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IAEA's Implementation of the State-Level Concept

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The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has taken several steps over the years to strengthen its safeguards program, including successfully encouraging more countries to bring an Additional Protocol into force, increasing the number of countries that are subject to a broader range of safeguards measures, and upgrading its safeguards analytical laboratories. IAEA's latest strategy to further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the safeguards program is to expand implementation of the "state-level concept" to all countries with safeguards agreements. The state-level concept is an approach in which IAEA considers a broad range of information about a country's nuclear capabilities and tailors its safeguards activities in each country accordingly. IAEA officials have stated that broader implementation of this approach will allow the agency to better allocate resources by reducing safeguards activities where there is no indication of undeclared nuclear activities and to focus its efforts on any issues of safeguards concern. Several member countries, including the United States, support IAEA's plans to broaden implementation of the state-level concept, but other member countries—including some countries with significant nuclear activities—have raised concerns that the agency has not clearly defined and communicated how the state-level concept will be implemented or how it will stay within bounds of the agency's existing legal authorities. In September 2012, the General Conference passed a resolution that included a request for IAEA's Secretariat to report to the Board of Governors on the conceptualization and development of the state-level concept. In August 2013, IAEA released that report to the Board of Governors and started briefing member states on its content. Our paper will discuss (1) IAEA's efforts to clearly define and communicate how IAEA will implement the state-level concept and (2) the status of its implementation.

Country or International Organization

United States of America

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