

Russia and U.S. Remove Nuclear Material From Vietnam

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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VIENNA — The United States and Russia have helped ship out nearly 16 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from Vietnam as part of a global campaign to reduce the use of nuclear fuel that could also provide material for bombs.

The move — making Vietnam the 11th country from which all highly enriched uranium has been removed in the last four years — was announced during a meeting in Vienna on how to prevent potential bomb ingredients from falling into the wrong hands.

There are about 1,440 tons of highly enriched uranium and 500 tons of plutonium stockpiled and in nuclear arms globally, says the Nuclear Security Governance Experts Group (NSGEG) lobby group. Most of it is under military guard but some for civilian uses is less stringently secured.

Analysts say radical groups could theoretically build a crude but deadly nuclear weapon if they

had the money, technical knowledge and materials needed.

"With this accomplishment [in Vietnam], we will have removed nearly all highly enriched uranium from Southeast Asia," U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said. The material, he said, will be downblended into low-enriched uranium to fuel power reactors.

But, "highly enriched uranium still exists in too many places where there are viable alternatives," said Moniz.

The first uranium shipment from Vietnam's Dalat Nuclear Research Institute to Russia, where it originally came from, took place six years ago, and there was a second delivery this month, Russian envoy Grigory Berdennikov said.

The UN nuclear agency and Canada also provided assistance.

In the previous such case, the White House said in April that the United States and its allies secured 68 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from the Czech Republic.

Obtaining weapons-grade fissile material poses the biggest challenge for militant groups, so it must be kept secure both at civilian and military facilities, experts say.

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