

US and Russian experts issue new study on ways to prevent nuclear terrorism

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Nuclear terrorism remains a real and urgent threat. Despite an array of mechanisms established to combat this threat, several serious problems persist, requiring relentless attention and actions by the United States, Russia and other responsible nations. These problems include continuing nuclear security vulnerabilities in a number of countries and the continued incidents of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials, radioactive sources and the various components.

To address these concerns, a new report, "[Steps to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism: Recommendations Based on the U.S.-Russia Joint Threat Assessment](#)," has been produced jointly by researchers at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies (ISKRAN). The study outlines concrete steps for the United States and Russia to take in leading international efforts to combat the [threat](#) of nuclear terrorism. The report is being released at [an event](#) at the EastWest Institute in New York on Wed. Oct. 2, with a [follow-up event](#) scheduled at Harvard Kennedy School on Friday, Oct. 4.

In 2011, Belfer Center and ISKRAN published the "U.S.–Russia Joint Threat Assessment on Nuclear Terrorism," which analyzed the means, motives, and access of would-be nuclear terrorists, and concluded that the threat of nuclear terrorism is urgent and real. Building on that groundbreaking study, this new report analyzes the existing framework for action, cites gaps and deficiencies, and makes specific recommendations for improvement.

The new study argues that the United States and Russia should jointly take a number of concrete and urgent actions in [nuclear security](#), intelligence, law enforcement, emergency response, and other areas to improve their ability to detect, prevent, disrupt, and recover from acts of nuclear terrorism. The proposed actions involve joint, parallel, and cooperative actions with other countries. They include creation of bilateral task forces to improve efforts to defeat nuclear terrorism, coordinate actions in the face of a future nuclear terrorism event, and study past examples of stolen material to prevent future such occurrences. The report also includes recommendations for specific standards for each country to work toward in nuclear security and suggestions for working with other countries to improve nuclear security worldwide.

The new study results from a nearly three year-long partnership by nuclear security experts from Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Russian Academy of Science's Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies in Moscow. The report's authors include retired senior military officers, government officials and academics from both countries.

Provided by HKS

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