

U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism

Российско-Американская инициатива по предотвращению ядерного терроризма

September - November 2016 Newsletter Информационный бюллетень за сентябрь-ноябрь 2016 г



ИСКРАН

NEWS:

IAEA Members Pledge to Strengthen Nuclear Security

Government ministers committed to further strengthening global nuclear security, including by combating illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive material, according to a [Ministerial Declaration](#) adopted on December 5 at the IAEA's International Conference on Nuclear Security. "We commit to continue taking active steps to combat illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive material, to protect and secure all such material to ensure that it cannot be used by non-State actors in criminal or terrorist acts, and to continue efforts on our territories to prepare for recovering such material in case it has fallen out of regulatory control, taking into account relevant international instruments," the declaration said, according to [IAEA](#). The conference has brought together 2000 participants from more than 130 of the agency's member states and 17 international, regional and non-governmental organizations, according to [World Nuclear News](#). U.S. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz [told](#) the conference that the United States is beginning consultations with the IAEA to monitor the dilution of up to six metric tons of surplus plutonium at the Savannah River Site in Aiken, South Carolina. That material is part of the U.S. plutonium stock that has been designated excess for military purposes, [IPFM Blog](#) reported on December 5. Director of the department for non-proliferation and arms control of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mikhail Ulyanov [told](#) the conference that Russia considers "universalization" of International Convention on Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and amended Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material to be an "urgent task." He also asserted that Russia believes only IAEA can play the lead role in international efforts to strengthen nuclear security and that nuclear security assistance to national governments can be rendered only upon their request.

Graham Allison Calls on Revitalization of U.S.-Russian Nuclear Cooperation

Director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs Graham Allison has penned a [commentary](#) for *National Interest* in which he argues that the next U.S. President must do everything possible to prevent an accidental U.S.-Russian war, now the likeliest it's been since the end of the Cold War. Washington should also engage Moscow in other areas of mutual interest where Russia's behavior can have a significant impact on U.S. national security, such as preventing terrorist attacks and countering proliferation of nuclear weapons, according to the November 28 commentary. November also saw Professor Allison – who participates in the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism – make a presentation: "Reflections on Nuclear Deterrence in the 21st Century" to the Defense Science Board at the Pentagon.



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Russia's New Foreign Policy Concept Highlights Nuclear Terrorism Threat

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed off on a new [Russian foreign policy concept](#), which describes prevention of nuclear terrorism as a priority. The November 2016 concept says Russia stands for “strengthening of political and legal foundations of the regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction as well as means of their delivery, taking into account the risk that components of such weapons can fall into hands of non-state actors, foremost terrorist organizations, including (those operating on) territories where the central authority is weakened or lost.” The concept also asserts that Russia stands for strengthening of nuclear security on the global level as well as for prevention of nuclear terrorism. The document also notes that “emergence of ISIS has given the global terrorist threat a qualitatively new character.”

Russia's National Guard Numbers 340,000

Russia's new National Guard now has 340,000 personnel in 84 units across Russia, the head of the force has claimed. The guardsmen have “ensured security and anti-terrorist protection of important state facilities, including enterprises of the nuclear weapons complex, nuclear energy industry and nuclear materials during their transportation,” said National Guard leader Viktor Zolotov, quoted by [Komsomolskaya Pravda](#) on November 25.

Rolf Mowatt-Larssen and Monica Duffy Toft on Countering WMD Terrorism

Belfer Center senior fellow Rolf Mowatt-Larssen and University of Oxford professor Monica Duffy Toft have teamed up to assess the threat of WMD terrorism and propose ways to counter it. The two researchers argue in their November 17 [piece](#) for JustSecurity.org that the threat of Islamic-inspired terrorism is now even greater than it was before 9/11. “Today, there should be no doubt that both the Islamic State and AQ are interested in acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction (WMD); their words and actions confirm their intentions in this regard,” according to the article, which draws on a paper originally commissioned by the Nuclear Threat Initiative. To counter the WMD terrorism threat, the next U.S. president needs to broaden the terms of bilateral intelligence engagement, ensure there are dedicated resources to counter terrorist weapons of mass destruction, and designate who is in charge of WMD terrorism in the policy, military and intelligence communities, according to Mr. Mowatt-Larssen and Dr. Toft. Mr. Mowatt-Larssen –who participates in the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism – has also written a [separate article](#) for the same web site, in which he warns of the threat that terrorists returning from Syria could pose to the stability of Russia's soft southern underbelly.



