

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY**

**Russian Probes on Arms Control Regimes**

**By**

**Dr. Andrei Shoumikhin**

**July 2005**

**© National Institute for Public Policy, 2005**

**The views expressed are solely that of the author and do not reflect those of National Institute for Public Policy or any of its sponsors.**

## **Russian Probes on Arms Control Regimes**

**Dr. Andrei Shoumikhin**

Recently, Moscow has endured several controversies related to arms control. One of them was directly connected to the U.S.-Russian presidential summit in Bratislava, Slovakia (February 24, 2005), and dealt with bilateral cooperation in the area of nuclear installation safety. According to some media reports, Moscow agreed to grant Washington “special rights” in monitoring, i.e. “controlling” Russian nuclear storage facilities. Still another one was based on rumors that Russia wants to exit the Treaty on Intermediary- and Shorter-Range Missiles in Europe (INF).

In a way that may hardly be regarded purely coincidental, there were also numerous statements by high-level Russian officials and experts on various arms control agreements – from the existing ones such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), to potential new ones, e.g. on “non-militarization of space.” For all practical purposes, Moscow has been “probing” the current status and possible future evolution of bilateral and international arms control regimes that touch upon Russian interests.

Several points explain this probing. On the one hand, Moscow may be concerned that existing arms control regimes are in jeopardy, and need to be bolstered before they either erode further or crumble altogether. On the other hand, Russia may have decided that given Washington’s preoccupation with other matters, there may be opportunities for changes in those regimes that would be to Russia’s advantage.

In either case, the probing may also be intended as a “reality check” on bilateral relations with America which remain an overriding priority for Russia. Adjustments in the U.S. strategy and policies, including personnel changes at the top of the second Bush Administration, are of keen interest as well.

Moscow regards these relations as a complex “balancing game” between common and opposing interests. In this connection, the assessment by the prestigious Center for Foreign and Defense Policy (CFDP) in Moscow offered in 1999 in the report on “Russian-American Relations at the Boundary between Centuries” is still relevant:

There is no fundamental conflict of interests in contemporary Russian-American relations that would unavoidably lead to rigid antagonistic juxtaposition. There are areas of close and coinciding interests that stimulate cooperation; there are also spheres in which Russia and the U.S. are primarily competitors. It should be kept in mind that the borderline between areas of cooperation and competition is fairly mobile and relative, and in many cases dependent of changing internal conditions and shifts in the political will of the top political leadership of the two countries... There are relatively few areas where competition dominates, however they are very sensitive for both sides. They include NATO’s expansion, the spread of the influence of the Northern Alliance over Baltic States and the CIS,

international trade in arms, the Russian-Iranian cooperation in the military and nuclear areas and some others. Among areas where cooperation prevails, one may stress the entire complex of problems of control over strategic weapons, strengthening of European security, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; struggle against transnational challenges (terrorism, illegal trade in narcotics, corruption, organized crime and money laundering, degradation of the environment, etc.), and, naturally, continued democratic and market reforms in Russia... The largest area where elements of cooperation and competition intertwine is the so-called "gray zone" that includes, among others, peacekeeping in the Balkans, evolution of the situation around Iraq, and development of energy projects in the Caspian region.<sup>1</sup>

Since the overall agenda of bilateral relations remains more or less unchanged, albeit with shifts in relative prominence, much depends on "shifts in the political will of the top political leadership of the two countries."

The Russian leadership's tendencies, as described by CFDP analysts, are as follows:

In the last decade, the place of Russia in the system of U.S. foreign policy priorities has changed dramatically. The American elites and public opinion are more and more inclined to regard Russia as a secondary power in all important spheres of international relations, with the exception of the military-strategic one, which is primarily related to the remaining huge Russian missile-nuclear potential.<sup>2</sup>

In effect, the status of Russia's nuclear arsenal remains a grounds for concern both inside Russia and abroad. The recent controversy surrounding the alleged American "right of access" to Russian nuclear facilities is linked to Russia's ability to deal with the above problem on its own. Overall, Moscow faces a difficult choice between growing reliance on foreign resources in assuring safety of its nuclear and other dangerous assets, including disposal of obsolescent and/or unneeded weapons and materials, and the desire to preserve the semblance of "sovereign independence" in tackling vital national security matters. Not surprisingly, debates among experts over possible options often become tense if not vitriolic as could be seen recently.

