



Arms Control and Proliferation Challenges to the Reset Policy

Conference Paper

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Introduction

The so-called New Start Treaty between Russia and the United States entered into force in February 2011. Consequently this treaty constitutes a baseline for all future bilateral, if not multilateral, efforts at arms control and nonproliferation involving these two powers, including President Obama's long-term commitment to reaching nuclear zero. Moreover, due to the saliency of the issues of tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) and missile defenses in any future negotiation, this treaty possesses great importance for the future architecture of European security as well. Likewise, as the major nuclear powers reduce their arsenals and as China's military potential grows and increasingly causes anxiety among Russian and U.S. military and political leaders, the treaty and subsequent arms control developments will possess considerable or even greater significance for Asian security, especially from Russia's standpoint.¹

Finally, this treaty is the most important and impressive manifestation of what the two governments view as the success of the Obama Administration's "reset" policy since 2009. Certainly it is the most tangible expression of bilateral cooperation under that policy framework. So if something happened to the treaty and the new regime it postulates, the reset policy would likely fall apart. Yet, despite its importance, the success of the reset policy and of future bilateral or multilateral accords on arms control and nonproliferation is by no means guaranteed. Indeed, one thing both sides as well as external observers agree about is the very fragility of the reset policy.² And it is quite likely that if this policy were to falter it would also diminish chances for further reductions in strategic arsenals among all nuclear powers, not just Russia and the United States. Thus the reasons for this fragility and the consequences for arms control and future cooperation on nonproliferation issues must be clarified.

There are many reasons for this fragility. Already by February 2011, discordant notes on European security were being heard in the European-Russian dialogue, a large part of whose current agenda is connected to issues of missile defenses and TNW indicating substantive differences of outlook on key questions and continuing mutual mistrust.³ Moreover, Russian governmental figures like Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov now say that the test of Russian relations with NATO and of NATO's "sincerity" is progress towards creating a joint missile defense system on Russia's terms.⁴ This posture is analogous to Moscow's similar statements that the success of the new treaty depends on the United States not building its missile defense system, for Russia has already formally stated that

such construction, if it continues, represents grounds for withdrawal from the treaty. Some may believe that these positions are merely negotiating tactics. But they also suggest a continuing Russian resort to the Soviet tactic of endless demands based on a sense that Moscow can keep pushing at no cost to divide NATO and induce Western concessions, while also attempting to browbeat or intimidate the West into concessions. They also suggest Moscow's continuing obsession with being able to intimidate Europe with the unimpeded threat of nuclear strikes against key European targets, and its linked belief in the possibility of using nuclear weapons in a warfighting role, however circumscribed that role might be. Nevertheless, Russia's positions on these particular issues are hardly the only reasons for concern over the fragility of the reset policy, arms control, and progress on non-proliferation.

Beyond those policy differences and the long-standing mutual suspicion between Moscow and the West as a whole (not just Washington), there exist substantial domestic constituencies in both the United States and Russia who are still driven by fundamental mistrust of each other. While those parties could not stop ratification of the treaty, major strategic issues still divide Russia and the United States as much as they unite them. For example, 39 Republican Senators cautioned the Obama Administration about allowing Russia undue influence over the United States (and NATO) missile defense program.⁵ And Republican Senate leaders are now attempting to force the Administration to lock in \$85 Billion for nuclear modernization programs.⁶ One could easily find analogous constituencies in Russian politics.

What drives these state-to-state, or NATO-Russia, and intra-state domestic struggles are deep-rooted fears of each other as well as continuing regional rivalries. Apart from the fate of arms control in the future, the potential for major regional rivalries in Eurasia, or unforeseen events like the U.S.-UK-France and then NATO air operation against Libya that began in March, 2011 have the potential to undermine, disrupt, and even possibly rupture the reset relationship. Apart from consideration of trends in arms control policy we must remember Lincoln's observation that "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me." Thus issues unrelated to the arms control agenda can seriously compromise both Russia's and the United States' capability to move forward on that agenda, as happened in 2001 to 2009. Indeed, it has generally been the case that while Moscow and Washington have been able to find agreement on issues of bilateral arms control, previous efforts at détente have faltered largely due to rivalries over regional security questions in Eurasia. This happened in the 1970s and again in the 1990s and 2000s. Today because so many of those issues remain unresolved and new ones like the NATO operation in Libya frequently crop up on the international agenda, the potential for discord remains strong.

This is especially the case as major bilateral disputes over missile defenses, TNW, and Eurasian security have only been temporarily suppressed but not resolved, while both sides' gains from the reset are of dubious durability. Furthermore, as Libya shows, Russia remains unwilling to accept the bottom line of U.S. national security policy, i.e. American leadership and (the intermittent) promotion of a global democratic order (which Russia regards as efforts at a unilateralist hegemony).⁷ Likewise, the gains for the United States may not be lasting either. As of this writing, there is no sign of lasting progress in Afghanistan, even though the United States killed Osama Bin Laden on May 2, 2011 (local time) and U.S. plans on remaining there after 2014 already arouse Russian suspicions.⁸ Moreover, as discussed below both Iranian and North Korean proliferation continue unabated, calling into question the profitability and sustainability for the United States of the reset policy.

