

**Prospects for U.S.-Russian Nonproliferation
Cooperation Under Bush and Putin**

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Since September 11, the relationship between the United States and Russia has evolved significantly. At the Crawford summit in November 2001, President George W. Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin officially declared a "new relationship" between the United States and Russia.¹ A significant portion of this new relationship has centered on nonproliferation matters, which have been declared a priority by both presidents. In fighting terrorist threats, Bush and Putin have "agreed to enhance bilateral and multilateral action to stem the export and proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological materials, related technologies, and delivery systems as a critical component of the battle to defeat international terrorism."²

The rapidly changing international security environment has caused a convergence of the threat assessment of both states, improving the prospects for U.S: Russian nonproliferation cooperation. Although the war on terrorism has enhanced the bilateral relationship between Bush and Putin and made agreement on nonproliferation matters more likely, disagreements between the two administrations still exist. However, some of the previous serious disputes between the nations, such as over the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty, have been less divisive than predicted prior to the September 11 attacks, showing the degree to which Putin values cooperation with the United States. Nevertheless, Russia has received few tangible benefits from its cooperation with the United States. Although the United States did recognize Russia as a market economy in June 2002 and has agreed to assist Russia with energy exploration, Washington has generally pursued unilateralist policies, ignoring Russian concerns. Given that Putin has received significant criticism for his foreign policy concessions and that he has valid concerns about the Russian

economy, Washington would be wise to help Russia achieve some of its goals as well in order to cement this partnership. This is an important window of opportunity for a new cooperative U.S.: Russian relationship that could combat proliferation and address other joint concerns.

This paper outlines the positions of Bush and Putin and other key decision makers on nonproliferation matters in three areas: preventing horizontal proliferation, preventing the diversion of nuclear materials or weapons, and furthering adherence to nonproliferation regimes, highlighting where cooperation between the United States and Russia is likely and where disagreements may prevent close cooperation.

President Putin

The prospects for U.S.: Russian nonproliferation cooperation are probably better than they have ever been under President Putin. Despite being viewed as strongly anti-Western, Putin has endorsed far-reaching cooperation with the United States.³ He has made it clear through words and actions that cooperation between the two countries is a greater priority than most other matters in Russian foreign policy. Although there are some points of disagreement between Putin and Bush, Putin has shown a willingness to work in all three areas of nonproliferation and has made significant concessions that his predecessors were unwilling to make.

Statement of the Threat

Russia's National Security Concept, signed in January 2000, declared that "the primary task in the area of maintaining national security" is to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems.⁴ The inclusion of this

statement reflects the priorities of the Russian elite and Russian society, as well as Putin's personal views. Putin has also sought additional U.S. funding to secure Russian nuclear materials and eliminate excess plutonium to ensure that these materials are not leaked to terrorists or third party states.⁵ Many of the countries that the United States has identified as potential proliferators - often termed "states of concern" by Washington - would also pose a threat to Russia if they were to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missile capabilities. However, Putin was not pleased with Bush's identification of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an "axis of evil" in his January 2002 State of the Union address, and he argued that the United States has not made a sufficient case for the threat that these nations pose.⁶ Furthermore, U.S. claims that states were either "with or against" the United States in this fight showed a lack of consideration for Russia's position as a clear partner of the United States in its war on terrorism, yet against expansion of the war to these states with whom Russia has strong economic and historical ties.

Although nonproliferation has become a greater priority for Russia, Putin's main concern is the Russian economy. Because Russia still faces economic instability, it is likely that even with the increased attention to nonproliferation, Russia will still look to the United States to provide much of the funding for its nonproliferation initiatives. Economics are also, in part, driving Russia's nuclear policy. As much of Russia's strategic arsenal ages, it would be very costly to extend the life of these weapons or build replacements. By cutting its arsenal, Russia saves much of this cost and has the benefit of U.S. cooperative nonproliferation assistance for dismantlement. Additionally, Russia has made several economically -driven decisions, most notably in Iraq and Iran, that have evolved into disputes with the United States and limited U.S.- Russian cooperation.

Stopping proliferation also feeds into Russia's desire to maintain its great power status by allowing Russia to maintain its position as one of the few nuclear powers in the world. Additionally, as put by deputy director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, Dmitri Trenin, the events on September 11 "drew a line between present day and the end of the Cold War, making the Cold War not simply history, but ancient history."⁷ This shift to a post-post-Cold War world gave Putin the flexibility to pursue a stronger relationship with the United States without losing the support of the anti-Western coalition that had gotten him elected. Furthermore, the newfound positive attention by the United States, the U.S. need for Russian help in the war on terrorism, and the new bilateral relationship added to Russia's great power status.

Preventing State Proliferation

Russia remains at least rhetorically committed to the prevention of new nuclear states. The Russian leadership continues to claim that it has never transferred materials that have violated international nonproliferation treaties. However, the United States argues that Russia has leaked key nuclear and ballistic missile technologies to Iran, India, and perhaps China. Though the Russian leadership previously disputed this claim, Putin has acknowledged that violations of export restrictions have occurred in the past. Furthermore, he has pledged to tighten Russian export controls to make sure that governmental transfers of sensitive technologies do not happen in the future. The administration of export controls has been put directly under Putin's control, demonstrating his dedication to resolving this dispute and ameliorating U.S. concerns, yet the United States remains "uncertain" about "the Russian government's commitment, willingness, and ability to curb proliferation-related

transfers."⁸ Furthermore, Russia still plans to assist Iran with construction of the Bushehr nuclear reactor despite U.S. objections.

