

8. NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

BACKGROUND

International efforts to control nuclear proliferation date back to the mid-1940s, during the initial stages of the development of the first atomic bomb. In 1943, allied governments, including the United States and Britain, met in Quebec and concluded agreements aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear technologies to states other than the US and the UK. In 1945, the United States, Britain, and Canada signed an Agreed Declaration on Atomic Energy which foresaw the dangers of nuclear proliferation.

While more ambitious international efforts aimed at preventing the future spread of nuclear weapons were initially frustrated, some success was eventually achieved with the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1956. Under the aegis of the UN, the IAEA's function, as defined in the Agency's statute of 1957, is "to seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity," as well as "ensure that assistance provided by it or at its request or under its operation and control is not used to further any military purpose." Although not exclusively devoted to the task of curbing proliferation, the IAEA has contributed significantly to this goal through the application of safeguards and inspections to ensure that states not divert nuclear energy, material and facilities used for peaceful purposes to the development of nuclear weapons. At the end of 1986, the Agency had concluded 164 safeguards agreements with ninety-four states.

Chief among existing international non-proliferation measures is the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Evolving out of a 1961 UN General Assembly Resolution, the Treaty was signed on 1 July 1968, and entered into force on 5 March 1970. It contains provisions for quinquennial reviews of its operation, and is due for renewal in 1995.

The NPT contains provisions to be followed both by existing nuclear weapon states (NWS) and non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS). Thus, Article I of the Treaty declares that each NWS "undertakes not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosives directly or indirectly; and not in any way assist, encourage or induce non-nuclear weapon states to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."

In turn, under Article II, non-nuclear weapon states agree not to receive and not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear explosives or other nuclear explosive devices; and agree to accept full IAEA safeguards on their nuclear activities. Nuclear weapons states parties agree to facilitate the fullest possible exchange of information and assistance to their non-nuclear counterparts for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Moreover, all states party undertake not to provide fissile material, or equipment used for processing or producing it, unless under IAEA safeguards.

Finally, under Article VI, nuclear weapon states party to the NPT agree to undertake to pursue negotiations "on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict, effective international control."