

**The Global Security Environment and  
U.S: Russian Strategic Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:  
Partners or Rivals?**

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## **PREFACE**

This study is written not only from the point of view of someone who helped negotiate some major arms control treaties between the United States and the Soviet Union and Russia, which resulted in substantially reduced levels of nuclear weapons, but in many respects from an academic point of view.

It does not set out to be a comprehensive examination of the issues facing the United States and Russia or today's world in the field of international security and world peace, because such a task would take more time and study than available.

This paper shows, however, that even with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War the world has not yet been freed from incessant and pervasive fear of nuclear devastation. This threat requires a wide spectrum of responses, but at the heart of it is the need for strict controls over nuclear weapons.

Mr. Yereskovsky's monograph deals with a topic of fundamental importance: in spite of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and a difficult economic and internal environment, Russia is still a strategic factor because it retains a long-term military and strategic potential, which remains of paramount security concern to the United States. He correctly notes that American security relations with Russia require careful tending. This relationship is one of the few that can be said to be vital.

The underlying reality is that, although times have changed, the two powers still occupy almost the same geostrategic positions that produced past rivalries and continue to rely on "mutually assured-destruction" capability vis-à-vis each other. For that reason, the two countries might risk returning to the past sometime in the new century.

Mr. Yereskovsky sees the possibility of a global nuclear arms race and growing nuclear dangers if the U.S. and Russia—which are now at a historic geopolitical crossroads—take a wrong road. They will have to make a geostrategic choice—to be partners or rivals or both in the 21st Century. He makes a strong statement of the critical need to reframe U.S.-Russian strategic relations to suit a radically different global strategic environment. The author's vision is historically optimistic and pragmatic. The end of the Cold War presented a historic geopolitical opportunity for forming a new and efficient security structure for mutual security. This paper attempts to find an adequate contemporary replacement for the strategy of "containment" and mutual assured destruction, which will allow the transition to a policy that goes beyond nuclear deterrence in the next few decades. The idea of a safer strategic environment involving progressively less reliance on nuclear weapons is still valid and must be pursued.

Graham Allison  
Director,  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

The end of the Cold War has presented major new historic geopolitical opportunities for dramatically improving Russian-American relations and gave rise to hopes that the legacy of a nuclear arms race and confrontation between the United States and Russia was coming to an end. Two prominent American scholars wrote: "The end of the Cold War has changed more than we yet realize. Fundamental rethinking is required across the foreign policy agenda; structures designed to pursue Cold War strategies must be reinvented..."<sup>1</sup>

Both countries have been searching for a unifying formula to provide a strategic framework appropriate to current and future circumstances. That search has not been easy. They had the opportunity, and took some steps in the early and mid-1990s, to create a new, non-deterrence-based nuclear relationship that would allow for dramatic nuclear reductions. The consolidation and dismantling of large tactical nuclear arsenals, the cooperative denuclearization of Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, and the symbolic de-targeting initiative and, most of all, the negotiation of the START I and II Treaties created further hopes for a radical de-emphasis of nuclear weapons in the bilateral relationship. Today hardly anybody believes a deliberate attack from Russia is likely, or even plausible, but the nuclear dangers did not disappear with the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, the journey from the detargeting to launch is frighteningly short.

Domestic events in Russia, growing interest in the United States in deploying a National Missile Defense (NMD) system, NATO enlargement, military actions in

Yugoslavia and the evolution of the post-Cold War international security environment in general, however, complicated efforts to break the Cold War paradigm and maintain the declared strategic partnership between the United States and Russia.

The present state of Russian-American relations is far from being satisfactory. There are some problem areas and a number of irritating factors regarding their relations. As far as U.S. National Missile defense plans and programs, the dominant view in Moscow is clearly that U.S. intentions toward Russia are hostile, and correspondingly, that NMD is not for counterproliferation purposes. There are suspicions that the United States has something else in mind than defending its national territory from potential Third World proliferators. Rather, the perception is that these initiatives are an element in a well-orchestrated plan to undermine Russian security while Russia is relatively weak. It may be assumed that unless prevailing Russian attitude and positions change, Russia may pursue harsh, and perhaps, disproportionate responses to any U.S. NMD deployment, especially if it is accompanied by Washington's unilateral Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty withdrawal.

To build or not to build NMD is certainly the exclusive prerogative of the U.S. President and the American people. No country, including Russia, can have a veto over an issue affecting U.S. national security. But in making a decision on deployment of NMD the U.S. must decide whether Russia, as a Party to the ABM Treaty, should be accommodated as a potential strategic partner of the United States or rebuffed as a still threatening rival. At this time, Russia economically is not in a position to be back in the arms race business with the United States. But such a possibility could appear in the future.

In case NMD is to be deployed by the U.S. without accommodating Russia, there are at least two alternatives for Moscow: to deploy NMD of its own, or to strengthen offensive weapons, for example, by retaining Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicles (MIRV). In addition to political, a series of asymmetrical measures-technical and military-might be taken by Russia in order to maintain strategic stability, which in reality could mean a revival of a strategic arms race.

Another set of serious security concerns is related to China. In reaction to U.S. plans to deploy an NMD together with a Theatre Missile Defense (TMD) in the Western Pacific, Beijing will have to significantly increase the number of those forces. Such a development would be detrimental not only for the U.S., but for Russia as well. Currently, the Chinese conventional weapon predominance vis-à-vis the vast but under-populated Russian Far East is balanced by Moscow's superiority in nuclear weapons. China's nuclear buildup might considerably erode this superiority, further weakening Russia's position in the Far East. In this context, selecting strategic allies in the new millennium should necessarily be in line with Russia's national interest. The Russian leadership should not allow itself to be motivated by illusions, as had been the case with the former Soviet leadership.

The Russian-American strategic relationship in the coming era is clouded in part because the two countries lack consensus regarding their relations in the security area. However, with an era of global affairs arriving, a different approach and fresh thinking are required. Why do the United States and Russia need to "deter" each other nowadays? There is no longer a place for the mutual assured destruction (MAD) doctrine in U.S.-Russian strategic relations.



Now is the time for an entirely new U.S.-Russian security relationship, different than that which existed during the Cold War. But it will take strong and daring political leadership and strategic vision to build such relations as new administrations take over in both countries. The central question of the study is to demonstrate that in the post-Cold War era the MAD strategy should be dismantled and replaced by a different deterrence formula-a strategy of "mutual assured cooperation." Reducing drastically the number of nuclear weapons, lowering the threat of their use, cooperation on nonproliferation and balanced defenses is the only path toward security and stability in this century.

This paper explores a broader, more constructive approach than has thus far been taken-one that takes into account some old and new dangers and many new opportunities that are emerging as a result of the Cold War's demise and revolutionary changes in Russia.

Building a new, constructive security framework between Russia and the U.S. requires long term strategic and structural changes in their nuclear forces. Effecting such changes requires, in turn, broadening the agenda of security issues between the two countries. Their security priorities must be redefined in broader, more comprehensive terms.

The new Russia has been looking and will continue to look for partners and allies abroad in the next century in order to solve its complex economic and political problems. And if Russia does not find such a partner in the United States then it will be looking for partners among its nearest neighbors-China, Iran, Iraq, United Europe. It would be hardly in America's strategic interest if the trend in the political climate in this country to disengage from Russia were to prevail. A wait and see policy toward Russia, in the long

run, could lead to a situation where the U.S. could lose the opportunity to establish a close strategic partnership with Russia. Russia should not be alienated through actions that are, or may be perceived as hostile and aggressive.

In the changed international environment of the 21st century the United States and Russia continue to need and work toward a new more stable and peaceful international system. It will be important in the reshaped world of the future to find a paradigm for building a new U.S.-Russian security relationship that will underpin not only the bilateral strategic relationship but also the larger interests of international security and stability.

This paper suggests some directions. Some of the conclusions presented in this paper will almost certainly be debated and modified.

## **GLOBAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

As the 21st century begins, the world faces a dynamic and uncertain security environment. However there is much that is positive about this environment. The collapse of the Soviet Union produced the greatest change in world power relationships since World War II. Russia is building a new nation-state with a new economy and new sociopolitical structure. Former adversaries, like Russia and other former members of the Warsaw Pact, now cooperate with the United States across a range of security issues. The world is enjoying a period in which there are no major competing military nations or blocks.