Diversion of Nuclear Materials

Thus far, Putin has appeared more interested than his predecessors in securing Russian materials that might otherwise be subject to unauthorized use or theft. Putin remains interested in expanding U.S. nonproliferation assistance in Russia, which would help to secure Russian nuclear materials from theft and dispose of existing stockpiles. This program is limited both by funding and by political issues stemming from Russia's unwillingness to open up all of its nuclear facilities to American experts.

Additionally, for the first time, Russia has accepted some responsibility for nuclear materials that originated in the Soviet Union during the Cold War and now remain in dozens of countries around the world. In August 2002, Russia cooperated in the transport and storage of enriched uranium from a vulnerable site in Yugoslavia where the material was a likely target for terrorist theft. Russia will down blend the uranium for use in nuclear reactors despite earlier refusal to do so.⁹ Putin also recently pushed legislation through the Duma that will allow Russia to import spent fuel. By allowing Russia to assume control of potentially insecure nuclear materials around the world, this will allow the consolidation of spent fuel and reduce the likelihood that these materials could be diverted.

Finally, Putin has called the disposal of excess plutonium "essential."¹¹ September 2000, Russia signed the U.S. Russia Plutonium Disposition Agreement, committing it to convert 34 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium into a proliferation-resistant form by burning it as MOX (mixed oxide) fuel over the next twenty years.¹³ However, Russia is currently behind schedule for implementing this agreement, due largely to a lack of long

term funding commitments by the international community, specifically the G8. It is estimated that the twenty-year program will cost between 1.7 and 1.9 billion dollars, only about a third of which has been pledged thus far.¹⁵ In addition, disputes remain over supervision of the program's implementation, the role of the donor countries, and the amount of the funding that Russia will provide. Although numerous obstacles stem from the G8 countries, Russia is also responsible for delays. Despite the appropriation of significant U.S. funding for plutonium disposition, Russia has left much of this money unspent, making a question of how dedicated Moscow is to eliminating excess nuclear material.¹⁶

Nonproliferation Regimes

President Putin speaks strongly of the power of nonproliferation regimes and has declared that it is important for Russia to abide by them. However, his commitment to international regimes is variable. He argues publicly that the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) has played a significant role in preventing proliferation and claims that, overall, it has been fairly successful in preventing the transfer of nuclear materials and technologies to potential proliferators.

Putin has been a strong promoter of strategic nuclear reductions, a step that works toward NPT disarmament goals. Almost immediately after assuming the job of acting president, Putin issued a statement that emphasized the importance of bilateral arms control. In May 2000, he ratified START II (which was ratified by the Duma in April of that year) and began to press for a dialogue on START III, including nuclear reductions to 1500 strategic warheads.¹⁷ Even if Russia's nuclear reductions are largely pragmatic, continued progress toward disarmament (as outlined in the NPT) is important if other states are to be convinced to remain non-nuclear.

While not directly violating its NPT commitments, Russia has used the NPT as a justification of its nuclear cooperation with Iran, including the building of at least one nuclear reactor at Bushehr. Although nuclear cooperation may take place with NPT members in good standing, the United States believes that Iran intends to build nuclear weapons and is thus violating the spirit of the NPT. Russian officials even sometimes agree in private that Iran's intentions are to build nuclear weapons, which would break its NPT commitments.¹⁸ Thus, Russia seems to value the economic benefits of nuclear cooperation over the nonproliferation goals underlying the NPT regime.

Despite Russia's technical compliance with NPT mandates, Russia's commitment to other regimes has been less conscientious. In early 2001, Russia sold low enriched uranium (LEU) to India in violation of its Nuclear Suppliers Group obligations and despite U.S. objections. This violation, especially against the background of Russia's questionable judgment in continuing nuclear cooperation with Iran, showed again that Russia prioritizes economic benefit over maintaining the integrity of nonproliferation regimes.

Other Key Russian Actors

President Putin has proved to be far ahead of others in his government in his spirit of cooperation with the United States. Others in the Russian elite have been much more reluctant to put great stake in the new "strategic partnership," arguing specifically that the United States has used the opportunity for better relations with Russia to take advantage of Putin's support. These dissenters note that rather than rewarding Russia for its cooperation with the United States, Washington has pursued its unilateral policies even more vigorously since September 11. For instance, the United States pulled out of the ABM Treaty without pursuing modifications that Russia would have preferred to abrogation. U.S. troops moved

into Central Asia and Georgia, encroaching on the Russian sphere of influence. Prior to September 11, the United States had approached the next round of NATO expansion with caution, taking into account Russia's objection to membership for the Baltic states. After September 11, the United States and NATO talked about adding the Baltics as a surety. Indeed, at the Prague summit in November 2002 the three Baltic states were invited to join NATO. Finally, the United States is pressing for international support to expand its war on terrorism to Iraq despite strong Russian objections.