Russia's American Obsession

Meanwhile in Russia's case, it is even fair to call its fears about U.S. power, policies, and proclivities, obsessions concerning the United States' objectives. Russian journalist Leonid Radzikhovskiy has said, "The existential void of our politics has been filled entirely by anti-Americanism" and that to renounce this rhetoric "would be tantamount to destroying the foundations of the state ideology."⁹ Similarly, Fedor Lukyanov, editor of *Russia in Global Affairs*, writes that,

The mentality of Russian politics is such that relations with the United States remain at the center of universal attention and virtually any problems are seen through an American prism. This is partially a reflection of inertia of thinking which is finding it hard to break with perceptions of Cold War times. It is partially a demonstration of a hidden desire to have a sense of our own significance. There is still a desire to compare ourselves specifically with the only superpower.¹⁰

Lukyanov also notes that both the United States and Russia see the other as being a power in decline.¹¹ And at least one Russian writer boasts that Russia bears primary responsibility for frustrating American unilateralism by shaping blocking coalitions that restrained and ultimately foiled U.S. designs.¹² This kind of thinking would conform to the contention by Kari Roberts, a Canadian scholar, that "It appears as though the common themes in Russian foreign policymaking continue to be how Russia views itself vis-à-vis the United States and its pragmatic approach to identifying and tackling foreign policy problems."¹³ For example, there is good reason to see Russia's Iranian policy as being closely tied to its perceptions of U.S. policies.

Concurrently, in Russia (if not the United States) issues connected to nuclear weapons make for major manifestations of political theater, and in both countries these issues are utilized for scoring points for or against parties in power, regardless of the truth.¹⁴ In the Russian case, this appears not just in overt and covert domestic political struggles, but also in the widespread, ingrained, and wholly unsubstantiated conclusion that the United States is essentially Russia's enemy and is trying to suppress it if not break it up and that U.S. politics, like Russian politics, are essentially a matter of dictating to smaller powers and endless conspiracies, either mainly against Russia or within the U.S. government. After all, that is the elite's own experience of Russian politics. And this habit of Russian projection of domestic phenomena and values onto the "other," i.e. the main enemy, the United States, dates back to Lenin and Stalin. This projection process institutionalizes what can only be called political or nuclear paranoia in the realm of threat assessment and political analysis, as well as the personal predilections of Putin and many other figures.¹⁵ As this writer has observed elsewhere, Russian elites still officially subscribe to a watered-down version of a Leninist threat paradigm that links together supposed internal "enemies" of the regime with outside powers and this paradigm is regularly invoked by Russian authorities whenever problems manifest themselves.¹⁶

Indeed, it is not too much to say that there is a deeply-held elite obsession with the United States as an exemplar, enemy, and potential partner, yet which is simultaneously regarded as being an a priori hostile power. This obsession with status, sovereignty, etc. and the U.S. attitude towards Russia, which is often attributed to be the mainspring of the United States' overall international policy, contrasts sharply with the growing relative indifference in U.S. elite circles to Russia and its affairs.¹⁷ Thus Richard Perle, former assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan Administration wrote about the U.S.-Russian relationship that,

In fact, that relationship has declined in importance to the point where it makes little difference whether the Russians have more nuclear weapons or fewer than they do now. The calculations of the consequences of a nuclear exchange between the United States and Russia, a proper obsession during the Cold War are no longer relevant, and despite President Obama's overblown claims, the New START Treaty is of no substantial benefit.¹⁸

This argument infuriates Russian elites, but there actually is considerable truth to it, as anyone observing the level of U.S. interest in Russia would quickly find out.

Another way of articulating this problem is to note that it is the fundamental nature of the Russian domestic political system, and a fact heightened by its juxtaposition to the U.S. and European systems, which drives the dynamic of hostility in East-West relations and fosters a situation where Russian thinking about security takes its cognitive and policy points of departure from what the German philosopher Carl Schmitt called the "presupposition of conflict."¹⁹ On a regular basis, the glaring asymmetries in the two sides' domestic political systems engender long-lasting perceptions based on mutual or reciprocal suspicion among powerful domestic constituencies that then try to obstruct meaningful progress in arms control or in overcoming outstanding differences on regional security issues in Eurasia. Consequently, any effort to determine not just Russia's posture but its evolving perspectives must take into account both the competing security orientations of the two states and the so-called values gap that fuels the mistrust, in order to understand Russian thinking to determine where accords can be reached or differences bridged and where they cannot be so resolved.

Meanwhile despite the treaty and the supposed bonhomie generated by the bilateral rapprochement, from 2010 to 2011, the supposed U.S.-NATO threat still drives Russian planning. We see this in many different expressions of Russian policy. For example, Dmitri Trenin has written that,

To demonstrate how seriously the Kremlin views that issue of U.S. missile defense capabilities, look at Russia's national security strategy, released in May (2009). The document calls a U.S. first-strike capability, which is attainable once the United States builds a seamless global missile defense system, the most serious external military threat to Russia. Short of an actual first strike, a shift in the strategic balance would allow the United States to blackmail Russia politically. This may be paranoia, but there are reasons for it. In a situation when the United States and Russia are not allies, or even strategic partners, nuclear deterrence has become the unique pillar of Moscow's strategic independence vis-à-vis Washington.²⁰

Similarly, Dmitri Suslov also argues that Moscow considers the United States as a "potential enemy" and seeks to maintain nuclear parity with it by any means and a quantitative advantage in TNW to include Anglo-French nuclear forces as hostile. Indeed, he observes that Russia is now discussing developing new types of nuclear missiles to compensate for the creation of a missile defense element within the NATO framework in Bulgaria, Romania, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Poland.²¹ In a similar vein, it is not unusual to find in the Russian press analyses purporting to argue that despite the visible denuclearization of the U.S. arsenal, Washington still has plans that it is developing for a preemptive nuclear strike against Russia.²²

By the same token we find exceptionally well-connected analysts like Sergei Karaganov, director of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, claiming that those pursuing nuclear zero are either motivated to or are unwittingly preparing trouble for Russia. Thus he writes that,

It is obvious that the philosophy of mutual confrontation has not been overcome and has even received an energetic fillip as a result of the disarmament talks [this was before the treaty—author], although we do not actually threaten each other. We no longer have the contradictions whose resolution might envisage war, and we have many common interests. The professional 'disarmers' who have become more lively as a result of the treaty's success are ready to draw us into new disarmament races which will open new "Pandora's boxes." The American coalition of antinuclear dreamers and cold cynics, who were seeking to convert the United States' non-nuclear superiority into political influence through the reduction of its nuclear arms that were cheapening it, has failed to launch movement toward a "nuclear zero." In addition, it turns out that it will not be possible to maintain even this superiority because of budget deficits in America.²³

We also see this threat assessment in the new effort to create a force to keep the United States at bay. President Dmitry Medvedev has recently decreed the creation of a new joint aerospace defense strategy and forces that combines existing air forces, anti-aircraft, and ballistic missile defense (BMD) units with Russia's early warning system and space control assets that is to be organized by the end of 2011.²⁴ The subsequent creation of a new aerospace defense force (Vozdushno-Kosmicheskaya Oborona or VKO) with 70,000 new officers can only reinforce that threat perception since it is precisely a NATO-U.S. air-space attack that is the scenario most dreaded by Russian planners.

