

U.S. and Russia Agree on Nuclear Terrorism

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Barack Obama meeting with South Korea's President Park Geun-hye and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

THE HAGUE — World leaders have called on countries to cut their use and their stocks of highly enriched nuclear fuel to the minimum to help prevent al Qaeda-style militants from obtaining material for atomic bombs.

Winding up a third nuclear security summit since 2010 on Tuesday, this one overshadowed by the Ukraine crisis, 53 countries — including the U.S. and Russia at a time of high tension between them — agreed that much headway had been made in the past four years.

But they also underlined that many challenges remained and stressed the need for increased international cooperation to make sure highly enriched uranium, or HEU, plutonium and other radioactive substances do not fall into the wrong hands.

The U.S. and Russia set aside their differences over Crimea to endorse the meeting's final statement aimed at enhancing nuclear security around the world, together with other big

powers including China, France, Germany and Britain.

But Russia, China and 16 other countries shunned a separate initiative of the U.S., the Netherlands and South Korea at the summit to incorporate United Nations' nuclear agency security guidelines into national rules.

"The absence of Russia, China, Pakistan and India — all nuclear weapons states with large amounts of nuclear material — as well as others ... weakens the initiative's impact," said the Fissile Materials Working Group, or FMWG, of security experts.

The Dutch hosts hailed the summit as "a major step toward a safer world." By contrast, the FMWG said the summit had taken "moderate steps" toward stopping dangerous weapons-usable nuclear materials from going astray but that bolder, more concerted action was needed.

U.S. President Barack Obama said Ukraine's decision at the first nuclear security summit in Washington in 2010 to remove all of its HEU was a "vivid reminder that the more of this material we can secure, the safer all of our countries will be."

"Had that not happened, those dangerous nuclear materials would still be there now," Obama told a news conference. "And the difficult situation we are dealing with in Ukraine today would involve yet another level of concern."

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