it was commented, has only bought time and thus it is now worth considering the possibility that some technologies are simply too sensitive to be left under purely national control. It was pointed out that the oil industry has been multinationalized for years, but that nuclear energy has never been approached on purely economic terms.

In the view of one participant, the fuel cycle should be viewed as the “weapon of choice” for dealing with proliferation, as a great deal has been learned since the 1980s about how proliferation is likely to occur. While multinational control over sensitive portions of the fuel cycle would not solve the proliferation problem, it would nonetheless be an improvement over national control. Nonetheless, others noted that it would be crucial to identify the scope of the problem that such a scheme would seek to address. National controls over access to sensitive technology are breaking down more quickly than had been anticipated. As a consequence, multinationalization of the fuel cycle warrants serious consideration. However, sooner or later – if a country wants nuclear weapons – it will obtain them, underscoring the need simultaneously to address the causes of nuclear proliferation and the question of security.

Others considered that the real problem stems from illicit or “surreptitious transfer” of technology and that this problem is far more immediate. A multinationalization project would be years in the making and, while worth exploring, would have to take a back seat to the more pressing questions of export controls and the nuclear black market.

The proposal was made that a study be set up to explore whether such a project is likely to fall prey to the same discussions and roadblocks as in the 1970s, or whether the different context might facilitate more progress and more tangible results. It was recalled that – contrary to expectations in the 1970s – the plutonium economy never got off the ground.

The suggestion was made that perhaps the best way forward would be to begin with the commercial sector: consulting representatives from the nuclear industry and seeking their opinion as to the best way to multinationalize the fuel cycle. Only then should governments, academics, think tanks and bureaucracies get involved. Without industry support, it is likely that the project will fail.

FRIDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2004

Panel II.2: Innovative Approaches to Managing the Nuclear Fuel Cycle (Part II): Reprocessing and Spent Fuel: The second panel on innovative approaches to managing the nuclear fuel cycle focused on the back end of the fuel cycle: reprocessing and spent fuel. The prospects for international support and the question of how international participation might be engaged were also discussed.

Concerns were expressed that the course of the new vision might affect current fuel cycle efforts of some states. The feasibility of bringing non-NPT States India, Israel and Pakistan under the umbrella of such a scheme was questioned, as was the likelihood that States of concern – those that had prompted the IAEA Director General's proposal² – would be inclined to join such a scheme in the first place. The establishment of an international plutonium storage bank or management organization was suggested as an alternative to the proposal.

Once again, the *ipso facto* assumption that multinationalization would necessarily increase transparency was challenged, and it was noted that the completion of the fuel cycle is one of the pillars of some States's nuclear policy and independence. However, another participant considered that such cooperation would also allow for the sharing of experiences and development risks, as well as increasing transparency. It was noted that a project of this kind would require the harmonization of regulations and licensing procedures, as well as of the different interests of users. It was also emphasized that States should continue to play an important role in the development of nuclear energy.

One participant asserted that non-proliferation is a political issue, to be solved by political means, although technological approaches are important complementary tools in this regard. It was suggested that continuing focus be placed on the development of proliferation-resistant technologies for the fuel cycle, and that it was worth evaluating the possibility of joint ventures between enterprises in developing countries and existing national and multinational suppliers of nuclear fuel cycle services, based on commercial interests. The participants in such schemes could agree on nuclear non-proliferation goals, to be verified or sponsored by organizations such as the IAEA, ABAAC or the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

During the discussion, one participant wondered whether such a proposal would be intended to serve as a policy objective or as a diagnostic tool – to detect the intentions of others. In response to this suggestion, another participant stated that regimes should not be used in this way, due to the fact that they are not neutral instruments, but are written and established with certain political aims in mind.

It was further noted that the demands on sovereignty would vary widely, depending how such a scheme was pursued – as, too, would the possible economic costs. The “constituencies” of such a proposal, i.e. supplier states; emerging suppliers; industry; customers (in the case of utilities); governments; and others such as environmentalists and nationalist political parties, should be identified.

The suggestion was made that the greater the adversarial relationship between the nuclear-weapon States and others the proposal is aimed at, the more such proposals will be considered suspect. It would be easier to achieve multinationalization at the back end of the fuel cycle, but that would be of less immediate value. In addition, while such a project could not go forward without US support, it was also likely that

² “Towards a Safer World”, *The Economist* (London: 16 October 2003).

