

THE HENRY L. STIMSON CENTER

**Russia's Approach to
Deep Reductions of Nuclear Weapons:
Opportunities and Problems**
Second Edition

Nikolai N. Sokov

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Pragmatic steps toward ideal objectives



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The Henry L. Stimson Center
21 Dupont Circle, NW
Fifth Floor
Washington, DC 20036
tel 202-223-5956 *fax* 202-785-9034
e-mail info@stimson.org
<http://www.stimson.org/>

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Preface to the Second Edition

The end of the Cold War opened a unique window of opportunity for halting decades of nuclear competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Although significant progress toward reducing bloated nuclear arsenals has been made, the arms control process now appears to be faltering. To prevent the window of opportunity from closing, it is essential to regain momentum on bilateral cooperation on arms control. Efforts to do so will depend critically on gaining a better understanding of the changed context of Russian decision-making on security issues.

In this in-depth look at Russian perspectives on nuclear and broader security issues, Nikolai N. Sokov makes clear that Russia is, in essence, a new “player.” Sokov, whose work on arms control and disarmament issues has included tenure in both the Soviet and Russian Ministries of Foreign Affairs, provides an authoritative, insider’s view of Russian policy-making on nuclear weapons issues.

Since this paper was first published in June 1996, a number of significant developments, both domestic and international, have affected Russia’s approach to nuclear arms control. In a new introduction prepared for the second edition, Sokov explores the impact of these recent developments on the prospects for arms control and on the long-term choices that Russia will need to make in the near future regarding its nuclear weapons. This new introduction builds on the analysis in the original text, which remains as originally written.

Much of Sokov’s original analysis remains valid and relevant to today’s situation. Sokov observes that Russian leaders, unlike their Soviet predecessors, face a constellation of influential domestic forces, including a more autonomous parliament, large corporate actors, and a powerful and independent defense industry. Consequently, decision-making on defense issues in Russia is now likely to be far less predictable, as complex interactions between domestic and external factors sway the outcome of policy debates. For example, corporate actors that depend on trade with the West are likely to favor “pro-Western” security decisions and oppose policies that would alienate Western nations; agrarian groups suffering from competition with Western imports are generally “anti-Western,” but may not support increased military spending, preferring government funds to be spent in their sector of the economy. As Sokov explains, we can no longer expect Russian decisions on security issues to be based on “rational choice.”

Russian attitudes toward arms control are also likely to be heavily influenced by US actions. Across the political spectrum, Sokov notes, most Russians see a strong link between NATO enlargement and START II ratification and view a possible deployment of

a US missile defense as intended to weaken Russia's retaliatory capability, rather than as a counter to threats from "rogue" states. In the new political context, Sokov cautions, "the relationship between arms control and political-economic aspects of US-Russian relations has changed. . . . [S]uccess in arms control increasingly depends on positive political and economic aspects of these relations." To increase the chances for START II ratification and, later, for further reductions, the United States should show greater flexibility on minor provisions in both completed arms control agreements and future negotiations. Other helpful steps the United States could take include: (1) efforts to further integrate Russia into the world community and the global economy, (2) steps to ensure that Russia does not feel threatened by NATO enlargement, and (3) serious consideration of Russian perspectives on defensive systems. In dealing with Russia on these issues, Sokov concludes, "the United States has to make a choice between short-term, unilateral, and predominantly military methods of ensuring security and longer-term, multilateral, and predominantly political methods."

In the near term, the Russian government will have to consider ratification and implementation of START II—or, if the treaty is not ratified by the parliament—implementation of some of the treaty's provisions on a unilateral basis or through a new agreement with the United States. As Sokov explains, Russia will be hard-pressed to fill even the lower limits set under START II, and would be even harder-pressed to sustain the START I force levels. In either case, modernization of Russia's nuclear forces will be necessary but complicated by the demands of domestic groups competing with the military for funds in a cash-strapped system. Sokov argues that significant cuts in US and Russian nuclear arsenals therefore would be to Russia's advantage, even if START II is rejected by the Duma, and could be achieved by methods other than a formal treaty agreement. If positive US-Russian relations can be maintained, Sokov concludes, "even the failure of Russia to ratify START II would not necessarily lead to a reversal of the momentum created in the late 1980s to the early 1990s. After a temporary setback, arms control would be likely to proceed." He warns, however, that deteriorating bilateral relations could make further reduction in nuclear arsenals very difficult.

This case study is the first in a series that examines key challenges for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Other studies in this series examine the implications of further reductions of nuclear weapons for US defense policy; the challenges of verifying nuclear disarmament and of safeguarding against violations of a ban on nuclear weapons; the linkages between biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons; and the relationship between deeper cuts in offensive weapons and the development of defensive systems. These studies seek to identify the main obstacles to the progressive elimination of mass destruction weapons from all nations and to propose solutions—both intermediate measures and longer-term approaches—to overcome these obstacles.

This series is part of the Henry L. Stimson Center's Project on Eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction, which seeks to encourage a national and international debate on the long-term nuclear future. The project is based on the premise that the end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and grave dangers of proliferation provide both reason and opportunity to reexamine fundamental assumptions regarding the relative benefits and risks associated with weapons of mass destruction. Through research and public education efforts, the Center seeks to explore the obstacles to, and implications of, the progressive elimination of all nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons from all states, and to consider measures that might bring all states closer toward that goal.

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Cathleen Fisher
Senior Associate
The Henry L. Stimson Center

Susan Welsh
Research Associate
The Henry L. Stimson Center

About the Author

Nikolai N. Sokov is currently a post-doctoral fellow at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies. After graduating in 1981 from the Moscow State University, he worked as a research fellow at the Institute for USA and Canada Studies (Moscow) and at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO). In 1986 he received a Soviet equivalent of a Ph.D. (*kandidat istoricheskikh nauk*). From 1987 to 1992, Dr. Sokov worked at the Soviet and Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Arms Control and Disarmament, where he dealt with negotiations on nuclear arms reductions and nuclear and military strategy. In this capacity he served as an expert on the Soviet delegation to START I talks (rounds IX-XII), on the Soviet delegation to several US-Soviet summit meetings, and in numerous meetings of ministers of foreign affairs. In 1992, he worked on nuclear non-proliferation issues in the former Soviet Union and on START II, and also participated in CIS summit meetings. Dr. Sokov is the author of several books published in the Soviet Union, as well as a number of articles. He is currently completing a book about the impact of democratization in the Soviet Union and Russia upon the decision-making mechanism for national security policy. In 1996 he received a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Michigan.

List of Abbreviations

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
ALCM	Air-Launched Cruise Missile
C ³	Command, Control, & Communications
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
INF Treaty	Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
JCIC	Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission
MIRV	Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SCC	Standing Consultative Commission (established by the ABM Treaty)
SLBM	Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile
SLCM	Sea-Launched Cruise Missile
SRF	Strategic Rocket Force
SSBN	Nuclear-powered, ballistic missile submarine
START I	Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (also known as the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)
START II	Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Further Reductions and Limitations of Strategic Offensive Arms
TMD	Tactical Missile Defense
TNW	Tactical Nuclear Weapons

Introduction to the Second Edition

Russia's Approach to Disarmament: The Time of Long-term Choices

Much has happened regarding the Russian approach to nuclear disarmament since the original writing of this paper in the first half of 1996. Although much of the earlier analysis remains valid, some important trends have become clearer and, in light of new developments, merit a second look. This is true, in particular, for the impact of NATO enlargement on Russia's approach to nuclear arms reduction and the role of new actors in the policymaking mechanism. While bilateral US–Russian arms control is stalled at this writing, chances for unilateral reduction of strategic arms have improved over the past year. This requires serious attention as well, especially since the long-term consequences of favoring unilateral over negotiated reductions are not necessarily positive for either Russia or the West.

The US–Russian relationship in the disarmament area has reached a critical juncture. If the arms control process is not restarted in the next year or two, then five to seven years from now it will be overtaken by the deployment of a national ballistic missile defense system in the United States and a comprehensive modernization program in Russia, which will cover both strategic and tactical delivery vehicles. This outcome is by no means preordained (some mitigating factors will be explored below), but the chances of unfavorable developments will be too high for comfort. Unilateral reductions might play an important role, but as a precursor to negotiated disarmament rather than as an independent method.

Given the developments since the original writing, the following observations can be made:

1) The continuing deadlock with START II ratification should not seem surprising. On the surface, it could be explained by Boris Yeltsin's illness and the understandable reluctance of the bureaucracy to engage in politically controversial activities at a time of uncertainty. More important is the fact that decision-making is never entirely rational; in Russia, as in any country, foreign policy is strongly conditioned by domestic politics. On its own merits, START II is in Russia's interest, as the Strategic Rocket Force (SRF) has been consistently saying for the past five years. But START II has become a victim of a complicated political situation, particularly within the Duma (the lower house of the Russian parliament), where conservative and even moderately conservative factions see START II as an embodiment of the surrender of Russia's security and defense interests to the West.

The US–Russian summit meeting in Helsinki in March 1997 introduced some changes into the START II package. It extended the implementation period, set an agenda for START III, and made some progress on the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty demarcation. The disarmament agreements were put into the context of a larger package designed to speed up Russia’s integration into world economic structures.

A unique feature of the Helsinki agreements was explicit recognition by the United States of the role of legislative and non-governmental actors in Russian foreign policy. The body of the joint statement on future reductions mentioned the Duma, but, more importantly, the summit directly addressed some of the objections to START II made by the Russian legislature.¹

Whether this new recognition of the realities of the Russian domestic scene will have the desired effect on START II remains to be seen. While not all Russian concerns were taken into account, the Helsinki agreements might be sufficient to create a “win-set” in Russia—a sufficiently large coalition supporting START II. Furthermore, the Helsinki summit apparently tacitly created an agreed sequence of events: the Russian government will attempt to ratify START II only after the final deal is reached on the ABM demarcation.² If the recent progress on that issue materializes,³ then the Russian government is likely to push for ratification by the end of 1997. Whether this effort will be successful remains to be seen; the parliament might still refuse to “buy” the treaty

¹ “Joint Statement on Parameters of Future Reductions in Nuclear Forces,” 21 March 1997, released by the Office of the President of the United States. Ironically, the joint statement mentioned only the Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament (called the Federal Assembly), and skipped the Federation Council, the upper chamber, which has to ratify international agreements together with the Duma (a majority of both houses has to vote for the agreement).

² At issue is, essentially, the fate of the ABM Treaty of 1972, which introduced qualitative and quantitative limits on anti-missile defense systems in the United States and the Soviet Union (now Russia). Recent developments in non-strategic defense technologies have made the line between strategic defense systems subject to the ABM Treaty and tactical systems, which the treaty does not cover, increasingly vague. The Russian military is concerned that tactical missile defense (TMD) with the capability to intercept strategic missiles might require at least a reassessment of the situation, if not a revision of the existing arms control treaties. Several years of talks within the SCC (the Standing Consultative Commission established by the ABM Treaty) did not produce a breakthrough. The Helsinki summit made an important step forward, but many complicated technical issues were left to be resolved by negotiators.

³ Reportedly, negotiators at the SCC have reached unspecified agreements, which were submitted to the governments for approval (see the 28 August 1997 briefing of the Foreign Ministry of Russia), with the signing tentatively set for September 25. One is tempted to recall, however, the failure in the fall of 1996, when the first stage of the demarcation agreement was abandoned because Russia wanted to reach at least a tentative deal on the second, more important part of the issue. Interpretation problems are very likely to emerge almost immediately. The United States insists that the Helsinki (and, by implication, the recent Geneva) agreement permits all six ongoing TMD programs; Russia used to interpret the Helsinki agreement much more restrictively. There are, certainly, good reasons to be optimistic, but, unfortunately, success is not yet certain.

itself or the demarcation agreement. In any event, the ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention will take precedence, since it is perceived as a more urgent matter.

At this writing, there is a reasonable chance that START II will be ratified, although it is by no means certain. The appointment of General Igor Sergeev, the commander-in-chief of the SRF and a strong supporter of START II, as the Minister of Defense has increased the prospects of ratification. As a possible sign of intent to act on the promises made in Helsinki, Boris Yeltsin appointed Sergeev as his personal representative on START II in the Federal Assembly, altering the standard practice of giving such appointments to the Foreign Ministry.

2) NATO enlargement is likely to have a profound impact on START II ratification, not because it directly affects the strategic balance,⁴ but because it will help to create a political situation in Russia that will not be conducive for disarmament in the near future. The consequences of NATO enlargement for Russia are threefold: a strengthened perception of the West's hostility; increased reliance on nuclear weapons; and, more specifically, new attention to tactical nuclear weapons.

Russia's reliance on nuclear weapons as the primary security guarantee has increased. The new military doctrine, currently being developed under the auspices of the Defense Council and due to be finalized by January 1, 1998, will retain the first-use plank introduced in 1993.⁵ There appears to be a high degree of agreement on this issue, as suggested by the rumors that the relevant section of the doctrine might be released earlier than the rest of the document. The military reportedly is even trying to somewhat broaden the first-use policy, providing for the use of nuclear weapons in a wider variety of situations than specified in the 1993 doctrine.

⁴ The enlargement could mean that a larger portion of the Russian facilities associated with strategic weapons would be within the range of NATO's substrategic delivery vehicles, with an increase from the current 50–60 percent to 70–80 percent (Vladimir Dvorkin, "Narushenie strategicheskogo balansa" (A Violation of the Strategic Balance), *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 16 May 1997). Even though NATO does not intend to deploy nuclear weapons in the territories of new members, the Russian military planners have to account for this possibility in their plans, especially since the NATO statement does not cover non-nuclear weapons and because air-based nuclear weapons (the only class that remain deployed) could be relocated forward with very short notice.

⁵ Igor Sergeev announced on September 4, 1997 that the doctrine will be finalized by January 1, 1998 (see *RIA-Novosti*, 4 September 1997). Although the text of the draft is, of course, not publicly available, important insights could be found in Makhmut Gareev, "Voyennaya Doktrina Rossii" (The Military Doctrine of Russia), *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozrenie*, 9 August 1997, 1, 4, and an interview with the then Secretary of Defense Council, Yuri Baturin, by the Ekho Moskvy station on July 17 (in FBIS, Central Eurasia, 18 July 1997). The recent changes in the Presidential Administration (the creation of the State Military Inspectorate, whose chief, currently Andrei Kokoshin, will be simultaneously the Secretary of the Defense Council) might increase the influence of the military on the future doctrine. It is significant that of one hundred staff members of the State Military Inspectorate, eighty will be active-duty officers.

Of even greater importance is renewed attention to non-strategic nuclear weapons, which are viewed as a deterrent to NATO's conventional forces in a mirror reflection of the mission assigned to NATO's tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) during the Cold War.⁶ Options under consideration in Moscow include an increase in the number of currently deployed air-based TNW, deployment of land-based tactical missiles (in a partial reversal of the 1991 Bush–Gorbachev initiatives), and deployment of TNW to the West, possibly to include the Kaliningrad oblast⁷ and Belarus. No decision on the fate of TNW has been made yet, and the interaction within the NATO–Russia Council will play an important role in the future decision. The prospects for the second stage of NATO enlargement will play an even greater role: if the second stage is viewed as imminent, deployment of TNW is almost assured. In any event, a decision will have to be made in the next few years, since the available pool of warheads for TNW is becoming outdated and, according to reliable estimates, by 2003 the warranty periods of almost all warheads will run out.⁷

Thus, the fate of START II ratification and, to an even greater extent, of the decision to deploy TNW will depend on the effectiveness of the new NATO–Russian institutions established under the Founding Act, as well as on developments in other international organizations, such as the G-8, the Paris Club, the World Trade Organization, etc. If Russian integration into various international regimes proceeds positively and reasonably quickly, domestic opposition to cooperation in the international security area is likely to subside, or, at least, the government will have a reason to try to push arms control treaties through the parliament. If, on the other hand, cooperation stalls and the agreements reached in Helsinki and Paris⁸ prove to be mere formalities, opposition to arms control agreements would be enormous, while the “pro-Western” factions in the political elite would lack a stimulus to invest political and other resources into supporting disarmament.⁹

3) While the future of negotiated reductions remains uncertain, chances for unilateral reductions of strategic weapons have improved significantly since the original

⁶ The reliance on tactical nuclear weapons might conceivably be even stronger than was the case with NATO, because the superiority of NATO over Russia in conventional forces (three-to-one now and possibly four-to-one after the enlargement, if the new Conventional Forces in Europe treaty does not rectify the imbalance) is greater than the superiority of the Warsaw Pact over NATO used to be during the Cold War.