### **Restatement of Official Views**

Official statements underline the significance of ongoing discussions in the Russian expert community and media on arms control regimes. Two such statements were made by the RF Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov during his working visit to the U.S. (January 10-15, 2005). At a press-conference in the Russian Embassy in Washington D.C. on

---

<sup>1</sup> "Russian-American Relations at the Boundary between Centuries." The report was "based on discussions in the CFDP working group co-chaired by Y.M. Vorontsov and S.A. Karaganov. Members of the group included A.G. Arbatov, A.A. Belkin, Y.N. Glushenko, V.I. Krivorhidzha, S.K. Oznobishev, A.K. Pushkov, and D.V. Trenin." < [http://www.svop.ru/live/materials.asp?m\\_id=6957&r\\_id=6969](http://www.svop.ru/live/materials.asp?m_id=6957&r_id=6969)>

<sup>2</sup> See < [http://www.svop.ru/live/materials.asp?m\\_id=6957&r\\_id=6965](http://www.svop.ru/live/materials.asp?m_id=6957&r_id=6965)>

January 12, and at the Council for Foreign relations in New York on January 13, 2005, Mr. Ivanov presented an overview of Russia's positions on key issues in arms control:

- Strategic stability is inexorably linked to the reduction of strategic offensive weapons;
- Russia carries out its obligations under SORT and START II diligently and fully;
- While Russia continues to improve its strategic deterrence forces, its efforts are aimed solely at their modernization, and not quantitative expansion;
- Russia abides by all treaty control mechanisms;
- Russian and U.S. experts continue to cooperate on defensive, i.e. ABM systems;
- Russia continues to cooperate with NATO within the joint Russia-NATO Council, particularly on Theater Missile Defense, non-proliferation, anti-terrorism, etc.
- Moscow is seriously concerned by potential deployments of U.S. silo-based anti-missiles in Europe;
- Russia insists on "full transparency" of BMD programs in Europe particularly in regions adjacent to its borders;
- Russia is determined to demonstrate the reliability of its nuclear storage facilities, as was proved by the "Avariya-2004" exercise attended by observers from 17 NATO states, and will be again proved by the "Road Warrior" exercise to be held in April 2005 in the U.S.;
- Russia seeks ratification of the adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe;
- Russia considers multilateral treaties, agreements and export regimes "the foundation of WMD non-proliferation";
- While meticulously abiding by all non-proliferation regimes and agreements, Russia resents "double standards" in the application of non-proliferation norms that often serve as a tool of unfair trade competition;
- Early implementation of CTBT will be a potent additional barrier on the way to WMD proliferation;
- Moscow is concerned that the recent U.S. decision on research in miniature nuclear charges will complicate the implementation of CTBT;

- Russia supports the Non-Proliferation Security Initiative and activities against black markets in nuclear materials and WMD as fully consonant with Russian interests;
- Russia wants all countries, including North Korea and Iran, to abide by NPT, and works strenuously in this direction.<sup>3</sup>

### **“Secret Agreement”**

In preparation for the Bratislava summit between Presidents George Bush and Vladimir Putin, the issue of sustaining and developing bilateral relations in the arms control area was widely discussed in the Russian expert community. One issue in particular led to a lively debate. It concerned the safety of Russian nuclear storage facilities and American assistance in assuring this safety.

Shortly before the summit, rumors began to circulate in Moscow that the Russian side was prepared to come to an agreement with the Americans at the summit on measures of “joint nuclear safety” interpreted as providing “special access rights” to Russian nuclear facilities by the American side. It was alleged that the draft of such an agreement was prepared by Russian Academy of Sciences’ U.S. and Canada Studies Institute (ISKAN).

While ISKAN’s pivotal role in advising the Kremlin on bilateral relations with the U.S. has faded since the end of the Cold War, it remains an important center of discussion—particularly in the run-up to a summit.

