

# BREAKING THE STALEMATE OF COLLECTIVE INSECURITY IN EUROPE

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JUNE 2011

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# **Breaking the Stalemate of Collective Insecurity in Europe**

The rebuilding of the continental security mechanism and missile defense cooperation as game-changers in Russia's relations with the United States and its European allies

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June 2011

This paper was commissioned by the Nuclear Threat Initiative.  
The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs would like to thank the Nuclear Threat Initiative for its support and financial sponsorship of this work.

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## Introduction

There is a clear convergence of vital security interests of Russia and NATO countries in that:

- No nuclear weapons or improvised nuclear devices are used.
- No more states acquire nuclear weapons or long-range delivery systems.
- No non-state actors acquire nuclear weapons or improvised nuclear devices.
- No acts of conventional or WMD terrorism with catastrophic consequences take place.<sup>1</sup>
- No inter-state wars occur in Europe/Eurasia.
- No Eurasian states fail and/or become safe havens for international terrorist groups.

Different vertices in the polygon formed by Russia and the NATO alliance have varying degrees of capabilities and motivations in tackling these challenges. They also often disagree on the ways and the means of doing so.

Arguably, Russia and NATO no longer pose any of the aforementioned threats to each other (with the exception, perhaps, of an accidental nuclear weapons launch). And both Russia and NATO stand to gain qualitatively by pooling their resources to reduce these common external threats. Yet, 20 years since the end of the Cold War, Russia on the one side and the United States with its NATO allies on the other still cannot agree on how to jointly mitigate against these threats in a systemic way. Moreover, they continue military planning against each other, with NATO members working on contingency plans to repel an aggression by Russia against the Baltic states while Moscow games out its own theoretical conflict scenarios against NATO in its routine large-scale “West” exercises, which feature joint operations with Belarussian armed forces and simulated launches of nuclear weapons.

When it comes to the divisive issues that hinder the cooperation of Russia and the NATO countries, there are two that stand out: the building of European missile defenses and the reforming of the collective security mechanism on the continent. If resolved, these issues could become game-changers in Russia’s relations with the United States and its NATO allies.

Moscow has sought to derail efforts by the United States and its European allies to build ballistic-missile defenses. Moscow’s concern is that the latter may eventually develop into a shield that would undermine the capability of Russian nuclear forces, which are already vulnerable to a first strike, to deal unacceptable damage to enemy countries in the event of war.

Having failed to derail the missile-defense efforts of the U.S. and its NATO allies, Moscow has shifted its tactics by proposing a Russia-NATO configuration of missile-defense cooperation that would introduce legally binding constraints on NATO missile-defense systems, which would serve to ensure that the latter cannot “break out” to target Russian strategic forces. The United States has already made it clear that it will not accept any Russian constraints on missile defense

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<sup>1</sup> This paper defines an act of catastrophic terrorism as a terrorist attack involving the use of chemical, biological, or nuclear materials, weapons of mass destruction, or conventional techniques to kill a very significant number of people (1,000 or more).

in Europe, but Russia continues to insist that it would cooperate on the issue only if NATO agrees not to target Russian forces.

It remains unclear whether the sides can resolve their differences and make a deal on cooperation. If they do, then all the sides will benefit from the capability to shoot down a significant share of incoming ballistic missiles even if the latter number in dozens. It is already clear that probably nothing short of military intervention will stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons if Tehran decides to make the final leap. A nuclear-armed Iran would be much more assertive against both the West and Russia alike—including not only in Russia's own ethnic Muslim regions, but also in the South Caucasus, the Caspian region and Central Asia—if both Teheran and Moscow know that the latter has no effective system of shooting down Iranian ICBMs launched by the dozens. In terms of nuclear deterrence, adding an effective missile-defense against Iran would benefit not only the Western nuclear powers, but also Russia itself.

Just as Russia sees no urgent need for an all-European missile defense, the United States and some of its European allies see no need to build a new collective European security architecture, which has been advocated by Russia since 2008. One of the Russian leadership's key public arguments for a new pan-European security architecture is that Moscow needs a meaningful, institutionalized say in European security decision-making. Russian leaders argue that NATO won't give Russia the right of veto, even though, in Moscow's opinion, it is in the U.S. and EU's interest to grant Russia this right. In the Kremlin's view, a new system needs to be built to give Moscow a say that is not granted by any other existing European organization.

Russia's other goals in pursuit of a new security system can be gleaned from the draft European Security Treaty (EST) that the Kremlin has presented. If this draft were accepted, NATO would no longer be able to accept new members without Russia's consent. The draft would also enjoin NATO members from providing their territory to fellow members or to the alliance as a whole for purposes of planning scenarios that involve the use of force against other signatories, unless all EST signatories agree to it. Clearly, neither the United States nor European members of NATO would accept such constraints. Hence, both Washington and its Eastern European allies are arguing that no new European security architecture is needed.

However, while Russia's proposal has clearly been put on Europe's back burner, the dangerous flaws in the continent's existing collective security architecture—the same flaws cited by Russian leaders when calling for replacement of this architecture—have not disappeared. If anything, they continue to demand urgent joint response.

This paper argues Russia's membership in NATO would be the best instrument not only to bridge gaps on missile defense and collective security mechanisms, but also to qualitatively enhance the capabilities of Moscow, Washington and Brussels to tackle external security threats, such as the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the threat of nuclear terrorism and the challenges posed by failed states in Central Asia. But while outlining a path to Russia's accession to NATO, the paper acknowledges that that such membership may prove to be unattainable in the short-to-medium term. Given this reality, there will still be a number of concrete measures that Russia, the United States and its NATO allies can take to overcome their differences over missile-defense systems and to achieve the reformation of the collective-security mechanism. This paper outlines these

measures, which, if adopted, will eventually facilitate the emergence of a security alliance of Moscow, Washington and Brussels, either in the form of Russia's membership in NATO or in some other form. These measures include the following possibilities:

- Agreeing on future deployments of substantial additional combat forces with NATO allies while deferring a decision on how to deal with those deployments that have already occurred as part of the effort to revive the adapted Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe.
- Concluding the Founding Act on Missile Defense Cooperation between NATO and Russia, which would declare that the alliance's members "have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy missile defense assets that would target or intercept delivery vehicles of Russian strategic nuclear forces."

## Collective Insecurity in Europe

In a June 2008 speech in Berlin, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev unveiled what he must have hoped would become one of the biggest foreign policy initiatives of his presidency: the proposal for a new pan-European security treaty.

“Our predecessors during the Cold War years managed to draw up the Helsinki Final Act (which, as the legal foundation for the European system, has withstood the test of time despite all the difficulties encountered), and so why should we not be able to take the next step today? Namely, drafting and signing a legally binding treaty on European security in which the organizations currently working in the Euro-Atlantic area could become parties,” he asked participants of his meeting with German leaders. “This pact could achieve a comprehensive resolution of the security indivisibility and arms control issues in Europe that are of such concern to us all,” the Russian leader argued, proposing to hold a “general European summit” to start the process of drafting this agreement.<sup>2</sup>

The summit that Medvedev called for almost three years ago never took place. Still, Russian diplomats continue to insist that the president’s proposal has been a success, arguing that it has generated a discussion about how to repair the currently dysfunctional continental security mechanism.

Indeed, there has been a lively discussion. December 2008 saw foreign ministers of OSCE member states discuss the idea while members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization have come out in support of Medvedev’s proposal.<sup>3</sup> Also, Italian President Giorgio Napolitano and Spanish Prime Minister José Zapatero said they supported discussing the proposal while visiting Russia in 2008. Javier Solana, chief of EU foreign policy, said in 2009 that the proposal “deserves to be taken seriously,”<sup>4</sup> while French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel wrote in a joint op-ed that their countries are “ready to debate” Medvedev’s proposal “with [their] allies and with [their] European partners, and to consider everyone’s point of view.”<sup>5</sup> And in June 2009, an informal meeting of OSCE foreign ministers launched the “Corfu Process” to discuss steps needed to tackle European security challenges and restore confidence in their capability of doing so.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, as said above, Russia’s call to hold an OSCE summit to discuss this proposal in mid-2009 was not heeded. Also, while a number of other Western European countries have welcomed the idea, they have also implicitly cautioned against undermining Europe’s existing international security agreements and structures. The United States and its Eastern European allies were even more skeptical. Then-Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza said on the

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<sup>2</sup> “President Dmitry Medvedev’s Speech at Meeting with German Political, Parliamentary and Civic Leaders,” Kremlin.ru, 5 June 2008.

<sup>3</sup> “Russia: CSTO states OK Russia’s initiative on new European security treaty,” *Thai News Service*, 11 December 2008.

<sup>4</sup> “European Leaders Split on Russian Security Plan,” *Deutsche Welle*, 2 July 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, “La sécurité, notre mission commune,” *Le Monde*, 3 February 2009.

<sup>6</sup> “‘Corfu Process’ launched to take European security dialogue forward, says OSCE Chairperson,” OSCE press release, 28 June 2009.



sidelines of an OSCE meeting of foreign ministers in December 2008 that there was an “excellent discussion” of the proposal, but that it remained “too vague” to plan a 2009 summit.<sup>7</sup> U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Beyrle said in October 2008 that the existing European security institutions function well and there is no need to build “something fresh here.”<sup>8</sup> The Obama administration has been more forthcoming, but again no concrete steps have been taken to discuss the Medvedev proposal in earnest. Celeste Wallander, Obama’s deputy assistant secretary of defense for Russia, said in July 2009 that “the United States remains open to discussion on improving the broader European security architecture, an issue raised by President Medvedev.”

Some retired U.S. officials have taken a more constructive stance. Sam Nunn, the former U.S. senator who now co-chairs the Nuclear Threat Initiative, launched the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative in 2009 together with former Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and former German Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger in order to “lay the intellectual foundation for an inclusive Euro-Atlantic security system for the twenty-first century.”<sup>9</sup> And Strobe Talbott, former U.S. ambassador to Moscow and also ex-deputy secretary of state, argued in a February 2009 *Financial Times* op-ed that Medvedev’s idea represented an opportunity, noting that its vagueness created a vacuum, allowing the United States and Europe to contribute some of their own ideas.<sup>10</sup>

Faced with reluctance on the part of the United States and some of its European allies to provide substantive feedback on Medvedev’s broadly phrased idea, Moscow may have inadvertently contributed to the proposal’s demise by adding clauses that the United States and its NATO allies found unacceptable. According to the draft European Security Treaty that the Kremlin unveiled in November 2009, an EST signatory “shall not allow the use of its territory and shall not use the territory of any other Party with the purpose of preparing or carrying out an armed attack against any other (signatory) or any other actions affecting significantly security of any other” signatory.<sup>11</sup> This provision essentially restricts NATO members from allowing their territory to be used by fellow members or by the alliance as a whole in the planning of the use of force against other signatories. Nor would the United States be able to deploy forces in Europe for purposes related to the use of force on the continent. This provision is one of many signs of the degree of Russia’s discomfort with NATO’s superiority in conventional forces—regardless of the fact that the probability of a war between Moscow and the alliance is very low.

