

Obama praises SA for abandoning nuclear weapons

Sapa.

United States President Barack Obama on Sunday heaped praise on South Africa for taking the decision to become the first country to abandon a nuclear weapons programme, as he met President Jacob Zuma.

Obama met Zuma amid a string of bilateral meetings with world leaders on the eve of a 47-nation nuclear security summit, designed to draw commitments from key powers to keep loose nuclear material out of the hands of extremist groups.

"South Africa is singular in having had a nuclear weapon program, had moved forward on it, and then decided this was not the right path," Obama said, noting how South African had since been a leader on non-proliferation.

"South Africa has special standing in being a moral leader on this issue. And I wanted to publicly compliment President Zuma and his administration for the leadership they've shown," Obama said.

"And we are looking forward toward the possibility of them helping to guide other countries down a similar direction of non-proliferation."

South Africa abandoned its nuclear weapons program in the 1990s and the International Atomic Energy Agency certified in 1994 that the programme had been fully dismantled. -- Sapa-AFP

Terrorists are a greater nuclear threat to the world than rogue states, Obama tells summit

By [Mail Foreign Service](#)

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Terrorists present the greatest nuclear threat to the world, Barack Obama has said.

The U.S. President spoke ahead of an historic nuclear summit he is hosting over Washington in the next two days - the next step in his mission to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

States like Iran and North Korea - neither of whom were invited to the gathering of 47 world leaders - will be top of the agenda.

However it was not the Islamic Republic but terror organisations that present the biggest threat, Mr Obama said ahead of the conference.

SA lauded on nuclear stance

Washington - US President Barack Obama Sunday praised South Africa for voluntarily dismantling its nuclear weapons programme as he met with South African President [Jacob Zuma](#) on the eve of a major summit on nuclear terrorism.

It was the first meeting between the two leaders in Washington since Zuma's 2009 election.

Obama used the opportunity to outline the goals of the summit on Monday and Tuesday, which is drawing 38 leaders and top officials from another nine countries.

"The single biggest threat to US security, both short term, medium term and long term, would be the possibility of a terrorist organisation obtaining a nuclear weapon," Obama said.

"If there was ever a detonation in New York City, or London, or Johannesburg, the ramifications economically, politically and from a security perspective would be devastating," he said.

The central focus of the summit is to get commitments from the top levels of government to recognise nuclear terrorism as a major global threat, to get commitments to current conventions on nuclear terrorism and to develop a work plan, White House officials said.

South Africa had been developing a nuclear weapons programme from the 1960s onward, reportedly in collaboration with Israel, but as the end of apartheid loomed in the 1990s, the South African government dismantled all its nuclear weapons.

It was the first country in the world to do so. Kazakhstan followed suit after the break-up of the Soviet Union.

"South Africa has special standing in being a moral leader on this issue," Obama said.

The move brought South Africa "greater security and prosperity" in the international community, noted Ben Rhodes, a White House official who talked to reporters. - Sapa-dpa

Obama lauds South Africa, Kazakhstan for dismantling nuclear weapons

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WASHINGTON: US President Barack Obama applauded South Africa and Kazakhstan for dismantling their nuclear weapons programmes.

Obama, who met South African President Jacob Zuma and his Kazakhstan counterpart Nursultan Nazarbayev at the Blair House on the eve of the Nuclear Security Summit took the opportunity to praise both the nations for dismantling their nuclear weapons programmes.

"I wanted to publicly compliment President Zuma and his administration for the leadership they have shown. And we are looking forward toward the possibility of them helping to guide other countries down a similar direction of non-proliferation," Obama told reporters after the meeting with Zuma.

"President Obama welcomed President Jacob Zuma to Washington to discuss nuclear security, as well as other topics of mutual interest. The President acknowledged South Africa's historical leadership in this arena, demonstrating its peaceful nuclear intentions by the dismantling of its nuclear weapons programme," the White House said in a statement.

"President Obama urged President Zuma to continue to use South Africa's unique authority on this issue to advance nuclear security and nonproliferation.

He also reiterated the US position that while America supports Iran's peaceful nuclear ambitions, Iran is refusing to uphold its international responsibilities and this requires a strong and unified international response. The presidents agreed to remain in close contact on these critical issues," the statement added.

The two leaders also discussed the situation in Zimbabwe, and agreed on the importance of continued international engagement to forge a path to elections in which the civil and political rights of the Zimbabwean people will be respected.

They also took the opportunity to talk about important security issues, including efforts to combat terrorism, the White House said.

Obama thanked Nazarbayev for his offer to host an International Nuclear Fuel Bank and expressed his support for Kazakhstan's intention to become a member of the IAEA Board of Governors, another statement said.

A joint statement issued by Obama and Nazarbayev said the two leaders pledged to intensify bilateral cooperation to promote nuclear safety and non-proliferation, regional stability in Central Asia, economic prosperity, and universal values.

Obama lauds SA's nuclear stance

13 April 2010

United States President Barack Obama, meeting with South African President Jacob Zuma at Blair House on the eve of a nuclear security summit in Washington, praised South Africa for being the first country to abandon its nuclear weapons programme.

South Africa, Obama said during Sunday's meeting, had acquired special standing as a "moral leader" for voluntarily dismantling its nuclear weapons programme in 1993.

"I wanted to publicly compliment President Zuma and his administration for the leadership they have shown," Obama said. "And we are looking forward toward the possibility of them helping to guide other countries down a similar direction of non-proliferation."

South Africa gave up its pursuit of nuclear weapons in 1993, making it the first and only country to abandon a nuclear weapons programme voluntarily. It has also consistently condemned acts of terrorism, and shares the international community's concern over nuclear security.

"South Africa maintains that it is important for countries to pool their resources and work together through strengthened multilateral institutions to combat all forms of organised transnational crime, including terrorism," Zuma's office said in a statement on Sunday.

The two-day summit, which opened on Monday, is considered an unprecedented effort to rally global action on securing vulnerable nuclear materials.

The United States is hoping that the leaders and representatives from the 47 countries attending the conference will be able to agree on specific steps to make nuclear material more secure, in order to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear materials and weapons.

Zuma is being accompanied by International Relations and Cooperation Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, Energy Minister Dipuo Peters and State Security Minister Siyabonga Cwele.

Source: [BuaNews](#)