

# Chapter 3

## Nuclear Security Summits and Legacy



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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, please allow me at the outset to thank the President of the Academia Nazionale dei Lincei, M. Alberto Quadrio Curzio, and M. Luciano Maiani and M. Said Abousahl, Co-Chairs of the XX Edoardo Amaldi Conference, for having organised this event and having invited me to present Canada's perspective on the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) process and its Legacy.

I will first provide a brief overview of the NSS process and detail some of its outcomes. Second, I will focus on one of the key deliverables of the NSS: the Nuclear Security Contact Group (NSCG), which in the true sense of a "legacy" was established to continue the work of the Summit process after it ended. Then, I will offer some final observations on key challenges and next steps in efforts to reinforce the international nuclear security architecture.

The Nuclear Security Summit (or NSS) process was an unparalleled mechanism to convene world leaders to ensure the highest level of political focus and to create momentum towards building and strengthening an international nuclear security architecture that could adequately mitigate the threat of nuclear terrorism.

The Summit process has been praised for having reduced the amounts of dangerous nuclear materials in the world, enhanced the physical protection of nuclear facilities, and to have helped to further coordinate the efforts of the key international organizations and initiatives: the IAEA, UN, INTERPOL, Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) and Global Partnership.

Attended by 52 States and 4 observer organizations (UN, IAEA, INTERPOL and the EU), the fourth and final Summit in Washington D.C. in March 2016 was an important turning point.

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It has been characterized as a transition Summit, as it marked the transition to our current post-NSS context, where there's a need to ensure that the political momentum generated by the Summit process is sustained to further enhance the international nuclear security architecture.

The outcome documents—consensus-based documents negotiated by all NSS States—outline commitments to principles and concrete actions to enhance nuclear security.

The 2016 NSS Communiqué overviews the commitments to principles, and links to the five “Action Plans” that outline actions for States in helping the transition of NSS commitments to the five key international organizations and initiatives working on nuclear security: the IAEA, UN, INTERPOL, GICNT and Global Partnership.

Smaller groups of States also committed to more specific concrete actions through joint statements or “gift baskets”, one of which saw 40 states commit to the establishment of the Nuclear Security Contact Group. This emerged as a key Summit deliverable and provided an opportunity for Canada to exercise international leadership in the efforts to maintain momentum post-NSS.

Domestically, States undertook specific commitments to engage in activities such as reducing their Highly Enriched Uranium or Plutonium stocks, enhancing the physical protection of nuclear facilities, etc.

There was a clear realisation, as the NSS process was winding down, that there was an inherent risk in losing the pulling power of leaders and that there was a need to find ways to avoid the dissipation of focus and find ways to advance the implementation of the NSS' key objectives, specifically its five Action Plans.

It is against this backdrop, that the US proposed a “gift basket” called “Joint Statement on Sustaining Action to Strengthen Global Nuclear Security”. Voluntary in nature, this “gift basket” was originally supported by 40 countries (i.e. Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Republic of Korea, Romania, Poland, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam) and the following international organizations: INTERPOL and the United Nations. The aim of this Gift Basket was to facilitate cooperation and sustain activity on nuclear security after the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit, and commit to:

1. Establish a Nuclear Security Contact Group; and
2. Designate an appropriately authorized and informed senior official or officials to participate in the Contact Group.

This Contact Group, which was first convened by Canada in September 2016, is as a mechanism to help ensure that work continues after the Summit process in order to maintain a global nuclear security architecture that is strong, sustainable and comprehensive.

*Statement of Principles:* At its initial meeting, the contact Group formalised itself by issuing a Statement of Principles which matches the NSS Joint Statement and outlines the aims and objectives of the Contact Group:

*Aim:* To facilitate cooperation and sustain engagement on nuclear security following the conclusion of the NSS process.

*Objective:* To advance the implementation of nuclear security commitments and build a strengthened, sustainable and comprehensive global nuclear security architecture.

In accordance with the group's wishes, the Statement of Principles was published as IAEA INFCIRC/899, and shared in the UN context in New York, so as to welcome a broader membership.

