

Nuclear and Radiological Security

Well-financed terrorist groups are known to seek nuclear weapons with the intention of using them against designated countries, including Canada and our allies. In addition to its nuclear weapons stockpile, Russia has more than 700 tonnes of weapons-grade nuclear material, much of which is vulnerable to theft (enough to build tens of thousands more weapons). As well, a significant number of highly radioactive sources could provide material to construct radiological dispersal devices or “dirty bombs”.

The Last Weapons-Grade Plutonium-Producing Reactor in Russia

Thanks to contributions from Canada, the U.K. and other countries under a U.S.-led project, the last weapons-grade plutonium producing reactor in Russia will be shut down in 2010, one year ahead of schedule. Canada has provided \$9 million to this U.S. project in Zheleznogorsk. The reactor produces enough plutonium to build one nuclear weapon each week.

Progress Made in 2007–2009

In 2007–2009, the GPP achieved significant results in helping to reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism. Canada’s bilateral cooperation with Russia focused on securing weapons-usable nuclear materials in storage and during transportation.

In 2007–2009, there were 20 cooperation projects being implemented at seven Russian nuclear facilities. Of these seven, four reside in the Russian defence complex. The remaining three facilities are located in the civilian complex.



A member of Canada's Joint Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defence Company checks a colleague for contaminants following the inspection of a simulated suspicious package.

Photo : Department of National Defence (DND).