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## The Nonproliferation Review

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## Turkey Had Plans—But No Plants—to Benefit from Nuclear Energy

When I read Sebнем Udum's excellent article, "Turkey's Nuclear Comeback: An Energy Renaissance in an Evolving Regional Security Context" (17.2, July 2010, pp. 365–77), I felt like I could finally hand off the baton to the next runner in a relay race. For nearly fifteen years, I was literally the only academic researcher in Turkey who was asking questions of government officials as well as civil and military bureaucrats regarding why and how Turkey repeatedly failed to realize its long-sought ambition to build nuclear power reactors. (I have published many journal articles and book chapters on the subject, some of which are cited in Udum's article.)

I first began looking into the subject of Turkey's interesting adventures in nuclear energy generation thanks to Harald Müller (now director of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt in Germany) in the mid-1990s, during my post-doctoral fellowship at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, when I was writing my chapter on Turkey for his book, *Europe and Nuclear Disarmament: Debates and Political Attitudes in 16 European Countries*. Professor Müller had suggested that I examine rumors that in the 1970s and 1980s the United States, along with other influential Western countries and Israel, had serious concerns about Turkey's possible acquisition of nuclear technology and know-how. These states were reportedly so worried about allegations that Turkey and Pakistan were clandestinely collaborating on nuclear weapons that they obstructed Turkey's attempts to acquire peaceful nuclear science and technology.

My initial reaction was to flatly reject the possibility that such a thing had happened, asking why Turkey's long-

standing NATO allies would want to prevent Turkey's large-scale energy generation projects simply because of unfounded allegations. Though Müller did not believe the allegations either, he asked me to devote part of my chapter to clarifying the matter.

Unfortunately, my research revealed that U.S. government officials had indeed taken the allegations seriously and therefore refrained from advancing or finalizing bids on nuclear energy projects in Turkey from consortia in which American firms participated. Moreover, subsequent U.S. governments pressured German, French, and Canadian governments and/or firms not to go ahead with finalizing their bids.

None of these obstructive measures could be officially pronounced or acknowledged by Western governments because under Article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Turkey has a right to the benefits of peaceful nuclear uses. Nevertheless, for nearly four decades unofficial yet effective ways and means were somehow found to block progress each time Turkey attempted to renew its bid to build power reactors. I discussed all of these issues in my article, "Turkey's Quest for Peaceful Nuclear Power," in the Spring-Summer 1997 issue of the *Nonproliferation Review*.

What has been most striking to me over the many years since I wrote that piece is that the same countries, especially the United States, have never dropped their concerns about Turkey's intent to build nuclear power plants. I have witnessed first-hand the concerns of representatives of the U.S. government at various levels, here in Turkey and abroad, in the past and today, in casual and also formal

conversations about Turkey's nuclear energy aspirations.

Sebnem Udum, whom I advised during her graduate as well as doctoral studies for nearly a decade, and who also wrote under my supervision her master's thesis and dissertation (which was co-supervised by Ali Karaosmanoğlu from Bilkent University), is making good progress on the issue. She belongs to a new breed of researchers and, maybe, represents a new perspective on matters related to Turkey's engagement with nuclear science and technology. It is not only a professionally satisfying and exciting experience for me to see the making of the next generation of fine researchers in a delicate issue area, but also a timely development. In fact, the timing of her article is just right; it came out as the Turkish government passed a bill in July 2010 allowing a Russian firm to build the first nuclear power plant in Turkey.

Using tangible and verifiable data, facts, and documents, Udum laid out the complicated history of Turkey's nuclear adventure over the years, and also the implications of Turkey's nuclearization for its allies as well as its neighbors. She provided a subtle perspective on all these matters without dwelling much on speculative aspects, and she produced convin-

cing arguments about the true reflection of the debate that is taking place in Turkey.

However, the fact that Turkey has recently concluded its first official bid with the Russian government—and that a second one is under way with a South Korean firm—should not suggest to one that suspicions in the West have disappeared. With or without the Western governments' support, Turkey seems determined to bring state-of-the-art nuclear technology to its people. How the allegations and concerns about Turkey's true intentions will affect the pace of Turkey's nuclearization, if at all, remains to be seen. In my view, this issue will thus continue to constitute the crux of the matter in the research and study of Turkey's quest for nuclear power. I hope that this particular dimension of the subject (which is nonetheless open to speculation) will feature more heavily on Sebnem Udum's future research agenda, so that she, PhD in hand, can raise the next generation of fine researchers to pass the baton off to when the time comes.