With the end of the Cold War, Treaties such as (INF), START I, START II, (CTBT), and the renewal of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), along with attempts to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), have structured the

nuclear order. These treaties have reduced the number and limited the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. They have contributed greatly to lessening military confrontations left over from the Cold War and have successfully reduced the threat posed by nuclear weapons. The START process has succeeded in reducing deployed strategic nuclear warheads on both sides from around 12,000 to roughly 6,000 and the potential exists to go even lower. Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine have joined the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states. Reciprocal unilateral decisions were made by the U.S. and Russia to reduce theater and tactical nuclear weapons and to remove nuclear weapons from surface ships. Also, there has been incremental progress in controlling fissile materials and large quantities of Russian plutonium and highly enriched uranium through verification and control.

Despite these positive developments in the international environment, the world remains a complex and dangerous place. While the immediate post-Cold War period was marked with considerable success, more recent events suggest that the arms control and disarmament process suffered several frustrating setbacks owing to accelerating proliferation in several regions, including the nuclear weapons tests in India and Pakistan and the covert nuclear programs of North Korea, Iran, and Iraq.

As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, warned on April 24, 2000, warned at the start of the recent conference to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, "nuclear conflict remains a very real and very terrifying possibility at the beginning of the 21st century. This is the stark reality confronting you today." <sup>2</sup>

While the 1990s have been a period of real physical disarmament, the 21st century could become the Age of Proliferation. The post-Cold War environment, among

other things, is prone with the growing threat of proliferation of ballistic missile technologies and weapons of mass destruction, as well as expanding regional and local conflicts, which could lead to nuclear powers becoming involved militarily in local hostilities. Although the apocalyptic threat is gone and the threat of a superpower nuclear arms race has been greatly reduced, some other threats-old and new-remain.

Major technological breakthroughs in military capability will happen in the next two decades. The impact of applied automation and computers, electromagnetic warfare, "brilliant sensors" and other technologies will lead to the rise of a military-techno culture in which time, area (space), distance, speed, and other fundamental conditions are radically changed. Nuclear weapons are being tested on the basis of scientific and technical progress: sub-critical experiments at the nuclear test ranges, super computers for mathematical simulation of complex processes of nuclear and thermonuclear explosions, powerful lasers, x-rays and gamma systems and devices. New technology could constitute a foundation for developing in the 21st century a new generation of miniature nuclear weapons of high accuracy. Much critical and urgent work remains to be done to achieve full and credible control of nuclear weapons worldwide and to prevent, deter, and prepare for those threats before they become reality.

Previously, arms control successfully helped regulate the superpowers' strategic nuclear forces. The issue is whether this process can deal with the challenges ahead. With Moscow's fall from superpower status, the bipolar structure that had shaped the security policies of the major powers for nearly half a century vanished, and the United States emerged as the world's only superpower.<sup>3</sup> Observers were quick to recognize that a new "unipolar moment" of unprecedented U.S. power had arrived<sup>4</sup> while

officials spoke of "a period of strategic opportunity"<sup>5</sup> for the United States.

The Russians state instead, that the collapse of a bipolar world has led to a multipolar world with several leading centers. While it is self-evident that the world is no longer bipolar in a traditional sense, does that mean it is unipolar, revolving around the sole superpower? Or is it somewhere in between-an asymmetrical bipolarity with a strong United States occupying one pole and the second-tier powers, including the European Union, Japan, China and Russia, at another.<sup>6</sup> U.S. dominance, as the sole superpower' appears to some countries as an imperial policy. Russia's new "Concept of National Security,,<sup>7</sup> signed by then acting President Vladimir Putin on January 10, 2000, identifies two "mutually exclusive" trends in international relations following the end of the Cold War: an attempt to create a multipolar world and a purported effort by the United States to dominate the world. As we can see the issue how the world is configured is still a subject to considerable debate.

It is obvious that one of these centers in a new world should be the Russian Federation, reflecting Russia's geopolitical importance as a major nuclear power. Some Western scholars and leaders might be tempted to write off Russia as a hopeless case.<sup>8</sup> However, this would be both premature and counterproductive. Russia has the natural resources to recover economically within two to three decades.<sup>9</sup> While there is uncertainty about Russia's future, it must be anticipated that no matter who is in the Kremlin, Russia is highly unlikely to relinquish its role as one of the leaders in international affairs and it will exert itself to try to regain and maintain its former superpower status.<sup>10</sup> Russia's National Security Concept says that "Russia's national interests in the international sphere lie in upholding its sovereignty and strengthening its

position as a great power and as one of the influential centers of a multipolar world."

Although the United States is in a "period of strategic opportunity", it should not underestimate other countries such as Russia or China.<sup>11</sup> These countries, along with India, France and others have opposed what they call U.S. hegemony following the Cold War and have attempted to create a counterbalance. As a result, China and Russia are strengthening their security relationship with each other in spite of strong countervailing factors that might otherwise prevent a close collaboration. Former Russian Prime Minister Primakov even conceived of a somewhat fanciful Russian-Chinese-Indian alliance directed against Western dominance. At the same time there are some indications of increased Russian and Chinese cooperation with the rogue states. Russia is not the Soviet superpower, and bipolar competition will not return in its old form. However the concern is that nations that have strong policy differences with the West will form a "cooperative relationship" that eventually will lead to a new and dangerous bipolarity.

Thus the end of the Cold War introduced many more variables and a corresponding uncertainty into the world order. This destabilization has made it difficult for policy makers to make definitive progress in world affairs, as every action may now have unforeseen consequences. Adapting to new conditions likely will require fresh thinking and careful U.S. and Russian foreign policies and defense strategies that address the underlying geopolitical sources of instability. The future will depend heavily upon U.S.-Russian relations and can be influenced by how Russia and the United States act.

## **WHERE DO U.S: RUSSIAN STRATEGIC RELATIONS STAND?**

At the historic meeting in the Kremlin on September 2, 1998, Presidents Bill Clinton of the United States and Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation signed "The Joint Statement on Common Security Challenges at the Threshold of the Twenty First Century." The Presidents declared that cooperation between Russia and the U.S. will be of the greatest import in the 21st century for promoting prosperity and strengthening security throughout the world. In this connection, they reaffirmed that "the Russian Federation and the United States of America are natural partners in advancing international peace and stability." The Presidents also reaffirmed that "Russia and the U.S. remain committed to jointly building an enduring peace based upon the principles of democracy and the indivisibility of security."

Earlier, on June 17, 1992, Presidents George Bush and Boris Yeltsin proclaimed a strategic partnership between the two countries in a document called "A Charter for American-Russian Partnership and Friendship." That was not a fantasy. The new Russia sincerely wanted to be a partner of the United States. In the first few years of the postSoviet era, hopes and expectations had run high in Moscow that the former hostility of the superpowers might turn into friendship. In 1991 President Yeltsin went as far as to suggest Russian membership in NATO. Many of the international steps taken by the Russian leaders, including military withdrawal from Eastern Europe, dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty, reunification of Germany and others were presented as necessary concessions to the West in preparation for Russia's entry into the family of democratic nations.

The end of the Cold War created an historic opportunity to integrate the former

Soviet Union into the global architecture of free market democracies in terms of economy, security dimensions and, ultimately, as a full-fledged partner with the U.S. and other Western states. Many Russians thought the West would embrace them, because the Soviet threat was gone together with the Soviet Union itself. Gone, too, was the threat of an invasion of Western Europe by the tank armada and massive Soviet ground forces. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved, but NATO survived. As a result, Europe is still divided, only this time between members and nonmembers.

Even most members of the liberal political-military elite in Russia sense that America has taken geopolitical advantage of Russian weakness over the past decade. To Moscow, Washington seems to pile on an accumulation of disputes: over NATO enlargement, National Missile Defense, Balkan interventions, U.S. petro-pipeline policies in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and more. Strategic partnership between Russia and the U.S. turned out to be mostly declaratory because the U.S. hasn't been prepared to develop a relationship with Russia on an equal basis and Russia, in turn, has not proposed a concrete program for strategic partnership with the United States.