Mowatt-Larssen Toft

Stephen Hawking Describes Nuclear Terrorism as Threat to Humanity

Renowned theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking said the biggest and most immediate challenge for humanity would come in the next century, pointing to such threats as potential nuclear terrorism, climate change, and the rise of artificial intelligence potentially outcompeting humans, according to a November 17 report in [Christian Science Monitor](#).

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Armenia Extends Deal with U.S. to Prevent WMD Proliferation

The parliament of Armenia has voted to extend for seven years a bilateral agreement with the United States on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, [RFE/RL](#) reported on November 17. Under the initiative, the United States provides Armenia with equipment and advice on preventing the spread of materials and technology related to nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

U.S. and Russian Experts on Whether Trump Will Engage Putin on Counter-Terrorism

Director of the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism William Tobey and director of the Russia Matters project Simon Saradzhyan have joined forces to [assess](#) prospects for a rapprochement between U.S. and Russia in the wake of Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential elections. In their November 10 article for [Russia Matters web site](#), the two Belfer Center research argue that Donald Trump will try to engage Vladimir Putin in such areas as preventing accidental war and terrorist attacks and countering proliferation of nuclear weapons. According to the director of the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies Sergei Rogov, it remains



Saradzhyan

Tobey

Rogov

unclear what Trump's actual policy toward Russia could look like. "Is Trump serious about improving relations? Russian officials hope he is, and so do I—but how could we really know?" Dr. Rogov [told](#) *New Yorker*. Dr. Rogov's institute participates in the working group of the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism.

Ukrainian Agencies Train to Intercept Nuclear Smuggling

Ukrainian government agencies have teamed up with U.S. Department of State and the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority to organize an exercise simulating the response to smuggling of nuclear or other radioactive material, according to the [Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#). The November 7-8 exercise has demonstrated "the seriousness with which each country views the threat of nuclear terrorism," according to the agency.

Matthew Bunn on Nuclear Challenges Faced by Donald Trump

Harvard Kennedy School Professor Matthew Bunn has outlined what nuclear security and safety challenges next U.S. President will face in a November 7, 2016 [presentation](#) at the American Nuclear Society. Professor Bunn has listed sabotage of nuclear power plants by terrorists, terrorists' interest in acquisition of nuclear weapons and curtailing of U.S.-Russian nuclear security cooperation among those challenges. Professor Bunn participates in the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism.



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Olli Heinonen on Nuclear Programs of Iran and North Korea

Belfer Center senior fellow Olli Heinonen penned several articles on challenges posed by Iran's nuclear program in September-November to voice concern over what he described as Iran's



intentional violations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action's terms. Among other things, he [pointed](#) out that Iran had exceeded the JCPOA limit for its inventory of heavy water. "The international community cannot rely on Iran's good intentions," he [wrote](#). Mr. Heinonen has also [weighed in](#) on how to tackle North Korea's nuclear program in the wake of DRPK's fifth nuclear test. Mr. Heinonen believes that the international community cannot apply the approach that has led to the agreement with Iran to the Hermit Kingdom. "Proper

verification, in particular for North Korea's weapon's program, would need to go well beyond the narrow approach used to address the so-called Possible Military Dimension of Iran's nuclear program," he wrote. Mr. Heinonen participates in the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism.

USAF Seeks Greater Input from Private Sector into Cyber Security of Nukes

The U.S. Air Force seeks greater interaction with the private sector to build better networks for securing nuclear weapons computer systems, [National Interest](#) reported on November 19th.

"Information technology that touches weapons systems needs to be cyber secure, updated and patched," Peter Kim, Air Force Chief Information Security Officer, said.