US support would generate scepticism among many potential participants. As a consequence, while such a proposal would require US support, it might also require another State or States to take the lead. Alternatively, it was suggested that rather than formal multinationalization, it might be possible to employ “multiple bilateral relationships”.

It was noted that the nuclear industry has been around for over fifty years and yet still has no capacity for long-term disposal of spent nuclear fuel. However, few States would be inclined to give up national control over what is done on their territories, and that it might instead be better to work towards “retrievable storage”. Another participant proposed that multinationalization of the fuel cycle should not start out on “a grand scale”, but should start small and expand. Regionally based initiatives would likely be the most appealing and would not take as long to implement. A suggestion was made regarding the possibility of Joint Nuclear Fuel Centres between Pakistan and India, and under IAEA safeguards. It was added that multinationalization would make sense in the context of an expanded programme, rather than one or two nuclear power plants.

The suggestion was made that multinationalization could be desirable because it would allow States formerly subject to US consent rights to let their activities rise and fall on the basis of economic benefits: the market would take over instead. One participant wondered if EURATOM might be able to “reinvigorate” itself to provide a kind of leadership role in lieu of the US, or whether the UK, France and/or Russia might play that role.

After Panel II, sessions 1 & 2, several participants were called upon to give their summaries on the previous discussions:

It was reiterated that the most sensitive areas in nuclear energy development are uranium enrichment and reprocessing of spent fuel. For those who do not want to give up the nuclear energy option, the importance of the assurance of supply and shifting alliances are playing an even greater role. Some suggested convening a small group of experts – including the IAEA but excluding governments – to find solutions to the growing problems in connection with the nuclear fuel cycle. Such experts could coordinate their views, submit them to governments and make them public through mass media. The problems of special nuclear materials; weak enforcement of international norms by the UN Security Council; and plutonium separation activities were specifically identified as being worthy of attention.

One participant also considered that there was a clear need for a multinational depository and universal export standards. It was stated that the seminar had raised more questions than it answered. For instance: what could realistically be done about the fuel cycle? What would be the costs of dealing with spent fuel? It was suggested that the oil crisis of 1973 had demonstrated that the value of nuclear energy is in its security. In addition, the threat of terrorism is now greatly influencing the agenda of many states; while nuclear safety issues tend to unite discussants, nuclear security issues tend to separate them.

Panel III: Enhancing Nuclear Security: The panel on nuclear security focused on two aspects: the identification of key challenges and responses, as well as an assessment of the current threat of nuclear terrorism.

It was proposed that there already existed a broad awareness of what must be done in the context of nuclear security; it remains only to gain support for and implement the solutions. Security measures continue to be insufficient and the call was made for a “National Security Partnership” between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, alongside rapid upgrades in nuclear warhead security in Russia. The nuclear security threat, as it exists today, is essentially terrorist and comes in the form of possible attacks against civilian targets and populations by those who seek the use – or threat of use – of a nuclear device and who wish to acquire the necessary nuclear fuel to do so. This extends also to the risks of the use of a radiological dispersal device (“dirty bomb”).

In the past, it was recalled, government money was spent in this area, but without an overall, coherent plan: it was assumed that non-State actors were not capable of assembling a nuclear device. Today, it is believed that a gun-type nuclear explosive device, using high-enriched uranium (HEU), could be assembled by terrorists, but only if they could gain access to sufficient amounts of fissile material. A call was made for the securing and elimination of HEU stocks globally.

The work done by the Agency towards enhancing nuclear security was discussed, along with the three main threats of nuclear terrorism: the detonation of a nuclear explosive device; the use of a radiological dispersal device; and the sabotage of a nuclear facility or during the transport of nuclear materials. An overview was provided of the IAEA programme for the protection against nuclear terrorism and of the Agency’s Plan of Action for Protection Against Nuclear Terrorism, emphasizing that Agency activities focus on prevention, detection and response. The progress made by the Agency with respect to the provision of evaluation and appraisal services was noted, as were the education and advisory services, and the resources provided by IAEA Member States to the Nuclear Security Fund.

It was pointed out that the smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive materials is a problem that is most dangerous and widespread in the former Soviet Union, and is accompanied by the problem of “brain drain” of former nuclear scientists. In addition, the possibility of accidents caused by ignorance of the risks due to poor social and economic conditions were noted.

