

The Problems with the NTI Ranking on Nuclear Security

Ch Viyyanna Sastry and Rajiv Nayan

Dr Ch Viyyanna Sastry was Research Fellow & Dr Rajiv Nayan is Senior Research Associate at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi

April 09, 2012

Summary

The assertion made by us in our preliminary comment – that the NTI Report has done more harm than good for nuclear security – is further substantiated here in this Issue Brief. Governments have begun to question the credibility of the entire process of non-governmental actors contributing to the debate and discussion on nuclear security. Indexing will provide a further opportunity for countries to make allegations that the NGOs working on nuclear security are basically pushing the agenda of the US non-proliferation community as well as of the US government. Broadly, the Report appears to be along the conventional North-South divide with one of its sub-headings reading “Wealthy and Democratic States Score Higher”. The NTI response has not changed our perception.

Introduction

The Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) released a report titled *NTI Nuclear Materials Security Index: Building a Framework for Assurance, Accountability and Action*, on January 11, 2012, showing a baseline assessment of nuclear security conditions prevailing in 176 countries.¹ This Index was developed in association with the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). Countries were assessed in two categories: 32 countries that possess one kg or more of weapons-usable nuclear materials, and 144 countries having less than one kg or none but which at the same time were vectored as potential safe heavens, staging grounds, or transit points for illicit activities. Five sub-categories were used to assess the performance of countries in the first category, and three sub-categories in the case of the second category of countries. The principal objective of the study project, as laid down in the Report, is “to provide an initial framework for discussion and decisions about what actions matter most for nuclear materials security and to contribute to international confidence and guidance for policymakers.”²

The timing of the Report’s release was interesting. The second Nuclear Security Summit was scheduled to be held in Seoul in March 2012, and the last of the preparatory meetings (the Sherpas’ meeting) was held in New Delhi in January, a few days after the release of the Report. One of the stated objectives of the report is “to spark an international discussion about priorities required to strengthen security”,³ yet the Report did not figure in the New Delhi Sherpas’ meeting.⁴ The Report generated some media interest and a couple of responses. The Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) published a preliminary comment⁵ on the report authored by us; this elicited a response⁶ from the authors of the NTI report.

In our preliminary assessment, we had noted that the NTI report was methodologically faulty, an assessment that was based on the criterion of the categorisation of the countries,

¹ Page Stoutland and Deepti Choubey, *NTI Nuclear Materials Security Index: Building a Framework for Assurance, Accountability and Action*, The Nuclear Threat Initiative, January 2012.

² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴ Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, “Foreign Secretary’s Media Interaction on Conclusion of New Delhi Sherpa Meeting”, Press Briefing, January 17, 2012, available at <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530318927>, accessed on January 18, 2012.

⁵ Ch. Viyyanna Sastry and Rajiv Nayan, “How Accurate is the NTI Nuclear Materials Security Index?” *IDSA Comment*, January 24, 2012, available at http://idsa.in/idsacomments/HowAccurateistheNTINuclearMaterialsSecurityIndex_rnayan_240112.

⁶ Nuclear Threat Initiative, “NTI Response to IDSA Article”, January 27, 2012, available at <http://www.nti.org/analysis/opinions/nti-response-idsa-article-how-accurate-nti-nuclear-materials-security-index/>, accessed on March 2, 2012.

the basis of threat assessment, discrimination against international legal conventions and treaties, etc. We also expressed the apprehension that the Report may generate an impression that there are some hidden agenda underlying it, such as pushing the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) and revealing the nuclear weapons stockpile of countries that had not publicised the size of their stockpile.

In response, the NTI explained that the one kg threshold for categorising countries was based on the IAEA's INFCIRC 225/Rev.5 document. It also explained, among other issues, its position on the countries coverage, quantities and number of sites, the primacy to Western initiatives over international conventions and treaties, corruption versus the illicit procurement of materials, and transparency and western bias.

This Issue Brief discusses in detail the issues that we had raised earlier about the Report as well as our rejoinder to the NTI's response to our preliminary comments.

