



Nunn-Lugar's war against WMD

Historic act carves up chemicals & nukes, but as Moscow rises, how long will it last?

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

LONDON – The Soviet Union was a humanitarian, demographic, economic, political, social and environmental disaster of epic proportions. Even with its implosion 16 years ago, the profound fallout is still being dealt with today in ways that will continue to send out seismic aftershocks throughout the world. It will continue to impact Russia, Europe and the United States for decades to come.

Traveling with U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar and former Sen. Sam Nunn between Aug. 26 and Sept. 2, the wake of the Soviet Union creates waves in all these spheres. The essential goal is to secure the uninventoried stockpiles of Soviet era nuclear,



Sen Richard Lugar and Nuclear Threat Initiative Chairman Sam Nunn (right) in a conference at the Albania Defense Ministry. The two have been on a 15-year mission to save humanity from WMD. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

See Page 3

Nunn mulls '08 dialogue

By **BRIAN A. HOWEY**

ODESSA, Ukraine - A chaotic primary sequence, the issue evolution (or lack thereof) on national security and energy, whether an Internet campaign could trump a \$100 million warchest, the demographic targeting by cable TV companies, the emergence of personal candidate foibles ... these are some of the topics in the mind of Nuclear Threat Initiative Chairman Sam Nunn as he ponders an independent presidential run in 2008.

Nunn was approached by Hamilton Jordan, a former aid to President Carter, and Doug Bailey as they



SAM NUNN



“Chemical weapons were first discussed five years ago with Sen. Lugar and nobody believes Russia would be willing to destroy its chemical weapons, but it’s happened.” - Russian Federation Agency for Atomic Energy Minister Sergei Kiriyenko



HOWEY *Political Report*

pondered a virtual Internet convention for what would be the Unity 2008 party sometime early next summer. Nunn still uses a phrase he's used before - "a possibility, not a probability" -- in discussing 2008. The fact that his old friend Jordan has been battling cancer has limited their discussions. But a presidential campaign was on Nunn's mind as he pondered the possible twists and turns at a hotel in Yekaterinburg, Russia last Thursday night and then again during an HPR interview somewhere between Odessa, Ukraine, and Tirana, Albania, on Saturday.

HPR: Tell me about your thought process for '08?

Nunn: I'm going to look very carefully at what both parties are doing. I'm hoping that we'll have some meaningful debate. It doesn't have to be agreement. But it has to be meaningful debate and discussion on the key issues facing America. From my own perspective, the security issue is right up front. I put the globalization issues and the people who are getting left behind (as a priority). I think we have to basically address those issues (and) letting people know we've got to compete in the world. We're going to have globalization. We're not going to roll back time. We also have to deal with that issue in terms of its affect on human beings. Along that line, I think we have to deal with the human capital side of this. What are we going to do to make our people ready to compete with people in the world? We've got a lot of skill training; we've got a lot of educational emphasis and also, I think we've got to have a much more modern infrastructure. Not simply roads and bridges but the whole digital infrastructure.

HPR: How important will energy issues be in 2008?

Nunn: That's another issue -- a huge issue that we discussed last night -- the energy issue. I think we've got to address in a meaningful way the energy issue. I hear people say we've got to be energy independent in 10 years and I say to myself, they don't know what they're

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talking about. They haven't analyzed it. They've got to have a meaningful debate about what our options are on energy. We have to understand we're going to have to do some conserving of energy. Use technology, do some conserving, and we're going to have to

kind of meaningful relief to those who get hit with it. We've got some serious issues in the entitlement programs and health care. Those things must be discussed. So my judgment on whether I actually roll out there is going to be wholly determined by the candidates who emerge as the nominees -- what they stand for and what I think we have a reasonable chance of somebody going to the White House who can really govern the country and build coalitions that can really address the problems. So that's where I'm at.

HPR: You made some comments that the two-party system may have served America well for the past 160 years, but is not doing so today. Tell me a little bit about your thought process on that.

Nunn: Well, I believe it has served America well and anytime you challenge something like that, you've really got to do hard thinking. I think in the last several elections we've not been willing to confront the real issues. I think we've got good candidates out there. I'm not critical of the candidates on the Republican or Democratic side. God bless them for getting out there and running. But the system itself -- the early primaries in other states, the fact that only a limited number of people participate in choosing the two nominees, the fact that all the incentives for money raising address what I call the niche issues that appeal to only certain groups -- those facts to me are leading me to at least come to a tentative conclusion that the system is



NTI's Sam Nunn (left) with Sen. Lugar and HPR's Brian A. Howey during an in-flight briefing following a tour to Mayak on Thursday. (HPR Photo)

address the carbon problem. I think if we're going to face up to that, we're going to have to some sort of carbon tax that can be refunded back into some



no longer working to produce the very best government we can produce. That means ... I'm not sure a third party is the answer, but there are Democrats and Republicans who share that frustration and they really want to see the country pull together; they want to seriously consider some alternative in 2008. That's why I was willing to talk to the Unity 2008 people and ask for the perspective they have. I have not concluded what I will do, but I certainly am open to thinking

about it.

HPR: So the key time frame is somewhere between February and April?

Nunn: I think that will be the key time in terms of seeing what we've got in the nominees and what they stand for. I believe we'll have good people nominated. The question is what do they stand for and whether they can get back to the center and govern. ❖

Nunn-Lugar: From page 1

biological and chemical weapons scattered in thousands of sites across 11 time zones.

Everywhere the Lugar and Nunn delegation traveled, we found environmental and weapon disasters. Chernobyl is only the most publicized nuclear disaster. As our plane approached the Chelyabinsk airport, I couldn't help but notice the many lakes which in America would be surrounded with cottages or extravagant homes. But here, the lakes were dumps of nuclear and chemical material. Catching a fish in one of them sets off American sensors monitoring the potential theft of plutonium and highly enriched uranium.

The 15th anniversary of the Nunn-Lugar Act was invariably seen through a prism of terrorism and the expansion of WMD to rogue states. The fact is that the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993 and al Qaeda's East African embassy bombings in 1998 were not the catalytic factors in securing the Soviet stockpiles.

