

U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism

Американо-Российская инициатива по предотвращению ядерного терроризма

February-March 2012 Newsletter

Информационный бюллетень за февраль-март 2012



ИСКРАН

NEWS:

Nuclear Security Summit Largely Reaffirms Earlier Commitments

More than 50 heads of state attended the second Nuclear Security Summit, which was held in Seoul on March 26th and 27th, 2012. Participants signed a joint [communiqué](#) pledging to strengthen nuclear security, reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism, and prevent unauthorized acquisition of nuclear materials. The document also reaffirmed an earlier pledge to work on securing and accounting for all nuclear material in four years and noted the relationship between nuclear security and nuclear safety, which was highlighted by the Fukushima accident in March 2011.



U.S. President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev met on the sidelines of the summit on March 27th to advance nuclear security cooperation between the two nations. Medvedev and Obama also met their Kazakh counterpart to issue a [statement](#) on the former Semipalatinsk test site in Kazakhstan.



The summit saw the Russian leadership make a number of proposals, including the initiative to organize a workshop on nuclear security, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's March 23rd [op-ed](#) in *Washington Times*. Russia is also conducting exercises aimed at preventing unauthorized access to nuclear technologies, "including the criminalistic aspect," according to President Medvedev.

Russia also called for strengthening IAEA nuclear safety standards and for adoption of the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident. Moscow also stands for better enforcement of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its amendments, and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, according to the [Memorandum](#) of the Russian Federation for the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit. The March 27th document details Russia's record in repatriation of nuclear materials and notes Russia plans to repatriate spent fuel from Vietnam and Uzbekistan, in addition to retrieving highly enriched uranium (HEU) from Ukraine. The document notes that a joint U.S.-Russian feasibility study on whether to convert six Russian research nuclear reactors from HEU to LEU is yet to be completed. "The decision on the actual conversion will be taken after the additional assessment of its economic effect," the memorandum notes.

U.S.-Russian nuclear security cooperation was also the subject of several fact sheets released by the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) ahead of the summit. NNSA's March 23rd [fact sheet](#) on disposition of Russian plutonium notes that the next steps include a U.S.-Russian agreement on milestones for allocation of the U.S. \$400 million contribution. NNSA's [fact sheet](#) on U.S.-Russian cooperation down-blending of uranium notes that 500 metric

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tons of HEU will have been converted to LEU by 2014, which is the equivalent of approximately 20,000 nuclear warheads.

NNSA also released a [fact sheet](#) on the March 2012 shipment of Ukraine's last cache of HEU to Russia, noting that in exchange the U.S. will provide replacement LEU fuel and a state-of-the-art Neutron Source Facility at the Kharkiv Institute for Physics and Technology. A small amount of HEU, however, still remained at this institute, according to an April 5th entry in the [blog](#) maintained by the International Panel on Fissile Materials.

Overall the summit was a relative success, according to Matthew Bunn, associate professor at the Harvard Kennedy School and member of the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism (IPNT). The success came from a number of countries, such as Ukraine, announcing that they had already gotten rid of the weapons-usable nuclear material on their soil, Bunn said in an [interview](#). But there were disappointments too as there were few new commitments with the U.S. and Russia issuing statements that largely said "what we are doing is what we ought to be doing," according to Bunn.

Prior to the summit, the Belfer Center launched a [site](#) dedicated to it. The site contains a threat briefing; security progress report; summit scorecard; Q&A on nuclear security and a fact sheet among other useful materials.

Co-Director of Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation Siegfried S. Hecker, Belfer Center director Graham Allison, and senior Belfer Center fellows William Tobey and Olli Heinonen had all visited South Korea prior to the summit to consult the



Allison Bunn Tobey Heinonen Hecker

organizers and speak to public audiences. Tobey – who is IPNT director - and Bunn also gave a threat briefing to 35 senior foreign diplomats in Washington, DC on March 12.

Russian IPNT Members Weigh In On Non-Proliferation Ahead of the Seoul Summit

Director of the Center for International Security Aleksei Arbatov commented on Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev's "What Iran Can Learn From Kazakhstan" [op-ed](#) in the March 25th issue of *New York Times*, arguing that recognition of this Central Asian as "one of the most respected members of the international community" would not have been possible if "Kazakhstan had



stubbornly held on to the heavy rockets that were located on bases on its territory that it could never have used anyway," Arbatov was quoted by RFE/RL as [saying](#) on March 28th.