Faulty Methodology

Brand EIU and NTI

As discussed in the earlier IDSA Comment, the methodology employed for the project is indeed faulty. As part of the process of data collection, the project investigators circulated its methodology and information amongst a section of the international strategic, policymaking and scientific communities. That the methodology of the Report was deficient was common knowledge even before it was published, notwithstanding the engagement of a panel of international experts, or the development of the index by the EIU. The NTI response sought to counter this by saying:

NTI collaborated with The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) because of its global reputation and track record providing forecasting and analysis to businesses and governments worldwide. We also relied upon an independent International Panel of Experts from around the world.

EIU's 900+ analysts have particular expertise in the legal and regulatory structures of countries around the world. Once the international panel, EIU and NTI developed the framework, EIU analysts relied on public, open source information in the form of domestic regulations and data from the United Nations, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), government sources and other credible non-governmental organizations to create the rankings. Objectivity was a paramount concern.⁷

The NTI response seems to have glossed over what actually matters: a brand name or an objective study. In fact, the IDSA comment acknowledged the presence of the eminent

⁷ Ibid.

experts by saying that "... the project that produced the Report had engaged some credible scholars from western universities and elsewhere..." However, a mere statement that a leading institution like EIU and a panel of international experts were involved in the study does not mean that the methodology cannot be questioned. It is puzzling to find that a brand name is being used to justify an error. Do the NTI and authors of the Report believe that reputed organisations, institutions, personalities and academicians are infallible? Debate and discussion need to be held on the basis of arguments, reason, facts, figures and evidences, and not on the methodology of cult and charisma. The EIU may have its brand, but our problem with the methodology adopted for this study project persists.

The One-kilogram Threshold

Unlike the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which had placed 44 countries with significant nuclear infrastructure under the Annex 2 list, the NTI considers 32 countries. Of the latter, the Czech Republic, Belarus, and Uzbekistan do not figure in the CTBT's Annex 2 list. Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, Columbia, Egypt, Finland, Indonesia, Peru, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, and Zaire are all listed in Annex 2, but they do not figure in the NTI list. These countries participated in the CTBT negotiations from 1994–1996 and possessed either nuclear power or research reactors by 1996. Our mention of the category of 44 Annex 2 CTBT countries was a mere reference and not, as the NTI response indicates, a suggestion for any categorisation.⁸

What, then, is the real threat? Or, putting it differently, what is the real threat perception? The NTI has a different focus of attention on conceptualising threat or threat perception. Regrettably, the methodological problem continues even in the case of developing an index for a "terrorist bomb". The NTI perceives a "terrorist bomb" or "nuclear yield-producing device fueled by dangerous weapons-usable nuclear materials"⁹ as the real or, in a manner of speaking, the sole threat. In the process, it ignores radiological weapons. In its response to our critique, NTI admitted that radiological weapons are a real threat even though it went on to contend that these require "a substantially different set of security requirements."¹⁰ In the international community, a consensus is emerging that the employment of a dirty bomb is a more probable scenario of nuclear terrorism, which is otherwise known as a low-probable, high-consequence threat. We accept that it is the prerogative of NTI to perceive the threat as it does. However, we may agree to disagree.

⁸ The NTI response was: "The article [IDSA article] suggests that Annex 2 of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) may have been a more useful guide to delineate the country categories. Annex 2 of the CTBT captures countries that participated in the negotiation of the CTBT from 1994-1996 and that possessed nuclear power or research reactors at that time. See *ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The criterion of selecting countries with more than one kg of nuclear weapons usable material is also questionable. In order to make a credible weapon, a minimum of five kg of plutonium or 25 kg of highly enriched uranium is required. How, then, did the Report arrive at the figure of one kg is a question worth asking. In its response to the IDSA Comment, NTI justified the one kg parameter on the ground that it was taken from the IAEA INFCIRC 225/ Rev.5 document. This raises the valid question: should the IAEA parameter or standard not be used? But the response is: has the Report taken *all* the parameters adopted by the IAEA or has it *selectively* used the IAEA's parameters in its study? What is therefore required is either the adoption of the entire IAEA standard for the analytical framework or providing the rationale behind the selective use of the IAEA document. Just because the IAEA INFCIRC 225/Rev.5 document has used the criterion of one kg does not mean that it cannot be questioned.