Although the optimism of the early 1990s about U.S.-Russian relations is gone and these relations have suffered during the past two years, nevertheless the last 10 years have demonstrated that in the current era security relations between the two countries have acquired a new meaning and a new context and that there are existing incentives to avoid further deterioration. One thing is clear: security and arms control issues remain a matter of vital importance and are still at the core of the relationship between Moscow and Washington, just as they were during the Cold War.

The end of the Cold War, which was to a certain extent facilitated by the arms



control agreements, opened the possibility for a new and positive relationship between the United States and Russia, at least in some foreign policy areas where former adversaries share a common interest in becoming partners in controlling weapons of mass destruction, missile technology, international crime and terrorism. The East-West strategic nuclear rivalry that dominated the global security environment for more than 40 years has been fundamentally, and in many ways irreversibly, altered.<sup>12</sup> As a result, some necessary prerequisites for establishing a new, non-confrontational model of relationship between Russia and United States have been formed on the basis of mutual interest.

But from the political-military point of view, the relationship is still an ambiguous one: Russia is recognized as a partner but not as an ally of the United States. The declared partnership between Russia and the U.S. is still far from fully embracing certain critical parts of their relations, as can be seen in many security issues. Unfortunately the two countries carry into the 21st century heavy baggage they inherited from the Cold War. Asymmetrical postures of Russia and the U.S. in the system of international relations have led to a divergence of interests, which became a cause of tension both in economic and political military spheres. Retaining the mechanism of mutual nuclear deterrence also contributed to conservation of some elements of rivalry in Russian-American relationship. The two countries remain stuck in Cold War thinking about mutual assured destruction, whereby the United States or Russia requires thousands of nuclear weapons to deter a state it no longer calls an enemy. U.S. and Russian nuclear posture and planning remain essentially unchanged a decade after the end of the Cold War. U.S. and Russian military planners still employ mass attack nuclear plans, nuclear arsenals remain on hair-trigger alert and in numbers far in excess of what could

reasonably be considered necessary to "deter" attack. The research and development of new means of mass destruction continue.

Strategic vulnerability continues to be a fact of life that influences thinking and attitudes in both countries. The two states, in essence, continue to regard mutual nuclear deterrence as essential to their security and maintain the capability to eliminate each other as civilized nations at any moment. At the same time future structure of the world's economic and political systems and system of international security of the 21st century will depend to considerable degree on the development of the Russian-American relationship. Neither the United States nor Russia should rely on nuclear weapons as their ultimate security guarantee. They should work to reduce the salience of nuclear weapon and nuclear deterrence.

## **TRANSFORMING THE DETERRENCE CONCEPT**

The most important problem of 21st century arms control is related to the future of mutual assured destruction (MAD) or mutual nuclear deterrence (MND), which was the key condition for the Soviet-American strategic stability during the Cold War. Nuclear deterrence was recognized by both sides as the only politically meaningful nuclear posture, at least on the declaratory level.<sup>13</sup> The end of the Cold War allegedly should do away with MAD. However, when looking at the problem from the political-military point of view, this need not necessarily be the case. Deterrence is still viewed as the organizing principle of international security and the main challenge is to achieve it at lower nuclear force levels. Nuclear deterrence and arms control remain two of the most complex problems of the U.S.-Russian security agenda as far as they interact with the

strategic concepts, programs and systems of both parties in the context of the post-Cold War international security environment. The U.S.-Russian strategic relationship suffers from all the effects of uncertainty and internal controversy of transition from clear-cut confrontational interaction to an unclear and unpredictable mixed mode of confrontation and cooperation.

The main components which together comprise the model of mutual nuclear deterrence remain intact.<sup>14</sup> The rough equality or parity in the numbers and classes of strategic weapons still remains a crucial prerequisite of mutual nuclear deterrence. All strategic arms control agreements have been preoccupied with equal numbers. The reliance on counterforce weapons raises at least theoretically a possibility of a preemptive strike, which can disarm and decapitate the enemy. The possibility of a preemptive strike makes it necessary to ensure tactical warning of imminent attack by the other side. All of those factors push both sides to rely on launch on warning. So the focus is on alert status of the nuclear forces of the opponent.<sup>15</sup> In planning the nuclear war-fighting scenario this means that the side that detects the beginning of the opponent's attack must immediately launch its missiles in order not to lose them. The concept of MAD also establishes a rigid relationship between strategic offense and strategic defense. A combination of counterforce weapons and strategic defenses may encourage a preemption. An aggressor could hope to destroy most of the nuclear weapons of the other side in a surprise first strike and then defend himself with strategic defenses from the retaliation of a much weakened victim. Thus, the vulnerability of both sides to the devastating consequences of a nuclear war, mutual assured destruction, is perceived as the only way to maintain strategic stability.<sup>16</sup>

The United States has made the most dramatic changes to its nuclear doctrine in the 1990s, placing greater reliance on its nuclear weapons to deter weapons of mass destruction.<sup>17</sup> In the Presidential Decision Directive # 60 of November 1997, President Clinton determined that nuclear weapons would remain the cornerstone of U.S. security indefinitely. He went on to direct the maintenance of the triad of U.S. strategic forces at a high state of alert that would permit launch on warning of any impending nuclear attack on the U.S..

The 2000 Department of Defense (DOD) report to the President states that "nuclear forces are an essential element of U.S. security, serving as a hedge against an uncertain future and as a guarantee of U.S. commitments to allies. Accordingly, the United States must maintain survivable strategic nuclear forces of sufficient size and diversity-as well as the deployment of theater nuclear weapons to NATO and the ability to deploy cruise missiles on submarines-to deter or dissuade potentially hostile foreign leaders with access to nuclear weapons."<sup>18</sup> While these "potentially hostile leaders" with nuclear access are generally assumed to be the so called rogue states, its ambiguity makes it clear that Russia could be considered "a potentially hostile power" also.

In April 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization reaffirmed its "first-use" doctrine, acknowledged the use of tactical weapons, and termed nuclear weapons "the supreme guarantee of the security of the Allies."<sup>19</sup>

Contemporary Russia has inherited an old strategic culture, which explains to a large extent, the enduring reliance on nuclear weapons. Its nuclear strategy and rationale are accordingly rooted in Cold War memories. The end of the Cold War has not led to major changes in nuclear doctrine or policy.

The Russian Federation has adopted a first-use nuclear doctrine and given new emphasis to tactical nuclear weapons. Russia's great military strength is dependent, at the moment, on nuclear weapons. Then Prime-Minister Vladimir Putin, speaking at a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the detonation of the first Soviet nuclear weapon, said that Russian nuclear weapons remain "the guarantor of national security and global peace in the current geopolitical setting."<sup>20</sup>

Russia's National Security Doctrine considers that "a vital task of the Russian Federation is to exercise deterrence to prevent aggression on any scale and nuclear or otherwise, against Russia and its allies." For that purpose, "it should possess nuclear forces that are capable of guaranteeing the infliction of the required damage to any aggressor state or coalition of states in any conditions and circumstances."

The new Russian military doctrine includes some details of the Russian nuclear policy. The doctrine does not mention directly Russia's right to the first use of nuclear weapons. However, the document states that "the Russian Federation keeps the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear arms and other WMD against it or its allies, and in response to a large- scale aggression with the use of conventional arms in situations critical for the national security of the Russian Federation or its allies." In fact, this practically means the declaration of the right to the first use of nuclear weapons.<sup>21</sup>

A number of developments have occurred in recent years with respect to nuclear doctrines that highlight the sizable role of nuclear arms in some states' security policy. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in his opening 2000 address to the NPT Review Conference: "We have witnessed the reaffirmation of the nuclear weapons doctrines of all the nuclear-weapons states." But in the post-Cold War era this strategy appears

increasingly dubious and anachronistic.

Why has the model of mutual nuclear deterrence survived all these years, even after the sources of conflict between the two countries have withered away? Is it because strategic arms control agreements negotiated in the 1970s to the 1990s, and even the START II treaty, were based on the principals of strategic stability and mutual nuclear deterrence? Or is it because the deployment and operation of weapons and people's thinking cannot be changed overnight, or at least as quickly as political factors? Nuclear policy apparently has a powerful inertia, a life of its own in fact.