Officials at ISKAN vehemently denied the rumor. The Institute’s deputy director, Maj.-Gen. (Ret.) Pavel Zolotarev claimed that “no agreements on nuclear safety will be signed at the Bratislava summit.”<sup>4</sup> However, Zolotarev also confirmed Moscow’s interest in the subject. He attempted to explain allegations about ISKAN “drawing agreements for the summit” by pointing to a “report on the reduction of nuclear risks discussed at a meeting of the Russian Academy’s Presidium.” As described by Zolotarev, “the report scrutinized the issues of reducing the risks without reducing the deterring role of nuclear weapons.”<sup>5</sup>

According to General Zolotarev, the key risk-reducing measure promoted in the Academy’s report was implementation of the Russian-U.S. memorandum on opening of a Missile Attack Early Warning Data Exchange Center in Moscow. This idea is favored by many Russian experts. As apparently emphasized in the report, Moscow’s internal bureaucratic squabbles prevented the Center from becoming fully operational. This is why, as mentioned by Zolotarev, “The report to the Academy’s Presidium included a sort

---

<sup>3</sup> “To Counteract New Challenges and Threats,” *Novosti - Rossiiskoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, February 2005, Issue No 2.

<sup>4</sup> “Russian Official Says Institute of US, Canada Did Not Draw Up Agreements for Summit,” *Agentstvo Voennykh Novostei*, February 7, 2005. [FBIS translated document CEP20050207000222].

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

of provoking suggestion to open such a center in the U.S. if we cannot manage the bureaucracy to open it in Moscow.”<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, Zolotarev disavowed some other alleged recommendations in the Academy report, e.g. to grant the U.S. a permission to supervise the Russian nuclear arsenals or joint patrol and protect nuclear facilities of Russia by Russian and American servicemen.

Even so, “traditionalist” opponents of expanding bilateral accommodation have ratcheted up their criticism of ISKAN and Zolotarev personally. For example, Sergei Brezkun, professor of the Academy of Military Sciences and a leading voice in the anti-U.S. “faction” of the Russian arms control community, accused ISKAN and Zolotarev of lacking patriotism if not outright “treason”.<sup>7</sup>

According to Brezkun: “Too often in recent decades experts from the ‘cohort’ of ISKAN and its related centers conceptually and ideologically disoriented the country’s supreme leadership beginning with Khrushchev (including Gorbachev with his ‘non-nuclear’ initiatives, unilateral nuclear moratoriums and the INF Treaty) and ending with Yeltsin, on whom they had palmed off nothing less than initially the Framework Agreement and then also the defeatist START II Treaty itself (there are few today who doubt its destructiveness).”<sup>8</sup>

Brezkun sounded a warning to those in the Kremlin who might heed ISKAN’s advice: “Today such ‘ideologues’ are also attempting to disorient Vladimir Putin, endeavoring to depict matters as if ‘poor’ Russia has no other way out than to ‘cave in’ to the ‘rich’ United States, fulfilling any of its demands, right down to establishing American or so-called ‘international’ control over the Russian nuclear complex.”<sup>9</sup>

Brezkun and other traditionalists insist that Russia should “put up a fight” primarily over such issues as Ballistic Missile Defense. To them, “the U.S. withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty is only the beginning of an incubation period of hegemonic paranoia based on ideas of acquiring world supremacy.”<sup>10</sup> Hence their call for strengthening the strategic nuclear potential of Russia at any cost while rejecting any confidence building measures as a “ploy” to disarm Russia.

After the summit meeting, the controversy over American “control over Russian nuclear potential” continued to simmer despite official explanations that no “secret agreements” on the issue had been concluded between Bush and Putin. In effect, right after the summit, Russia’s Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov declared that while the parties

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Sergei Brezkun, “It’s Time To Work for Great Russia: No Confidence Measures Can Replace Real Nuclear Might,” *Voенно-Promyshlennyi Kurier*, February 2, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

agreed to exchange “practical experience” on preventing the weapons from falling into terrorists’ hands by “exchanging information on systems, equipment, and human protection and the defense of these sites, including from the air,” the appropriate agreement “does not talk about reciprocal visits to each other’s sites, not to mention mandatory visits.”<sup>11</sup>

Heated debates that nevertheless proceeded in Moscow underscored that both proponents and opponents of increased bilateral cooperation in the nuclear-safety and other strategically-sensitive areas were concerned not so much with the technical aspects of this cooperation as with its political and even ideological ramifications. In effect, mutual access to nuclear depots and related security information has acquired proportions of an “existential” issue in defining the nature and scope of Russia’s interaction with the U.S. in the strategic area.

