

U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism

Американо-Российская инициатива по предотвращению ядерного терроризма

April-May 2013 Newsletter

Информационный бюллетень за апрель-май 2013 года



ИСКРАН

NEWS:

USA Releases Country Reports on Terrorism 2012

The U.S. State Department released its [annual report on foreign terrorism](#) on May 31st. It notes that the U.S. and Russia held several joint military exercises last year that dealt explicitly with terrorism-related scenarios. The two countries also collaborated on nuclear and transportation security, and joint programs on financial monitoring. Last year, Russia and the United States also held meetings of the Counterterrorism Working Group under the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission and participated in the yearly Four-Party Counterterrorism Working Group, which includes the Federal Security Service (FSB), the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

GICNT Plenary Meeting in Mexico

Partner nations and official observers in the [Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism gathered in Mexico City](#), Mexico on May 24th for the GICNT Plenary Meeting. Russian and U.S. Co-Chairs thanked all GICNT partner nations and official observers for their continued commitment to the initiative and its Statement of Principles and welcomed new partners, according to a May 28th press release issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry. Partner nations briefed participants on key outcomes of GICNT exercises, workshops, and conferences conducted since the 2011 Plenary Meeting, including Russia's "Exercise Guardian 2012" on nuclear detection response procedures.

Members of the Proliferation Security Initiative Attend 10th Anniversary Meeting

On May 28th Poland hosted a [meeting of the Proliferation Security Initiative](#) (PSI). The United States, Russia, 70 other partner nations, and 3 international organizations sent representatives to participate in the PSI high-level meeting to mark the 10th anniversary of the initiative, which is designed to disrupt illicit movement of biological, chemical, nuclear and radiological weapons. At the meeting, over 70 states affirmed four joint statements pledging specific actions in deterring proliferators, criminalizing international WMD-related trafficking, sharing expertise and resources, and expanding the influence of the PSI globally, according to a May 28th press release by the State Department.

William Tobey Criticises Cuts to U.S. Nuclear Security Budget

[William Tobey](#), Belfer Center senior fellow and director of the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism (IPNT), has published an op-ed warning against pending cuts to the U.S. nuclear security budget. In a piece, entitled "[Cuts to Nuclear Security Will Make Us Less Safe](#)," published by Politico on May 14th, Mr. Tobey notes that the U.S. president's budget proposal for 2014 would cut about \$400 million from nonproliferation programs run by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). These cuts would hinder NNSA's efforts to convert research reactors from fuels that use highly enriched uranium to those that use low enriched



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uranium. The plan to complete construction of a plutonium conversion at Savannah River, South Carolina, would also be put in jeopardy by the proposed cuts. Tobey urges President Obama and the U.S. Congress to “come together and provide the funds necessary to secure or to dispose of dangerous nuclear material.”

U.S. and Russian Officials Upbeat about New CTR Agreement

U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Kenneth Handelman said that if the new U.S.-Russia Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement is not signed before June 16th, it would be solely due to bureaucratic, not political, problems. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov is similarly upbeat about replacing CTR, also known as the “Agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation Concerning the Safe and Secure Transportation, Storage and Destruction of Weapons and the Prevention of Weapons Proliferation.” “Hopefully, this will happen earlier than in the end of this year,” Mr. Ryabkov said in late May.

Russia announced last fall that it would not extend the June 17, 1992 agreement, which expires on June 16th, but it is prepared to negotiate a replacement agreement with the United States.



Lavrov

Kerry

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry discussed replacing CTR with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov during his visit to Moscow in April. Sources in the Russian Foreign Ministry and State Department told Russian media after the visit that the negotiations had “advanced far.”

Russia Stages a Nuclear Terrorism Drill

Russia’s National Anti-terrorist Committee held “Atom-Izotop-2013” exercise in the Leningrad region in late May to practice cooperation of law-enforcement agencies in interdicting an attempt by terrorists to stage an attack on a nuclear facility.

USEC to Cease Enrichment of Uranium

The only [U.S.-owned plant for enriching uranium](#), near Paducah, Kentucky, will be shut down in June 2013. The announcement was made by USEC, the nuclear operator known as the U.S. Enrichment Corporation.

USEC, based in Bethesda, Maryland, said it has a large inventory of enriched uranium and would continue to import enriched uranium from Russia for sale to American utilities, the *New York Times* reported on May 25th.

U.S. President Obama Outlines Steps to Combat Terrorism

U.S. President Barack Obama delivered a [major counter-terrorism speech](#) on May 24th reviewing measures that he plans to take in his second term to fight terrorism at home and abroad. In his address Obama vowed to end the war in Afghanistan and close the Guantanamo Bay prison, but insisted that drone strikes would continue albeit with greater oversight. He observed that Americans who are plotting abroad to kill other Americans in terrorist attacks void their rights as U.S. citizens. While outlining steps to combat conventional terrorism, the U.S. leader did not touch upon the threat of nuclear terrorism in his speech.

