



International Nuclear Disarmament Dialogue

The Stanley
Foundation

April 22, 2008
St. Petersburg,
Russia

This brief summarizes the primary findings of the conference as interpreted by the project organizers. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this brief. Therefore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to all of its recommendations, observations, and conclusions.

Evolving Nuclear Realities and US-Russian Relations

Summary of Recommendations

To improve bilateral relations while reinvigorating the global nonproliferation regime:

- New unilateral actions on the part of the United States and/or Russia could help break the current inertia, while safely protecting the strategic concerns of each:
 - Further reductions below the roughly 2,000 warhead level outlined in the Moscow Treaty
 - Doctrinal changes, such as in declaratory policy (moving away from hair-trigger alert status) and regarding negative security assurances (promises to refrain from nuclear attack except as a response to a nuclear attack)
- Continued progress could be made on the withdrawal of forward-based weapons—NATO tactical weapons on the US side, and western border deployed weapons on the Russian side.
- While the Moscow Treaty agreement surpasses Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) in terms of reductions, losing the verification and accounting of START would sever a valuable strategic communication link between the two countries and leave each much more in the dark regarding the other's activities. This unnecessarily dangerous outcome should be avoided.
- The two countries should work together to resuscitate past arms control attempts that did not come to fruition, including several components of the draft START III agreement to disclose overall strategic stockpile inventories, increase transparency of doctrines and strategic deployments, and engage in discussions over tactical stockpiles transparency.
- The United States should continue to encourage information-sharing in Russian society and engage with them when appropriate, so as to create a more transparent environment whereby various sectors within Russia can work to understand each other's efforts toward cleaning radioactive waste sites, nuclear energy and safety concerns.
- The United States and Russia should continue engagement on issues related to multilateral fuel cycle arrangements, which may provide a way out of the fuel cycle debate trap and which also will set the stage for the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

- The United States and Russia could go far in moving the global community toward a new conceptualization of the nonproliferation and disarmament framework by presenting a united front and agreeing on overall principles on the thorny issues of Iran and North Korea.

Throughout the Cold War, nuclear issues were front and center in the US-Soviet relationship and even afterwards. The end of that stand-off produced an opportunity for quick and significant progress on arms control. President George W. Bush, whose antipathy to binding international agreements is notable, briefly put the US-Russian strategic relationship on the map again near the beginning of his first term, when he looked into President Putin's eyes, saw someone with whom he could work, and announced further strategic nuclear weapon reductions—codified under the Moscow Treaty.

Since 2002, however, competing priorities have pushed the US-Russian strategic relationship into the background. Some of these issues—like Afghanistan and Iraq—were only tangential to the US-Russian context, while others—such as missile defense—directly clashed with Russian conceptions of strategic security. The United States and Russia reaffirmed their previous statements of shared understandings of the global environment as recently as April 2008 in Sochi, Russia, but the gap between rhetoric and progress on the ground is disconcerting. Precisely because the two countries continue to possess huge nuclear-weapon stockpiles, the US-Russian strategic relationship remains critical if the global community is to affirm not only its longstanding commitment to eventual nuclear disarmament but also put substance to its rhetorical acknowledgment that the world has fundamentally changed since the United States and the Soviet Union nearly started World War III during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

While a serious and long-needed discussion has begun among unofficial experts inside the United States—most notably the Hoover Institution effort led by William Perry, George Shultz, Sam Nunn, and Henry Kissinger—more work needs to be done with our international allies and colleagues to advance the understanding of US motivations, perspectives, and opportunities. The reactions and views of key interested states and regions will be critical if the global community is to focus on

redefining its whole approach to nuclear issues and to reaffirm the universal commitment to nuclear disarmament. Many in the global community are likely to support a United States that re-engages on its longstanding rhetoric of disarmament. Shared steps, however, must take place for this process to unfold in a manner that is mutually reassuring.

Toward that end, the Second Russian National Nuclear Dialogue on Energy, Society, and Security brought together government officials, nuclear industry, academics, civil-society groups, representatives from Russia's nuclear regulatory body, and Russian media. Conference topics ranged from ways to manage nuclear waste disposal, terrorist threats to nuclear facilities and the role of the public in countering them, to the necessity of renewing a US-Russian strategic dialogue. Participants and speakers alike commented on the uniqueness of the participant mix at the conference and the value of interaction and information-sharing among the groups. Despite political reforms following the break up of the Soviet Union, interaction among agencies and organizations within Russian society has remained limited. Mainly covering domestic concerns, the conference touched on Russia's nuclear history, nuclear energy, radiation safety, and waste disposal. Discussions of these topics not only were important to a domestic audience but also became an opportunity for international participants to engage with Russians on these issues of shared concern.

