

ISA Workshop on Energy and Security

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Final Report

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This report aims to fulfill the post-workshop reporting requirements for our ISA-funded workshop at ISA 2014. In line with the instructions, it includes three primary sections: a description of how the workshop went, a discussion of future publication plans, and a detailed accounting of budget expenses.

I. Description of how the workshop went

Our central aim in the workshop was to gather together scholars whose work all touches on the “energy-security nexus” in different ways. As we were aiming to generate policy relevant work, we also invited two policy practitioners to join us. The workshop went very well. The stamp of ISA helped in a number of ways, we feel. All potential participants that we contacted were very responsive. While not everyone was able to participate, generally it was because of a conflict and not for a lack of interest. Our project on Energy and Security at NC State is a new initiative, so it was very helpful for us to have ISA’s implicit stamp of approval in making our efforts better known. A number of authors asked if they might be attached to the project beyond ISA, even if they were unable to participate in the workshop. In that sense, the workshop was very successful.

The workshop itself ran very smoothly. Laura’s “team”, (comprised largely of Laura, I assume) had everything set up and ready to go. The technology worked and there were lots of people around to make sure all was set up according to plan. Throughout the whole process, Laura has been very responsive to any questions we had.

The discussions at the workshop also worked very well. We had a working lunch and a working dinner, which allowed us to spend a full 12 hours really talking through issues of interest to all of us. In many ways this was an exploratory workshop. As such, we were unsure how it would all hang together. What this funding allowed us to do, however, was to put a small group of smart people in a room for 12 hours of focused discussion on a topic that we found important. That in itself is very difficult to accomplish. But the conversation yielded a number of themes that, as discussed below, we believe will make a valuable contribution.

If I had any suggestion about improving the process, it would be to consider waving either the conference registration or the membership fee for potential participants who are not academics. I understand the challenges in adjudicating this. For our own project, however, it would have been very interesting to have engineers, for example, in the room to talk about the nuclear fuel cycle and nuclear safe guards. Asking them to register for the conference and to cover membership, however, meant that it wasn't really tenable. The workshops would be a potentially good way to enhance the multidisciplinary nature of the work generated by ISA. The last suggestion would be to spell out very clearly those rules, whatever they are. There was some confusion on that point.

II. Future publication plans

After returning from Toronto, the organizers have spent some time generating a framework narrative that we believe makes an important contribution to debates over energy and security. We also believe it will allow us to propose a research agenda moving forward. Our goal from the beginning was to generate policy-relevant work and we believe we have. We are finalizing that framework narrative now and have gathered a first round of feedback from participants. We plan to circulate a final narrative to the participants and other interested scholars in May. Once we have gathered all the paper abstracts, we will begin contacting editors at policy-relevant journals for publication. As possible, we also intend to publicize this workshop and its results on the website of our Energy and Security Initiative, which we are currently completing. In all publications, we will acknowledge the critical support of ISA in moving this project forward.

In addition, at least two other research projects came out of side conversations around this workshop, although both are contingent largely upon future funding. One was a book-length project on counter-WMD proliferation efforts. The other addresses how to govern efforts by nuclear aspirant states in a way that would grant their right to peaceful nuclear technology while minimizing the risk of weapons proliferation.

III. Detailed accounting

Under separate cover in E-mail.