One participant suggested that the Agency hold an Annual Nuclear Security Review, while another expressed concern about the “mass anxiety” which often resulted from the frequently sensationalistic discussion of this threat. The “nuclear smuggling summer” of a few years ago – which caused a great deal of unnecessary panic – was recalled. However, it was also noted that a great deal had been done to address these kinds of problems in the last ten years – primarily as a result of concerns that had arisen following the demise of the Soviet Union.

Others declared that States needed to be more pessimistic about the realities of such a threat and must begin to prepare accordingly, suggesting that a State's nuclear security capabilities be linked to the provision of other assistance (for example, that coming from the Agency's technical cooperation (TC) programme, the United Nations or UNESCO). The comment was made that the WMD terrorist threat is essentially from radiological (and biological) weapons. It was thus suggested that the prevention of such acts be primarily an intelligence-led exercise.

Panel IV: International Media Forum: Engaging the Media on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Issues: The final panel of the seminar contained discussants from both NGOs and the media. In light of the increasing media attention during the last year, the panel sought to provide a "scorecard" for 2003. The panel also focused on the role of the media, both in reporting non-proliferation news and in helping to drive the non-proliferation agenda. It was observed that the year 2003 had seen unprecedented attention focused on the work of the IAEA and had led to a sharp increase in requests for information and interviews received by the Agency's Division of Public Information in 2003.

An overview of non-proliferation stories in 2003 was provided. With respect to Iraq, one participant considered that there has been some good news. Despite the ejection of inspectors in 1998, it now appears that Iraq had been unable to reconstitute its nuclear programme and that the IAEA and UNSCOM inspections between 1991 and 1998 had worked. One participant pointed out that societal verification – while useful in Iran –has not been helpful in the case of Iraq.

The case of the DPRK also demonstrated what one participant called "false transparency", referring to the recent invitation of selected groups to the DPRK to see certain facilities. It was also noted that, in the eyes of the IAEA, the DPRK had not legally withdrawn from the NPT as it claims, but is still a party to that treaty. One participant suggested that the DPRK appears to have concluded, from the recent war in Iraq, that Iraq was invaded because it had no nuclear deterrent.

In the case of Iran, the utility of societal verification was reiterated (in reference to those parts of the programme that had been exposed by Iranian dissidents), which may serve as a warning to others. The Iranian case provoked discussions regarding the NPT and what activities it permits, although Iran's signing of the Additional Protocol constituted a success. In light of the leaked Board of Governors report on Iran and the furore that had erupted in the US over the use of the concept of "evidence", one journalist suggested that the Agency reconsider its reasons for withholding such reports.

Finally, recent events in Libya have revealed new aspirations and exposed a black market. The revelations have also demonstrated the power of "economic and security incentives". In addition, one journalist noted the lack of media awareness of the US/UK initiatives in Libya until the story was officially released.

Concerns were also expressed regarding apparent governmental manipulation of the press. The need to get the news out quickly frequently dictated that the first port of

call for information was, increasingly, governmental briefings. This, in the eyes of one participant, was turning the press into a conduit for what governments want their populations to believe. In response, one journalist recalled the recent release of the findings of the Hutton Inquiry (held in the United Kingdom and released on 28 January 2004) and suggested that the fight between the Blair government and the BBC does not support the idea that the media merely parrots back government information.

The use of the same databases, too, has often led to a uniformity of information. It was suggested that part of the reason for the lack of questioning of government non-proliferation policies by the media was due to the preponderance of technical information and the “awe” such information inspired, leading to a subsequent unwillingness to challenge it. A further problem was that journalists appear to have a story pre-determined, only requiring an expert to “fill in” the quote. If this cannot be achieved, they often lose interest.

It was suggested that media coverage of non-proliferation often resembles a soccer team wherein journalists chase around after one issue rather than covering the whole field. The result is that the news agenda with regard to non-proliferation tends to be driven by crises. It was recalled that the real “big story” in 2003 had been the complete transformation of US policy in arms control, but that this was barely picked up on. One participant suggested that because the United States has been under attack, the presiding administration has come to believe that everything is justified in the war on terror, and that it appears that the American press has been unable or unwilling to counter this.

