



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Press Statement

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Midpoint Of The Successful Implementation Of The Highly Enriched Uranium Agreement Between The United States And Russia

The following is a joint statement of the Departments of State and Energy of the United States of America and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Federal Atomic Energy Agency of the Russian Federation marking the successful midpoint of implementation of the HEU agreement:

September 2005 marks a significant milestone in the implementation of the HEU Agreement. Formally known as the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Russian Federation Concerning the Disposition of Highly Enriched Uranium from Nuclear Weapons, dated 18 February 1993, the HEU Agreement is one of the most important instruments for cooperation between our two governments. Two hundred fifty metric tons of highly enriched uranium (HEU), equivalent to 10,000 nuclear warheads, have been converted to low enriched uranium (LEU). This accomplishment marks the halfway point towards the goal of eliminating 500 metric tons of HEU by 2013, when the Agreement is set to be fully implemented.

Under the HEU Agreement, the Russian Federation has agreed to process HEU extracted from dismantled nuclear warheads into LEU, which is used in the United States for the peaceful purpose of generation of electricity in commercial power reactors. To implement the HEU Agreement, the United States and the Russian Federation have entered into a number of additional agreements, including a package of agreements concluded on March 24, 1999, which established a mechanism for the disposition of the natural uranium component of the LEU. These agreements have been implemented, in part, through contracts between commercial companies, whose activities in implementation of these agreements are carefully managed and overseen, as appropriate, by the U.S. and Russian Governments.

Pursuant to the HEU Agreement and the implementing contracts, 30 metric tons of Russian HEU are converted each year into LEU for use as fuel in U.S. nuclear power plants, generating approximately 10% of U.S. electricity. A unique feature of the HEU Agreement is that it is designed to realize its nuclear threat reduction goals without cost to the taxpayers of the United States or Russia. The appropriate payments and the return of the natural uranium feed component received by the Russian Federation ensure the Russian Federation's continued conversion of HEU into LEU under the Agreement and the construction and operation of facilities for this conversion, as well as a variety of other valuable activities, such as nuclear safety upgrades, conversion of military facilities to peaceful uses, and environmental clean-up.

Moreover, as noted by delegates of the United States and the Russian Federation at the Seventh Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference held in New York in May of 2005, the HEU Agreement has played a valuable role in fulfilling the Article VI obligations of the United States and Russia under the NPT to pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

The United States and the Russian Federation continue to support the HEU Agreement and its goals and recognize it as one of the most significant bilateral initiatives between our governments in the area of nuclear weapons dismantlement while attaining valuable energy and environmental benefits.

Consistent with the mutual policy of our governments to strengthen cooperation in this field, and considering the crucial role played by the HEU Agreement, the United States and the Russian Federation intend to ensure that the HEU Agreement is implemented successfully and without any hindrances to achieving this goal.

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