

U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism

Российско-Американская инициатива по предотвращению ядерного терроризма

August-September 2013 Newsletter

Информационный бюллетень за август-сентябрь 2013 года



ИСКРАН

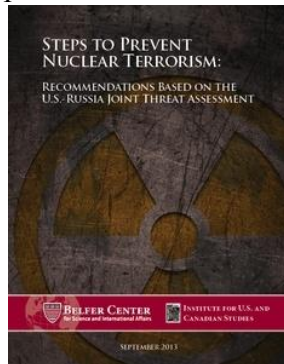
NEWS:

IPNT's New Report Outlines U.S.-Russian Steps to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Participants in U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism (IPNT) have completed a new report that outlines concrete steps for the United States and Russia to take in leading international efforts to combat the threat of nuclear terrorism.

“[Steps to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism: Recommendations Based on the U.S.-Russia Joint Threat Assessment](#)” was produced jointly by researchers at Harvard’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies (ISKRAN).

In 2011, the Belfer Center and ISKRAN, which participate in the IPNT working group, published the “[U.S.-Russia Joint Threat Assessment on Nuclear Terrorism](#),” which analyzed the



means, motives, and access of would-be nuclear terrorists, and concluded that the threat of nuclear terrorism is urgent and real. Building on this study, the new report analyzes the existing framework for action, cites gaps and deficiencies, and makes specific recommendations for improvement. The foreword of the new report was written by the [Elbe Group](#), which consists of retired U.S. and Russian senior military and intelligence officers.

The authors of “Steps to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism” have also produced a separate report on “[Transcending Mutual Deterrence in the U.S.-Russia Relationship](#),” which argues that better political and economic cooperation between the U.S. and Russia and greater transparency in military plans and doctrine, are needed to move beyond a relationship built on mutual nuclear deterrence.

GAO on U.S. Cities’ Nuclear Terrorism Response Plans

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has published a report on [preparedness of 27 major American cities to respond to terrorist attacks that use improvised nuclear devices](#) (IND) and radiological dispersal devices (RDD). According to the September 2013 study, 11 of the 27 cities reported that they had completed RDD response plans, and 8 of the 27 reported that they had completed IND response plans.

Most of the city emergency managers interviewed by GAO reported perceived needs for federal technical and resource assistance to support their cities’ early response to RDD (19 of 27 cities) and IND (21 of 27 cities) attacks. Based on the report’s findings, GAO recommended that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) develops guidance to clarify the early response capabilities needed by cities for RDD and IND attacks, but FEMA did not agree with this recommendation.

U.S. and Russia Sign an Agreement on Nuclear R&D

U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz and Director General of the Russian Federation State Corporation “Rosatom” Sergey Kirienko signed an [Agreement on Cooperation in Nuclear- and](#)

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Energy-Related Scientific Research and Development on the margins of the International Atomic Energy Agency's General Conference in Vienna, Austria on September 16, 2013.

According to the U.S. Energy Department, the Agreement provides the legal framework necessary to expand cooperation between U.S. and Russian nuclear research laboratories, institutes, and facilities in a broad range of areas, including nuclear technology, nonproliferation, fundamental and applied science, energy, and environment.



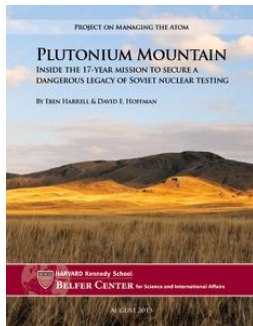
Moniz

Kirienko

Belfer Center Report Details Effort to Secure Plutonium in Semipalatinsk

In August 2013, the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs published a report by its associate Eben Harrell and David E. Hoffman on joint U.S.-Russian-Kazakh effort to remove hundreds of pounds of plutonium from the Soviet-era nuclear test site in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan.

According to the report, in October 2012, several dozen Kazakh, Russian, and American nuclear scientists and engineers gathered for a small ceremony that marked the completion of a [\\$150 million operation to secure plutonium](#) left inside tunnels of the site's Degelen Mountain that was enough to build more than a dozen nuclear weapons.



Siegfried Hecker, Director of Stanford University's Center for International Security, played a lead role in conceiving and implementing the project. Hecker's Center participates in the IPNT working group.

Sergey Lukashenko, director of the Institute of Radiation Safety and Ecology at Kazakhstan's National Nuclear Center, told GSN that despite the completion of the 17-year effort, there is still a possibility that more nuclear material remains buried beneath the soil of the Semipalatinsk steppe, unsecured and potentially vulnerable to theft.

Vladimir Dvorkin: Nuclear Terrorism Is Not a Priority for Russia's National Security

Vladimir Dvorkin, senior research fellow at the Center for International Security of Russia's Institute of World Economy and International Relations, has published an op-ed in the August 16th issue of *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozrenie*. In his op-ed, Dvorkin asserts that Russian leadership would not be overly worried if Russia's potential withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, coupled with lack of further reductions in U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals, disrupt the 2015 NPT Review Conference because [“threats of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism are not among priorities of Russia's national security.”](#) Dvorkin's Center participates in the working group of the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism (IPNT).