⁷ Alexei Arbatov, ed., *Yadernye vooruzheniia i bezopasnost Rossii* (Nuclear Weapons and the Security of Russia), (Moscow: IMEMO, 1997), 56. The number of deployed tactical nuclear weapons has not been officially disclosed either in Russia or in the United States. Unofficial figures are about 1,000 in the United States (about 500 of them in Europe) and about 3,000 in Russia (the share in the European part unknown).

⁸ A NATO–Russian summit meeting was held on May 27, 1997 in Paris, during which the Founding Act was signed.

⁹ See Sergei Kortunov, “Rossiiskaya voyennaya reforma i NATO” (The Russian Military Reform and NATO), *Vlast v Rossii* (RIA-Novosti) 86, no. 34 (1997).

writing of this paper. Even staunch opponents of START II recognize that Russia does not have the resources to maintain parity with the United States at the START I level of 6,000 warheads. The majority of Russian experts and politicians also believe that politically the United States would not be able to sustain the START I-level triad if Russia significantly reduced its nuclear arsenal, and that the United States would follow suit. Although the US reductions would likely be smaller, disparity seems widely acceptable in Russia.¹⁰ Conservative critics of START II might be expected to push for unilateral reductions as an alternative to ratification of the treaty.

The brighter prospects for unilateral measures have not resulted from improvement of US–Russian bilateral relations, however. To the contrary, there is a growing suspicion of the motives of the United States (not necessarily of the White House, but rather of Congress, especially the Republican majority). A large part of the foreign policy establishment suspects that through START II the United States is trying to deprive Russia of its last reliable security guarantee, nuclear weapons. Moreover, few, if any, serious Russian experts believe that a US ABM system would be intended against “rogue nations,” as has been espoused by the United States. The debate in the United States about the reliability of the Russian command and control system and the physical control of nuclear stockpiles is perceived by Russia as the creation of a pretext to demand unilateral nuclear disarmament and the establishment of international control over Russian fissionable materials. As a result, Russian military experts have stopped discussing these issues publicly.

Given the growing lack of trust, progress in disarmament is likely to be slow and difficult; disarmament is no longer viewed as an exclusively cooperative venture in enhancing international security, but, to a large extent, as an exercise in competition.

For that reason, the foreign policy and military establishment in Russia is increasingly switching to unilateralism, emulating, in its own fashion, the approach now popular in the United States. This means that Russia might decrease its reliance on international regimes, including treaty obligations, in favor of more convenient and cost-effective unilateral measures.

Those who advocate reliance on unilateral steps in the absence of formal treaties do not necessarily share the same approach, however. “Liberal” groups favor unilateral reductions because ratification of START II is difficult and politically costly.

¹⁰ See, for example, a publication of the conservative Spiritual Heritage Foundation, *Ratifikatsiia Dogovora SNV-2: Resheniia, Problemy, Perspektivy* (Ratification of START II: Solutions, Problems, Perspectives), (Moscow: Spiritual Heritage and RAU-Corporation, 1996). Recently, the same view was expressed in Alexei Podberezkin, “Rossiya Dolzhna Otkazatsya ot Dogovora SNV-2” (Russia Should Abandon the START II Treaty), *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 22 August 1997, 2.

“Conservative” groups, on the other hand, see unilateral reductions as the means of keeping MIRVed ICBMs or, at least, preserving the right to have them in the future, especially since those weapons are viewed as the best counterbalance to the national missile defense system currently contemplated in the United States. All shades of the political spectrum consider unilateral reductions as more cost-effective than any treaty would be.

Despite the increasingly positive outlook for unilateral reductions, there are several problems with this approach. First, unilateral reductions are likely to take place at a rate slower than the one provided for in START II. Second, unilateral disarmament could transform too easily into unilateral decisions on modernization and a lack of interest in deep reductions. The situation could be complicated by the political situation in Russia, since Yeltsin’s successor, even if pro-market and pro-democracy, will not necessarily stress international integration to the same extent.¹¹ Third, in the absence of a structured, institutionalized dialogue, the relationship between the United States and Russia might come to be dominated by an action-reaction pattern. Furthermore, since Russia will have deployed new, recently produced weapons, it will be, by definition, reluctant to immediately eliminate them. The United States, in turn, will have to face decisions on whether to replace the aging nuclear weapons that now constitute the backbone of its triad.

The 1991 unilateral initiatives of Bush and Gorbachev provide an example of the pitfalls of unilateralism. The reductions in tactical nuclear weapons seemed safe for about five years, but a change in the external (especially NATO enlargement) and domestic conditions in Russia revived interest in these weapons, and now nothing prevents Russia from exercising its right to withdraw from self-imposed restrictions. Worse still, the unilateral obligations did not provide for any kind of transparency, and even the exact number and locations of TNW remain unknown on both sides. Although START I will preserve a high degree of transparency, only the rather loose rules of START I will limit modernization and deployment on both sides.

At the root of the trend toward unilateralism in arms reductions is the domestic dynamic in the United States and Russia and the reluctance of the executive branch in each country to take on institutional and political interests inside their own countries.

¹¹ Yeltsin has already announced, on September 1, 1997, that he will not seek reelection to a third term (the Russian Constitution prohibits third terms, but this announcement was politically important anyway). Some of the possible heirs combine commitment to economic and political reforms with a considerably harder line in foreign and defense policy. The powerful mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, is but one example.

It is much easier politically to proceed with arms reductions unilaterally, by incorporating vested interests, party programs, and the personal prejudices of influential domestic players.

After all, it is, indeed, convenient for the United States to keep options open, whether on possible deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in the territories of new NATO members or on deployment of an ABM system. Statements on the absence of intentions have become very popular in the United States. Russia is increasingly resorting to the same policy: it does not intend to engage in a major effort to develop a new MIRVed ICBM, but it also prefers to keep the option open. Likewise, Russia is not moving forward on tactical nuclear weapons, but is keeping that possibility open as well.

The lack of legally binding restrictions, however, will inevitably fuel attempts to guard against unfavorable developments and, consequently, unnecessarily strong research and development programs. The conflict between a general trend toward arms reductions and mistrust rooted in the absence of formal verifiable agreements will become particularly acute when Russia faces a decision on deployment of new types of strategic weapons. Under START II and even START III conditions, some modernization is inevitable, and the deployment of Topol-M single-warhead ICBMs is practically dictated by these treaties. In addition, Russia is creating a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) and a modernized nuclear-powered, ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) that would better suit lower overall levels of warheads. Finally, it has recently been disclosed that a new heavy bomber is being developed as well; new air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs), both conventional and nuclear, seem logical, although no public information on them is available. The key questions are whether Russia will retain, in the future, all these research and development programs, and what the scale of deployment will be—questions that will have to be answered probably five to seven years from now. In the absence of formal obligations and formal verifiable constraints of possible US actions, it is likely that Russian decision-makers would favor larger programs.

4) One reason for optimism, however, is the fact that nuclear disarmament is but a part of a much larger political game, both within Russia and internationally. The past year has confirmed the validity of assessments of the role of non-governmental actors in Russian politics made in the original paper. Indeed, their impact seems to have increased even further, to the extent that the interests of banks and companies, which have nothing to do with defense industry, are becoming more and more entangled with foreign policy.

Apparently, the most influential figures in the government (beginning with Boris Yeltsin, Viktor Chernomyrdin, Anatoli Chubais, and Boris Nemtsov) treat arms control

with barely hidden contempt, as an obstacle to economic reforms and integration with the West, rather than as an issue having its own value. The influence of strong non-governmental groups that favor integration with the West, such as the major financial institutions, might succeed in pushing the government to make sacrifices on military considerations in order to reap economic benefits. In a sense, economic and trade issues might prove more important for Russia's approach to nuclear disarmament (within reasonable limits, of course) than the traditional problems of strategic balance, anti-missile defense, second-strike posture, etc.

A fundamentally new element of the overall picture is the potential for economic growth in Russia, something that after ten years of economic crisis simply does not occur to many policymakers in the West.¹² Under improved economic conditions, the key question is whether Russia would spend the new resources for nuclear modernization. One should be cautious, however, not to misperceive a "legitimate" increase in defense spending. There is little doubt that the absolute size of defense spending will increase: after years of neglect Russia will need to replace the already outdated weapons and improve the training and living conditions of its military. At issue, rather, is whether Russia will perceive a need for a crash nuclear modernization program, or whether it will deem large-scale modernization unnecessary. In this regard, the benefits reaped from economic relations with the West and integration into the international economic institutions will be critical.

5) Russia's decisions on arms control will depend, to a very large extent, on the behavior of the West in the next several years. Despite the growing mistrust of and disenchantment with the West, the government and a sufficiently large portion of politically relevant non-governmental actors continue to value economic and political integration with the West. This, in turn, will create a favorable atmosphere for a renewed disarmament effort.

The West, and especially the United States, needs to make a decision soon regarding its approach to Russia. Two tracks will have to be pursued in order for the West to improve the prospects for arms control and prevent a major modernization effort in Russia five to seven years from now.

First, it will be necessary to adopt a broad policy of involving Russia in the existing institutional structure of international relations and updating this structure to accommodate Russia. To a degree, the Clinton Administration and the majority of

¹² Although statistics are generally viewed as unreliable, there are telltale qualitative signs, such as the return of the money that left Russia in the last five to seven years, and long-term investment by banks into industry through the privatization program. For the first time, the optimistic forecast of the government (a two percent growth in 1998) does not seem totally misplaced.

Western governments are pursuing this policy, but it needs to be intensified. Of particular importance will be the establishment of the NATO–Russia Council as an international decision-making mechanism, rather than simply as a forum for the exchange of views, and, in general, the institutionalization of Russia’s relations with NATO.

The second track is more particular to disarmament. The West will have to sacrifice some arms buildup and modernization options in order to win similar sacrifices on the part of Russia. This would remove the necessity of worst-case planning on both sides. It is time to recognize that arms control treaties have a value of their own, as international regimes rather than simply as security measures. Consequently, agreements should be pursued even if they are politically difficult, such as on ABM demarcation. Of course, it is easier to abandon negotiations if an agreement is difficult to reach or is politically costly, but the longer-term consequences of foregoing negotiations are likely to outweigh short-term gains.

Two concrete steps should be taken in the very near future. First, the United States should withdraw tactical nuclear weapons from Europe and propose to Russia to formalize the 1991 informal regime and complement it with transparency and verification mechanisms. Second, both countries should engage in START III talks even before START II is ratified. For that matter, START III might be made conditional on START II’s entry into force, the same way as START II was conditioned on START I and the non-nuclear status of Belarus, Kazakstan, and Ukraine. Coupled with broader cooperative effort, these two measures are likely to restart the nuclear arms reduction process, so that under the expected conditions of economic growth Russia will not feel compelled to ensure its security through expanding its nuclear weapons programs.

The observations presented above build on the analysis that is contained in the original paper. Some important trends, which were barely noticeable then, are considerably clearer now; consequently, firmer predictions are possible. Nuclear arms control is approaching the moment of decision. Negotiated measures are progressively losing attraction in both the United States and Russia, but the improved prospects for unilateral reductions are not entirely positive either. Unless each unilateral step is quickly formalized in a legally binding, verifiable agreement, the probability of a reversal will remain unacceptably high. In the Russian case, this is likely to take the form of a relatively large-scale modernization program five to seven years from now; new resources resulting from economic growth might make this financially and politically feasible.

At the same time, the future is not necessarily gloomy. In the next year or two Russia will gladly embrace a new effort at arms reductions. Negotiations will not be

easy: the heady days of the late 1980s to early 1990s are over, but the chance for success is high.

Furthermore, there is now a strong domestic constituency in Russia that puts trade and economics above the old-fashioned approaches to security, which stress military balance. If this constituency has sufficient reasons to value positive relations with the West, the chances for successful cooperative endeavor in nuclear disarmament are likely to grow further. Given the specific features of the Russian domestic and international situation, the fate of nuclear disarmament is now in the hands of the West. It has to take the initiative. But Russia is certain to respond positively, if the right steps are made by the United States and NATO.

Russia's Approach to Deep Reductions of Nuclear Weapons: Opportunities and Problems

The end of the Cold War held a promise of fast reduction of US and Russian nuclear weapons. This has turned out not to be the case: lingering doubts about the fate of START II indicate a potential crisis in arms control. What should be done to regain the momentum of disarmament and how easy will this be? Ratification of START II is the obvious first step. But even with ratification—and more so without it—deep reductions of nuclear weapons will require close attention to broad issues of military balance and international security. Nuclear weapons have become an integral part of the international system and they must be removed cautiously to avoid creating new problems or destabilizing international security.

Russia's approach to the reduction of nuclear weapons is key to future progress in nuclear arms control. In 1985–93, the Soviet Union and then Russia were willing to make the concessions that were necessary to move arms control negotiations ahead. This does not appear to be the case today. On the contrary, Russia now applies strict criteria and is not afraid of stalemates. The external conditions are seen by many Russian politicians and experts as less favorable for deep reductions of nuclear weapons than only three to four years ago. Russia's approach also seems less predictable than in the past because of its volatile political situation and the increased role of domestic politics in determining foreign policy.

To understand what influences the Russian approach to the reduction of nuclear arms, it is necessary to consider the following questions. What are the views of Russian politicians and military experts on nuclear weapons? Which developments outside Russia (external factors) may increase its interest in disarmament or, conversely, cause it to return to a more traditional, Cold War-style policy? How is the changing domestic scene likely to affect Russia's national security policy? What are the economic and military factors that may stimulate the pursuit of arms reductions? Based on the analysis of these factors, this paper describes possible scenarios for Russia's approach to the ratification of START II and reductions beyond it, and identifies conditions that would likely be the most favorable for maintaining the momentum of disarmament and eventually achieving the elimination of nuclear weapons.

This paper does not propose specific guidelines in terms of numbers and systems for each stage of reductions. Such an exercise is often fruitless because, in the course of negotiations, obscure technical details, as well as the personal dispositions of negotiators, can create unforeseen opportunities or problems. Where figures are mentioned, they are examples rather than recommendations. The paper concentrates,

instead, on the conditions required for further reduction and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons and the main stages of this process.

Russia's Approach to Nuclear Weapons

The Soviet approach to the role of nuclear weapons passed through several stages. Soviet leaders initially formulated the notion of deterrence,¹ then their thinking evolved into a recognition that nuclear war could be fought. By the early 1970s, Soviet strategic planners had accepted the retaliatory strike as the basis of mutual security; in the early 1980s this notion was further developed and detailed during the discussion of US plans to develop a strategic defensive system (popularly known as “Star Wars”). By the end of the 1980s, the Soviet Union had embraced the idea of a pure second-strike as the basis for strategy.

Russia's approach to nuclear weapons inherited many features from the Soviet approach of the late 1980s, but was modified to account for the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the protracted economic crisis. The dissolution of the Soviet Union created a serious proliferation problem and moved Russia toward the de-MIRVing of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs—discussed below).² Russia also has become more conscious of potential military threats and challenges from the South (Islamic states and China) and—a problem that is becoming increasingly visible—of the possibility of expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Economic conditions have constrained Russia's ability to pursue both modernization and reduction of nuclear weapons. Although these developments have not altered Russia's fundamental adherence to a second-strike strategy, they have complicated its implementation and enhanced the role of nuclear weapons as a means of providing security.