An empire implodes

The Nunn-Lugar program came about via relationships with Soviet scholars and the military the two senators had developed since the mid-1980s and particularly after General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1986. Lugar remembers visiting a dacha before the Soviet implosion with a Moscow acquaintance and hearing about the coming changes. "The gist of what these Russians were saying to us was that we're in transition," Lugar said. "There could be individual soldiers who might be in states of desperation during this transition hoping to save their

families. Iran was in search of these materials. The Russians had lost the cohesion of the Communists. The sense of fear had provided this security and now they had no money; the army was not getting paid and we're going to need your help."

Lugar added, "We had spent \$6 trillion trying to contain the Soviet Union and now it's all going to come loose."

Nunn literally found himself a witness to the unthinkable: the collapse of the Soviet Union. He was attending a conference in Hungary when a coup d'etat had captured Gorbachev. "One of my Soviet friends got on the plane and went back to Moscow in emergency when Gorbachev was taken captive," Nunn said. "He called me the day Gorbachev was released and we were still at the conference. He said, 'Sam, you need to come immediately to Moscow and Russia.' He didn't say 'Soviet Union,' he said 'Russia' and that was a tipoff. He said,

"You've got to get over here. Big things are happening; great opportunities and huge dangers."

Nunn said he didn't have a visa. The Russian ambassador was in his hotel lobby 30 minutes later with a visa. Nunn would spend half a day milling around the Russian White House where Boris Yeltsin had made his stand. "I talked to a lot of military people and I talked to a lot of people who expressed to me very grave concerns about what was going to happen to the weapons because they saw this as the beginning of the breakup of the Soviet Union." In the Duma, Nunn sat for two days and watched the debate.

"I combined that with having been so involved with the Vietnam War and knowing what happened when a country lost a war. I saw that Russia was unraveling and multiplied it by a hundred because we lost one conflict that was devastating to our psyche and military," Nunn



Sens. Nunn and Lugar with U.S. Ambassador William Burns at Spaso House in Moscow on Aug. 27. It was Burns' father - Gen. John Burns - who helped get the Nunn-Lugar Act from "concept" stage to actual implementation in Russia. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)



explained. "It created all sorts of conflicts with the military, caused all sorts of drug problems. We had all sorts of alcohol problems. I went through that in the '70s in America. I said to myself on the way back, 'This is a lot more serious than what we went through.' And yet, you've got all these weapons spread over 11 time zones."

In the autumn of 1991, it was Nunn who sought to get American funding to help secure the Soviet arsenals from rogue states like Iran, Libya and North Korea. That led him to Sen. Lugar. "I went to see him in his office and I said, 'We've got to do this, this year in another bill and I need a Republican partner; the one who has the most credibility and you've got it.'"

What had begun in September 1991 ended with the Nunn-Lugar Act that December. "The partnership was the only way that it could have been done," Nunn said. "Dick Lugar and I have been the key to it."

When Nunn and Lugar spoke at Spaso House in Moscow celebrating 200 years of U.S.-Russian relations, the praise they had for each other was effusive. Lugar said of Nunn, "As a leading voice in U.S. defense policy, he has attained a level of credibility and respect that few Americans in our history have ever matched."

When Nunn left the Senate in 1996 -- the same year Lugar sought the presidency -- Lugar called it a "dilemma." He explained, "I'm going to have to handle this annual battle (for funding) not by myself, but without my partner at my side."

At Spaso House, Nunn said Lugar, "More than anyone I know has worked effectively for a long time to serve the United States of America by improving the security of and well being of people all over the globe. And he's done it with remarkable effectiveness. In baseball in the United States, we have a selection what we call the Most Valuable Player. It's done every year. In my book, over a long number of years, Dick Lugar has been the Most Valuable Player in the United States Congress. I think he continues to be today."

At Spaso House, Lugar summed up their work: "I have never considered Nunn-Lugar to be merely a program, or a source of funding, or a set of agreements. Rather, it is a concept through which, we as leaders who are responsible for the welfare of our children and grandchildren attempt to take control of a global threat of our



Nunn and Lugar reunite at the Moscow Marriott Hotel on Aug. 26. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

own making. It is an engine of non-proliferation cooperation and expertise that can be applied to many situations around the world."

Lugar described the evolution of politics and terror. Nunn-Lugar as conceived on the eve of the 1992 presidential election found the first Bush administration possessing little interest in non-proliferation. "When the Clinton people got their government organized," Lugar said, it was with (Defense Secretary) Bill Perry and Ash Carter, with whom he and Nunn had long working relationships. That resulted in a "period of some enthusiasm" for Nunn-Lugar.

The idea of Islamic Jihadists getting their hands on Soviet aircraft, submarines and nuclear warheads was just "an interesting footnote," Lugar

said. The idea that someone like Osama bin Laden would seek HEU or weaponized anthrax was the stuff of "sophisticated journals and spy magazines," Lugar said. "It was horrible but it was still in a sense a science fiction dilemma."

Even when American diplomat Andy Weber was witnessing the huge Soviet anthrax production facilities of the Biopreparat (at 13 different locations) or the sprawling anthrax facility at Stepnogorsk, Kazakhstan, were there moments of alarm?

"Surprisingly, no," Lugar said. "But there should have been. This was seen as interesting but not life threatening. The preoccupation was the way cities were blown up and with our public, the fear that New York might be obliterated." Did Sept. 11 snap everything thing into context?

"Well," said Lugar in his classic understated style, "it made a difference. In my talks with Russia, the first half hour was always about Chechnya. It was only later that we got to Osama bin Laden. Terror meant different things to different people. Ultimately after 2001 and the current situation and the bombing of the embassies, for most members of the Senate, learning about al Qaeda was entirely new."

As you will read in the following dispatches filed from Russia, Ukraine, Albania and Great Britain, the world has shifted. The United States has signed the chemical weapons convention. Lugar's new partner -- U.S. Sen. Barack Obama -- expanded Nunn-Lugar into conventional weapons. And no one can predict how Russia will behave.