Putin is currently facing domestic resistance to a strategic partnership with the United States from many different groups outside his administration. The Russian armed forces object to a U.S. presence in Central Asia, and are worried that U.S. troops will remain in the region. The Russian intelligence services are suspicious of American motivations. Although the officials close to Putin publicly support him and continue to implement his policies, it is likely that many of them disagree with the level of concessions that Putin has made in pursuit of a U.S. Russian partnership. This likely includes Sergei Ivanov, the Defense Minister (and former KGB general), who has publicly muted his own views in support of Putin despite earlier grumblings about Russian concessions. The military industrial complex fears that a Russian partnership with the United States will end their lucrative business with U.S. adversaries, including Iraq and Iran. Finally, the Russian parliament is largely against Putin's westward lean. Even the liberals have been outspoken about the mistakes that they believe Putin has made.¹⁹

Despite these objections to Putin's foreign policy, thus far little real pressure has been put on Putin to backtrack from his westward-looking policy. Putin's popularity at home is largely based on economic performance, and Russia has been offered some key economic benefits by the West. Closer ties with NATO, membership in the G8, and recognition of

Russia as a market economy all bode well for Russia's economic future. Furthermore, if Bush keeps his summit promises of U.S. investment in the Russian oil industry and if the United States endorses Russia's WTO bid, the continuing prospect of positive economic outcomes will help to maintain Putin's domestic popularity and may keep U.S. Russian cooperation on track.

President Bush

President Bush has expended significant energy on the creation of a cooperative personal relationship with President Putin. Although Bush has focused on the need to work cooperatively with Russia, the United States has still pressed forward with several unilateral moves at Russia's expense and without Russian consultation, belying his rhetoric about the importance of bilateral cooperation. However, Bush has realized that Russian cooperation is necessary to combat both state proliferation and the diversion of nuclear materials, two areas in which Bush has pressed for U.S. Russian cooperation. Bush's commitment to nonproliferation regimes has been less conscientious, and he has used them selectively to back U.S. policy where the regimes accord with U.S. interests while looking the other way when U.S. policy might violate them.

Statement of Threat

Although President Bush made promises during his presidential campaign that stressed the need to control the potential sources of proliferation, his record in office initially contradicted many of these pledges, ignoring the recommendations of experts, Congress, and the Baker-Cutler Task Force, which was created to review U.S. nonproliferation programs with Russia.²¹ Although each of these groups strongly advocated the allocation of

additional funding for nonproliferation, Bush reduced funding to these programs in his first budget request.

Since September 11, nuclear proliferation has become a much greater threat to U.S. interests. Nonproliferation is currently one of the highest U.S. priorities, especially given the attempts of Osama bin Laden and other terrorist organizations as well as "states of concern" to steal Russian nuclear materials and components since at least 1993.²² Bush declared that proliferation to certain states constitutes "today's most urgent threat."²³ The magnitude of the threat that the United States perceives is also reflected in the fact that Washington is strongly considering attacking Iraq, presumably to destroy components of Iraq's WMD programs.²⁴ However, Bush has been slow to increase funding to nonproliferation programs despite statements he has made since September 11 which reflect that nonproliferation has become a greater priority. Nevertheless, Bush has recently pressed for the allocation of both domestic and international funds (through the "10 plus 10 over 10" program, discussed further below) which, though modest, will be used to stem the flow of dangerous materials and expertise from Russia and the former Soviet Union. Bush is still far from allocating a level of funding that corresponds to the magnitude of the threat he has outlined, causing some doubt that nonproliferation is as high a U.S. priority as Bush claims.

Preventing State Proliferation

The United States and President Bush remain committed to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons to new states. Worried that North Korea was not abiding by the promises made under the Agreed Framework of 1994 and concerned about its proliferation, the Bush administration took a harder line with Pyongyang than the previous administration's tit-for-tat inducement approach.²⁵ What the U.S. approach to North Korea

will be now that Pyongyang has admitted its possession of an active nuclear weapons program is not yet clear. Additionally, Bush has pledged to take a more aggressive stance on Iraqi intransigence in order to eliminate its WMD program and prevent it from building a nuclear weapon.²⁶ Finally, the Bush administration has continued to pressure Russia about its transfers of nuclear and dual-use technologies to Iran, claiming that although they do not directly violate nonproliferation regimes, these transfers are questionable and could contribute to Iran's suspected nuclear program.²⁷ Therefore, the United States has continued to sanction Russian businesses for the ongoing trade of sensitive technologies, and is pressuring Russia to cancel its agreement to build nuclear reactors for Iran.

Diversion of Nuclear Materials

During his presidential campaign, President Bush pledged to "ask the Congress to increase substantially our assistance to dismantle as many of Russia's weapons as possible, as quickly as possible."²⁸ He also has repeatedly emphasized the threat posed by the large numbers of Russian nuclear materials and unemployed experts that are still inadequately protected. Since September 11, Bush has declared that one of the most important areas for bilateral cooperation is in preventing the leakage of nuclear materials from Russia and elsewhere. After meeting with Putin in November 2001, Bush announced that the United States and Russia will "strengthen [their] efforts to cut off every possible source of biological, chemical and nuclear materials and expertise."²⁹ Despite his rhetoric, Bush did not immediately increase funding for nonproliferation assistance to the former Soviet Union, which would help reduce the possibility that weapons of mass destruction or nuclear materials could be stolen from Russia's massive nuclear complex. Rather, Bush cut funding for threat reduction by more than 100 million dollars (from \$879 million to \$760 million) in

his FY 2002 budget request.³⁰ However, Congress found the budget request unsatisfactory and replaced much of the funding that Bush had cut. After September 11, Congress added more than \$200 million in supplemental funds.

