

The International Atomic Energy Agency

As a verification organization the IAEA, established in 1957, is unique in that its verification role is forced to compete, both politically and in terms of allocation of finances and resources, with another primary role, that of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Its assistance to states in the peaceful uses field has actually made its verification task more difficult, by at best increasing its verification task and at worst contributing to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Agency is also unusual in being involved in verifying compliance with several arms control and disarmament agreements simultaneously, including those that have established nuclear weapon-free zones in various regions.

The IAEA has faced more serious cases of non-compliance than any other multilateral arms control or disarmament regime. Its most serious failure was its inability to detect Iraq's massive violation of its NPT and safeguards obligations before 1989. This led to a seachange in the concept of nuclear safeguards although one which has yet to be universally applied. Institutionally the Agency is currently in better shape than for some years. It has performed creditably in Iraq since the first Gulf War and is better funded and more proactive than ever before.

The Agency is governed by a powerful 35-member Board of Governors, comprising member states most advanced in nuclear technology as well as those that are the principal producers of nuclear source material. It has a Secretariat, based in Vienna, headed by a Director General, and a General Conference of all member states which meets once a year. It also has operational offices in Toronto and Tokyo and runs or supports research centres and scientific laboratories in Vienna and Seibersdorf, Austria, Monaco and Trieste, Italy. The Standing Advisory Group on Safeguards Implementation (SAAGSI) provides technical advice. The regular budget for 2004 is US\$285.5 million, of which US\$102 million is for nuclear verification. Nuclear safety and security, which today is closely associated with nonproliferation efforts and is gaining increasing attention, is allocated, in addition, US\$22.4 million. The Agency currently has 2200 multidisciplinary professional and support staff from more than 90 countries. There are currently 556 inspectors, the largest number in the Agency's history.

Full-scope safeguards

Each non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) party to the NPT is required by the treaty to conclude a 'comprehensive' or 'full-scope' safeguards agreement with the IAEA.¹¹ As of July 2004, a surprisingly large number—42 out of 189 states parties—did not have such agreements in force.¹² (The non-NPT states parties, India, Israel and Pakistan, all have non-comprehensive safeguards agreements that apply only to certain facilities and/or materials).

Under such agreements, non-nuclear weapon state (NNWS) parties declare to the IAEA all their nuclear facilities (which, by definition, are assumed to be for peaceful purposes) and inventories of all nuclear materials. These are subject to verification ('safeguarded') by the IAEA to ensure timely

¹¹ Based on a model provided in a 1972 IAEA document. See 'The structure and content of agreements between the Agency and states required in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons', INFCIRC/153 (Corrected), IAEA, Vienna, June 1972.

¹² Safeguards current status, 30 July 2004, www.iaea.org/worldatom.