There is no comprehensive elaboration of the contemporary Russian approach to the role of nuclear weapons in Russian and international security, nor does there exist

¹ Ironically, one of the first, and probably the first formula of nuclear deterrence (as opposed to containment) was proposed by Stalin in the first official recognition that the Soviet Union had nuclear weapons (*Pravda*, 6 October 1951). It is interesting to note that nuclear weapons were supposed to deter US nuclear weapons rather than a conventional attack, and be used in a retaliatory strike. This stands in contrast to the most recent reformulation of the nuclear strategy (to be discussed in detail below), which now assigns nuclear weapons with deterrence of a conventional attack and permits their first use.

² MIRV stands for Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicles. De-MIRVing can be accomplished in two ways: (1) by eliminating all MIRVed ICBMs—and possibly replacing them with single-warhead ICBMs; or (2) by downloading, that is, by removing all warheads but one from MIRVed ICBMs.

a full consensus on all details. Certain main elements of the dominant approach can be identified, however:³

First, in the view of most Russian military planners, strategic nuclear weapons are the foundation of international security because they are believed to prevent a war among the major powers and possibly regional wars as well. Nuclear weapons also are seen to guarantee Russia the status of a great power and provide it a last line of defense, meaning that potential foes will hesitate even to test where the last line lies. Theater and tactical nuclear weapons are viewed as providing defense against potential local threats, which are usually associated with Russia's "southern flank" (the border of the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] with Islamic countries and China).

Nuclear weapons, both strategic and tactical, also are seen as fulfilling an additional deterrent role—that of providing security for other newly independent states. Russia's military doctrine mentions that nuclear weapons could be used in response to an attack against Russia's allies. The Tashkent Treaty on Collective Security (May 1992), as well as bilateral agreements with some of the states-not party to the Tashkent Treaty (including Belarus), indirectly provide for a Russian "nuclear umbrella" by employing language that closely parallels relevant provisions of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Second, nuclear weapons, being the ultimate means of ensuring security, do not have a direct relationship to the political situation in the world. For most Russian strategic planners, it does not really matter whether other nuclear-weapon states are seen as enemies, opponents, or even partners; nuclear weapons are insurance against the worst possible development. At the same time, the utility of nuclear weapons in daily policy is limited; they cannot help attain Russia's foreign policy goals in the Balkans or prevent NATO expansion, but at the same time they do not preclude cooperation.

³ The document that serves as a basis for the Russian approach to nuclear weapons is the military doctrine (published in *Izvestiia*, 18 November 1993, and *Rossiiskie Vesti*, 18 November 1993), but the document is very general and skips many important points. Additional elements can be found in Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev's description of the military doctrine (*Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 9 June 1994), especially on the conditions under which nuclear weapons can be used. An interesting and detailed review is contained in A.A. Danilovich, "On New Military Doctrines of the CIS and Russia," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 5 (December 1992): 517–38. See also the draft of the military doctrine published in 1992 (*Voyennaia Mysl'*, May 1992). A considerable elaboration of many points was provided at a conference in the Supreme Soviet in the summer of 1992; the conference was open to the public but the deliberations were not reported in the press. The analysis contained in this paper also draws on a number of unpublished documents and personal interviews conducted by the author. Important clues are provided by the analysis of Russian (and Soviet) initiatives on nuclear arms reduction or positions at negotiations.

In this view, the security role of nuclear weapons is primarily symbolic—their actual use is not seriously contemplated. This was underscored by the 1994 agreement on the “detargeting” of nuclear weapons and reduction of their alert status.⁴ In 1992 Russia made a proposal to store ballistic missile warheads separately from missiles. This proposal was subsequently rejected by the Russian military, but only because of the lack of storage facilities; an analogous measure was implemented for heavy bombers pursuant to the Bush–Gorbachev initiatives in the fall of 1991.⁵

Third, there is broad agreement among Russian experts and politicians that nuclear weapons ensure Russian and international security through the threat of inflicting “unacceptable damage” in a retaliatory strike. This belief makes the preservation of a second-strike capability the key element in the nuclear equation. There is, however, no consensus on the definition of “unacceptable damage” or how many weapons would be needed to inflict it. Interpretations vary from one nuclear warhead to several hundred. The Duma’s Committee on Defense mentioned 200 deliverable warheads as the threshold,⁶ although it is recognized that “unacceptable damage” is a perceptual category that cannot be precisely quantified. The central point is that each side perceives the potential damage from a retaliatory strike as unacceptable, e.g., Russia thinks that it can inflict damage upon the United States that the United States would consider unacceptable, and the United States thinks Russia can, indeed, inflict damage that would be unacceptable. The actual capability of the nuclear potential is largely beyond the point.

In military and political planning, determining whether Russia has an adequate retaliatory capability takes into account several variables. The “objective” indicators are the numbers and characteristics of the nuclear weapons of the United States, as well as those of other states with nuclear weapons, relative to the nuclear forces of Russia. Through complex modeling, experts try to determine how many Russian weapons

⁴ Detargeting went into effect on March 30, 1994, under a trilateral agreement of the United States, Russia, and Great Britain (Interfax, 30 March 1994); later it was supplemented by a Russian-Chinese agreement to the same effect (Interfax, 3 September 1994).

⁵ After Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev made the proposal on ballistic missile warheads public, it turned out that the initiative had not been coordinated with the military beforehand. In September–October 1991, US President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev exchanged unilateral initiatives that included, among other elements, the obligations of both sides to remove non-strategic weapons from surface ships and submarines and store them ashore; to remove nuclear weapons from heavy bombers and store them separately and to discontinue the practice of permanent patrols of heavy bombers; and to eliminate or store ground-based tactical missiles. The initiatives also included some unilateral non-parallel (that is, not matching) obligations.

⁶ The Duma is the lower house of the Russian parliament. Anatoli Yurkin, “No Duma Committee Consensus on START II Treaty,” ITAR-TASS, 2 February 1996, cited in FBIS-SOV-96-023, 2 February 1996, 8.

would be likely to survive a first strike and whether this number would be sufficient to inflict a level of damage that definitely would be viewed as “unacceptable” by the attacking state; the latter judgment is largely subjective, however.

At the same time, the Russian government has to satisfy the perceptions held by relevant interest groups, such as political parties, the military, the defense industry, research centers, and others, or at least a majority of such groups. This makes the adoption of a minimalist approach to the definition of “unacceptable damage” and corresponding requirements for the force posture unlikely, because the government has to factor in views of nationalists and/or groups with an intrinsic interest in high levels of weapons.

Fourth, there is widespread agreement that a retaliatory capability must be retained at any cost, or nuclear weapons could turn into an instrument of political blackmail. Few, if any, serious Russian experts and politicians believe that the United States would actually use nuclear weapons even if it had a clear superiority. Many think, however, that the loss of retaliatory capability could make Russia vulnerable to conventional attacks (e.g., similar to the limited strikes in Iraq and Bosnia) and thus reduce its ability to conduct an independent foreign policy.

Perceptions clearly play a key role in maintaining the stability of the nuclear balance. For example, the United States may think that Russia's retaliatory capability could be eliminated in a successful first strike, while Russia knows that it would still retain that capability. Conversely, Russia might think that its retaliatory capability was no longer assured and thus might try to restore it, while the United States still thought that the capability existed. Such inadequate perceptions, leading to a classic security dilemma, could, to a large extent, result from the dynamics of domestic politics, especially since governments tend to bow to the particular agendas of interest groups out of need to co-opt their support. The way to avoid such a security dilemma is to maintain constant communication between the two governments, discussion of stability of the nuclear balance, mutual accommodation in disarmament measures, and discussion (or even scaling down) of planned modernization programs to avoid misperceptions.

Fifth, by the end of the 1980s, as a result of an intense and often dramatic discussion, the Soviet Union adopted a second-strike strategy. Prior to that time, it had relied on a “strike-on-warning” policy (*vstrechno-otvetnyi udar*), but finally it recognized that a pure second-strike policy (launch only after the incoming warheads reach their targets) was better for the preservation of deterrence and the prevention of an accidental or unauthorized nuclear strike. This transition in strategy, however, was not supported by adequate weapon systems. The technical characteristics of the existing systems did not meet the requirements of a second-strike strategy, which include a high

proportion of relatively invulnerable weapons systems, improved command and control systems, and a lower warhead-to-launcher ratio.

By the mid-1980s the Soviet Union already had started to deploy mobile ICBMs and nuclear air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) on modern heavy bombers (Tu-160) and had enhanced the survivability of some silos, which helped to move the strategic triad closer to the second-strike posture. Reductions under START I also helped to increase the percentage of more survivable weapons. Still, a transition of this magnitude requires considerable time and expense. The transition has not yet been completed and will require additional time and modernization.

One should not, though, mistake a second-strike policy for a commitment to no-first-use. The latter policy was dropped after a heated discussion of military doctrine in 1992.⁷ It was assumed that, first, conventional weapons can be almost as destructive as nuclear weapons and, given Russia's inferiority in modern conventional weapons, retaliation against a conventional attack might require the use of nuclear weapons. Second, since Russia no longer held superiority in conventional armed forces over its neighbors (NATO and China, and other "southern flank" countries), it might need nuclear weapons to deter a conventional attack. Essentially, the new doctrine is similar to the standard rationale for NATO's first-use strategy: NATO adopted a strategy permitting the first use of nuclear weapons to counter what then was seen as superior Soviet conventional forces—now the roles have been reversed. Russia nevertheless retained the restrictions on the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states-party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as provided by the positive and negative guarantees adopted by the Soviet Union. Russia modified the

⁷ An early draft of the military doctrine, prepared still under the auspices of the High Command of the Joint Armed Forces of the Commonwealth (essentially, the Soviet Armed Forces under a new name), retained the original Soviet policy of no-first-use. It stated that Russia "would not be the first to use nuclear weapons or any other weapon of mass destruction." (*Voennaia Mysl'*, May 1992). The drafts that were developed by the Russian Ministry of Defense several months later, however, introduced a radically different policy: they stated that Russia could use nuclear weapons not only in response to a nuclear attack but also in the case of a conventional attack against nuclear weapons or the early-warning system, which would be classified as a nuclear attack. No-first-use was seen as a policy that could be adopted in the future on a multilateral basis. The final version of the military doctrine, adopted in November 1993, defined only the cases in which nuclear weapons would not be used: "against any state-party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 that does not have nuclear weapons." But the doctrine made two important exceptions: nuclear weapons could be used against non-nuclear-weapon states that were allies of a nuclear-weapon state or acted together with a nuclear-weapon state; in both cases nuclear weapons could be used only in response to an attack against Russia, its armed forces, or its allies (*Izvestiia*, 18 November 1993). For a detailed analysis of the first-use policy see Sergei Rogov, "Novaia Voyennaia Doktrina Rossii" (The New Military Doctrine of Russia), *SShA: Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiia*, No. 5, 1994. Rogov's article can be considered an authoritative interpretation of the new military doctrine, since he is very close to the Ministry of Defense.

Soviet guarantees, however, to allow the use of nuclear weapons in response to attack by non-nuclear-weapon states that are allies of states possessing nuclear weapons.

Sixth, strategic balance is viewed by a majority of Russian experts as a comprehensive phenomenon, which, in addition to offensive weapons, includes early-warning systems; command, control, and communication systems (C³); defensive capability; and conventional weapons with strategic capabilities (for example, conventional ALCMS capable of destroying missile silos or command and control systems and radars). In this view, the deployment of an anti-ballistic missile (ABM) defense system would be equated with the deployment of offensive weapons, because it would enhance the capabilities of the latter. In the United States, however, a considerable part of the public, as well as many experts and politicians, treat defensive weapons as essentially different from offensive ones. This difference in views could potentially lead to conflict.

Conventional strategic weapons were largely excluded from START I and START II, with only token restrictions established. The role of such weapons is likely to increase for several reasons, most notably: (1) as the number of nuclear weapons decreases, the role of conventional weapons capable of destroying second-strike nuclear weapons, as well as early-warning and C³ systems, will become significant; and (2) conventional weapons increasingly are acquiring a capability to inflict “unacceptable damage” by themselves.

Seventh, the strategic balance is seen as comprising three countries—the United States, Russia, and China, with the bilateral balance between Russia and the United States constituting the central axis. In the late 1980s, the Soviet Union made an important change in its thinking on the strategic balance by departing from an overemphasis on numeric indicators in the calculation of the nuclear balance. A dominant point of view among Russian experts today (although one not necessarily shared by politicians) is that numbers provide only a very rough and imprecise estimate of the strategic balance and that parity in numbers is not necessary to ensure a retaliatory capability. Essentially, this means that Russia can have fewer nuclear warheads than a combination of other nuclear powers or even than the United States alone, but still retain a retaliatory capability against any or all of them. This belief served as the fundamental premise for the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and was further codified in START I. In fact, under START I the Soviet Union accepted inferiority to the United States,⁸ yet that was not seen as significantly

⁸ According to then-current calculations, the Soviet Union would have had 6,400 warheads while the United States would have had about 9,000 (the rules of accounting of START I permitted the treaty limits to be exceeded), although full implementation of the Air Force programs could have increased the number of Soviet warheads beyond 7,000.

impairing the Soviet Union's capability for retaliation against any or all of the four other nuclear-weapon states.

Of course, most Russian strategic planners also recognize that the disparity cannot exceed certain (as yet undefined) proportions. As the numbers of nuclear weapons decrease, the numeric disparity between the United States and Russia will have to decrease as well. In addition, the nuclear balance codified in international agreements will have to include Great Britain, France, and China. Current estimates put the threshold after which the latter three would have to be covered by arms control treaties somewhere around 1,500–2,000 warheads, although, of course, this number may be reconsidered.

Eighth, there is broad consensus that the nuclear equation must remain limited to the current five nuclear-weapon states, whose interests and behavior are relatively stable and whose alliance patterns are known and reasonably predictable. Calculating the balance is difficult even today, and perceptions play a very large role in the equation. Proliferation would complicate these calculations beyond a reasonable margin of error. For that reason, Russia will oppose nuclear proliferation and an increase of the nuclear capabilities of the “unofficial” nuclear countries (commonly considered to include Israel, India, Pakistan, and possibly North Korea).

The above outline of Russia's current approach to the role of nuclear weapons is obviously cursory and does not include many important technical details that are certain to arise at future negotiations. Still, it provides a reasonably complete framework for analysis of the prospects for START II ratification and implementation, as well as for future arms reductions.

The International and Domestic Context of Russian Arms Control Policy⁹

Policy in the area of nuclear weapons is affected by two groups of variables: external and internal.

External variables include the foreign and defense policies of other states as well as trends in their strategic capabilities. An unfavorable change in the balance of power is likely to cause alliance building or resource mobilization and an increase of a state's military power (i.e., arms buildup). Typical examples of states whose foreign and defense policies may be explained virtually exclusively in terms of external inputs

⁹ The following section benefited from the results of a research project conducted under a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The author would like to express his gratitude to the Foundation for its generous support.

include the European monarchies of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries and the totalitarian and authoritarian regimes of the twentieth century (for example, the Soviet Union under Stalin).

National security policy of democratic or partially democratic states presents a more complicated case, because internal variables play a greater role in influencing policy decisions. Democratic freedoms, the accountability of the government to the public through periodic elections, and the role of interest groups introduce considerable modifications into the way a state's leaders respond to changing external conditions. Leaders of democratic states may overlook relatively unfavorable external conditions or, to the contrary, may overreact to comparatively minor external problems, because of a particular constellation of domestic forces. The most obvious case is the interest of the defense industry and the military in a high level of defense spending. There may be other, somewhat less obvious, examples of the role of interest groups. Export-oriented industries, or industries that depend on foreign suppliers, may influence the government to moderate foreign policy, while industries that depend on the import of raw materials may demand an aggressive foreign policy to secure access to these inputs.