Green Cross International, an NGO founded by former Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev and a collaborating organization, offered a grassroots glance into nuclear energy and radioactive waste issues. Several Green Cross representatives served as panelists over the two-day conference, prodding the state-run energy sector on issues that have long been taboo in Russian civil society. The budding intersect between the public and private sector is a reminder of the value of dialogue both within and between governments. In addition, these representatives exchanged perspectives with scientists from Russian-based research institutes and from neighboring countries. Participants offered insights on the radioactive legacy of the Cold War, including disposal of spent fuel and the deleterious effects of nuclear testing. Sustainable development and the atom in civil society are issues of global concern and consideration. It was thus appropriate that the states with the largest stockpiles participate

in the dialogue as alternative energy sources are being explored worldwide.

The US debate is presently in a state of extreme flux. One panelist observed that Congress has refused to fund several programs proposed by the Bush administration, including plans to develop a new generation of replacement nuclear warheads and plans to modernize the nuclear weapons complex. It was also noted that despite crafting a Nuclear Posture Review in 2001, the Bush administration has failed to articulate a clear nuclear weapons policy nearly two decades after the Cold War. Congress is withholding some funds for national laboratories on the grounds that many programs cannot be evaluated without a clear statement of US nuclear policy.

At present, the international community faces new security challenges, among which are access to energy for growing global populations, global warming, and global-minded terrorists. Likewise, the topics discussed in St. Petersburg know no borders and require multilateral solutions. The worldwide dispersion of nuclear energy, particularly in the production and disposal of fissile material, is a key topic of debate both within the United States and in the United Nations. That is especially so given recent events in North Korea and Iran and the global economic struggle to meet future energy challenges. As two countries with mature military and civilian nuclear programs, both Russia and the United States have keen interests in playing leadership roles in regional and global security. They also remain key stakeholders in the future of the nexus among nuclear weapons, nuclear energy, and the global security order.

Shrinking Nuclear Arsenals of Cold War Adversaries

In addition to technical discussions regarding the future of nuclear energy in Russia and around the globe, discussions touched on the need for continued bilateral cooperation between the United States and Russia on further reducing their nuclear arsenals. The focus on the two countries' responsibility to living up to their end of the NPT bargain—the reduction of their respective nuclear arsenals and practicable measures both countries should take to achieve such levels—remains critical to the nonproliferation regime and the broader debate on disarmament. Most participants agreed that working with counterparts to achieve common interests was

still possible in the strategic relationship between the once-Cold War adversaries.

New leadership in Russia, and shortly in the United States, was mentioned as critical for determining whether renewed thinking on nuclear posture will match the 21st century global security realities. It was emphasized that the days of accumulating dizzying stockpiles of tens of thousands of nuclear weapons while creating and monitoring strict non-proliferation and arms control measures are long over. Significant progress has been made to shrink stockpiles over the past two decades, but as one panelist noted, much work is left to be done as we enter a new age of emerging, transnational threats.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) served as a global nuclear framework for the entire nonproliferation regime that defines and balances the benefits and obligations on states regarding nuclear issues. Fast approaching is the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which will be critical to showing continued commitment to the guidelines that the 1968 Treaty laid out and to underscoring the importance of continuing to move toward the obligations outlined in the Treaty.

Evident in the discussions was the need to remind ourselves of the original source of the arms control discussion. Historically, the United States and Russia have been the drivers of the debate. Progress on the issue into the future depends on continued bilateral success. Russia remains critical not only because, outside of the United States, it maintains the largest nuclear arsenal in the world, but also because Russia is a regional and global leader with considerable influence. With Russia's broad interests sometimes clashing with those of the West, particularly with the United States', continued progress on bilateral and multilateral steps toward increased nuclear accountability must not be overshadowed by points of bilateral friction, such as the August 2008 conflict between Russia and Georgia or by recent developments in the US missile defense system. Regardless of the current situation, maintenance of minimal levels of security guarantees that bind the nonproliferation regime is crucial.