And there is another paradox. Mutual nuclear deterrence, in the long run, is not compatible with the strategic partnership proclaimed by Russia and the United States, simply because Russia and the U.S. cannot be strategic partners if they continue to believe they must deter each other with nuclear weapons.

Partnership demands a very substantial measure of transparency, coordination of policy, openness, mutual trust and patience. Just not being the main enemy is not enough for making mutual deterrence irrelevant, unless and until a former opponent becomes a formal or informal ally. For instance, while Great Britain and France rely on nuclear deterrence, there is no mutual nuclear deterrence between the United States and each of these two countries. In contrast to that, the U.S. and Russia up to now have not become formal or informal allies, although they are no longer enemies. Their "partnership" is quite an amorphous transitional intermediate state of relations, somewhere between rivalry and alliance. The new Russian National Security Concept sets Russia the task of consolidating its position as one of the great powers and influential centers in the world. The concept drops Russia's earlier call for a "partnership" with the West and replaces it

with a more limited call for "cooperation." Some U.S. analysts believe that the United States "has pragmatic reasons" for establishing "limited partnership with Russia in areas of mutual interest."<sup>22</sup>

### **A NEW STRATEGY**

The Russian intelligentsia always has liked to ask two questions: "What to do?" and "Who is to be blamed?" I am not going to answer the second question. I just say: "Nobody is perfect." Trying to answer the first question, I think that the transformation of the Russian-American strategic nuclear relationship is possible and inevitable and that the model of mutual assured destruction (MAD) has to be replaced by a new, more advanced model, based on "a constructive partnership," a model which more fully reflects the objective reality of the post-Cold War period. I would call it a strategy of "mutual assured cooperation" (MAC). This strategy should exclude such notions as first strikes, launch on warning, unacceptable damage and so on. But this can only be accomplished if the overall political and military relations between the two countries do not again become highly competitive.

Is nuclear deterrence still necessary? No matter what the levels of a balance of strategic offensive weapons have remained between Russia and U.S., the present model of mutual assured destruction, which has existed for decades, remains practically unchanged in spite of its absurdity. It is obvious that for today and the foreseeable future deterrence is still necessary for preventing the use or threat of nuclear weapons and other WMD against the United States or Russia. Like Great Britain and France, the U.S. and Russia may need to rely on nuclear deterrence but there should be no nuclear deterrence

between them.

In the post-Cold War period it would be more productive to drop or to redefine deterrence as being designed to prevent a return to confrontation, a counterforce posture or an arms race. It is expedient to maintain such a balance of smaller nuclear forces specifically for such purposes. But this should be a new type of "deterrence", quite different from that of the past. A new concept should be introduced which is based on the principal of "offensive-defensive sufficiency".

What can be done to make real progress toward a more safe and stable world in the 21st century? Of overriding importance to this security is a further reduction in the number of the nuclear weapons while accommodating strong pressure to address the threat to both the U.S. and Russia of ballistic missile attacks by rogue states. For this reason the two countries should commit to holding negotiations on both a START III (or a new START) and the ABM Treaty to accommodate the new strategic arms control framework (similar to the January 1985 Gromyko-Shultz agreement to negotiate START, Defense and Space and INF-three "baskets"). This new framework would be intended to structure Russian and American strategic offensive and defensive forces so that each side could realistically cease fearing a sudden and debilitating first strike. A combination of efficient offensive nuclear forces and the defensive systems (both regional and national) seems to be an important condition for either a weakening of the stimulus for possessing nuclear means for the countries which do not have them now, or at least an emergence of certain guarantees against their use.

In order to reach a smaller number of nuclear forces the old idea of "minimum (or finite) nuclear deterrence," its contemporary meaning, requirements and visibility have to



be addressed .<sup>23</sup> The concept of "minimum deterrence" envisioned very low levels of forces. Russia and the United States could go down as low as 500-600 warheads deployed permanently in their forces with the rest being stored, perhaps under mutual inspection. Missiles and aircraft which are without nuclear warheads will be more like conventional dual purpose systems which will no longer be considered a part of combat-ready arsenals but rather will be a part of reserve forces. One possible long-term solution could be based on a multilateral nuclear equation in which the five nuclear powers will be apportioned approximately equal numbers of combat-ready nuclear warheads with the provision that the United States and Russia will preserve certain non combat-ready reserves, with delivery vehicles and nuclear warheads decoupled and under the control of all five nuclear powers.

### **HOW TO MOVE ALONG?**

I would suggest that the United States and Russia pursue a three-stage effort to limit their nuclear arsenals. The first and immediate stage would consist of steps to reduce the size of each nation's strategic nuclear arsenal to 1,000-1,500 warheads. In this first stage, the U.S. would, in effect, agree to a lower START III level, which would lead to less pressure on Russia for force modernization, in exchange for Russian agreement to amendments to the ABM Treaty that would allow protection against potential rogue state threats. The key issue is how to manage NMD deployment so as not to abrogate the ABM Treaty or interfere with the arms reduction process. In the process of dismantling the model of mutual assured destruction the U.S. and Russia could eventually reconsider the restrictions on strategic ballistic missile defenses. If both sides agree that threats from

third countries require the deployment of BMD systems they may renegotiate the ABM Treaty and increase the number of ABM-protected areas from one site, as currently provided in the Treaty, to two or even more sites.

The second stage would include development of an extensive and intrusive transparency and inspection regime on warheads, fissile material and ballistic missiles. This regime would have value in itself and could be opened to include the other Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) nuclear powers as a preliminary step to involving them in actual reduction discussions in the third stage. This would help to lay the groundwork for limits on tactical nuclear weapons, including sea-launched cruise missiles, at as low a level as possible-perhaps 500 weapons for each party. Such a limit could pave the way for a gradual move to a single, combined level for each party, say a total of 1000 for all nuclear weapons, including reserves. These steps could be taken only if the parties remain comfortable with the deterrent value of their retaliatory forces in the face of whatever missile defense deployments are permitted by an amended ABM Treaty. Moreover, Russia will agree to limits on tactical nuclear forces only if Western and Chinese policies are not perceived as degrading its security situation.

The third stage would involve five-power negotiations aimed at reaching residual levels of nuclear weapons in the low hundreds for the U.S. and Russia and even lower levels for China, France and the UK (taking into account the programs of India, Pakistan and Israel). If successful, this five-power process would represent the most dramatic and important development regarding implementation of Article 6 of the NPT and would enormously strengthen the NPT regime.<sup>24</sup>

However, on the road toward minimum deterrence the deep numerical reduction

of nuclear weapons should not be an end in itself. The main purpose of nuclear arms control agreements is not only to reduce the number of weapons, but rather to lower the threat of their use.

With such understanding in mind and the acceptance of this new nuclear deterrence formula, the issue of lowering levels of alert or readiness of nuclear forces becomes easier to resolve. The main goal of lowering the readiness of nuclear forces is to reduce the pressure for hurried decisions, to lower the risk of giving unprovoked order for the launch of the missiles based on the information from the early warning systems. In this context, agreements on confidence building measures and predictability in the political-military area, in conjunction with the drastic reduction of strategic offensive weapons and restructuring the architecture of the strategic potential of both countries, should lead to the solution of a major objective of future arms control negotiations-- safeguarding strategic stability in a transformed post-Cold War strategic environment, i.e. a situation in which each side is confident and regards it as inconceivable to use nuclear weapons against each other or that the other side could be engaged in a first strike.

### **SOME DESTABILIZING STRATEGIC FACTORS**

Thus, the question of the relevance of mutual assured destruction to post-Cold War U.S.-Russian strategic relations is far from clear. But what is clear is that the principles and conceptions of nuclear deterrence, which have been shaped as major postulates of the Cold War and the global confrontation between the two social systems, remain a source of irritation and tension in Russian-American relations. Cosmetic and unverifiable measures such as non-targeting of U.S. and Russian strategic missiles could

not change the substance of their relationship in the nuclear field that the two countries inherited from the era of the Soviet-American confrontation. Gimmicks like non-targeting (missiles can be retargeted within 90 seconds since the targets are retained in computer memory) only produce the false impression that the problem has been resolved while it has not been really tackled.

