

Nuclear terrorism

BOTTOM LINE



BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

THE third nuclear security summit was held at The Hague on March 24-25. Russian President Vladimir Putin did not attend the summit and instead sent his foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov. Observers say that the timing of the summit was not appropriate because the Ukrainian crisis overshadowed the deliberations of the summit. The political tension between Russia and the West did not augur well for cooperative talks between the two countries on the prevention of nuclear terrorism. Most of the nuclear weapons are in Russia and the US (Russia-8,500 and the US-7,700, as of 2013).

President Obama held the first nuclear security summit in April 2010 in Washington, D.C. The second summit was held in Seoul in March 2012. The third summit was held in The Hague. All the summits had one main purpose, to find ways to secure nuclear weapons, nuclear fuel, and radioactive wastes so that they do not

fall in the hands of terrorists. Thirty-five out of 53 nations taking part in the third summit pledged to turn international guidelines into national laws. The US, UK and Japan were among the countries to agree to the deal at the summit. Major nuclear powers Russia, China, India and Pakistan did not join the initiative.

Although Japan has agreed to turn over hundreds of kilos of nuclear material to the United States, experts believe its remaining stockpile of lower-grade plutonium contained in waste fuel could potentially be reprocessed as fissile material for an extremely large nuclear arsenal. Furthermore, Japan is planning to open a nuclear reprocessing plant this year in the north of the country, which could turn out large quantities of additional plutonium.

About 140 cases of missing or unauthorised use of nuclear and radioactive material were reported to the global nuclear watchdog -- International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) -- in 2013.

The biggest nightmare for the world is that a terrorist group could get hold of nuclear material and be able to use it. The technology has now come to such a stage that a backpack nuclear bomb can be made without great difficulty and detonated in the heart of any city, killing millions of people instantly.

Pacifists say "nuclear security" is an absurd proposition because terrorists aren't just trying to get their hands on material to build their own nuclear explosives but also to get access to the ready-made weapons.

Experts say that protecting such materials in transit, developing nuclear forensic techniques to help law enforcement agencies detect illicit trafficking, and using low enriched uranium in nuclear medicine are important parts of the security process.

There are two treaties to eliminate nuclear weapons. Becoming a party to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT) would require scrapping of nuclear arsenals, something the nuclear powers outside the pact,

including Israel, India and Pakistan, have refused to do so far. Another step for nuclear disarmament is for all states to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Furthermore, a significant step is to conclude the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), which would prohibit further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. The discussion has been stalled at the Geneva-based Disarmament Conference as of today.

Bangladesh has signed both the NPT and CTBT, reflecting its commitment to world peace and security as enshrined in Article 25 of the Bangladesh Constitution.

Although preventing nuclear terrorism is a laudable intention, the ideal goal is to eliminate all nuclear weapons. Pacifists say "nuclear security" is an absurd proposition because terrorists aren't just trying to get their hands on material to build their own nuclear explosives but also to get access to the ready-made weapons, most which are in Russia and the US.

What we need now is a nuclear weapons summit with all the key players to advance the phased, verified elimination of all nuclear weapons.

In 2000, in his book *Engagement: Australia faces the Asia Pacific*, Paul Keating, former prime minister of

Australia, argues for scrapping nuclear weapons for the following reasons: "Three possibilities exist with regard to nuclear weapons and three only. First, they will be used, either deliberately or accidentally. Second, that they will not be used but will be managed forever by wise, prudent and well-meaning governments and military forces and will never fall into the hands of terrorists. Or third, that we agree to get rid of them. The first possibility offers catastrophe to the human race. The second requires us to make assumptions about the future that run completely counter to logic and experience. The third is the only possibility that can secure our safety."

In November 1954, five months before his death, the father of atomic bomb Einstein summarised his feelings about his role in the creation of the atomic bomb: "I made one great mistake in my life... when I signed the letter to President Roosevelt recommending that atom bombs be made." Furthermore, Einstein wrote in German to a Japanese friend Shinohara in a letter dated June 23, 1953: "I have always condemned the use of the atomic bomb against Japan but I could not do anything at all to prevent that fateful decision."