Moscow: Issues so huge they are difficult to grasp

MOSCOW - There are some issues that are so



huge and difficult to grasp that we lose track of their significance. Many Hoosiers have heard Sen. Lugar say what he did here on Tuesday at the Carnegie Moscow Center: "Weapons of mass destruction remain the number one national security threat to the United States and Russia. Our nations continue to lack even minimal confidence about many foreign weapons programs."

Many of us have heard of the successes of the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program: the 6,982 Soviet strategic nuclear warheads deactivated, 653 intercontinental ballistic missiles destroyed, 485 ICBM silos eliminated, 101 ICBM mobile launchers destroyed, 613 submarine launched ballistic missiles eliminated, 436 SLBM launchers eliminated, 30 nuclear submarines capable of launching ballistic missiles destroyed, 155 bombers eliminated, 906 nuclear air-to-surface missiles destroyed, 355 nuclear weapons transport train shipments, 12 nuclear weapons storage site security upgrades, and 9 biological monitoring stations built and equipped.

"Perhaps most importantly," Lugar notes, "Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan are nuclear weapons free" as a result of Nunn-Lugar.

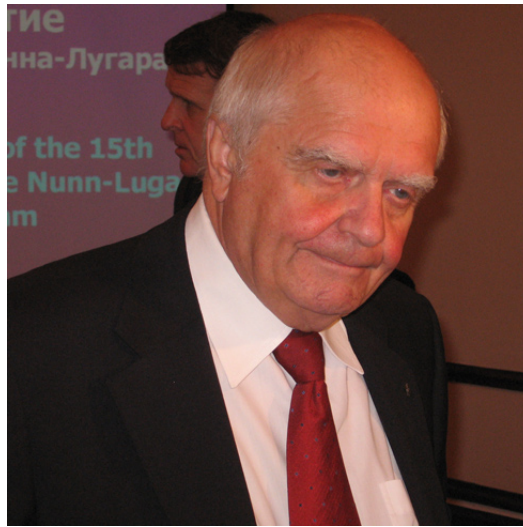
On Aug. 28 we heard from the man who has his finger on the button: Russian Gen. Eugeny Maslin, who is a strong advocate of the program. With Nunn and Lugar looking on, Maslin asked a question he has heard from his own countrymen: "Could Russia not have resolved this issue by itself?"

He answered, "Yes, Russia is capable of resolving any situation. With the dissolution of the USSR, Russians could have done this. But, it would have happened much slower. This would have been done in a much more dangerous manner."

Gen. Maslin noted that during the first Chechen War, the Americans began asking: "Did the Chechens have nuclear weapons? Could they steal nuclear weapons?"

And Gen. Maslin told a room of nuclear experts from around the globe, "I am saying that the threat of theft of nuclear munitions, radioactive material ... this has always existed and it would be. It is our primary task to relieve this threat."

Of course, we all know what Sept. 11 could have been if instead of terror pilots turning airliners into missiles



Gen. Eugeny Maslin, the Russian with, literally, his finger on the button. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

-- or if Timothy McVeigh had found plutonium instead of gas, fertilizer and a truck -- the number of victims in New York City or Oklahoma City would have been multiplied by the thousands. Gen. Maslin worries that the United States is the only country which has nuclear weapons outside of its borders. "These bases are bait for nuclear terrorists."

And the sobering comments began cascading from the experts at this round table. Gen. Maslin: "Osama bin Laden has said he would try to hit the infidels with nuclear weapons."

Nunn, who chairs the Nuclear Threat Initiative and is a potential independent presidential candidate in 2008, asks even more disturbing questions: "If a nuclear strike hits New York City, Moscow or London or New Delhi, or Tokyo, what are the things we wished we had done?"

Or how about this doozy: "What could we have done if a computer hacker takes over a North Korean nuclear weapon?" Noting that President Bush and President Putin have a mere 15 minutes to react to a potential nuclear strike accident, Nunn asks, "What would we have wished we had done to give the presidents of the United States and Russia more time? Give us a warning time of an hour, or a day, or a week."

And almost as an afterthought, Nunn notes that the threat of bioterrorism grows. It was under the Nunn-Lugar program that vast arsenals of known weaponized anthrax, Marburg and Ebola -- some, Lugar notes, under the security of rusty padlocks or string and wax in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union -- were located and addressed.

The Lugar and Nunn visit comes at a time of Cold War-style saber rattling by Putin. He's compared the U.S. to the Nazis, resumed intelligence flights over Guam and planted a Russian flag at the North Pole. Speaking at the 200th Anniversary of



James Reid, policy director for the Pentagon's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, is often the key man on the ground for the U.S. and, subsequently, Nunn and Lugar. He is shown here during a press briefing between Chelyabinsk and Shchuch'ye Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)



HOWEY *Political Report*

Weekly Briefing on Indiana Politics

U.S.-Russian relations at Spaso House on Monday, Lugar noted that "some commentators have questioned whether our nations are returning to a Cold War footing." He adds, "We cannot afford to succumb to pessimism. The United States and Russia have too much at stake and too many common interests to allow our relationship to drift toward conflict."

James Reid, the policy director for the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, reassured me that "day-to-day, there is no internal dispute" between the Americans and Russians. The next day (Aug. 29) Reid would watch Lugar and Nunn push a button and destroy a Soviet era SS-25 missile.

"The transparency is better than it's ever been," Reid said. Lugar adds that "Putin is basically saying, 'We're back.' The wilder and wilder statements are points in domestic politics."

But Lugar describes the Nunn-Lugar program as a "window of opportunity ... we never know how long that window will remain open."

And one predominant thought I hear repeatedly from Russians and Americans: we are damned lucky that we haven't had to ask the tough questions Nunn posed on weapons of mass destruction.

And yet, the haunting specter exists: WMD aimed at one of our cities. It's hard to grasp, but it's out there.

A bilateral nuke shield

Lugar and Nunn called for the extension of the START Treaty during a conference Tuesday at the Carnegie Moscow Center. "The United States and Russia must extend START treaty's verification and transparency elements, which will expire in 2009," Lugar told the conference of nuclear experts from around the globe. The original treaty was signed in 1991.

