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INSC Statement on North Korean Nuclear Weapons

September 15, 2003

The International Nuclear Societies Council, made up of more than 35 member societies, representing more than 80,000 nuclear professionals around the world, believe that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's withdrawal from the Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on January 11, 2003 is a serious matter and has therefore endorsed the attached statement.

Currently, the following Nuclear Societies are members of INSC: American Nuclear Society (ANS); Asociación Argentina de Tecnología Nuclear (AATN); Associação Brasileira de Energia Nuclear (ABEN); Atomic Energy Society of Japan (AESJ); Australian Nuclear Association (ANA); Canadian Nuclear Society (CNS); Egyptian Society of Nuclear Science and Applications (ESNSA); European Nuclear Society (ENS) - Austrian Nuclear Society; Belgian Nuclear Society; British Nuclear Energy Society; Bulgarian Nuclear Society; Croatian Nuclear Society; Czech Nuclear Society; Danish Nuclear Society; Finnish Nuclear Society; French Nuclear Society; German Nuclear Society; Hungarian Nuclear Society; Israel Nuclear Society; Italian Nuclear Society; Lithuanian Nuclear Energy Association; Netherlands Nuclear Society; Nuclear Society of Russia; Nuclear Society of Slovenia; Romanian Nuclear Energy Association; Slovak Nuclear Society; Spanish Nuclear Society; Swedish Nuclear Society; Swiss Nuclear Society; Indian Nuclear Society (InNS); Israel Nuclear Society (IsNS); Korean Nuclear Society (KNS); Latin American Section (LAS); Nuclear Energy Society Taipei, China (NEST); Pakistan Nuclear Society (PNS), and Sociedad Nuclear Mexicana (SNM).

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Whereas:

1. For more than 30 years, the NPT has proven to be an essential instrument to maintain international peace and security by preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and by avoiding the danger of nuclear warfare in conflict situations among nations of the world;
2. Adherence to the NPT includes a commitment by Nuclear Weapons States (China, France, United Kingdom, Russia, and the United States) to provide support and immediate assistance to any state that is a victim of an act, or object of a threat of aggression, in which nuclear weapons are used;
3. The DPRK indicated its intention to withdraw from the NPT, and during the three-month period before the withdrawal became effective, the NPT safeguards agreement with the IAEA remained binding and in force. Despite these legal commitments, several actions taken by the DPRK constituted non-compliance with that safeguards agreement thereby representing a unilateral refutation of obligations undertaken in the frame of international law;
4. The DPRK's withdrawal from the Treaty on January 11, 2003, followed by its announcement to proceed with the development of nuclear weapons, is particularly unsettling in the precedent it appears to establish for others to do the same without consequence, endangering an arduously attained state of worldwide restraint in the use of nuclear weapons.

Therefore:

The International Nuclear Societies Council:

1. Strongly supports the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and believes that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, utilized under strict international safeguards, significantly serve world peace and the best interests of all nations;
2. Considers that the DPRK's actions of non-compliance with the NPT safeguards agreement need to be addressed by responsible international organizations (like the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Security Council of the United Nations) not only to reinforce the regime of international law and agreements, but also to prevent other NPT Parties from following their example on the basis of a precedent without penalties;
3. Emphasizes the importance for all nations to enforce their export control measures to prohibit any illegal transfer of sensitive nuclear materials and technologies to the DPRK, or other nation or organization not upholding the principles of peaceful uses of nuclear technology;
4. Recommends that its member societies stress to their respective governments that the 2005 NPT Review Conference address the issue of maintaining the provisions of the NPT safeguards agreements on those materials and facilities safeguarded before withdrawal from the NPT;
5. Supports the DPRK nuclear professionals who, acting within the legal structure of their country, uphold the regime of non-proliferation and try to encourage policies that value the principles of the INSC Global Creed, particularly the enhancement of the peaceful uses and application of nuclear science and technology;
6. Expresses its great hope that multilateral diplomatic negotiations under way among China, DPRK, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia, and U.S. will restore the non-proliferation regime in North Korea.