University of Texas Paper: Some U.S. Nuclear Facilities Poorly Protected

A new paper by Lara Kirkham and Alan J. Kuperman of the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Project (NPPP) at the University of Texas at Austin, warns that [some U.S. nuclear facilities are inadequately protected](#) against theft of weapons-grade materials and sabotage by terrorists. The authors claim that some U.S. nuclear power plants are vulnerable to terrorist attack from the sea, but they are not required to protect against such ship-borne attacks.

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Former deputy NNSA administrator Jerry Paul and the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) have criticized the paper as poorly researched. NEI noted that the authors didn't "have access to the safeguarded information that [they] would need to make such as assessment."

USAF ICBM Unit Fails Safety and Security Inspection

A U.S. Air Force unit that operates one-third of the nation's land-based nuclear missiles [failed a safety and security inspection](#) in August, marking the second major setback this year for a force charged with the military's most sensitive mission, according to Lt. Gen. James M. Kowalski, commander of Air Force Global Strike Command. "This unit fumbled on this exercise," Kowalski told AP on August 13th, adding that this did not call into question the safety or control of nuclear weapons at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana.

Russian Military Trains to Respond to Nuclear Weapons Accidents

The Russian military is [testing new approaches to respond to accidents involving nuclear weapons](#), according to Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.



"The active phase of the tactical special comprehensive training Avariya-2013 (Accident-2013) has begun today. The purpose of this training is to test new approaches to the organization of the liquidation of the consequences of accidents involving nuclear weapons," Shoigu explained to top Defense Ministry officials on August 5th. The minister also told Interfax that "Possessing such weapons gives us serious obligations to ensure their security."

'Terrorists' Gain Access to 'Nuclear Fuel' in U.S. Force-on-Force Exercise

The [Project on Government Oversight](#) reported that the Savannah River Site facility in South Carolina failed security tests in January. U.S. Energy Department personnel pretending to be terrorists reached mock nuclear fuel in a series of "force-on-force" exercises at the Savannah River Site.

Targets in the January exercises included the H-Canyon Complex, which can contain up to several tons of weapons-usable uranium and plutonium.

U.S. Observers Visit Mayak as Megatons to Megawatts Program Ends

On August 1st, ITAR-TASS reported that chief executives and specialists of the Mayak Production Association hosted a meeting with U.S. observers to [finalize Russian-U.S. cooperation under the Megatons to Megawatts Program](#). This was the 90th visit paid by U.S. observers to Mayak, which has recycled over 150 metric tons of high enriched uranium into low enriched uranium, fulfilling all commitments of the enterprise under the Megatons to Megawatts program.

NOTABLE STATEMENTS ON NUCLEAR TERRORISM:

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin:** "The world reacts (to threat of force) by asking: if you cannot count on international law, then you must find other ways to ensure your security. Thus a growing number of countries seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction. This is logical: if you have the bomb, no one will touch you. We are left with talk of the need to strengthen nonproliferation, when in reality this is being eroded." (*New York Times*, September 11, 2013).

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- **U.S. Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller:** “While the likelihood of a large-scale nuclear exchange has fortunately diminished through decades of cooperative, but also challenging disarmament work between Moscow and Washington, nuclear dangers have not disappeared. The threat posed by the spread of nuclear materials and technologies remains. The possibility that terrorists or other non-state actors could acquire a nuclear weapon ensures that the nuclear “Sword of Damocles” still hangs over us.” (State.gov, September 6, 2013).
- **Ex-foreign minister of Russia Igor Ivanov:** “Russia and the United States remain the only countries in the world, capable of destroying each other and the rest of humanity several times over in a suicidal nuclear war. Therefore, the issues of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the prevention of nuclear terrorism primarily fall on the shoulders of our two nations.” (*Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozrenie*, August 16, 2013).

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- End of 2013. Russian Defense Ministry to release the White Paper on national defense that will cover the period ending in Year 2020.
- January 2014. U.S. authorities to decide on whether prosecutors will seek the death penalty for accused Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev.
- February 7-23, 2014. Winter Olympics in the Russian city of Sochi.
- March 24-25, 2014. Nuclear Security Summit in The Hague.

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.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Photo of Sergei Kirienko by World Economic Forum; photo of Ernest Moniz by U.S. federal government; photo of Vladimir Dvorkin by International Luxembourg Forum, photo of Sergei Shoigu by the press service of the Russian president.

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

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

- *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University [W. Tobey, william_tobey@hks.harvard.edu, 1- 617-496-0518]*

- *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]*

- *Center for International Security, Institute for World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences [imemoran@imemo.ru, 7-499-120-52-36]*

- *Центр международной безопасности, Институт мировой экономики и международных отношений, Российская академия наук [imemoran@imemo.ru, 7-499-120-52-36]*

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- *Институт США и Канады, Российская академия наук [Доктор наук С. Рогов, pa.to.rogov@rambler.ru, 7-495-691-11-66]*