Although the Report and the response do not elaborate upon the logic and rationale for choosing the INFCIRC225/Rev.5 document, it appears that the authors assume that terrorists may accumulate small quantities from many countries in order to build a nuclear bomb. If a terrorist group wants to accumulate uranium for weapon development purposes, it may well target countries with less than one kg uranium as well. So, the one kg parameter does not offer any convincing methodological argument. Moreover, INFCIRC/225/Revision.5 may not necessarily be the best of the documents and it may have its own share of problems. Thus, first, the selection of the one kg threshold in the project and the later justification by citing the INFCIRC/225/Revision 5 remains incomprehensible and continues to elude a proper and convincing logic.

What is More Important: Number of Nuclear Facilities or Proper Security for them?

A closer look at the five sub-categories devised for 32 countries—quantities and sites; security and control measures; global norms; domestic commitments and capacity; and societal factors—suggests that these are also a mix of the genuine and the illogical. A country with more sites and a larger quantity of nuclear materials will thus be awarded lesser points. A comparison of India and Austria, for example, reveals that India is placed lower in the ranking due to the sheer size of its stockpile and number of sites. This is the reason why the first 10 rankings in the NTI index are awarded to smaller countries with a smaller number of sites and quantities. NTI's response mistook our critique as one of questioning the downgrading of India's ranking. That was not our objective; rather it was intended to closely examine and question the methodology employed for the study.

The NTI study confuses the real issue by overly focusing upon the number of nuclear sites instead of upon their security. It presupposes that the security capability/infrastructure of a country is fixed. Thus, even if a country increases the number of sites, it would have to rely upon the same infrastructure. By this logic, an increase in the number

of sites within a country will necessarily compromise the security of the sites located within it. Generally, any country increasing its nuclear capability undertakes appropriate security measures to protect the larger number of sites. The increasing level of awareness and activities generated by several institutions and fora about nuclear security in recent years has, in fact, made countries with nuclear facilities pay much more attention to security requirements at the sites. Admittedly, a country expanding its nuclear capabilities may or may not expand its security capabilities correspondingly. In case of the latter, those countries that are not taking appropriate security measures should be identified.

The NTI indexing castigates all the countries that are expanding their nuclear capabilities. This kind of indexing may give an impression that nuclear security equals anti-nuclear energy and anti-nuclear renaissance. Thus, this kind of study may prove counterproductive for both nuclear energy and nuclear security.

Transparency versus Nuclear Security

Transparency is a contentious issue. The international strategic and academic communities are already struggling to craft a transparency regime. Despite regular calls to make their nuclear materials stockpiles public, countries like China, Israel, Pakistan, and India have not done so, leaving it to other countries and think tanks to engage in guesswork. The reason why these countries have not declared the size of their stockpiles is because these stockpiles play a role in calculations pertaining to credible minimum nuclear deterrence. Analysts now acknowledge that a country with small nuclear forces may come under domestic pressure to match the size of the arsenal(s) its larger rivals or adversaries, if it makes its stockpile level public.

Transparency is a point on which many national governments as well as the Report find difficulties, especially vis-à-vis nuclear security. The Government of India¹¹ and a former chief of the Indian Department of Atomic Energy¹² have stated that transparency and nuclear security are mutually contradictory. In fact, the NTI Report finds merit in the argument that transparency and nuclear security are paradoxical by acknowledging that its stress upon transparency “is not a call for states to reveal so much information that they compromise national and global security.”¹³ But at the same time, the Report expects countries to: (i) publish nuclear security regulations and other “framework” information that provide general descriptions of security arrangements; (ii) declare inventory quantities

¹¹ “Foreign Secretary’s Media Interaction on Conclusion of New Delhi Sherpa Meeting”, n. 4.

¹² Indrani Bagchi, “India placed at bottom of nuclear safety index compiled by US thinktank”, available at http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-01-15/india/30629446_1_nuclear-security-anil-kakodkar-physical-protection, accessed on April 4, 2012.