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<sup>7</sup> The U.S. is prepared to discuss the proposal with fellow OSCE members, but is generally satisfied with the existing European security architecture, Bryza said. “Matthew Bryza explains U.S. views on President Medvedev’s initiatives,” *WPS: Defense & Security*, 10 December 2008. Georgia, Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, the three Baltic States and several other Central and Eastern European countries are either openly hostile to or extremely wary of the Russian security proposal. Jean-Christophe Peuch, “Russian Proposal for New European Security Pact Encounters Skepticism,” *Eurasia Insight*, 4 March 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, Bryza, “Matthew Bryza explains U.S. views on President Medvedev’s initiatives,” *WPS: Defense & Security*, 10 December 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Wolfgang Ischinger, Igor Ivanov, Sam Nunn, and Robert Legvold, “Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative Launch,” 10 December 2009 (Washington, D.C., Brussels, Moscow) available at <http://carnegieendowment.org/events/?fa=eventDetail&id=1505>.

<sup>10</sup> Strobe Talbott, “A Russian ‘reset button’ based on inclusion,” *Financial Times*, 23 February 2009.

<sup>11</sup> “The draft of the European Security Treaty,” Official website of the Russian president, 29 November 2009. Available at <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/275>.

The draft warns that “every Party shall be entitled to consider an armed attack against any other Party an armed attack against itself” and render assistance, but also that an extraordinary conference of signatories must be convened to decide on “collective measures” and that these decisions should be taken “by unanimous vote.”<sup>12</sup> This provision can be interpreted as permitting individual countries to assist each other in case of armed attack while barring NATO as an organization from doing so without the authorization of EST’s Extraordinary Conference.

The draft text also states that “the Parties to the Treaty shall not assume international obligations incompatible with the Treaty.” Considered in light of Article 5 of the NATO Charter, this clause could prove to be an obstacle against the acceptance of new NATO members.

Given the aforementioned clauses, it should come as no surprise today that Medvedev’s initiative now appears to be as far away from practical implementation as it was when it was unveiled in June 2008.<sup>13</sup> However, while the proposal has been clearly put on Europe’s back burner, the flaws in the existing collective security architecture—the same flaws Russian leaders cited when making the case for replacement of this architecture—have not disappeared, and continue to require urgent collective action by Moscow, Washington and Brussels.

Europe’s collective security system remains as slow and dysfunctional as it was before the August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia. It is still rooted in Cold War stand-offs, and is insufficiently adapted to the new political, military and security realities of a Europe where the most serious security threats are non-military and external in nature, and where the threat of conflict between Moscow and NATO has all but vanished.<sup>14</sup>

The failures of Europe’s post-Cold War security architecture as seen by the Russian leadership include not only the 2008 war, but also NATO’s eastward expansion; the bombing of the former Yugoslavia by NATO; the declaration of Kosovo’s independence in 2008 and its recognition by Western countries; and the demise of the adapted Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE).

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<sup>12</sup> “The draft of the European Security Treaty,” Official website of the Russian President, 29 November 2009. Available at <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/275>. The Russian side asserts that the idea for such an Extraordinary Conference is not new, but rather is based on previous documents, including the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty.

<sup>13</sup> Notably, Medvedev’s mentor, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin—who continues to play a central role in shaping Russia’s policies on key issues—has taken a back seat on what has become Medvedev’s first major foreign policy initiative. Engaging Medvedev on his proposal could have also meant strengthening his role in shaping Russia’s foreign and security policies as the ruling tandem nears the time that Putin will have to make a decision on whether he or Medvedev will run in the March 2012 elections.

<sup>14</sup> I can cite, for example, the convergence of the following vital and very important interests of the U.S., its NATO allies and Russia in warding off the following threats to their security that have emerged in Asia: the proliferation of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons technologies with Iran and Syria as buyers; the threat of conflict including use of nuclear weapons between India and Pakistan; the prevention of the emergence of failed states in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asian countries and some Arab countries; major terrorist attacks, including with use of CBRN materials, on the territory of the EU, the U.S. and Russia, organized or assisted by networks based in Asia, such as Pakistan and Afghanistan; the prevention of the proliferation of medium and long-range ballistic-missile technologies in Iran; the prevention of violent inter-state conflicts in heartland Asia, particularly Pakistan-India; and the suppression of drug trafficking and other illicit flows.

With recent memories of the traumatic brush with international intervention, pacification and nation-building in the former Yugoslavia still fresh on Europe's mind, it is clear that neither the U.S. nor its European NATO allies can be described as fully satisfied with the performance of the existing continental collective security system.

It is also clear that both the EU and the United States would welcome a new mechanism of conflict prevention, interdiction and resolution—a mechanism that would provide for the management of consequences, that would be immune to deadlocks similar to those seen in the UN Security Council over Kosovo, and that could be employed in a timely manner.

The United States would also be interested in seeing European governments play a more active role in dealing with continental challenges similar to the military interventions in the former Yugoslavia. Both the United States and its European allies would also have welcomed a European security mechanism that was sufficiently effective to dissuade Georgia from attempting to recapture the breakaway region of South Ossetia by force—a gambit that triggered Russia's disproportionate response and ended in the formal recognition by Moscow of the independence of the breakaway Georgian republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The United States and its allies have suggested an alternative to Medvedev's EST proposal that would remedy these flaws by seeking to reform existing pan-European institutions and empower them for conflict resolution. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), has proved capable of monitoring ceasefires and occasionally of keeping the peace. But even if the OSCE were granted a mandate to rapidly intervene in conflicts, whether it be to deter spoilers or to enforce conditions, it would still lack NATO's capacity to do so in a credible and effective way. I doubt, furthermore, that OSCE members could reach a consensus on the commitment of their forces to a larger standing military entity capable of deterring conflicts or sustaining peacekeeping operations.

Another remedy would be to add meat to the bones of the NATO-Russia Council by empowering it to mediate and resolve conflicts. This, perhaps, is what Russian diplomats have hinted at when stating that Russia and NATO are close to a breakthrough in their relations.<sup>15</sup> But such a step would be an even less effective solution to the current stalemate than reforming the OSCE, given that countries that are neither members of NATO nor members of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) would hardly accept the authority of a NATO-Russia structure to manage conflicts in which the latter powers find themselves involved—especially if Russia tacitly supports one side. An alliance between NATO and CSTO is an unattractive option in the additional sense that it would institutionalize a Yalta-like division of Europe, with or without the prior accession of additional former Soviet republics into either of the two alliances.

Russia's accession to NATO would be perhaps the most effective, comprehensive option for eliminating the aforementioned flaws in Europe's collective security system and introducing rapid-reaction capabilities to new collective security challenges in Europe.

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<sup>15</sup> "A period of profound thaw has set in Russia-NATO ties. I am sure that we are close to a breakthrough," Vladimir Voronkov, head of the ministry's European cooperation department, said in February 2011. "Russia, NATO 'on verge of breakthrough,'" *RIA Novosti*, 14 February 2011.

Russia's membership in NATO will give Moscow an institutionalized and meaningful voice in European security decision-making. The lack of such a voice is one of the Russian leadership's central arguments for a new pan-European security architecture. Russian leaders argue that NATO won't give Russia the right of veto, even though, in Moscow's opinion, it is in the interest of the U.S. and the EU to grant Russia this right. As seen from the Kremlin, other existing European organizations cannot give Moscow such a role.

Russia's membership in the alliance will not only end the stalemate over European collective security, but also allow Moscow, Brussels and Washington to focus on advancing the long-term common security interests that I have defined in the introduction to this paper—security interests that have every reason to rank higher than the procedural nuances that have been the cause of much bickering over existing security mechanisms. NATO membership for Russia would not only enhance security in Europe, but would also make Moscow, Brussels and Washington much better prepared to contain and reduce instability emanating from Central and South Asia, including such countries as Afghanistan.

In the short term, Russia's membership would significantly ease negotiations over such contentious issues as reducing tactical nuclear weapons. Bringing other former Soviet republics into a NATO that includes Moscow would arguably eliminate existing differences over European missile-defense configurations altogether—and remove, in turn, the perceived need to revive the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe.

Integrating Russia into NATO would neutralize Moscow's own concerns over the membership of the other former Soviet republics that have already joined the alliance. It would also play a very important—though not a decisive—role in helping Russia to forge closer economic ties with the West in order to secure its assistance in diversifying and modernizing the Russian economy.<sup>16</sup>

There are reservations on the part of some NATO members that Moscow would play the spoiler in the alliance, blocking decisions and obstructing progress on important issues. Such a possibility can be eliminated by reforming NATO's decision-making mechanism, replacing the existing consensus system with a super-majority system, as has been suggested by renowned U.S. statesmen William Perry, U.S. secretary of defense from 1994 to 1997; and George Shultz, U.S. secretary of state from 1982 to 1989.<sup>17</sup> Such a transition, however, may be opposed by those Eastern European NATO members who are prepared neither to lose their right of veto nor to allow Russia to enter the alliance.<sup>18</sup> Those countries who oppose bringing Russia into the fold can perhaps be convinced that a Moscow membership would be a good way to guarantee the Kremlin plays by the rules—to say nothing of neutralizing their reflexive anxieties that Russia would once again seek to dominate them.

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<sup>16</sup> President Medvedev has repeatedly directed Russian diplomats to make establishment of economic modernization alliances with the West a top priority for Russia's foreign policy. Medvedev said in his November 2009 annual address: "Stop 'puffing cheeks' for the sake of looking important, start working to attract foreign investment, new technologies and ideas to Russia." "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," Kremlin.ru, 12 November 2009.

<sup>17</sup> William Perry and George Shultz, "How to Build on the Start Treaty," *New York Times*, 10 April 2010.

<sup>18</sup> As Vladimir Kozin, chief of the Foreign Ministry's press center, notes: "Russia is not and does not plan to become a member of NATO. And under no circumstances would that alliance ever accept Russia into its ranks as a full-fledged member." Vladimir Kozin, "Rasmussen's 'Roof' Has Some Leaks," *Moscow Times*, 29 April 2010.

Just as important is the question of whether Russia, after being an independent center of power for centuries, would want to join the alliance and cede some of its sovereignty on security issues to a collective body where a different power plays the lead role. Russia's membership would put a curb on Moscow's tendency to play the hegemon in the former Soviet Union. But arguably, the Kremlin realizes that it can successfully hold its ground on issues of core interest to Russia, even within U.S.-dominated NATO, by making common cause with alliance members that have a tradition of successful cooperation with Russia. An example of such cooperation is the adoption by France, Germany and Russia of similar positions opposing the United States on the second war in Iraq. More importantly, the continuing rise of competing centers of power in Asia and growing instability in Central Asia, where only NATO<sup>19</sup> is arguably strong enough to help Russia's stabilization effort, should convince Moscow to seek security alliances in which it is not only a giver, as is mostly the case with the CSTO, but also a taker. As for Russia's influence in the former Soviet Union, Moscow has already realized that economic development and soft power are much better instruments of attaining influence in the post-Cold War environment than is the projection of military power.