Although \$80 million greater than FY 2001 funding for nonproliferation assistance under Clinton, Bush's FY 2003 budget request was a decrease of nearly \$60 million from the FY 2002 final appropriation (including the supplemental). Furthermore, this sum masks the cuts to the nuclear threat reduction programs, which were severe.³¹ Thus, Bush has failed to significantly increase funding to these programs as promised, and the funds that he *has* allocated fall far short of what the threat he claims seems to merit. Additionally, a significant portion of the funds allocated for the Cooperative Threat Reduction program (CTR) was held up for more than ten months because the Bush administration failed to certify to Congress that Russia is fully committed to all arms control agreements, as required by restrictions placed on that funding. However, recent moves have signified Bush's increased attention to reducing the nuclear dangers stemming from Russia. On August 7, 2002, President Bush signed a temporary waiver that allowed funding being held up to again flow to Russia. Additionally, it is also possible that advances in transparency being investigated after the Moscow summit will allow experts to certify that U.S. funds are properly allocated, making it possible to increase funding for nonproliferation assistance in the future.

In June 2002, Bush successfully convinced the members of the G8 group of industrial nations other than Russia and the United States to commit to allocating up to ten billion dollars to nonproliferation programs over the next ten years, to match the ten billion dollars the United States expects to commit over that time. Such commitments are an important start;³⁴ however, given the increased urgency of securing these materials highlighted by the terrorist attacks on September 11, there is a need to allocate more money

over a shorter time frame than the G8 funding and modest U.S. increases have provided. For instance, the Baker-Cutler Task Force recommended that the United States expand its own funding to \$3 billion per year to address nuclear threats alone, while the G8 pledge calls for only status quo U.S. appropriations.³⁵ Furthermore, thus far the other G8 countries have only committed approximately \$2 billion of the \$10 billion the initiative seeks, suggesting that funding may fall short of the goal.³⁶

U.S.-Russian cooperation to remove loose nuclear materials from poorly guarded sites around the world is a key step forward for the Bush administration. The cooperative effort to remove weapons-grade uranium from the Vinca Nuclear Institute in Yugoslavia and the plans to carry out a similar operation in Uzbekistan show that Bush is taking an international lead in locking up materials around the world that could be diverted.³⁸ However, there are many remaining research reactors that hold poorly secured nuclear fuel of U.S. origin. Bush needs to step up efforts to address this problem, especially now that it has been highlighted on the international scene.

Nonproliferation Regimes

Although President Bush advocates maintaining the NPT and believes that it is useful for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons to new states, he has shown that he does not have an interest in abiding by U.S. NPT commitments. Three developments since September 11 have weakened the nonproliferation regime. First, the United States backtracked from its November declarations of significant unilateral strategic reductions by announcing that it would store a significant number of these weapons rather than destroying them. This move calls into question the U.S. NPT pledge of nuclear disarmament by stating

outright that in the future the United States may need a larger nuclear arsenal than reductions would leave.

Second, leaks from the classified Nuclear Posture Review revealed that the United States is considering projects to develop new low-yield nuclear weapons that would have the capability to destroy underground targets.⁴⁰ These weapons seem aimed at destroying possible WMD facilities or command centers in countries like Iraq, North Korea, and Afghanistan in which most targets are underground or dug into mountains. However, none of these countries have nuclear weapons (yet). Attacking any non-nuclear state with nuclear weapons is a direct violation of the NPT, thus this new U.S. strategy further weakens the regime.

Finally, Bush has withdrawn the United States from the ABM treaty and has refused to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is clear that the Bush administration wants to avoid treaties that could limit U.S. freedom of action. Although Bush signed the Treaty of Moscow in May 2002, it did not change U.S. plans. The United States will still store many of the nuclear weapons that were targeted for "reduction" and can break the treaty with six months notice. However, the most recent activity of the United States shows more promise for international regimes. Instead of unilaterally confronting Iraq for its suspected violation of U.N. mandates to destroy its WMD programs, Bush went to the United Nations to seek its support. Even when France and Russia objected to the U.S. desire to go forward with military action, Bush pressed for a U.N. resolution that would put greater pressure on Iraq to comply with U.N. inspections. U.S. freedom of action has been voluntarily surrendered in favor of multilateral action. Despite this new development, it is still unclear what the United States' weak adherence to the mandates of the NPT will mean for the future of other agreements in the nonproliferation arena.

Other Key American Actors

As with President Putin in Russia, President Bush is ahead of other Americans in his perception of a strategic partnership with Russia. While it seemed that in November 2001, Bush was willing to make several U.S. concessions in order to cement the partnership, his administration conceded on few of the points pursued by Russia. In fact, the United States has barreled ahead with nearly all of the proposals that Russia objected to prior to September 11. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice have both admitted that several high-level people in the administration are against the new trend toward cooperation with Russia.⁴¹ Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz has most vocally objected to increased cooperation with Russia. The unilateralist policies and ideas about the American need to pursue power held by some in the administration could be seen in Bush's State of the Union address, and have been evident from many of the U.S. policy decisions since November 2001. It appears that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld is opposed to a significant Russian role within NATO. He publicly opposed talk of "NATO at 20," and downplayed language which portrays Russia as a member with veto power over crucial NATO decisions. This could limit the extent of the Russian partnership and cooperation with the west that is being tested under the new NATO-Russia Council, which would make this change largely rhetorical.

Although it is not clear which positions are advocated by which sectors of the administration, great debate has surrounded the U.S. Russian partnership. Since November 2001, when Bush advocated a forward-looking relationship with Russia, U.S. decisions have reflected the input of Cold War thinkers, who believe that missile defense should be pursued at all costs and that Washington should pursue its interests unilaterally, unhampered by

treaties and agreements. Unless Bush can regain control of his administration and his interest in cooperation is genuine, U.S. policy is likely to continue with this disregard for Russia, limiting the chances for a meaningful U.S.-Russian strategic partnership and missing out on many historic opportunities.