¹³ See *NTI Nuclear Material Security Index*, n. 1, p. 35.

for both highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium; and (iii) make regular “peer reviews” the norm for sites holding HEU and plutonium.¹⁴

Both the Report and the response to our critique indicate that some countries, including India, have not responded to the NTI indexing process. In actual fact, the NTI study does not state clearly the kind of regulatory transparency it wants. In various meetings, representatives of India and other countries, which refused to respond to the NTI’s questions, did give presentations on their regulatory mechanisms.¹⁵ If we accept what NTI maintains – that it did not have enough data on the countries which did not respond to its request – it leads to yet another analytical issue. If researchers do not have information about a system, they should refrain from ranking that system. The lack of data about the nuclear system of a country should have ideally led to the establishment of a separate category altogether. Instead, the study and its index have mixed up two issues: the data collection problem and the nuclear security problem. The lack of data about a country does not mean the lack of security measures.

Increasing Complacency

The ranking may create a false impression and the real issue may get misplaced in the maze of indexing data. Lost in its own statistical and ranking mess, the Report places India at the 28th spot in the first list with Vietnam, Iran, Pakistan, and North Korea below it, and China on the 27th spot. Equally surprising are the rankings of Israel at number 25, Russia at number 26 Japan at 23, and France at 19 along with South Korea. The top five countries in this category are Australia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, and Austria. There is definitely no room for complacency by any country. However, some countries, which are well known for being vulnerable to terrorist attacks, will happily hide behind the statistical and ranking riddle generated by the NTI Report. They would contend that countries like Japan or India are just a rank or two above them, and thus there is no need to take special cautionary measures. The index may also make these countries argue that all is not bad with their systems; they may be weak on some issues, as are the others, but in other areas they show strength by earning a specific number of points.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.35-36.

¹⁵ For example, Fredric Lall, “Design and Operational Provisions for Security of Nuclear Installations in India”, International Symposium on Nuclear Security, March 30–April 3, 2009, Vienna, available at http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Meetings/PDFplus/2009/cn166/CN166_Presentations/Session%20%2012/017%20Lall.pdf, accessed on March 2, 2012; also see, International Atomic Energy Agency, “International Symposium on Nuclear Security”, March 30–April 3, 2009, Vienna, details available at http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/Meetings/cn166_Presentations_n.asp, accessed on March 2, 2012.

Corruption versus Illicit Materials Transactions

The Report also includes the pervasiveness of corruption as an indicator. Some issues, however, need to be addressed here. First, how can corruption be measured in a society? It is necessary to consider the fact that in developing countries, nuclear establishments are insulated from other governing bodies because of the national importance attached to them. What is even more surprising is that the Report gives a rating of 0-2 for groups interested in acquiring nuclear materials illicitly while at the same time giving a rating of 0-4 for pervasiveness of corruption! In its response to our critique, the NTI acknowledged this problem, but did not provide a satisfactory answer as is evident from the following: "After lengthy discussion within the team and among our advisors, we ultimately chose to use EIU data from its long-standing and reputable Risk Briefing Service."¹⁶

WINS and Other Centres of Excellence

The inclusion of contribution to the World Institute for Nuclear Security (WINS) as a variable is also questionable. A country that supports WINS or any centre of global excellence wins points. While the Report highlights WINS, it does not name other such centres. Favouring one over others appears unfair to many who can view this Report as a mere marketing ploy to promote an organization like WINS. NTI's response to our critique seems to only endorse the suspicion: "NTI helped found WINS and believes in its mission...."¹⁷

NTI also argues that WINS currently has the best "best practices". This is a highly subjective issue. Although some may agree, most would disagree with the contention that WINS has the really most appropriate practices. Even the US academic community has issued a dissenting note on it.¹⁸ Similarly, many would disagree with the idea of equating WINS with the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO). While WANO has won credibility, WINS is yet to do so.

We do not question the right of the NTI to campaign and finance any organisation. Just because NTI helped found WINS and believes in its mission does not mean that WINS should automatically become the high point earning index of a supposedly independent study undertaken by the NTI. Furthermore, while the NTI is free to do so, it should not claim objectivity. Its response clearly shows that NTI is not clear whether it intends to produce an objective study or promotional literature.

¹⁶ "NTI Response to IDSA Article", n. 6.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See, for example, Paul Nelson, "The Nuclear Threat Initiative," March 29, 2012, <http://www.idsa.in/node/8459/3587#comment-3587>, accessed on April 4, 2012.

