

# WebMemo



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## Counterterrorism and Nonproliferation: Two Goals for the Nuclear Security Summit

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This week, leaders from around the world are gathering in Washington D.C. to participate in the Nuclear Security Summit. Hosted by President Obama, this summit will focus on adoption of a final communiqué committing the participating states to advancing two goals: countering nuclear terrorism and securing nuclear materials and facilities.

In order to realize these two objectives, the communiqué will recommend certain steps, including:

- A recommitment to the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT),
- Full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 on nuclear terrorism,
- Strengthening the Proliferation Security Initiative for interdicting the trafficking of nuclear materials and equipment,
- Broadening application of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program for securing sensitive materials,
- Extending the G-8's Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction beyond 2012, and
- Continuing the efforts of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Most of the specific commitments that are likely to be included in the final communiqué will represent positive steps toward combating both nuclear terrorism and proliferation, although a few may be ineffectual or even counterproductive.

**Ten Pillars of a Successful Summit.** There are several principles, or “pillars,” essential to strength-

ening the counterterrorism and nonproliferation regimes. These principles need to be recognized and reinforced if the goals of the summit are to be realized. They include:

1. *The inherent right to individual and collective self defense.* All participating states need to understand that the steps they commit themselves to are based on a more fundamental purpose: the right of all individual sovereign states—and the collective right of the groups of states that participate in alliances—to defend themselves. This is an inherent right and not a privilege granted by the U.N. Security Council or any other international organization.
2. *The national military forces, self-defense forces, and intelligence services that form the ultimate means for countering both terrorism and nuclear-armed rogue states.* If participating states do not provide for these forces and services, no amount of diplomatic cooperation will create effective counterterrorism and nonproliferation regimes.
3. *U.S. leadership in the nonproliferation regime.* The U.S. has been a leader in the nonproliferation regime since the regime's creation. Some critics have implied that the U.S. has not or is not

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in compliance with Article VI of the NPT, which speaks to aspirations for nuclear arms reductions and disarmament. The fact is that the U.S. has always been in compliance with Article VI, which has no timetable for disarmament. The NPT is not a nuclear disarmament treaty.

4. *Recognition that the right under the nonproliferation regime to nuclear technology is a limited and qualified right.* Non-weapons states under the NPT do not have an inherent right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. They must earn that right by not diverting nuclear technology to weapons purposes and honoring the safeguards that serve to detect diversion.
5. *Recognition that nuclear assistance under the nonproliferation regime is not an entitlement.* Suppliers of nuclear assistance to non-weapons states for peaceful purposes are not obliged to provide such assistance in all cases. They have the latitude to make prudent decisions about providing assistance on a case-by-case basis.
6. *The standard of “timely warning” under nonproliferation safeguards.* Safeguards are designed to provide outside states the time to take effective measures against a non-weapons state that may be diverting peaceful nuclear technology to weapons purposes. It is not the purpose of these safeguards to determine that a non-weapons state already has a weapons capability.
7. *The policy of nuclear deterrence.* Nuclear weapons in the hands of responsible states will serve to keep the nuclear peace and limit the appetite for nuclear weapons among non-weapons states that might otherwise aspire to or feel compelled to acquire such weapons.
8. *The policies of extended deterrence and reassurance.* The U.S. in particular used its considerable military and political strength to extend security umbrellas over friends and allies that would otherwise be vulnerable. This has effectively served both the counterterrorism and nonproliferation regimes.
9. *The principles of non-aggression and not purposely targeting noncombatants.* Nuclear weapons have no moral content. They are very powerful tools that can be used for either good or evil purposes. Ultimately, the principle of non-aggression is what matters most in determining

the threats these weapons pose. Terrorism, on the other hand, targets innocent non-combatants. An act of terrorism constitutes a purposeful, immoral action by a person or group of people. In either case, it is the morality of the people using the weapons that must be discussed; the weapons themselves are morally neutral tools.

10. *Appreciation of the inherent limits of arms control and disarmament.* Unwise unilateral steps to reduce or eliminate arms by responsible states will not serve the counterterrorism and nonproliferation regimes. It is certainly unwise to assume that acts to reduce or eliminate arms by responsible states will induce all others to follow suit.

**Learning from History.** The history of counterterrorism and nonproliferation regimes offer a series of compelling tales; this week’s Nuclear Security Summit provides a good opportunity for participating states to tell them. For example, atomic weapons ended World War II at a time when a prolonged invasion of Japan would have cost millions more American and Japanese lives. The U.S. nuclear umbrella helped keep the peace in Europe after World War II, an unprecedented period of tranquility and prosperity on an otherwise war-torn continent. The deterrence of nuclear weapons prevented the Cold War confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union from erupting into World War III. And as this perilous period in world history came to an end in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the numbers of nuclear weapons have already plummeted through the voluntary agency of the nuclear states, including the U.S.

In a new age of international challenges and instability—as well as many more aspiring nuclear actors—preserving a level of nuclear deterrence as part of U.S. military doctrine is critical to a safe and prosperous world.

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