The political reforms that started in 1987 and accelerated after the dissolution of the Soviet Union shifted Russia from the first to the second category of states. Accordingly, the role of domestic components in shaping its nuclear policy has increased.

External Variables

The external variables that may influence Russia's approach to the reduction of nuclear weapons are, generally, any events that may further reduce its status, security, or influence in world politics. For example, the actual or perceived exclusion of Russia from the peace settlement in the Balkans or the denial of Western economic aid as a result of Russia's relations with Cuba have no direct relationship to nuclear policy,¹⁰ but could cause Russia to act more assertively and could generate a negative attitude among Russian leaders toward compromises on arms control. Two events, however, are likely to have a direct and strong impact on Russia's future approach to the reduction of nuclear arms: the expansion of NATO and the deployment of an ABM system by the United States.

¹⁰ Pursuant to the Helms-Burton Act (adopted in early 1996 after the Cuban Air Force shot down two planes that belonged to an anti-Castro organization of Cuban immigrants in the United States) the United States might introduce sanctions against Russia, including termination of aid, to punish Russia's participation in the use of the property confiscated in Cuba during or after the 1959 revolution. The measure, however, did not single out Russia and is applicable to other countries receiving aid from the United States, as well as to private companies, that use confiscated property.

NATO expansion

The expansion of NATO figures prominently in Russian debates over START II ratification. Practically all parties and factions in the Russian political spectrum warn that ratification of START II and NATO expansion are incompatible.¹¹

Current Russian military doctrine lists “the expansion of military blocs and alliances to the detriment of military security of the Russian Federation” as a threat to security.¹² NATO, the strongest military alliance in the world, is seen in Russia as at least potentially unfriendly. With expansion, NATO would move closer to the borders of Russia and NATO troops would acquire additional numerical strength. As a result, the level of potential threat would increase considerably, and Russia might need to enhance its own military capability to counterbalance this new threat.

The rationale underlying the linkage between NATO expansion and START II ratification is the newly-assigned role of nuclear weapons in deterrence of a conventional attack. This role could become even more salient if NATO expands eastward. Many experts and politicians in Russia are now trying to determine whether Russia's nuclear forces under START II would be sufficient to deter a conventional attack by an expanded NATO, or whether Russia would need a larger nuclear force.

Recently, the Russian Minister of Defense, Pavel Grachev, underscored this new role of nuclear weapons by stating that the East/Central European states that become members of NATO would be included in the group of countries against which nuclear

¹¹ The Chairman of the Duma's Committee on International Affairs, Vladimir Lukin (of the liberal Yabloko faction), specifically noted that the expansion of NATO worsens Russia's strategic situation (Vladimir Abarinov, “Duma Will Not Hurry With Ratification of START-2,” *Segodnia*, 28 March 1995). Lukin also cited the territorial dispute with Japan and poor relations with Ukraine and the Baltic states as the reasons why Russia needed a strong nuclear arsenal. A more recent example is Lukin's interview with *Moskovski Komsomolets*, 6 February 1996, cited in FBIS-SOV-96-026, 7 February 1996, 20). An identical point of view was voiced by Gyennadi Zuyganov, the leader of the Communist Party (“START II Ratification by Russia is Problematic,” *Segodnia*, 30 January 1996). Aleksei Mitrofanov, the Chairman of the Duma's Committee on Geopolitical Issues (the Liberal-Democratic party) made a similar point about NATO's expansion (*Izvestiia*, 31 January 1996, cited in FBIS-SOV-96-022, 1 February 1996, 16). The then-speaker of the Federation Council (the upper chamber of the Parliament), Vladimir Shumeiko, noted, too, that the possibility of NATO expansion led some legislators to reconsider their support for START II (Viktor Litovkin et al., “Differences Remain After Perry Visit,” *Izvestiia*, 5 April 1995). Finally, an unidentified high-ranking representative of the General Staff stated that NATO expansion, especially the possibility that tactical nuclear weapons could be deployed in Central Europe, was a major factor that would reverse the General Staff's support for START II (Interfax, 6 February 1996, cited in FBIS-SOV-96-026, 7 February 1996, 19).

¹² *Izvestiia*, 18 November 1993 (see also footnote 3). A development of this theme, in broader geopolitical terms, can be found in a report of the Council of Foreign and Defense Policy published by *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* on 21 June 1995 (*Transitions*, 15 December 1995, 27–32).

weapons could be used. It should be noted, however, that this does not represent a new element in Russia's nuclear policy; current military doctrine already provides for the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states that are allies of a nuclear-weapon state. Thus, Grachev's warning represents a restatement of a two-year-old policy.

A US anti-ballistic missile (ABM) defense system

The deployment of an ABM system by the United States would have even greater relevance for START II ratification and for the future of nuclear arms reduction. Russian opposition to changing the existing ABM regime dates back to the Soviet period.¹³ The Russian approach to ABM proceeds from the premise that the nuclear balance encompasses both offensive and defensive weapons. Russia would be certain to see the deployment of an ABM system by the United States as potentially depriving it of a second-strike capability.¹⁴ Like NATO expansion, the fate of the ABM Treaty is a common theme that is supported by practically every influential political or elite group in Russia.¹⁵ It is important to note that a possible US ABM system is viewed in Russia almost exclusively in terms of its effect upon the US-Russian nuclear balance;

¹³ Only once in the last decade has a Russian (or Soviet) leader spoken favorably about the transition to strategic defense—Yeltsin in his address on arms control in January 1992—and even then the statement did not reflect the position of the governmental bureaucracy. The plank on “exploration” of an anti-missile regime was inserted in Yeltsin's speech at the last moment as a result of interference by Yevgeni Velikhov. Information about his role found its way into the press afterwards (see *Novoe Vremia*, No. 15, April 1992, 26–28, cited in FBIS-SOV-92-092, 12 March 1992, 2; and *Krasnaia Zvezda*, 27 February 1992, cited in FBIS-SOV-92-048, 11 March 1992, 6.) The grand-sounding initiative was quickly diluted to mean a joint warning system. Russia still favors a tactical ABM system based on the existing S-300 complex (the idea is promoted, among others, by the Ground Forces), but a strategic system seems firmly out of the question.

¹⁴ The list of threats contained in the military doctrine includes “the undermining of strategic stability through violations of international agreements on arms limitation and reduction,” which obviously refers to the ABM Treaty. (*Izvestiia*, 18 November 1993).

¹⁵ A report of the Duma Committee on Geopolitical Issues, summarizing the hearings on START II, underscored that the possible deployment of an ABM system by the United States might indicate an intention to abandon the concept of mutual nuclear deterrence, which had been the foundation of international security in the post-Cold War period (Interfax, 30 January 1996, cited in FBIS-SOV-96-021, 31 January 1996, 20). The Duma Committee on Defense came to a similar conclusion as a result of its 1995 hearings; the deputy chairman of that committee, Aleksandr Piskunov, stressed that the unconditional adherence to the ABM Treaty was the first and the most important condition of START II ratification and implementation (Petr Zhuravlev, “Representatives of the Defense and Foreign Ministries Have Spoken Out in Favor of START II Ratification,” *Segodnia*, 13 July 1993). An anonymous high-ranking representative of the General Staff stated that the deployment of a strategic ABM system by the United States was the second key factor that could change the military's support for START II (the first, quoted above, was expansion of NATO) (Interfax, 6 February 1996, cited in FBIS-SOV-96-026, 7 February 1996, 19).

practically no one takes seriously the idea of defense against North Korea or Libya.¹⁶ What really counts for Russian politicians and military planners is the ability of a US ABM system to intercept Russian missiles.

Of the two possible responses to a US ABM system—symmetric and asymmetric¹⁷—Russia would be most likely to choose the second. An asymmetric response would be cheaper and would use existing technologies. Russia's goal would be to increase the number of warheads it could launch against the defensive system in order to enhance the chances of penetration. An asymmetric response might include three components. First, Russia might return to the strategy of strike-on-warning, which would allow it to “save” the warheads that otherwise would be lost in a first strike launched by another state. Second, Russia might reject START II or abandon it, if the treaty is ratified, and create a new ICBM with four to six warheads. Third, Russia might develop weapons with higher probability of penetrating a defensive system: submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) with short flight-time and depressed trajectory, and ALCMS.

Although a symmetric response would be very (perhaps even prohibitively) expensive for Russia, one cannot rule out the possibility that Russia might pursue research and even development of its own ABM system. This parallel track would be more likely if aerospace firms that are currently engaged in international cooperation would lose contracts with Western firms.

As mentioned above, the difference between the US and Russian perceptions of an ABM system would be likely to stimulate a new round in the bilateral arms race. An increase in Russia's offensive capability might be seen in the United States as an

¹⁶ The reason for not taking seriously the usual US justification for an ABM system is simple: strategic missiles are war-fighting weapons that could be used to wage war or prevent war through deterrence, rather than to threaten a very limited, terrorist-style use. A country that wants to use nuclear weapons for terrorist acts is likely to find cheaper and more clandestine ways to do so rather than engage in a protracted, expensive, and easily detectable ICBM development program.

¹⁷ Symmetric response involves deployment of Russia's own defensive system; asymmetric response involves deployment of offensive systems to offset the US defensive capabilities. In the 1980s, the Soviet Union proceeded simultaneously with symmetric and asymmetric responses, although even then it was perfectly clear that an asymmetric response would be cheaper and faster. Anatoli Chernyaev, an assistant to Mikhail Gorbachev, wrote in his memoirs that an asymmetric response was estimated to cost only ten percent of the ABM system itself—see Anatoli Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym* (Six Years with Gorbachev) (Moscow: Progress—Kultura, 1993), 74. For additional information see Aleksandr Savel'yev and Nikolay Detinov, *The Big Five* (Westport: Praeger, 1995), 86. The fact that the Soviet Union simultaneously was engaged in research and development of its own ABM system may be attributed to interest group politics; for evidence of such research—conducted, at least officially, within the framework of the ABM Treaty—see *Izvestiia*, 14 April 1992; and Moscow TV, 8 August 1992, cited in FBIS-SOV-92-154, 10 August 1992, 2.

indicator of aggressive intentions. For this reason, a US “counter-response” in offensive weapons might follow, which, in turn, could cause a “counter-counter-response” by Russia. The spiral could continue for a considerable period of time.

Internal Variables

Russia’s response to changes in the external situation is likely to be strongly conditioned by domestic developments, however. The increased role of domestic politics probably has been the most important change in the decision-making mechanism for national security policy, including nuclear policy, from the Soviet period. Russian legislators and the government are now likely to disregard Western criticism of a policy that is popular domestically; the presidential elections slated for June 1996 considerably heighten the stakes. For example, the Russian government preferred to risk sanctions from the US Congress over the deal with Iran, which involved the sale of nuclear reactors, rather than to overrule its own Ministry of Atomic Energy.¹⁸ Similarly, Russia is likely to continue developing relations with Cuba despite possible US sanctions under the Helms-Burton Act.

The parliament

In the late 1980s an independent legislative branch emerged, representing the first stage in the changing domestic context. Since then, policy differences between the executive and the legislative branches have become a common feature of foreign policy decision-making in Russia. The extent of this conflict is often overstated, however. While the previous Duma (1993–95) usually took a tough stand on national security issues, its budgetary policy often did not correspond to the rhetoric. Thus, defense appropriations remained far below the requests of the military and the demands of the defense industry.¹⁹ The approach of the new Duma, elected in December 1995, is difficult to gauge at this writing because its activities are strongly influenced by the presidential elections, scheduled for June 1996.

¹⁸ According to the agreement, signed on 8 January 1995 following a previous agreement in 1992, Russia agreed to help Iran complete a nuclear power station and to supply a nuclear reactor for it; the project had been abandoned earlier by Germany. The United States argued that the deal could provide Iran with valuable nuclear-weapons related technology, but the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy downplayed the risk. The government stood behind its agency. It is interesting to note that an earlier deal, involving the sale of submarines to Iran, caused a serious split within the government. The United States, arguing that Iran could use submarines to seal the Strait of Hormuz and disrupt shipments of oil from the Persian Gulf, wanted to block the deal. The two arguably most important agencies—the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—were against the deal as well, but the defense industry was able to prevail in the conflict and the submarines were sold to Iran.

¹⁹ In both 1994 and 1995, the Duma rejected the military’s requests to increase the defense budget. The strategic forces are funded, reportedly, at only ten percent of what they require (ITAR-TASS, 16 May 1994).

In addition to the increased independence of the parliament, three other factors play a key role in defining the new type of domestic politics: (1) the emergence of large, relatively independent corporations; (2) an increase in the level of independence and influence of the defense industry; and (3) the emergence of non-defense industries as new actors in the politics of national security policy-making.

Corporate actors

Economic and political reforms, together with privatization, have led to the emergence of a large strata of former state enterprises, which are no longer subject to daily management by governmental officials. These enterprises increasingly behave like Western corporations, although on average, Russian "corporations" are larger than Western companies (a prime example is *Gazprom*, which controls almost one-third of world gas deposits). In addition, the recent trends in monopolization have led to the creation of "financial-industrial groups" that combine vertical monopolies in industry with banks. As of December 1995, there were 27 financial-industrial groups; each group's assets, as a rule, are concentrated in the head company, which also controls the government-owned shares in the enterprises that constitute the group.²⁰

These "corporations" actively interfere in politics by supporting political parties and parliamentary factions; they influence the government even more directly through personal and business contacts or bribes. The degree of influence of such economic-based interest groups typically is a function of the concentration of interest (how much a group concentrates on influencing a particular policy depends on how salient that particular policy is for the success of the group), the level of organization, and the amount of resources (political or financial) that an actor can and is willing to spend. Corporate actors in present-day Russia score high on all three counts. Moreover, many influential figures in the government have considerable personal stakes in business ventures.²¹

The defense industry

As a result of political and institutional changes, the defense industry has become better organized and has acquired stronger leverage on national security policy

²⁰ *OMRI Daily Digest*, No. 67, Part I, 3 April 1996. On the nature and the political role of the financial-industrial groups see: Lev Freinkman, "Financial-Industrial Groups in Russia: Emergence of Large Diversified Private Companies" and Irina Starodubrovstaya, "Financial-Industrial Groups: Illusions and Reality," both in *Communist Economies and Economic Transformation*, 7:1 (March 1995).

²¹ For excellent material detailing the growth of the political role of industrial managers, see Nina Lopatina, "Rukovoditeli predpriatii: perekhod k rynochnoi ekonomike" (The Leaders of Enterprises: The Transition Toward Market Economy), *MEMO*, No. 5, 1994, and Irina Starodubrovskaya, "The Nature of Monopoly and Barriers to Entry in Russia," *Communist Economies and Economic Transformation*, 6:1 (March 1994).

than was the case during the Soviet period. Within the industry, large, vertically structured amalgamations—called “powerhouses” by Andrei Kokoshin, the first deputy minister of defense in charge of acquisitions—possess considerable resources and have high stakes in the outcomes of policy debates, but are no longer subject to tight governmental control.²²

Previously a decision of the Politburo or even lower levels of the governmental machine (such as the Military-Industrial Commission of the Council of Ministers) could stifle the opposition of the defense industry to a particular decision of the political leadership. If the government determined an arms control agreement to be feasible and desirable, it could be concluded without further political struggle. The ability to disregard domestic opposition was the primary reason why Mikhail Gorbachev could force arms control concessions on the military-industrial complex. Now, however, “powerhouses” can contest government decisions through the mass media, use the organizations they have created (such as the League of Defense Enterprises) to influence decisions, or call on deputies with whom they have close ties to introduce issues in the parliament.²³

The elimination of branch ministries, along with the introduction of the freedoms of speech and association, played a crucial role in increasing the political clout of the defense industry. Enterprises were able to join efforts in fighting for their preferred policies. They created several large, nation-wide organizations, such as the League of Defense Enterprises, the Industrial Union, the Union of Commodity Producers, and other similar organizations, and gained strong influence in broader political and professional organizations, such as the Civic Union.

