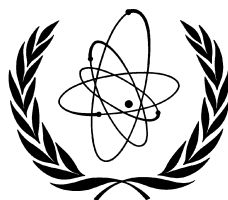


SPEECH AT
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR SECURITY:
ENHANCING GLOBAL EFFORTS

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INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY

Thank you, Mr President.

Good morning, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am pleased to welcome you to this IAEA *International Conference on Nuclear Security*. I thank you, Minister Martonyi, for taking on the role of President of the Conference.

This is the first time that a conference on this very important subject has been held at ministerial level, open to all IAEA Member States. I am grateful for the active participation of so many ministers, senior policy-makers and technical experts.

Your presence here sends an important message: that the world is serious about enhancing global efforts to protect nuclear and other radioactive material – and associated facilities – from malicious acts.

Much has been achieved in the past decade. Many countries have taken effective measures to prevent theft, sabotage, unauthorized access, illegal transfer, or other malicious acts involving nuclear or other radioactive material. Security has been improved at many facilities containing such material.

Partly as a result of these efforts, there has not been a terrorist attack involving nuclear or other radioactive material. But this must not lull us into a false sense of security. If a “dirty bomb” is detonated in a major city, or sabotage occurs at a nuclear facility, the consequences could be devastating. The threat of nuclear terrorism is real, and the global nuclear security system needs to be strengthened in order to counter that threat.

Taking action now to help prevent an incident occurring, and to limit the consequences if an incident were to happen, is clearly a necessary and a very

worthwhile investment. I believe that this Conference will help in our continuing efforts to ensure that no terrorist attack ever succeeds.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I am asked how serious the threat of nuclear terrorism really is, I often give the example of a case in the Republic of Moldova two years ago. Moldovan police seized a quantity of high enriched uranium from an individual who was trying to sell it. The smugglers had tried to evade detection by building a shielded container. This is the actual container they used.

The attempt to shield the high enriched uranium from radiation detectors showed a worrying level of knowledge on the part of the smugglers.

I commend the Moldovan authorities for their success in securing this material. This was the result of their sustained efforts over a period of years, in cooperation with the IAEA and with partner countries, to boost their nuclear security capabilities.

This case ended well. The material was seized, arrests were made and a number of people received prison sentences. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure if such cases are just the tip of the iceberg.

Well over a hundred incidents of thefts and other unauthorised activities involving nuclear and radioactive material are reported to the IAEA every year. This means the material is outside regulatory control and potentially available for malicious acts. Some material goes missing and is never found.

Most of the incidents reported to us are fairly minor, but some are more serious. However, effective counter-measures are possible if *all* countries take the threat seriously.

I stress *all* countries. Even States without nuclear or other radioactive material should not think that this issue does not affect them. Terrorists and criminals will try to exploit any vulnerability in the global security system. Any country, in any part of the world, could find itself used as a transit point. And any country could become the target of an attack.

Responsibility for ensuring nuclear security lies with national governments, but international cooperation is vital. Cooperation has improved in recent years and the central role of the IAEA in helping countries to strengthen nuclear security has been widely recognised.

The Moldova case shows that a well prepared government with an effective nuclear security regime *can* prevent trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive material. It is my hope that this Conference will help to ensure that all countries achieve a similarly high level of preparedness. This requires action in many areas, from putting the necessary laws on the statute book and strengthening border controls, to training law enforcement officers and installing radiation detectors at ports and airports. The IAEA has programmes to help countries in all of these areas, including through the development of comprehensive *Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plans*. I encourage more countries to make use of our assistance.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me spell out three key areas in which I believe progress could – and should – be made quickly to improve global nuclear security.

First, bringing into force the Amendment to the *Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material*. The Amendment was agreed in 2005, but it has still not entered into force because not enough countries have ratified it.

The original Convention covers only the physical protection of nuclear material in international transport. The Amendment would expand its coverage to include the protection of nuclear material in domestic use, storage and transport, and the protection of nuclear facilities against acts of sabotage.

We still need ratifications from 30 countries for the Amendment to enter into force. Entry into force of the Amendment would have great practical benefits. It would also represent a timely demonstration of international resolve.

Second, all countries should invite peer review of their nuclear security arrangements by international experts. Let your experts share experience and best practice with experts from other countries and from the IAEA. Peer reviews have a good track record in improving safety at nuclear power plants. Everyone benefits. Let us do the same for nuclear security.

Finally, make use of IAEA nuclear security guidance. This provides detailed and practical recommendations, devised by leading international experts working through the IAEA. It is not legally binding – but if implemented everywhere, it would help to make the world safer and more secure.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nuclear and other radioactive materials are an essential part of modern life. They provide great benefit to human beings in medicine, industry and many other areas. It is vitally important that these materials are protected from misuse by those who wish to do harm. That requires constant vigilance, as well as collective action.

My message to you today is that all countries should work to establish effective nuclear security systems. All countries should strengthen international cooperation,

making sure that all internationally agreed instruments are in force and actually used. And they are encouraged to make full use of the expertise and assistance of the IAEA.

I am confident that this IAEA Conference will make an important contribution to strengthening nuclear security throughout the world. I wish you every success with your deliberations.

Thank you.