Nunn said the two powers need to "take a deep breath," adding, "We could stumble to the precipice of strategic danger if we and our Russian friends play a foolish zero-sum game with missile defense. In our modern age, considering the explosion of technology, know-how and terrorism, any plan for global peace



Sen. Lugar is briefed prior to his trip to Rosatom and a meeting with Minister Sergey Kirilyenko on Wednesday by Kenneth A. Myers III of the Senate Foreign Relations staff at the delegation's control room at the Moscow Marriott. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)

and security that does not feature the Russians and Americans working together is not likely to be successful for either of us or the world."

When conferees noted that elections will bring two new leaders to the U.S. and Russia in 2008, Lugar insisted there was plenty of time for Presidents Bush and Putin to work toward a solution instead of waiting until 2009.

Lugar also urged the U.S. and Russia to take up "very vigorous diplomacy" on the issue of Pakistan's exporting of nuclear centrifuge technology "at the presidential level or the secretary of state level."

Lugar was aware of the Kremlin's concerns. "I am concerned by reports that U.S.-Russian negotiations do not include discussions of a legally binding treaty or the continuation of a formal verification regime. The current Russian-

American relationship is complicated enough without introducing more elements of uncertainty into the nuclear relationship."

Luch and Geodeziya: Destroying warheads under a Russian rainbow

GEODEZIYA, Russia – A gentle rain began to fall on U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar and the delegations of Americans and Russians as they headed into the crude cement and cinder block chamber where they would bear witness to history.





Before them stood an SS-25 missile motor, prepared for demise. Outside this chamber about 18 miles from Moscow, the rain stopped and a brilliant rainbow appeared with the full spectrum of colors vividly on display. A few minutes later, Lugar and Nunn, along with Sergey Nikolayovich Shevchenko, who heads the Geodeziya facility, traveled a mile away and entered a strange room with a pea green tint, smelling like a new shower curtain. Two television monitors sat on a table at the front of the room as close to 50 people gathered.

"Have there ever been three button pushers?" Lugar asked at one point, referring to the three boxes with red knobs in front of them. Shortly after 5:30 p.m. Aug. 29, American translator Arkady Morgulis could be heard: "Please prepare to put your fingers on the buttons."

And at 5:34 p.m. Lugar, Nunn and Shevchenko did just that. A loud roar could be heard outside, akin to an airliner taking off. The walls rumbled. The senators sat, transfixed. The pitch and tenor of the roar grew, began to fade, grew once more, and then finally faded away with the rainbow. Inside the chamber a mile away, the temperature grew to 1,000 degrees centigrade as the SS-25's propellants burned, destroying the missile. One of the TV monitors grew bright with the kind of light Robert Oppenheimer might have first felt in the first split seconds at Trinity in 1945. It lasted about two and a half minutes.

For the first time in history, Americans had destroyed a Soviet era missile on Russian soil. Someone proclaimed, "Happy anniversary," as the Nunn-Lugar program celebrated its 15th year of existence. Nunn asked, "We're going to view it?"

About 20 minutes later, the delegation returned to the burn site. The cinder and cement walls were still warm. They saw the hollow shell of the motor that could have transported the SS-25 into an American city.

"This used to be carried by rail," Lugar said. "It could not be pinpointed by our bombers like an ICBM. This is true progress."

By December, international observers will return to Geodeziya to inspect the burned out shells of some 12 other SS-25s.

After the post-burn tour, the delegation returned to a nearby building where they feasted on smoked salmon, caviar, turkey, ham and fruit. There were more than a half dozen toasts as bottles of locally-made vodka were opened. Lugar would only take a small sip (probably of water). He lauded the "patriotic Russians" who worked with the Nunn-



Sens. Nunn, Lugar, and Sergey Nikolayovich Shevchenko prepare to push buttons that will burn a Soviet-era SS-25 motor. U.S. Ambassador William Burns watches at right. (Photo courtesy of the Russian Federation)

Lugar program to destroy this missile and more than 100 like it in the coming months.

Nunn noted that the fissile material removed from the SS-25 and other missiles is processed into a lower grade uranium. "Twenty percent of our electricity is fueled by nuclear power," he said of U.S. energy needs. "Fifty percent of that fuel comes from the highly enriched uranium that has been blended down into energy producing fuel that was once on the end of a warhead that was aimed at America. So, by definition, 10 percent of the electricity in America comes from warheads that have been deactivated."

Nunn added, "The most important part is the foundation that has been built on trust and partnership. If we would work together as we do now, we can prevent catastrophic nuclear terrorism."

Earlier in the day, the Americans visited the Luch Rosatom facility at Podolsk south of Moscow. In 1992, a worker at the facility – Leonid Smirnoff – stole 1.5 Kg of highly enriched uranium and sought out the black market. When the first of \$25 million Nunn-Lugar funds came into play at Luch, the facility was surrounded by a wooden fence. Today, it is secure, its storage reduced from 28 sites to five. Workers with access have been reduced from 1,600 to 300. A series of detectors prevent anyone from stealing the HEU. The plant now processes highly enriched uranium from 11 countries as the Russians and Americans seek to prevent terrorists from accessing the material that could easily destroy a city.

Dr. Ivan Fedik, who heads the Luch facility, said, "We are grateful that in a different time, you came to our assistance. This assistance has allowed us to conduct work with fissile material in a more safe fashion."



Nunn would say, "The Old Testament talks of converting swords to ploughshares and that's what we're doing."

On Wednesday, they did it under a Russian rainbow.

Shchuch'ye: 2 million chemical warheads

YEKATERINBURG, Russia – Imagine yourself at the RCA Dome for a Colts game, or Wrigley Field, or Notre Dame Stadium, or even Hinkle Fieldhouse.

These are far places from the Shchuch'ye Chemical Weapons Destruction Facility on the western edge of Siberia. But the United States under the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program is spending more than \$1 billion here.

Why?

With the Russian economy now flush with oil and natural gas revenues, why should Americans be here spending this kind of money?