Excitement to the controversy was added by a strange episode involving President Putin’s website ([www.kremlin.ru](http://www.kremlin.ru)). The text of the “Joint Russian-American Statement on Nuclear Security Cooperation” posted at the site on February 26, 2005 contained a passage stating that joint “visits” to Russian nuclear facilities would begin “before December 2005.”

By February 28, the passage, which did not appear in the text posted on the U.S. presidential website ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)), was deleted. A Kremlin official said the passage’s appearance in the text was caused by a “computer glitch,” adding that it “was never agreed” and “should not have been in the text”.<sup>12</sup>

Opposition media immediately charged that the deleted passage was evidence that “secret provisions” of the agreement cede the U.S. the right of inspection, i.e. actual control over Russian nuclear facilities.<sup>13</sup> Observers in Moscow found additional “proof” of Moscow’s decision to relinquish important elements of its authority and control over nuclear weapons to the U.S. in the statements of the Director of the Federal Security Service Nikolai Patrushev and General Staff Commander Yurii Baluevskii that appeared shortly after the conclusion of the summit. Both top apparatchiks emphasized the “significantly increased threat of international terrorists who can now acquire weapons of mass destruction” and called for “the creation of a joint antiterrorist front” with the United States.<sup>14</sup>

As soon as the “glitch” with the publication at the presidential website became known, official Moscow rushed to disavow any “secret deal” with the U.S. Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov was quoted by government news agencies to the effect that “no one is

---

<sup>11</sup> Nikita Petrov, “An Audit of U.S. Atomic Programs: Radioactive Materials Are Being Delivered Abroad Unchecked,” *Staran.ru*, March 1, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> *ITAR-TASS*, March 1, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> *Kommersant*, February 28, 2005; *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, March 4, 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Yurii Baluevskii, “The Russian Army Has an Opportunity to Stretch Out Its Back,” *Izvestiya*, March 1, 2005.

talking about any mutual visits to each other's facilities, especially not compulsory visits".<sup>15</sup> On March 5, 2005, the Defense Ministry issued a "denial of media reports that U.S. inspections of Russian nuclear munitions depots are to be allegedly broadened." The Defense Ministry statement also claimed that Yurii Baluevskii's March 1, 2005 interview to the *Izvestiya* was "misquoted and misinterpreted" to mean that Russia is prepared to give access to its nuclear facilities to the Americans.<sup>16</sup>

Former Secretary of the Security Council, currently Chairman of the Duma Committee on CIS Affairs Andrei Kokoshin known for his Kremlin ties asserted: "The summit in Bratislava demonstrated that the United States recognizes Russia as an equal partner that possesses equal technical knowledge and an equally great system of security. There cannot even be any discussion of any control over our nuclear facilities on the part of the USA. I am convinced that Russia, ensuring its full sovereignty in the nuclear sphere, would never allow this. However, there are forces in the USA, which are constantly casting doubt upon Russia's capacity to ensure the security of these facilities adequately and with full independence".<sup>17</sup>

Russian "realists" appear to have been genuinely concerned with the backlash that has accompanied the discussion of nuclear-safety issues in Bratislava. ISKAN's Zolotarev stated: "We now hear 'patriotic' yells about Russia's 'capitulation' in Bratislava. We are witnessing today the increased activities of those political forces that want to see only the enemy in the U.S.... What kind of an alternative are they offering – rejecting the Nunn-Lugar Program? ... However, the American aid makes up approximately one half of our government's allocations for weapons' utilization and nuclear security... We bear special responsibility for the safety of nuclear weapons and fission materials."<sup>18</sup>

### **Withdrawal from INF**

Another recent controversy concerns the alleged intention of Russia to withdraw from the Treaty on Intermediary- and Shorter-Range Missiles. According to media reports, the announcement on the contemplated Russian move was made during the January 2005 visit to the U.S. by Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov:

Dialogue between Moscow and Washington has all but led to the dismantling of one of the most important agreements in the sphere of international security—the Treaty on Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. It is known from sources in the U.S. administration that the two countries' defense ministers—Sergei Ivanov and Donald Rumsfeld—recently discussed the possibility of

---

<sup>15</sup> *RIA-Novosti*, March 1, 2005; *ITAR-TASS*, 2 March 2, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> *ITAR-TASS*, March 5, 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Yurii Kotenok, "Russia Will Not Allow Outsiders Onto Its Nuclear Facilities", *Utro.ru*, March 2, 2005. [FBIS translated document CEP20050302000149].

