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**Preparation Paper/Study Guide:**

**International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

**“Illicit Nuclear Trafficking”**

## **Nuclear Security**

The issue of global nuclear security has been on the IAEA's agenda since the 1970s. The events of 9/11 were a turning point of the collective perception of the matter and importance of protecting the radioactive and nuclear material from terrorist attacks as such. Therefore, in March 2002 the IAEA boarded its first program that consisted of assisting the United States in strengthening their nuclear security plan.

The main objectives of the Nuclear Security Plan are as follows: *guarantee of powerful security for transport, storage, production and application of nuclear and radioactive material*. These goals has been achieved through human resource development, capacity building and risk reduction. Furthermore, other objectives of the nuclear security plan is *assisting the obedience to and implementation of legal instruments* (policies and regulations) related to nuclear energy; *empowering the international coordination and cooperation to enable peaceful, secure and safe use of nuclear energy and radioactive material*.

## **Nuclear Trafficking**

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the so-called Eastern Block had a significant impact on the increase of the risk of the possible illegal actions related to the radioactive and nuclear materials. The majority of nuclear incidents root from that region. According to the IAEA, from January 1993 to December 2012 the Illicit Trafficking Database affirmed (ITD) the total number of 2 331 incidents. Out of this number, 419 incidents were implicated in illegitimate possession of nuclear material and associated with unlawful acts. Separating these acts into sub-categories, 16 acts were related to the transportation of high-enriched uranium (HEU) or plutonium, 615 incidents were theft of nuclear or other radioactive material, and about 1244 cases included unapproved disbandment of radioactive material. Despite the placement of extensive stringent procedures on the border concerning the transportation of sensitive materials, illicit nuclear trafficking was still prevalent at an increasing rate in 2012. According to ITDB, 17 out of 160 incidents reported during 2012 are implicated in criminal activities and possession of nuclear material, 119 still have the status of unapproved activities.

## **Threat of Terrorism**

Terrorist groups gaining access to possessing nuclear material has become a growing concern over the past years. These days terrorist organizations are very efficient in accessing illegal imports, identifying potential buyers and providing safe transport of illegal nuclear material through international borders. Consequently, terrorists gaining access to nuclear material became able to initiate a colossal threat and risk from igniting the so-called nuclear "dirty bomb" into huge populated cities. Therefore, the urge for immediate cooperation to inhibit action involving nuclear terrorism can be described as nothing but means of protection by the developed countries.

The detection of illicit nuclear trafficking by the police has become difficult due to the fact that some groups are affiliated with organized criminal networks that provide the transport of the illicit nuclear material surreptitiously. This alliance forms a series of illegal distribution that is well protected, and accordingly much more challenging for the police to discover.

## **Areas of Interest**

The majority of nuclear deals of the past two decades have been conducted in the Black Sea region, a channel, which can lead to Central Asia, the Caucasian Region or South-East Europe. Historically this area is known for its cultural and ethnic strains, battling countries over the possession of natural resources and power, discordant geography, disputed borders and continuous warfare. Thus, this route is most commonly used among smugglers in transporting illegal nuclear material.

The amount of theft and illicit trafficking of nuclear materials is alarming and to a high extent contributes to nuclear proliferation. Implementation of a comprehensive nuclear security program is a key component in detecting and responding to the aforementioned activities. Therefore, the participatory states in the IAEA are in need of executing such program in place that aims at enhancing the states abilities in detecting, responding and preventing any illicit nuclear transport and the availability of guidance and technical support at all times.

## Reading

For a comprehensive reading on current issues related to nuclear trafficking:

### IAEA Guides

IAEA Nuclear Security Series No. 6, 2007  
Combating Nuclear Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear and Other Radioactive Material

[http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/pub1309\\_web.pdf](http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Publications/PDF/pub1309_web.pdf)

Promoting Nuclear Security: What the IAEA is doing, 2007

<http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Factsheets/English/nuclsecurity.pdf>

IAEA Nuclear Security Series No. 7, 2007  
Nuclear Security Culture

[http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/Pub1347\\_web.pdf](http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/Pub1347_web.pdf)

IAEA Nuclear Security Series No. 12, 2010  
Educational Program in Nuclear Security

[http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/Pub1439\\_web.pdf](http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/Pub1439_web.pdf)

### Agreements

Nuclear Security Plan 2010 – 2013:

[http://www.iaea.org/About/Policy/GC/GC53/GC53Documents/English/gc53-18\\_en.pdf](http://www.iaea.org/About/Policy/GC/GC53/GC53Documents/English/gc53-18_en.pdf)

### Washington Nuclear Summit

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/communiqu-washington-nuclear-security-summit>

### Organized crime, Terrorism and Nuclear Trafficking. Strategic Insights

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=45519>