In fact, Russian military leaders openly state that in the context of the concurrent negotiations that led to the treaty, its aftermath, and Russia's defense reform that began in 2008, the role of the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) will actually grow, despite the reductions in numbers.²⁵ Moreover, beginning in 2009, the Russian military began to modernize its nuclear arsenal with new systems, prolong existing ones, develop its command control capabilities, etc. In that context, the chief claim of the new RS-12 and RS-24 (Yars) missile systems is that they have independently targeted warheads and can evade (or so it is claimed) any Western missile defense, an attribute that allegedly fulfills former President Vladimir Putin's earlier promise of asymmetric measures against U.S. missile defenses.²⁶ Simultaneously, Russia is pursuing an agreement with the Obama Administration that would give it access to U.S. technology for interceptors designed to destroy enemy missiles on impact.

Although critics of the Administration's policy point to this effort that is consonant with the Administration's efforts to loosen export controls, reset with Russia, and move towards nuclear zero, as a perfect storm, it is equally if not even more illustrative of the schizophrenic Russian attitude that while the United States is its main enemy, it also is the purveyor of the most desired and needed Russian defense technologies. Therefore, a reset or détente-like policy with America is needed.²⁷ Even after the treaty was signed, prominent defense commentators like Mikhail Barabanov wrote that the role of nuclear deterrence in Russian relations with the United States will actually grow because,

The United States will never view Russia as a friend even in principle, because existence of other powerful countries is in principle unacceptable to America as the world hegemon, as they limit Washington's claims for world supremacy by the very fact of their existence. There are two such countries now, namely Russia and China. Actually this very fact is the main reason for tensions in the U.S.' relations with Russia and China under any regimes.²⁸

Other arguments along this line, e.g. a recent commentary by retired General M.A. Gareyev, president of the Academy of Military Sciences, typically argue that geopolitical pressures from the United States and China will only grow, that future wars may not be confined to local or regional theaters and that "regarding security, Russia has never been in such a crunch as in the early 21st century since, perhaps, 1612," a rather bizarre and even hysterical threat perception for a World War II veteran.²⁹ Nevertheless, such analyses are all too visible in Russian public commentary on defense and security issues.

Meanwhile, this fear of such a U.S. and allied aerospace attack has been a major, though hardly the only, cause of both a dramatic increase in defense spending, with these systems being a priority after nuclear weapons, and the termination of Russia's defense reform of 2008 to 2011. The Russian press frequently comments about the potential for U.S. aerospace attack both by existing weapons and new ones in design like the X-37B Orbital Aircraft.³⁰ Increasingly, Russian military writers see the air and space attack from the United States and/or NATO as an integrated operation as in Libya and Kosovo, and regard it as the primary operational threat to Russia.³¹ Since Russian analysts and officials regard U.S. conventional precision-strike capabilities as being strategic ones in their impact, they are not only striving to build an integrated aerospace defense against them but to use the

treaty process, both in 2009-10 and in the future, as a means of reducing the threat.³²

Indeed, so great is the perception of threat (before Libya) that Russia, in complete contradiction to the earlier defense reform's stated goals of reducing a bloated army and officer corps, is expanding active duty officer ranks by 70,000 new officers to this new aerospace defense formation. And it is more than doubling officer pay even as it sharply raises procurement targets. A new justification for this rise in defense spending, though it was planned no later than 2010, is the NATO intervention or air operation in Libya that officials from Premier Putin on down now claim justifies this immense expansion of defense spending. Thus a report on a recent visit to the defense plant in Votkinsk observed that,

Putin pointed out that the enormous sums being invested in the State Defense Order are being diverted from other areas. And these sacrifices have to be justified. The state-of-the-art technologies that will emerge in the OPK will subsequently cross over into civilian sectors. And the events surrounding Libya also leave the premier in no doubt regarding the necessity for and timeliness of the reinforcement of Russia's defense might. All too readily do the United States and its allies decide to employ armed force against sovereign states, Putin stressed.³³

This argument suggests that the Libyan operation will exact substantial costs upon the new reset policy of the Obama Administration and Russo-American relations. All this is happening even as Russia cannot stop the insurgency that is inflaming the entire North Caucasus and as its economy as a whole stagnates. Nor does it want to even study counter-insurgency to deal with this threat or the equally serious potential one of insurgency in Central Asia, as its response to ethnic pogroms in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 illustrates.³⁴

Clearly, Russia also sees nothing wrong with missile defenses that can presumably take out the U.S. nuclear capability, despite years of argumentation against BMD. But this new branch of the armed forces also shows the expectation of what Russian military writers believe would be the decisive first strike by the United States and Allied forces, namely a conventional aerospace and missile attack supported by space-based assets.³⁵ Therefore this enduring mistrust and melange of asymmetric cognitive approaches between Washington and Moscow are not simply a matter of differing ideas about the future trajectory of arms control and nonproliferation discussions. Rather they continue to reflect and to express a fundamental clash of values that does not preclude negotiated treaties on arms control—which, after all, date back to 1963—but which seriously impedes reaching such accords.