Points of Disagreement

There are nine major points of disagreement between the United States and Russia in the area of nonproliferation cooperation. They are listed below.

The ABM Treaty

While the United States feels that the ABM treaty is a relic of the Cold War, Russia sees it as the cornerstone to all other arms control and nonproliferation agreements, believing that abandoning the treaty may "undermine the regime of nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction."⁴² Furthermore, the ABM treaty is a symbol of Russia's coequal status with the United States. However, when Bush pulled out of the treaty on December 13, 2001, there was little that Russia could do. Looking forward to the new partnership and other benefits that Russia thought it would receive from cooperation with the United States following the September 11 attacks - including closer ties to the United States and NATO, an early U.S. pledge on strategic reductions, and Washington's backing of Russian membership in the World Trade Organization,⁴³ - made it difficult for Russia to do much more than simply voice disapproval.

National Missile Defense

The United States withdrew from the ABM treaty to pursue a national missile defense system (NMD) which the Bush administration believes is necessary to protect the U.S. population from ballistic missile attacks by terrorists or rogue states. While Bush believes that "defenses can strengthen deterrence by reducing the incentive for proliferation,"⁴⁴ Putin argues that the pursuit of NMD may actually encourage states to proliferate. As the United States makes further moves to build and deploy a missile defense system, this dispute is likely to continue. However, it is currently unclear whether Russia will respond negatively to the deployment of NMD or simply register verbal complaint as it did with the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty. This reaction will likely depend on whether Russia receives tangible benefits from cooperation with the United States in the interim period and whether Washington consults with Moscow on its plans or pursues them unilaterally. The United States also has an opportunity to include Russian technology in NMD plans. Using Russian technology would make NMD a greater cooperative effort, and while this is unlikely to convince Russia that NMD is the best move for international -security, it would help to mollify the concerns of Russians who still believe that the system is being designed in part to reduce the effectiveness of the Russian arsenal, thus diluting the Russian deterrent. Furthermore, joint development would create economic investment in Russia and help Russia restore its coequal status with the United States.

Russian Export Controls

Russia and the United States have been at odds over Russian export controls since the Cold War, particularly concerning the matter of Russian cooperation with Iran in areas of dual-use nuclear and missile technology. Since 1995, the issue of transfers to Iran has

been raised in all U.S: Russia talks.⁴⁵ Both the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Robert Einhorn, a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation, have accused Russia of contributing to Iranian proliferation.⁴⁶ Einhorn testified before the Senate in March 2001 that the transfer of sensitive nuclear technologies and information from Russian government-affiliated groups to Iran has both continued and accelerated in recent years.⁴⁷ By contrast, Russia claims that it has not transferred extremely sensitive nuclear and ballistic missile technologies. Rather, it argues that although the economic chaos of the dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in the transfer of some materials, the Russian government itself has never been involved. The United States views Iran as a potential proliferator with an unstable, potentially unfriendly regime in a key area of U.S. interest and, therefore, a future threat to U.S. security. It is thus a key part of U.S. nonproliferation policy to prevent Iran from attaining the necessary knowledge, materials, and infrastructure to build nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Washington believes that Russia should hold a stricter standard for the transfer of dual-use technology, assistance, or equipment and crack down on, companies that violate this standard.

Until the United States agrees to lift sanctions on Russian businesses, the export control issue will remain a problem in the U.S: Russian bilateral relationship. Although Putin is taking steps to contain export control violations, clear progress has not yet been made, and the United States doubts how dedicated Russia actually is to ending assistance to Iran's nuclear and missile programs.⁴⁸ Until Russian assistance to Iran is stopped, in the words of the Baker-Cutler Task Force, Russian "cooperation with Iran will inevitably have a major adverse effect on continued [U.S: Russian] cooperation in a wide range of other ongoing nonproliferation programs."⁴⁹

Russia's Reactor Project in Iran

In addition to general export violations, Russia is in the process of building a nuclear reactor at Bushehr. Russia claims that it is meeting its obligations under the NPT by aiding Iran's peaceful nuclear program through helping Iran to build at least one nuclear reactor and that Russia's interest in the reactor deal is purely economic. Putin accuses the United States of a double standard - using engagement to deal with North Korea but criticizing Russia's use of engagement with Iran.⁵⁰ However, the United States claims that Iran will be able to extract nuclear materials from the reactor which could be used in nuclear weapons.

As the May 2002 Moscow summit approached, Russia took clear steps to mollify U.S. concerns about the Bushehr project. Minister Alexander Rumyantsev of the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy pledged that the nuclear deal would be limited to one reactor, that the project would be open to international inspection, and that the Russians will provide the reactor fuel and then return it to Russia, minimizing the chances that Iran will be able to use the reactor to produce the nuclear material necessary for nuclear weapons.⁵¹ At several points in negotiations, the United States had agreed to grandfather the first reactor at Bushehr, therefore Rumyantsev had agreed to most of the points demanded by Washington.⁵² Although these were significant concessions to the United States, documents from the Ministry for Atomic Energy of the Russian Federation (Minatom) leaked in June 2002 revealed that no agreement had yet been reached with Iran for the return of spent fuel to Russia.⁵³ Tensions rose further when Russia announced in late July that it was still considering building three more reactors at Bushehr and two at Ahwaz. However, Minatom later backtracked from these statements, declaring that discussion of plans to expand nuclear cooperation with Iran was "merely a list of existing technical possibilities."⁵⁴ The fact that Russia and the United States were still able to reach an agreement on oil exploration despite

uncertainty about Russia's plans with Iran shows that this issue alone will not bring all U.S. Russian cooperation to a halt, yet Washington is likely to continue to push for an end to all Russo-Iranian cooperation despite the deleterious effects this might have on its cooperation with Russia in other areas.

