

China and US confront nuclear terror threat

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**Illustration: Liu Rui/GT**

The third Nuclear Security Summit kicks off Monday at The Hague, the Netherlands. Chinese President **Xi Jinping** and US President Barack Obama will meet on the sideline of the summit. What can we expect from their meeting?

People are paying particular attention to the meeting between Xi and Obama because China and the US are both great powers that have a significant say in meeting global challenges, such as nuclear terrorism.

In April 2009, Obama called nuclear terrorism "the most immediate and extreme threat to global security" in his speech at Prague. Then in 2010, Obama hosted the first Nuclear Security Summit in Washington. The US objective is to "ensure that terrorists never gain access to plutonium or highly-enriched uranium." Obama's call has won positive responses from other leaders.

It seems improbable that any terrorist organization could initiate a nuclear attack, but no one can be certain it will never occur. The world has become highly globalized, and terrorist organizations with advanced technology are forming ties to each other.

As the world is getting more and more open, it has become easier for terrorists to get nuclear knowledge and technology.

Preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear and radiological materials that could be used in weapons of mass destruction is a critical challenge the international community must meet.

China and the US have common interests in strengthening nuclear security and preventing terrorists, criminals and all other unauthorized actors from acquiring both nuclear materials that could be used in nuclear weapons, and other radioactive materials that could be used in radiological dispersal devices.

Several severe terrorist attacks have taken place in China in the last few years. The most recent occurred in Kunming, Yunnan Province on March 1. Before that, several terrorist attacks were aimed at local police offices in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

At the bilateral level, China-US cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear technology has made great progress since the first Nuclear Security Summit.

On March 30, 2011, the China National Energy Administration and the US National Nuclear Security Administration announced that they had agreed to continue expanding cooperation on nuclear security issues.

During a meeting of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the US-China Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology Agreement, the two sides agreed that experts from both countries would pursue additional areas for cooperation and continue research and development into new technology to guarantee a safe and secure nuclear future. They also agreed to cooperate on radioactive source security.

At the multilateral level, China and the US can work to establish a regime for international nuclear security.

Both China and the US have realized that the largely nationally focused efforts of preventing the terrorists from gaining the weapon usable materials are inadequate, and that leading countries like China and the US must work hard to build a framework for a cohesive international nuclear security governance system.

China and the US can also cooperate on providing technological aid to other countries to secure the storage and transportation of nuclear materials and other radiological materials that might be used to produce weapons of mass destruction. The third Nuclear Security Summit is a good opportunity for the two to further their cooperation on these issues.

The Sino-US relationship is both comprehensive and complicated. Cooperation doesn't mean there are no differences or hurdles. But it's time for the two great powers to do their utmost to understand each other, dissolve mutual mistrust, and cooperate on world peace.

Xi's meetings with Obama, from the Annenberg Estate in California to The Hague, both at the bilateral level and at the multilateral level, have all shown China's intention to build a new type of great power relationship.

There are many areas on which China and the US can cooperate. Every small step forward to cooperate in multilateral arena will contribute a lot to the bilateral relations.

The China-US relationship has become more and more mature and institutionalized than two or three decades ago, though it will not be determined by any one meeting between top leaders. But there is no doubt the meeting and cooperation on nuclear security will contribute greatly to the comprehensive bilateral relations.

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