Differences among Experts

Can a nuclear physicist judge with similar ease a legal framework, the complex nuclear normative order and societal factors? A close look at the international panel of experts does not inspire confidence that all the parameters taken by the study may have received just treatment. The Report does not give a clear picture of how data were collected and analysed with the help of these international experts. The method seems opaque and bewildering. The Report—and the response—at different places give different versions of the method of weighing and indexing. In analysing such vast data, it appears that the consistency of expert opinion was not checked. This is essential as different experts can have different opinions.

Hidden Agenda?

The methodology and timing of the Report prompts questions about the presence of a hidden agenda. It appears that this is indeed the case. First, the Report gives the sense that it is providing a push for the Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI), an American initiative. Russia may or may not have benefited from the Initiative, but other countries, including India, may require more time. Whether or not to adopt the GTRI's programme should be a country's individual choice. A country that finds the GTRI programme useful would automatically adopt it. However, it is methodologically faulty to assume that *not joining* the GTRI is bad for nuclear security. In its response to our critique, NTI stated: "NTI has been a champion of this program, but it is not included in the Index framework at all."¹⁹ Nowhere in our comment did we mention that GTRI was taken into account for indexing the countries.

The NTI report in its "Findings" section has made some key observations. Here, the subsection "Governments Are Becoming More Engaged" notes:

The past two decades have seen tremendous progress in reducing the threat posed by nuclear materials. Nineteen nations plus Taiwan have eliminated their stocks of weapons-usable materials entirely. This progress was facilitated by a range of important international initiatives aimed at combating the threat, such as the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction; the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism; the Proliferation Security Initiative; and the U.S. Department of Energy's Global Threat Reduction Initiative and Materials, Protection, Control and Accounting Program. The genesis for many such programs was the groundbreaking Cooperative Threat Reduction program, also known as the Nunn-Lugar program, in which the United States, Russia, and other countries worked together following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.²⁰

¹⁹ "NTI Response to IDSA Article", n. 6.

²⁰ *NTI Nuclear Material Security Index*, n. 1, p. 26.

In another subsection²¹, “More States with Weapons-Usable Materials Could Eliminate Stocks”, the Report further notes:

In the past two decades, 19 countries plus Taiwan have eliminated or removed their weapons-usable nuclear materials. Most have done so through the U.S. Department of Energy’s Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) or its predecessors. GTRI is a program that works with countries to return U.S. – and Russian-origin HEU to the United States and Russia for blend down. The cooperation between the United States and Russia – and among the states returning the materials – has produced significant results in risk reduction. Today, 14 of the 32 states with weapons-usable nuclear materials in the NTI Index have limited quantities of those materials (less than 100 kilograms), and many may be good candidates to eliminate their stocks over the next few years. Many of these countries have only small amounts of materials (which might be converted to non-weapons usable fuels) at one or two sites (which might be shut down).

However, the most important sub-section titled “Target Assistance to States with Urgent Needs” recommends:

Matching countries with urgent needs with those countries able to provide assistance is critical to strengthening nuclear materials security worldwide. Although many countries are better informed on materials security, significant uncertainty remains regarding which actions have higher priority. The NTI Index can be used as a resource in that regard. For each country, it identifies areas needing improvement that may benefit from various forms of international assistance as well as other countries that may have the capacity to provide assistance. For instance, the United States and Russia, along with other states that have engaged in cooperative threat reduction measures, are particularly well suited to provide assistance to those in need.²²

By the report’s own admission, the Cooperative Threat Reduction program or the Nunn-Lugar program produced Initiatives such as the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, and the Proliferation Security Initiative, which were taken into account for indexing. We want to believe that there is no hidden agenda on GTRI, but the NTI Report has not helped the international community in developing a fair understanding of GTRI.

²¹ Ibid., p. 31.

²² Ibid., pp38-39.

