

Based on the success of the DOE Lab-to-Lab program in the FSU, DOE has been asked to establish lab-to-lab contacts with China.²⁸ This new program seeks to build mutual responsibility, respect, and trust between the United States and China; promote transparency in nuclear programs; establish use of technology and practices to achieve NACD goals; and build stable professional relationships to increase communication and understanding.

A China Lab-to-Lab program involving Sandia National Laboratories took place in January 1996. Representatives of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and Physics (CAEP) stated that Chinese involvement in arms control had three purposes: to strengthen national defense, reduce the danger of war, and enhance national and international security. The CAEP representatives demonstrated their knowledge and keen interest in the technical side of verification, including data management, technologies associated with the CTBT, and dual-purpose technologies such as electronic borders and border tracking.

U.S. efforts to engage the FSU and China in cooperative programs illustrates a willingness for one party to provide financial support to the other party in bilateral arrangements which support NACD efforts. The U.S. Congress and public have accepted the notion that unofficial, yet authoritative, Lab-to-Lab interactions can be a powerful tool for accomplishing several national security objectives. Because these interactions are not formal arms control negotiations, they hold the promise for rapid progress which can be followed up in more official ways.

Reciprocal Actions and Unilateral Declarations

On 27 September 1991, U.S. President Bush declared that the United States would take a number of initiatives in relation to its inventory of short-range (theater or tactical) nuclear weapons²⁹, its strategic nuclear weapons, non-nuclear ABM systems and early warning, nuclear weapons safety and testing, and other matters, including prompt ratification of START-I. President Gorbachev's response and counterproposals followed on 5 October 1991, and were followed later by proposals put forward by President Yeltsin in early 1992. These Presidential commitments differed from previous arms control procedures in that part of the proposed measures were adopted on a unilateral basis and part by mutual agreement. As a result, instead of complicated negotiations, both countries assumed certain obligations and solved a number of problems in a brief period. Implicit in the measures, of course, was a reliance on unilateral means of verification.

²⁸ Because the program consists of lab-to-lab interactions, it is considered to be an "unofficial, yet authoritative" interaction. This has permitted more open exchanges between scientists and engineers than might be possible in a negotiating environment.

²⁹ Various acronyms have been used to abbreviate this term: TNW and SNF are the most commonly used. The Russians use TNW, and that is used in this paper.