There are also a number of other "devils" hidden in the details of this issue that proponents of Russia's membership in the alliance, including myself, tend to overlook when making grand calls for Moscow's accession to the bloc.

As an example, if Russia becomes a NATO member, then it can no longer object to membership for other former Soviet republics. Nor would Eastern European countries agree to Russia's membership in NATO if post-Soviet states like Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Georgia are restricted from making their own membership bids.

NATO would also have to decide whether to accept former Soviet republics located in Central Asia. This may prove to be a very difficult burden for the alliance, given the instability in these countries and the fact that all of them, perhaps with the exception of Kazakhstan, are significantly lagging behind NATO members' military and economic—to say nothing of democratic—standards. But if the Central Asian states are not denied membership, however, then the question would then become how to reconcile Moscow's membership in NATO with its leadership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as well as Belarus and Armenia, and which commits Russia to help defend these countries in case of outside aggression. Russia could still perhaps retain the Central Asian dimension of CSTO, much as the United States maintains its own regional security alliances in Asia, extending its security umbrella to countries like Japan and South Korea.

Even more problematic than accession for the ex-Soviet states of Central Asia is the aforementioned issue of accession for the former Soviet republics located to Russia's west and southwest. Progress in these zones would require the resolution of "frozen" territorial disputes where Russia is seen as a supporter of one side, as is the case in the conflict between Georgia and its breakaway republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. None of these frozen conflicts, which include the Nagorno-Karabakh and Transdniestria regions, appear to be ripe for resolution,

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<sup>19</sup> China is the other player capable of assisting Russia's stabilization effort.

although the Transdniestrian conflict may be easier to resolve than others. Exploration of options for resolving these conflicts merits a separate paper, but for purposes of this research, I can say that they may well collectively pose the single most important obstacle against Russia's NATO accession in the short-to-medium term.

## **The Decline and Fall of Conventional Arms Control**

As stated above, membership of Russia and its post-Soviet neighbors in NATO would eliminate key points of contention regarding conventional arms control and missile-defense configurations in Europe from the agenda of issues being negotiated by Moscow, Washington and Brussels. But with Russia's accession to NATO unlikely in the short term, and with Medvedev's EST proposal shot down, the question remains the following: What system will replace the stalemated, dysfunctional CFE arms-control regime that was designed to limit conventional weapon systems and ensure the transparency of their deployment in Europe?

The CFE treaty was signed in 1990 by the former Soviet Union and 22 other states under the auspices of OSCE's predecessor to set limits governing conventional forces deployed by the NATO alliance and the former Warsaw Pact. The treaty was then modified to reflect the disintegration of the socialist camp and the Soviet Union. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan signed an adapted version of the treaty in Istanbul in 1999, and subsequently became the only four countries to ratify it. Since then, Russia has repeatedly called on all NATO countries to follow suit on ratification. NATO members have responded to these calls by insisting that Moscow fulfill the declaration it signed at the Istanbul summit of 1999 along with the adapted treaty. It has been asserted by NATO alliance members that the declaration commits Russia to withdrawing military personnel from the separatist provinces of South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transdniestria. Russia rejects this assertion.

Rhetorical jousting over CFE went on until April 2007, when Russia's then-President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia was suspending its CFE obligations. Putin cited as his reasons the failure of NATO members to comply with the accord, as well as U.S. plans to deploy a missile-defense shield in Eastern Europe. While Putin was right to note that a number of new NATO members had not joined CFE, perhaps the real reasons for Moscow's walkout lay elsewhere. Those reasons were probably related to the Kremlin's unwillingness to comply with the treaty's flank limitations, which restrict Russia's ability to deploy additional forces on its southern flank, thus making it difficult for Moscow to cope with emergent threats from the North Caucasus.

Some influential Russian experts argue that the demise of the CFE treaty has its own advantages. A March 2011 report by the Russian Participants of the Valdai Club's Working Group on the Future of Russian-U.S. Relations led by Sergei Karaganov, chairman of the Russian Council for Foreign and Defense Policy, argues that resuming CFE negotiations will again position Russia and NATO as potential enemies and fuel the militarization of European politics anew.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, reanimation of the CFE may lay the groundwork for the launching of fresh Russia-U.S. talks on the reduction of their tactical nuclear arsenals, and also weaken Medvedev's European treaty proposal, which contains a certain vision of a new regime of control over

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<sup>20</sup> Russian Participants of the Working Group on the Future of the Russian-U.S. Relations, "U.S.-Russia Relations after the 'Reset': Building a New Agenda. A View from Russia," Valdai Club, March 2011.

conventional armed forces in Europe, according to the report, which was authored by an impressive array of Russian policy-shapers.<sup>21</sup>

I would argue, however, that the European treaty proposal is already weakened beyond the point of revival. I would also argue that inaction with respect to the dysfunctionality of the CFE treaty will have no negative impact on negotiations toward the reduction of tactical nuclear weapons. Moreover, Russia's conditions for revival of the adapted CFE include reductions in the numbers of weapon systems operated by NATO. If met, these conditions will lessen Russia's current reliance on tactical nuclear weapons as an equalizer against the overwhelming superiority of NATO's conventional forces. In addition, the CFE sets limitations and verification mechanisms governing the deployment of conventional forces—a transparency that has given the governments of Russia and of NATO's member states sufficient knowledge of each other's plans and actions to avoid the militarization of their relations.

More important, it appears that President Dmitry Medvedev believes CFE negotiations cannot undermine his EST proposal, and that he sees more benefits than costs in reviving the treaty. Otherwise, the Kremlin would not have begun to show interest in reviving it.

In December 2009, Medvedev and Putin held separate meetings with visiting NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen to discuss conditions for the revival of the CFE treaty. During his trip, Rasmussen made clear NATO's interest in just such a revival.

“We consider the CFE to be a pillar of European Security, an essential instrument for increasing transparency and predictability in Europe,” Rasmussen said. “That is why we would very much like to see a strengthened and modernized CFE regime. There have been a number of important discussions on this issue in Vienna with the aim of agreeing on a framework of principles to guide future negotiations. I believe that all participants are interested in finding appropriate solutions to resolve the outstanding problems.”<sup>22</sup>

Apart from this collective interest, the U.S. has also signaled its own interest in bringing back the treaty, as evidenced in statements made by Vice President Joseph Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, as well as through the appointment of a special envoy for CFE.

Less than four months after Rasmussen's Moscow visit, Russia's NATO envoy Dmitry Rogozin sent an official letter to Rasmussen outlining Moscow's conditions for reviving the adapted CFE.

These conditions include the abolishment of the treaty's flank limitations,<sup>23</sup> the signing and ratification of the treaty by all European countries,<sup>24</sup> and reductions in numbers of weapon systems operated by NATO to help address the Russian military's significant inferiority to NATO in conventional forces. Russia's conventional military strength was weakened by the collapse of

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<sup>21</sup> In addition to Sergei Karaganov, who was the main co-author with Dmitry Suslov, authors included Timofei Bordachev, Feodor Lukyanov and Nikolai Silayev. The authors consulted Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov, who oversees arms control and North American affairs at the agency, when writing the report.

<sup>22</sup> “Rasmussen optimistic about Russia-NATO ties,” *RIA Novosti*, 19 November 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Sergei Borisov, “Razblokirovat situatsiu,” *Parlamentskaya Gazeta*, 25 March 2010, and Alexander Gabuyev, “Borba za mir vo vsem NATO,” *Kommersant*, 13 March 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Sergei Borisov, “Razblokirovat situatsiu,” *Parlamentskaya Gazeta*, 25 March 2010.



the Soviet bloc and the subsequent expansion of NATO combat potential in the 1990s.<sup>25</sup> Among Russia's stated conditions for reviving the treaty is the stipulation by the parties of a single definition of the phrase "substantial additional combat forces."<sup>26</sup> Another condition is that as soon as the adapted CFE comes into force, signatories need to start working on modifying it so that it conforms to the ideas outlined in Medvedev's EST proposal.<sup>27</sup>

Some of the conditions included in this wish-list, such as reductions in NATO weapon systems, would be difficult to implement, given the alliance's need to reach consensus among all its members. Also, NATO and Russia remain at loggerheads on whether Moscow has fulfilled its Istanbul commitments. For instance, when NATO's Rasmussen told Putin in December 2009 that the alliance would "very much" like to resume negotiations on the treaty, the Russian premier responded by claiming that Russia has met its Istanbul commitments in the sense that it no longer maintains military bases on the territories of Georgia and Moldova. Putin's logic was, of course, predicated on the concept that Russian troops in South Ossetia and Abkhazia cannot be considered to be stationed on the territory of Georgia, because Moscow has recognized both of these separatist republics as independent states. Rasmussen disagreed with Putin's logic.

One way out of the current stalemate could be for Russia and NATO members to try to craft a consensus on at least some of the steps needed to revive the treaty, which is key to ensuring transparency and predictability in the sphere of conventional forces in Europe, while deferring the issue of Russia's Istanbul commitments. These steps could include, for instance, reaching a consensus on the definition of "substantial additional combat forces," but applying that definition only to those deployments that will occur in the future.

The so-called Istanbul commitments, which Russia made during the OSCE summit in 1999 and which NATO insists are binding, call for Russia to refrain from permanently stationing "substantial additional combat forces" in areas that border Estonia and Latvia. In its turn, NATO pledged to refrain from "new stationing"—i.e., the stationing of "substantial" combat forces on the territory of new NATO members.<sup>28</sup>

Another document that refers to substantial additional combat forces is the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation of 27 May 1997. The document includes a passage in which NATO "reiterates that in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defense and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces."

Having made these commitments to no new "substantial additional combat forces," NATO and Russia have yet to agree on what this phrase should mean.

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<sup>25</sup> Alexander Gabuyev, "Borba za mir vo vsem NATO," *Kommersant*, 13 March 2010; Alexander Golts, "Polnaya degradatsia," *Ezhednevny Zhurnal*, 15 March 2010; and Alexander Gabuyev, "Facilitating Peace," *Kommersant*, 15 March 2010.

<sup>26</sup> A senior Russian diplomat referred to his condition at a Harvard event in March 2010. He asked not to be named.

<sup>27</sup> Sergei Borisov, "Razblokirovat situatsiu," *Parlamentskaya Gazeta*, 25 March 2010.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Perenyi, "Key CFE Obstacles are not Subregional," *Arms Control Today*, December 2009.

Ideally for Russia, “substantial additional combat forces” would be defined in a way that prohibits NATO from opening new bases on the territories of member states that joined the alliance after the Cold War ended. Another best-case scenario for Moscow would be a definition that restricts the alliance from deploying elements of missile defense on the continent.