One major consequence of this presumption of hostility that impedes, though it does not prevent, the reaching of accords with Moscow is that deep-rooted belief of the Russian leadership that due to this presumption of hostility, Russia must remain wedded to a posture of mutual assured destruction, mutual deterrence, and an almost literal and crude argument in favor of the offense-defense reaction described in earlier generations of writing on these subjects. From Russia's standpoint, the only way it can have security vis-à-vis the United States, given that presupposition of conflict, is if America is shackled to a continuation of the mutual hostage relationship based on mutual deterrence that characterized the Cold War, so that it cannot act unilaterally. To the degree that both sides are shackled to this mutual hostage relationship, Russia gains a measure of restraint or even of control over U.S. policy. For as Patrick Morgan has observed, this kind of classic deterrence "cuts through the complexities" of needing to have a full understanding of or dialogue with the other side. Instead it enables a state, in this case Russia, to "simplify by *dictating* the opponent's preferences."³⁶ (Italics in the original.) Thanks to such a mutual hostage relationship, Russian leaders see all other states who wish to attack them or even to exploit internal crises like Chechnya as being deterred. Therefore, nuclear weapons remain a critical component in the ensuring of strategic stability and, as less openly stated, in giving Russia room to act freely in world affairs.³⁷

Russian Chief of Staff General Nikolai Makarov warned that,

The factor of parity should be accompanied by the factor of stability, if the U.S. missile defense begins to evolve; it will be aimed primarily at destroying our nuclear missile capabilities. And then the balance of force will be tipped in favor of the United States. With the existing and maintained parity of strategic offensive means, the global missile defense being created by the United States will be able to have some impact on the deterrence capabilities of the Russian strategic nuclear force already in the medium term. This may upset the strategic balance of force and lower the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. Although missile defense is a defensive system, its development will basically boost [the] arms race.³⁸

Neither is this just rhetoric. A recent article also points out that current Russian nuclear programs aim to overcome or even neutralize U.S. missile defenses.

The impression is that the Kremlin no longer believes in America's military omnipotence. Russia responded to the ultimatum with a maiden flight of its latest T-50 fighter and rearmament of its anti-aircraft defense system with T-400 Triumph complexes. [This may be referring to what we call

the S-400 SAM--author]. To all appearances, Triumphs are ASAT weapons also capable of intercepting and destroying inbound ballistic warheads. Continuation of Bulava missile tests was proclaimed as well. Work on the missile will be brought to its logical end, sooner or later. Specialists are even working on a concept of the future strategic bombers that will replace TU-95s and Tu-160s one fine day.³⁹

Since Moscow rigorously adheres to this mutual hostage concept it cannot trust the United States, and any unilateral U.S. advance in defenses must be compensated by greater Russian offensive and defensive capabilities. For example, as noted above, missile defenses should lead Russia to procure missiles that can evade any defense. The following citations demonstrate this deep-rooted belief in the mutual hostage relationship, deterrence of the enemy, and the action-reaction process regarding armaments among the Russian political and military leadership. First, Lavrov told an interviewer in February 2007 that,

Our main criterion is ensuring the Russian Federation's security and maintaining strategic stability as much as possible. We have started such consultations already. I am convinced that we need a substantive discussion on how those lethal weapons could be curbed on the basis of mutual trust and balance of forces and interests. We will insist particularly on this approach. We do not need just the talk that we are no longer enemies and therefore we should not have restrictions for each other. This is not the right approach. It is fraught with an arms race, in fact, because, it is very unlikely that either of us will be ready to lag behind a lot.⁴⁰

Here, Lavrov signaled Russia's unwillingness to leave a mutually adversarial relationship with America and its presupposition of mutual hostility as reflected in both sides' nuclear deployments. Similarly, Alexei Arbatov then ridiculed the Bush Administration's view, stated by Ambassador Linton Brooks, the former U.S. arms control negotiator, that because the two sides are no longer adversaries, detailed arms control talks are no longer necessary, as either naiveté or outright hypocrisy.⁴¹

Since then, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov subsequently stated that,

Issues of strategic offensive and defensive arms are inextricably linked. To deny this relationship is meaningless because it is the essence of relations between the countries that have the appropriate potential in both areas. An augmented capacity of one of the parties in the realm of missile defense is automatically echoed in the form of plans and decisions of the other party in the realm of strategic offensive arms. And not even obliquely, but in the most direct way what is happening in the field of missile defense and U.S. relations with its East European allies on this topic has an impact on our START follow-on negotiations. Without recognition of the relationship between strategic and offensive defensive arms, there can be no such treaty, it cannot take place.⁴²

Likewise, Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov told the Munich Security conference in February 2010,

It is impossible to speak of reducing nuclear potentials in earnest while a state that possesses nuclear weapons is developing and deploying systems of defense against means of delivery of nuclear warheads that other states possess. It is like the sword and shield theory, where both are continuously developing with the characteristics and resources of each of them being kept in mind.⁴³

Putin's late 2009 remarks in Vladivostok fit right into this outlook.

The problem is that our American partners are developing missile defenses, and we are not, But the issues of missile defense and offensive weapons are closely interconnected ... There could be a danger that having created an umbrella against offensive strike systems, our partners may come to feel completely safe. After the balance is broken, they will do whatever they want and grow more aggressive.⁴⁴

And this outlook has continued since the treaty was signed. As part of its ratification process the Duma formally stated that both parties to the treaty accept that strategic offensive weapons and defenses are interrelated and that this relationship becomes more important as reductions in offensive systems occurs.⁴⁵ Similarly, Ivanov, speaking at the 2011 Munich Security conference, stated that the creation of missile defenses leads to the development of strategic offensive weapon and thus a new arms race. Any efforts to build a shield inevitably lead to comparable efforts to build a sword.⁴⁶

Regional Security in Eurasia in Russian Thinking

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that many Russian writers rightly attribute the persistence of deep mistrust despite our being 20 years past the end of the Cold War to the frozen mentality of deterrence and/or the mentality of a containment policy.⁴⁷ Thanks to all these factors that go into Russian thinking about arms control

and nuclear weapons, the linkages between competing regional security policies and programs in Eurasia and the two states' orientations to those issues are invariably linked with the agenda of arms control and nonproliferation negotiations. To cite some obvious examples: The current discussions on connecting Russia to the United States and NATO missile defense programs or the linkage between progress on the CFE treaty negotiations and the issue of TNW—including all of Russia—testifies to the abiding, if not growing, importance of these regional and strategic linkages.