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Matthew Bunn on Technology and Policy of Nuclear Security

[Matthew Bunn](#), associate professor at the Harvard Kennedy School and IPNT member, has recorded a lecture, in which he spells out the answers to a number of questions that are key to ensuring nuclear security. What are the most important technologies and approaches used to protect weapons-usable nuclear materials from theft? What are the major international agreements and initiatives focused on improving nuclear security? What are the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches? Watch Mr. Bunn answer these questions in his “[Nuclear 101: Technology and Policy of Nuclear Security](#)” lecture, posted on the Belfer Center’s website.



U.S. House of Representatives Approves Nuclear Security Bills

On May 20th the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved legislation to complete U.S. ratification of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and to bring the United States in line with a 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. But a key Senate opponent has reaffirmed his lingering opposition to the bill, GSN reported.

HEU Removed From Czech Republic, Sent to Russia

The Czech Republic [eliminated its stockpile of highly enriched uranium](#) (HEU), sending it to Russia. 68 kilograms of HEU, enough for two nuclear weapons, were shipped with U.S. help to Russia to be converted for use in nuclear power reactors, U.S. National Security Council spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden told AP in early May.

If Boston Marathon Attack Had Involved Dirty Bombs

Had the Tsarnaev brothers used dirty bombs rather than conventional ones in their alleged attack on the Boston marathon on April 15th, the casualties might have been the same, but managing the consequences would have been much more difficult, George Moore of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies wrote in an [op-ed](#) in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*.

Simon Saradzhyan, research fellow at the Belfer Center and member of IPNT, has published a number of op-eds in the wake of the Boston bombings to highlight the possibility that the [U.S. and Russia are facing a common terrorist threat](#) and urge the two countries’ special services to avert what he described as a “[cooperation failure](#).”

USA Expects Completion of HEU Purchase Agreement with Russia in 2013

By the end of this year, the U.S. government expects the 1993 [U.S.-Russia HEU Purchase Agreement to be completed](#), under which 500 MT of highly enriched uranium from dismantled Russian weapons will have been converted into low-enriched uranium, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Frank Rose said on April 9th. He added that Russia has also been an essential partner in the U.S. Global Threat Reduction Initiative. The GTR efforts have now converted or verified the shutdown of over 75 research and test reactors, and repatriated to the United States or to Russia over 3,000 kg of HEU for secure storage, downblending and disposition.

Graham Allison on Obama’s Nuclear Illusion

In his April 5th op-ed in the *Boston Globe*, [Graham Allison](#), director of the Belfer Center and IPNT member assessed President Obama’s progress in fulfilling his pledge made in April 2009 in Prague to advance the world toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. If comparing this

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undertaking to climbing an unscaled mountain, Prof. Allison suggests that “on our present



trajectory, the likelihood of a nuclear avalanche is greater than the prospect of reaching the peak. Avoiding that tragic fate will require not just climbing faster on our current course, but making substantial strategic adjustments.”

In the op-ed, entitled “[Obama’s Nuclear Vision - or Illusion?](#)” Prof. Allison warns that “The potential for catastrophic failure appears to be growing on at least three fronts: Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan.” While Iran and North Korea combined

have likely produced enough nuclear material for no more than 16 bombs total, Pakistan, a frail, if not yet failed, state is now producing enough nuclear material for that many additional bombs every year.

USA Gets “B-” and Russia Gets “B” for Their Nuclear Arms and Nonproliferation Policies

The Arms Control Association gave the Obama administration a “B-” grade for its atomic arms and nonproliferation policies since 2010, citing the refusal to rule out a nuclear strike against Iran or any other non-nuclear weapon state in questionable standing with U.N. inspectors. The association’s April 2013 Report: “[Assessing Progress on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament: 2010-2013 Report Card](#)” offers limited praise for U.S. and Russian long-range nuclear force reductions under a bilateral strategic arms control treaty that took effect in February 2011. Those cuts contributed to Russia’s overall “B” grade, GSN reported.

NOTABLE STATEMENTS ON NUCLEAR TERRORISM:

- **Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger:** “In a world of increasing flux and uncertainty, the United States and Russia face a similar set strategic challenges, including building durable structures of regional security throughout Europe and Asia, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, combating nuclear terrorism, and maintaining strategic nuclear stability.” (Itar-Tass, May 27, 2013).
- **Russian Ambassador to Great Britain Alexander Yakovenko:** “We attach huge importance to the work of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee and the ‘1267’ and ‘1988’ committees on, respectively, al-Qaeda and the Taliban. It is also critical to maintain a focus on sanctions and to prevent nuclear terrorism.” (*Russica Izvestia*, May 23, 2013).
- **U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry:** “We know that our greatest nuclear threat is no longer a large-scale nuclear exchange, but the danger that terrorists could acquire nuclear materials or, worse, a nuclear weapon.” (*Foreign Policy*, March 8, 2013).
- **Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Frank Rose:** “Nuclear terrorism is one of the greatest threats facing the United States. The traditional concept of nuclear deterrence – the idea that a country would not initiate a nuclear war for fear of nuclear retaliation – does not apply to terrorists.” (State Department, April 11, 2013).

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- June 16, 2013. The Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction agreement between the United States and Russia expires.
- June 17-18, 2013. G8 summit in Northern Ireland.

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- June 27-29, 2013. Rosatom, in collaboration with the IAEA, will hold an international ministerial conference on “Nuclear power in the 21st century” in St. Petersburg.
- September 5-6, 2013. G20 summit in St. Petersburg.

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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