For the United States and its NATO allies, the optimal outcome would be a definition that stipulates, among other things, the withdrawal of Russian forces from the separatist provinces of South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transdniestria, and that bars Moscow from deploying new forces in western Russia, Belarus or the Crimea, where the Black Sea fleet is based. In his May 2010 op-ed in the *International Herald Tribune* on European security, U.S. Vice President Biden pledged to “explore reciprocal limitations on the size and location of conventional forces,” implying that the United States is prepared to negotiate limits on new deployments of conventional forces.<sup>29</sup>

Building on Biden’s offer, the United States and its NATO allies should negotiate limitations with Russia on future deployments of substantial additional combat forces while deferring a decision on how to deal with those deployments that have already occurred. The alliance should also consider promising to accommodate some of Russia’s aforementioned wishes, such as the cancellation of flank limitations, once the adapted CFE is revived. Such an accommodation would serve to assuage Russia’s concerns over the inferiority of its conventional forces to those of NATO, to say nothing of helping pave the way for reductions in tactical nuclear weapons.<sup>30</sup>

That will probably not go down well in Georgia and Moldova, which seek to use the CFE discussions as a forum to press Russia on troops already deployed in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Transdniestria. But these nations’ leaders should realize that diplomacy is the art of the possible. There are real prospects for the Transdniestria conflict to be resolved in a way that would accommodate Moldova’s demands for withdrawal of Russian troops, or at least alleviate its concerns about their presence. But there is practically no such possibility in the case of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, at least in the short-to-medium term. Resolution of South Ossetia’s and Abkhazia’s conflicts with Georgia seems improbable in the near future, as does the withdrawal of Russian forces from these breakaway republics. Leaders of Georgia, if not also Moldova, should realize that by digging in their heels on this issue—an issue upon which hinges the future of the adapted CFE treaty—they are denying themselves an opportunity to win transparency with respect to the build-up and deployment of troops in Russia proper without getting any closer to the removal of Russian troops from the separatist regions themselves. And it is clearly in the interest of Georgia, whose leadership publicly admits to fears of a second war with Russia, to ensure the predictability of its powerful northern neighbor’s military deployments.

The same holds true for other nations that may harbor suspicions or mistrust of their neighbors’ intentions. For example, the Baltic states may be just as interested in military transparency as are Georgia and Moldova. And even if the negligible probability of a war between Russia and the

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<sup>29</sup> Joe Biden, “Advancing Europe’s Security,” *International Herald Tribune*, 6 May 2010.

<sup>30</sup> The Obama administration has repeatedly said it wishes to negotiate reductions in tactical nuclear weapons with Russia now that the New START is concluded. Moscow’s response to this wish has invariably featured a talking point that tactical nuclear weapons serve as part of an equalizer for Russian conventional forces’ inferiority vis-à-vis NATO. For a detailed analysis of Russia’s position on tactical nuclear arms control see Simon Saradzhyan, “Russia’s Non-strategic Nuclear Weapons in Their Current Configuration and Posture: A Strategic Asset or Liability?” Paper, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, February 2010.

alliance has reduced the importance of transparency to Moscow and the founding members of NATO, it is entirely possible that such transparency may yet become important for them again. While NATO's founding states and Moscow now probably harbor no deep suspicions of each other in terms of military planning, the longer such transparency is absent, the more probable it becomes that the sides may develop such suspicions of each other and start planning for what military strategists call "the most dangerous" scenarios.

The revival of CFE would also be important to Russia because the treaty would reinforce conventional arms-control accords across a continent where an alliance in which Moscow is not a member and with which it used to be locked in a military stand-off enjoys overwhelming superiority over conventional Russian military forces. A CFE revival would deepen Moscow's knowledge of the alliance's intentions, thus providing additional assurances to Russian policy-makers that NATO, which Russia's 2010 defense doctrine ranks No. 1 on the list of external military "dangers,"<sup>31</sup> is not a threat. Russia would also benefit from revival of the CFE if the latter features a definition of "substantial additional combat forces" that constrains the alliance's ability to open new bases on the territory of its post-Cold War members. Arguably, revival of CFE can also improve Russia's knowledge of military plans and deployments of South Caucasus countries, including Georgia.

If revival of CFE is stalled, then one interim step that could help to facilitate predictability in the absence of a functioning CFE treaty would be for European countries to undertake unilateral military transparency commitments, including notifications on deployments of substantial forces and assets on their territories.

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<sup>31</sup> The doctrine, which President Medvedev signed in February 2010, has the following first entry in the list of main external military dangers: "the desire to endow the force potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with global functions carried out in violation of the norms of international law and to move the military infrastructure of NATO member countries closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, including by expanding the bloc."

## Missile Defense as a Game-Changer

In the absence of Russia's membership in NATO, substantive cooperation among Russia, NATO and the United States on missile defense could become a game-changer in Moscow's relations with Washington and Brussels. If institutionalized, such cooperation will not only strengthen the collective security of European countries, but will also help to end the military stand-off between the alliance and Moscow, paving the way for deeper cooperation and even, perhaps, Russia's accession to NATO.

So far, the sides have failed to reach a consensus on this issue. Russia sees no urgent need to construct an all-European defense system against ballistic missiles, arguing that there are currently no credible ballistic-missile threats to the continent, contrary to Washington's assertions that Iran represents such a threat. Moreover, the currently planned configurations of U.S. and NATO ballistic-missile defense systems can neither neutralize nor significantly undermine Moscow's ability to deliver a retaliatory second strike with its strategic nuclear arsenal—an arsenal that is already vulnerable to a first strike from NATO and the U.S. Nevertheless, Moscow is concerned that deployment of the alliance's missile-defense configurations would lay the foundation of a security architecture that opens the door to the alliance's acquisition of just such a capability. This is so in part because the U.S. has offered neither the assurance nor even the suggestion that it would refrain from further developing the system beyond its currently planned configuration—leaving open the possibility that it might even be deployed in other areas after the completion of Phase IV of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA). Thus has Moscow been trying to utilize the dialogue on cooperation to slow and limit the development of missile defenses by the U.S. and NATO.

These efforts have included offers by Russia to share certain of its own capabilities, if only on the condition that Washington and Brussels accept constraints on their planned missile defenses. While seeking to constrain U.S./NATO missile defenses in Europe, Russia is also keen on limiting the geography of its own cooperation with Washington and Brussels, concerned as it is that a robust, far-reaching cooperative missile defense may spur China to start beefing up its own nuclear forces.<sup>32</sup> Washington, for its part, knows perfectly well that it can build a missile-defense shield against Iran without Moscow's help. Even so, the U.S. is continuing to try to keep Russia engaged in dialogue on missile-defense cooperation to minimize the possibility of the Kremlin taking disruptive steps in this area. The same driver is evident in the approaches of other core European powers, such as France and Germany, to the issue of missile-defense cooperation. These European powerhouses are not as concerned as the United States that they might be targeted by Iranian missiles, but they are also keen to accommodate U.S. interests without antagonizing Russia at the same time.

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<sup>32</sup> Moscow is worried that a joint missile-defense program could provoke China, possibly leading to Sino-Russian estrangement and a Chinese nuclear arms build-up, because Russia couldn't count on substantive Western support and protection, according to one of Russia's leading arms-control experts, Alexei Arbatov. If China were to build up its long-range strategic forces, it would deprive Russia of the nuclear option in a hypothetical conflict by threatening devastating retaliation on Russia's European urban-industrial zone. According to Arbatov, Russia would have to stick to conventional means in a war with China, which, given Chinese superiority in these forces, would lead to the loss of the Russian Far East and Siberia. Alexei Arbatov, "New State of Arms Control. Gambit or Endgame?", Carnegie Moscow Center, March 2011.

In June 2007, Vladimir Putin proposed to George W. Bush at a G-8 summit in Germany that their two countries cooperate on missile defense. The Russian leader said the United States and Russia could jointly use the Soviet-era early warning radar station in Gabala, which Moscow leases from Azerbaijan, if Washington abandoned its plans to build high-frequency X-band radar in the Czech Republic. Putin also suggested that the United States rely on its Aegis missile defense system rather than deploying ground-based interceptors (GBIs) in Poland.

The Russian leader expanded this proposal in July of that same year during the so-called Lobster Summit at the Bush family compound in Maine. Putin told Bush that, in addition to Gabala, Moscow would also agree to the sharing of data from another early warning radar station located in Armavir, Russia, and proposed joint establishment with the United States of two additional information-sharing centers. Russia would do all this, he said, if the United States abandoned its missile-defense plans for Poland and the Czech Republic—a scenario regarded by Russia’s top military and political leaders as a potential threat to their nation’s nuclear forces.

Two years later, in a move heartily welcomed by Moscow, U.S. President Barack Obama scrapped plans to deploy GBIs in Poland and X-band radar in the Czech Republic, opting instead for a shorter-range and more dispersed configuration, dubbed the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA).

However, substantive cooperation has yet to materialize, and Russian strategists have begun to wonder publicly whether Phase IV of EPAA might undermine Russia’s ability to exercise strategic nuclear deterrence. Moscow is simultaneously calling for deployment of SM-3 Block IIB interceptors that can chase ICBM missiles during their ascent phase, before these missiles can deploy countermeasures, or before warheads separate from those missiles which are MIRVed.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, according to NATO, Russian officials have recently started to express concern over Phase III of EPAA, which provides for the deployment of SM-3 Block IIA interceptors on sea and land.<sup>34</sup>

U.S. officials have tried to assure Moscow that EPAA will neither target Russian nuclear strategic forces nor be capable of intercepting sophisticated Russian ICBMs, but that it is intended, rather, to counter missile threats from Iran, which has made significant progress in its efforts to develop its own ballistic-missile program and uranium-enrichment capacities. Iran has successfully test-fired its solid-fuel propelled Sajill-2 missile, which boasts a range of 2,000 kilometers and is said to be more accurate than earlier models. Iran’s Ashura missile, which has a

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<sup>33</sup> “The first three phases of the [U.S. missile defense] plan pose no threats to Russian security. It is the last one that will have the potential to compromise the Russian deterrence posture,” said PIR-Center expert Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Yevgeny Buzhinsky. *Kommersant*, 2 March 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Speaking at the annual security conference in Munich in February 2011, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Russia objects to the third and fourth stages of the U.S. “phased adaptive approach” for developing an expansive missile-defense system in Europe by 2020 because it would allegedly undermine Russia’s strategic nuclear potential—the only military area that puts Russia on par with the United States. Alexander Golts, “The Boogeyman the Kremlin Loves to Hate,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 9 February 2011. In addition, James Appathurai, the NATO Secretary General’s special representative, said Moscow wants guarantees that EPAA Phases III and IV will not undermine Russia’s strategic deterrence capabilities. “Kremlin to create working group on ABM cooperation with NATO by March 18,” *Itar-Tass*, 3 March 2011.

range of over 2,000 kilometers, could be aimed by Teheran to targets in southern Europe and Israel. Iran recently demonstrated its nuclear prowess by launching a payload into space aboard its Kavoshgar-3 rocket in February 2010. The U.S. Air Force's National Air and Space Intelligence Center estimated in a 2009 report entitled "Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threat" that Iran's modified version of the Shahab-3 missile already has a range of 2,000 kilometers, and that Iran could, with foreign assistance, develop and test an ICBM capable of reaching the United States by 2015.

