

Strengthening the International Safeguards System

During the past year, the IAEA's Board of Governors devoted appreciable time to the consideration of various proposals put forth by the Secretariat. These proposals and the status of the Board's current consideration of them are outlined in this article. During its 24-26 February 1992 meetings, the Board deliberated upon proposals regarding:

- the use of special inspections,
- the early submission of information about plans to construct new nuclear facilities,
- the reporting and verification of the production, export and import of nuclear materials; and similarly,
- the reporting and verification of the export and import of equipment and materials specially intended for use in nuclear activities.

With respect to the matter of special inspections, the Board reaffirmed the IAEA's right to undertake special inspections in States with comprehensive safeguards agreements, when necessary and appropriate, and to ensure that all nuclear materials in all peaceful nuclear activities are under safeguards. The legal basis for the IAEA's right to conduct special inspections is set out in safeguards agreements concluded pursuant to documents INFCIRC/66 and 153.

The evaluation of the information provided under safeguards will enable the Agency to develop a more comprehensive understanding of a State's nuclear activities. This will be the *sine qua non* of the IAEA's enhanced capability to ensure a full and timely awareness of such activities. Such an "early warning" system would likely consist of four parts:³⁸

- information gathering,
- information evaluation and analysis,
- information confirmation or non-confirmation, and
- information dissemination.

Safeguards agreements provide only for reporting of the export and import of certain nuclear material. Expansion of the existing requirements for nuclear material reporting to all nuclear material in all peaceful activities would provide assurance that nuclear material which is not currently subject to reporting, is used in accordance with a State's basic undertakings under a safeguards agreement.

Reporting by all States on the export and import of certain equipment and non-nuclear material would provide a greater measure of openness about nuclear activities. Hence, it would contribute to confidence in the peaceful use of such equipment and material, as well as associated nuclear material.

The IAEA safeguards system has evolved very significantly since the publication in 1961 of its first Safeguards Document. However, events of 1991 made it clear that the evolutionary development of safeguards approaches needs acceleration.

38 David Fischer, Paul Szasz, *Safeguarding the Atom: A Critical Appraisal*, SIPRI, 1985. pp. 23-34.