²² Such amalgamations usually include research institutes, producers of the final product, and producers of components; they often create their own banks. The concept of “powerhouses” was developed initially in an attempt to select the enterprises that were indispensable for continued production of arms. In the spring of 1992, 220 such enterprises were identified (Andrei Kokoshin, “Protivorechiia formirovaniia i puti razvitiia voyenno-tekhnicheskoi politiki Rossii” [The Contradictions of the Development and the Paths of Development of the Military-Technical Policy of Russia], *Voyennaia Mysl'*, No. 2, 1993). During the summer of 1992, the Ministry of Defense, together with the League of Defense Enterprises, drew plans to create 20–30 leading companies; the first ones were mandated in the fall of that year. (*Krasnaia Zvezda*, 29 October 1992, cited in FBIS-SOV-92-214, 4 November 1992, 33).

²³ For example, in the spring of 1992 the United States complained that a Russian deal to sell rocket motors to India was in violation of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). The government initially agreed to consider the termination of the deal, but the issue was introduced in the parliament (then called the Supreme Soviet) by several deputies close to the aerospace industry. As a result of a heated public campaign, the government was forced to rebuff the United States and uphold the deal, despite sanctions the United States introduced against *Glavkosmos*, the semi-private agency that had concluded the deal. A more recent example of the same trend is the Russian deal to supply Iran with nuclear reactors (mentioned above).

It is obvious that the defense industry as a whole (with several important exceptions described below) is interested in an increased level of defense spending. Thus, it is opposed to deep reductions of arms and promotes policy decisions based on the assumption that the West is hostile to Russia. The defense industry's anti-Western attitude also stems from the fact that it is often locked in competition with Western firms over arms sales. The influence of arms exporters may account for a recent change in the Russian position at negotiations over an arms sales regime.²⁴

Non-defense groups

The relaxation of a rigid hierarchical structure, however, also has opened national security policy-making to the influence of non-defense groups that previously had been prevented from direct participation in the policy-making process by political, security, and administrative barriers. These groups have become rightful contenders for the resources that the military-industrial complex used to consume without competition. Civilian interest groups are now equally well organized and have equal or greater resources that they can spend to influence policy.

The most visible and well-known examples are the oil and gas industries. Their interest in access to foreign markets, foreign investment, and imported equipment can be realized only under a relatively positive, "pro-Western" Russian foreign policy. Not surprisingly, throughout 1992–95 these industries remained one of the main forces behind such a cooperative policy. The oil and gas industries have been able to influence foreign policy for the reasons noted above: a concentration of interest, organization, and resources. The level of monopolization is extremely high; the gas industry is concentrated almost exclusively in *Gazprom* and the oil industry is controlled by a handful of large concerns. These two industries have direct access to the highest levels of actors involved in decision-making related to national security policy.

More recently, the metallurgical industry also has acquired an interest in stable relations with the West. In a development that was unusual by Soviet standards, the change in the industry's policy preferences was triggered by the rapid devaluation of the ruble. Devaluation made exports of its products profitable; as a result, metallurgical enterprises started to make money and acquired an interest in continued export opportunities. They also were finally able to import new equipment. Their range of

²⁴ The talks are being conducted within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament and are aimed at enhancing the transparency of conventional arms sales, as well as developing commonly acceptable guidelines. Russia has changed its approach to the notification of planned arms sales contracts: initially, its position was similar to the US view—that is, that early notifications should be provided. Russia, however, abruptly changed that position and now proposes that notifications be provided only after a contract has been signed. The Russian negotiators believe that, if a planned deal is made public before the signing of the contract, competitors would be likely to enter the picture and could disrupt the deal.

interests is basically the same as those of the oil and gas industries—exports of products, foreign investment, and import of equipment.

The aerospace industry, which relies on Russia's continued cooperation with the West to obtain badly needed contracts for launches of satellites, financing for space exploration, and markets for civilian airplanes, has similar interests as well. A renewed confrontation with the West could torpedo deals like the sale of rocket motors by NPO *Energomash* to Pratt-Whitney; reportedly, the military strongly opposed the deal on security grounds, but lost.²⁵ While the industry could produce military aircraft or civilian planes for domestic consumption as a possible alternative to contracts with the West, this would be much less attractive.

Conversely, the civilian machine-building industry suffers from the radically increased competition from Western firms and favors strong protectionism.²⁶ It is also interested in continued cooperation with the former Soviet republics, which represent the only available market for its products, and is a major force behind the trend toward greater political and economic integration of the region. These two sets of interests determine the industry's generally negative attitude toward the West. This attitude is also characteristic of the agriculture and food industries, which likewise favor protection from foreign competition (foreign producers now account for approximately one-third of the Russian food market).²⁷

The generally anti-Western line of the agrarian and machine-building sectors, however, does not necessarily translate directly into support for a new round of defense spending. Even though these sectors favor protectionism and a tougher line toward the West, they also demand greater financial support from the budget.²⁸ This puts them in conflict with the defense industry over scarce resources and may forestall a positive response by the Duma to the demands of the defense industry for greater defense appropriations. This trend is illustrated by the position of the Agrarian Party in the previous Duma (1993–95): it was protectionist and its rhetoric had strong anti-Western overtones, but nevertheless it did not support reallocation of budgetary funds in favor of the military.

²⁵ *OMRI Daily Digest*, No. 67, Part I, 3 April 1996.

²⁶ Sergei Glaziev, a one-time minister of foreign trade and a critic of the government's economic policy, noted that the oil and gas industries shifted their purchases of equipment to the West. As a result, a Cheboksary tractor-building plant experienced a 50 percent drop in orders; the share had been taken by imports. See Sergei Glaziev, *Ekonomika i politika: epizody bor'by* (Economy and Politics: Scenes from Struggle) (Moscow: Gnozis, 1994), 108.

²⁷ *OMRI Daily Digest*, No. 59, Part I, 22 March 1996.

²⁸ In 1995, agriculture received 6.7 trillion rubles of subsidies from the federal budget (\$1.4 billion) and more than twice this amount from local budgets. Agriculture, however, wanted an almost one hundred percent increase in subsidies—to 13 trillion rubles (*OMRI Daily Digest*, No. 59, Part I, 22 March 1996).

As can be seen in the above examples, the attitude of interest groups (as well as that of the general public) toward the West is tempered by a new pragmatism. Good relations with the United States will no longer carry the day as a general proposition, as was the case during the Soviet period, when the United States held considerable attraction for the public despite (or perhaps because of) official anti-American propaganda. In particular, corporate actors are likely to attach considerable importance to the benefits they derive from East-West trade. Put simply, if they derive profits, they are likely to pressure the government to minimize political conflicts with the West; if they have no intrinsic interest in East-West cooperation, even small political disagreements may grow into major conflicts. The recent controversy around the possible sale of SS-18 ICBMs and relevant technology to China may play out differently depending on how the aerospace industry assesses the prospects of trade with the West. The same rule may apply to Russia's propensity to uphold UN sanctions against such countries as Iraq or Libya, or against Serbia, if they are reintroduced later this year (the machine-building industry may be interested in trade with these countries if it does not have a stake in trade with the West). The situation is not unlike the one in US-Chinese relations: the involvement of US companies in trade with China makes the US government interested in resolving disagreements with China through compromise rather than conflict. Moreover, the payoff for corporate actors has to be short-term or even immediate; a general promise of long-term benefits is unlikely to be taken seriously.

In sum, START II is only one—albeit important—piece in the larger puzzle of Russian domestic politics. The treaty's fate will be determined by a broad variety of considerations. If elites are willing to overlook certain real or perceived shortcomings of the treaty in the interest of maintaining cooperative relations with the West, the treaty is likely to be implemented. If the proponents of a confrontational approach with the West prevail, the treaty might fail in the Duma. This uncertainty is enhanced by the ambivalence of the military, which favors the treaty, but not without reservations. The fact that START II is a controversial agreement makes it vulnerable to a variety of political "games." Consequently, it is very important not to upset the delicate balance, which at this writing appears to lean in favor of START II.

The chances that the treaty will be ratified or implemented without ratification may be increased by: (1) keeping Russian industrial elites interested in economic ties with the West, requiring at least the same level and intensity of economic cooperation as today; and (2) strengthening the favorable attitude of the Russian military toward START II, so that the treaty's proponents are not vulnerable to accusations that they are willing to compromise the country's security. The military aspects of nuclear arms control—which are related to the second point—are discussed below.

Getting START II Out of Limbo

Fundamentally, the Russian debate about START II boils down to whether Russia would be able to sustain a second-strike capability within the limits of the treaty. As noted above, the majority of Russian politicians and experts believe that in the foreseeable future the absence of war between the major powers will depend on the stability of the nuclear balance, particularly the maintenance of an assured second-strike capability. Russia's relative inferiority in the numbers and quality of conventional armed forces (at least compared to NATO) makes that requirement even more salient.

Factors that Work Against START II Ratification and Implementation

The critics of START II maintain that, given the numbers and types of weapons the treaty permits, Russia would lose its second-strike capability. In their view, maintaining such a capability requires returning to the more permissive conditions of START I and continuing reliance upon MIRVed ICBMs; the critics also argue that deploying MIRVed ICBMs would be cheaper than deploying single-warhead ICBMs with the same overall number of warheads. The proponents of START II, on the other hand, say that the second-strike capability can be maintained under the treaty and that, in addition, the strategic balance would become more stable.

The choice between ratifying START II and returning to START I is not straightforward, however, making the debate heated and its outcome uncertain. START I is not completely acceptable to Russia. Due to its high limits and accounting loopholes, as well as its lax treatment of conventional strategic weapons, START I presents too many possibilities for modernization of strategic weapons. The Soviet Union agreed to the majority of the treaty's key provisions in 1988–90, based on then-current modernization plans. In 1991 these plans had to be scaled down, particularly the heavy bomber and ALCM programs. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia "lost" many MIRVed ICBMs that were supposed to constitute the bulk of the Soviet strategic force under START I. Even more important, Russia "lost" the production base for MIRVed ICBMs.²⁹ Economic problems also prevent Russia from pursuing the large-scale modernization that would be needed to fill START I limits.

The way in which Russia has conducted the reduction of weapons under START I is an indirect indicator of the problems it has with meeting the treaty requirements.

²⁹ The two modern types of MIRVed ICBMs—the SS-18 and the SS-24—were produced at the *Yuzhnoe* plant in Ukraine. Only the older SS-19, the production of which had been terminated long before START I was concluded, was produced in Russia, at the Khrunichev plant. Thus, Russia can retain MIRVed ICBMs only for a short period of time, until the service periods for the three existing types expire; after that it would have to create new production almost from scratch. In the case of the Khrunichev plant, that could mean the loss of contracts with the West for building "civilian" launchers.

Initially, implementation was to take seven years, primarily because some retired weapons were to be replaced with more advanced systems. Modernization has not taken place, however, leading to an accelerated rate of reductions. The implementation of START I consequently was practically completed by the time the treaty entered into force in December 1994, as Russia had 6,921 warheads at that time (presumably, by START I accounting rules).³⁰

START II is, in a way, opposite to START I—while the latter is too permissive, the former is quite restrictive regarding the number of warheads and the weapon types it permits. A constellation of three conditions creates problems for Russia: (1) Russia is likely to continue reliance upon land-based missiles—ICBMs; (2) START II prohibits MIRVed ICBMs, so Russia would have to deploy single-warhead missiles; and (3) to fill the overall number of warheads under the treaty (3,500), Russia would need to deploy a very large number of single-warhead ICBMs, many more than initially planned by the Soviet Union. Consequently, START II will be difficult to implement, especially under conditions of economic crisis.³¹ Furthermore, the transition toward a single-warhead ICBM force has to be completed in a short time (by 2003, according to the provisions of START II), making the situation even more difficult. There also are modernization requirements (to be discussed below) that would put an additional strain on the Russian economy. Although the scale of modernization would be smaller than what START I would have required, it would still be very considerable.

Of course, one should not underestimate Russia's ability to mobilize resources. If an authoritarian regime returns to Russia (and external conditions, such as the expansion of NATO, might contribute considerably to the probability of such a development), Russia would be likely to start a large-scale modernization effort sooner than anyone in the West today thinks is possible.

Several other factors also work against START II ratification, most importantly: (1) one of START II's initial goals—the de-nuclearization of Ukraine—was achieved outside the treaty framework, thus evaluation of the treaty is now devoid of one of its main original components; and (2) some secondary implementation provisions that

³⁰ Interfax, 6 March, 1995. See also *Arms Control Today*, 3/1995, 32.

³¹ A conference conducted by the Duma in January 1996 concluded that Russia was financially incapable of fully implementing START II and some participants implied that the treaty had to be revised (*Interfax*, 30 January 1996, cited in FBIS-SOV-96-021, 30 January 1996). Hearings on START II conducted in July 1995 reached similar conclusions (Petr Zhuravlev, "Representatives of the Defense and Foreign Ministries Have Spoken Out in Favor of START II Ratification," *Segodnia*, 13 July 1995). In fact, de-MIRVing was considered prohibitively expensive even before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. That US proposal was discussed within the Soviet government after the Malta summit in late 1989 and then again after the Bush initiatives of September 1991. It was concluded that de-MIRVing was possible and stabilizing but only well into the twenty-first century, after profound modernization and deep reductions.

Russia conceded at the last stage of negotiations have generated opposition from the military. In addition, future modernization necessary to achieve a survivable force within the START II limits could generate a conflict with the United States.

The de-nuclearization of Ukraine

START II was negotiated when Russia was struggling to prevent Ukraine from acquiring the status of a nuclear-weapon state. After the Soviet Union dissolved, Ukraine initially declared its intention to become non-nuclear, but it apparently began to change its position in February–March 1992 when it halted the withdrawal of former Soviet tactical nuclear weapons from its territory. Ukraine then demanded to be granted equal status with Russia and the United States as a party to START I; it later established administrative control over the nuclear weapons on its soil. Russia perceived these steps as part of an effort to acquire a nuclear status. Since Russia's own influence over Ukraine was minimal, it counted on the influence of the United States to persuade Ukraine to denuclearize—and for a time it appeared that the positions of the two countries on Ukraine were identical.

In the early months of 1992, START II negotiations proceeded independently from the confrontation with Ukraine. The negotiations became deadlocked, however, over the issue of de-MIRVing ICBMs. Finally, at a meeting in Brussels in March 1992, US Secretary of State James Baker told the Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev that he saw no point in continuing fruitless discussions.

A few weeks later, the United States changed its position on Ukraine's demands concerning the former Soviet nuclear weapons located on its territory and agreed that Ukraine should have equal status as a party to START I.³² The United States made some other concessions as well, such as extending the period for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Ukraine from two to seven years and de-linking Ukraine's accession to the NPT from the entry into force of START I. Many in Russia interpreted the new US position on Ukraine as a sign of US displeasure with the Russian position on START II.

Under these circumstances, Russia saw only one way to regain US support for the Russian position on Ukraine—to accept the US proposal to de-MIRV ICBMs under START II. DeMIRVing would make Ukraine effectively non-nuclear, since all ICBMs in Ukraine were MIRVed. At the same time, Russia tied START I's entry into force more explicitly to Ukraine's joining the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon state; START II could enter into force only after START I did. The decision to conclude START II entailed considerable infighting within the Russian government, but the prospect of a nuclear Ukraine tipped the balance.