<sup>18</sup> Pavel Zolotarev, "U.S. Expands Control Over Russian Nuclear Facilities; Nunn-Lugar Program Undergoes Further Development," *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, March 4, 2005. [FBIS translated text CEP20050309000347].



Russia's withdrawing from a treaty which once secured the elimination of an entire class of missile weapons... The agreement, concluded in 1987, ended the missile crisis that emerged in Europe over the deployment of Pershing-II and SS-20 missiles in a number of NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. The latter are known in our country as the RSD-10 or "Pioner"... The Pentagon meeting between Sergei Ivanov and Donald Rumsfeld on 11 January this year could have led to the "Pioner" ballistic missile, last launched at the Kapustin Yar range in May 1991, being given back its right to exist. As was officially announced after the talks, the ministers agreed the wording of a Russian-American agreement on controlling the trade in manually-portable air-defense systems (signed later at the Bratislava summit)... According to a report in Britain's Financial Times newspaper citing U.S. Administration sources, Ivanov asked the Pentagon chief how he might respond to a possible Russian withdrawal from the INF treaty regime. Rumsfeld allegedly answered that it "did not trouble" him.<sup>19</sup>

A possible explanation offered by the *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie* was that Russia's withdrawal from INF was intended as a "counterargument to lifting from the United States some of the restrictions imposed or self-imposed, like the moratorium on resuming nuclear tests on the arms race".<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, the Russian Foreign Ministry precipitated to officially repudiate the Defense Ministry on the INF-withdrawal issue in its own statement. As declared by the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko: "I would like to reaffirm Russia's adherence to the INF Treaty. Moscow hopes that the other signatory to the treaty will stick to the same position."<sup>21</sup> At the same time, as noted by Russian sources, while the "political decision" to withdraw from the INF Treaty has not been made and it is unclear when it will be made" there is a considerable interest in Russia in probing the potential U.S. response to such a move.<sup>22</sup>

There is no unanimity among Russian experts on the subject. Col.-General Viktor Yesin, former chief of staff of the Strategic Missile Troops, stated that "the INF treaty accords with our country's interests and fully retains its importance to it".<sup>23</sup> In the view of the director of the Center for Disarmament Studies at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology Anatolii Dyakov, "Russia has enough existing weapon systems to deter any

---

<sup>19</sup> Artur Blinov, "Behind the Scenes in Missile Deal. Moscow and Washington Attempted To Pull Out of Deal That Ended Missile Crisis in Europe," *Nazavisimaya Gazeta*, March 11, 2005.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Agentstvo Voennykh, *Novostei*, March 15, 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Aleksei Nikolskii and Vasilii Kashin, "Russia to Shield Itself from its Neighbors with Missiles, If Sergey Ivanov Has His Way," *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, March 10, 2005, [FBIS translated text CEP20050310000341].

<sup>23</sup> Blinov, op. cit.

potential adversary for the next 10 years,” therefore, there is no need to create a additional “missile shield”.<sup>24</sup>

Military expert Mikhail Barabanov believes that from a military perspective, it would be better to increase production of the Topol-M ICBM, “which right now is going at a “miserly pace”.<sup>25</sup> Ivan Safranchuk of the Center Defense Information’s Moscow office, noted that while historically the missiles that were eliminated under the 1987 INF Treaty had a deterrent role vis-à-vis Europe and China, the Russian military is most likely contemplating the use of intermediate-range missiles in a “non-nuclear configuration for strikes against certain international terrorists in the south”.<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, maintaining intermediate-range missiles, in Barabanov’s opinion, would be much cheaper for Russia than resurrecting combat-capable aviation and large scale ground troops. These missiles “would possess a certain amount of stability in combat, since searching for and destroying missile launchers in Iraq has turned out to be a difficult task, even for the American Army.”<sup>27</sup> Dyakov also notes that it is technically possible for Russia to resume development and production of such missiles.