Russia Discards Three Nuclear Security Deals With U.S.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a [federal](#) law on suspending the Russian-U.S. intergovernmental agreement on disposal of weapons-grade plutonium. The document was posted on the official website of legal information on Oct. 31. The announcement of suspension listed a litany of grievances against Washington, demanding Washington compensate Moscow for the sanctions imposed in 2014 and called for repeal of the Magnitsky Act. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow suspended the plutonium pact because of "aggressive anti-Russia tendencies at the basis of the U.S. policy on Russia." He pointed to NATO deployments, infrastructure and missile placement as examples of "aggressive steps that have a direct bearing on our national interests and can affect our national security," according to [CNN](#). Meanwhile, Russia's nuclear state corporation Rosatom said in a statement that "Russia adheres to its commitment to utilize 34 tons of plutonium which are excessive for defense needs" that falls under the suspended agreement.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau lamented the Kremlin decision, arguing that the disposal deal was beneficial to both countries. White House press secretary Josh Earnest said the Obama administration was disappointed by the Russian decision since "both leaders in Russia and the United States have made nonproliferation a priority." The United States had earlier offered the Russian side to hold consultations on the methods of plutonium disposition to save the agreement, but, regretfully, Russia rejected the proposal, according to then-U.S. Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller.

In addition to suspending the plutonium deal, Russia has also terminated the U.S.-Russian agreement regarding cooperation in concluding feasibility studies of the conversion of Russian research reactors to low-enriched uranium fuel and suspended the U.S.-Russian agreement on

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cooperation in nuclear- and energy-related scientific research and development. Decisions on these two deals were [published](#) by the Russian government on October 5. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov [said](#) the suspension of the 2013 research accord was a response to Washington's "hostile" move to suspend all such nuclear energy cooperation. "The curtailing of cooperation between Russia and the U.S. in the nuclear sphere is making the world increasingly less safe, according to Alexey Arbatov of the Center for International Security at Russia's Institute of World Economy and International Relations. "Now all cooperation between Russia and the U.S. in ensuring the safety and security of weapons-grade nuclear materials – both uranium and plutonium – has been suspended. This is a very bad and alarming thing," he [told](#) RBTH. Dr. Arbatov's Center participates in the working group of the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism. Edwin Lyman, a senior scientists in the Union of Concerned Scientists' Global Security program, [believes](#) the next U.S. president can still persuade Russia to resume implementation of the plutonium deal, securing Russia's consent to have the American side dilute plutonium rather than transform into MOX-fuel. One "benefit of the dilute-and-dispose method is it poses a smaller risk of nuclear terrorism than the MOX option, which would entail additional handling and transporting weapon-usable materials," he wrote in All Things Nuclear on November 22.

UNGA's First Committee Approves Text to Prevent WPD Terrorism

UN General Assembly's First Committee has approved a draft resolution that aims to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. By adopting that resolution the General Assembly would call upon Member States to support international efforts to prevent the acquisition and use by terrorists of radioactive materials and sources and, if necessary, suppress such acts, in accordance with their national legal authorities and legislation and consistent with international law, according to a statement posted on [UN web site](#) on October 28.

Siegfried Hecker: U.S. and Russia Have a Responsibility to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism

Siegfried Hecker has contributed an inaugural commentary to the Russia Matters web site in which he argues that when it comes to global nuclear security Russia continues to matter. "Today, like 30 years ago, the size of its nuclear program—namely its nuclear weapons, facilities, materials, experts—and its safety, security and environmental challenges are rivaled only by the United States. They dwarf all others in the world combined," he wrote in the October 21 [article](#). In the piece, Dr. Hecker calls on Moscow and Washington to take steps to reverse what appears to be a return to an arms race and potential nuclear confrontation. "Together, Moscow and Washington have a greater stake than anyone in ensuring that the nuclear nonproliferation regime is strengthened rather than crippled. And more than anyone in the world they have a responsibility to join their technical, professional and military talents to help the world avoid nuclear terrorism," he wrote in [Russia Matters](#). Russia Matter was launched in October to provide analysis, data and curated news digests on U.S. policy toward Russia, U.S.-Russian relations and Russian policies that impact vital U.S. national interests. In addition to contributing to Russia Matters Dr. Hecker has recently edited a new book, which details U.S.-Russian lab-to-lab nuclear cooperation, entitled "[Doomed to Cooperate](#)." He participates in the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism.



