

U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism

Американо-Российская инициатива по предотвращению ядерного терроризма

August - September 2010 Newsletter

Информационный бюллетень за сентябрь-октябрь 2010 года

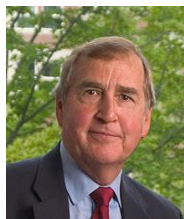


ИСКРАН

NEWS:

Allison Optimistic About Global Nuclear Order, But Calls for More Action

In an [interview](#) published in the September-October issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic

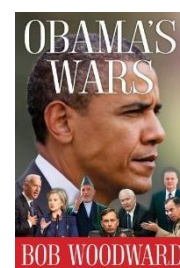


Scientists, Graham Allison, director of the Belfer Center and member of the U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism (IPNT), praised the Obama Administration for a “very strong start” in efforts to boost nuclear security. Among these efforts Allison singled out negotiating the New START treaty with Russia, a Nuclear Posture Review that shifts from the old focus on deterrence to a focus of preventing nuclear terrorism, and the Nuclear Security Summit in April. He also commended Russia for its efforts to secure nuclear weapons and

materials. “Here we are, 19 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and not one single nuclear weapon has come loose from that arsenal. That is nothing short of miraculous,” he said. However, more needs to be done to ensure terrorists do not gain access to nuclear material. “In the case of the nuclear threat, the good news is that this is a preventable catastrophe—preventable by an identified plan of action that is feasible and affordable: Lock up all nuclear bombs and materials as good as gold. If we can deny terrorists the means to make a mushroom cloud, we can deny them nuclear terrorism,” Allison said.

Book: U.S. Government Is Unprepared For a Nuclear Terrorist Attack

A classified exercise in May showed that the government was woefully unprepared to deal with a nuclear terrorist attack in the United States, according to the recently released book—*Obama’s War*—by American journalist Bob Woodward. The exercise involved the detonation of a small, crude nuclear weapon in Indianapolis and the simultaneous threat of a second blast in Los Angeles, the [Washington Post](#) [reported](#), citing the book. In an interview with Woodward, U.S. President Barack Obama called a nuclear attack in the United States “a potential game changer.” He said: “When I go down the list of things I have to worry about all the time, that is at the top, because that’s one where you can’t afford any mistakes.”



IPNT Members Call for De-Alerting of Arsenals to Reduce Threat of Nuclear Terrorism

Viktor Yesin and Pavel Zolotarev, senior fellows of the Institute for the USA and Canadian Studies, and IPNT members, warned of the growing threat of nuclear terrorism and called for de-alerting and downsizing U.S. and Russia’s nuclear arsenals in the September-October issue of *Foreign Affairs*. “In the future, the danger of mistaken or unauthorized use or of the exploitation of nuclear weapons by terrorists is likely to grow rather than diminish,” according to the authors, who in addition to Zolotarev and Yesin include another researcher of the Moscow-based Institute

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as well as renowned U.S. arms control experts Bruce Blaire and Matthew McKinzie. The [article](#) argued that Moscow and Washington should divide their nuclear forces into distinct components, each with a different degree of combat readiness to reduce the danger of mistaken or unauthorized use, including nuclear terrorism. “War-ready nuclear postures keep hundreds of nuclear weapons in constant motion, changing combat positions or moving to and from maintenance facilities. This affords terrorists opportunities to steal them as they are transported



Zolotarev

and stored temporarily – the relatively exposed phase of their operation,” according to the article. The authors argued that the U.S. and Russia can downsize their nuclear arsenals to 500 warheads each and still maintain a robust deterrent. They warn, however, that the U.S. and Russia also need to reach a compromise on the missile defense issue. A failure to do so will derail deep cuts, according to the article.



Yesin.

Mowatt-Larssen Calls for Greater Attention of US Intelligence to WMD Terrorism

Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, Belfer Center senior fellow and IPNT member, wrote an op-ed that was published by the Huffington Post on September 9th to warn that the FBI’s field agents “still avoid



being assigned certain tasks, such as preventing proliferation and terrorism of weapons of mass destruction.” The [article](#), titled “Nine Years After 9/11: Keeping America Safe,” argued that the U.S. intelligence community as a whole must be prepared to identify the subtle clues of a Muhammad Atta-like plot to commit the next 9/11 attack. “What matters most is to deny terrorists another chance to change the world,” according to Mowatt-Larssen.