The writer is former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

IPCC rings warning bell: Is anyone listening?

POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



SALEEMUL HUQ

I have just spent a gruelling week in Yokohama, Japan, at the plenary meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The summary for policymakers on climate impacts, adaptation and vulnerability was adopted there a day after the official closing, after an all-night marathon of work.

The co-chairs of the working group crafting the summary, Chris Field of the United States and Vicente Barros of Argentina, were on the podium for nearly 40 hours straight. The rest of us lead authors were also supposed to be there on standby in case any of the government delegates had questions on the text.

One reason it takes so long is that each sentence in the summary must be approved, line-by-line.

THE POSITIVE

Having participated as a lead author in three such mega-assessment reports, I can see some positives and negatives from the most recent process.

First, the positive side is that this is by far the biggest global scientific enterprise the world has ever seen. It involves literally thousands of scientists from all over the world and from a variety of disciplines.

The willingness of scientists from different backgrounds to provide their time voluntarily and to achieve a consensus among themselves (no mean feat in itself) makes it a stimulating collaboration for the thousands of scientists involved.



Another positive is the fact that when the final summary is adopted by governments it becomes their report and no government can then disagree with the findings afterwards. This gives the report enormous credibility in informing policy.

A final positive is that, despite setbacks and lack of adequate movement in policymaking under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), each IPCC report has provided significant momentum to the UNFCCC negotiations. Thus, it has largely met its aim of science informing policy.

THE NEGATIVE

On the negative side, however, the mega-assessments are taking longer and longer to

produce (this fifth assessment took over five years) and, hence, by the time it is published it is already out-of-date by well over a year.

Another negative aspect (from the perspective of adaptation knowledge, which is the topic that I work on) is that most of the knowledge is in the process of being generated by planners and practitioners at national and local level. Much of this knowledge does not get published in scientific peer-reviewed journals, or at least it won't be for a number of years.

But those same planners and practitioners are demanding knowledge of what works, now, and would prefer to have less-than-perfect knowledge sooner rather than wait years for fully scientifically evaluated knowledge.

When it comes to adaptation, I think the IPCC should consider commissioning more special reports on specific topics that can be delivered more easily and within two years instead of over five years for the mega-assessments.

WHAT'S NEW?

What's new in this latest report?

First is the overwhelming new evidence from across the globe -- including land and ocean ecosystems -- of shifts and changes occurring in response to climatic changes. This reinforces the fact that mankind is now irrevocably living in a climate-changed world, one some people have dubbed the "anthropocene."

Second, adverse impacts of climate change are now hitting all continents and all countries and groups, including rich countries and rich people.

Third, while the world as a whole can probably adapt to an up to 2 degree Celsius temperature rise (which will still mean sacrificing some species, places and people), if temperatures continue to rise to 4 degrees Celsius (which is where they are headed at the present rate), then all bets are off. In other words, our ability to predict ends.

To end on a more optimistic note (and avoid being called an "alarmist"), I would say we are learning a lot about how to adapt to climate impacts, and paradoxically the poorer countries are leading the way on generating new knowledge through practice on adaptation.