The Role of Treaties versus Unilateral Declarations

The Crawford summit highlighted another difference between the U.S. and Russian approaches toward nuclear nonproliferation and treaty commitments. While Putin believes that formal treaties provide the best opportunities for U.S. and Russian security, the Bush administration prefers unilateral declarations that do not restrict U.S. freedom of action. One of the weaknesses of unilateral declarations is the absence of verification measures. However, verification measures were also absent from the Treaty of Moscow, despite the fact that it is a signed bilateral treaty. Recognizing that verification is an important component in assuring accordance with arms control treaties, Russia and the United States pledged to work on better ways to certify compliance. Progress on verification would be an important step for nuclear cooperation overall. If either side does not trust that the other has complied with its promises under the Treaty and cannot verify compliance, agreements could become difficult in the future, thus bringing nuclear arms control to a stop.

Another clear disadvantage of unilateral declarations became clear in January 2002, when the Bush administration announced that it plans to store many of the nuclear weapons that Bush originally pledged to eliminate. This move would reduce the value of strategic reductions since the United States could reactivate these warheads at any time. Putin reacted negatively to this announcement, stating that reductions must be "verifiable, irreversible and legally binding."⁵⁵ By February, the United States had again changed course and pledged to

sign a "legally binding agreement" which would confirm the level of reductions.⁵⁶ The Treaty of Moscow was signed at the May 2002 summit.

The Implementation of Nonproliferation Assistance

In the past, several obstacles to U.S: Russian nuclear security cooperation have existed. Although it is very possible that in the post-September 11 environment, many of these problems can be worked through, they must be addressed if the Bush administration is going to increase the priority of - and the funding to - cooperative nonproliferation projects. The two major impediments to cooperation have been securing access to nuclear sites and the lack of Russian funding.⁵⁷

In the early stages of the U.S: Russian cooperative nonproliferation program, U.S. access to Russian sites was limited because Russia did not want to share its most critical nuclear secrets with its former adversary, and the United States would not blindly transfer funding to Russia without verification that it had been spent as intended. Although the Russians have significantly increased U.S. access, some sites are still quite limited and the United States still refuses to grant the Russians corresponding access to many of their own sites. While the Russians feel that there should be reciprocity of access, the United States believes that it should be able to enter the sites where it provides funding, while there is no reason for Russian access to U.S. sites where there is no bilateral cooperation. Even after September 11, verification and access have continued to be a problem. Despite the importance of speeding up the security of WMD and their destruction, as noted above, Washington failed to certify that Russia is abiding by all relevant arms control agreements for almost a year after September 11, halting the dispensation of much of U.S. nonproliferation assistance and the dismantlement of Russian WMD.⁵⁸ The waiver implemented on August 7,

2002 was only in effect until October 1. In the 2003 Defense Authorization Act, Congress granted a three-year waiver of CTR conditions which would allow the program to continue unfettered, but the president may again have to lobby Congress for an extension of waiver authority for 2006.⁵⁹ The dispute over verification means that the funds that are necessary to aid Russian dismantlement and nuclear security have been withheld and may be delayed again in the future. If the United States and Russia are going to form a partnership and are serious about addressing the threat of leakage of nuclear materials, this issue will have to be addressed.

Although the Russians agreed to fund up to half of early cooperative nonproliferation projects, economic constraints have limited their contribution. Until the status of the Russian economy improves markedly, Moscow will be unable to allocate the funds that the U.S. feels it should contribute. Given that proliferation has become an urgent threat to the United States, however, Washington could find that it is in its best interests to speed up and expand the cooperative nonproliferation effort, even if it has to take on much of the expense. Nevertheless, as the Russian economy improves, it will be expected that Russia will take greater responsibility for nonproliferation programs within its borders.

Tactical Nuclear Weapons

The issue of tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) is likely to become important during the presidencies of Bush and Putin, but has thus far been largely unaddressed. As strategic nuclear weapons are reduced to low numbers, the four thousand or more Russian TNWs (many of which have yields comparable to strategic weapons) become increasingly significant.⁶⁰ But agreement on TNWs will be difficult. Russia still claims that its TNWs are necessary to make up for weak conventional military forces. As mentioned above, the United

States is contemplating the development of new "bunker-busting" TNWs, a move which would surely make Russian TNW disarmament less likely. Furthermore, for any agreement to be made on TNWs, Russia is likely to demand that the United States remove its TNWs from Europe. Since these weapons make up a critical part of the U.S. nuclear commitment to Europe, both Europe and many U.S. government officials would object to this withdrawal.

Additionally, if the United States holds to its commitment to reduce the proliferation risks that Russian nuclear weapons and materials present, the tactical nuclear weapons issue must be approached. These weapons present the largest proliferation risk because they are often smaller and more portable than strategic weapons, and it is not clear that Russia has an accurate count of its weapons.⁶¹ In Rumsfeld's recent testimony before Congress, he called on Russia to account for all of its TNWs, and suggested that they be brought up in future arms control discussions.⁶²

If the new relationship between Europe and Russia continues to progress, there might be an opportunity - for the first time since the end of the Cold War - to withdraw U.S. TNWs from Europe and perhaps induce a reduction or securing of these weapons in Russia, lowering the proliferation risk that they create.

