

JOINT STATEMENT
of U.S. Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham and
Minister of the Russian Federation for Atomic Energy Aleksandr Rumyantsev
on Cooperation to Transfer Russian-origin High-Enriched Uranium Research Reactor
Fuel to the Russian Federation

The U.S. Department of Energy and MinAtom of Russia recognize the great significance of cooperation in the issue of transferring high enriched uranium (HEU) research reactor fuel of Russian origin to the Russian Federation as a mutual contribution to the reduction of global stockpiles of weapons-usable nuclear materials and, therefore, to reducing the threat of international terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Such cooperation, which is being implemented with the active involvement of the International Atomic Energy Agency, supports the objective of transferring to the Russian Federation fresh and spent HEU fuel from research reactors currently located in research centers of 17 foreign countries. An important component of this activity is the conversion of such research reactors from HEU to low enriched uranium (LEU) fuel when a suitable LEU fuel has been qualified. To this end, we are jointly developing LEU fuel.

HEU can be directly used in manufacturing nuclear weapons. Our common objective consists of reducing, to the greatest extent possible, and, ultimately, eliminating the use of such materials in civilian nuclear activity.

We have real examples of cooperation in this area. Two shipments of Russian-origin fresh HEU research reactor fuel to Russia have taken place. We have already started preparations for the next fresh HEU shipment. Preparations also are in progress for the transfer of spent HEU fuel from Uzbekistan to Russia. Completion of a bilateral Government-to-Government Agreement under which more than a dozen other countries will become eligible to ship their fresh and spent research reactor fuel to Russia for safe and secure disposition is in its final stages. It is expected that this Agreement will be signed shortly.

By the end of the year, we intend to conduct bilateral consultations between MinAtom of Russia and the U.S. Department of Energy to develop a schedule for all remaining potential shipments of fresh and irradiated HEU fuel.

Signed at Washington, DC, in duplicate, this 7th day of November, 2003, in the English and Russian languages.

U.S. SECRETARY OF ENERGY
S. ABRAHAM

MINISTER OF THE RUSSIAN
FEDERATION FOR ATOMIC ENERGY
A.Yu. RUMYANTSEV