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## International Cooperation Needed to Better Understand Nuclear Criminals

Alexander Kupatadze's article, "Organized Crime and the Trafficking of Radiological Materials: The Case of Georgia" (17.2, July 2010, pp. 219–34), discusses an important but not significantly recognized problem—the role of organized crime in nuclear proliferation. Most researchers cannot study this problem because they do not have access to the data that is needed

to produce a research project on this topic. Dr. Kupatadze's paper draws on a unique body of data: the criminal cases of those charged with engaging in nuclear smuggling, interviews with investigators of smuggling cases, and even interviews with nuclear smugglers. Georgia has been a key point in the transit of nuclear materials outside the perimeter of the former Soviet

Union; as such, it is one of the key locales to understand the relationship between crime and nuclear proliferation.

Few can do such research because it requires a knowledge of the Georgian language, the criminal culture of Georgia, and access to case data or personnel that is not easy to obtain. Therefore, the ethnographic- and case-based data needed to study the problem have precluded most others from conducting this important type of analysis.

The next stage of this research requires that the Georgian analysis be combined with case data from neighboring countries, such as Turkey, that have investigated a significant number of nuclear smuggling incidents. Turkish data on nuclear smugglers reveal that the perpetrators are not only Turkish, but also Georgians and citizens of other Soviet successor states.

Only through the cooperation of researchers who have access to national data sets, an understanding of different cultures, and language capabilities, will it be possible to understand the kind of criminals who participate in nuclear smuggling—professional criminals, corrupt officials, past and present members of security services. Because only the unlucky and less professional lawbreakers are caught, we will never have a complete understanding of the criminals who smuggle nuclear materials. Greater insight can be gained, but international research collaborations are needed.

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## In Memoriam: Alexander Pikayev

It is with great sadness that we mourn the untimely death of Dr. Alexander Pikayev. Known to his friends and colleagues in the international nonproliferation community simply as "Sasha," he was in the prime of his life—personally and professionally.

Sasha was only forty-eight years old but had long been one of the most senior and authoritative Russian analysts of defense and national security issues, especially those involving U.S.-Russian/Soviet nuclear arms control. Indeed, my first recollection of him was as a young scholar—in his twenties—when he participated in a U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiation simulation course I offered one summer at the University of Bonn. At the time, I remember Ambassador Victor Israelyan, who was a co-instructor of the course, observing Sasha in action and commenting: "What is this young man doing here? We need him on the 'real' Soviet START delegation."

Sasha was selected to join the original Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) Soviet Nonproliferation "core group" in 1991, and he was one of the early Newly Independent States Nonproliferation Project Visiting Fellows in Monterey during the spring 1994 semester. He was a unique figure, sometimes reserved, often funny, but always exceptionally astute. On conference panels he tended to speak softly and slowly, usually without notes, but with great precision and acuity regardless of the topic. The breadth and depth of his knowledge were enormous, and he could meticulously recall facts and figures on almost any issue impacting on Russian national security. One also could always count on him to be probing and provocative, qualities that endeared him to many and made him an invaluable colleague and resource as the head of the CNS Nonproliferation Project in Russia.

At the time of his passing, Sasha also served as director of the Section on Disarmament and Conflict Resolution of the Center for International Security at the Institute of World Economy and the International Relations (IMEMO) in Moscow. He previously had worked as co-chair of the WMD Nonproliferation Program at the Carnegie Moscow Center and as a senior professional staff member of the Russian Duma Defense Committee.

Sasha was a prolific author, frequent media commentator, and friend and mentor to many in the international arms control and nonproliferation community. He cannot be replaced, but he will long be remembered.

As a tribute to Sasha, CNS plans to establish the Alexander Pikayev Scholarship Fund for young Russian students who pursue graduate work in the field of nonproliferation at the Monterey Institute of International Studies. The fund will enable the next generation of young Russian analysts to follow in Sasha's footsteps, reinforcing his legacy in a very practical and long-lasting manner. Contributions are welcome.

Sasha's friends at CNS extend their deepest condolences to his wife Marina and his family.

**William C. Potter**

*CNS Director  
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The *Nonproliferation Review* welcomes input from its readers and encourages a dialogue on the topics covered and articles published in the journal. Please send all letters to Editor Stephen Schwartz, [sschwartz@miis.edu](mailto:sschwartz@miis.edu). Be sure to include your contact information, including mailing address. Letters may be edited for length, clarity, and style. The authors of the correspondence published in this section maintain the copyright to their letters.