In particular for the Russian Federation, this linkage between regional security and strategic agendas has become a paramount feature of overall Russian thinking about Russian security in both Europe and Asia. As Jacob Kipp has written,

For Russia, which inherited the Soviet nuclear arsenal, but has faced a serious change in its international position, the nuclear equation is, in fact, shaped by Russia's status as a regional power in a complex Eurasian security environment, where nuclear issues are not defined exclusively by the U.S.-Russian strategic nuclear equation but by security dynamics involving interactions with Russia's immediate periphery. On the one hand, Russia's security responses have been shaped by a post-Soviet decade of sharp internal political crises, economic transformation, social instability, demographic decline, and the collapse of conventional military power. The impact of these developments has been uneven across Russia, leading to very distinct security environments which have demanded regional responses. The initial focus of security concerns for both the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation was primarily upon European security. This was the primary focus of the U.S.-Soviet strategic competition and the place where its militarization was most evident.⁴⁸

Consequently, despite the treaty and the evident satisfaction of both parties with the current course of policy the problems stemming from this fundamental disparity between them have not been overcome and the reset policy is therefore subject to reversal, particularly if issues of regional security in Eurasia lead one or both sides to revert back to the presupposition of a conflicted relationship. If we are to understand the cognitive mainsprings of Russian thinking and security policy, we must further clarify this point of the nexus between regional and global security in Russian thinking and policy.

Fedor Lukyanov, like many others, has observed that while Russia has lost its global perspective, it seeks to retrieve it.⁴⁹ Andrei Tsygankov further amplifies this observation by stating that although Russia seeks to remain a regional power in Europe, the Caucasus, Central and East Asia, it acts globally. In other words, it uses its geographical location astride several key Eurasian regions to force itself into both regional balances and thus leverage itself into being accepted as a global actor. To the extent that it feels itself excluded, as it did, by the United States, from participating in key regional security fora, policies, or institutions, it pursues a policy of resistance using, among other instruments of power, its nuclear weapons.⁵⁰ As a result, and following Kipp's remarks above, from Russia's standpoint there can be no purely regional crisis in the key regions where it is situated or where it deems itself to have important interests. Consequently the potential for any crisis to escalate, even against its participants' intentions, creates the ever-present possibility of a global crisis, if not conflict, where nuclear arms provide either the background music or are the primary instrumental soloists.⁵¹

This inherent linkage from the regional to the global level also shapes Russian approaches to the future agenda of arms control. Apart from the perceived linkages from regional to strategic level issues in Moscow's perspective, several prospective issues for future negotiations are intrinsically linked in Russian eyes. For example, the United States (and NATO) have long since argued that the next round of arms control treaty negotiations deal with the issues of TNW in Europe. Moscow has equally consistently rejected that stance, saying that countries owning or possessing TNW must first remove them to their home territory before any such talks could begin, thereby leaving Europe denuded of them. But now, according to Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov, Russia argues that although it has repeatedly called on other nuclear states to remove TNW from abroad and leave them at home, restrict maneuvers with them on the territory of non-nuclear states, and disassemble structures for their prompt deployment abroad, nonstrategic nuclear weapons "grow increasingly outside NATO and Russia." In his words, North Korea, Pakistan, Israel and China are Russia's neighbors and their TNW, particularly China's, provide a threat.⁵² While Ivanov's remarks should enlighten us concerning what Russia regards as its real strategic borders, what also is noteworthy here is the announcement again, even if implicitly, that China and Israel are potential enemies and Pakistan is both a potential enemy and proliferation threat.

Beyond the fact that this statement reflects a comparable presupposition of conflict with regard to all these states from Moscow's standpoint, Ivanov's remarks also reflects Moscow's posture as well, that in any future round of arms control talks, all nuclear states, not least China should be at the table.⁵³ Makarov too has advocated bringing all nuclear powers to the table in the next negotiating round.⁵⁴ And now the Foreign Ministry has followed suit, saying that the five major nuclear powers must join the next round of arms reductions talks.⁵⁵ Thus, progress on TNW on our agenda must somehow take account of the growing threat Russia perceives from China's

increasing TNW threat as well as its steadily developing conventional missiles and forces.⁵⁶ Other analogous linkages may well exist with regard to Russian perspectives on arms control issues. Again, for example, as Sam Nunn has argued, if there is to be success on curbing proliferation of nuclear (and chemical and biological) weapons, multilateral cooperation is essential. Thus, other nuclear states must be fully committed partners.⁵⁷ Therefore virtually every conceivable issue will play into the agenda of any future multilateral arms control negotiation, allowing any of those states to obstruct nonproliferation measures to secure its nuclear agenda making cooperation on nonproliferation even more complicated than those in the past have been.

