The security situation in Europe is more unstable and unpredictable than since the end of the Cold War. Adding to the increased tensions are public statements about the possible use and modernization of nuclear weapons, as well as military exercises that simulate their deployment, including unannounced drills. Developments in other regions around the world are also a cause for concern. In the Far East, North Korea is methodically proceeding with its nuclear weapons program. Although the nuclear agreement with Iran has seemingly defused the situation in the Middle East, questions remain about the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The region also continues to be threatened by the rise of violent extremism with terrorist organizations such as Daesh and Al-Qaeda reported to have sought nuclear weapons and materials.

This new reality calls for more attention to global nuclear governance in the spirit of the UN Security Council resolution 1540, which affirmed that proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery constitutes a threat to international peace and security. It also highlights the importance of the preservation of the integrity of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), achieving its universality and full implementation. Additionally, it shows the need for an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as an important pillar of global security. This has been also recognized by NATO, which in its Warsaw Summit Communiqué called on all states to commit to combating effectively the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) also through the universalization of the CTBT. For its part, the UN General Assembly has adopted a resolution to convene negotiations on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, with a view to prohibiting nuclear weapons.

Efforts to make the world safer and more secure from the nuclear threat are also important for the continued peaceful use of atomic energy. From the beginning of the nuclear age, it was feared that states would seek to acquire nuclear energy capabilities as a stepping stone to nuclear weapons programs. The current renewed enthusiasm for nuclear electricity generation must therefore also address fears of nuclear hedging. Global governance should also be strengthened to keep pace with evolving challenges and threats, including the possibility of cyber-attacks against nuclear installations, as highlighted in the Ministerial Declaration of the recent IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security.
GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What impact, if any, can the recent change of guard at the White House have on US/NATO missile defense cooperation with Russia, further reductions in the US and Russian nuclear arsenals and resumption of US-Russian nuclear security efforts?

- What are the central advantages and limitations of JCPOA and what should be put in place when this agreement expires?

- What are the lessons of the successful completion of the EU3+3 talks on Iran and which of these can be applied to advance the six-party talks on North Korea?

- Is the Middle East nuclear weapons free zone a mirage or an oasis?

- How can a nuclear revival in the developing world affect global nuclear governance?

- Is computer security the Achilles' heel in the efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism?

- Now that the NSS process is history, which mechanisms of and takeaways from it can and should be sustained to ensure nuclear security world-wide?