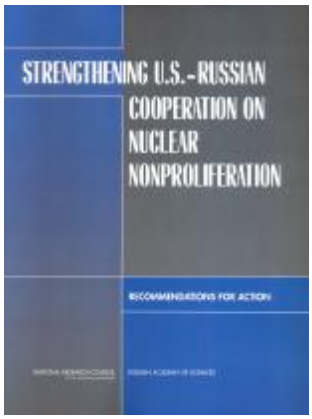

Strengthening U.S.-Russian Cooperation on Nuclear Nonproliferation (2005)

As the nations with the world's largest stockpiles of nuclear weapons and fissile material, the United States and Russia not only have an opportunity but also an obligation to strengthen their cooperative nuclear nonproliferation programs and make them as effective as possible. Since 1992, the United States has been working with Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union to develop joint nuclear nonproliferation initiatives, many under the Cooperative Threat Reduction framework. These efforts have significantly advanced the goals of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to work toward reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons and materials stocks. The programs have had important successes during the past several years, including the enhancement of security for nuclear storage facilities; the commercial sale of surplus Russian enriched uranium as power plant fuel; and the elimination of nuclear weapons from Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

Despite the accomplishments of the cooperative efforts, impediments to joint work have limited progress in the past and threaten to do so in the future. Some of these problems are the result of restrictive practices following 9/11, while others linger from the Cold War era. Still others involve legal issues, managerial and organizational problems, project financing, and weaknesses in U.S.-Russian scientific and technical cooperation. Many of these issues are legitimate concerns about national security matters. Even so, there is the potential for U.S. cooperation with Russia to shift toward a more effective full partnership. *Strengthening U.S.-Russian Cooperation on Nuclear Nonproliferation* presents recommendations to streamline and accelerate the cooperative nuclear nonproliferation programs so that the United States and Russia can establish a more effective partnership.

POLITICAL ISSUES

- **The presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States should establish a Joint High-Level Commission to define a strategy for current and future U.S.-Russian cooperation to combat nuclear proliferation.** Experts from outside the government should participate in this effort so that a variety of viewpoints and backgrounds are brought to the table. To develop new ideas for cooperation or methods to streamline the joint work, the commission might appoint working groups to investigate specific issues of concern.

- **The Senior Interagency Group that was established by Presidents Bush and Putin at the Bratislava Summit should oversee the implementation of U.S.-Russian cooperative efforts on nuclear security.** It should have effective communication channels to the Joint High-Level Commission and responsibility for translating those recommendations into

policy. In addition, it should have the power to create working groups to address specific issues, such as financing, that arise during the implementation process.

LEGAL OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES

U.S.-Russian cooperation is based on government-to-government agreements and national laws. Disagreements over legal issues have in some cases impeded cooperation. The countries need to overcome these legal issues to facilitate more rapid implementation of current cooperative nonproliferation programs and to establish an improved framework for future work in this area. The following obstacles are of concern:

- *Liability protection.* One of the most challenging barriers to cooperation is the disagreement over liability protection. The countries disagree about the level of liability protection that should be given to U.S. agents and contractors working on projects involving nuclear technology in Russia. To address this concern, **they should adopt and ratify the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage.**

- *Taxation issues.* The U.S. government is unwilling to have its contributions to bilateral nonproliferation efforts taxed by the Russian government. Exemptions must be provided for contractors and grantees who receive U.S. funding for work performed in Russia; however, there are often problems with providing and implementing these exemptions. **Russia should take steps to reduce or remove these impediments, such as improving the mechanism for the value-added tax exemption, amending the Russian tax code to exempt gratuitous assistance from the excise tax, and addressing and resolving issues of exemption from the payment of regional and local taxes.**

- *Access to sensitive facilities.* The United States would like access to Russian sites where U.S.-funded work is taking place to ensure that the money is being spent on intended purposes. However, this raises national security concerns for the Russian government. **The U.S. government should require U.S. agencies and contractors to clearly define their requests for access, link their access requests to the achievement of specific goals, and make use of tools such as preset master lists of visitors**. They should also coordinate their visits to minimize the administrative burden for Russian facilities.

- *Lack of reciprocal access.* The countries will need to work closely together to develop technologies and procedures and exchange best practices. Visits by Russian experts to U.S. sites would facilitate this collaboration, enable experts to see how various techniques have been implemented at individual U.S. facilities, and provide opportunities for joint research. **The governments should collaborate to identify steps to implement President George W. Bush's recent call for more reciprocal access.**

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Many of the current U.S.-Russian nuclear nonproliferation programs have specific strategic plans for implementation, but few have jointly developed objectives and priorities. One approach to improving partnership is to develop programmatic strategic master plans based on a systems approach.

- **Government agencies and implementers should work together to establish and maintain a clear division of responsibility between those managing the program (central control) and those implementing the program (local control) while working together to achieve the objectives of U.S.-Russian cooperation.** Furthermore, federal authorities in both countries should give primary problem-solving responsibility for projects to program managers and implementers and reward them for good results that they produce by being creative and taking responsible risks.

- Finally, there is a need for improved interactions at all levels, from individual project teams to the international community. At the highest level, within the international community, nuclear proliferation is a widely shared concern. **Once the United States and Russia have defined a joint**

strategy for cooperation, it would be beneficial to explore the roles that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the G-8 partnership can play.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

There are several reasons why the United States and Russia have found it useful to collaborate on science and technology and why it is important that they continue to expand this cooperation. First, they both have a significant pool of scientific and technical expertise on which to draw, as well as extensive research and development infrastructures that were established during the Cold War. Second, relationships built during scientific and technical cooperation help strengthen the ties between the nations and create a foundation for cooperation. Third, the collaboration can contribute to their joint efforts to promote nonproliferation goals around the world.

- It is important that future programs take advantage of the talent pool. **Agency leaders should actively seek opportunities to incorporate appropriate scientific flexibility for participants from both countries in future projects** so that scientific expertise can be used as effectively as possible and such projects can be made more attractive to the best scientific talent in each country.

- From the Russian perspective, there is a growing need for a new formally recognized science and technology relationship since it is a sensitive subject with constraints on both sides. Therefore, **there should be a review of currently operative agreements and an assessment of the nature and the scope of any new agreements that might be needed.**

- In addition, a number of possibilities for mutually beneficial cooperation on science and technology exist, such as the development of nuclear energy technology and cooperation against the threat of radiological terrorism. **A joint technical working group on risk assessment and mitigation relating to nuclear energy projects in non-nuclear-weapons states should be established under the charter of the Joint High-Level Commission.** A bilateral scientific and technical working group on combating radiological terrorism should be established under the same charter.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Cooperative efforts are at a turning point with the Russian Federation now able, politically and economically, as well as militarily, to be a true partner of the United States in the effort to contain the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world. Therefore, it is time for the two countries to forge a full partnership. To accomplish this, a two-pronged program is required. First, the remaining impediments to cooperation must be removed. Second, a long-term approach for establishing of a true partnership is required to reduce and eliminate the threat of further proliferation of nuclear devices, the material needed to construct them, and their delivery systems.

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Copies of *Strengthening U.S.-Russian Cooperation on Nuclear Non-Proliferation* are available from the National Academy Press (NAP); (800) 624-6242 or (202) 334-3313, or visit the NAP website at www.nap.edu. For more information on the project, contact staff at (202) 334-2359 or visit the DSC website at www.nationalacademies.org/dsc.