The claim that Russia and America no longer aim their missiles against each other only covers the unpleasant truth that both countries continue to adhere to launch on warning postures as they were during the most tense moments of the Cold War. As we can see from the table below the immediate threat is from thousands of Russian and U.S. warheads on a hair-trigger, thereby creating the risk of starting a nuclear war through the possibility of an accidental or unauthorized launch which could be caused by one or more of the following: a) the wrong assessment of a threat (for example, the Cuban missile crisis); b) mistakes in the early warning systems; c) internal rivalries within the former Soviet Union; d) lack of controls on ballistic missiles leading to accidents; e) a human error in judgment; f) nuclear terrorism. The more long-term threat is from the possibility of the proliferation of nuclear weapons material and technology throughout the world.

The present strategic setting, as I see it, looks in the following way: the first level is Russian and U.S. strategic offensive missiles; second-Russian and U.S. tactical nuclear weapons; third-the enormous Russian inventory of highly enriched uranium and weapon-grade plutonium; fourth-Chinese modernization programs and the fifth level consists of rogue states, including Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. These levels require a wide spectrum of responses.

## The Missile Threat to the United States: Dominated by Russia

*Global Strategic and Nuclear Arsenals, January 2000*

	ICBMs	ICBM Warheads	SLBMs	SLBM Warheads	Bombers	Bomber Warheads	Total Delivery Vehicles <sup>1</sup>	Total Strategic Warheads <sup>2</sup>	All warheads (including tactical hedger)
US	550	2,000	432	3,456	92	1,750	1,074	-7,200	-10,500
Russia	756	3,540	348	1,576	69	790	1,174	-6,000	-20,000
China	20	20	0	0	0	0	20	20	-410
France	0	0	64	384	0	0	64	384	-464
UK	0	0	48	185	0	0	48	185	185
Israel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-200
India	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60 <sup>4</sup>
Pakistan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30 <sup>4</sup>
N. Korea	0 <sup>5</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	? <sup>6</sup>
Iran	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>7</sup>
Iraq	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 <sup>8</sup>

ICBMs: Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, i.e., long-range land based missile

SLBMs: Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile, i.e., long range sea-based missile

Sources: Natural Resources Defense Council, Institute for Science and International Security.

<sup>1</sup> "Delivery Vehicles" includes ICBMs, SLBMs and bombers

<sup>2</sup> "Total Strategic Warheads" includes all warheads on the delivery vehicle above.

<sup>3</sup> All warheads includes short-and medium-range warheads, including those on land-and-sea-based missiles and on bombers, and warheads in the "hedge"-dormant storage, but not disassembled. Both the U.S. and Russia maintain such a reserve.

<sup>4</sup> India and Pakistan may have enough fissile material for these numbers of nuclear weapons; it is unknown whether they have weaponized the materials, but they are on a path to do so.

<sup>5</sup> North Korea has built one prototype of a long-range missile, the Taepo Dong-2, that theoretically could hit the United States with a nuclear warhead if it is equipped with a third stage, but it has never been tested.

<sup>6</sup> North Korea may have enough fissile material to make two nuclear weapons, produced before it shut down its nuclear program as required under the 1994 Agreed Framework with the United States. It is unknown, however, whether they have refined the reactor-grade material to weapons-grade, a difficult process.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. officials believe Iran is pursuing nuclear material and technology. Iran has always complied fully with inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but doubts remain.

<sup>8</sup> Iraq had a large nuclear weapons development program prior to the Gulf War, but the IAEA and the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) succeeded in eliminating the program entirely. The end of the UNSCOM inspection regime in December 1998, however, may allow Iraq to resume its program, although from a minimal base.

Source: Stephen W. Young, *Pushing the Limits: The Decision on National Missile Defense* (Washington, D.C.: Coalition to Reduce Nuclear Dangers, April 2000), p.32.

## **WHY DO STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES STILL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN U.S. AND RUSSIAN STRATEGY?**

We can hardly count on relatively quick elimination of nuclear forces on a global scale for the reasons that have been mentioned earlier as well as others. One of them is that development and deployment of some nuclear arms programs takes up to 15 to 20 years. Decommissioning them takes almost the same amount of time. The U.S., Great Britain and France are now at the stage where several years still are needed to complete modernization of their nuclear forces. Russia just entered a similar stage. That is why elimination of nuclear weapons in these countries-even under the most favorable political-military conditions and without taking into account a stability of the regime of proliferation of nuclear and missile technology-can be predicted not earlier than in the middle of this century.

In fact, the U.S. and Russia have all but curtailed their nuclear arms modernization programs, compared to mid-1980s. As recently as only 10 years ago the U.S. was simultaneously deploying four new strategic ballistic and cruise missile systems (MX, Trident-1, ALCM and SLCM ), one SSBN and one heavy bomber system (Ohio-class and B-1B), as well as developing and testing four more missile systems (Trident-2, Midgetman, ACM and SRAM-2), and one new bomber type (B-2).

The U.S.S.R was deploying six ballistic and cruise missile systems (SS-24, SS-25, SS-N-20, SS-N-23, SS-H-21 SLCM and AS-15 ALCM), two new SSBN classes (Typhoon and Delta-4) and one heavy bomber type (TU- 160 Blackjack), as well as pursuing R&D on at least four other ballistic and cruise systems (SS-27, new SLBM,

SLCM and ALCM types). Each side had about 10,000-12,000 nuclear warheads in its strategic forces and 15,000-20,000 tactical nuclear weapons of great variety.

At present, the U.S. is finishing construction of one last Ohio-class submarine and procuring at a slow pace the remaining B-2 bombers. Russia is conducting a low-intensity testing program and initial deployment in very small numbers of its follow-on to the SS-25 ICBM, called the Topol-M (SS-27).<sup>25</sup> Neither has any other high-priority wellfunded strategic modernization program.

In line with the START II Treaty as adapted at the Helsinki summit of March 1997, the U.S. and Russia are planning to reduce their strategic nuclear forces to 3,0003,500 warheads by the year 2007. By the same date, if START II is properly implemented, the two parties have agreed to undertake still further reductions down to about 2,000-2,500 warheads by a START III Treaty. Besides, both powers have reduced their tactical nuclear forces and the tendency seems likely to continue.

At the same time, Russian military officials and strategists stress that in the foreseeable future Russia has more than enough reasons to increase the role of nuclear deterrence in its doctrinal provisions in view of the dramatic decline of Russia's military and its geostrategic vulnerability along its western, southern, and eastern borders. First, the West possesses 3-4 times advantage over Russia in conventional forces since the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. Only nuclear weapons can compensate for this situation because with their help Russia must reliably guarantee "a window of security," at least for the nearest 10-15 years, in order to create adequate and effective conventional forces on a new technological base. Second, there is regional instability near Russia' s borders which is combined with the complexity of predicting

the possibility of escalation of a local or regional conflict.

There are divisions in Russia's political-military elite concerning the role of strategic nuclear weapons in the near and remote perspective between "supporters of a unilateral approach" to dealing with new security challenges and "arms controllers." Representatives of the first direction argue that Russia should renounce all treaties on limitation and reduction of strategic offensive weapons because their implementation requires considerable financial resources. Russia should unilaterally define a quantity, a structure and types of its strategic offensive forces in order to reduce to the minimum expenses on their maintenance and development.

Now, everyone understands that for economic considerations it is practically impossible to resume the production of the heavy ICBM SS-18, the ICBM's SS-19 and SS-24, but MIRVing the mobile SS-25 or the new Topol M (SS-27) ICBM, which is currently deployed in the START II-compatible single warhead mode, looks quite attractive. Economically, it is easier to maintain the same number of warheads in a MIRVed ICBM grouping than ICBMs with single warheads, as provided by the START II Treaty. It has been argued that mobile ICBMs do not have the same destabilizing affect as fixed ICBMs. At the same time it's easy to prove that the Trident II SLBM with 1/2mt warheads W-88 type on Ohio class submarines have higher counterforce potential and no less level of concentration of warheads at one point, than MIRVed mobile ICBMs. Moreover, there is no need for Russia to maintain the same quantity of warheads as the U.S..