International Convention and Institutions versus US/Western Initiatives

The Report also mixes up multilateral regimes with international legal conventions and treaties in the global norms category (see Table 1 below). Arrangements like the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) as well as membership of the G-8 cannot be treated at par with international treaties and organisations. In its response to our critique, NTI had this to say: “International treaties (captured by the International Legal Commitments indicator) are given twice as much weight as much as the initiatives mentioned in the article (captured by the Voluntary Commitments indicator).”²³

This explanation is even more disturbing. There are two international conventions for nuclear security – the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Of these, CPPNM has been amended. A country may simply not sign these two conventions but join the US- and Western countries-led initiatives and score more points. This undermines international law. The study also denigrates international institutions like IAEA. A country will earn the same point for joining both the IAEA and the PSI. In the Report a WINS contributor is equated with an IAEA Nuclear Security Fund contributor. So, if the rankings/indexing of the NTI study become the norm in the future, then in order to score on the ranking, a country might ignore international conventions (and hence undermine international law) and jump on to the bandwagon of the US and western-led security initiatives.

Table 1: Criteria 3 Global Norms

Criteria 3 Global Norms	Score of 0–100 (100 = most favorable nuclear materials security conditions)
3.1 International legal commitments materials security conditions)	Score of 0–5 (5 = most favorable nuclear
3.1.1 CPPNM	Rating of 0–2
3.1.2 2005 Amendment to the CPPNM	Rating of 0–1
3.1.3 ICSANT	Rating of 0–2

²³ “NTI Response to IDSA Article”, n. 6.

3.2	Voluntary commitments	Score of 0-5 (5 = most favorable nuclear materials security conditions)*
3.2.1	IAEA membership	Rating of 0-1
3.2.2	PSI membership	Rating of 0-1
3.2.3	Global Initiative membership	Rating of 0-1
3.2.4	G-8 Global Partnership membership	Rating of 0-1
3.2.5	WINS contributions	Rating of 0-1
3.2.6	IAEA Nuclear Security Fund contributions	Rating of 0-1
3.2.7	Bilateral or multilateral assistance	Rating of 0-1
3.2.8	NNSA Second Line of Defense participation	Rating of 0-1
3.3	Nuclear security and materials transparency	Score of 0-6 (6 = most favorable nuclear materials security conditions)
3.3.1	Published regulations and reports	Rating of 0-2
3.3.2	Public declarations and reports about nuclear materials	Rating of 0-1
3.3.3	Invitations for review of security arrangements	Rating of 0-1
3.3.4	Confidence level of estimate of nuclear materials quantity	Rating of 0-2

Source: NTI Report

Conclusion

The IAEA is already working and mobilising its member states towards nuclear security. The Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) convened by US President Barack Obama has also generated a momentum towards nuclear security as well as greater awareness of nuclear terrorism. The Summit has underscored the need for working together and the importance of international cooperation. The Summit process received accolades for bridging the NPT-based international divide. In contrast, the NTI Report seeks to recreate the old divide, and could even prove counterproductive for nuclear security. The confidence and trust that the Summit process gathered could be adversely affected by such documents.

The assertion made by us in our previous comment – that the NTI Report has done more harm than good for nuclear security – has been further substantiated. Governments have begun to question the credibility of the entire process of non-governmental actors contributing to the debate and discussion on nuclear security. Indexing will provide a further opportunity for countries to make allegations that the NGOs working on nuclear security are basically pushing the agenda of the US non-proliferation community as well as the US government. Broadly, the Report appears to be along the conventional North-South divide with one of its sub-headings reading “Wealthy and Democratic States Score Higher”. The NTI response has not changed our perception.

The Report is concerned about the missing consensus on priorities to achieving nuclear security. However, this does not really seem to be the case. The 2010 Washington NSS released two important documents: the communiqué and the work plan, based on the consensus of participating countries. The 2012 Seoul Summit also witnessed the emergence of consensus on a few new areas like synergy between nuclear safety and nuclear security. The IAEA is also actively providing guidelines for nuclear security. There is thus greater awareness of nuclear security today. Different inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations and bodies as well as individual analysts are also proposing mechanisms for nuclear security.

We do not rule out that some countries may be lax or helpless but, overwhelmingly, the international community and concerned countries would like to weigh the ideas, mechanisms and proposals appropriate for their nuclear security requirements arrived at design-basis threats which are considered the fundamental principles of physical protection. A constructive and positive engagement/pressure from the non-governmental circles may certainly help international consensus-building, but such circles should also be prepared to accept that some of their proposals may not be found useful by the concerned countries.