

Social Media

The first Nonproliferation and Nuclear Security working group topic covered the role of publically available social media in nonproliferation and nuclear security.

The group began by developing a common definition of social media for the purpose of the discussion, which was; "electronic communications, carried out online, where users form a community for information sharing." Social media can be used to collect information for analysis, as a communication platform for networking among nuclear experts, and to build public understanding. The group focused primarily on the information collection aspect.

Social media can span a range of platforms and data types. There is a spectrum of engagement regarding pertinent data that can range from the passive observation of publically available social media data, to active elicitation of information by encouraging citizen reporting. The session members then brainstormed a variety of nonproliferation and security topics for which social media may be relevant. The discussion included evaluation criteria including aspects such as cost, technical difficulty, legal authority, and the ability to motivate users to participate.

The group identified a number of insights and questions:

- Utility of social media depends on the question to be answered
- Comprehensive and targeted collection of data are challenging
- There are ethical, legal, and privacy issues in encouraging people to report
- How to appropriately integrate social media into an organization's operational and legal framework?
- Who owns the data?
- How do you protect the person who posts or participates from harm?

The group concluded that an on-going expert discussion of these issues is needed, along with continuing research. Topics for future research and discussion included:

- Security or proliferation vulnerabilities that may arise from social media
- How to evaluate and motivate participation in societal verification
- Validation of information
- Ethical, legal, and privacy factors
- Enhancing communication among professionals
- Use of social media for building public understanding

Strategic Trade Control

Controlling transfers of nuclear weapons-related technology remains a critical element of nonproliferation. Every recent attempt to acquire nuclear weapons has included illicit international procurement of technology.

The working group discussed the significant challenges facing efforts to impede such trade, including:

- Sophisticated, adaptive adversaries, using many tactics to seek technology
- Changing technologies (in particular, 3D printing)
- Spreading technology, with more suppliers in more places potentially able to produce sensitive goods
- Uneven implementation and gaps in controls

There is no overarching international body for export controls, and no international forum for high-level discussion comparable to the nuclear security summit process. States vary from highly cooperative and committed to export control to doing little implementation and assigning low priority to the effort. Export control efforts involve a complex web of stakeholders with different interests -- and a great deal of money at stake in facilitating and regulating trade.

The group discussed a range of solutions to these challenges, many of which are already being implemented, but could be expanded. Capacity-building efforts for both state agencies and firms are essential – with a focus on ensuring sustainability. The group discussed expanding outreach to countries and enterprises, and a shift in approach to government-industry relations from policing to partnership. The group also discussed integrating export control outreach with other issues, including implementation of the Additional Protocol (which requires states to report on exports); broader enforcement of customs and border controls; and implementation of the procurement channel established under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

There was also a discussion of industry's desire for more streamlined and harmonized approaches, which would minimize the barriers to legitimate trade. The European Botticelli initiative, led by industry, is working to develop industry best practices. The group agreed there was a need to focus on incentives for government, agencies and firms to implement effective strategic trade controls.

Recommendations

- There is a need for an ongoing discussion of strategic trade controls. Venues might include a part of the INMM, or the nonproliferation section of the American Nuclear Society (which includes more representation from industry), or other partners.
- More research is needed on the most effective ways to motivate both private firms and countries to implement effective controls, and on what emerging technologies are of most concern, and how they might be controlled.
- New tools and venues for outreach, analysis, technical support, and best practice exchanges, including:

- The Centers of Excellence established in the nuclear security process;
- Industry working groups (such as the Botticelli initiative)
- Academic and non-government organization initiatives (such as Project Alpha at King's College)

Sustaining Nuclear Security After the 2016 Summit

The group agreed that there was a significant risk that nuclear security efforts would lose momentum and stakeholders would drift apart after the summit process concludes in 2016. The group focused its discussion on how to avoid that outcome around six themes.

Making Best Use of the Post-NSS Official Process

The post-summit process will be disaggregated and action plans are being developed for five entities: the IAEA, the UN, Interpol, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The group agreed that nuclear security supporters should seek to work with these five entities, and to supplement them with new ideas.

Preserving Summit Progress

The group agreed on the need to create a new coalition, which might be called the “New Agenda Coalition for Nuclear Security” or the “Nuclear Security Leadership Council.” Such a grouping could be a forum for states to make commitments, and develop new initiatives. There could be several approaches to creating such a group, including making it a new element of GICNT, or a separate grouping. It could be coalition of governments, or it could include other stakeholders, such as industry and non-governmental experts.

Closing Gaps

The group identified 10 key nuclear security gaps that still remain: consolidation, military materials, baseline standards, security culture, governance, commitment validation, smuggling, forensics, radiological sources, and limited participation. Working to resolve these gaps could make up the agenda for the new coalition.

Role of the U.S. Government

The United States has played a key role in promoting nuclear security – though it is important to take inclusive approaches and avoid having nuclear security seen as only an “American agenda.”

However, the world is entering a new era of nuclear security cooperation with the conclusion of the summit process, a large reduction in U.S.-Russian cooperation, and the completion of many equipment installation efforts. Nuclear security efforts will likely shift from U.S.-funded equipment installation to encouraging and assisting states to do more independently.

There is an urgent need for a new interagency strategy and vision for this new era, as current approaches are mismatched. Non-government groups should propose a new strategy. This could be developed with one or more workshops over next 6 months, to prepare a report that would be ready for the next administration.

New International Nuclear Security Agreement

Some participants discussed the benefits of negotiations for a new, legally binding international agreement on nuclear security. There was no consensus, however, on whether such a new agreement would be politically feasible or the correct path forward. As an interim step, the group agreed it was important to encourage more countries to join the implementation initiative from the 2014 Nuclear Security Summit (whose text is now incorporated in INFCIRC/869, and is open for signature to all IAEA member states).

Building New Partnerships

One benefit of the nuclear security summit process has been building new partnerships among different stakeholders. This effort should continue, in three areas:

- Functional partnerships (e.g., nuclear security regulators, or technical experts in particular areas): There are a variety of opportunities, and more should be done to seize them. Such efforts can start informally, and transition to more formal structures later (as demonstrated by the successful efforts in forensics).
- Country partnerships: There is a need to find ways to incentivize new countries to cooperate. Renewed and expanded Russian participation, in particular, would be beneficial.
- Partnerships among sectors: There is a trio of sectors in nuclear security: government and labs; industry; and non-governmental experts. It is crucial for these groups to work together. As an initial step, these groups can invite representatives from the other sectors to participate in meetings. Additionally, all three could be part of the new coalition proposed above. There is a need to address the differing constraints and incentives for members of each sector.