The first line of thinking was present in President Vladimir Putin's speech at the Duma on April 14, 2000, when Russia's parliament ratified the START II Treaty.



Reflecting his concern about the U.S. desire to build a national missile defense system, Mr. Putin threatened to renege on START II if President Clinton goes ahead with that plan. "We will have the chance, and we will withdraw not only from the START II Treaty but also the whole system of treaties on limitation and control of strategic and conventional weapons," he noted. "We can put on the question on reviewing our decisions in the sphere of tactical weapons," said Putin, adding that "under these conditions we shall head for taking an independent policy in the sphere of nuclear deterrence."

Advocates for the second line of thinking argue that it is necessary to strictly adhere to the system of the treaties between Russia and the United States on limitation and reduction of strategic offensive weapons and the ABM Treaty, and to preserve an approximate balance of nuclear forces of the two countries as far as quantity of warheads and combat capabilities of a nuclear triad are concerned.

Some of their principal arguments are the following:

1. In a different strategic environment, it is in Russia's interest to have a manageable weapons reduction and verification process in place. The present almost 30 year old system of treaties provides unprecedented transparency of strategic nuclear forces of Russia and the U.S.. Such transparency is an important element of military-strategic stability, because uncertainty always leads to an exaggeration of combat capabilities and forces of an opponent and could result in a new arms race, which Russia at the present time can not afford. But Russia could have this capability in the future.

2. Holding negotiations on both START III and the ABM Treaty might be a last chance for Russia to keep strategic parity with the United States (which Russia doesn't

want to give up without special necessity) and retain possible influence on U.S. strategic arms levels.

3. The trend toward reduction of strategic offensive weapons within the frame of the treaties between Russia and the U.S. from 6,000 warheads, according to START I, to 3,000-3,500 START II and to 2,000-2,500 warheads according to START III would allow Russia to continue to maintain an approximate strategic balance between the two countries.

The future nuclear forces of Russia should be considered first of all within the system of bilateral Russian-American, and also in the prospective-multilateral system of treaties on limitation and reduction of strategic offensive weapons.<sup>26</sup>

What prospective numerical level of warheads of strategic nuclear forces can be considered within the framework of a system of treaties between Russia and the United States?

At the meeting in Moscow in June 2000 Presidents Clinton and Putin confirmed previous agreements to cut their arsenals of deployed warheads. But in the context of the new geopolitical situation and the international security environment, these levels can hardly be considered satisfactory. Even if START III were negotiated and ratified in the near future, both sides would still possess over 2,000 deployed strategic nuclear warheads at the end of 2007. Declared levels of reduction 2,000-2,500 warheads are still too high for other official members of the "nuclear club" to demonstrate their intentions to take part in the process of nuclear weapons reduction. Moreover, such a pace of strategic offensive weapons reduction, combined with the absence of the other nuclear powers from the negotiating process, would not strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

Lowering the level of the American and Russian strategic weapons, for example, to 1,500 deployed warheads still provides a significant breakaway from the states of nuclear "five" and retain in such a way sufficient influence of this important political-military factor.

As more strategic nuclear forces are deeply reduced tactical nuclear weapons are going to play a more important role. Negotiations on this issue promise to be more complicated and should be held separately from both START and ABM because practically all tactical weapons have dual applications, and it is more difficult to verify which of them are deployed and which are not.

An additional factor which stimulates further reduction of strategic offensive weapons is an economic one. Lack of funding is compelling the Russian military to dismantle much of the ICBM and SLBM force ahead of the START II schedule, while the U.S. maintains its nuclear forces at the START I level. This would mean that America would obtain numerical superiority. Military experts estimate that economic conditions will not permit Russia to maintain after 2000 strategic nuclear forces at the level of the START I Treaty (6,000 deployed strategic warheads) and after the year 2005 at the level of the START II Treaty (3,000-3,500). For the United States the additional expenses, which are necessary to maintain excess strategic weapons, constitutes a surmountable problem, but for Russia it is practically an unsolvable problem. For that reason to maintain a rough balance of strategic offensive weapons on a minimal level (1,000-1,5000) should be an acceptable variant for the U.S. and, as far as Russia is concerned it is perhaps the only alternative. Although for different reasons, the two countries also could move to START II or III levels unilaterally.

From the point of view of some Russian military strategists it is considered expedient in prospective to retain a strategic triad-ICBMs, SLBMs and strategic bombers-and to maintain Russia's strategic nuclear forces on-the level-of 100-2000 warheads.<sup>27</sup> Proper correlation between components of the nuclear triad will depend on the level of warheads which will be established by START III and, perhaps, by some other agreements which will follow, and their conditions as well. Thus, if MIRVed ICBMs remain banned, more warheads would be deployed in the sea-based leg of the strategic triad. The second largest number of warheads would be on the fixed and mobile land-based ICBMs. The rest of the arsenal is an air-based component of the triad.

In case the ban on MIRVed ICBMs is dropped-which is quite possible in a new non-confrontational relationship between Russia and the U.S.-the number of warheads of the land-based and sea-based legs might be nearly equal.

### **WHY NOT REMOVE ALL WEAPONS FROM ALERT?**

Discussions on the risk of taking a mistaken decision to launch the missiles based on the information from radar or other warning systems have a long history. Misinformation or misinterpretation of such information is an ever-present danger. The intensity of such discussions has become higher after the end of the Cold War. Although it seemed that the level of risk was much higher when it was assumed that a decision to launch missiles-a launch on warning or a counter-force strike-on the basis of the information from the early warning systems had to be taken only on condition that they discover a full-scale attack from the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. It was also assumed that hundreds of missiles and thousands of warheads would be involved in a counterforce

strike. Now such a scenario about exchanging of strikes looks absurd. Accidental launch cannot be deterred. Russian and U.S. nuclear-armed missiles on rapid-launch status are a real and present danger to the security of both countries. The hair-trigger alert rates on SLBMs are still the same as during the Cold War. As far as we know, the levels of readiness on ICBMs have not changed significantly either. Only the bombers are on a significantly lower level of alert.

Experts differ on how bad the situation is in Russia, notably because of the erosion of the Russian early warning system and the military command and control over nuclear forces. But by encouraging Russia to keep a force larger than it can control, the U.S. increases the danger of both accidental launch and proliferation. While few U.S. experts believe that a nuclear accident is likely, there is considerable concern that an accidental launch is more likely now than in the past—far more likely than a deliberate attack. Such a launch probably would involve only a few missiles.

Should we be afraid of a mistaken launch of a missile, which was made judging by the information about a single missile launch? It seems that it is extremely difficult to make a decision to launch missiles within several minutes even if the information received says that it is a full-scale attack. Making such a decision would mean a guaranteed destruction of civilization. And it is quite unreasonable to take such a decision on the basis of the information about single missile launches even if such an information is absolutely reliable.<sup>28</sup>

It is quite obvious that the above-mentioned problems exist both not only from theoretical, but also from a practical point of view. They also show the need for political confidence building measures. We can see quite clearly some areas where the two sides

can work to reduce the risk of making mistaken decisions.

The first one is contained in the Joint Statement On the Exchange of Information on Missile Launches and Early Warning, signed in Moscow on September 2, 1998. The objective of the initiative is the continuous exchange of information on the launches of ballistic massive and space launch vehicles derived from each side's missiles launch warning system, including the establishment on June 4, 2000 of a Center for the exchange of missile launch data operated by the U.S. and Russia and separate from their respective national centers.

The second area-de-alerting-is based on the implementation of concrete technical measures, which must directly prevent rapid missile launch, by making a decision based on the information derived from each side's warning system.<sup>29</sup> Under the circumstances it is difficult to imagine the possibility of reducing the technical level of readiness of all strategic forces of the U.S. and Russia while the other nuclear powers keep their strategic arsenals on constant alert. France, Britain, and China should become party to a de-alerting regime. For this reason the possibility to lower high-alert status not of all, but of some of the strategic forces of U.S. and Russia should be considered, for example, leaving some 500-600 warheads for each side on constant alert.

