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Research in Progress

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CHARACTERIZING AND DRAWING LESSONS FROM TACTICS AND METHODS OF ILLICIT PROCUREMENT TO IMPROVE COUNTERPROLIFERATION AND PREVENT FUTURE NUCLEAR, MISSILE, AND MILITARY PROLIFERATION

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ABSTRACT:

Trafficking in nuclear, missile, and military commodities is an ongoing threat perpetuated by states that operate outside of global nonproliferation norms and agreements. Such countries rely heavily on outside supply to obtain the commodities needed to build covert or banned nuclear, missile, and military programs. In a recent study, the Institute for Science and International Security found that many countries are at risk for exploitation by these state-directed efforts and that this trafficking may be poised to worsen. According to the survey, some 74 countries currently do not have any export control systems in place. Moreover, dozens of countries that do have export control systems still fall far below adequate for detecting and preventing illicit nuclear procurement attempts alone. At least one dozen of that number are Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) member states. Together, these trends indicate that many countries are increasingly at risk for exploitation by state-directed illicit nuclear, missile, and military procurement networks, either by attempts to obtain sensitive and controlled equipment from their territories, or through use of their territories in other ways, such as re-transfer points or proliferation financing hubs. Driving the increased threat is also the fact that there has recently been an augmentation in the number of countries that make and supply sensitive and dual-use goods in the developing world, creating greater availability of sensitive commodities worldwide. As adversaries seek to obtain the wherewithal to create and augment nuclear, missile, and military programs, the United States and its allies must be better prepared to detect and stop these attempts.

Research in Progress describes ongoing PASCC research. For more information please contact INSS@usafa.edu.