



A RAY OF HOPE AMID NUCLEAR CLOUDS

Over the past few months, the world witnessed continued transformation of the global landscape. The trend is controversial; old partnerships are stress tested; new formats of cooperation emerge. Nuclear-related events have been high on the global agenda: failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference and long-awaited nuclear deal with Iran. The current issue of the *Security Index Journal* focuses on the recent developments and emerging trends in the nuclear sector as well as on the international relations in the field.

The 2015 NPT Review Conference demonstrated that nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, which have so far been immune to political turbulences, are no longer safe. Tensions between Russia and the United States over Ukraine cast a shadow on the discussions and Washington's desire to protect Israeli interests sunk the Final Document. Experts are wondering which global or bilateral disarmament arrangement will be next to fall victim to politics. An article by Andrey Baklitskiy offers an eyewitness account of the bumpy NPT review process, while interviews with high-ranking officials and experts from the U.S., France, Brazil, China, Austria and Russia demonstrate widening rift between nuclear and non-nuclear states.

This year has also seen a move of a completely different nature. An approach based on negotiations and compromise that the international community was unable to pursue in NY succeeded in Vienna, where after over a decade of futile talks a historic deal between Iran and P5+1 was concluded in July. Though it has yet to stand to the United States Congress and the Iranian Majlis, chances are that the worst is behind us. If all goes as planned, in just a few months from now the gradual process of sanctions-lifting will begin and very soon a former rogue state might become a respectable member of the responsible nuclear energy states family and its markets will be opened up to the world. The power balance in the region—if not globally—will inevitably shift. Just a few days after the Grand Finale of the talks one of the key Russian negotiators Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Ryabkov answered the questions of the *Security Index Journal*.

More and more countries come knocking on the door of the nuclear energy club. Among the many urgent issues they will have to deal with is nuclear security. A comprehensive overview of best international practices and IAEA standards in the field is contained in



Dmitry Kovchegin's article *Nuclear security in nuclear energy newcomer countries* and offers a useful toolkit to the first-timers.

While nuclear disarmament is in decay, nuclear energy is booming. Countries that fail to reach an agreement on conceptual matters show true partnership when it gets down to business. A *TENEX*-moderated roundtable on the role of the nuclear fuel cycle held at the 2015 ATOMEXPO served as a vivid illustration. Although European sanctions against Russia are still in place and confrontation with Kiev continues, Russian companies remain reliable suppliers of nuclear fuel and material to Ukraine and France. This offers a ray of hope.

Problems remain, but recent success stories are encouraging. Aside from drawing inspiration from them, now is probably the moment to ponder over how the success was achieved, what helped bridge the gaps and find compromise. Then, with a little bit of luck, more will follow.

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