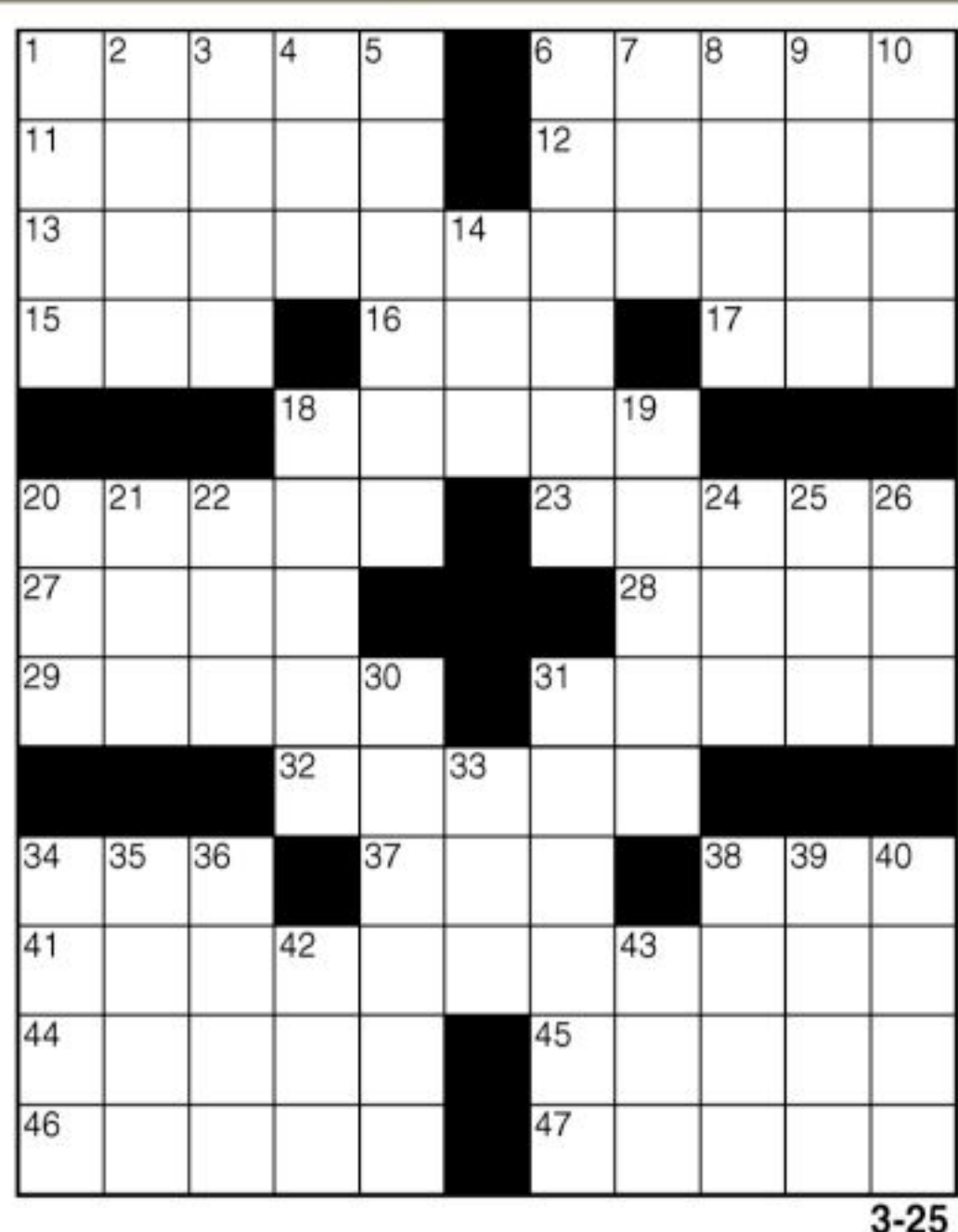
We know what to do. Doing it just needs renewed political will.

So as the IPCC continues to ring the warning bells once again, I hope policymakers will not remain deaf to the warnings forever.

The writer is the director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, based in Bangladesh, and a senior fellow at the International Institute for Environment and Development, based in London.