What new steps can be taken to minimize the concerns caused by the problem of taking mistaken decisions?

- Conclusion of an agreement between the U.S. and Russia on exclusion from the decision making process to use nuclear weapons of the algorithms for launch of missiles, based on the information from the early warning systems;
- Conclusion of an agreement between all nuclear weapons states to shift to lower

states of alert of their nuclear forces; and

- Development of technical solutions for lowering alert status of all types of nuclear weapons.

### **COULD THE STRATEGIC EQUATION BE "DE-STABILIZED"?**

In order to meet new requirements for shaping the international security environment, some major decisions will be made in the U.S. and Russia over the next few years that will leave a lasting impact not only on Russian-American relations but also on efforts to build a more peaceful 21st century.

### **THE NMD FACTOR**

In this regard the most serious problems might arise particularly concerning U.S. hopes for modification of the ABM Treaty and intentions to deploy a National Missile Defense System. In the opinion of some Russian strategists, such a system, at least in theory, would be capable of intercepting a few tens of Russian missiles surviving a U.S. first strike.

The Russian reaction to this initiative may present some real difficulties in the U.S.-Russian relationship and may have impact on Russian nuclear planners. Russian defense officials have become very sensitive to any developments that might erode the strength of deterrent capability.

Current levels of Russian strategic nuclear forces are large enough to penetrate through a potential limited U.S. NMD. However, for economic reasons, their size will significantly decline in the future. Some experts even predict that it might drop lower than 1,000 deployed strategic warheads. Furthermore, as a result of a new wave of

NATO eastward enlargement and U.S. dominance in submarine warfare, Russian nuclear forces will become increasingly vulnerable to a potentially disarming first strike. As a result, a classic situation of instability would emerge: the Kremlin would fear that its future modest nuclear forces could be considerably reduced in a first strike, and a retaliatory strike made by a few of surviving weapons could be successfully intercepted even by a limited and relatively ineffective U.S. NMD. "Use it or lose it" incentives could threaten strategic stability and might lead to increased Russian reliance on launch on warning to protect its deterrent.

It is interesting to note that in 1991 the Russian position on this issue was quite different. At the meeting of the strategic stability group in Washington D.C. in November 1991, the Soviet delegation declared that "the issue of development of an ABM system on a scale beyond the limits of the ABM Treaty can be considered ... in a context of strengthening our partnership relationship on the bases of a joint, allied analysis of real threats."

## **THE CHINA FACTOR**

In reaction to U.S. plans to deploy an NMD together with a TMD in the Western Pacific, Beijing has adopted a \$10 billion package for nuclear buildup. China possesses only about two dozen missiles capable of hitting targets in North America, meaning that the Chinese force could be intercepted by even a modest NMD. In order to maintain the credibility of its nuclear deterrent, China will have to significantly increase the number of those forces, which might considerably weaken Russia's position in the Far East. Such a development would be detrimental not only for the U.S., but for Russia as well. The



Russian leadership should not allow itself to be motivated by illusions, as had been the case with the former Soviet leadership. More often than not, the Soviet Union's attitudes toward its allies and partners had been a whimsical mix of cynicism and idealism, which led to a tremendous squandering of resources, with true friends turning out to be very few in number. Those policies were among the reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union and the coalition of its allies.<sup>30</sup>

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Russian Federation and the United States are now at one of those crucial historic crossroads where they have to make a major geostrategical choice on which road to take to the future: to be competitors, rivals and adversaries or partners, allies and friends, or maybe both, in the 21st century. It is very much in the long-term interests of the United States that Russia become a real strategic partner of the West.

2. Russia is a major power and will be a challenge, still a strategic factor for the United States in this century. Although Russia's nuclear arsenal is shrinking and the United States faces a clearly diminished threat of nuclear attack by the missile force of the former Soviet Union, nevertheless, the U.S. remains vulnerable to a large Russian attack because Russia continues to maintain operational strategic nuclear forces capable of delivering thousands of nuclear weapons against the United States and continues strategic force modernization programs. The U.S. nuclear policy toward Russia should be formulated accordingly with this in mind.

3. The material base for confrontation between the two countries remains intact. We have to proceed from the assumption that objective sources of friction between

Russia and the U.S. in the area of international security could continue to exist in the future. Generators of mutual distrust and suspicion will be neutralized only when a material infrastructure of waging war is dismantled together with its auxiliary political, doctrinal, and psychological mechanisms.

4. It is important that U.S. and Russia break out of the Cold War paradigm of deterrence, which has allowed policymakers to be limited by misperceptions for far too long. This confrontational stance has forged a gap in the security perceptions of the U.S. and Russia. This gap must be closed so that the United States and Russia can move forward instead of devolving in the future to the Cold War polarization bringing back an era of suspicion and confrontation.

5. The right approach would be to revise their respective doctrines and strategic policies so that a better balance can be found between deterrence, reassurance and operational safety. A strategic framework for respective U.S. and Russia national security doctrines should differ from the Cold War habits of the past half-century. New reduced and stable nuclear force postures need to reflect the transformation in the overall security relationship from adversarial to cooperative.

6. The ratification of START II and the conclusion of START III should be aggressively pursued by both sides. It requires that the U.S. compromise on a level of strategic weapons that will be both more beneficial to the Russians and Moscow compromises on NMD. Resistance to deep cuts and opposition to modifying the ABM Treaty are rooted in the Cold War doctrine of Mutually Assured Destruction. That doctrine must be dropped.

7. The U.S. and Russia should build a common security strategy. If both the U.S.

and Russia maintain a minimum arsenal of strategic nuclear weapons and organize balanced defenses based on a modified ABM Treaty and forward deployed TMD systems, they could switch to a new strategy of "mutual assured cooperation," based on the principal of "offensive/defensive sufficiency" and "minimum deterrence." Such strategy will deter a potential attack from the other power and smaller countries and can deal with various kinds of attacks from others should they nevertheless occur, and with accidental, unauthorized or mistaken launches. It will be a new type of deterrence-more cooperative rather than adversarial.

A new strategy might not be "sufficient" to produce peace and stability because the two countries still rely on nuclear weapons. But long-term vision is not lost here. It is only an intermediate step on the road to the elimination of nuclear weapons. It is understood that doctrines based upon nuclear deterrence should be gradually reduced and disappear entirely together with the elimination of nuclear weapons.

8. What is needed is a new set of rules of the game and an effective confidential organizational mechanism, which does not exist now. A new high-level U.S.-Russian forum could be established-including the personal involvement of the Presidents. A joint Russian-American commission of civilian and military leaders should be created to provide, manage and coordinate the strategic relations of the two countries.

9. Managing nuclear forces securely must be a top U.S. and Russian security policy priority. A new U.S.-Russia Strategic Stability Treaty that would attempt to resolve the two countries' differences over the ABM Treaty and lower number of nuclear warheads should be concluded. A joint political declaration of the new strategy should be signed, accompanied by a specific program of cooperation.

The U.S.'s and Russia's new doctrines should not provide for launch-on-warning, before it is known whether an incoming missile is something other than accidental or unauthorized launch. Russia and the U.S. should take some of their nuclear weapons off alert, so they can not be launched on short notice.

The two countries must be absolutely sure that no matter who is in the Kremlin or in the White House today or tomorrow they are not going under no circumstances to destroy or hurt each other in a global conflict or by accidental or unauthorized launches.

10. The stakes of a decision to deploy a limited NMD are enormous, and will affect not only security relations between U.S. and Russia for years to come, but would have major ramifications for world peace and stability. If Russia and the U.S. react to this deployment intelligently, there is no reason for alarm. There can be some alternative approaches found to address the new missile threats. However this first great security debate of the 21st century should not be the last before returning to a dangerous confrontation between the two nuclear powers. The two countries must try to move cooperatively to the new world to help preserve international security and strategic stability.