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IAEA Chief: There's been a Disruptive Cyber Attack on a Nuclear Power Plant

A nuclear power plant was the target of a disruptive cyberattack two to three years ago, and there is a serious threat of militant attacks on such plants, according to International Atomic Energy Agency director Yukiya Amano. "This is not an imaginary risk," Amano was quoted by [Reuters](#) as saying in October. "This issue of cyberattacks on nuclear-related facilities or activities should be taken very seriously. We never know if we know everything or if it's the tip of the iceberg." Amano declined to give details of either incident, but said the cyberattack had caused "some disruption" at the plant.

Jerome Hauer on Preparing America to Respond to Nuclear Terrorism

Former acting assistant secretary of health Jerome Hauer has [published](#) an article in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* in which he calls on the next U.S. president to adopt measures that he believes will enhance U.S. authorities' preparedness to manage consequences of nuclear terrorism. These measures include additional funding for communication systems that don't rely on the local infrastructure as well as for research on medical countermeasures for acute radiation sickness. Also, a federal government structure for responding to an improvised nuclear device detonation in a major city should be completed within one year in the new administration, according to Mr. Hauer's October 7 article.

Russia Reports More Than 50 Tons of Civilian Plutonium

Russia has submitted its 2015 civilian plutonium report to IAEA. Russia reported 55.4 tons of civilian plutonium. This includes 53.1 tons of material in storage, 1.5 tons of plutonium in unirradiated MOX and 0.8 tons of plutonium stored elsewhere, according to [IPFM](#). The numbers in 2014 were 52, 0.3 and 1.3 tons respectively for the total of 53.6 tons, [IPFM](#) reported on September 23.

U.S. and Russia Cooperate To Retrieve HEU from Poland

The United States, the Russian Federation, Poland and the International Atomic Energy Agency has successfully cooperated to retrieve 61 kilograms of Russian-origin highly enriched uranium from Poland. Sixty one kilograms of Russian-origin highly enriched uranium has been retrieved from the Maria Research Reactor in Otwock-Swierk and shipped to Russia. The shipment has removed the last known HEU from Poland, making Poland the 31st country plus Taiwan to become HEU-free, according to a September 26 statement issued by the [U.S. Department of Energy](#).

William Tobey Takes Stock of Nuclear Security Summits

Belfer Center senior fellow and IPNT director William Tobey has reviewed the motivations, strengths, and weaknesses of the Nuclear Security Summits in an [article](#) for *Global Summitry*. The summits advanced nuclear security in important ways, but they didn't resolve the issue of nuclear security, according to the October 10 article. It will require, ultimately, commitment by

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states, international organizations, and nonstate actors to continuous improvement, Mr. Tobey wrote. Mr. Tobey has made some of the same points in a policy brief for [Stanley Foundation](#). The September brief concludes that some of the innovations from the summit process, such as gift baskets and national commitments, progress reports, and scenario-based discussions by leaders will continue to be useful tools.

U.S. Worried About Al-Qaeda Nuclear Attack in 2003

U.S. intelligence chiefs were so worried in late 2003 of a nuclear terror attack, they asked the British to take over their spying in case something ‘catastrophic’ went down, [Daily Beast](#) reported on September 10. “Intelligence said there was very likely” a nuclear device that “could affect command and control systems in Washington,” a former U.S. official who was directly involved in efforts to verify the intelligence on al Qaeda and prepare for a possible detonation told *The Daily Beast*.

U.S. Nuclear Security Facilities Decrepit

U.S. nuclear security facilities are so decrepit that they are putting national security goals at risk, [CNN](#) reported on September 7, citing U.S. nuclear officials. At the end of fiscal year 2015, the total cost of deferred maintenance across all NNSA property stood at \$3.7 billion, according to NNSA Administrator Lt. Gen. Frank Klotz. More than half of NNSA's approximately 6,000 real property assets are over 40 years old, and nearly 30% date back to the Manhattan Project era, Klotz was quoted by CNN as saying.