The Group is currently supported by the leaders of 44 countries and 3 international organizations—the UN, INTERPOL, EU (the IAEA has been invited to participate regularly).

The membership remains open to new members who publically commit to the goals of the NSCG outlined in the statement of principles, namely through:

1. Contributing to the work of the NSCG, including through participation in NSCG meetings;
2. Discussing a broad range of nuclear security-related issues, including new and emerging trends that may require more focused attention;
3. Promoting and assessing the implementation of nuclear security commitments, including those made in the NSS process;
4. Maintaining a “culture of deliverables” that characterized the NSS process (where leaders took stock of efforts to implement commitments and, importantly, made new commitments going forward); and
5. Developing and maintaining linkages to non-governmental experts and nuclear industry.

While the establishment of such a group may have appeared pretty straightforward at the outset, it was clear early on that maintaining the momentum and focus achieved throughout the Summit process, without the “pull” of leaders and within a relatively large group of countries with different approaches, was going to be challenging.

In this context, the Group shaped itself around three strategic objectives:

1. sustaining momentum on strengthening nuclear security in a context of competing concerns and demands;
2. maintaining engagement among senior levels;
3. continue a culture of deliverables which typified the NSS process/in other words focus on both practical steps and policy positions that serve to support and enhance a strengthened international nuclear security culture, stressing the importance of achieving concrete results.

Quote: “A breeding ground for new ideas to address nuclear security threats and challenges”—Heidi Hulan—first NSCG Convener.

Worth noting that the NSCG is not a decision-making body; its actions and commitments are based on the NSS Action Plans and national commitments.

During the course of its first year of existence, and more recently during its meeting in May on the margins of the NPT PrepCom the Group saw specific NSCG Members take lead roles to advance nine key “Action Items” arising from the discussions in London, for focused efforts to implement key NSS commitments, which have been outlined in thematic “non-papers”; in some cases (#3 and 9) there are ‘sub-groups’ that have emerged to help advance these issues:

- Core messaging across fora (Canada)
- Industry Cooperation (Germany)
- Resources for nuclear security (Netherlands)—sub-group exists
- Concentrated support to the IAEA (US)
- Outreach and diplomacy on global nuclear security architecture (Korea)
- Emerging challenges to nuclear security (UK)
- Regional Capacity Building and Cooperation (China)
- IPPAS Missions (UAE)
- CPPNM/A 2021 RevCon (Australia)—sub-group exists

Some of the NSCG’s key accomplishments can be described as follows:

First, the NSCG succeeded in achieving participation of a wide array of regional groups, stemming from all continents, a true manifestation of the global importance of nuclear security and the potential impact of nuclear threats.

Second, the forum established post-NSS allowed the action items to further mature and the emergence of thematic leads, dealing—for example—with issues of resources, messaging and legal instruments. In turn this created sub-groups of interested countries focusing on issues of particular interest or concern in a more coordinated manner. This approach also helped reinforce the fact the Summit Chair or the NSCG convener cannot be driving the process, ownership and engagement by members is key to progress and success.

Third, the Group “cohered”—not an easy task nor a given in light of the diversity of views represented through the broad membership. The Group now thinks of itself as a forum where some strategizing can take place, albeit still modest.

Finally, the group has remained pragmatic and collegial in its approach—despite differences of views—and has also managed to achieve some durability, having already identified its next convener (Jordan) as well as the following (Hungary), meaning that the Group will have an established presence for at least two more years.

Canada has completed the first year as the inaugural “Convener”, and has transitioned to Jordan as the new Convener. Hungary will follow as the Convener for 2019. The Group will need to strike the right balance between maintaining high

level political attention to the issues while also going down into the weeds of efforts to advance technical elements of the NSS Action Plans in the relevant fora.

While Canada during its convenership sought to focus on the implementation of the IAEA Action Plan—given that the Agency was in the process of developing its next Nuclear Security Plan (NSP 2018–2021)—Jordan has already indicated that it will seek to advance the Interpol Action Plan.

Almost two years after the 2016 NSS and notwithstanding the establishment of the NSCG, there is a risk of losing the political momentum necessary to maintain focus on threats to nuclear security.