As reported by the *Agentstvo Voennykh Novostei* of the Interfax news service, the Russian military confirms that all the necessary technical and production prerequisite are in place for resuming the production of medium-range missiles if necessary. An unidentified source in the military establishments explained:

The achievements in research and technology gained in the development of the “Skorost” missile system in the 1980s may become a basis for manufacturing medium-range missiles... The “Skorost” system was developed in less than a year through cooperation between several enterprises led by the Moscow Heat Engineering Institute. Its development was, however, suspended soon after test launches began because the USSR and the United States concluded the INF Treaty... The Skorost system has a range of up to 2,500 km, a deployment time of two minutes from the combat ready position, and nine minutes from the traveling position... An intermediate-range missile groups could considerably increase the potential of the Missile Forces in potentially dangerous strategic areas. It is especially important with the mass decommissioning of the strategic missiles past the end of their service life. The cost of intermediate-range missiles is many times lower than that of the “Topol-M” missiles, with which the Russian Strategic Missile Forces are being equipped... Development of new missiles with a range of 500-600 km, based on the existing “Iskander-E” tactical missile systems is also

---

<sup>24</sup> Nikolskii and Kashin, op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

a possibility. This, however, will be more costly and may take up to five or six years.<sup>28</sup>

## **Tactical Nuclear Weapons**

Another area where reversal of the existing status-quo is perceived as beneficial for Russian interests is tactical nuclear weapons (TNW). Experts argue that the changing geo-strategic situation in proximity to Russian borders, e.g. NATO' eastward expansion and activities of radical regimes and groups, call for an "adequate response" with TNW that can perform unique functions complementing those of Strategic Nuclear Forces and conventional forces.

In the words of Major-General (Ret.) Vladimir Belous, senior analyst at the Institute of International Relations and World Economics of the Russian Academy of Sciences and a corresponding member of the Academy of Military Sciences, "From the perspectives of deterrence, it is expedient to clearly define for the eventual enemies those limits in the development of a military-political situation that once trespassed will create the real threat of the use of nuclear weapons against them. Strategic Nuclear Forces (SNF) may not be fit for deflecting an aggression with conventional forces since particularly at the initial stage the intruding troops will wage war in the territories of Russia or its allies... Under such circumstances... Russia will have no other choice but to use Tactical Nuclear Weapons [TNW] as the last resort".<sup>29</sup>

Belous finds tangible manifestations of "the recently increased attention of the Russian military leadership to tactical nuclear weapons": "During the Russian-Belorussian command-staff exercise "Union Security – 2004" [*Souznaya bezopasnost -2004*] in July 2004... that involved virtual tactical nuclear strikes against a sudden aggression of superior enemy forces... Another indication is increased attention to the creation of the operational-tactical "Iskander" missile complex that can deliver a nuclear warhead at ranges of up to 280km, and that should be delivered to the troops instead of the analogous "Oka" missile complex destroyed under the Treaty on shorter- and medium-range missiles by the irresponsible and myopic leadership of the then USSR".<sup>30</sup>

Some Russian experts warn that return to reliance on TNW will increase chances for their actual use. Argues former deputy head of the State Duma Defense Committee Dr. Aleksei Arbatov: "Tactical nuclear weapons traditionally used dual-purpose platforms: planes, missiles, artillery, torpedoes. To a much greater degree than strategic weapons, these weapons have always been viewed as a war-fighting means... Such views were incorporated in the real policy of stockpiling, improvement, storage, deployment, and use of such weapons in the line units, and to an even greater extent in the principles for

---

<sup>28</sup> "Russia Able to Resume Medium-Range Missiles Production at Short Notice," *Interfax-AVN*, March 17, 2005. [FBIS Translated Text CEP20050317000280].