Ivanov's remarks fall into a broader context, namely that of the developing or growing Russian anxiety about Chinese military power and Russia's lack of anything near an adequate conventional response to it. There are multiplying signs of this anxiety and of Russia's efforts to reposition its conventional forces to deal with it. But of course, ultimately the TNW and other nuclear systems are the great equalizer in this theater, i.e. the Russian Far East [RFE].⁵⁸ By the time Moscow published its new defense doctrine in 2010, it had begun to consider the rise of China, not only as an example that could be emulated but also as a potential threat to the RFE. Thus the doctrine not only reiterated the long-standing invocation of a NATO threat, it also added new threats that appear to be focused, albeit without saying so, on China. Specifically, the 2010 doctrine cites a "show of military force with provocative objectives in the course of exercises on the territories of states contiguous with the Russian Federation or its allies" and "stepping up the activities of the armed forces of individual states (groups of states) involving partial or complete mobilization and the transitioning of these states' organs and military command and control to wartime operating conditions."⁵⁹

Commentators here and abroad interpreted this language as pointing to the Russian perception of an increased potential Chinese threat based on the modernization of the Chinese armed forces and on exercises in 2009 that seemed to presage a possible mission directed against the RFE.⁶⁰ Indeed, in 2009, commanders for the first time began to speak publicly, undoubtedly with Moscow's assent, about a genuine military threat from China.⁶¹ So while one motive for the Vostok- 2003, and possibly the more recent Vostok -2010 exercises may be connected with the need to defend energy deposits in the RFE, a second motive clearly had to do with the rise of China.⁶²

Vostok-2010 ended with a simulated tactical nuclear weapon strike on China to repel a ground invasion of Russia. Meanwhile the extensive American coverage of China's new Stealth Fighter, the J-20 and its naval construction program, including advanced anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs) overlooks the fact that all these capabilities could be used against Russia as well. And China has its own TNW as well as thousands of conventional and nuclear missiles that could easily be targeted on Russia. As Jacob Kipp observed in 2010,⁶³

A year ago, informed Russian defense journalists still spoke of the PLA [China's People's Liberation Army] as a mass industrial army seeking niche advanced conventional capabilities. Looking at the threat environment that was assumed to exist under Zapad 2009, the defense journalist Dmitri Litovkin spoke of Russian forces confronting three distinct types of military threats: "an opponent armed to NATO standards in the Georgian-Russian confrontation over South Ossetia last year. In the eastern strategic direction Russian forces would likely face a multi-million-man army with a traditional approach to the conduct of combat: linear deployments with large concentrations of manpower and firepower on different axis. In the southern strategic direction Russian forces expect to confront irregular forces and sabotage groups fighting a partisan war against "the organs of Federal authority," i.e., Internal troops, the border patrol, and the FSB [Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation].⁶⁴ By spring of this year, a number of those involved in bringing about the "new look" were speaking of a PLA that was moving rapidly towards a high-tech conventional force with its own understanding of network-centric warfare.⁶⁵ Moreover, the People's Liberation Army conducted a major exercise "Stride-2009" which looked like a rehearsal for military intervention against Central Asia and/or Russia to some Russian observers.⁶⁶

Beginning in 2009, overt discussions of the potential Chinese military threat began to surface in the military press. These statements were deliberately planned to call attention to Chinese military prowess.⁶⁷ And they all pointed to the threat of an invasion, not just by a large, multi-million-man army, but also, as Roger McDermott observes, to the example derived from China's military modernization that has led China to an informatizing, if not informatized, high-tech, capable military in just over a decade.⁶⁸ In a dilapidated and remote theater that is an economy of Force Theater with vast distances inadequate infrastructure, and a declining industrial and manpower base,

In the first instance, in any military conflict the Russian VVS (Air Forces) cannot guarantee air superiority against the Chinese. Moreover, they do not possess sensor-fused cluster munitions, though in theory their surface-to-surface missiles (SSM's) could deliver cluster munitions depending on whether the missile troops remained intact long enough. Faced with an advancing PLA division or

divisions' early use of TNW would present a viable option.⁶⁹

In this context, what is particularly telling about Russia and China's relations regarding the Arctic and Pacific energy deposits is the new trend in Russian naval policy; Russia's new plans for naval construction, especially in the RFE also have access to the Arctic in mind.⁷⁰ Indeed, experts see the primary direction or mission of four new directions for the fleet and its new modernization program as being the protection of Russia's access to oil, gas, and other mineral reserves or deposits on Russia's continental shelf. All in all 36 submarines and 40 surface ships are to be added by 2020.⁷¹ But beyond this primary mission and the other three directions for future naval construction these plans betray a reorientation of Russia's naval emphasis to the Asia-Pacific, and to a new emphasis on meeting the challenge posed by China's naval buildup.⁷² This naval construction is supposed to help Russia compensate for its vast conventional inferiority in numbers and quality vis-à-vis China in the RFE.⁷³

Here we should understand that Russia's forces, particularly those in the North and the Far East may be deployed on a "swing basis" where either the fleet or air forces in one theater move to support the fleet or air forces in the other. Russia has carried out exercises whereby one fleet moves to the aid of the other under such a concept.⁷⁴ Likewise, Russia has rehearsed scenarios for airlifting ground forces from the North to the Pacific in order to overcome the "tyranny of distance" that makes it very difficult for Russia to sustain forces in Northeast Asia. And the revival of regular air patrols over the oceans have clearly involved the Pacific-based units of the Long Range Aviation forces as well as some of the air forces based in the North and Arctic who fly in the areas around Alaska.⁷⁵ Indeed, nuclear exercises moving forces or targeting weapons from the North to the Pacific or vice versa have also occurred.⁷⁶ To the degree that Arctic missions become part of the regular repertoire of the Russian armed forces, they will also to some degree spill over into the North Pacific. And this all preceded Vostok-2010. Since then, China's military program has continued apace. Consequently new Chinese developments like the conventional IRBM (Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile) DF-16, the new ASBM, etc. threaten not just the United States and its allies but also a whole range of Russian military targets deep into Russia.⁷⁷

Russia's Force Modernization and Positions on the New Nuclear Agenda

The foregoing perspectives are essential to the understanding of Russian thinking as we discuss possibilities for future arms control negotiations involving Russia. And from February-March 2011, Russian spokesmen outlined Russia's positions on almost all the outstanding issues for a future arms control negotiation. Russia's positions concerning the evolving nuclear agenda as well as its ongoing weapons program reflect its assessment not only of the situation created by the new treaty but also its assessment of current or future threats and longstanding Russian policy objectives.

