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Enhancing and maintaining unpredictability on nuclear transports

Background

Nuclear materials have to be secured while in facilities and during transports. It is a truism. That is why the CPPNM has been made and amended to fit with current threats. That is also the reason why IAEA is developing a set of NSS documents to help countries build, improve and implement their national nuclear security regime. The French nuclear security authority has emphasized the need to increase unpredictability on nuclear transports and developed a new concept.

Unpredictability strengthens security

Many constraints make difficult to conceal the occurrence of nuclear transports. On the one hand, safety is to be guarantied and has to be made transparent to most of public opinions :
Nuclear facilities are easily identified and steadily located,
dedicated roads, rail tracks, harbours and airports are scarce and generally shared with public freight and passengers.
logistic organisation calls for reproducing the same transport scenarii schedules.

On the other hand, it is easily understood that security requires limited publicity and restrictions to keep days, hours, locations and length of stops, border crossing spots and itineraries of nuclear transports unknown.

That is the reason why, in 2017, France has initiated a strengthened unpredictability program. After a one year long experimentation implementation period, adjustments have been made to be fully operational since January 1rst, 2019.

Unpredictability criteria at different stages of the transport

Unpredictability criteria to modified are well known : itineraries, night stops, temporary resting areas, days of departure / arrival, hours of departure and arrival,

Time has come to take stock of the currents achievements, to identify the lessons learned while implementing the whole process as well as to anticipate which could be the next orientations to keep the momentum of improving security in this area.

This is the presentation the French nuclear security authority proposes to share and to elaborate on at the February 2020 security conference in Vienna.

Gender

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