<sup>29</sup> Vladimir Belous. "Nuclear Weapons as Guarantee of Stability," *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, January 21, 2005.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

authorizing their use and creating guarantees against unauthorized use, which are much less strict than they are in the SNF.”<sup>31</sup>

However, others insist that Russian deterrence may be credible only if it is effective. The increased possibility of actually using TNW in Russian possession augments the deterrence capability.<sup>32</sup>

Experts of the Center for the Study of Problems of Disarmament, Energy and Ecology of the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology argue in a recent report that Moscow’s desire to keep its TNW arsenals in response to perceived hostile attitudes of the U.S. and NATO and absence of progress on TNW are bound to “inexorably poison” U.S.-RF relations in the future:

Russia regards U.S. nuclear weapons still remaining in the European territory as strategic since they can cover most of its territory and threaten the security of its key installations... NATO’s refusal to conclude a binding agreement on the non-deployment of nuclear weapons in the territories of the new member-states is another argument that strengthens this Russian position... However, removal of U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons [NSNW] from the European territory is not the only Russian condition that may move Russia to negotiations [on NSNW]... The next impediment may be NATO’s superiority in conventional weapons. Particularly telling in this context is the interview of the First Deputy Commander of the General Staff of RF Y. Baluevskii related to the situation with the ratification of the adapted CFE treaty in which he said that “...Russia has a sufficient arsenal of forces, means and methods of assuring security and assuring its national interests.” Overall, it appears that Moscow has occupied a passive position and is not interested in negotiations on the control over no-strategic nuclear weapons... The U.S. has in effect also occupied a wait-and-see position on concluding a regime of control over NSNW... Therefore... it is impossible to count on the early resolution of the problem of control over NSNW within the framework of Russian-American bilateral relations or the Russia-NATO framework... However, the existence of huge nuclear weapons’ reserves not subject to measures of transparency and control would invariably poison and impede the development of bilateral Russian-U.S. relations... Today the U.S. is mostly interested in assuring reliable storage and control over nuclear munitions in Russia. However tomorrow this interest may be driven not by the issue of safety but by the quantitative superiority that Russia still has over the U.S. in only this type of weapons.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Aleksei Arbatov, “Subtle Political Tool, *Nezavisimoe Voyennoe Obozreniye*,” December 5, 2003.

<sup>32</sup> Sergei Kremliev (Sergei Brezkun), “Response Strike Should Be Inexorable,” *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, April 9, 2004.

<sup>33</sup> A.S. Dyakov, Ye.V. Myasnikov and T.T. Kadyshev, “Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons. Problems of Control and Reduction,” Center for the Study of Problems of Disarmament, Energy and Ecology at MFTI. *Dolgoprudnyi*, 2004.

In view of the stalemate-type situation on TNW, experts of the Center for Disarmament propose the mechanism of “coordinated unilateral steps” which they hope will eventually lead to “treaty-based measures of control”:

In the absence of any preconditions for negotiations [on tactical nuclear weapons]... only unilateral actions remain available even though this path has many defects... [including] the possibility of revoking obligations undertaken also in a unilateral fashion and absence of measures of control. However coordinated unilateral initiatives may prove to be very advantageous... Unilateral initiatives could contribute to introduction of treaty-based measures of control.<sup>34</sup>

### **Militarization of Space**

The “pragmatically selective” Russian approach to arms control regimes may be illustrated by the comparison between the attitudes to the INF and TNW, and the so-called “militarization of space.” In light of the potential advantages of resuming the production and deployment of intermediary- and shorter-range missiles Russia appears to be ready to sacrifice one arms control regime, i.e. the INF. At the same time, faced with various constraints in developing advanced military and dual-purpose space-based systems, Moscow seeks to introduce another new regime that would disallow the placement of weapon systems in the outer space.

The RF has no objections to military uses of space that assist in implementation of strategic arms reduction agreements or provide for troop command and control, monitoring and intelligence, e.g. missile-attack early warning, etc. While recognizing that the “process of the modernization of Russian and U.S. military satellite groupings is an objective reality,” Moscow objects categorically to the “danger of the placement of weapons, especially anti-satellite weapons, in the outer space”.<sup>35</sup>

Historically, Moscow sought broad international coalition in fighting “militarization of space”. In 2002, at the Disarmament Conference, Russia and China introduced the draft of the main elements of an obligation not to put into terrestrial orbits objects with any types of weapons; not to place such weapons on celestial bodies; and not to use force or the threat of force against space objects. On October 5, 2004, the Permanent Representative of Russia at the UN in Geneva made a noteworthy declaration to the effect that “Russia takes upon itself the obligation not to place weapons of any type in the outer space first, and called upon all states that possess space capabilities to follow this example”.<sup>36</sup>

However, parallel to continued insistence on “non-militarization of space”, Moscow has been sending warning signals that it would not be idle in the face of “attempts by others”

