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Undergirding the IAEA: How Regional Safeguards Agreements Can Take the Pressure off

For the past 60 years, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been the primary organization responsible for international nuclear safeguards. As the years have progressed, the workload for the IAEA has increased significantly. Now, there are concerns that the IAEA's budgetary and human resources will not be sufficient for the task as the workload continues to increase. The world is on the cusp of another surge in nuclear power plant construction related to expected increase in world energy demand; the development of advanced nuclear technologies (generation IV reactors, small modular reactors, floating nuclear power plants, the advent of the thorium fuel cycle, and laser uranium enrichment); the increase of nuclear materials under safeguards; and decommissioning activities related to the potential of shutdown of as many as 200 reactors by 2030.

One possible solution is the establishment of regional safeguards agreements (RSA) that might assist the IAEA in using its resources in the most efficient manner. This paper will assess the viability of this solution. The authors will evaluate the cooperation between the IAEA and the two current regional organizations, ABACC and Euratom, to determine the ways in which their operations and capabilities assist the IAEA in its mission and suggest additional steps that may further contribute to lessening the IAEA's workload. Finally, they will discuss the potential value of RSAs in Southeast Asia and Africa. Southeast Asia is a rapidly developing region of 11 states, seven of which are considering nuclear power options. The Pelindaba Treaty that created an NWFZ in Africa sets out a provision for the creation of a verification body, which can serve as a good foundation for the creation of an RSA. Further discussion will outline how such agreements could be adapted to meet specific regional challenges while decreasing the burden on the IAEA.

Topics

SGI3

Which "Key Question" does your Abstract address?

SGI3.9

Which alternative "Key Question" does your Abstract address? (if any)

SGI1.1

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