Even so, a number of Russian leaders and experts insist that Iran's missile program poses no credible threat to the United States, Europe or Russia, and that Russia has no evidence that Teheran is pursuing nuclear weapons capable of being mounted on these missiles. Nevertheless, Medvedev agreed with Obama that the two countries must review existing and future threats. At their summit in July 2009, the two leaders signed a joint statement on "Missile Defense Issues" to "analyze the ballistic missile challenges of the twenty-first century and to prepare appropriate recommendations."

Separately, Moscow and Brussels agreed at the NATO-Russia summit of November 2010 to craft a consensus on the sources of missile threats and how to deal with them in 2011. The first draft of that analysis is to be completed by June 2011 so that it can be assessed by NATO and Russian defense ministers.

Agreeing on the configuration of missile-defense cooperation between Russia and NATO appears to be as difficult for Moscow, Washington and Brussels as reaching a consensus on sources of missile threats to Europe. NATO countries want their missile-defense system to be separate<sup>35</sup> from Russia's, while Russia has essentially advocated a joint system controlled by a dual-launch key.<sup>36</sup>

At NATO-Russia's 2010 summit, Medvedev came out with a proposal for establishment of sectoral missile defense<sup>37</sup>—an idea which was developed by experts of the Russian ministry of defense and then approved by the Russian president.<sup>38</sup> A high-ranking Russian diplomat speaking on background explained Medvedev's proposal as a system in which "all sensors, radars and interceptors are oriented towards outer space and are not located at the Russia-NATO division line." Said the diplomat, "Medvedev's proposal boils down to the following: Moscow is ready to shoot down any bullet that flies toward Europe across Russia. That is, to literally protect those countries located west of us. But NATO should assume identical responsibilities for its sector or

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<sup>35</sup> President Obama made it clear that the U.S. will not pursue a joint system with Russia in his letter to a U.S. Senator in December 2010. Also, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told Russian journalists in early 2011: "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is responsible for protecting the territory of NATO member states and for the safety of their populations. We do not intend to transfer that responsibility to anyone else." Alexander Golts, "The Boogeyman the Kremlin Loves to Hate," *Moscow Times*, 8 February 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said: "NATO's [control] button will always be the U.S. button. The same goes for our button: We will have sole control of our button. The military know how to guarantee joint work in the launch of such a system while taking into account these two facts." "'No-targeting' pact key to missile defense deal with NATO—Lavrov," *RIA Novosti*, 2 March 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Medvedev said: "We proposed building a sector-based missile defense system." Our "conditions are equality, transparency, technological involvement and responsibility for particular tasks." "News Conference following NATO-Russia Council Meeting," 20 November 2010.

<sup>38</sup> "Moskva i NATO poshli na ustupki," *Kommersant*, 22 November 2010.

sectors: if anyone decides to carry out a strike against us over Europe, then whatever flies must be shot down by the Americans or NATO.”<sup>39</sup>

Should Russia, the United States and its NATO allies fail to agree on missile-defense cooperation, warns President Medvedev, “a new round of arms race will start” within a decade, and Russia will have to start making “decisions on the deployment of new strategic weapons.”<sup>40</sup>

Medvedev’s patron, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, fully supported his protégé’s sectoral proposal in a December 2010 interview with CNN.

“We could reach an agreement with NATO and, by extension, with the United States, on information-sharing and on jointly managing these systems,” Putin said.<sup>41</sup> The Russian president also praised Barack Obama for cancelling his predecessor’s plan to deploy X-band radar in the Czech Republic and ground-based interceptors in Poland. But he also warned, however, that “if a threat emerges on our borders in the form of a new incarnation of” George W. Bush’s plan, and “if anti-missile and radar systems are set up near our border, even in 2015,” then Russia would deploy new missiles and develop new nuclear-missile technology.<sup>42</sup>

Dmitry Rogozin, a Putin protégé who serves as Russia’s envoy on missile cooperation with NATO, echoes his patron’s warning to the alliance: “If we learn that some joint efforts lead to the emergence of a missile-defense infrastructure near Russia’s northwestern borders, not to mention its northern ones, and if we learn that strategic missile-interception systems are deployed in this sector, which is a sector of Russia’s strategic forces, we will have to develop attack systems for their guaranteed overpowering.”<sup>43</sup>

In reality, Russia would have to double its production of ICBMs even to remain on par with the United States within the limits of the New START treaty, to say nothing of competing in any new arms race of the sort referenced by Medvedev.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> “Moskva i NATO poshli na ustupki,” *Kommersant*, 22 November 2010.

<sup>40</sup> “In the coming decade we face the following alternatives: Either we reach agreement on missile defense and create a full-fledged joint mechanism of cooperation, or ... a new round of the arms race will begin,” Medvedev warned in his November 2010 state of the nation address. “Medvedev: ‘Arms Race’ Possible If Missile Defense Agreement Fails,” *Huffington Post*, 30 November 2011.

<sup>41</sup> Transcript of Vladimir Putin’s interview with CNN’s Larry King, Official website of the prime minister of Russia, 1 December 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Transcript of Vladimir Putin’s interview with CNN’s Larry King, Official website of the prime minister of Russia, 1 December 2010.

<sup>43</sup> *Interfax*, 2 December 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said in March 2011 that Russia will double production of intercontinental ballistic missiles and operational-tactical missiles starting from 2013. Aleksei Nikolsky, “Rossiya udvoit vypusk ballisticheskikh raket,” *Vedomosti*, 21 March 2011. New START requires Russia to have no more than 700 deployed vehicles with no more than 1,500 warheads assigned to them by April 2018. As of late 2010, Russia had 611 strategic deliver vehicles capable of carrying 2,679 warheads, according to Aleksei Nikolsky, “Proshchai oruzhie,” *Vedomosti*, 18 March 2011. But this number of delivery vehicles could decline to 390 by mid-2019, according to estimates made by Hans Kristensen of FAS and Pavel Podvig of Stanford University. According to Kristensen, the 390 delivery systems will include some 90 bombers, 180 SLBMs and 120 ICBMs. “Nuclear Weapons, Status and Options Under a START Follow-On Agreement,” by Hans M. Kristensen, Federation of American Scientists, “Presentation to Arms Control Association Briefing Next Steps in U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Reductions: The START Follow-On Negotiations and Beyond,” 27 April 2009. According to Podvig, the 390 delivery systems will

As for the position of Russia's military leadership, the chief of Russia's General Staff, Army Gen. Nikolai Makarov, puts it this way: "It will all depend on the configurations."<sup>45</sup> In other words, Makarov and the rest of Russia's top brass believe in sectoral defense.<sup>46</sup>

Graham Allison, Harvard professor and ex-U.S. assistant secretary of defense, has remarked that "missile defense is a matter of theology in the United States and of neurology in Russia." It is a fair paraphrase of Prof. Allison's comment that on the topic of missile-defense cooperation, some Russian military commanders sound as theological in public as they may be neurological in private.

"We are continuing with the creation of military space defense and the resolution of issues of both strategic and non-strategic missile defense," said General Alexander Zelin, commander of the Russian Air Force, which has both strategic aviation and air defense under its jurisdiction. "God willing, we will solve them together with NATO."<sup>47</sup>

Russian diplomats are the most articulate when it comes to formulating conditions for Russia's cooperation with NATO and the United States in the sphere of missile defense. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says that successful cooperation hinges on a formal agreement guaranteeing that NATO and Russian missile defense systems are not directed against each other, and on a dual-key launch-control system. A degree of elaboration has been offered by Sergei Ryabkov, Lavrov's Foreign Ministry deputy in charge of arms control and relations with the United States.

"This must be a joint system with shared responsibilities, information exchange and decision-making in order to make us an equal and responsible member, Ryabkov said. "If two separate networks are built, things won't change for us and we will see a situation when the NATO system could potentially be used against Russia's security interests. Cooperating on such a system would mean hurting ourselves."<sup>48</sup>

Some Russian diplomats have published entire lists of demands for the United States and NATO, albeit with the disclaimer that they are acting in private capacities. Among them is Vladimir Kozin, chief of the Foreign Ministry's press center. Kozin expressed his personal views on the issue in a recent op-ed. According to Kozin, the sincerity of NATO's assurances that its missile defenses will not be directed against Russia, and that the alliance is ready to cooperate with Moscow, will be borne out by the following factors:

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include some 80 bombers, 100 SLBMs and 210 ICBMs. See Podvig's "Long-term force projections," *Russian strategic nuclear forces blog*, 25 January 2009. Arguably, Russia's plans to develop a 10-warhead ICBM, unveiled after Podvig and Kristensen made these forecasts, would require the upward revision of these forecasts, but I would still argue that a nuclear arms race with the U.S. is not something that Russia would want or can afford, given the economic disparity between the two countries.

<sup>45</sup> *Echo Moskvy*, 22 November 2010.

<sup>46</sup> It was the General Staff that designed the sectoral proposal and convinced Medvedev to present it at the Lisbon summit. "Moskva i NATO poshli na ustupki," *Kommersant*, 22 November 2010.

<sup>47</sup> *RIA Novosti*, 16 March 2011.

<sup>48</sup> "Report: Russia warns US over missile defense plans," *AP*, 7 February 2011.



- NATO refrains from deploying U.S. national missile-defense assets near Russia in the territories of East and Southern Europe.
- It officially proclaims a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons against Russia.
- It revises any offensive and contingency plans that provide for the use of nuclear and conventional weapons against Russia.
- It refrains from deploying attack systems and interceptor systems in space.
- The United States withdraws all tactical weapons from Europe.<sup>49</sup>

Russia's air-defense industry appears to be not very supportive of the prospects for missile-defense cooperation either, judging by the comments of Igor Ashurbeyli, general director of Almaz-Antey, which manufactures the S-300 and S-400 air-defense missile systems, and which will also be producing the S-500 mid-course missile-defense system.

"Relations with the West are like a swing: first to, then fro," Ashurbeyli said in 2010.<sup>50</sup> "Such a sphere as defense nonetheless requires stable, conservative, long-term planning. Such in-depth integration is, I believe, for all that, unrealistic."

Some Russian parliamentarians are equally skeptical.

"As regards Russian-American cooperation on missile defenses, there remains a large number of problems there, of course," said Andrei Kokoshin, a former deputy defense minister who is now a senior official in the Russian state. "This issue has been discussed and will be further discussed. Though personally I'm skeptical about the possibility of exchanging any kind of technology."<sup>51</sup>

Not all former defense ministry officials share Kokoshin's pessimism.

The former head of the defense agency's analytical department, Gen. Pavel Zolotarev, believes that "what we need are joint efforts to analyze common threats, in order to prevent them, and to move toward a general system under joint command."<sup>52</sup>

Among the ranks of retired generals, it is Viktor Yesin, former chief of staff of the Strategic Missile Forces, who has done a great deal of thinking on the issue. Yesin believes "sectoral missile defense is the most realistic resolution of the problem." He envisions "a common system of observation and analysis of the air-defense situation, whose data could converge in Brussels and Moscow."<sup>53</sup>

At the same time, Yesin sees a number of major obstacles against the construction of a joint NATO-Russia missile-defense system. Those obstacles include the sides' differences on how sources of threats are assessed; questions over the relative degree of participation of the sides in

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<sup>49</sup> Vladimir Kozin, "EvroPRO—problemy sozdania i uslovia uschastia v nei Rossii," *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozrenie*, 25 March 2011.