Paul McNelly, program manager for the Chemical Weapons Destruction Fund at the Shchuch'ye facility has an answer. "All it would take is one of these small shells put in a backpack strapped with C4 plastic explosives going into a stadium," McNelly began. "Depending which way the plume went, you could kill 10,000 to 20,000 people. And there are two million of these things sitting out here."

There is a photo of U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar posing with one of the 85mm shells which had been placed into a brief case. McNelly noted, "That was a live round" which brought a smattering of laughter on the bus heading to the site. "Now he tells us," said Kenneth A. Myers Jr., Republican staff director on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

But back when this was discovered following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, it wasn't a laughing matter. The Soviets made so much of these deadly agents and kept no inventory. Once they started, they didn't stop. Finding them would have been a dream come true to



Lugar (top photo) views some of the 2 million 85 mm chemical weapons canisters stored in a drafty barn at Shchuch'ye early in the Nunn-Lugar program. One of the barns could be seen from the road on this trip (center photo). In the bottom photo, Nunn and Lugar tour the facility that will destroy all 2 million chemical shells over the next five years. (Nunn-Lugar and HPR Photos)

someone like Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda.

McNelly said the vast stockpiles of Soviet-era nerve agents – sarin, VX, GB and soment – were stored in decrepit buildings where you "could see light coming through the walls; coming through the ceilings."

Wooden fences guarded the place and even they were falling down.

Nunn said, when he first saw the Soviet storage facilities, "The

shells were stacked at two to three times the height of this bus" as he and the delegation that included Lugar headed to inspect the site.

"Taking inventory would have been extremely difficult," Nunn said. "It would be very hard for them to know one was missing if there was a clever inside job."

When the Shchuch'ye facility gets up and running in 2008 and 2009 with monetary assistance from Great Britain, Canada and several other countries, the

facility will destroy 1,600 metric tons of these shells a year for the following four years.

A hole will be drilled into the munition, the nerve agent drained, the shell decontaminated, deformed and scrapped. The agent will be drained into a reaction tank, then neutralized and mixed with a bituminous material and "stored for eternity."

Before the destruction process begins, the shells have been surrounded by double and triple fences, with breach monitors, guard towers, and cameras.



Both the Russian government and the U.S. Congress dragged their feet for three to four years on this project. In the meantime, the Russian Federation went from insolvency to flush with oil and natural gas revenues. But James Reid, the project manager for the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, said that the U.S. had made a commitment in exchange for the Russians agreeing to the chemical weapons convention. And when Russian President Putin first met President George W. Bush, he specifically asked for help in destroying the Soviet era chemical munitions.

"I am convinced that the weapons destroyed here must be dismantled quickly and safely," Lugar said. "I look forward to the day when the last of these horrific weapons are eliminated and a dire threat they pose to all nations is removed. Progress on this project has been a particular focus of mine for the last seven years, seeking amendments to permit construction to continue and making sure my colleagues in the Congress understand the necessity of this work."

Lugar called his visit with Nunn on Aug. 28 "an important milestone" because "the weapons destroyed here are highly portable and attractive to terrorists the world over."

Their destruction will help ensure that the only bomb thrown at the RCA Dome comes from the hand of Peyton Manning.

Mayak: The mystery, the riddle, the enigma of U.S.-Russia ties

YEKATERINBURG - If there was a point where reality met fiction and the mysterious Soviet past met the American present, it was here in and around the city of Yekaterinburg. Here a Czar and his family were slain and the greatest weaponized biological accident occurred in 1979 with anthrax. This was the oblast that produced Boris Yeltsin, the only Russian leader who has voluntarily given up the reins of power. The Mayak Fissile Material Storage Facility near the closed nuclear city of Ozersk was the most important stop for the Nunn-Lugar delegation. Flying here you are greeted from the air by hundreds of lakes ... with no homes on them. It's because the Soviets used to dump nuclear material in them. Much of the area -- larger than that around Chernobyl -- is contaminated.

Two days before, when the Nunn-Lugar delegation visited Rosatom -- the Russian atomic agency headed by former Prime Minister Sergey Kiriyenko -- it announced a huge resettlement deal for the citizens of Muslyumovo on the banks of the glowing Techa River. From 1949 to 1953, Mayak dumped nuclear waste in lakes and in one infamous field where it spontaneously combusted.

Nunn observed, "The first time we went out, they were storing that plutonium in buckets and there was only

one lock on the door. You could pick the buckets up, it was that bad."

Jim Reid added, "It was scary."

The next time Nunn visited Mayak in 2002 he found a warehouse that could have fit a couple of football fields. But it was empty. The U.S. government has paid for hardening



Mayak official Igor Konyshev (top photo) and David E. Hoffman of the Washington Post (center, bottom photo) locked horns over access and transparency at Mayak. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey and Andy Fisher)

of doors, walls and windows, installing intrusion sensors, alarms and closed-circuit televisions, and entry control points.

Today, Mayak is the burial site for at least 25 tons of the 100 tons of plutonium extracted from warheads like the SS-25s. No one is quite sure where the rest of the plutonium is being stored, or what will happen to the rest of the HEU the Russians have.

While reporters were barred from visiting Mayak with senators, Lugar gave a description: "We started through the entry control part. Essentially the vehicle goes in, the door closes, so that you have security against terrorists. You move on to 7, into an unloading room. Whatever is in the vehicle is taken out of it. At this point, as Jim (Reid) has said, beginning this process where they put code numbers on anything that happens, whether it is a box or bag. There is some history of whatever is in there.



We proceed through the transport control area to 347. We walked our way through each of these situations. We were in regular clothing until we made our way here."

Donning white gowns and caps, the senators found themselves outfitted with a monitoring device, "for how much radiation we might pick up."

"Today we were taken to a top floor that is on top of all of this," Lugar said, where material containers are fitted inside a basket and four baskets go inside a shroud and two shrouds are fitted into a tube and capped with a manhole cover. "It's a half an acre football field," Lugar explained. "Before it was blank. Each one of these sectors have little holes in them, which is for ventilation or whatever is required. In any event, we were on top. That is what we did."