U.S.-Russian HEU Purchase Agreement 80% Complete

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) [announced](#) on September 9th that it had monitored the elimination of more than 400 metric tons (MT) of Russian highly enriched uranium (HEU) – the equivalent of more than 16,000 nuclear weapons – under a landmark nuclear nonproliferation program. The 1993 U.S.-Russian HEU Purchase Agreement is now 80% complete and by 2013 will convert 500 MT of HEU from dismantled Russian nuclear weapons into low enriched uranium for peaceful nuclear energy use, according to NNSA.

Russian MoD’s Integrated Approach to Prevention of Nuclear Terrorism.

Russian Ministry of Defense’s nuclear security department has procured and installed integrated security systems designed for detection of terrorist and sabotage groups, restriction and prevention of unsanctioned actions, situation assessment, and adjustment of the actions of security subunits to block and eliminate the perpetrators, a senior commander said. The Ministry’s 12th Main Directorate is also working on creation of a counter-terrorism training complex for Russian border guards and escort teams with active assistance from the U.S.



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Department of Energy, Col. General Vladimir Verkhovtsev, chief of the department, was quoted in the [September 4th issue of the defense ministry's *Krasnaya Zvezda*](#) as saying. Verkhovtsev also noted that Russia conducts non-nuclear explosion experiments in order to test the reliability of its nuclear arsenals, and that the Russian segment of the International Monitoring System designed to detect nuclear tests is being completed.

Russian and U.S. Experts Discuss Ways of Preventing Nuclear Terrorism

Stanislav Ivanov, senior researcher at Russia's Institute of World Economy and International Relations and member of IPNT, participated in a Moscow-Washington DC video bridge,



[“Russia-United States: Joint Efforts to Counter Terrorist Threat,”](#) which was co-organized by Russian news agency RIA Novosti on September 2nd. U.S. and Russian experts, including Ivanov, acknowledged the seriousness of the threat of nuclear terrorism, noting that organizers of terrorist attacks stop at nothing in pursuit of their goals. They discussed whether the U.S. and Russia share each other's assessment of terrorist threats and ways their countries could act in unison to prevent nuclear terrorism.

Uranium-238 Seized in Moldova

Authorities in Moldova seized almost two kilograms of Uranium-238 from traffickers, including former interior ministry officials, [Agence France Press reported](#) on August 26th. Interior ministry spokesman Chiril Motpan told the agency that “It was the first time that contraband radioactive materials were intercepted in Moldova.” Suspected traffickers had wanted to sell the uranium for \$11 million dollars, according to AFP. The seized uranium will be sent to the nuclear research centre in Germany for identification of a producer country and the degree of enrichment of the radioactive substance.

123 Agreement Likely to Come Into Force in October

Despite misgivings about Russia, Congress is unlikely to block the so-called 123 Agreement that would allow U.S. companies to export nuclear technology to America's former Cold War rival, the Associated Press [reported](#) on August 12th. The civil agreement has support from lawmakers from both parties whose districts include businesses that could benefit from U.S. nuclear exports to Russia. Barring congressional action, the agreement will take effect after 90 days in which Congress is in session. That would likely fall in October, according to the agency.

Belfer Center's Allison, Bunn, and Mowatt-Larssen in Documentary on Nuclear Terrorism

[Countdown to Zero](#), a documentary on nuclear terrorism, featuring Belfer Center director Allison, Matthew Bunn, associate professor at Harvard's Kennedy School and IPNT member, and Belfer Center senior fellow Mowatt-Larssen opened in U.S. cities in late July. The film, created by Academy Award-winning producer Lawrence Bender, focuses on the reality of

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nuclear danger in today's world and makes an urgent case for securing nuclear materials against terrorists. Upon release of *Countdown to Zero*, Allison called for a [citizen follow-up](#) to the documentary. The latter “is a testament to our long-standing commitment to providing leadership in advancing policy-relevant knowledge about the threat of nuclear terrorism and proliferation,” Allison said. “Translating words into deeds, however, will require private citizens to take action.”

Tobey and Mowatt-Larssen Call for Intra-Agency Team to Fight Nuclear Terror

Mowatt-Larssen and William H. Tobey, senior fellow at the Belfer Center and director of IPNT, co-wrote an article published on the Center’s web site in [English](#) and [Russian](#) in July which argues that the U.S. government should set up a dedicated team of intelligence, policy, law enforcement, and technical experts working together full-time to resolve nuclear smuggling cases. The article, “The Armageddon Test: To Prevent Nuclear Terrorism, Follow the Uranium,” also calls for development of an internationally shared forensics catalogue and urges the International Atomic Energy Agency to foster an ethic of disclosure and cooperation to advance the work of detecting and interdicting nuclear smuggling rings. “Our collective inability to investigate thoroughly and resolve cases of nuclear smuggling amounts to criminal negligence. Unless we can be as ruthless in examining the causes of failures in nuclear security and preventing them in the future as are parachutists in assessing and correcting their errors, we will remain vulnerable to a fatal malfunction,” the authors warn.