Taking the War on Terrorism to Iraq

If, in fact, the next stage of the U.S.-led war on terrorism is an expansion of the war to Iraq, this could have negative effects on the bilateral relationship between the United States and Russia. While the Bush administration seems willing to use any and all means to eliminate Iraq's WMD programs, Russia is not in favor of unilateral strong-arm tactics. In the past, Putin has been wary of U.S. unilateralism and American attempts to become the

lone superpower. Furthermore, Russia has strong interests in Iraq that it is afraid will be ignored in an American war against Iraq which was made clear through Moscow's multibillion-dollar trade agreement with Baghdad in August 2002.⁶³ U.S. pursuit of war with Iraq in spite of Russian objections could give support to Putin's domestic opposition that is concerned about U.S. unilateralism. However, the United States could take several steps to reduce Russian objections and keep a cooperative relationship intact. Specifically, if the United States were to guarantee that the next regime in Iraq would be responsible for repaying the state's debt to Russia and for upholding oil contracts with Russian companies, Moscow would be more likely to acquiesce to a U.S. initiative that promised a stable outcome for Iraq and Russian interests there. Furthermore, the November 2002 Security Council resolution which promises "serious consequences" for a material breach has laid the groundwork for the United States (or a U.S. led coalition) to forcibly enter Iraq to find and eliminate Iraq's WMD program. Russia had demanded that international inspectors be given a chance to search Iraq before the United States turned to more extreme measures. Now that Iraq has agreed to resume United Nations weapons inspections, U.S. military action against Iraq under conditions other than those outlined in the November resolution could have negative consequences for the U.S. Russian relationship. However, the fact that Bush did go to the United Nations rather than act unilaterally does show promise for cooperative action.

Human Rights

Although the United States dropped criticism of the Russian war in Chechnya immediately after September 11, just six months later the U.S. State Department released its report on human rights, calling Russia a continuing violator of human rights in Chechnya.

The Russian Foreign Ministry took this report as a sign that the sense of common threat that existed after September 11 was evaporating since the Russians believe that the Chechens are also terrorists and thus Russia should be free to deal with them forcefully.⁶⁴ Continued U.S. criticism of Russia's war in Chechnya - especially in the face of strong Russian support for the U.S. war on terrorism - will have a negative impact on U.S.-Russian cooperation by portraying the United States as a hypocritical and an unreliable ally. Although Russian actions in the war in Chechnya have received high profile attention in the U.S. human rights community, President Bush did support Putin's response to the Chechen seizure of a Moscow theater in October 2002. Russia received significant criticism for his use of a gas that killed many of the hostages, yet Bush laid the blame solely on the Chechens who he referred to as "terrorists."⁶⁵ This could be a step toward reducing tension with Russia over the Russian-Chechen conflict if the United States begins to view the Chechens as similar to the terrorists that it is combating.

Areas of Cooperation

The United States and Russia have made great strides in the bilateral relationship since September 11. They now share a common threat and have significantly increased their degree of cooperation both to fight terrorism and to meet mutual goals. In November 2001, the leaders each declared that they would reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals to below the levels mandated by START II (never ratified by the U.S. Senate) and even below predicted START III levels. Despite the series of disagreements about the nature of the reductions, the United States signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT, also known as the Treaty of Moscow). The conclusion of the agreement on strategic reductions has laid the groundwork for further cooperation in arms control. Additionally, the United States and

Russia have begun to seek out better verification measures that could be applied to this and future agreements.

Cooperation is also likely to expand in the area of inadequately protected nuclear materials in Russia and elsewhere, which is now being seen as a more pressing threat by both leaders. It is likely that Bush and Putin may follow through with recent promises to increase the security of Russian materials despite earlier disagreements and U.S. funding cuts. Cooperation in this area is likely to build upon itself, increasing the level of trust and coordination between Moscow and Washington. Better verification measures would ensure that U.S. funds are being applied appropriately, that nuclear materials are being properly secured and accounted for, and might result in the loosening of U.S. requirements to visit all of the facilities to which -nonproliferation assistance is applied. Progression on these issues would allow Russia to absorb more funding at an accelerated rate if such funds were available.

U.S.-Russian cooperation on the down blending of weapons-grade materials has progressed under the Bush administration. Bush has continued support for the successful 1993 HEU purchase agreement which has resulted in the down blending of thousands of tons of uranium from Russian nuclear weapons into fuel for U.S. nuclear reactors, reducing the chances that excess nuclear weapons or material could be stolen from Russia.⁶⁶

Recent cooperation between the United States and Russia to remove, store, and down blend weapons-grade uranium from the Vinca Nuclear Institute in Yugoslavia and the planned removal of material from the Institute of Nuclear Physics in Uzbekistan are encouraging examples of additional U.S.-Russian cooperation to prevent the diversion of materials located outside the former Soviet Union, which shows that both states are interested in pursuing this goal. However, the fact that the United States government had to

turn to the private Nuclear Threat Initiative to provide some of the funding for the Vinca project and that well over one hundred similar reactors exist worldwide means that there is room for progress in the future.⁶⁷

The success of the project to remove nuclear materials in Yugoslavia, especially if followed by an operation in Uzbekistan, will also likely lead to further cooperation to prevent proliferation. These projects give weight to claims that Russia will take a lead in the NATO-Russia Council and the G8 groups in preventing the diversion of nuclear materials to terrorists or dangerous states.

