



Observance of the 20th Anniversary of the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers

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Benjamin Franklin Room
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[Joint Statement](#)

Thank you, Ned. I'd like to extend a special welcome to Ambassador Ushakov . Ambassador Kroner of the Netherlands, Ambassador Khvostov of Belarus, esteemed guests, and dear colleagues, thanks to all of you for being here today.

Today we celebrate a truly historic event: the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the agreement between the U.S. and the USSR to establish Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers, or NRRCs. This landmark agreement, negotiated between the two countries in order to "avoid the risk of accidental nuclear war," is a true milestone in the beginning of the end of the Cold War. Its simple premise: confidence building through information exchange. With this agreement, the U.S. and Soviet Union both recognized the utility of transparency, and created a means to achieve it.

Following the signing of the agreement, both countries set about creating, staffing, and putting into operation their respective centers. The Soviet NRRC was housed in the Ministry of Defense, while the U.S. NRRC was established here in the Department of State. The U.S. and Soviet NRRCs exchanged their first messages in early 1988, and were soon engaged in the day-to-day work of implementing the notification provisions of a handful of arms control treaties and agreements-most notably, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces, or INF, Treaty. A few years later, when the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty-START-entered into force, the NRRCs' missions expanded considerably. Today we express our deepest appreciation to all those involved in facilitation of the NRRCs operation and acknowledge the substantial contribution to world peace made by our respective governments and experts. In the case of INF treaty, the U.S. and the Soviet Union verifiably eliminated or destroyed an entire class of the world's most dangerous missile systems, over 2500 missiles.

In the 1990s, as the focus shifted from bilateral to multilateral agreements, the NRRCs proved ready to take on new challenges. The NRRCs helped add global understanding for security and confidence building communications that directly support compliance and treaty implementation. They now support the notification requirements for over a dozen treaties and agreements, including the confidence and security building measures of the Vienna Document of 1999, the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Open Skies Treaty.

The U.S., and now Russian, national centers have proven their utility and flexibility time and again. Indeed, during the attacks of September 11, 2001, U.S. Forces moved to Defense Condition 3, our highest alert level. The Deputy Secretary of State asked the NRRC to send a message to the Russian NRRC that this was due to our emergency and not directed at Russia, so Russian Forces could stand down.

For twenty years, the NRRCs have helped make peace work. The relationship between the U.S. and Russian NRRCs has been a model one. Much like the direct communications links by which they exchange information, the NRRCs have proven to be stable and reliable colleagues in the area of information exchange. The U.S. and Russian NRRCs continue to fulfill their promises, to each other and to the world. We've come from supporting one Agreement between two nations, in two languages, to supporting almost 20 Treaties and agreements with over 50 countries in 6 languages.

But the success story should not end here. The proven two-decade track record of the NRRCs makes them an attractive tool for future requirements in transparency and confidence-building, and a model for other regions seeking improved communications and information exchange.

I am pleased that the NRRCs' core mission-confidence building through information exchange-has and is being accomplished on a daily basis. As we observe this twentieth anniversary of the signing of the NRRC Agreement, we celebrate the past contributions of the NRRCs. We also welcome future opportunities to use these valuable diplomatic tools to further increase international security and stability.

At this time, I'd like to invite my cohort for today's event, Ambassador Yuri Ushakov, to share his thoughts on this momentous occasion. Mr Ambassador...

Thank You, Ambassador Ushakov.
(sign and exchange certificates with Ambassador Ushakov)
(formal ceremony concludes)
(present gift to Ambassador Ushakov)
(invite Ambassador Ushakov on tour of U.S. NRRC)

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