³² Previously, both Russia and the United States were supposed to be parties to START I, with Russia responsible for treaty implementation in the territory of other former Soviet republics.

The United States, however, did not formally uphold Russia's view that the entry into force of START I was impossible until Ukraine joined the NPT.³³ Under these conditions, Russia was all the more interested in concluding START II on American terms and hurried to finalize START II only weeks before the Clinton inauguration, even at the cost of additional concessions—Russia wanted the new US administration to have a stake in supporting the Russian position on Ukraine.

As is well known, the linkage did not work as planned. Ukraine joined the NPT only at the end of 1994, and Russia additionally had to concede several important issues, including compensation for nuclear warheads and a US role in safeguarding and monitoring nuclear warheads. Moreover, because so much time had elapsed between START II's signing and Ukraine's accession to the NPT, and because additional concessions were needed, the treaty is now being assessed on its own merits, without consideration of an important component of the initial plan.

Russia's concessions

Some of the concessions that Russia made at the last stage of the negotiations in order to speed up the conclusion of the treaty now work against START II ratification and reinforce the perception that the agreement is disadvantageous to Russia.³⁴

First, the treaty limits the number of heavy ICBM silos that can be converted to contain single-warhead ICBMs to 90 and the number of SS-19s that are permitted for downloading to 105. During the talks, Russian negotiators pushed for allowing for unlimited conversion of silos and downloading of SS-19s for financial reasons; retaining more former SS-18 silos could have saved money on both silos and base infrastructure, while retaining all 170 SS-19s (with one warhead each instead of six) could help to stretch out the production of single-warhead ICBMs. The Russian experts argued that conversion procedures and additional inspections could guarantee compliance with such treaty provisions.

Second, Russia was forced to abandon its proposal to eliminate front section platforms as part of downloading. The proposal was aimed at preventing the possibility

³³ Initially Russia hoped for a joint statement with the United States that would have repeated the language on linkage of the two issues as contained in one of James Baker's letters to Kozyrev. At the last moment, however, Baker refused to repeat that position, so Kozyrev made a unilateral statement at Lisbon. Ukraine did not recognize the linkage and two days later made a special statement to that effect. The United States apparently did not recognize the linkage either; officially the administration remained silent, and Baker did not transmit Kozyrev's statement to the Senate.

³⁴ A fairly detailed description of these concessions is provided by Jack Mendelson, *Arms Control Today*, (22) December 1992, 5–6.

of uploading Russian SS-19 ICBMs and American D-5 (Trident-II) SLBMs.³⁵ Similarly, Russia wanted tighter provisions concerning “reclassification” of heavy bombers from non-nuclear to nuclear tasks, but had to accept US proposals permitting such reclassification without modification.³⁶ Although these concessions have not attracted much attention from politicians, they generated opposition to START II within the military and the defense industry during the 1995 hearings on the treaty in the Duma (similar concerns have not yet been reported in 1996).³⁷

Modernization of the Russian nuclear force

Modernization of the Russian nuclear force represents a likely source of conflict with the United States in the future. The problems of modernization have not been seriously discussed so far even in Russia, but they are likely to emerge soon.³⁸ The government may promise modernization to win the support of the military and the defense industry and to counter the charges of the opposition that de-MIRVing would lock Russia in an unfavorable position.

³⁵ START II kept, as a result, the provisions of START I that made downloading an easy and cheap procedure because ICBMs and SLBMs retained the original platforms (during the early stages of START I talks the Soviet Union had introduced a similar proposal, which, too, was rejected by the United States). Uploading, however, is also easy—warheads could be stored and simply put back on platforms in a very short time. For START II, Russia wanted to tighten the procedures by requiring new platforms designed to hold only the new, smaller number of warheads. Downloading without the replacement of platforms was seen as advantageous mainly for the United States—in Russia the missiles designated for downloading were primarily the aging SS-19s that were slated for elimination anyway; in the United States it involved primarily D-5s that were supposed to remain in service for a long time. Thus the United States would have retained the potential for quick uploading for a much longer time than Russia. To prevent that, the Russian military was ready to accept higher costs.

³⁶ That provision permitted the United States to retain an additional 100 nuclear-capable heavy bombers outside the limits of the treaty to replace the aging B-52 heavy bombers in the future.

³⁷ An article in *Krasnaia Zvezda* in July 1995, analyzing the views of the Duma deputies and specialists, noted that a major objection to START II was the ability of the United States to “reactivate components of its nuclear arsenal that are supposedly slated for elimination,” while Russia was supposed to eliminate weapons completely, first of all SS-18 and SS-24 ICBMs (“START II Treats US, Russian Arms Differently,” *Krasnaia Zvezda*, 25 July 1995, cited in FBIS-SOV-95-145, 7 July 1995). The description obviously referred to the provisions on downloading SLBMs and to the freedom of switching US heavy bombers from a non-nuclear to a nuclear category, while Russia could download only a limited number of aging SS-19s that were slated for eventual elimination. The *Washington Times* reported that an “internal report” prepared by specialists of the Duma proposed to amend START II to permit conversion of all 154 SS-18 silos for single-warhead ICBMs (Bill Gertz, “Russians Attempting to Rewrite START II,” *Washington Times*, 26 October 1995).

³⁸ A short item in *Krasnaia Zvezda* about a meeting between a first deputy minister of defense in charge of acquisitions and research and development, Andrei Kokoshin, and the chief designer of NPO *Mashinostroenie* to discuss long-term modernization of missiles, seems to suggest that such plans are being considered. (*Krasnaia Zvezda*, 24 January 1996, cited in FBIS-SOV-96-016, 24 January 1996, 38).

To complete the transition to a second-strike strategy, Russia will need a considerably improved single-warhead mobile ICBM (comparable to the *Midgetman* previously planned by the United States). Russia's current single-warhead ICBM, the SS-25, draws considerable criticism from the military and experts outside the government and it is politically inconceivable that Russia would be content with a deficient ICBM type.³⁹ It is questionable whether the modification of the SS-25, the SS-25M, will be much superior to its predecessor in terms of survivability: it seems to entail only marginal improvements in certain characteristics and the introduction of dual basing (mobile and silo). A more advanced single-warhead ICBM for dual basing probably will be needed in the future, especially if reductions go beyond START II.⁴⁰

Heavy bombers and ALCMs are also potential candidates for modernization. Due to financial constraints, the Soviet Union was forced to discontinue the production of its modern heavy bomber (Tu-160). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia retained only a handful of these planes.⁴¹ The Tu-95s of various modifications are technologically obsolete and will have to be replaced at some point. Thus, it is probable that Russia may resume production of the Tu-160 or choose to create a more advanced heavy bomber (the latter seems less likely given the required amount of financing). In addition, Russia will need a non-nuclear ALCM, a weapon type that is becoming increasingly important for non-strategic missions; both START I and START II provide ample space for these weapons.

Such modernization programs could cause concern in the United States, since US leaders and the general public might view the upgrading of the capabilities of

³⁹ The deficiencies of the SS-25 remained a closely guarded secret for a long time and were revealed publicly only in 1992 as an argument against START II. Ironically, the secret information was made public by *Pravda* (*Pravda*, 31 December 1992, and 30 December 1992. For more recent arguments see *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 1 April 1994 and 28 March 1995, and *Krasnaia Zvezda*, 15 April 1995). The SS-25 was characterized as highly vulnerable to a first strike; *Pravda* wrote that not enough launchers could leave their restricted areas on short warning, the launchers had low speed and could not go far enough, and those that left could be easily toppled by the blast wave. Given these deficiencies, mobile SS-25s could be acceptable as a relatively small part of the triad (approximately 500 out of the total of 3,000–3,300 ICBM warheads under START I) but would be less acceptable as the main component of the ICBM force.

⁴⁰ During the hearings on START II in the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, CIA deputy director for intelligence Douglas MacEachin described the SS-25M as a follow-on to the SS-25 and as a new version of the same system. At the same hearings, MacEachin and Secretary of Defense William Perry stated that they expected Russia to continue modernization of single-warhead ICBMs (Dunbar Lockwood, "Senate Panel Ends START Hearings," *Arms Control Today*, 4/1995, 17).

⁴¹ Russia kept five Tu-160s (60 ALCMs), 22 Tu-95MS16 (352 ALCMs), and 61 Tu-95K (non-ALCM bombers). Forty more Tu-95MS16 were transferred from Kazakhstan later (Interfax, 22 February 1994). Ukraine has agreed to return all its Tu-160s and Tu-95s to Russia, although most of these aircraft are inoperable and will likely be used for spare parts. ("NRDC Nuclear Notebook," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, March/April 1996, 63.)

Russia's strategic triad as a threat to US security. In reality, however, modernization would only ensure the survivability and the second-strike effectiveness of the Russian nuclear triad—the very goals START II was intended to achieve.

While it is fairly clear where modernization will be needed in order to maintain a survivable force under START II, the question of timing remains open. If the political atmosphere and, especially, relations with the United States remain stable, then modernization is likely to proceed at a slow pace and could be postponed in the foreseeable future. The same outcome could be brought about by the influence of non-defense interest groups, independent from relations with the United States; however, if bilateral relations deteriorate and Russia sees a potential threat emerging from the West, it might prefer early modernization regardless of the associated costs.

Prospects for START II

For all the problems it creates, however, START II is not a bad agreement for Russia. The treaty is far more balanced than the nationalist and Communist opposition in the parliament seeks to portray it. If fully implemented, it would eliminate a fundamental inequality between the two countries that resulted from START I's special rules of accounting for ALCMs. START II also provides, for the first time, explicit limits on SLBMs, an area of US superiority. Finally, the treaty implicitly includes the Bush-Gorbachev initiatives of September–October 1991, which removed nuclear sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs) from surface ships and submarines,⁴² thus meeting the chief concern of the Soviet military with regard to START I. Of course, the concessions that Russia had to make to achieve these goals were greater than the Soviet military initially had planned to accept, but the gains cannot be discarded easily, either. A rejection of START II by the Russian parliament would require extensive modernization and additional deployment in all three “legs” of the strategic triad, plus an equally large effort in conventional strategic weapons and SLCMs. For that reason, critics of START II are incorrect when they suggest that Russia would be better off strategically if it would reject the treaty.

There are several possible scenarios regarding START II ratification: (1) the treaty is ratified as it stands (or with amendments that do not alter its basic provisions); (2) the treaty is ratified with amendments that would change its fundamental principles; (3) the treaty is ratified, but a Communist government (if one is elected) abrogates it or demands renegotiation of major provisions; (4) the treaty is not ratified at all. Accordingly, there are several steps that could be taken to save START II or to regain the momentum of nuclear arms reduction if the Duma fails to ratify the treaty.

⁴² SLCMs can be launched from submarines or surface ships.

Increasing the chances for ratification

The fate of START II is uncertain, but even a relatively minor effort could tip the balance in favor of the treaty. A crucial factor in the outcome will be the military, whose position today is ambivalent—it favors START II in general, but is dissatisfied with certain elements that were conceded by Russia at the last stages of the negotiations.⁴³ If some of these elements—the ones that would not affect the main provisions of the treaty—are changed before ratification, the military would be likely to give more definite support to START II.

Gaining stronger military support for START II would entail giving Russia the right to convert all SS-18 silos to hold SS-25s and to download all SS-19s to one warhead. Conversion procedures and additional on-site inspections could ensure adherence to the treaty. These two new provisions would provide Russia with greater freedom in using existing silos and infrastructure, help to postpone modernization, and ease the financial burden of implementation. Not only the military, but also many budget-conscious parliamentarians who now complain about START II's high costs, would receive such changes favorably.

An important additional purpose of these provisions would be to prevent the Duma from introducing other, more fundamental amendments that could be crippling for treaty implementation. The opposition may demand, for example, the elimination of front section platforms in the process of downloading, or reintroduce the proposal for strict criteria for conversion of heavy bombers from nuclear to non-nuclear equipment.⁴⁴ Both demands would be virtually unacceptable to the United States and could seal the fate of the treaty.

Another change that could help START II gain the support needed for ratification would be to extend the time period for implementation of the treaty. Under the current timetable, reductions have to be completed by 2003, or by 2000 if the United States provides assistance. Specifying a precise target date rather than a time frame was in itself uncommon; under current conditions, the target date works against the treaty because it condenses the implementation period and increases the costs. Initially, START II was supposed to enter into force in 1993, thus allowing ten years for implementation,

⁴³ Although the official position of the military seems to be firmly in favor of START II, some grumbling continues and, as the *Washington Times* suggested, the initial support of the military was weakening (Bill Gertz, "Russian Support for Arms Pact Slips," *Washington Times*, 13 November 1995).

⁴⁴ START I provides only for externally observable features; the additional 100 bombers that may be reoriented for non-nuclear missions under START II do not require even that. The Russian parliament may demand two things: first, to require at least the externally observable features for reclassification under START II; second, it may wish to upgrade the reclassification (conversion) procedures and demand so-called functionally related features, which could include, for example, a different distance between attachment points for nuclear and conventional weapons and a different size of internal weapons bay.

or seven with US assistance. This time frame could be retained but the target dates dropped (which would conform to the standard practice with treaties). The ten-year time frame would mean that, if START II enters into force in 1996, it would be implemented by 2006. Such an extension of the implementation period would help Russia to keep its current slow rate of production of SS-25s and thus might make the military and the parliament more amenable to the treaty.⁴⁵ Of course, either party to the treaty would still be able to speed-up its own implementation if it saw this as advisable and feasible; the longer period would be an option rather than a requirement.

Amendments that do not affect the basic provisions of the treaty could be negotiated without reopening formal, full-scale talks, in the framework of the Joint Compliance and Inspection Commission (JCIC) created under START I. The JCIC has the authority to agree upon amendments that do not affect the basic principles and goals of the treaty; whether a particular amendment is technical or substantial is decided by the two sides. Both the number of SS-18 silos permitted for conversion and SS-19s permitted for downloading could be classified as technical issues.⁴⁶ The extension of the implementation period, however, probably belongs to the category of fundamental provisions that would require ratification by both legislatures, but this change is unlikely to be controversial.

Implementation without ratification

The relatively poor prospects for START II ratification and implementation raise the question of whether it could be implemented through parallel unilateral obligations assumed by both states. As mentioned above, START II is in Russia's interest, so this option is logical. Whether it could actually be done would depend on two conditions.

First, the Russian government would have to disregard the political costs associated with going against the majority of the parliament; it is obvious that unilateral implementation would come up only if ratification was firmly out of the question. Only a non-Communist government might even consider that option; a Communist president would be likely to seek consensus with the parliament.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ For the rate of production of SS-25s, see *Arms Control Today*, September 1994, 27.

⁴⁶ Amendments that alter technical aspects of the treaty can be agreed upon in the JCIC and enter into force immediately (they represent an executive agreement), while amendments that alter the substantial provisions of the treaty (such as a change in the warhead limits) require ratification by the legislatures of the parties to the treaty. It is possible to argue that, for example, the limit on the number of SS-19s that are permitted for downloading (105 missiles) does not alter the treaty in a substantial way and thus can be agreed upon within the framework of the JCIC. Of course, the executive branches in both the United States and Russia would have to obtain the prior agreement of their respective legislatures.

⁴⁷ According to Interfax, the Communist factions in the Duma and their allies, which together have a firm majority, prefer to postpone consideration of START II until after the June elections (Interfax, 1 February 1996, cited in FBIS-SOV-96-023, 2 February 1996, 9). Their motive is reasonably clear: they

Second, Russia and the United States would have to agree on which aspects of the treaty to implement unilaterally. It is unlikely that all treaty provisions could be completely implemented without formal ratification; thus, only the main provisions would be observed. This means that Russia most probably would use all SS-18 silos and download all SS-19 missiles. Russia might want to make further changes in the treaty's provisions, beyond the changes that are feasible for renegotiation. For example, it might want to retain SS-18s and SS-24s for a longer period of time by simply downloading them and concluding a contract with Ukraine on spare parts. It is questionable whether the United States would agree to such changes, however.

