

Conclusion

The danger that nuclear weapons or weapons-usable material in Russia or other nations of the Former Soviet Union could be stolen, sold to terrorists or hostile nations, and used against Americans or our allies remains an urgent threat to the security of the United States. The US government supports several programs to reduce this danger. These efforts have made considerable progress, but much more remains to be done.

We have presented three proposals to expand existing programs for reducing stockpiles of HEU in Russia and other nations of the Former Soviet Union. We recommend that the United States adopt these proposals to:

- Rapidly blend down all excess Russian weapons-origin HEU;
- Remove HEU stockpiles from smaller, less secure facilities in the FSU; and
- Replace HEU fuel in Soviet-built research and test reactors with LEU fuel.

We recommend that the current rate of blending down excess weapons-origin HEU be doubled. Such an increase would be straightforward and could be accomplished for about \$40-60 million per year to cover the cost of the blending and to provide the incentive for Russia to adopt it.

We recommend a number of measures to enhance the Department of Energy's efforts to remove HEU from smaller, less secure facilities in the FSU and to focus those efforts on the facilities that present the greatest risk. Most of our recommendations are for policy changes that would cost little to implement. However, we also recom-

mend that annual funding for DOE's Materials Consolidation and Conversion project be twice the Administration's 2003 request of \$27 million. The additional funds could be sufficient both to remove all HEU from high priority facilities within three years and to cut two or more years from the time needed to fulfill DOE's longer term goals.

We recommend expanding efforts to replace HEU fuel in Soviet-built research and test reactors with LEU fuel. That will require continued support for research programs to develop and test higher density LEU fuels; payment for at least the first LEU fuel core for reactors whose operators agree to convert; and payments to Russia to take back Soviet-supplied spent fuel and unused fresh fuel in other countries. An increase of less than \$20 million per year over current appropriations, for the next few years, would be sufficient to fund the conversion of virtually all Soviet-built, HEU-fueled reactors and the return of all HEU fuels to Russia within the next few years.

Implementation of these three proposals would significantly reduce the risk that terrorists or other groups might divert HEU for use in nuclear weapons. All three are low cost, and none of them pose insurmountable policy challenges that would obstruct their implementation. They are the low hanging fruit. They can be picked now, while other efforts continue to address some of the more challenging long-term problems.

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