There are several immediately apparent opportunities for US-Russia strategic cooperation. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which reduced strategic stockpiles in both countries and contains significant verification provisions, expires in 2009. While the Moscow Treaty agreement

surpasses START in terms of reductions, losing the verification and accounting of START would sever a valuable strategic communication link between the two countries and leave each much more in the dark regarding the other's activities. This unnecessarily dangerous outcome should be avoided, and while many doubt that a new treaty regime can be put in place within such a short time frame, a bilateral extension of these specific provisions would be beneficial. Negotiations on such an extension have begun, but it is likely that the final outcome will wait until a new US administration. Work should continue on setting the stage.

Another immediate opportunity is the upcoming NPT Review Conference, scheduled for the spring of 2010. Cooperative efforts on some of the points raised above, such as a mutual agreement on fuel cycle questions and continued bilateral progress on disarmament (most clearly enunciated in the "13 Practical Steps" outlined and approved in the 2000 NPT Review Conference), will go a long way toward ensuring a successful outcome to the 2010 Review Conference. The failure of the 2005 Review Conference was a worrying indication of the fissures in the nonproliferation and disarmament regime. A successful conference five years later could do much to reassure the global community.

Looking beyond the "low-hanging fruit," a series of additional measures could be pursued to improve the bilateral US-Russian strategic relationship:

- A US-Russian strategic dialogue to recognize new realities could provide the setting for discussing these issues, using the Sochi Declaration as the jumping-off point.
- Harkening back to past arms control attempts that did not come to fruition, several components of the draft START III agreement could be resuscitated:
 - Disclosure of overall strategic stockpile inventories.
 - Increase in the transparency of doctrines and strategic deployments.
 - Discussions of tactical stockpiles' transparency.
- Continued progress could be made on the withdrawal of forward-based weapons—NATO tactical weapons on the US side and western deployed weapons on the Russian side.
- In the manner of the previous unilateral actions of Presidents George H. W. Bush and Boris

Yeltsin, new unilateral actions on the part of the United States and/or Russia could help break the current inertia, while safely maintaining the strategic concerns of each:

- Further reductions below the roughly 2,000 warhead level outlined in the Moscow Treaty.
- Doctrinal changes, such as in declaratory policy (moving away from hair-trigger alert status) and regarding negative security assurances (promises to refrain from nuclear attack except as a response to a nuclear attack).
- Broader engagement could bring some improvement along the lines of several related issues:
 - Multilateral fuel cycle arrangements may provide a way out of the complete fuel cycle debate trap.
 - * As Russia has suggested, it could act as fuel provider for regions such as Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.
 - * Russia's offer to provide a long-term physical repository for spent fuel should be considered and evaluated.
 - Presenting a united front on the thorny issues of Iran and North Korea, with Russia and the United States agreeing on overall principles would go far in moving the global community toward a new conceptualization of the nonproliferation and disarmament framework.

Internal US Debate on Nuclear Weapons

With much focus of the conference given to domestic concerns within Russia, one conference panel raised issues within the US domestic nuclear debate. With the third comprehensive review of nuclear strategy yet to be crafted and US presidential elections approaching, the details of a new US nuclear strategy remain unclear. What is clear is that bipartisan consensus has been reached on a number of critical nonproliferation issues, providing political space for a new administration and Congress to take immediate action to craft the third comprehensive review of US nuclear weapons strategy.

In addition to mandating that the next president conduct a new Nuclear Posture Review, Congress has established a Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, co-chaired by former Secretaries of Defense William Perry and James Schlesinger. As it was pointed out, Congress has set three requirements on the 2009 Nuclear Posture Review. Those requirements include the congressionally empanelled Strategic Posture Commission that will complete its work in March 2009, the Nuclear Policy Review—led by the National

Security Advisor—to consider the purpose and role of nuclear weapons and due by September 2009, and a Nuclear Posture Review, led by the Secretary of Defense. The latter is to consider the size, posture, and planning for US nuclear forces and is to be completed by March 2010.

Further Opportunities on Nonproliferation

Concerns over adherence to disarmament obligations, break-out of a nuclear weapons capability, and access to sensitive fuel cycles technologies have arisen over the years. Many participants agreed that this points to a need to reinvigorate the nonproliferation regime, not eliminate it. In envisioning a global society that has greatly expanded its civilian use of nuclear technologies, countries must be willing to look creatively to means of strengthening and tightening carefully balanced provisions of the NPT. There was consensus among participants that a secure future will rely on more than a sustainable energy path. The related issues of nuclear weapons, nuclear arms control and disarmament, and the critical strategic relationship between Russia and the United States are at the center of global security considerations. The important connection among nuclear energy, our ongoing nonproliferation cooperation regarding Cold War remnants, and nuclear weapons disarmament must remain in the forefront.

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