Deputy director of the U.S. and Canadian Studies Institute Pavel Zolotarev cautioned against excessive pressure on Iran, noting that U.S. policy, if overzealous, may actually push Iran towards making the final leap towards acquisition of actual nuclear weapons. At the moment, Iran seems to be opting for creating potential for such a leap without crossing the red line, Zolotarev said in a presentation in Moscow on February 3rd.

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Both Zolotarev's U.S. and Canadian Studies Institute and Arbatov's Center for International Security participate in IPNT's working group.

Graham Allison on Clues for the Nuclear Security Summit

Graham Allison, director of the Belfer Center and IPNT member, has published a [paper](#) entitled "What Happened to the Soviet Superpower's Nuclear Arsenal? Clues for the Nuclear Security Summit." The March 2012 paper explores denuclearization of fourteen of the fifteen successor states to the Soviet Union. The paper identifies clues that can be extracted from this success to inform our non-proliferation and nuclear security efforts in the future. The paper concludes with specific recommendations for building upon the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit's achievements before the next summit in 2014.

Allison also wrote an [op-ed](#), "Can Seoul summit tackle biggest threat to US security – nuclear terrorism?", to take stock of the Seoul event. The op-ed, which came out in *Christian Science Monitor* on March 26th notes that actions taken by states for the 2010 and 2012 nuclear security summits have unquestionably made the world safer from nuclear terrorism. "The fact that Obama, already engaged in a hard-fought battle for reelection, is devoting this much time to an issue that has little resonance for most voters, demonstrates that he is serious when he says that nuclear terrorism is the single biggest threat to American national security," Allison said.

Elbe Group on Need for U.S and Russia to Lead Combat Against Nuclear Terrorism

Members of the Elbe Group, comprised of former leaders of American and Russian intelligence and military organizations, met in Cyprus on March 18th-21st to discuss further steps to counter nuclear terrorism ahead of the summit in Seoul. They also debated other important issues on the bilateral agenda, including missile defense, Iran and stability in Afghanistan and Syria. This was the group's third meeting since October 2010. The group is co-chaired by former Russian Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov and former chief of U.S. Strategic Command Eugene Habiger. Executive director of the Belfer Center and IPNT member Kevin Ryan and other members of the group also co-authored an op-ed on countering the threat of nuclear terrorism with recommendations for the 2012 and 2014 nuclear security summit.

The op-ed argued that the U.S. and Russian leadership should reaffirm their cooperation against the deadly menace of nuclear terrorism— a threat that combines the Cold War peril of nuclear holocaust and the 21st century danger of international terrorism.

"We believe that, as the two leading nuclear powers in the world, Russia and the United States have a special responsibility to do everything in their power to deny weapons-useable nuclear materials to terrorists," the op-ed said. The op-ed was published in the English language [Global Post](#) on March 20th and in the Russian language [Military Industrial Courier](#) on March 21st.



Kulikov

Habiger

Ryan

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Matthew Bunn Takes Stock of Effort to Secure Nuclear Stockpiles in Four Years

Matthew Bunn, associate professor at Harvard Kennedy School and IPNT member, co-authored a number of products devoted to the March 2012 summit in Seoul, including the [report](#), “Progress on Securing Nuclear Weapons and Materials: The Four-Year Effort and Beyond,” and the [presentation](#) “Nuclear Security Summit Dossier.” The March 2012 report finds that the international initiative launched at the 2010 summit to secure all vulnerable nuclear stockpiles within four years has reduced the dangers they pose. The March 12th, 2012 presentation assesses the campaign to consolidate dangerous nuclear materials worldwide into fewer, more secure sites, with analysis of success stories, ongoing risks, near-term opportunities, and recommendations for next steps.

Obama Administration Requests \$519 Million for CTR, Other Programs Cut

For fiscal 2013, U.S. President Barack Obama’s budget request for the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, or CTR, is \$519 million, roughly \$130 million of which would be devoted to nuclear security-related activities, according to Kenneth B. Handelman, deputy assistant defense secretary for global strategic affairs.

Handelman said his department continues to prepare for scenarios in which terrorists get their hands on nuclear weapons, the official was quoted as saying in a March 15th [report](#) by the American Forces Press Service. “For instance,” he warned, “the instability or collapse of a nuclear-armed state could quickly lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons or materials well beyond the country of origin and involve multiple state and nonstate actors as it moves across the globe.”