Tobey

Bunn and Velikhov Call for U.S.-Russian Cooperation on New Global Nuclear Framework

While Russia and the United States have many disagreements, they have deep common interests in reducing the dangers of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism and those interests can best be served through cooperation, not isolation or confrontation, according to IPNT member Bunn and Evgeniy Velikhov, one of Russia’s leading nuclear scientists and president of the Russian Research Center Kurchatov Institute. The two scientists argued in an op-ed – published by the [Hill](#) in July– that a new global framework for nuclear energy, including new or strengthened global institutions, must be established.

“Without such a new framework, unbridled competition in nuclear energy could pose grave risks. Even a single catastrophe – whether a Chernobyl-scale accident, a successful sabotage (a “security Chernobyl”) or, worse yet, a terrorist nuclear bomb – would doom any prospect for nuclear growth on the scale needed to make a significant contribution to coping with climate change,” Bunn and Velikhov warned.



Bunn



Velikhov

NOTABLE STATEMENTS ON NUCLEAR TERRORISM:

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Former U.S. Senators Sam Nunn and John Warner: “The possibility of nuclear war has declined, but the chances of nuclear weapons being used by a terrorist group, or a rogue nation in a regional war, are increasing. These threats are fueled by the spread of nuclear weapons, materials and technology around the world.” (*Politico*, September 16, 2010).

Senator John Kerry: “Friendlier relations (between U.S. and Russia) will also facilitate vital initiatives, like the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program, which are designed to keep weapons and fissile material out of the hands of terrorists – our top national security priority.” (*Foreign Policy*, September 16, 2010.)

Director of the Moscow-based Institute of World Economy and International Relations

Alexander Dynkin: “So-called super-terrorism, aimed at intimidating, mass casualties and aspiring towards acquisition of weapons of mass destruction” is a major threat to Russia. (RIA Novosti, September 14, 2010).

Head of the Russian Defense Ministry’s 12th Main Directorate Col. General Vladimir

Verkhovtsev: “It’s true that in the modern world under conditions of the growing threat of terrorist activity the provision of reliable protection and safekeeping of nuclear weapons is the paramount mission of the 12th Main Directorate.” (*Krasnaya Zvezda*, September 4, 2010).

Independent Russian military expert Alexander Golts: “The entire territory of the former Soviet Union is awash in radioactive material which was used in Soviet times for some 30 various ministries and services, in medicine or agriculture. Most often those materials are enriched to just three to five percent, which cannot be used to make nuclear weapons.” (Agence France Press, August 27, 2010).

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- October 2010. Moscow session of the Munich Conference on Security Policy.
- October 28-29. 4th International Conference and Exhibition “AtomEco-2010” in Moscow.
- November 2010. G-20 summit.
- Late November-December 2010. 6th meeting of the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee and State Duma International Affairs Committee.
- Fall 2010. NATO summit to adopt a new Strategic Concept. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev invited to attend.
- December 2010. NATO annual Conference on WMD, Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation.

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.

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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 Американо-Российской инициативы по предотвращению ядерного терроризма состоят следующие организации:

- *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University [William 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 РАН [imemoran@imemo.ru, 7-499-120-52-36]

- *Center for International Security and Cooperation, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University [Dr. S. Hecker, shecker@stanford.edu, 1-650-725-6468]*

- **Центр международной безопасности и сотрудничества** Института международных дел имени Фримана Спogli Стэнфордского университета. [Доктор наук З. Хэkker, shecker@stanford.edu, 1-650-725-6468]

- *PIR Center [Dr. V. Orlov, reception@pircenter.org, 7-495-987-1915]*

- **ПИР-Центр** [Доктор наук В. Орлов, reception@pircenter.org, 7-495-987-1915]

- *USA and Canada Studies Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences [Dr. S. Rogov, pa.to.rogov@rambler.ru, 7-495-691-11-66]*

- **Институт изучения Соединенных Штатов Америки и Канады РАН** [Доктор наук С. Рогов, pa.to.rogov@rambler.ru, 7-495-691-11-66]

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