

DISEC

Lichtenstein

Safeguarding Nuclear Power Plants from War and Terror Uses

[Highschool]

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Topic A: Safeguarding Nuclear Power Plants from War and Terror Uses

In 1986, the infamous Chernobyl Power Plant incident would spread up to 400 Hiroshima bombs worth of radiation to nearly half of the European continent (International Atomic Energy Association). The effects of this accident would not only lead to mass ARS (Acute Radiation Syndrome) but also the displacement of nearly 350,000 people from their homes (World Nuclear Association). The implications of nuclear power plant incidents, whether man-made or not, prove disastrous to the stability and sustainability of a region, a prospect that could threaten the internal security of any nation. Many attempts of violence toward nuclear facilities have been brought about by that cause alone. For instance, in 1981, Israeli forces, in an effort to hinder the Iranian nuclear program, launched an air raid on Baghdad's Osirak nuclear facility, threatening the city's population with radiation exposure (Ramberg 495-514). During the Iran-Iraq War, the Iraqi military targeted the Iranian Bushehr nuclear reactors to disrupt the Iranian energy grid and threaten reactor core instability (Carlson). In the 1990s, terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda planned to attack Western nuclear power plants which they considered to be "the best targets for spreading fear" (Ghoshal and Rothaus). Only recently with the events of Russia's invasion of Ukraine has the stigma and topic of nuclear power plant security been brought back to the forefront of the global security debate. As mentioned by UN Secretary-General António

Guterres, “any damage to any nuclear facility could spell catastrophe:” catastrophic towards the nation's stability and to the health of the local civic population (Felipe). Therefore, in times of conflict and terrorism, the UN must ensure that the safety of a power plant is preserved and not used as a weapon.

Realizing the threat that extremist groups can display with the use of nuclear radiation and proliferation, the UN has adopted measures to limit the utilization of nuclear energy as a weapon of terror or destruction. Although not concerning power plants specifically, the UN has adopted measures like the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) which has aimed at hindering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to terrorist and extremist groups to ensure global security for new generations (World Nuclear Association). Additionally, the IAEA has also proposed the first Nuclear Security Plan which has sought to regulate the security protocols of international nuclear facilities including background checks, barricades, surveillance, and X-ray technology (IAEA). These efforts seek to protect nuclear power plants from any external threat from vigilante groups. When it comes to military action, the UN has outlined legislation and treaties regarding the security and preservation of nuclear power plants. As outlined in the Additional Protocol of 1979 at the Geneva Convention, Article 56 requires that nuclear facilities “shall not be made the object of attack, even where these objects are military objectives, if such attack may cause the release of dangerous forces and consequent severe losses among the civilian population.” (Schmitt). Although this bars countries from legally attacking nuclear power plants, it does not particularly prevent countries from attacking in what can be referred to as self-defense. For instance, the Israeli Air Force would launch an attack on the unfinished Iranian Osirak nuclear power plant claiming that the attack was necessary to curb Iran’s nuclear program which they saw as a threat to Israeli security (World Nuclear Association). This is a

prospect defensible by the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, which seeks to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons (NTI), while at the same time compromising the health and safety of the closely located city of Baghdad. However, in 2005, a period filled with anti-terrorist sentiment post 9/11, the International Convention on the Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism was ratified, which sought to outline the definition of nuclear terrorism and the international consequences of such. This legislation was the first act that would comprise terrorism of any kind involving nuclear energy (Nuclear Threat Initiative). Since then, no real external threat has been taken against nuclear power plants. However, recent events like Russia's invasion of Ukraine have brought back the topic of nuclear energy safety into the General Assembly. The shelling of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant has sparked a new revival in the Cold War stigma towards nuclear energy (Faulconbridge and Davis). Even though the threat of nuclear terrorism has been addressed by the UN, it is the responsibility of the UN to adopt and address nuclear safety concerning military conflict.

Regarding the safety of nuclear power plants, Lichtenstein has sided with Western powers in ensuring the safety of nuclear energy in times of conflict. As a signer of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Lichtenstein has devoted itself to limiting the existence of nuclear threats, that being nuclear weapons or the safety of nuclear power plant facilities. Lichtenstein also supports the facilitation of new nuclear power plant developments to create more sustainable and clean energy production. Due to Lichtenstein's co-dependence on Switzerland, which supplies 98% of Lichtenstein's energy consumption (Kucharska), the country has backed Switzerland on major efforts regarding nuclear energy. Lichtenstein shares Switzerland's doctrine regarding the disarmament of nuclear weapons towards more sustainable energy production. When Switzerland pushed for the Global Threat Reduction Initiative and the

Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Security, which was created to address the safety and protection of nuclear resources, Lichtenstein backed up their efforts in the UN (Schneider-Ammann). When Russia invaded Ukraine and shelled the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Lichtenstein, along with multiple other countries, drafted a statement condemning Russia's actions and forcing them to draw off shelling. In addition to that, Lichtenstein also supported the creation of a demilitarized zone around nuclear power plants like Zaporizhzhia to legally protect them from any military threat (Glantz). In 2005, Lichtenstein also supported the ratification of the International Convention on the Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism, a resolution that strived to enhance nuclear safety concerning outside, purposeful attacks like terrorism or in some cases war (Nuclear Threat Initiative). These actions sought to not only prevent a Chernbyl-level accident of radiation exposure from happening again but also to support the development of nuclear energy production as a sustainable, clean source of energy.

When it comes to the topic, Liechtenstein fully supports the IAEA in establishing international protocols regarding the safety of nuclear power plants from both human errors and external attacks. The nation seeks to bestow the IAEA with a greater international influence on nuclear protocol, additionally granting them the power to take control of nuclear power plants in countries of political instability or war (IAEA). Lichtenstein fully supports the demilitarization of nuclear power plants, as can be seen in Zaporizhzhia. A demilitarized zone surrounding nuclear power plants would ensure their safety and protection during times of military conflict (Schmitt). Additionally, Lichtenstein hopes to better outline the International Convention Suppression Acts on Nuclear Terrorism further defining what nuclear terrorism is and how acts of terrorism or sabotage can be brought to justice. By enacting stricter protocols regarding safety and integrity, the prospect of nuclear terrorism will be hindered (Nuclear Threat Initiative).

Fortunately, due to these measures outlined by the UN, nuclear terrorism has never resulted in any catastrophic disasters. However, events like the attack on the Creys-Malville power plant site in France have made Lichtenstein and other countries both strive for the highest standard concerning power plant security and the security of nuclear resources as a whole.

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