<sup>50</sup> *Izvestia*, 27 November 2010.

<sup>51</sup> *Interfax*, 17 September 2010.

<sup>52</sup> *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 October 2010.

<sup>53</sup> *Izvestia*, 27 November 2010.

building the system; agreeing on the principles for building it; the lack of trust between the sides; challenges in achieving technical interoperability of means of surveillance and analysis, targeting and interception; and differences on how to institutionalize the cooperation.<sup>54</sup>

If we were to exclude most the hard-line of Russian demands, then Moscow's consolidated position on the content of missile-defense cooperation with the U.S. and NATO would contain the following provisos:

- Completion of joint NATO-Russian and U.S.-Russian assessments.
- A system of joint missile defense divided into sectors of responsibility with de jure or de facto restrictions on NATO radar angles and limits on deployments of mid-course interceptors in the territorial waters and lands of northeastern Europe, where they could intercept Russian ICBMs.
- Sharing of information on threats collected by radar and other means.
- Sharing of radar and interceptor technologies.

The United States and its NATO allies are themselves keen on the concept of joint threat assessments, and are prepared to share information and some technologies, but are opposed to the concepts of joint defense and sectoral division.

In fact, they have all but shot down the sectoral proposal unveiled by Medvedev during the Lisbon summit. This should come as no surprise, given that the proposal provides for Russia to be in charge of defending NATO from missile attacks from certain directions and allows Moscow to demand that limitations be introduced on both EPAA and on NATO's Active Layered Theater Ballistic Missile Defense (ALTBMD), which will monitor the southeastern sector.

Asked whether Russia's proposal for sectoral missile defense system is a dead idea, Deputy U.S. Ambassador to NATO John Heffern said: "Sectoral is not a very good word because it suggests that NATO is not going to defend NATO territory. NATO is going to defend NATO territory. Full stop. No question about that. We are not going to share that, give that responsibility to somebody else. NATO is going defend NATO territory. Russia is going to defend Russia."<sup>55</sup>

One NATO official even compared Medvedev's sectoral proposal to his idea for EST. The Russian president's idea of "the sector-based ABM concept is too vague ... as vague as the European security treaty idea," said the unnamed official, who spoke to a Russian daily newspaper on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference in February 2011.<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine the White House agreeing to any cooperation on missile defense that would either put Russia partially in charge of NATO's defense or place constraints on the alliance's development of the EPAA system. In fact, President Obama gave his formal assurance

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<sup>54</sup> Vladimir Kozin, "EvroPRO - problemy sozdania i uslovia uschastia v nei Rossii," *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozrenie*, 25 March 2011.

<sup>55</sup> "Russia in Review," *U.S.-Russia Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism*, 25 February 2011.

<sup>56</sup> "Rossiiskoye nastuplenie poshlo dalshe SNV," *Kommersant*, 27 February 2011.

to Congress that there would be no such constraints after Senate Republicans almost disrupted ratification of the New START, claiming that it would impose limits on U.S. missile defense.<sup>57</sup>

On the other hand, Russia insists that it needs commitments from the United States and NATO that the planned missile defenses will not target its strategic nuclear forces. As said above, Lavrov believes a formal agreement guaranteeing that NATO and Russian missile-defense systems are not directed against each other is the key to cooperation. Russia is so interested in attaining such an agreement that its diplomats have indicated that Moscow may acquiesce to separate systems rather than to joint ones, but only on condition that there is a formal deal ensuring that U.S. and NATO missile defenses do not target Russia's strategic nuclear forces.<sup>58</sup>

And while the sides seem supportive of sharing information on this issue, they also seem to disagree on the scope of information exchanges. Specifically, U.S. officials believe that in asking for an exchange of information on missile interceptors, Russia has a lot to learn from the U.S., but little to offer in return.<sup>59</sup> They are also concerned that the information provided to Moscow may somehow be leaked to undesirable third parties like Iran.

I would argue there is a way out of this stalemate. First of all, U.S.-Russian and NATO-Russian assessments of missile threats should be completed. If based on facts, these assessments should conclude that Iran's program will produce missiles capable of reaching targets not only in Europe, but also in the United States and much of Russia in the foreseeable future. One thorough and authoritative joint U.S.-Russian assessment of missile threats that has already been completed predicts that Iran might be able to master independently the "critical technologies" for advanced mobile or silo-based IRBMs and ICBMs within 15 years.<sup>60</sup>

This threat will, of course, grow exponentially if Iran acquires nuclear weapons, which the United States assesses Teheran can accomplish in one to three years if the country's leadership makes a political decision to do so. In fact, Iran's existing IRBM program makes "military-strategic sense" only if its missiles are outfitted with warheads carrying weapons of mass

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<sup>57</sup> "We have made clear that the system we intend to pursue with Russia will not be a joint system, and it will not in any way limit United States' or NATO's missile defense capabilities," *Letter from U.S. President Barack Obama to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry M. Reid*, 19 December 2010. Available at:

<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2010/December/20101220112111su0.6327565.html#ixzz1HjNgkHn6>

<sup>58</sup> In fact, Moscow has already indicated it is prepared to abandon its demand for the dual-launch key. "NATO's [control] button will always be the U.S. button. The same goes for our button: We will have sole control of our button," Lavrov said when commenting on the configuration of missile defense cooperation that Moscow favors. "'No-targeting' pact key to missile defense deal with NATO—Lavrov," *RIA Novosti*, 2 March 2011.

<sup>59</sup> The Russian government is specifically seeking a defense technology cooperation deal with the Pentagon that will permit it to gain access to U.S. hit-to-kill missile-defense know-how. The reason, U.S. officials said, is that Moscow knows it can offer very little in the way of cooperative missile defense with the U.S. Bill Gertz, "Inside the Ring," *Washington Times*, 23 March 2011. As of last year, Russia had no operational surface-to-air systems that could shoot down ballistic missiles during take-off or in mid-flight, according to Gen. Anatoly Kornukov (Ret.), former commander of the Russian Air Force. Russian commanders still only have the upgraded S-400 system at their disposal to intercept ICBMs in mid-course. "Kornukov: RF ne raspologayet sredstvami dlya porazhenia operativnykh raket," *RIA Novosti*, 13 May 2010.

<sup>60</sup> The EastWest Institute, "Iran's Nuclear and Missile Potential: A Joint Threat Assessment by U.S. and Russian Technical Experts," May 2009. This assessment was initiated by and its findings shared among Obama's would-be national security advisor James Jones, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Secretary of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev.

destruction, primarily nuclear weapons, according to ex-deputy defense minister of Russia Andrei Kokoshin.<sup>61</sup>

Skeptics point out that the Iranian regime is hardly suicidal, and will not launch a missile attack on the United States or its European allies, knowing as it does that there will be an overwhelming response. However, the skeptics seem to forget that Iran, if armed with long-range ballistic missiles, will grow more assertive in challenging not only the West, but also Russia, given its historical interest in influencing affairs in the Caspian region, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia. Iran would be even more assertive if its missiles were armed with nuclear warheads. Russia should keep all these potential developments in mind while deciding with NATO whether there should be a list of common missile threats, and whether that list should include Iran.<sup>62</sup>

Once the threat assessments are completed, Russia and NATO should act on their findings by building cooperative missile defenses against the identified threats. To do so, Russia and NATO should conclude a Founding Act on Missile Defense Cooperation. Paraphrasing language from the 1997 Founding Act on NATO-Russian relations, this new document should declare “the member States of NATO have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy missile defense assets that would target or intercept delivery vehicles of Russian strategic nuclear forces.”

The 1997 act says further that “the member States of NATO reiterate that they have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO’s nuclear posture or nuclear policy—and do not foresee any future need to do so.” And while the United States and its allies disagreed with Russia on whether that act contained legally binding bans and whether it required ratification, Washington still kept its promise to avoid deploying nuclear weapons in new NATO member states.

Similarly, an act on missile-defense cooperation that contains a formal guarantee by the U.S. and NATO never to target Russian nuclear forces should suffice to assuage Russia’s concerns. With or without such an act, the United States is going to continue to develop both the EPAA and other missile-defense systems aimed at protecting its own territory and that of its allies. Eventually, in the medium-term future, these systems may reach a point where they may have significant capacity against Russian ICBMs, so Moscow would be better off with a written promise that this capacity will not be used than without such a promise.

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<sup>61</sup> Andrei Kokoshin, “Ensuring Strategic Stability in the Past and Present,” *Krasand*, 2009.

<sup>62</sup> Moscow and Washington could use the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) as a fig-leaf for their joint cooperation in missile defense against Iran. Director of Russia’s U.S.A. and Canada Studies Institute Sergei Rogov makes this argument, but couches it in diplomatic language. Iran and North Korea “have medium-range and short-range missiles, which were banned [for Russia and the U.S.] by the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces [INF] Treaty of 1987. This also makes it possible for us and the Americans to begin a dialogue on the threat and the means for the parrying of it.” From his article, “Seven Steps Forward: Basic Principles Were Marked Out for the Formation of a New Model for Russian-American Cooperation in the 21st Century.” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 9 July 9 2009. Retired U.S. diplomat Kenneth Adelman concurs: “Presidents Obama and Dmitri Medvedev of Russia together should urge all countries to sign the (INF) treaty,” Adelman wrote in 2009. “A global treaty signed by more than 100 states would stigmatize the testing and developing of such missiles ... would head off a common criticism of the nonproliferation treaty—that big powers are allowed such weapons while little ones are not.” Kenneth Adelman, “A Long-Term Fix for Medium-Range Arms,” *New York Times*, 25 September 2009.

Since it would not require ratification, such an act would also preempt attempts by parliamentary opponents in the West to derail cooperation.

And the United States government should also be able to dissuade opponents in the Congress from even trying to derail it, given that a U.S. missile-defense system built in the absence of cooperation with Russia would increase the probability of a Russian nuclear strike against the United States. The reason for this is that Moscow will inevitably perceive the development of an open architecture of U.S./NATO missile defenses without Russia's participation as a threat to Russian nuclear forces, which Russian commanders already regard as being vulnerable to a first strike. The result of this perception would be an increase of what theorists of strategic stability call "crisis instability"—a situation in which one side may be prompted to launch a preemptive first strike for fear that a delayed launch would cripple its capacity to cause unacceptable damage to the foe, which may strike first and then employ robust missile defenses to shoot down as many as possible of any surviving missiles launched in retaliation.