Another participant noted that there was little if any coverage of the NPT Preparatory Committee (NPT PrepCom) meeting that took place in Geneva in April-May 2003. One journalist responded that there had been little coverage of the NPT PrepCom sessions because of little demand or interest from the readers. It was noted that it has often been necessary to persuade editors to run such stories. However, one journalist questioned the extent to which the media itself drove the daily non-proliferation agenda, as it was noted that editors are generally mistrustful of political agendas.

Comments were made with respect to the near-impossibility of including all the requisite details in stories of this kind, given the 400-700 word limit and the need for cooperation with colleagues. It was recalled that until recently, non-proliferation debates had been conducted between experts, whereas now they are part of the mainstream political discourse. However, the subject remains as complex as ever, lending itself to over-simplification and misinterpretation. Journalists are no longer specialists holding a close relationship with the organization they report on. While this has perhaps allowed for more objective reporting, it has also meant that many journalists remain only superficially familiar with the subject.

One journalist recalled that Livermore National Laboratory has organized briefings for journalists on the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and wondered if the Agency could do the same. It was observed by one participant that the media in many countries were very unfamiliar with the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and the

IAEA. It was suggested that it might be helpful to organize related press events on the Agency's activities.

One comment touched on the differences between the television and print media, focusing in particular on the requirement for a picture to accompany the story. Several comments noted with regret limited amount of television time or word space allotted to the subject, which prevent it from being explored in more detail. It was suggested that, as the media transforms itself, the journalistic expertise needed to break the cycle that flows from governments to media to NGOs and back to government does not exist. One participant proposed that, especially for TV, there might be a need for a WMD "czar" to act as a readily available, interview "figure-head". The possibility was mooted of establishing an NPT Secretariat, which could discuss relevant issues with interested journalists.

Conclusion

The two full days in which the seminar took place covered a range of complex topics. In spite of the inevitable limitations of time, these subjects generated range of comments, debate and new ideas for further consideration and in so doing, the seminar accomplished the task it had been assigned: not to draw conclusions, but to contribute to the larger conversation taking place both within the Agency and within the international community. The participants themselves were generally pleased with the level of the discussions, with some regretting that only two days were available. The Agency plans to organize a similar seminar in 2005, which it is hoped will continue to add to this important dialogue.



INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

**Seminar on Innovative Approaches to
Nuclear Non-Proliferation and the Nuclear Fuel Cycle³**
C07IV, IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, 5-6 February 2004

AGENDA

Thursday, 5 February 2004

09:30 – 10:30 Introduction

11:00 – 13:30

I. Nuclear Verification in a Non-Cooperative Environment

- a. General principles of international nuclear verification (in co-operative and non-cooperative environments)
- b. Lessons from the 1990s: - unique cases or templates for the future?
 - i. Iraq
 - ii. DPRK
- c. “Breakout” scenarios and the limitations of the Agency’s safeguards system
- d. Implementing nuclear verification: prospects for the future

15:00 – 18:30

II.1 Innovative Approaches to Managing the Nuclear Fuel Cycle (Part I): Overview and Enrichment

- a. Overview and assessment of past efforts
- b. Overview and assessment of the current risks of the nuclear fuel cycle
- c. New approaches to managing the nuclear fuel cycle: enrichment

³ All IAEA staff members, as well as invited experts, are participating in their personal capacities. The proceedings of this Seminar are “off the record” and may not be reported. Recording devices may not be used. Participation is by invitation only.

- d. Engaging participation: prospects and possibilities for international support

Friday, 6 February 2004

09:00 – 12:30 [11:00 – 11:30 BREAK]

II.2 Innovative Approaches to Managing the Nuclear Fuel Cycle (Part II): Reprocessing and Spent Fuel

- a. New approaches to managing the nuclear fuel cycle: reprocessing
- b. New approaches to spent fuel management and disposition
- c. Engaging participation: prospects and possibilities for international support

13:30 – 15:15

III. Enhancing Nuclear Security

- a. Identifying key challenges and developing responses
- b. Assessing the current threat of nuclear terrorism

15:30 – 19:00 [17:00-17:30 Break]

IV. International Media Forum: Engaging the Media on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Issues

- a. Nuclear Non-Proliferation: A Scorecard for 2003
- b. The Media: Driving the Daily Non-Proliferation Agenda

Closing

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