U.S. and Russia Rank 36 and 30 in Global Terrorism Index

The Global Terrorism [Index](#) has released data for 2015, finding that worldwide there had been 29,376 deaths caused by terrorism last year—a drop of 10 percent from 2014, according to [Reuters](#). ISIL was the deadliest group in 2015, killing 6,141 people, according to GTI. Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria accounted for 72 percent of all deaths. The United States ranked 36th, with France 29th, Russia 30th and the United Kingdom 34th in GTI. The global economic impact of terrorism was assessed to be \$89.6 billion.

Experts Weigh on the 10th Anniversary of 9/11

Brian Michael Jenkins, Bruce Hoffman, and Martha Crenshaw wrote that on the 10th Anniversary of 9/11 that the victory against major terrorist groups has remained “elusive.” “This month marks the 15th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, but we forget that just a few weeks ago al-Qaeda “celebrated” its 28th year in existence. Hezbollah, to cite another example, is 34 years-old; Lashkar-e-Taiba is 30; and Hamas is only one year younger. The longevity of these preeminent terrorist groups is testament perhaps to the intractable fixture of conflict in the 21st century that terrorism has become—and likely will remain,” they [wrote](#) on September 11 in *The Atlantic*. Richard Clarke also [weighed](#) in, arguing in an interview with *Washington Post* that “the threat is actually worse: It has metastasized and spread geographically. “Today there are probably 100,000 people in the various terrorist groups around the world, and that’s much larger than anything we had 15 years ago,” according to Clarke. Clarke’s opinion is shared by many

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Americans. Some 40% of the American public believe that the ability of terrorists to launch another major attack on the United States is greater than it was at the time of the 9/11 attacks, which is the highest share expressing this view over the past 14 years, [according](#) to Pew Research Center.

Brian Jenkins on Nuclear Terrorism Threat

RAND analyst Brian Jenkins has taken stock of efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism in a September 2016 [paper](#) for Nonproliferation Policy Education Center. He reminded the readers that several terrorist groups have contemplated acquiring nuclear weapons in the past four decades, arguing that “Russia’s Chechen rebels probably had the best shot at acquiring nuclear weapons or material.” None of these groups has succeeded, but the spread of fissile material and nuclear weapons know-how will require increasingly stringent security measures, not just at nuclear facilities, but affecting all of society, according to Jenkins.

NOTABLE STATEMENTS ON NUCLEAR TERRORISM AND NUCLEAR SECURITY:

- Donald Dudenhoeffer, Information Technology Security Officer at the IAEA: “In physical protection, you can see what you’re protecting and visualize probable attack scenarios. But in cyberspace, criminals have many more targets including those not at the facility; you could even be attacked at home. We must learn to think like the criminals to better understand how to protect against cyberattacks wherever we are.” ([IAEA](#), December 9, 2016)
- International Atomic Energy Agency director Yukiya Amano: “Terrorists and criminals will try to exploit any vulnerability in the global nuclear security system. Any country, in any part of the world, could find itself used as a transit point. And any country could become the target of an attack.” ([IAEA](#), December 5, 2016)
- President of the International Luxembourg Forum on Preventing Nuclear Catastrophe Vyacheslav Kantor: “With the exception of a direct military confrontation between the nuclear powers, nuclear terrorism is the most serious threat for humanity, in comparison to which even local wars and other crises fade.” ([TASS](#), December 2, 2016)
- Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov on the Islamic State terrorist organization: “We have fears that if nukes get in their hands they will use them immediately to kill hundreds and millions of people.” ([Jordan Times](#), September 24, 2016)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- December 12, 2016. 25th anniversary of President George WH Bush signing the Nunn-Lugar bill into law.
- December 25, 2016. 25th anniversary of the dissolution of USSR.
- 2017. 210th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and the United States.

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- February 2017. India will host a meeting of the Implementation and Assessment Group of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.
- September 2017. IAEA fuel bank to open in Kazakhstan.

CALL FOR PAPERS, ARTICLES AND COMMENTARY:

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

PHOTO CREDITS:

Photos of Graham Allison, William Tobey, Matthew Bunn, Simon Saradzhyan, Olli Heinonen, Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, Monica Toft by the Belfer Center; photo of Siegfried Hecker by the U.S. State Department, photo of Sergei Rogov by the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies.

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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]

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