In addition to the benefits that joint action will have for preventing proliferation and WMD terrorism, cooperation with the United States will give Russia some of the economic benefits and international status that it has been seeking. The United States and European Union have already granted Russia market economy status and Russia has become a de facto member of the G8, cemented by plans to hold the 2006 G8 summit in Moscow.⁶⁸ Cooperation with the West could lead to Russian membership in the WTO which would confer additional international prestige on Russia.

Furthermore, bilateral cooperation and the war on terrorism have led to stronger links between Russia and Europe, leading to the creation of the NATO-Russia Council. This new forum has the potential to cement Russia's ties to the west if it is actually used for meaningful consultation with Russia in key issue areas, as opposed to the impotent NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, which Russia never viewed as a real effort to bring Russia into NATO decision-making. Russian cooperation is critical in order to face the challenges of nonproliferation and management of the consequences of WMD use. Russia has also muted its objection to another round of NATO expansion. These are signs that both the United States and Russia see a lasting relationship developing, and that Putin does not view NATO

as a threat to Russian security. Additionally, better relations between Europe, Russia, and the United States might alleviate the Russian hesitancy to granting the access necessary to verify the reductions, storage, and dismantlement that will be a key part of progress in nonproliferation. Cooperation across the Atlantic could also lead to an agreement on tactical nuclear weapons, which would eliminate many of the most dangerous weapons in terms of proliferation threats.

Although Bush and Putin were likely to pursue an agreement on strategic nuclear reductions even prior to September 11, it is clear that the terrorist attacks on the United States have changed the future of bilateral nonproliferation cooperation. More international attention and funding is being devoted to the prevention of proliferation through threat reduction programs, and the United States is likely to maintain at least the status quo in its funding of nonproliferation programs in accordance with its G8 commitment. For the first time, both countries see a clear and present danger posed by WMD proliferation. This has resulted in a significant improvement in bilateral relations between Russia and the United States and will likely result in a willingness to find agreement on nonproliferation issues that have long been a source of dispute.

Overall Analysis

The aftermath of the terrorist attacks on September 11 offered a window of opportunity for the United States and Russia. This event alerted Washington and Moscow to their commonality of interests and increased the value of bilateral cooperation for both countries. Russia saw an opportunity to further integrate with the prosperous West, cooperation that has meant both an improvement in great power status and increased economic investment (through the new energy partnership agreed upon at the May summit).

The United States needed Russian help in its war on terrorism, and cooperation with Russia is integral to the new U.S. priority of keeping nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists.

Cooperation between the United States and Russia immediately following September 11 was unprecedented, resulting in the disappearance of several issues, which had clouded the U.S.-Russian relationship for years. However, within three months, this new strategic partnership had already begun to have problems. Starting in December, Washington made a series of policy decisions that were at odds with Russian desires and priorities. One after the other, the United States abrogated the ABM treaty, backtracked on strategic reductions, moved forces into Georgia, and re-voiced criticism of Russia's war in Chechnya, all the while moving closer to a war in Iraq in the face of Russian objections. Despite the importance of many of these issues to much of the Russian elite, Putin's reactions have been astoundingly muted. He still hopes that the United States and Russia can move beyond Cold War thinking and into a real era of partnership. However, given the continued unilateralism of the United States, it is not surprising that many Russian elites doubt the sincerity of proposals for a strategic partnership.

The May 2002 Moscow summit made some important steps toward creating a sense of partnership and rewarding Russia for its cooperation. For the United States to bend to Russia's request for a signed treaty was a symbolic but critical step. Furthermore, the U.S. recognition of Russia as a market economy and declaration of plans to invest in Russia's oil industry will help the Russian economy and give Putin successes that help to fulfill his campaign promises and maintain his domestic popularity. If the United States continues to offer Russia tangible rewards for its cooperation and continues to treat Russia more like a partner than an adversary, much can be achieved in the nonproliferation arena.

The current opportunities for U.S.-Russian cooperation and partnership are great, and further Russian integration into the West is in the interest of both states. Greater consultation with Russia on U.S. policy moves and an assurance that the United States will look out for Russia's interests would help to reduce the suspicion of U.S. unilateralism. The United States could further tie Russia to the West by accelerating Russia's entry into the WTO, making an effort to use the new NATO-Russia Council to discuss *key* issues that Russia can take a lead on. It can also agree to forgive debt in exchange for Russian help in reducing the nuclear threats stemming from the former Soviet Union. In order to cement the U.S. Russian strategic relationship, it is critical that these states capitalize on the new strategic environment that makes cooperation between East and West a possibility.

Although the groundwork for cooperation has been laid under Bush and Putin, both leaders have a long way to go in terms of their commitment to nonproliferation. Both have failed to make the changes necessary to speed up the security of nuclear materials and weapons despite being faced with what they have accurately described as a significant and present threat. Although the G8 nonproliferation funding is a significant step, given the amount of money that the United States has put into homeland security, it is hard to believe that more money has not been allocated to securing the nuclear materials that could create a domestic tragedy of unimaginable scale. Especially since the U.S. government commissioned the Baker-Cutler Task Force to evaluate its nonproliferation programs, it is disturbing that greater action has not been taken. Additionally, Russia has not taken measures to better secure its most proliferation-prone weapons. U.S.-Russian cooperation is necessary to address the proliferation threat. Furthermore, the pace of action must accelerate if the threat is to be stemmed before terrorists get hold of these dangerous materials.

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