While the senators were visiting Mayak, a Mayak official (and possible FSB official) named Igor Konyshhev and two colleagues were being grilled by reporters in Yekaterinburg. "Can you please tell us why Mayak has continued to refuse Americans access for three and a half years?" asked **Washington Post** foreign editor David E. Hoffman.

And why hasn't there been a transparency agreement? Where is the uranium being stored? And, asked Douglas Birch of the Associated Press, isn't 97 percent of the world's polonium supply kept at Mayak?

The polonium-210 question connects a dot of extraordinary international intrigue after Alexander Litvinenko, a lieutenant colonel in the FSB and pronounced critic of Russian President Putin, died of exposure to the isotope in London. American sources say that polonium was often used by the KGB and successor FSB to mark money involved in espionage.

If polonium-210 could be smuggled out of Mayak, might that happen with plutonium?

Konyshhev answered with a series of "I cannot confirm or deny" styled answers.

Hoffman summed it up: "Your statement at the beginning of the press conference is that you seek international cooperation, but then you told us you can't explain why the fissile storage facility is closed; you can't explain the kind of isotopes you produce; you can't even tell us what protection issues such as (the) polonium case; so it really raises the question of whether you are interested in international cooperation."

Konyshhev responded, "That's a one-side declaration." He added that the issues of transparency would be "developing."

Lugar acknowledged that 25 tons of plutonium is "likely to be stored" at Mayak. "They will not use it for uranium. They originally were supposed to have 400 tons of HEU. They made the point they will now have the space for all the plutonium in Russia. That which could be transferred.

"The Russians always thought plutonium was worth a whole lot more and didn't want to destroy it. It was almost like the feeling there might be a fire sale some day and you might get more value out of this stuff, that we'd furnish the place and at some point, they might be able to cash in."

As for the transparency issue, Lugar wrote Kiriyenko last June hoping for a transparency agreement by this trip. The reporters were told one might be put forth by the end of the year. "We asked about the transparency agreement," Lugar said. "That was part of our discussion. Mr. Kiriyenko, raised it the other day. It came up here. We raised it with the officials again today. There is a disagreement about the amount of information we require and the amount at this point the Russians are prepared to give."

Despite the flow of information or lack thereof, Lugar said the value of this kind of trip is for relationship building.

Nunn gave an example of this in the biological sphere of the Nunn-Lugar Act (though this particular trip did not intersect with that front). "One of the most encouraging moments, we were in a biological lab and I was introduced to a young man plugged into his computer every day and he was working on a new vaccine for small pox directly with NIH (National Institute of Health) in Washington," Nunn said. "He and his counterpart

in Washington felt they were making substantial progress."

As for the issue that created some consternation on a trip that otherwise was marked with the trappings of cooperation, Nunn explained, "15 years ago when this program got started, there was a psychology in the former Soviet Union that the Communist system was the security. The closed society was the security. There has been a tremendous shift in that.

"This is no longer a closed society in the sense it was," Nunn continued. "Closed cities are much more open now. I think there's been an evolution here – some might say a revolution – working with the Americans. Security has become the security, not the closed society that served to protect the weapons and so forth. In other words, there wasn't this kind of focus. That is one of the main advantages of the whole cooperative effort ... of the shift that security has become the security. I think it's been a major





change ... for the better."

Albania: A former pariah rids itself of chemicals

TIRANA, Albania - If there was any aspect of the Nunn-Lugar program that tended to produce scoff and chuckles, it was Albania.

But here's why it's not so funny, and why, in fact, it has become one of the most remarkable aspects of the program. Twenty years ago, this was a pariah nation, aligned with Red China. It feared a Soviet invasion.

Today, it has become the first nation to cede all of its chemical weapons. After decades of despotic and paranoid rule by First Secretary Enver Hoxha, Albania has transitioned from communism, to socialism, to a recently elected democratic government. Its capital Tirana is parched and subject to electric blackouts due to its reliance on hydro-power. On the road from the airport into Tirana, one can see the bizarre bunkers (below) that Hoxha, fearing invasion, constructed throughout the land. They contained thousands of conventional weapons, but even more perverse, 16,000 metric tons of the blistering agent Lewisite and Adamsite that when breathed, destroy the human lungs resulting in agonizing death. As was the case at Shchuch'ye, the communist regimes kept no inventory. The Nunn-Lugar program also found 79 MANPADs, shoulder-held missiles that have the acute potential of bringing down a civilian airliner. This is the type of weaponry al-Qaeda dreams of obtaining.

From top, one of Hoxha's weapons bunkers. Hoxha's maso-lium in Tirana still welcomes President Bush. At right, Lugar meets with Albanian officials.



Check out Albania's geography and it is within the arms reach of al-Qaeda. "The thing about Albania is its always been a terrific smuggling culture," said Lugar communications director Andy Fisher. "It's a poor country with much lawlessness and if anybody could have gotten their hands on them, they almost certainly would have ended up on the black market."

Albanian Defense Minister Fatmir Mediu notes, "In a remote corner of Southwestern Europe, the U.S. and Albania had a quiet victory in the war against weapons of mass destruction."

Lugar called it a "major contribution to global security."

The enlightened Albanian leadership had sought out the U.S. to rid itself of these weapons caches. It's amazing that a country with a past like Albania could even produce the kind of leaders it has today.

Lugar explained. "The U.S. acted promptly to meet the Albanian request for assistance. That expertise was needed. Destroying this deadly stockpile of chemicals proved to be a dangerous and complex operation. It was determined that it would be unsafe to try to transport the weapons agents down from the mountains from where they were first discovered. Thus, a destruction facility had to be built on-site, in very rugged territory, as I can



personally attest."

In Lugar's first of three visits to Albania, the mountainous roads to the site were so rough that his vehicle blew out a tire.

"This work began quietly last year and the Albanian government announced last month that all of its chemical weapons stockpiles had been destroyed," Lugar continued. "This is a truly remarkable achievement. This marks the first time in history that any nation has completely eliminated its stockpile of chemical weapons. In light of the fact that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons is the most serious national security threat we face, this is an important milestone."