The option that seems most realistic would be to agree on unilateral implementation of only the first stage of START II reductions—to 4,250 warheads—while reserving the possibility of de-MIRVing in the future. Such reductions would be much less controversial than START II as a whole, because its first stage permits the retention of MIRVed ICBMs; thus the opposition would lose its trump card.

As an additional benefit, a stage-by-stage approach would change the tone and the format of the debate. By the end of 1996, with the presidential elections in the past, the impact of domestic Russian political debates upon arms control is likely to decrease. The Duma will have to confront more seriously decisions about resource allocation for the development and production of strategic weapons and consequently the perception of the cost/benefit structure for some important actors both inside and outside the parliament would change.⁴⁸ As mentioned above, some influential groups, such as the Agrarians and the representatives of the machine-building industry, would be reluctant to support a major reallocation of resources from subsidies and social programs, notwithstanding their criticism of START II.

“START 1½”

If START II is not ratified (or is ratified with crippling amendments) and if implementation without ratification is politically difficult for Russia or for the United States, it may be wise to opt for a more limited agreement. At least, Russia would be interested in going below the START I limits because, as noted above, deployment of the required numbers and types of weapons would be prohibitively expensive. A limited agreement (“START 1½”) would help to maintain the momentum of nuclear arms reductions and prepare ground for a return to START II.

do not want to give Yeltsin a political victory before the elections, but at the same time would be reluctant to reject the treaty for obviously fleeting political reasons. After the elections, a more serious discussion of START II should be possible.

⁴⁸ Allocation decisions would need to be made, first of all, for the development and deployment of a new MIRVed ICBM, as well as for an early resumption of production of Tu-160s and ALCMs.

Numerically, “START 1½” would probably set limits similar to those of the first stage of START II by establishing an overall ceiling of 4,250 warheads (or the earlier projection of 4,800). Russia would retain SS-19s (thus staying within START II’s first-stage limit of 1,200 warheads on MIRVed ICBMs) and also might want to keep a number of SS-18 heavy ICBMs with a lower number of warheads.⁴⁹ Russia could be expected to seek the retention of the START II limits for ALCMS (“real” accounting) and SLBMs. Conventional weapons would likely figure prominently as well.

Large-scale modernization would still be needed under “START 1½.” A new single-warhead ICBM to replace the SS-25 is likely under any circumstances. Russia would have to replace the SS-19 (and the SS-18 that is produced in Ukraine) with a new MIRVed ICBM. In addition, Russia would have to increase the number of heavy bombers and ALCMS (both nuclear and conventional). The associated economic and financial problems would probably lead Russia back to START II after a relatively short period, maybe even before “START 1½” was fully implemented.

Of course, this scenario could be changed by external and domestic variables. The rejection of START II could generate a lasting impulse in the parliament toward strategic modernization. In this case, the expansion of NATO would become more likely as well, with obvious consequences for the alignment of forces in the Russian domestic scene. Finally, even a partial restoration of an authoritarian regime would be likely to provide the government, in a more distant future, with greater opportunities to mobilize resources, making a large-scale modernization effort easier to sustain. Naturally, the United States would be likely to respond with its own modernization programs, making a return to START II even more difficult. The upgrading of strategic and non-strategic conventional capabilities would be especially significant in this respect, since it would block increasingly the further reduction of nuclear weapons.

The deployment of a strategic ABM system by the United States, or even a large-scale ABM research and development program, would further complicate the reduction of nuclear weapons. Most probably, Russia would not invoke the Soviet Union’s unilateral statement about the right to consider deployment of an ABM system a sufficient reason to leave START I (and, by implication, later agreements).⁵⁰ Russia would likely want to retain MIRVed ICBMs, however, because they are a preferable option for

⁴⁹ The first stage of START II provides for a 650 warhead limit on heavy ICBMs but does not permit downloading.

⁵⁰ At the signing of START I the Soviet side made a unilateral statement that the abandonment of the ABM Treaty by one of the sides (meaning, of course, the United States) might be classified as a cause for abrogating START I. The statement represents an integral part of START I and, at least formally, remains in force today. The United States simultaneously made a statement that it does not regard abandonment of the ABM Treaty as a sufficient reason to abrogate START I.

an asymmetric response to an ABM system. In the face of such developments, a return to START II would become extremely unlikely.

At that point, a seemingly paradoxical option would be possible: to go down to the START II level of 3,500 warheads *without* de-MIRVing. Probably about 60 percent of all warheads would be deployed on ICBMs, with, for example, 700 on mobile single-warhead ICBMs, 700 on silo-based single-warhead missiles, and 160–170 on MIRVed ICBMs with three to four warheads each. The overall structure probably would be sufficiently stabilizing (that is, it would ensure a second-strike capability for both Russia and the United States), but at the same time would permit Russia to undertake a reasonably moderate scale asymmetric response to a US ABM system.

Strategic Arms Reductions Beyond START II

After (and if) START II is ratified, the United States and Russia could proceed to START III. A detailed discussion of the content of a future treaty, such as exact limits and constraints, is of limited value, because each state could be reasonably flexible on these issues. The following discussion, therefore, focuses on whether further reduction would be possible and under what conditions.

Prospects for START III

Prospects for START III would depend, to a large extent, on the political situation in Russia and Russian relations with the outside world. Whether the talks would take place depends, first, on whether the Duma ratifies START II (or whether Russia implements START II without ratification). Furthermore, Russia could be expected to favor early conclusion of a START III agreement to avoid full-scale deployment of single-warhead ICBMs under the 3,500 ceiling. The intensity of Russia's preference for an early next stage of nuclear weapons reductions and its readiness to seek compromise solutions would not be assured, however.

The planned expansion of NATO will play a very considerable role in determining Russian attitudes toward arms control. In a sense, that issue is likely to affect START III to an even greater extent than it affects START II, because the latter might be ratified in 1996, while the actual expansion of NATO would take place later, possibly coinciding with the beginning of START III negotiations. Even if the expansion of NATO would not derail the negotiations altogether, it might cause Russian decision-makers and negotiators to take tougher positions and be less disposed to compromise. For example, the propensity to demand stronger restrictions on conventional strategic weapons could be directly related to the eastward expansion of NATO, especially its military component.

Conversely, increased assertiveness of China or the states to the south of Russia (Turkey, Iran, and Iraq), coupled with relatively stable political-military relations with the West, might increase Russia's interest in strategic conventional weapons as a means of non-nuclear deterrence against local threats. In that case, Russia might favor a lenient treatment of such weapons—a position that would translate into an early agreement at START III negotiations.

Domestically, Russia's approach to deeper arms reductions will depend on the politics of resource allocation and the relative influence of defense-oriented and civilian interest groups of industrial elites. Of course, the exact alignment of forces is almost impossible to predict, but it seems fairly clear that two variables will affect Russia's interest in pursuing START III. First, strong export opportunities and investment from abroad would help to increase the influence of non-defense groups and other groups, such as the aerospace industry, that are sufficiently diversified so as to be motivated to devote resources to influence political debates and public opinion in favor of positive relations with the West. Second, prospects for deeper cuts might also be influenced by social issues, especially the demand for subsidies by industries engaged in restructuring and agricultural interests, claims on resources by the unemployed and those who are hard-pressed to find a place in the emerging market economy, and the demands of elderly citizens for adequate pensions and other support. Essentially, issues that are largely non-military or even altogether non-political by nature are likely to affect Russia's approach to START III. Of course, for social demands to have an effect on arms control policy, the political system has to be democratic.

Of both external and domestic variables, the *possible development and deployment of an ABM system* by the United States would have the most immediate impact upon Russia's approach to START III. If the United States does pursue an ABM system, Russia would have to choose between three options: (1) abandon START II; (2) pursue *comprehensive* modernization within the START II framework; or (3) pursue *limited* modernization within the START II framework. The choice ultimately would depend upon the political situation, particularly the relative influence of the civilian and military-related interest groups, as well as the demands for social support by various groups of the population.

Modernization in response to US deployment of a defense system would likely be in the area of offensive weapons. If Russia decides to abandon START II, it would return to START I (or "START 1½") conditions, and the possibilities for further nuclear disarmament would be the same as described above. Under a comprehensive modernization program within the START II framework, Russia would develop a new single-warhead ICBM and a new SLBM, test SLBMs for short flight-time and depressed trajectory, quickly resume the production of Tu-160s, and proceed with development and deployment of conventional ALCMs. Limited modernization would represent a

compromise between the amount of modernization minimally necessary to preserve the retaliatory potential (such as a new single-warhead ICBM) and full-scale, comprehensive modernization within START II limits. The tradeoff for a US ABM system would likely be in the pace and intensity of Russian modernization: whereas modernization probably would be protracted without a US ABM system, it would be fast and early if the US did develop an ABM system (although the pace of modernization might be tempered by domestic considerations in Russia).

It is only under the third option—limited modernization—that Russia might still consider START III. In all cases, Russia would be likely to adopt firmly a strike-on-warning strategy to increase the probability of penetrating the defense system.

The Main Task of START III

The main task of START III would be to utilize fully the potential for reducing nuclear weapons on a bilateral basis, that is, to reach whatever level the United States and Russia could agree to be acceptable for a bilateral endeavor. As noted above, the level that the majority of Russian experts now consider the lowest for bilateral reductions is about 1,800 to 2,000 nuclear warheads.⁵¹ Implementation of START III could begin around the year 2006 (after the implementation of START II) or sooner if Russia tried to avoid full-scale deployment of single-warhead ICBMs under START II. Since the number of weapon systems slated for elimination would be rather small, implementation should take only a few years.

The reductions would still have to be guided by the same requirements of strategic stability, first and foremost among them the assured second-strike capability. The situation, however, would hardly deserve the Cold War classification of mutual assured destruction simply because the number of weapons would be small compared to the 1980s and even to START I levels. The assured second-strike capability would almost completely lose its military significance and retain only its political meaning—that of providing assurance that a nuclear war is not likely to occur.

Lower levels of nuclear weapons would entail stricter requirements for strategic stability, however. First of all, the United States and Russia would need to develop a rather precise understanding of what constitutes strategic stability. The traditional bargaining process, by which both sides slowly, by trial and error, arrive at a mutually acceptable composition of their respective strategic triads, would be difficult to replicate in this new phase of negotiations, if only because the room for compromise would be smaller. START III negotiations would have to be preceded by broad internal and bilateral discussions on modernization requirements, a desirable strategic posture under START

⁵¹ A similar level—2,000 to 2,500 warheads—was initially proposed by Russia for START II. Below this level, the other nuclear-weapon states would need to be brought into the negotiations (see below).

III, and, on a broader plane, the fundamentals of strategic balance. Specifically, the United States and Russia would have to reach an understanding on the best way of ensuring stability at levels lower than 3,500 warheads, the relationship between nuclear and conventional weapons, and the role of defensive weapons, among other issues.

The composition of the strategic triads under START III is hard to predict, but it is likely that Russia would want to keep a considerable portion of its arsenal deployed on ICBMs, while the United States would probably want to retain a relatively large SLBM and heavy bomber force. The goal of accommodating the “favored” components of the triads, while at the same time preserving an economically and militarily effective distribution of warheads among all three components,⁵² would limit the scope of reductions and would make 2,000 warheads a preferred target for START III.

The composition of Russia’s strategic forces within the 2,000 limit, for example, could include 900 warheads on ICBMs (600 mobile and 300 silo-based, probably of a new type to replace the SS-25 and the SS-25M), 572 warheads on SLBMs (8 submarines with 16 launchers each and 4 warheads per SLBM), and 480 warheads on heavy bombers (40 Tu-160s with 12 ALCMs each), for a total of 1,952. Simultaneously, Russia might introduce a conventional ALCM for deployment on the aging Tu-95MS heavy bombers. The pace of modernization would likely be rather relaxed.

During post-START II reductions, Russia would be likely to insist on stricter limitations on conventional strategic weapons, first and foremost conventional weapons deployed on heavy bombers, in order to avoid a situation in which its retaliatory potential could be eliminated or weakened without the United States using nuclear weapons (and, as mentioned above, the enhanced capabilities of conventional weapons represented one of the reasons why Russia dropped the no-first-use policy). For financial reasons, Russia would hardly deploy a significant strategic conventional force of its own. Three specific provisions concerning strategic conventional weapons seem possible: first, a reduction of heavy bombers equipped for conventional weapons; second, a limit on the number of conventional ALCMs on each heavy bomber or an overall limit on conventional ALCMs (through agreed rules of accounting); and third, a limitation of conventional weapons intended against early-warning systems (like Tacit Rainbow).

⁵² It would be simply financially inefficient for Russia to retain a very small force of submarines—for example, two to five submarines. Similarly, the United States would have to retain a number of submarines and heavy bombers that would be financially sound. In a sense, financial requirements would work against very deep reductions.

Methods of Reaching an Agreement

Although the previous discussion of reductions beyond START II focuses on negotiations, more flexible methods of reaching an agreement are in fact possible and appropriate. Probably the best option would be to use several methods simultaneously, including:

- ministerials (meetings of foreign and defense ministers);
- high-level expert groups (deputy minister level, plus teams of experts);
- formal negotiations; and
- broad informal non-governmental discussions, including conferences and joint studies (with governmental officials participating in a personal capacity).

A flexible scheme would utilize the strongest aspects of each channel and at the same time mitigate each method's negative aspects. For example, although high-level officials (ministers or even presidents) can rarely make important decisions on the spot, they have considerable latitude in exploring possible solutions and providing political oversight (otherwise negotiations can bog down in an infinite number of small technical details). Experience also shows that in the presence of ministers and presidents, experts engage in highly productive brain-storming sessions and come up with solutions in several nights rather than in months.⁵³ Meetings of high-level officials are somewhat less productive than ministerials but can be held more often.

Formal negotiations, on the other hand, are an ideal place to maintain continuous contact, engage in old-fashion bargaining, and solve technical details. All three aspects remain important. Sustained contact helps to fine-tune positions and to maintain the momentum between more sporadic high-level meetings. Bargaining also prepares for high-level meetings by eliminating unacceptable solutions and testing for common ground. Many problems, even if they are not very important in terms of substance, can be solved only through bargaining; the "split the difference" approach is often used for reasons of prestige rather than substance. Both states will need to pay much attention to technical details, which often remain unnoticed or unappreciated outside the immediate circle of officials engaged in the talks. Worse, since technical details usually arise in the final stages of negotiations, it would be prudent to tackle at least some of them at an early stage.

A discussion outside formal intergovernmental channels is the best way to develop broad understanding of the underlying principles that never find their way into

⁵³ This is a result of small-group decision-making under pressure. Under normal conditions the interagency process involves dozens or hundreds of people who often have no personal contact. During high-level meetings each agency is reduced to several people (often just two or three) who work as one team under constant pressure from their superiors to come up with a solution.

treaty texts but constitute a vital element of the “philosophy” of the treaty, such as “unacceptable damage” and the role of deterrence. In addition, discussion can help create public and legislative support for the future treaty.

The result of these negotiating forums does not need to be a large-scale treaty. An important result of START I was the creation of a detailed, sufficiently comprehensive framework, upon which further agreements can be built. For example, START I provides for an elaborate verification mechanism, conversion and elimination procedures, and data exchange format and rules. START II demonstrated how easy it is to build on the existing foundation.

New agreements could be undertaken quite easily through *unilateral initiatives*, some of which could be discussed with the other state in advance. For example, an agreement to reduce the number of warheads could actually be formalized in parallel unilateral obligations of each state, with only technical details (e.g., additional inspection rights) contained in a series of executive agreements. Some steps could be taken even without prior discussion (non-parallel unilateral obligations), especially in cases when one state forgoes a particular modernization program. For example, the two governments could undertake an obligation to define areas free of anti-submarine activities. Unilateral obligations, however, are a tricky option. They can be undertaken easily on marginal issues, but serious reductions may require the approval of each country’s legislature, which would make such obligations practically indistinguishable from formal interstate agreements.

