



Nuclear security culture: A generic model for universal application

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Nuclear security culture found its way into professional parlance several years ago, but still lacks an agreed-upon definition and description. The February 2005 U.S.-Russian Joint Statement, issued at the presidential summit meeting in Bratislava, referred specifically to security culture, focusing renewed attention on the concept. Numerous speakers at the March 2005 International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) International Conference on Nuclear Security referred to security culture, but their visions and interpretations were often at odds with one another. Clearly, there is a need for a generic model of nuclear security culture with universal applicability. Internationally acceptable standards in this area would be invaluable for evaluation, comparison, cooperation, and assistance. They would also help international bodies better manage their relations with the nuclear sectors in various countries.

This paper will develop such a model. It will use the IAEA definition of nuclear security, and then apply Edgar Schein's model of organizational culture to security culture at a generic nuclear facility. A cultural approach to physical protection involves determining what attitudes and beliefs need to be established in an organization, how these attitudes and beliefs manifest themselves in the behavior of assigned personnel, and how desirable attitudes and beliefs can be transcribed into formal working methods to produce good outcomes, i.e., effective protection. The security-culture mechanism I will propose is broken into four major units: facility leadership, proactive policies and procedures, personnel performance, and learning and professional improvement. The paper will amplify on the specific traits characteristic of each of these units.

Security culture is not a panacea. In a time of mounting terrorist threats, it should nonetheless be looked upon as a necessary organizational tool that enhances the skills of nuclear personnel and ensures that security hardware is used to its full capacity. In addition to its other benefits, an efficacious security culture expects employees to take a proactive and innovative stance in a threat milieu where risks are too numerous to predict. And managers should be receptive to security culture: Some, if not most, of the traits associated with security culture are not confined to security but constitute a mainstay of healthy management practices. Managers can advance security while advancing the self-interests of their organizations. The paper thus will show how the international community can benefit from a model of security culture while also helping the international community frame its appeals to management throughout the nuclear complex.