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Nuclear Treaties

TIERNEY:

Let's talk about the politics of nuclear power.

What do this [video: nuclear power plant] and this [video: atomic explosion] have in common? Both nuclear power plants and nuclear weapons generate energy when the nucleus of an atom is split apart. Splitting atoms creates enormous amounts of energy. In a nuclear power plant, that energy is turned into electricity. Nice! But that enormous power can also be used as a weapon. That's what a nuclear bomb is. They are capable of destroying entire cities. That's why nearly every country has agreed to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. That treaty states that no new countries can develop nuclear weapons but that any country can use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Today, only about 10 countries have nuclear weapons. And around 90% of those nuclear warheads belong to the United States and Russia. You can blame the Cold War for that. When it comes to nuclear threats, two countries have been in the news a lot. North Korea has developed nuclear weapons and continues to test them, and Iran has been putting together the materials needed to make nuclear weapons. Leaders in America and elsewhere are working on deals and exploring military options for limiting the spread of nuclear weapons.