11. This is no time for unnecessary secrecy. The best way to allay apprehensions is not only to hold a dialog on some strategic issues but also to work on some joint projects. U.S.-Russian cooperation on limited NMD or regional sea-based or land-based TMD systems, for example, in the Pacific, the Middle East or Europe, would be an excellent way to show that the U.S. considers Russia to be a partner, not an enemy. The two countries should share their respective technology in this field.

12. Russia and the United States need to develop a new strategic nuclear arms

control strategy. Specifically, they should look at future arms control agreements not as simply continued reduction of nuclear weapons within the model of mutual nuclear deterrence but as a way to change the model. They should not forget, however, that the START treaties so far have only addressed the problems of numbers of strategic weapons. They do not address equally critical areas such as destruction of their considerable stockpiles, alert levels, targeting, and nuclear operations doctrines. All of these issues should be considered.

Russia and the U.S. should switch from traditional "trench negotiations" to consultations, aimed at informing each other and coordinating their respective policies in the area of strategic security. Meaningful arms control has largely been limited to U.S.-Russia bilateral arrangements. Eventually, in collaboration with the other nuclear weapon states, they should establish a framework for multilateral negotiations leading to a major reduction of nuclear arsenal and a minimum deterrence posture.

13. We should recognize the objective reality of the future security situation. While important progress is already being made in nuclear arms control and security cooperation there can be no confidence or guarantee that arms reductions are irreversible and that nuclear catastrophe will be averted. Also, in the foreseeable future, the present weapons of mass destruction-nuclear, chemical and biological-could be joined by new kinds of weapons of mass destruction, developed on new physical and other principals. This issue should be considered separately from the present arms control issues in the context of strategic stability between the two countries.

14. On a global strategic scale Russia and the United States need to lay the basis for a mutually beneficial partnership. The difficulties on the way to such a partnership do

not look insurmountable in the long run. The end of the Cold War, on the one hand, makes it possible, and the danger of a new nuclear arms race, growing proliferation and terrorism, on the other the hand, renders it necessary that Russia and the U.S. become natural partners in maintaining international stability. The two nations bear a special responsibility for bringing about a more predictable world order in the 21st century that would provide for a bright future for our children and grandchildren.

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- <sup>3</sup> William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Summer 1999), p. 5.
- <sup>4</sup> Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Winter 1990/1991), pp. 23-33.
- <sup>5</sup> William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress*, 1999, p.1.
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- <sup>7</sup> "Kontseptsia natsionalnoy bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsiyi," *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, January 14, 2000.
- <sup>8</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard* (Moscow: International Relations Publishing House, 1999), pp. 108-148.
- <sup>9</sup> *Strategic Assessment*, 1999 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 1999), p. 9.
- <sup>10</sup> Or it might be another scenario: economic, social and political instability threatens to the very survival of that country-Russia will continue to disintegrate into small countries, thousands of nuclear warheads in the hands of demoralized and underpaid military and we have a country that blackmails the rest of the world with nuclear weapons and does not want to cooperate in order to reduce them.
- <sup>11</sup> Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller, *The Cold War and After: Prospects for Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1993), pp. 244-291.
- <sup>12</sup> Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Cote, Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones and Steven E. Miller, *America's Strategic Choices* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 50-98.
- <sup>13</sup> Nuclear deterrence is the threat of nuclear attack as retaliation, to prevent the opponent from using violence against the vital interest of the deterrer. See, for example, Tom Sauer, *Nuclear Arms Control, Nuclear Deterrence in Post-Cold War Period* (London: MacMillan, 1999), p. 1.
- <sup>14</sup> Sergey Rogov, *Arms Control After the End of the Cold War*, (Moscow: Institute of U.S.-Canada Studies, 1996).
- <sup>15</sup> Harold Feiveson, Bruce Blair, "How to Lengthen the Nuclear Fuse," *IEEE Spectrum*, March, 2000, p.40.
- <sup>16</sup> "Strategic stability" or deterrence relationship is the situation in which neither side is tempted in times of crises to engage in a first strike at the other.
- <sup>17</sup> R. Jeffrey Smith, "Clinton Directive Changes Strategy on Nuclear Arms; Centering on Deterrence, Officials Drop Terms for Atomic War," *The Washington Post*, December 7, 1997; and Brian Hall, "Overkill is Not Dead," the *New York Times Magazine*, March 15, 1998.
- <sup>18</sup> William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to the President and Congress*, 2000, p. 69.

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<sup>19</sup> "The Alliance's Strategic Concept," Para 62, NATO, Press Release NAC-S(99)65, April 24, 1999.

<sup>20</sup> Interfax , August 31, 1999.

<sup>21</sup> *Yaderny Kontrol Digest*, Volume 5, No. 1, Winter 2000, p. 42-44.

<sup>22</sup> *Strategic Assessment*, 1999, (Washington, D.C.: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 1999), p. 16. .

<sup>23</sup> Minimum deterrence is a concept that originated during the Cold War. From the very beginning it was an intellectual compromise between the recognition of the impossibility of complete nuclear disarmament on the one hand and the absurdity and provocative nature of the huge nuclear overkill arsenals on the other. See A. Arbatov, "Nuclear Deterrence: Problems and Perspectives in the 1990s," UNIDIR, /93/26, Geneva.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Graham, Jr., John B. Rhineland, Alexander S. Yereskovsky, "Viewpoint," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, July 12, 1999.

<sup>25</sup> In December 1999 the second regiment of Topol-M's was deployed as scheduled. In June of that same year, the Topol-M had been successfully tested with a warhead making a side maneuver (the technology aimed at avoiding anti-missile interception during the final phase of the fly trajectory). In October 1999 Russia resumed production of SS-N-23 SLBMs. Those missiles were initially tested with 10 warheads, but were deployed with only four. Thus, their resumed production should be understood in the context of higher ceilings as well. Deployment would permit Russia to maintain its rapidly shrinking sea-based leg of the strategic triad. In addition, possible future uploading of those missiles would increase the number of warheads that the potential NMD should intercept. And finally, if SLBMs fly on the depressed trajectories from unknown directions, the task of intercepting them becomes more difficult. In 1999 Russia suddenly resumed talks with Ukraine on the purchasing strategic bombers that remained on Ukraine soil after the Soviet collapse. Eight TU-160 Blackjack and three TU-95 MS Bear were purchased by forgiveness of \$250 million of Ukrainian energy debt. It would not only help to keep higher ceilings, but could enforce capabilities available for circumventing ABM systems aimed at hitting ballistic missiles but not aircraft.

<sup>26</sup> While these forces and programs have not been immune from the wholesale reduction in the Russian military capability, and Russia's arsenal of strategic warheads will continue to shrink, Lt. General Patrick M. Hughes, U.S.A Director, Defense Intelligence Agency testified that he "can foresee virtually no circumstance, short of state failure, in which Russia will not maintain a strong strategic nuclear capability," Statement for the Record, Senate Armed Services Committee, February 2, 1999, p. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Russia could have 1500-2000 nuclear warheads in the 2005-10 time frame. A future force of 1500 warheads would consist of 500-600 warheads on ICBMs, 700-800 warheads on SLBMs and the rest on bombers (100-300). General Vladimir Yakovlev, February 19, 1998, News Conference.

<sup>28</sup> The CIA and the U.S. Strategic Command, however, believe that an accidental or unauthorized launch is extremely unlikely. According to the CIA, "Russia employs an extensive array of technical and procedural safeguards on its nuclear weapons and China keeps its missiles unfueled and without warheads mated."

Some proponents of NMD argue that Russian early-warning and command-and-control capabilities are fragile. The most likely scenario-a launch prompted by a false warning on Russian radar and ordered by the commander of ground- based missile forces



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(possibly without consulting the political leadership)-would involve hundreds or even thousands of warheads. Lawyers Alliance for World Security, "White Paper on National Missile Defense", Spring 2000, p. 43.

<sup>29</sup> De-alerting measures are those which, if taken, would increase the amount of time between a decision to launch a nuclear attack and the actual launch. Some examples of proposed de-alerting measures include: remove and store warheads; sawing of missiles; disabling silo covers; keep submarines on modified alert; remove launch codes from submarines and others.

<sup>30</sup> Andrei A. Kokoshin, *Soviet Strategic Thought, 1917-91*, (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press 1998), pp. 194-209.