Finally, a *tit-for-tat method* of reductions is also an option. Both states might take small steps in turn, with each reducing its forces only by a small fraction that would not affect its retaliatory capability. Additional reductions would be made only if the other state responded in kind. The cumulative effect of these small reductions could be quite considerable. It is doubtful, however, that this method alone could produce deep reductions, which require complicated large-scale tradeoffs. Tit-for-tat may prove the best instrument for starting the process, however, especially if talks stalled for some period of time. A combination of several mechanisms is likely to yield the best result.

Strategic Arms Reductions Beyond START III

Reductions below the level of 1,800–2,000 warheads would have to be conducted on a multilateral basis and could ultimately lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons. The success of efforts to conduct deep cuts in nuclear arsenals will depend upon the resolution of several fundamental problems pertaining to the overall relations between nuclear-weapon states, the definitions of security and strategic balance, and the continuing ability to deter large-scale war.

The elimination of nuclear weapons could be possible under a situation in which the security of nuclear-weapon states (or, perhaps, all major states) was determined by the absence of causes for conflict rather than the presence of military power to deter conflict. Essentially, this is a condition that today exists only among two groups of countries—the Atlantic community and Latin America. An example of a relationship conducive for deep reduction of nuclear weapons is that between Great Britain and France. Neither sees the other as even a minor threat, and though conflicts occur from time to time, the use of force is never even remotely considered. Cooperation has been stable for so long that no one in these countries expects the level of conflict to increase in the future. Nuclear weapons have no role in that relationship and are oriented outwards, toward other powers.

It seems that such a state of relations would demand mutual recognition of legitimacy of political regimes (even if regimes still would differ from country to country), mutual recognition of legitimacy of foreign policy interests, and a highly institutionalized mechanism to solve conflicts and adjust policies. This type of relations would entail a high degree of economic and political interdependence, as well as extensive non-governmental contacts. In other words, it would be necessary that at least major powers would not see any goals worth fighting for and no threats that might require war-related sacrifices. It remains to be seen whether the transition to such a system would require a hegemonic regime, a great-power concert, or could be achieved through democratization of international relations (equality of all states, the rule of law, and strong supranational institutions to enforce the law).

Multilateral reductions below the level of 1,800–2,000 warheads could begin even before the international system reaches a situation that would permit the elimination of nuclear weapons; on the contrary, balanced reductions that would avoid creating even the slightest perception of inequality would help to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation, which at a later stage would help to eliminate nuclear weapons completely. The strategic nuclear balance under such an international system would be detached from political relations. Reductions still would have to be conducted under the same criteria—first of all that no nuclear-weapon state has a first-strike capability (or, put differently, that each state has a second-strike capability). That requirement, however, would have only political, rather than military meaning.

Nuclear balance is related to political relations between major states through the notion of “unacceptable damage.” To accept deep reduction and eventual denuclearization, states would have to find themselves in an environment in which *any* damage would seem unacceptable. As noted above, the definition of “unacceptable damage” depends, to a large extent, upon the perception of threat to a country’s security, which, in turn, is a reflection of the quality of political relations. The more stable the external situation, the lower the level of damage that is considered unacceptable. If no

more than minor issues were at stake in relations between the nuclear powers, governments would be risk-averse and would regard any level of damage as unacceptable; the very idea of using military force, even less nuclear weapons, would be inconceivable. On the contrary, if a country thinks that another nuclear-weapon state threatened its survival or core interests, it is likely to suspect that its opponent might be willing to suffer considerable damage in order to gain victory, and the country itself therefore would be ready to sustain considerable damage to protect its sovereignty. In other words, if a perception of threat were present, the nuclear balance might regain its military dimension.

Two problems have to be solved to create the conditions under which Russia would agree to very deep reductions and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. The first relates to the potential threat from the West, the second to the potential threat from China. In a sense, the first problem is easier to solve because the mechanisms are reasonably clear, even if difficult to implement. First, the domestic economic and political system in Russia has to stabilize and become compatible (though not necessarily identical) with those in the West, meaning some form of democracy and market economy. Second, Russia has to be fully integrated into the world market, which would help to create a strong constituency both in Russia and in the West with a vested interest in stable political relations and avoidance of any type of serious conflict. Third, Russia has to be fully integrated in international political structures, that is, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and/or other institutions. Under conditions of political isolation, Russia would be likely to perceive that at least a remote, potential external threat to its security existed and thus would be reluctant to part with nuclear weapons.⁵⁴

Achieving similar relations with China seems more difficult because relations are less institutionalized and the interests of each state, as well as potential areas of conflict, are less clear. Essentially, Russian-Chinese relations are in their pure form relations between two great powers, where sheer economic and military potential defines mutual expectations and perceptions. The Chinese interests in Asia are not completely clear. Russia's interests in the area are even less clear—they do not go beyond a general proposition of good-neighborly relations with all Asian states. Thus, the potential sources of conflicts are unknown and it is therefore difficult to prevent them. An institutional framework is practically absent as well—the two countries have

⁵⁴ That declared intentions are not sufficient to create a perception of security is reflected in the definition of a challenge to security (contained in some Russian internal interagency documents): a challenge, as opposed to an actual threat, is defined as a situation when a state or a group of states do not have intentions to harm Russia's interests but are potentially capable of doing so. Even a challenge is seen as requiring some form of defense, including nuclear weapons as the last line of defense.

established normal diplomatic and trade relations only very recently, and they still have a long way to go before these relations become smooth.

Furthermore, in order for Russia to accept deep cuts, relations completely purged of the perception of external threat on both fronts (the West and China) have to continue for a reasonably long time—probably at least a decade or so. If relations consistently fluctuate between cooperation and conflict (as has been the case in US-Soviet and US-Russian relations), suspicion and policy planning on the basis of worst-case scenarios would generate a perception of potential threat and nudge decision-makers toward preserving a relatively high level of nuclear weapons. For Russia, this lingering mistrust would mean that it would not go below the level that guarantees it the ability to deter all four other nuclear-weapon states (as has been suggested above, 1,800–2,000 warheads). Of course, it is not necessary to achieve the “ideal” state of relations between Russia and the West and between Russia and China before tackling deep reductions of nuclear weapons. It would be sufficient to start along that track, hoping that the overall development of relations, together with the new trust generated by fair and balanced reductions, would work to create conditions conducive for complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

A more practical problem that would have to be solved in order to successfully tackle reductions beyond the level of 1,800–2,000 warheads is whether Russia would accept equality with only the United States. In present conditions, it is possible to disregard the role of the other three nuclear-weapon states simply because the difference in arsenal sizes is so large; below 1,800 warheads, however, a five-way balance would replace the bilateral one.

From a Russian perspective, the solution would depend primarily on the state of relations between Russia and the United States, as well as between Russia and China. If relations remain generally positive, but wary, and with a potential for occasional serious crises, then Russia probably would insist on having more nuclear warheads than the United States to ensure that it had a retaliatory capability against all four nuclear-weapon states. That is, its calculations would take into consideration two nuclear balances: between Russia and NATO, and between Russia and China.

There are many possible solutions to this problem that Russia might accept. For example, the correlation of nuclear weapons of the five states might be described by a system of two equations: $Russia = US + \text{Great Britain} + \text{France}$; $\text{France} + \text{Great Britain} = \text{China}$; or some other formula. In the end, the solution probably would be arbitrary, because it is impossible to find a totally objective criterion. It would also be influenced by how Russia perceives relations with the United States and the relations between the United States and China.

If relations among the five nuclear-weapon states were positive for a reasonably long time, and if there were a stable majority in each country that favored continued cooperation, then Russia might agree to equality with the United States. The correlation of nuclear weapons could be described by the following formula: United States = Russia = France + Great Britain + China.

The relationship between strategic nuclear and conventional weapons is likely to become a serious problem as well. At this stage of reductions, conventional weapons with strategic capability would have to be strictly limited and probably reduced, because otherwise a state could be capable of destroying a retaliatory nuclear capability of another state without resort to nuclear weapons. The problem pertains not to military security (as it would be unlikely that a nuclear-weapon state would actually use its conventional weapons for this purpose), but rather to the level of mutual trust between nuclear powers in the process of nuclear arms reduction.

The reduction of conventional strategic weapons is likely to cause a problem for the United States and, to a lesser extent, for Russia and other nuclear-weapon states, because conventional ALCMs and SLCMs are widely used in regional conflicts (e.g., Iraq and Bosnia). An apparent contradiction between intentions and capabilities, which stems from the multitude of missions that strategic conventional weapons are capable of performing, could complicate the pursuit of nuclear arms reductions. On the other hand, it is not inconceivable that conventional warheads might be put on ICBMs, in effect eliminating the distinction between nuclear and dual-capable systems.⁵⁵ It would be wise to tackle this problem as soon as possible.

Finally, reductions of conventional armed forces also would be necessary to move to lower levels in nuclear weapons. This is especially relevant for Russia, which has densely populated countries with numerous armies on its southern borders. This factor is likely to affect calculations of nuclear requirements, because Russia could wish to retain a nuclear deterrent against the superior conventional capabilities of NATO and China, and other "Southern flank" countries; this perception would have to change (i.e., neither NATO nor China should be seen as a potential threat) in order to proceed with deep reduction of nuclear weapons. The position of the United States is very different in this regard; the elimination of nuclear weapons would restore the United States' detachment from immediate security threats. For Russia and, to a lesser extent, for Great Britain and France, the elimination of nuclear weapons could mean a return of old threats and the possible emergence of new ones, depending upon the political context.

⁵⁵ Under the START I and START II Treaties an ICBM with a conventional warhead would still be classified as nuclear. The standards applied to ALCMs and SLCMs, however, demand only that conventional systems be distinguishable from nuclear (observable differences only, in fact), so in a future treaty an attempt to apply the same criteria to ICBMs cannot be ruled out.

For that reason, Russia would be unlikely to move below a level of several hundred warheads. This situation could be changed, but only through the creation of an effective and reliable international collective security system, which could take decades to emerge.

Despite these challenges, it should be possible to move from the level of 1,800–2,000 warheads to much lower ceilings. In fact, it would be best to avoid a series of small-scale agreements and go directly to the level of less than 1,000 warheads, even if this would take protracted and complicated multilateral negotiations. Deep reductions, paradoxically, would be easier to achieve if the time lead were sufficient; deeper cuts would permit more flexibility in trade-offs and the complete elimination of features that the other states perceived as destabilizing.

The structure of nuclear arsenals is difficult to predict for levels well below 1,000, but most probably Russia would keep the largest part or all of its nuclear arsenal on ICBMs, meaning the complete denuclearization of the heavy bomber force (which would still have strategic conventional capabilities). The naval component of the Russian nuclear triad would be hard-pressed to survive as well; the number of submarines could not be reduced below a certain threshold without the whole force losing financial viability and military significance. The creation of a new submarine for a small number of SLBMs would be too expensive to be a realistic option. In sum, it is not inconceivable that Russia might prefer to keep all of its nuclear weapons on ICBMs (for example, 500–700 warheads or fewer on highly survivable mobile and silo-based missiles complexes).

A particular feature of the process is likely to be a new relationship between nuclear and conventional weapons. As the number of nuclear weapons declines and the capabilities of conventional weapons grow, broad questions of international security will need more attention. Conventional weapons are generally perceived as “usable,” regardless of their destructive capacity. Strong barriers against the use of military force among the major powers at least would have to be erected simultaneously with deep reductions of nuclear weapons.

Reductions of nuclear weapons beyond the 1,800–2,000 level are possible if two basic conditions could be met. First, the non-proliferation regime would have to remain in force and be strictly observed; it might actually be necessary to strengthen the regime's enforcement provisions and to involve all states that have even a remote capability to create nuclear weapons. Second, the strategic balance should be kept simple, that is, limited to offensive weapons. Although reductions to fewer than 1,000 warheads under a mixture of offensive and defensive weapons are not inconceivable,

it would be rather difficult to achieve and, in any event, would require limits on the capabilities of the ABM system (for example, it should be limited to interception of no more than 100–200 warheads, assuming one is able to determine how to calculate its capabilities).

Conclusion

Russia's approach to the reduction of nuclear weapons will be determined by three groups of variables: external developments, the dynamics of the domestic political struggle, and the constraints and opportunities presented by existing and potential arms control treaties in terms of the military considerations. A successful pursuit of nuclear arms reduction would require reasonably favorable conditions on all three fronts.

A favorable disposition of external variables means that Russia is not isolated in the world community, especially in Europe, and does not feel threatened by NATO and/or by a combination of NATO and China. That means that close attention should be paid to the problem of NATO expansion; perhaps the issue could be solved along the lines that Russia proposed recently, that is, by admitting East/Central European countries to NATO, but not deploying NATO troops and nuclear weapons in their territories. A good counterbalance to NATO expansion would be strengthening the OSCE, which would permit Russia to remain involved in issues pertaining to European security.

Caution on the part of the United States regarding a strategic ABM system is also key to a favorable external environment. Regardless of how the issue is solved (and there may be many solutions besides non-deployment of such a system), one key condition has to be met: for the foreseeable future, the situation of mutual nuclear deterrence has to remain in effect. A transition toward a strategic balance that encompasses both offensive and defensive systems—if such a transition indeed were necessary—would have to be gradual and account explicitly for mutual security considerations. In sum, the United States has to make a choice between short-term, unilateral, and predominantly military methods of ensuring security and longer-term, multilateral, and predominantly political methods.

The future configuration of domestic variables is difficult to predict, but it boils down to one important condition: Russian industrial elites are likely to provide strong political backing for cooperative relations with the West, including on arms control, if their intrinsic interests are served. This means, first and foremost, the continued integration of Russia into the world economy. On this point, the trends are reasonably favorable at the moment. What the West can do is to avoid measures that would derail these trends; the rest is likely to be done by market forces, with only moderate political

support. As long as the majority of Russian industrial elites sees opportunities for trade with and investment from the West, it is likely to support restraint in the military aspects of Russia's national security policy.

An important element of the picture would be continued opportunities for Russia's defense industry to export arms. It should be noted that the defense industry would not object to internationally recognized limitations on arms sales (such as restrictions imposed by the non-proliferation regime or the missile technology control regime) as long as they are applied equally and fairly. It is the loss of what they see as "legitimate" sales that they are worried about; here it would be wise to proceed cautiously and avoid creating an impression of unfair practices.

The military conditions for further reductions appear to be the least difficult to meet. Even though Russia definitely would need some modernization of its nuclear weapons in order to make the triad less vulnerable and, thus, make deterrence stable, modernization would be limited and slow if developments outside and inside Russia were favorable. A broad, multilevel dialogue aimed at removing misperceptions of controversial modernization programs would be crucial.

At a later stage, however, when nuclear arms reductions had proceeded to a multilateral stage, it would be necessary to pay close attention to the reduction of conventional weapons and armed forces, so that the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons would not result in an increased danger of non-nuclear war.

At all stages it will be important to keep in mind that the relationship between arms control and the political-economic aspects of US-Russian relations has changed. Arms control can no longer play the role of a "locomotive" capable of improving relations between the two countries; to the contrary, success in arms control increasingly depends on positive political and economic aspects of these relations. This new situation has both negative and positive consequences. On the negative side, it will be difficult, if not altogether impossible, to pursue reduction of nuclear weapons if overall relations are sour. On the positive side, if US-Russian relations are positive, arms reductions are likely to continue despite occasional setbacks. In particular, even the failure of Russia to ratify START II would not necessarily lead to a reversal of the momentum created in the late 1980s to the early 1990s. After a temporary setback, arms control would be likely to proceed.