First of all, Russia is currently undertaking its newest in a series of long-term defense modernization projects. The State Armament Program submitted to Medvedev and the Duma for 2011-20 now totals 20.7 trillion rubles (\$646 Billion) of which 19.4 trillion rubles goes to the needs of the Ministry of Defense. Seventy-nine percent of that total will go to the acquisition and purchase of high-tech armaments (including nuclear weapons which remain a priority). This represents a tripling of the current 2006-15 program that supposedly provides for delivery of 1300 models of equipment and armament of which 220 require modernization or creation of new capacities.⁷⁸ Within this new program that also entails the comprehensive modernization of the entire machine tool sector along with the high-tech sector; the state order (Goszakaz) for 2011 will go up by a third to 1.5 trillion rubles in 2011 and then another third by 2013 to 2 trillion rubles.⁷⁹ Right now there is a serious debate regarding the nuclear sector. Many sectors of defense industry possess the ambition to virtually double Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) production through 2020 by modernizing production lines and producing heavy liquid-propellant missiles and spending nearly 77 billion rubles towards these ends.⁸⁰ Russia aims to modernize its quantitative arsenal to conform to the new treaty's requirements. Furthermore because it maintains that the United States has not definitively settled upon a missile defense model (which is strange given the Administration's policy) it allegedly needs to modernize qualitatively to have designs that can counter space weapons, a set of weapons that Moscow apparently fully believes the United States intends to create.⁸¹

Therefore, one way to meet these demands is to create a heavy liquid-propelled ballistic missile, an issue that has touched off a major debate among missile designers with First Deputy Defense Minister Vladimir Popovkin supporting it and Yuri Solomonov, a famous missile designer at the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology, opposing it. In opposition to the calls for this new missile are the designers of the Topol-M, Yars, and Bulava solid propellant systems. In other words, Russia's nuclear program, although work has started on the liquid-propellant system, is in the throes of a debate, so its final outcome and prognosis remains somewhat unclear at this time.⁸² Despite this as yet unresolved debate, the current expectation is that the ultimate design will copy that of the Satan (SS-18 ICBM) and be insensitive to the effect of an electromagnetic (EMP) impulse, launchable from a silo even after a missile has hit it, and capable of carrying a large complex of defense penetration aids so that it can evade missile defenses and deliver a ten-ton combat payload to any point in the world. It also will include ten

individually-guided warheads of the megaton class, i.e. it will be MIRVed.⁸³ These plans date back at least to 2008, when it was first announced that the new RS-24 would be MIRVed.⁸⁴

Meanwhile Deputy Defense Minister Vladimir Popovkin is moving forward and outlining a huge Russian conventional and nuclear rearmament program through 2020.

Popovkin said Russia plans to develop a new liquid-fueled heavy ICBM to carry up to ten warheads, and having a service life of up to 35 years. Former RVSN Commander General-Lieutenant Andrey Shvaychenko talked about a new liquid heavy missile as far back as late 2009, and the issue's been debated in the Russian military press since. Popovkin said the Defense Ministry plans to accept the Bulava SLBM and the first two *Borey*-class SSBNs this year. There will be 4-5 Bulava launches this year. Recall [that] to date only seven of 14 Bulava tests have been successful. Addressing the missile's past failures, Popovkin said there were many deviations from the design documentation during production. He also said Russia plans to build eight SSBNs to carry Bulava by 2020. He was unclear if this includes the first two *Borey*-class boats.⁸⁵

It is clear that this construction program contemplates not just deterrence but also a war using nuclear weapons, albeit in what is possibly a restricted number of contingencies, but clearly premised on a U.S./NATO attack. Indeed, as Popovkin said in another interview, the first priority is the strategic deterrent which includes nuclear weapons, early warning missile and aerospace defense (i.e. the new VKO force).

The first priority [is] the strategic deterrent force. They have two components: the strategic nuclear forces, as well as a system of missile warning, missile defense and aerospace defense. The second priority [is] a long list of high-precision weapons, whose use is based on information support from space. Third: automated command and control. In the next two or three years [it is proposed] to link all species of ACS in a single management system. Modernize it so it was with an open architecture and it allows you to build the capacity in any direction.⁸⁶

Finally, as part of the nuclear program the General Staff commissioned research institutes to determine how many nuclear warheads are needed for a guaranteed retaliatory strike against a potential enemy, presumably to confirm the General Staff's earlier insistence on 1,500 warheads as an irreducible minimum under present circumstances.⁸⁷ These studies and building programs obviously have a great deal of bureaucratic muscle and financing behind them so in practical terms it will be very difficult to win Russian assent to large reductions in strategic forces until and unless other nuclear powers including but besides the United States, also agree to them. This makes attaining the goal of nuclear zero anytime soon a very dubious proposition.

