

NUCLEAR BLACK MARKETS: Pakistan, A.Q. Khan and the rise of proliferation networks

A net assessment

The arrest and public confession of Pakistani nuclear weapons scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan in 2004 confirmed the existence of a global proliferation network which had, over almost two decades, provided nuclear technology, expertise, and designs to Iran, North Korea, Libya and possibly other countries. Khan was not the only nuclear arms merchant and Pakistan was not the only country implicated in his shadowy network. It spanned three continents and eluded both national and international systems of export controls that had been designed to prevent illicit trade. The discovery of the network highlighted concerns that nuclear technology is no longer the monopoly of industrially advanced countries, but possibly can be purchased off-the-shelf by both states and terrorist groups.

The IISS Strategic Dossier on nuclear black markets provides a comprehensive assessment of the Pakistani nuclear programme from which the Khan network emerged, the network's proliferation activities, and the illicit trade in fissile materials. In addition, the Strategic Dossier provides an overview of the clandestine nuclear procurement activities of other states, along with the efforts made both by Pakistan and the international community to prevent the reoccurrence of further proliferation networks and to secure nuclear technology. The final chapter assesses policy options for further action.



