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Release Date:

Tue, 2010-10-12

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) today announced the removal of more than 450 kilograms (more than 1,000 pounds) of Russian-origin highly enriched uranium (HEU) spent fuel from Poland.

^[1]The nuclear material, enough to make more than 18 nuclear weapons, was sent back to Russia in a series of five shipments over 12 months and marks the completion of the largest spent fuel shipment campaign in NNSA's history. The campaign also included the largest single shipment of HEU spent fuel (187 kilograms) and involved the entire fleet of spent fuel transportation casks used for transportation of Russian-origin HEU.

"This major milestone brings us one step closer to achieving President Obama's goal of securing all nuclear material around the world within four years," said NNSA Administrator Thomas D'Agostino. "These shipments also support the goals of the April 2010 Nuclear Security Summit where 47 nations committed to strengthening nuclear security and reducing the threat of nuclear terrorism. Our close partnership with Poland to eliminate this excess nuclear material reduces the risk that it could be stolen by terrorists and sets an important example for other countries to follow."



The shipments were conducted by NNSA's Global Threat Reduction Initiative (GTRI) in close coordination with Poland's Radioactive Waste Management Plant and Institute of Atomic Energy, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Russian Federation. They included HEU reactor fuel from both the Ewa and Maria research reactors that are located at the Nuclear Center in Swierk, Poland. With the removal of this material, GTRI has now removed all HEU from the Ewa research reactor and Spent Fuel Storage Building at the Institute.

NNSA and Poland's Institute of Atomic Energy share a long history of cooperation on nuclear nonproliferation issues. This cooperation has included the return of HEU fresh fuel to Russia in two shipments in August 2006 and August 2007, technical cooperation to prepare for conversion of the Maria research reactor from HEU to low enriched uranium (LEU) fuel, and improvement of security for nuclear materials.

"Our partnership with the National Nuclear Security Administration has enabled us to continue Poland's leadership on global nuclear security issues while also maintaining the excellent scientific work being done by the Institute of Atomic Energy," said Miroslaw Lewiński, Director of the Nuclear Energy Department in the Polish Ministry of Economy. "We look forward to continuing to work with the United States as we advance our common nuclear nonproliferation agendas."

During each of the five shipments, the material was packaged into internationally licensed transportation casks, secured in shipping containers, and transported in an armed convoy from the site to a nearby rail station. The material was then transported by rail to a Polish seaport where it was loaded onto a vessel and transported to the Russian Federation.

In a speech in Prague in April 2009, President Obama called for an international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years. These shipments result in permanent threat reduction because they eliminate weapons-usable nuclear material at civilian sites.

"This operation is an excellent example of how two allies, the United States and Poland, can work with Russia to enhance nuclear security," said U.S. Ambassador to Poland Lee A. Feinstein.

With the successful completion of this shipment, NNSA has now removed or assisted with the disposition of more than 2,850 kilograms of HEU and plutonium – enough material to make more than 110 nuclear weapons.

Photos and video from this operation are available on NNSA's Flickr and YouTube pages. High-resolution files are available to the media upon request.

A fact sheet on NNSA's Global Threat Reduction Initiative is available online [here](#) ^[2].

A fact sheet on NNSA's efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism is available [here](#) ^[3].

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Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the United States and abroad.

Related Link:

[Photo Gallery: NNSA Completes Largest Highly Enriched Uranium Fuel Return Campaign in Program's History](#) ^[1]



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