While the fiscal 2013 CTR budget request is a slight increase from the previous year’s budget, CTR’s Global Nuclear Security program is targeted for a 17 percent cut. Funding within the State Department is also reduced, with cuts proposed to the WMD Terrorism, Global Threat Reduction, and Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance programs, according to a February 14, 2012 [statement](#) by the Partnership for Global Security.

U.S. Strategic Command Launches Anti-WMD Headquarters

The U.S. Strategic Command unveiled a new Standing Joint Force Headquarters for Elimination during an official ceremony Feb. 3rd, an organization that will provide expert planning, intelligence, and operational capability for combating and eliminating WMD.

“The standing headquarters will greatly increase the capability of the department to plan, train and execute WMD elimination operations, which include the ability to locate, characterize, secure, disable or destroy hostile WMD programs or capabilities in a non-permissive or semi-permissive environment,” Principal Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary Kenneth Handelman was quoted as saying in the command’s February 6th [press release](#).

NOTABLE STATEMENTS ON NUCLEAR TERRORISM:

- **Russian President Dmitry Medvedev:** “The main problem today is that we have a quality regulatory framework but not everyone has been quick to ratify and adopt it. Other states

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should do the same to ensure that we have guaranteed protection from natural disasters and related tragedies, not to mention issues such as nuclear terrorism, when criminals gain unauthorized access to nuclear materials and technology. This undermines the security of our world and creates a threat of nuclear terrorism.” (Kremlin.ru, March 27, 2012).

- **U.S President Barack Obama:** “Of course, what's also undeniable is that the threat remains. There are still too many bad actors in search of these dangerous materials, and these dangerous materials are still vulnerable in too many places. It would not take much -- just a handful or so of these materials -- to kill hundreds of thousands of innocent people. And that's not an exaggeration; that's the reality that we face.” (State.gov, March 26, 2012).
- **Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov:** “Russia and the United States are the most advanced states in terms of nuclear energy use. We have put an end to the Cold War and the arms race, including the nuclear one. Today, our countries have taken a common stand for the strengthening of the nuclear nonproliferation regime and have intensified their cooperation in combating nuclear terrorism.” (*Washington Times*, March 23, 2012).
- **Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich:** “There is no threat of a terror attack for Ukraine and the region because all nuclear materials have been taken away.” (*Wall Street Journal*, March 28, 2012.)
- **Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin:** “There is no need to expand nuclear club membership. We are against it because expanded membership will increase the risk to international stability and security and make other countries want to become nuclear powers as well. As for the technology, we have many nuclear physicists in this room, and they can tell you that making it isn't that complicated.” (Website of the Russian prime minister, February 24, 2012).
- **Director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Security and Disarmament Department Mikhail Ulyanov:** “I'd like to stress that the challenge of preventing the falling of sensitive technologies and materials into the wrong hands concerns not only Pakistan. It is of a global nature and requires efforts of all countries.” (Interfax, February 9, 2012).

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- May 24, 2012. 10th anniversary of the signing of the SORT treaty.
- May 2012. NATO summit in Chicago.
- May 2012. G8 summit in Chicago.
- May 2012. 20th anniversary of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine signing the Lisbon Protocol to the START I Treaty, and, therefore, committing to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear states.
- June 2012. 20th anniversary of the United States and Russia signing the umbrella Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement.
- October 15-28, 2012. 50th anniversary of Cuban Missile Crisis.
- October 2012. 20th anniversary of the United States and Belarus signing the umbrella Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement.
- December 8, 2012. 25th anniversary of the signing of the INF treaty.

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- June 2013. The umbrella U.S.-Russian Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement expires.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism (IPNT) solicits papers, articles and commentary from readers for inclusion in the newsletter and publication on the Initiative's web site. Contact Belfer Center fellow Simon Saradzhyan at (phone) +1-617-496-8228, (fax) +1-617-495-8963, or simon_saradzhyan@hks.harvard.edu.

The Working Group of the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism includes the following institutions:

В рабочей группе по осуществлению Американо-Российской инициативы по предотвращению ядерного терроризма состоят следующие организации:

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- *Белферовский центр науки и международных отношений Института государственного управления имени Джона Ф. Кеннеди Гарвардского университета. [Уильям Тоби, william_tobey@hks.harvard.edu, 1- 617-496-0518]*

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