



NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY: *A Crisis of Compliance*

“Countries which join the Nonproliferation Treaty and pay lip service to its core principles while secretly violating them are a huge challenge to the nonproliferation norms that underlie international peace and security.”

—Assistant Secretary of State Paula DeSutter

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) is at the center of the international community’s broader efforts to preserve and promote peace and security by preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. The NPT incorporates an important understanding: parties to the Treaty should be able to obtain the benefits that peaceful nuclear energy and research can bring to mankind, but they may do so only if they comply with the provisions of the Treaty designed to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In the words of the Treaty, every non-nuclear State Party to the agreement undertakes not “to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons.” At the same time “the inalienable right of all Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes” is conditioned on conformity with the Treaty’s articles barring the attempt to acquire or manufacture nuclear weapons.

Iran and North Korea have pursued nuclear weapons programs—in North Korea’s case actually building nuclear weapons—under the guise of “peaceful” nuclear programs. For years, they did this while claiming legitimacy as members in good standing of the NPT system and while receiving international assistance. Iran still does. North Korea withdrew from the NPT after more than a decade of noncompliance.

The International Atomic Energy Agency’s Role

- Each non-nuclear-weapon state that is Party to the Treaty is required to conclude a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), covering all nuclear material within its territory, or under its jurisdiction, or control anywhere.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION INITIATIVES

- Took steps to ensure that the NPT regime successfully meets its challenges;
- Acted to prevent and reverse the spread of WMD technology; and
- Promoted groundbreaking actions to strengthen the regime and adapt it to contemporary problems.

- The IAEA Board of Governors must report noncompliance with safeguards agreements to all IAEA members and to the U.N. Security Council and General Assembly. International and regional security is seriously jeopardized if violations are not dealt with immediately and effectively. The international community cannot wait for a smoking gun in the form of a mushroom cloud.

- The Additional Protocol requires the declaration of a broad range of nuclear activities, and gives the IAEA broader authority to verify these declarations. The U.S. strongly supports universal adherence to the Additional Protocol.

Dangers of Noncompliance

A world in which countries can ignore their commitments is a world more dangerous for all of us. The pretense of arms control in which Parties do not insist on full compliance is a threat to all, for it not only fails to control proliferation, but also can provide a false sense of security that constrains only honest countries.

Failure by the international community to hold states such as Iran and North Korea accountable for their noncompliance would not be lost upon other would-be violators. While Libya’s welcome example in renouncing its former pursuit of weapons of mass destruction points to the benefits of compliance, failing to address Iranian and North Korean noncompliance today will tempt others to confront the international community by challenging the credibility of the NPT.

Taking stronger collective action now to bring violators into compliance is necessary to help ensure that future generations live in a world made safer by controlling the proliferation of nuclear weapons.