

# WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

**David Albright, President  
Institute for Science and International Security**

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**David Albright:** Greetings, and welcome to the ISIS conference on “Separated Civil Plutonium Stocks—Planning for the Future.” My name is David Albright. I am the President of the Institute for Science and International Security.

We have called this conference in order to address what we believe is a growing problem: the continuing growth of separated civil plutonium. You are all no doubt aware that in 1997, nine key countries agreed to the Guidelines for the Management of Plutonium. These guidelines include a provision whereby the states agree to strike a balance between the production and use of separated plutonium. However, projections of future civil plutonium inventories, based on current plans, indicate that these stocks will continue to grow for some time. Therefore, ISIS believes that plans to use plutonium should be assessed, and that alternatives should be considered in order to bring down these stocks in a timely manner.

Over the next two days, we will hear from speakers addressing many facets of the production and use of separated civil plutonium. A number of speakers will discuss commercial plans for the use of civil plutonium. We also will hear about the U.S. program to immobilize excess military plutonium. A panel will address the technical aspects of plutonium immobilization and standards that can be applied to the immobilization of civil separated plutonium. There will also be panels discussing the Guidelines for the Management of Plutonium and methodologies for estimating separated civil plutonium stocks. We are grateful to all of the speakers who have agreed to appear at this conference.

Clearly, any discussion of plutonium—be it civil or military—raises a host of problems. There are economic questions, political questions, security issues, and questions of public acceptability. We are all familiar with these issues, and many here have personally participated in many very controversial debates. These questions will certainly be explored at this conference.

That said, I would like to underscore what this conference is *not* about. First, it is not about military separated plutonium. Although several speakers will address the problem of disposing of military separated plutonium, our intention is to seek out the lessons that can be learned from this effort and applied to the civil side.

This conference is also not focussed on the proliferation or terrorist threat posed by separated plutonium. It is also not about energy policy, the future of nuclear power, or whether reprocessing is the correct or only solution to solve energy problems. We made a decision to stay away from these questions, although they will certainly be an undercurrent to the discussions.

This conference grew out of a series of smaller conferences that ISIS has held. Those conferences tend to be small, off the record, and informal. Critical to the success of those events was a robust discussion, where we have reduced the amount of time spent on formal talks, and expanded on the

time for questions and comments. Although this conference involves larger numbers of speakers and participants, we certainly encourage people to raise questions and discuss these issues.

Because we believe that the views expressed at this conference are important, we are recording the conference and will prepare an edited transcript. So unlike most of our conferences, this one is on the record. All speakers will have an opportunity to edit their remarks for clarity. As for the audience, we do not intend to attach names to questioners.

Finally, I'd like to thank several people and institutions that made this conference possible. First, I'd like to thank Terry Tyborowski of the Department of Energy (DOE), who encouraged us to take on this project. We are grateful for her assistance and encouragement. I also would like to thank Sandy Spector and John Gerrard at DOE who assisted ISIS in putting this conference together. DOE also provided some of the funding to support this conference.

We need to also thank several foundations, particularly the W. Alton Jones Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the John Merck Fund, and the Ploughshares Fund, that have really made it possible for ISIS to do this conference.

I also thank the ISIS staff, particularly Kevin O'Neill, the Deputy Director of ISIS, for taking the lead in pulling this conference together. I'd also like to thank Holly Higgins and Corey Hinderstein for their invaluable work on this conference.

With those introductory remarks concluded, I would now like to turn the floor over to Kevin O'Neill, who will introduce our first speaker. ■