Russia, for its part, should make a similar pledge of non-targeting in the act, and all signatories should consider elaborating on the precise meaning of the non-targeting clause. For example, the U.S. could either refrain from deployment of SM-3 Block IIB interceptors close to Russia, such as in the seas of northeastern Europe, including the Barents Sea, where they could shoot down Russian ICBMs, or limit such deployments to the low dozens, as well as refrain from deploying more-advanced follow-on interceptors in areas where such deployments are possible.<sup>63</sup>

And if it's true, as U.S. NATO envoy Heffern says, that "sectoral is not a very good word," then that word can be easily replaced with a word like cooperative, or any number of adjectives that have already been used by NATO and Russian officials to describe missile-defense cooperation. If one were to analyze statements made by Russian and Western officials on missile-defense cooperation, then one would soon realize that despite disagreements over whether the system should be referred to as joint, separate, sectoral or otherwise, there does exist language that both sides would find acceptable—such as phrases like cooperative mutually reinforcing systems, full-fledged cooperation mechanism, equal participants and equal partners.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Russia's top brass estimate that by 2020, U.S./NATO missile-defense systems in Europe would be able to intercept any Russian nuclear missiles fired at the United States along a North Pole trajectory if ships equipped with Aegis missile defense systems are deployed in the Norwegian fjords. Alexander Golts, "The Boogeyman the Kremlin Loves to Hate," *St. Petersburg Times*, 9 February 2011. The same estimate has been given by a U.S. official, according to James Acton's "Low Numbers: A Practical Path To Deep Nuclear Reductions," *Carnegie Endowment*, March 2011. A U.S. official has acknowledged that SM-3 Block IIBs can intercept Russian ICBMs if deployed very close to Russia, such as in the Barents Sea. The official also stated that the burn-out velocity of the SM-3 Block IIB missile will be 5 kilometers per second. However, an interceptor launched 1,000 kilometers from a modern solid-fueled ICBM would require a burn-out velocity of about 10 kilometers per second in order to intercept the ICBM at the end of its boost phase (i.e., just before the start of the ascent phase).

<sup>64</sup> Russian President Medvedev said: Either Russia and NATO members "reach agreement on missile defense and create a full-fledged mechanism of cooperation" in the next ten years or "we will embark on another round of arms race," with Russia deploying new strike systems. ("Annual address to the parliament," Kremlin.ru, 20 November 2010.)

Russian Defense Minister Serdyukov said: "It is important that Russia will be an equal participant. Only then can a missile-defense system be established that satisfies all sides." "Russia Open To Missile Defense Cooperation With NATO," *AFP*, 12 November 2010.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said: "We have already started that conversation with Moscow about how this can be accomplished in practice, and we are eager to begin a joint analysis, joint exercises, and sharing of early

The cooperation act's general guidelines for the system's actual configuration may designate Russia and NATO countries as separate sectors to be defended as Moscow wishes.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, those guidelines should not bar the United States and NATO from deploying radars and interceptors to target missile threats that may emerge from countries located south of Russia, including Iran, as long as no such assets are deployed in significant quantities in the territorial lands and waters of northeastern Europe, where they could arguably be deployed to intercept Russian ICBMs, according to Russian generals.<sup>66</sup>

The Obama administration can also consider reviving the proposal to restrict radar angles that was made by then-U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Robert Gates during the "two-plus-two" Moscow meetings held in October 2007.<sup>67</sup> If radar-angle restriction does not become part of the pact, it could find a home in a separate agreement, provided that it doesn't require ratification by the Senate.

At the moment, Russia has deployed no conventional system capable of shooting down ICBMs in mid-course. It relies instead on a Soviet-era system of nuclear-armed interceptors to defend the Moscow area from ICBM attacks. But hopefully, by the time the U.S., NATO and Russia sign the Missile Defense Cooperation Act, Russian designers will be completing their work on the development of systems that would give Russia the capacity to shoot down ballistic missiles, as does the U.S. Aegis system. Such systems will allow Russia to shoot down missiles flying over its sector or sectors en route to targets in NATO countries. At a minimum, Russian commanders do plan to have S-400 air-defense systems upgraded to intercept ballistic missiles in mid-

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warning data that could form the basis for a cooperative missile-defense system. We will work together to ensure that our missile-defense systems are mutually reinforcing." "Secretary of State Clinton makes remarks February 5 at the Munich Security Conference plenary session," U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, February 5, 2011. She also said: "Russia and the United States have unique missile defense assets which if used together in a cooperative manner could enhance the security of both countries." "Secretary Clinton Interview with The New Times (START, Iran, Afghanistan). Secretary Clinton Interview with Yevgenia Albats, The New Times," Secretary of State, Washington, D.C., 15 March 2010. Available at <http://geneva.usmission.gov/2010/03/16/secretary-clinton-interview/>.

Under Secretary of State Ellen Tauscher said: "We are eager to begin a joint analysis, joint exercises, and sharing of early-warning data that could form the basis for a cooperative missile-defense system." The United States and Russia would work together "to ensure that our missile defense systems are mutually reinforcing," she said. "U.S. Welcomes Mutually Reinforcing Missile Defense Cooperation With Russia," *RIA Novosti*, 23 March 2011. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Frank Rose said: "The most effective way to eliminate Russia's concerns regarding our European missile defense deployments is for the United States, NATO, and Russia to work together against common threats." Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Frank Rose's speech at 11th Missile Defense Conference, Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies, 28 May 2010.

<sup>65</sup> Russia currently has no operational surface-to-air systems that could shoot down ballistic missiles during take-off or in mid-flight, according to General of the Army (Ret.) Anatoly Kornukov, former commander of the Russian Air Force. "Kornukov: RF ne raspologayet sredstvami dlya porazheniya operativnykh raket," *RIA Novosti*, 13 May 2010. However, Russian commanders do plan to have S-400 air defense systems upgraded to intercept ICBMs in mid-course. They also count on the Russian defense industry to complete the development of the S-500, which should also be able to shoot down ICBMs in mid-course, by 2013. "Glavkom VVS anonsiroval skoroe sozdanie sistemy PVO S-500," *Lenta.ru*, 28 March 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Alexander Golts, "The Boogeyman the Kremlin Loves to Hate," *Moscow Times*, 8 February 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Viktor Yesin, "Action and Counteraction," *Russia in Global Affairs*, January-February 2009.

course.<sup>68</sup> They are also counting on the Russian defense industry to complete the development of the S-500 system, which should also be able to shoot down ICBMs in mid-course, by 2013.<sup>69</sup>

The act should also provide for the continuous sharing of information collected by early warning systems of the United States and NATO to enhance the capabilities of the mid-course systems that will form part of the overall cooperative missile-defense system. As part of the act, Moscow can contribute its early warning capabilities, including its national radar facility in Armavir and its Gabala station, which Moscow leases from Baku. The two radar systems can track an Iranian ballistic-missile launch for the first five minutes of its flight, according to a recent article by Sergei Rogov, director of Russia's U.S.A. and Canada Studies Institute.<sup>70</sup>

The radar in Azerbaijan has detected Iranian missiles some 100 to 110 seconds after they have been launched from Iran's northern test range in the southeastern direction, according to Gen. Vladimir Dvorkin (Ret.). This radar can detect Iranian missiles launched from the same test range in the northwestern direction even faster—a capacity possessed by no radar station in the entire U.S. warning system, according to Dvorkin, a leading Russian arms control expert.<sup>71</sup> Dvorkin calls the offer of the radars in Gabala and Armavir “the most important proposal,” since it would also allow the establishment of a reliable joint-monitoring system that is designed to detect missile threats in the Middle East region. The system would have the capability of detecting test launches from countries under scrutiny, such as Iran, according to Dvorkin, fellow Russian expert Pavel Podvig, and U.S. experts George Lewis and Theodore Postol.<sup>72</sup>

The act should introduce exchange-liaison officers who would regularly visit command and control centers of the respective missile defense systems. In the realm of information, the act can also introduce exchanges of information on missile-defense technologies, even including data on the propulsion systems of interceptors, to ensure greater transparency and to help assuage Russia's concerns. It could also contain provisos for the joint research and development of advanced missile-defense technologies.<sup>73</sup> (Or this can be done earlier and separately, possibly within the framework of the Ballistic Missile Defense Cooperation Agreement, which the two sides had discussed in 2009–2010, but never signed, although they claimed to be close to consensus on several occasions.)

For its part, Russia should avoid imposing false red lines in the act. Even if SM-3 Block IIBs, which are yet to be developed, are deployed in 2020, as EPAA provides for, several dozen of these interceptors will not be able to undermine the capability of Russia's strategic nuclear

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<sup>68</sup> Once all missiles for S-400 are developed, the system will be able to intercept targets in low-earth orbits as well as ICBM warheads, according to Lt. General Vadim Volkovitsky, deputy commander of the Russian Air Force.

<sup>69</sup> “Noveishimi sredstvami PVO S-400 mogut vooruzhit kollektivnye sili SNG,” *Newsru.com*, 17 February 2010.

<sup>70</sup> “Glavkom VVS anonsiroval skoroe sozdanie sistemy PVO S-500,” *Lenta.ru*, 28 March 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Sergei Rogov, “Perezagruzka v otnosheniakh mezhdu Rossiei i SShA prodolzhaetsya,” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozrenie*, 25 September 2009.

<sup>72</sup> “Russia has much to offer USA in joint missile defense—expert,” *Interfax*, 18 April 2011.

<sup>73</sup> “Missile Defense in Europe: Dangers and Opportunities,” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozrenie*, Vladimir Dvorkin et al, 28 September 2007.

<sup>74</sup> While Russia currently lags behind the U.S. in development of ICBM interceptors, such an exchange would be lopsided: the two sides may move closer to reciprocity in this sphere when the Russian defense industry completes development of the S-500 by the end of 2012.

forces, of which the New START treaty allows the operation of 1,550 deployed warheads.<sup>74</sup> Commander of Strategic Missile Forces Lt. Gen. Sergei Karakayev said Russia's single-warhead Topol-M and multi-warhead RS-24 ICBMs are capable of defeating of all of the existing and future missile defenses.<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, according to Yuri Solomonov, Russia's lead designer of ballistic missiles, U.S. missile defense in Europe is not a threat to Russia's strategic nuclear forces.

"All these 'Aegis' and associated things do not present any threat to the Russian strategic nuclear forces," said Solomonov, general designer of the Moscow Thermal Engineering Institute General Designer, lead developer of Russia's Topol-M ICBM and Bulava SLBM programs. "All the fuss" around U.S. missile-defense elements in Europe "is totally senseless," according to Solomonov.

"It is a political game and it is not very smart. Someone needs it to achieve one's goals," Solomonov said. By pursuing a new 10-warhead ICBM as a response to U.S. missile defense, Russia is making the same mistake that the Soviet Union did "in relation to Ronald Reagan's well-known SDI program," he said.<sup>76</sup>

I would argue that some of the R&D decisions made by the Russian Ministry of Defense also indicate that Russia is not very concerned about the future capabilities of EPAA. The agency has ordered development of the 10-warhead ICBM.<sup>77</sup> Development of this missile, which will replace RS-18 and RS-20 missiles, should be completed in the next several years. If Russia decides to produce this ICBM, then I would argue that once it is developed, it would mean that Moscow has opted for a cheaper way of keeping parity, and that the Kremlin has no fear that the United States will be able to intercept a significant number of Russian ICBMs at boost phase or deliver a surprise nuclear first strike. At the same time, such heavily MIRVed ICBMs have a negative impact on the aforementioned crisis stability.

