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Survey on Problems of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Russia and the NIS

*Nonproliferation*

*Export Controls*

*Nuclear Safety*

*Nuclear Strategy*

*Chemical Weapons*

*Biological Weapons*

*Conventional Arms Export*

*Nuclear Weapons Free Zones*

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## EDITORIAL

### THE TEMPTATION TO EXPORT

"Russia has been thoroughly meeting its international commitments in the field of sensitive export control!" "No gram of nuclear material is shipped and will be shipped from Russia without any control to the states intended to develop nuclear weapons!"

Such assertions are easy to believe for several reasons. First, they are spoken by cognizant people. Second, today there is no information, at least widely published, denying these assertions. Third, ... no one wishes to assume that the threat of proliferation may be an issue for Russia, the nowadays Russia, which possesses unique stockpile of fissionable weapon-grade materials, dual-use technologies and "brains".

Moreover, in the last few years some mass media (both Russian and Western) has probably done the best that any report on drains of materials, technology and brains from Russia is understood as a next canard.

Nevertheless, the threat is higher today, than it was before.

Threats are posed not only by the ghost of illegal nuclear trade, but also by the intention of the state to push whatever to anywhere under a plausible pretext to earn a cent for an empty budget.

In this context one can recall the notorious Order (rasporyazheniye) numbered 75-rps (classified) of February 21, 1992: "With the aim of complex resolving the problems of Russian ecological security I order: (...) to allow the Concern ("Promecologia"- Industrial Environment) producing, purchasing, storing, transporting, delivering and selling of red mercury for rubles and hard currency (...) To establish, that the Concern's profits yielded on selling red mercury is not subject to taxation in favor of the Federal budget".

Nowadays, the question is not what was covered by the red mercury pseudonym. The question is the following: whether the Russian Prime-Minister can swear an oath that the time of similar "hush-hush" orders is over and that there are no "Promecologia" concerns, large or small ones, which could easily get the right for special products export without paying any taxes (it is clear: no tax is no deal) and everything would be done with aim of complex resolving the problems of Russian ecological security? At last, whether the Committee on External Economic Links keeps abreast of all the deals which it, under the law, has to control and that these deals correspond with the international commitments made by Russia?

I am afraid, to swear such an oath for the Prime-Minister is a hard nut to crack.

A secret tank prototype shipped to Great Britain by the will of the Deputy Prime-Minister; a dozen barrels, filled with a chemical agent, waiting at Moscow's suburban dacha to be shipped to the region of the Mediterranean Sea - these are only a tip of iceberg. Will we ever be aware of the true picture of what is going on in the spaciousness of Russia and CIS? Who has foreseen possible repercussions of events when our neighbors having become both hope and base of their own country's military industrial complex, had a strong hold on the technology taken much earlier than we did? Can we say with confidence who will be a Russian ally and who will be its strong competitor in the 21st century?

The profit or economic effect is said to have been counted precisely. It is probable that somebody has counted. But those, who easily get free access to the most advanced technology, to the holy of the holiest, and who are not in a mood to settle a full account with the state, can easily find a key to the hearts of officials.

Exports and the export controls have to be two sides of a united state policy - to promote exports in all cases, if it does not contradict international commitments and inflict damage on national security. Today too many people are happy to forget the second part of this formula.

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