

Admiral William Crowe

Duncan Wood writes: After the Cold War Admiral Crowe (obituary, Oct 23) recognised the strategic value of building new co-operative ties between America and Russia, and as such he served on the Board of Visitors of the US Department of Energy's nuclear Material Protection Control and Accounting (MPC&A) Programme with the Russian Federation, which was established after the break-up of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s to address the threat posed by the vast quantities of poorly secured fissile materials and warheads in the former Soviet Union.

I had the pleasure of serving on this board with Admiral Crowe and I vividly remember him chatting with his fellow board members, Evgeny Velikhov (the senior nuclear adviser to the Russian president and the head of the Kurchatov Institute, Russia's principal nuclear energy lab) and Dr Jack Caravelli, the head of the American MPC&A programme and a former White House National Security Council director for nonproliferation. We were reviewing photographs of Russian nuclear navy sites that Crowe would have given his eye-teeth to see into during the Cold War, and were discussing the best ways to secure 4,000 nuclear warheads located at 42 Russian Navy storage sites.

I also remember with a grin watching him doodle aircraft carriers and frigates on the side of his notes as he took part in these discussions. It's nice to see a touch of humour and normality in our leaders.