And, Lugar warns, "Albania's secret stockpile may not be the last. We can and must be prepared to address similar risks in the Middle East, Asia and anyplace else where supplies of weapons of mass destruction may be located."

Dodging Bullets: 'We don't know'

How important are Sen. Lugar and NTI Chairman Sam Nunn?

Everywhere they went in Moscow, to Yekaterinburg, to Odessa, to Tirana, they were hailed as visionaries. They were warmly received by Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov. They were Americans willing to lend a hand. They don't act unilaterally, as the Bush administration has been accused of. They have multiple partners.

Kenneth B. Handelman, principal director of the DOD's Counternarcotics, Counterproliferation and Global Threats, explained, "Basically, no Lugar, no program. Both on the Hill and in the executive branch, you don't just pass a law and the executive branch implements it. It's actually very hard to spend money. There's a continued need for active involvement from Congress, and the presence of the author or people who are interested in the successful implementation of the law. There's a physical force that continues to emanate from Capitol Hill that holds you accountable."

Of Lugar, he says from the Pentagon to the Armed Services Committees, "They know they've got Lugar watching. He has very good relationships with Carl Levin, John McCain and John Warner." The Pentagon's relationships with Lugar staffers like Kenneth A. Myers Jr., the Republican

staff director for the Committee on Foreign Relations, are excellent and productive.

"We're held accountable," Handelman said. "It's proved to be a really great partnership. Even with the difficulties in Russia, these guys (Russians) are interested in making it work."

Did mankind dodge a bullet?

Handelman answers, "In my business, there are always two challenges: balancing what's most dangerous against what's most likely. You guys saw when we went to Shchuch'ye. There are a lot of chemical weapons in Russia. We went after the stuff ... the most dangerous stuff which was nerve agent, in the smallest containers. It's counter-intuitive sometimes, you know, we need to go after the huge bulk containers. But nerve agent is most dangerous, but the likelihood is higher when it's in smaller containers. That's one eternal challenge."

Handelman continued, "There's another sort of a known truth: it is we don't know what we don't know. So did we dodge a bullet? Yeah. Any time we take something

off the market or we eliminate a delivery system or a piece of infrastructure, as far as I'm concerned, it's money well spent because some day some guy could put it in his process chain. I'm a good sleeper, so I don't lose sleep at night, but I don't know what I don't know. In pushing Nunn-Lugar, we've got to go where we aren't now. Now Nunn-Lugar addresses the non-state entities -- the terrorists -- that's the next challenge. Pound for pound I worry most about nukes and bio."

Did we dodge a bullet?

Nunn answers, "There hasn't been in history this kind of cooperation; this kind of addressing security problems together by bitter enemies without military defeat."

Postscript

I sat with author John Shaw in an outdoor pub just outside Red Square, drinking German beer while listening to The Clash. Moscow has become one of the most expensive cities on the globe, but its economy has barely integrated with the community of nations. The administration of President Vladimir Putin has become the reassertion of the intelligence services over the democratic process that ruled through the blood-soaked soils of 80 years of communism. A middle class has barely emerged. The birth rate is in decline. After touring Red Square and the Kremlin on a balmy August evening, I was struck by the masses of young people. In the shadows of St. Basil's Cathedral, which barely escaped Stalin's wrecking ball 70 years ago,



Sens. Lugar and Nunn meet with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Lugar described the meeting as cordial. (HPR Photo by Brian A. Howey)



HOWEY *Political Report*

there were virtually no babies in carriages. The youth have little incentive to procreate. This will be a dilemma for decades to come.

Moscow went from a drab, gray city 20 years ago to one with more billboards than any other. A McDonald's can be found just outside the Kremlin walls.

Western observers brace for the political battles of 2008, when Putin is supposed to step aside. **New York Times** bureau chief Chris Chivers believes there is a "40 percent chance" he will actually do so. HPR envisions a scenario where Putin cites a national crisis and stays; or hand picks a successor who resigns shortly after taking office, restoring Putin to power. There are 100,000 youth in the Nashi who are harassing foreign diplomats as Putin tries to stave off an "Orange Revolution" that snatched Ukraine from despotism earlier this decade. It is being funded by Putin's Kremlin. Yet democracy is tenuous in the former Soviet breadbasket and it may split up. Some believe Moscow will attempt to reacquire its former republics.

Americans are generally treated in cordial fashion, though the Iraq War evokes political hostility. In the press, there is an active debate about how the "West Lost Russia," with **Moscow Times** columnist Gordon M. Hahn declaring, "Russia is back as a global player and it is no longer a starry-eyed admirer of the United States."

Russians worry about the NATO expansion into Ukraine and Georgia, military installations in the Czech Republic, and the unilateral missile shield. "These are the bitter fruits of the West's -- and in particular the United States -- mistaken policies since the end of the Cold War," Hahn writes. "Instead of treating Moscow magnanimously ... the West declared victory. All opinion polls now show that a ... majority of Russians regard the United States as the greatest threat to Russia and the world. It has translated into a burning desire among the Russian elite and public to finally show the West that it would regret its policies once Russia 'got up from its knees.' That time has surely come."

Despite the rhetoric, Lugar and Nunn remain optimistic.

In his Spaso House speech, Lugar paid tribute to the man who held his Senate seat a century ago -- U.S. Sen. Albert J. Beveridge -- one of the foremost Russian experts of his time who traveled across the 11 time zones prior to the Russo-Japanese

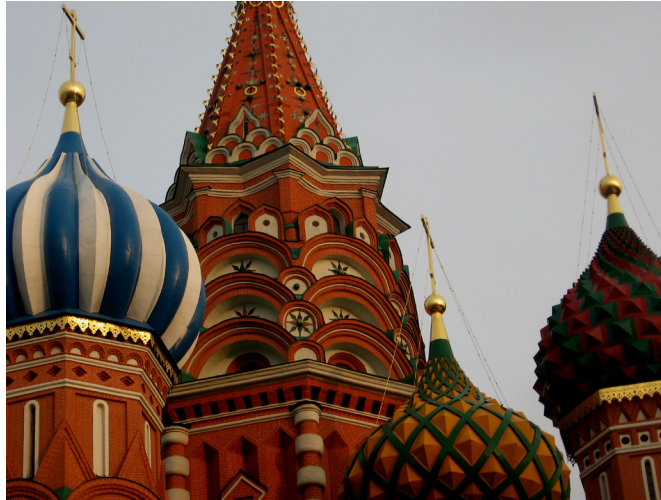
War in 1905. "He was an insightful observer of his times," Lugar said, "but he could not have predicted the twists and turns of the 20th Century, anymore than we can predict what will happen 100 years from now."