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

- ACROSS**
- Squander
 - Blitzen's boss
 - One with a record
 - Court event
 - Clinic specimen
 - Ready to go
 - Cloth piece
 - Gender
 - Some sculptures
 - Low nobleman
 - Prolonged attack
 - March time
 - Clinic picture
 - Poisonous
 - No longer fresh
 - Hoarse
 - Fire remnant
 - Neither follower
 - Put in stitches
 - Coen Brothers movie
 - Realty listing
 - Racket
 - Ranch animal
 - Muscularly fit
- DOWN**
- Fly catchers
 - Wheel bar
 - Edinburgh native
 - In addition
 - Evasive maneuver
 - Play places
 - Tattoo setting
 - Wee bites
 - Story
 - TV's Trebek
 - Dispendent
 - Polite refusal
 - Three-score
 - Drill part
 - Commotion
 - Singer Ritter
 - Important time
 - Lass
 - Storm center
 - Frankness
 - Quick run
 - Sinking signal
 - Fundamentals
 - Mailbox part
 - Sharpen
 - Go around
 - Otherwise
 - Garden pest
 - Pow of praise
 - Cow call



Yesterday's answer



CRYPTOQUOTE

LRXQ KLD PQXZPQ JL JZJZCCFJQ
ZRYJQFP LM ZCCDEZRFJQ, KLD'AQ LRF
YCZHQAQYCLIQ.
- SZCC ELKQAY

Yesterday's CRYPTOQUOTE:

PERHAPS NO PLACE IN ANY COMMUNITY
IS SO TOTALLY DEMOCRATIC AS THE
TOWN LIBRARY. THE ONLY ENTRANCE
REQUIREMENT IS INTEREST.
- LADY BIRD JOHNSON

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

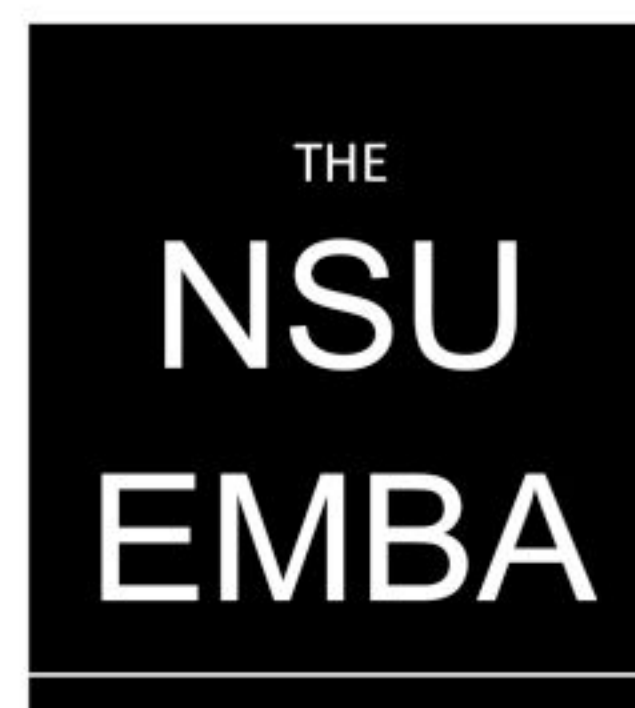


Request for Concept Notes

Katalyst is a market development project that aims to contribute to increasing the income of poor men and women in rural areas. It does this by facilitating changes in services, inputs and product markets, which in turn increases the competitiveness of farmers and small enterprises. Katalyst is co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the UK Government, and the Danish International Development Agency (Danida). It is implemented by Swisscontact and GIZ International Services under the umbrella of the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh.

Katalyst's approach is based on the premise that enhanced private and public sector business services, coupled with an improved enabling environment, leads to more competitive enterprises, sustainable economic growth, and poverty reduction. In connection with this, Katalyst is looking for a suitable organisation to work as a sub-facilitator for Katalyst to aid in the development and implementation of different sets of interventions for better production of quality fish feed for farmed fishing. The proposed interventions must follow the market development approach.

Interested consultancy firms, international and local non-government organisations, and activation agencies can access the detailed Request for Concept Note, Sector Brief and template for Concept Note from the following web-link: http://www.katalyst.com.bd/abtus_procurement.php



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