

U.S. Ratifies the IAEA Additional Protocol

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Media Advisory

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Press Contacts: [Daryl G. Kimball](#), Executive Director, Arms Control Association, (202) 463-8270 x107; [Peter Crail](#), Nonproliferation Analyst, (202) 463-8270 x102

Four years after the U.S. Senate issued its advice and consent to ratify an additional protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), President George W. Bush signed the instrument of ratification Dec. 30. The United States is expected to deposit the measure with the agency this week.

The [1997 Model Additional Protocol](#) provides IAEA inspectors with greater authority to verify all nuclear activities within a state, including the use of environmental sampling and short-notice inspections. It was created following the discovery of clandestine nuclear weapons programs in Iraq and North Korea during the 1990s. Countries conclude specific additional protocols to supplement their IAEA safeguards arrangement.

Washington has long insisted that other states, in particular Iran, conclude additional protocols to allow the agency to better detect and deter covert nuclear weapons programs.

As a nuclear-weapon state recognized by the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the United States is not required to conclude a safeguards agreement nor an additional protocol with the IAEA, but it has done so as confidence-building measures.

"This is primarily a symbolic gesture and it is unfortunate that it has taken four years to clear the interagency red tape," said the Arms Control Association's (ACA) nonproliferation analyst Peter Crail.

"Nonetheless, it removes a somewhat embarrassing contradiction in which the United States promotes universal adherence to a nonproliferation measure it has not been able to ratify itself," Crail said.

In order to continue to promote adoption of the protocol, ACA Executive Director Daryl Kimball argues that more needs to be done. "Although this ratification sends a positive signal, other countries are not likely to take on additional safeguards commitments just because the United States has agreed to a largely symbolic and voluntary measure," Kimball said. "If Washington really wants to get other countries to sign on, it has to demonstrate a more serious commitment to reducing the role and number of U.S. nuclear weapons and formally ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty," he noted.

"The United States and other IAEA member states have a responsibility to work harder to ensure that the additional protocol is more widely supported and universally applied," suggested Kimball.

A total of 89 states, including the United States, have ratified additional protocols and another 29 have signed them. For details see the IAEA Web site at:

http://www.iaea.org/OurWork/SV/Safeguards/sg_protocol.html.

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