Key Challenge—Obama on work beyond 2016: key focus was to be “able to sync up the efforts of the [NSS process] with existing institutions like the IAEA, INTERPOL, UN”—so far, it has been a major challenge getting key institutions such as the IAEA to take on board the commitments in the IAEA Action Plan—especially in the area of predictable resources for the Agency to undertake its work on nuclear security.

There is a continued need for NSCG members and others involved in the NSS to deploy consistent messaging to dispel the perception/narrative of nuclear security being characterized as an impediment rather than an enabler of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This narrative continues to be counter-productive and in fact has already limited our collective ability to ensure that the IAEA has sufficient and predictable resources to implement its Nuclear Security Plan for 2018–2021.

Importance of engaging all partners, including industry and civil society to achieve an effective nuclear security architecture with buy-in from these key stakeholders who can help implement concrete commitments, and help with horizon-scanning efforts, such as certification for nuclear security professionals (ref. WINS).

Given the nature of terrorist actors and their adaptability, there are constantly evolving and emerging threats to nuclear security, which requires the need for constant vigilance and a constant lookout without being alarmist!

In closing, I would like to offer some thoughts on NSS legacy and particularly in response to the questions: Has the nuclear security architecture improved as a result of these collective efforts?

Canada would say “yes”, particularly as the NSS process brought about the focus of 53 World leaders to coordinate actions to address challenges of enhancing nuclear security. Canadian action domestically and internationally was certainly galvanized by the NSS process and this is certainly true for most, if not all, NSS countries.

The “culture of deliverables” that characterized the Summit process galvanized efforts to enhance physical protection of vulnerable nuclear facilities, enhance nuclear security capacities at border crossings to prevent nuclear smuggling, and to overall enhance the global nuclear security architecture and its associated legal framework.

Minimizing sensitive nuclear materials (HEU and Pu) is another key outcome: the US supported efforts for removal or disposition of hundreds of tonnes of material (enough for over 7,300 nuclear weapons Citation: <https://static1.squarespace.com/>

<static/568be36505f8e2af8023adf7/t/56fd4bbc40261d3687221733/1459440572253/NSS+At+A+Glance+-+ENGLISH.pdf>)

The Summit process also elevated the profile of key legislative instruments, resulting in the entry into force of the Amendment to the CPPNM, and helped increase the number of signatories to ICSANT—strengthening the international legal framework—though work remains to be done to universalize these instruments.

However, it is also important to maintain a healthy dose of self-criticism in order to avoid complaisance, in particular the issue of resources remains one of particular concern, not only on a national basis for a number of States, but particularly for the IAEA where more than 80% of its nuclear security activities rely on extra-budgetary contributions made by a group of Member States on a voluntary basis. This is not the kind of predictability and sustainability we collectively need to ensure that the Agency can continue to effectively play its central coordination role in assisting its members in meeting their nuclear security needs.

Efforts to address this discrepancy must be sustained and will require effective international mobilisation and consistent countering of the notion, advanced by some countries, that the focus on nuclear security is intended to hinder some States' access to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology. On the contrary, nuclear security, likely nuclear safety, underpins the peaceful uses and must be seen as an enabler. The politicization of this issue poses a high risk that, like any nuclear security accident, can have significant negative consequences for any State, beyond any border.

It is also important to maintain a healthy dose of self-criticism in order avoid complaisance. In that regard, the issue of resources remains of particular concern, not only on a national basis for a number of countries, but also for the IAEA where approximately 85% of its nuclear security activities rely on extra-budgetary contributions made by Member States on a voluntary basis. This is not the kind of predictability and sustainability we collectively need to ensure that the Agency can continue to effectively play its central coordination role in assisting Member States in addressing their nuclear security needs.

Efforts to address this discrepancy must be sustained and will require effective international mobilization and consistent countering of the notion—advanced by some countries—that nuclear security hinders some of States' access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

On the contrary, nuclear security, like safety, underpins the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and must be understood as an enabler.

The politicization of this issue poses a high risk, which—like any nuclear security event—can have significant negative consequences for any state, beyond any borders. The international community cannot wait for a major nuclear security event before mobilising to effectively reinforce the architecture and related international nuclear security norms.

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