However, beyond this set of considerations there are also other reasons for suspecting that despite the effort to complete a huge conventional upgrading of the Russian military that Russia in 2015-20 will continue relying much more on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. Basically it has already become clear that the defense industry, which has never been able to provide the armed forces with its requirements, has again failed as of 2010. Recent articles make the extent of this failure very clear. Specifically,

Last year, for example, they did not get a single nuclear submarine cruiser, although the Yuri Dolgoruky with 12 Bulava missiles on board and a multirole Yasen-class nuclear submarine were to have been commissioned at the very least, and only five out of 11 communications and reconnaissance satellites were sent into space. Nor did the fleet get a project 20380 corvette. Only six out of nine Yak-130 aircraft planned for delivery were received and just 78 out of 151 BMP-3 infantry fighting vehicles.⁸⁸

Yet typically nobody received a reprimand for this, confirming that "non-fulfillment of the Army's orders in the defense industry has become the norm for our country."⁸⁹ Under the circumstances the planned modernization of the forces' armaments remains a dubious proposition. But in turn that raises the question of how the military is to fulfill President Dmitry Medvedev's 2008 directive that by 2020 Russia should have,

A guaranteed nuclear deterrent system for various military and political circumstances must be provided by 2020 ... We must ensure air superiority, precision strikes on land and sea targets, and the timely deployment of troops. We are planning to launch large-scale production of warships, primarily, nuclear submarines with cruise missiles and multi-purpose attack submarines... We will also build an air and space defense network.⁹⁰

Furthermore, the planned conventional modernization also seemed to imply an interest in exploring the possibilities for more sophisticated conventional means of deterrence. Thus, former Deputy Defense Minister and current Duma member Andrei Kokoshin called the Severodvinsk class of fourth generation nuclear powered but conventionally armed submarines a non-nuclear deterrent, suggesting this interest in non-nuclear forms of deterrence and of a concept of deterrence "ladders" some or most of which would only require the use or display

of conventional systems.⁹¹ Absent sufficient capabilities of this kind, Russia will have little choice but to rely predominantly on nuclear deterrence against the United States (NATO), China, and potential proliferators in its vicinity. Yet as Medvedev and Defense Minister Serdyukov have publicly said, Moscow will not even be able to reach the treaty's limits for nuclear weapons by 2020, forcing it both to modernize its existing arsenal, extend existing weapons past that date, and hope for the best regarding conventional systems till 2020.⁹² Therefore the already visible failure of Russia's modernization project adds another to a long series of question marks that must be put against the idea of obtaining serious nuclear reductions in the foreseeable future.

Indeed, Kokoshin has said that nuclear deterrence will remain the keystone of Russian defense for the future, that there are no conceivable alternatives to nuclear deterrence even in the distant future (i.e. the presupposition of hostility with both the West and China, not to mention everyone else cited here will continue till then). Therefore, Russia must continue modernizing its land, sea, and air-based nuclear weapons and its tactical and operational-tactical nuclear systems too.⁹³

Russian Perceptions of the New Treaty

Russian perceptions of where it stands as a result of the new treaty also represent an obstacle to progress because they are firmly ensconced in the matrix of the mutual hostage and presumption of hostility mentioned above. Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov, who negotiated the treaty, calls it the gold standard for future treaty negotiations.⁹⁴ He and his colleagues certainly regard it favorably but largely because it reduced the United States' threat and strengthened Russia's relative position, not because it enhanced international security. Lavrov echoed Antonov's description of the treaty.⁹⁵ Serdyukov stated that not only does the treaty provide a guaranteed level of deterrence adequate to Russia's security; it allows Russia to update 70 percent of strategic carriers and warheads or 90 percent of those belonging to the Strategic Missile Troops, while America must reduce its arsenal. Like Lavrov, he said that if the United States continues to build missile defenses the treaty allows Russia to make "an adequate response, i.e. withdraw from the treaty."⁹⁶ Medvedev's national security advisor, Sergei Prikhodko, voiced his approval of the clauses limiting deployed delivery vehicles and launch systems and the incorporation of heavy bombers into those categories that limit the United States' breakout potential, a key Russian demand.⁹⁷

Other commentators cheered the reduction of inspection visits to each other's facilities, which they regarded as burdensome and as a means of transmitting intelligence data to Washington. Therefore they also cheered the elimination of the requirement for transmitting remote telemetry of test launches of new missiles for the same reasons. Russia also secured exemption for monitoring for road-mobile Topol land-based ICBMs. And getting the United States to count some conventional carriers as strategic ones equating them to nuclear weapons in line with Russian assessments of those systems is another positive outcome from Russia's point of view. Yet Russia's capabilities for building up its arsenal were not affected. At the same time of course, the treaty was a compromise and reflected some American gains.⁹⁸ Similarly Ruslan Pukhov, a noted defense commentator, observes that these benefits for Russia along with the overall reduction of both sides' nuclear potential are very beneficial for Russia and that, "It is obvious that this is not very beneficial for the United States on the whole."⁹⁹ Likewise, Alexei Arbatov argues that the treaty limits both U.S. nuclear and conventional strategic forces and gives Russia means of leverage upon the United States.¹⁰⁰ For these reasons, given the Russian sense of having won or at least prevailed in the negotiations, it is hardly surprising that Antonov said further disarmament is contingent upon both sides implementing the treaty (presumably with the hidden implication that should the United States build defenses, Russia might exercise its option for withdrawal).¹⁰¹ Unfortunately it is precisely these Russian gains that have aroused the ire of Republican opponents of the treaty in the United States and underscores the continuing bilateral mistrust that could yet poison the reset policy and future arms control talks, not to mention progress towards a nuclear zero.

Finally, in advance of a new round of negotiations there is a decided difference in the contending approaches of Russia and the United States. As recently reported in connection with Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov's recent visit to the United States,

While U.S. officials have focused publicly on a nuclear treaty that would cover reducing the numbers of not just strategic arms but also shorter-range tactical nuclear weapons, Ryabkov talked first about turning to the control of conventional arms in Europe and reaching some predictability of forces on the continent. He said shaping the military relationships on the ground, where Russia has vastly fewer troops and less equipment, would relate to the future of nuclear disarmament. He [Ryabkov] talked about the difficulty of finding the correct "platform" for any future agreements, saying that weapons in outer space, non-nuclear strategic weapons, other nuclear nations and missile defenses also have to be considered.¹⁰²

This last impediment to future reductions and progress to nuclear zero is hardly insurmountable in and of itself.

But added to the existing obstacles, and to the pressure of unforeseen events like Libya, all of these obstacles to further reductions represent serious obstructions to negotiations toward that end.

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