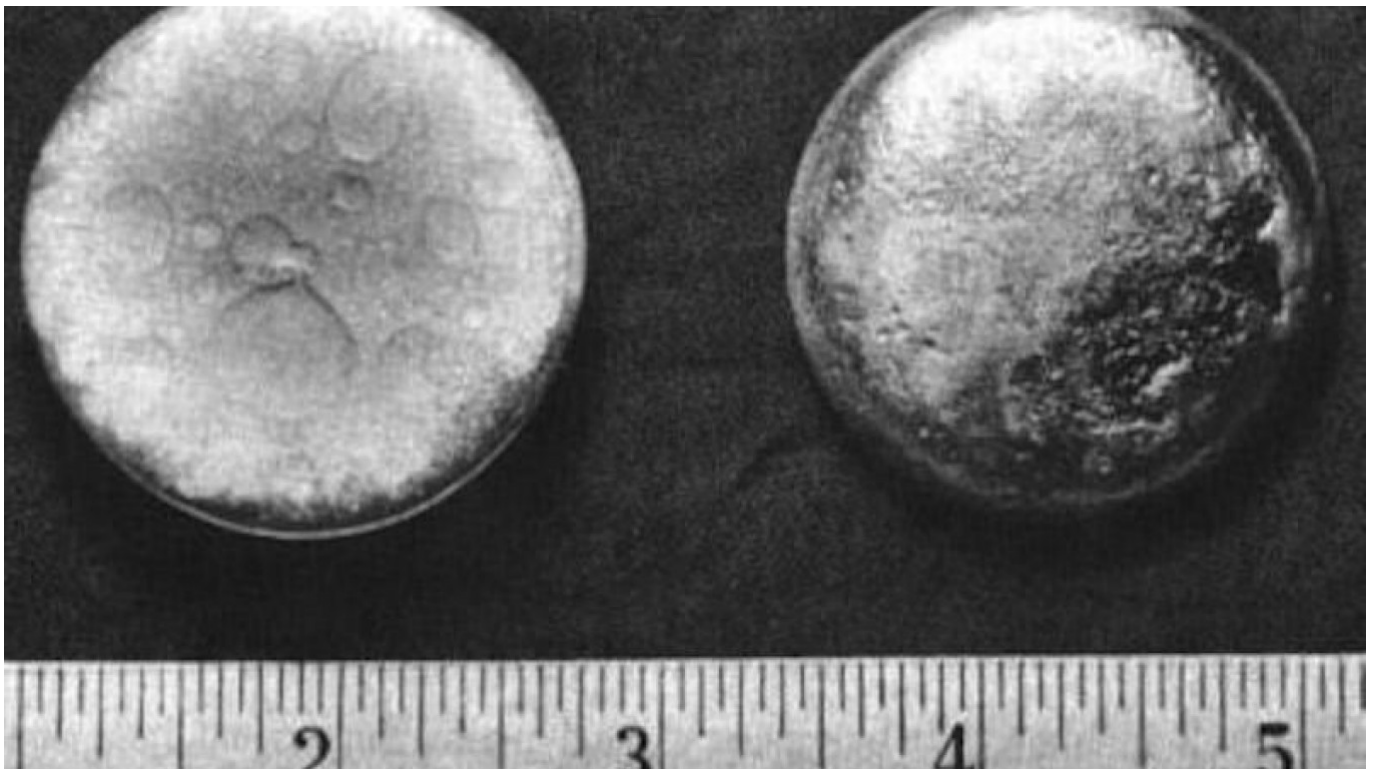


Russia Formally Suspends Nuclear Cooperation with United States

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The Russian Parliament on Wednesday approved the suspension of a cooperative weapons-grade plutonium disposal agreement with the United States, formalizing one of the sharpest downturns in relations between Moscow and Washington since the start of the Ukraine crisis in 2014.

According to the Tass news agency, the measure was adopted virtually unanimously by the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament. Of the deputies present, 445 supported its adoption, and only one member of parliament abstained.

The proposal made waves in the international community when President Vladimir Putin introduced it for the legislature's consideration on Oct. 3. Russia accused the United States of failing to uphold its end of the agreement, which aimed to reduce stockpiles of nuclear material on both sides.

The Kremlin also presented a list of demands for the U.S. to accede to before Moscow will consider resuming nuclear cooperation in this sphere. Namely, the U.S. must remove military hardware and infrastructure from NATO countries that have joined the alliance since Sept. 1, 2000.

Furthermore, Moscow demanded Washington annul the so-called Magnitsky Act, which sanctioned Russian officials for the death of a Russian lawyer of the same name, repeal of sanctions imposed against Moscow over Ukraine, and repay the damages incurred from sanctions.

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