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# Russian Plutonium Disposition: Fact Sheet

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The Plutonium Management Disposition Agreement (PMDA) supports President Obama's U.S. nonproliferation and energy security agenda by disposing of enough plutonium in total for 17,000 nuclear weapons, prohibiting the United States and Russia from generating any new stockpiles of separated weapon-grade plutonium from the reactors that will be used for disposition, demonstrating U.S. and Russian leadership toward fulfilling each side's commitments under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and requiring international verification that both sides are disposing of their plutonium.

## BACKGROUND:

In 2000 the U.S. and Russia signed a Plutonium Management and Disposition Agreement (PMDA), committing each country to dispose of no less than 34 metric tons of weapon-grade plutonium removed from their respective defense programs. Both countries will dispose of their plutonium by irradiating it as mixed oxide (MOX) fuel in nuclear reactors beginning in the 2018 time frame. Once irradiated and converted to spent fuel, the plutonium can no longer be readily used for nuclear weapons.

On April 13, 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov signed a Protocol that amends and updates the PMDA. Under the updated protocol, Russia reaffirmed its commitment to dispose of its surplus weapon-grade plutonium and presented a technically and financially credible approach for disposition. This approach is consistent with Russia's national energy strategy which relies on the use of both existing and planned Russian fast reactors operating under nonproliferation conditions. The United States and Russia have committed to a cost sharing program to support the disposition of Russian surplus plutonium. On July 13, 2011, the PMDA and its protocols were brought into force.

## VERIFICATION:

The amended PMDA also calls for the United States and Russia to "take all necessary steps to conclude an appropriate agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)" on verification of each side's disposition program. Consultations began in summer 2010. In an August 2010 letter, Secretary of State Clinton and Foreign Minister

Lavrov requested that the IAEA “engage in all necessary efforts” to undertake a PMDA verification role.

**NEXT STEPS:**

The next steps are completion of a Verification Agreement and U.S./Russian agreement on milestones for allocation of the U.S. \$400 million contribution.

**Related Link:**

[US Department of State: Russian Plutonium Disposition](#) <sup>[1]</sup>



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**Links:**

[1] <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/rls/fs/186675.htm>