Lugar noted the "commonalities" between the American and Russian people and the potential "strong bonds if they were allowed to develop.

"Both nations were linked closely to Europe, but possessed independent cultural identities that support rich literary, musical and artistic traditions. The national experiences and mythologies of both nations were profoundly influenced by the development of vast, resource-rich wildernesses. Our cultures deeply value exploration and technical achievement, epitomized by our space programs.

"We cannot afford to succumb to pessimism. The United States has too much at stake and too many common interests to allow our relationship to drift toward conflict."

Whether Nunn-Lugar represents a high-water mark or an enduring foundation will be a story left for another day, perhaps another era. But for one week in Russia, Ukraine and Albania, there is little doubt as to how extraordinary these current chapters are in the annals of human history. ❖



Russo-American mirrors: Sen. Lugar (right) meeting with Russians at the Luch Central Storage Facility outside of Moscow on Aug. 28. Watching U.S. - Russian relations has long been tricky and you don't always know what you're seeing. The photo at the top of this page is St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square. (HPR Photos by Brian A. Howey)



Suit filed challenging property tax system

INDIANAPOLIS - A group of Indiana taxpayers challenged the constitutionality of the state property tax system in a lawsuit filed Thursday. The petition filed

in Indiana Tax Court questions statewide assessment methods, the use of tax abatements and

other aspects of the state system (**Evansville Courier & Press**). It argues Indiana's tax structure does not comply with a state constitutional requirement for a "uniform and equal rate of property assessment and taxation." Multiple taxing districts can lead to vastly nonuniform bills for people living in the same county if they are in different school districts or townships, the suit claims. "This is a statewide issue," said John R. Price, a Carmel, Ind., attorney who filed the lawsuit on behalf of 11 taxpayers and seven taxpayer associations. Price said many of the lawsuit's plaintiffs would like to see property taxes abolished. "This case could ultimately be used to help accelerate that," he said.



Gomeztagle says lawsuit filed Thursday too broad

ST. JOHN - Joe "Taxes" Gomeztagle took on Indiana's property tax system and lived to tell about it (**Times of Northwest Indiana**). This one, filed Thursday in Indiana Tax Court, attacks property taxes on several fronts, including a few specific to Marion County. Gomeztagle says the plaintiffs would be better off taking on property taxes with the precision of a scalpel, rather than the cleaver approach apparent in their broad legal challenge. "You need to focus on what has caused this problem, and the problem with Marion County, and the entire state, is the exemptions and de-

ductions that are a question of constitutionality," said Gomeztagle, who runs a nonprofit awareness group known as Operation TEN (Tax Education Now). This new lawsuit, among other things, assails tax abatements and other breaks typically given to businesses at the expense of other taxpayers, including homeowners. Gomeztagle says those benefits are "arbitrary and capricious" and seem to violate the Indiana Constitution clause calling for a "uniform and equal rate of property tax assessment and taxation" -- the fulcrum for his successful lawsuit. But Gomeztagle goes a step further than the current lawsuit, arguing that the whole spectrum of tax exemptions, including the \$45,000 homestead deduction for homeowners, should be done away with, so the everyone pays the same tax rate.

Henry offers cooperative buying program

FORT WAYNE - Democratic mayoral nominee Tom Henry hopes to save taxpayer money by working with other governments to purchase materials such as road salt and tires (**Fort Wayne Journal Gazette**). Henry on Thursday announced his plan for starting a northeast Indiana purchasing network. He said by combining the purchasing power of multiple government agencies, prices should drop. "The citizens of Fort Wayne deserve the best deals, too," he said. "Cooperative purchasing just makes sense."

St. Joe Commissioner pays off tax warrants

SOUTH BEND - Some of the outstanding state tax warrants that have been a bone of contention between Sheriff Frank Canarecci and the county commissioners apparently were owed by County Commissioner Board President Steve Ross (**South Bend Tribune**). Or they were, at least, until this week. Ross said -- and the Indiana Department of Revenue office here confirmed Thursday -- that all of

the outstanding warrants against his businesses have been paid. According to Ross, he brought the warrants up to date this week, after being questioned about them by The Tribune. "I admit my guilt," Ross said Thursday, acknowledging that he can sometimes be disorganized.

State to spend \$90 million on Keystone Avenue

CARMEL - Gov. Mitch Daniels announced Thursday that the state will pay Carmel \$90 million to take control of the roadway, paving the way for Mayor Jim Brainard's vision of building six roundabout-style interchanges on Keystone Avenue north of 96th Street (**Indianapolis Star**). Political foes of Brainard and Daniels criticized the deal, but the governor and mayor called the pact a win-win that will bring an innovative solution to one of the area's most severe traffic headaches. "This allows us to do something that will be wonderful for our citizens, and do it in a way that will bring some notice to Carmel," Brainard said. "Mitch Daniels has proven that the Major Moves money is nothing more than his personal slush fund," said Democratic Chairman Dan Parker.

Rokita alleges vote fraud in Clark County

JEFFERSONVILLE - Standing atop the steps of the City-County Building in Jeffersonville, Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita told reporters Thursday that he believed voter fraud had been committed in Clark County in recent years (**News-Tribune**). However, citing a potential criminal investigation that could be in the works, he released very few details of what may have taken place, and Clark County Prosecutor Steve Stewart hasn't commented. Rokita would not say how the fraud happened, what municipalities may have been involved, who the players were or even which party ❖