While claiming victory in the eyes of domestic audiences and Russia's allies if a missile-defense cooperation act with NATO is signed, the Kremlin will, of course, know that the assurances in the act will not be binding. But the Kremlin will also know that NATO has kept its promise to deploy no nuclear weapons in new member states—a pledge it made in the 1997 NATO-Russia Act, which was not binding either. More importantly, Moscow will be guided by the knowledge that if it chooses not to cooperate, it will have fewer options for influencing U.S. decisions on missile defense in Europe, and fewer means at its disposal to determine what the U.S. and NATO contemplate doing next, or even what it is technologically possible for them to do next.

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<sup>74</sup> *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* estimated that as of 2010, Russia possessed 2,600 strategic warheads in its operational arsenal that could deliver a retaliatory strike against the U.S. and NATO countries.

<sup>75</sup> "Glavkom RVSN: Vse novye rossiiskie MBR smogut preodolet lyubye PRO," *Ekho Moskvy*, 18 December 2010.

<sup>76</sup> "Russian missile designer criticizes New START dependence on missile defense," *Interfax*, 17 March 2011.

Solomonov seems to genuinely believe a U.S. missile defense system in Europe is not a threat and that this could be used in arguments on the issue, but his agenda may also involve the foiling of a contract already awarded to a rival designer (Scientific Production Association of Machine-Building in Reutov) to develop a new liquid fuel 10-warhead ICBM that would replace the SS-18 Satan. Solomonov's Moscow Thermal Engineering Technology Institute designs only solid-fuel ICBMs and SLBMs.

<sup>77</sup> Aleksei Nikolsky, "Rossiya udvoit vypusk ballisticheskikh raket," *Vedomosti*, 21 March 2011.



Russia's leaders will also know that they will have time to prepare an adequate response well in advance should U.S./NATO decide to expand the system to target significant quantities of Russian ICBMs flying across North Pole trajectories to North America.

Such deployments will undermine Russia's second-strike capability and constitute a crossing of the red line. But Russia can beef up both its first-strike and second-strike capabilities, further advance the counter-missile-defense features of its ICBMs and deploy assets targeting U.S./NATO missile defenses prior to the implementation of any decision to expand those defenses. So as long as the U.S. refrains from deploying its interceptors and radar systems in these areas in significant quantities (defined here as more than a dozen), Russia will remain content with the missile-defense cooperation founding act, in my opinion.

If the sides still cannot agree on a missile-defense cooperation act, then they can, perhaps, consider the less effective, but still "better-than-nothing" option of making unilateral political commitments to refrain from having their missile-defense assets target each other's nuclear forces. These could come in the form of presidential initiatives by the U.S. and Russian leaders similar to initiatives on non-strategic nuclear weapons that the two countries unveiled in 1991.<sup>78</sup>

And even without a formal act in place, the United States and its NATO allies and Russia would risk nothing if they begin their missile-defense cooperation by reviving joint exercises and expanding them to test the interoperability of radar and interceptor systems as well as of command and control structures. In the absence of a formal act, the two sides can also implement the idea of the Joint Data Exchange Center (JDEC) agreed to by Putin and George W. Bush—and perhaps even revive the Russian American Observation Satellite (RAMOS) program agreed to by Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin. The JDEC could be the first step by Russia and the United States toward building an interlinked early warning system that could be joined by other countries, in particular France and China, according to Viktor Yesin, former chief of staff of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces.<sup>79</sup>

Successful missile cooperation is an important element of U.S-Russian partnership, as seen by the Moscow-based Institute of Contemporary Development, whose board of overseers President Medvedev chairs. The institute recently released a report that attempts to forecast Russia's future in 2011–2050. One of the report's sections is titled "Russia and United States Are Tied by a Relationship of Strategic Partnership." This section calls "for development of joint programs of missile defense by the United States and Russia and reaching a qualitatively new level of cooperation in the further strengthening of regimes of nonproliferation of weapons of mass

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<sup>78</sup> In September and October 1991, U.S. President George H.W. Bush announced his Presidential Nuclear Initiatives (PNIs), a series of unilateral measures to downsize and consolidate non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNWs). In response, Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev announced similar unilateral measures in October 1991. In January 1992, Russian President Boris Yeltsin confirmed the gist of Gorbachev's pledges, but modified them. Both Russia's NSNW commitments and the U.S. PNIs were non-binding political declarations that stipulate no verification procedures. Despite the lack of verification, both Russia and the U.S. are believed to have largely honored most of their NSNW commitments. Both governments have repeatedly said they have honored these commitments.

<sup>79</sup> Viktor Yesin, "Action and Counteraction," *Russia in Global Affairs*, January–February 2009.

destruction.” The report predicts that U.S.-Russian missile defense “cooperation in the Iranian and North Korean vectors becomes especially important.”<sup>80</sup>

There are well-grounded reservations in both the United States and Russia about the effectiveness of missile defenses. One outspoken and authoritative American skeptic is MIT professor Theodore Postol. Another skeptic is Russian-born U.S.-based arms control expert Pavel Podvig.<sup>81</sup> In Russia, the army of skeptics includes Solomonov, the aforementioned lead designer of ICBMs; and Sergei Karaganov, chairman of Russia’s Council for Foreign and Defense Policy.<sup>82</sup>

But regardless of the actual level of their effectiveness, cooperative missile defenses can help to achieve a very important goal in NATO-Russian relations: the transformation of the Russia-NATO relationship from a military stand-off rooted in Cold War concepts of nuclear deterrence to a partnership based on substantive, sustainable defense and security cooperation, and the convergence of vital long-term interests in combating the common security threats posed not only by emerging nuclear states, but also by WMD proliferation, nuclear terrorism and failed states.

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<sup>80</sup> “Russia of the 21st Century. The Image of Desirable Tomorrow,” *the Institute of Contemporary Development*, Moscow, Russia, 3 February 2010.

<sup>81</sup> “In a real confrontation, missile defense would be irrelevant at best. For starters, the probability of a country such as North Korea successfully launching a missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to U.S. territory is low. So when all of the uncertainties in missile and warhead performance are added up, the chance of success probably wouldn’t be higher than a few percent (which, by the way, is considered a highly potent threat worthy of a multibillion dollar investment in missile defense). Missile defense eventually might be able to reduce that chance, maybe even considerably, but it will never reduce it to zero.” Pavel Podvig, “The false promise of missile defense,” *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 14 September 2009.

<sup>82</sup> Karaganov said: “There is no need to panic, because a missile-defense system, which may at some point threaten our deterrence, does not exist, nor is it expected soon, and even if it is expected, we will manage to overcome it dozens of times.” “Russian Experts Play Down Disagreements With U.S.A. Over New START,” *RIA-Novosti*, 7 February 2011. Also, a March 2011 report by the Russian Participants of the Valdai Club’s Working Group on the Future of Russian—U.S. Relations led by Karaganov notes that “Moscow should realize that the Obama administration’s proclaimed goal of creating a multi-tiered MD system is unlikely to ever be achieved even in its European version.” “U.S.—Russia Relations after the “Reset”: Building a New Agenda. A View from Russia,” Russian Participants of the Working Group on the Future of the Russian—U.S. Relations, Valdai Club, March 2011.

## Conclusion

Neither NATO nor Russia can afford the status quo in the security realm of their relations.

The lingering suspicions and lack of institutionalized cooperation between Russia and NATO members will look absurd and pernicious to future generations as they struggle to ward off the aforementioned traditional and new challenges, including the proliferation of nuclear weapons and long-range delivery systems,<sup>83</sup> the acquisition of nuclear weapons and other WMDs by non-state actors seeking to commit acts of catastrophic terrorism,<sup>84</sup> and failed states whose territories are exploited by terrorist groups bent on targeting other countries with WMDs.<sup>85</sup>

Addressing these challenges requires the use of instruments that can be found only in a collective tool box that has yet to be assembled by NATO and Russia.

If not addressed together, these already grave and imminent threats will continue growing closer to materialization. Failure to jointly interdict these threats, some of which have the potential to become history-changing events, such as a successful nuclear terrorist attack, would result in consequences<sup>86</sup> whose impact on individual vertices of the polygon formed by Russia and the NATO states will vary over the short term, but whose longer-term impact will weaken the entire structure.

In order to interdict these threats, NATO members and Russia should start by building cooperative missile defenses and reforming the dysfunctional collective security mechanism in Europe. These measures would be the first building blocks in a challenging but necessary process

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<sup>83</sup> Acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iran, with other countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt following suit, would lead to the emergence of what Russian strategic arms expert Andrei Kokoshin describes as a very unstable system of polygonal deterrence.

<sup>84</sup> Any of the official nuclear powers could launch a nuclear strike in reaction to a false alarm. There could also be premeditated use of nuclear weapons, if, for instance, a Pakistani-based terrorist group stages a series of deadly attacks in India, killing hundreds, prompting India to retaliate against Pakistan. As a result, a conventional conflict erupts between the two countries—a conflict that could always escalate into a nuclear war, given Pakistan's concern that its conventional forces could be overwhelmed by those of India.

<sup>85</sup> Terrorist groups that are targeting Western countries (such as Al Qaeda), and Russia (such as North Caucasus-based networks), have continuously sought to acquire nuclear weapons and other WMD with practical use in mind. For a comprehensive review of Al Qaeda's nuclear aspirations, see Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, "Al Qaeda Weapons of Mass Destruction Threat: Hype or Reality?" Paper, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, January 2010. For a comprehensive review of North Caucasus-based groups' nuclear aspirations, see "Russia: Grasping the Reality of Nuclear Terror," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 607, No. 1, 64-77 (2006). Al Qaeda and North Caucasus-based groups have maintained close ties since the early 1990s. Osama Bin Laden was actively involved in the terrorist insurgency in Chechnya since 1995, sending Al Qaeda agents to the North Caucasus and sponsoring local networks. Al Qaeda's would-be No. 2, Ayman al-Zawahiri, travelled to the North Caucasus in 1996, purportedly attempting to acquire nuclear weapons in Russia. In 2005, France's Interior Minister said members of Al Qaeda groups that had received training in Afghanistan to commit acts of biological terrorism had relocated to Georgia's then unruly Pankisi Gorge, which borders Russia's North Caucasus. He said these groups carried out BW experiments in the gorge, where the majority of the population consists of ethnic Chechens, and where Chechen rebels would retreat during Russia's second war with Chechnya for rest and recreation.

<sup>86</sup> While the U.S. and the EU may be more likely to be targeted if terrorist groups based in Pakistan acquire nuclear weapons, it would be Russia that bears the brunt of instability if states fails in post-Soviet Central Asia.

that culminates in NATO membership for Russia and inaugurates the emergence of a firmly institutionalized security alliance based on the convergence of the vital shared security interests of Moscow, Brussels and Washington in warding off current and future common threats.