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Andrei Kislyakov, “Orbital Game of Cards,” *Rossiiskoe Voennoe Obozrenie, RIA-Novosti*, February 2005, No. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

to deploy weapon systems in space. For example, in an October 31, 2004 interview, the Space Troops Commander Lt.-Gen. Vladimir Popovkin declared in response to a question about placement of nuclear weapons in space:

We do not intend to put nuclear weapons in space, even though there are many people interested in making space a sphere of armed conflict. According to our data, such work is under way in a number of countries. Of course we cannot react calmly to that... Today Russia has 100 spacecraft which perform various missions, including defense and socioeconomic. We are obliged to ensure reliable protection of these systems in space. But we are against space becoming a sphere of armed conflict. It is good that at least something in the world has no borders. Let space remain one.<sup>37</sup>

Expert opinions on placement of weapons in space range within wide parameters. There is usually no great problem finding statements that closely follow and/or support official government positions particularly as far as the critique of “aggressive” American space-related programs is concerned. In the oft-repeated opinion that deals with the negative effects of U.S. BMD effort, “performing missile defense missions using space-based weapons requires the creation of weapon systems which will destroy ballistic missiles or their reentry vehicles automatically without human involvement. In this case the risk of the situation’s uncontrolled development due to a malfunction or false triggering of equipment grows considerably. In addition, the appearance of weapons in space will lead to the creation of numerous spacecraft groupings with orbits at altitudes of 400-1,500 km. This is the part of outer space used most widely for remote Earth sensing and manned flight missions.”<sup>38</sup>

At the same time, Russian military experts recognize that advancements in the military uses of space may be irreversible. According to a report prepared in early October 2003 by the Tsiolkovskii Academy of Cosmonautics:

Creation and development of space means and dual-purpose complexes that increase the effectiveness of the Space Forces is a key link in maintaining national security”. Experts of the Academy consider the following activities of priority importance: creation of the new systems of missile-attack early warning, communication and combat command, as well as integration of the space-based means of intelligence, global navigation, meteorology and communication within the framework of systems of troop and weapon command-and-control.<sup>39</sup>

These experts also believe that since:

Space apparatuses that are not weapons per se are becoming the fundamental element of the effective use of contemporary technology and weapons... it is

---

<sup>37</sup> *ITAR-Tass*, October 31, 2004.

<sup>38</sup> Nikolai Khorunzhii, “Aerospace Defense Begins With Air Defense,” *Izvestiya*, June 7, 2004.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

imperative to oppose in a legal and practical way the placement of attack anti-satellite systems in space. Otherwise the world will drift to an unprecedented race in space weapons that cannot be modeled by any computer. In all appearance, we should also think about developing special agreements on limiting passive actions in relation to dual-purpose satellites.<sup>40</sup>

The Vice-President of the Academy of Cosmonautics Ivan Mesharikov raised particular concerns over “the new American system of interference against communication satellites” that allegedly “presents a serious threat for the Russian orbital grouping and in particular to the GLONASS communication and navigation system.”<sup>41</sup>

In Mesharikov’s opinion, U.S. efforts that took the shape of the deployment of the new land-based radars are aimed primarily against the Russian satellites:

The Russian GLONASS and the American GPS navigation systems work at similar frequencies and orbits. However we know that at any moment, the U.S. GPS may shift to other frequencies while our satellites will become defenseless. This is why the process of the demilitarization of the outer space requires the solution of a whole complex of tasks before a truly universal agreement of peaceful cosmos is developed.<sup>42</sup>

Many Russian military experts maintain that actual militarization of space is unavoidable, and the only real question is when it begins in earnest. A typical line of reasoning in favor of “starting sooner rather than later” has been presented by Colonel (Ret.) Vyacheslav Baskakov who advocates developing Russia’s “space fleet” to include anti-satellite weapons and other:

...assets of space combat that could not only destroy the enemy’s space means but also to strike against air and land (naval) targets in view of the overall tendency in favor of developing offensive space means” that is bound to *de facto* eliminate the existing restrictive international legal norms on placement of weapons in space in the very near future.<sup>43</sup>

Most military and space experts emphasize the need to research and develop novel means of defense and offense, including those that are based on new physical principles, in order to provide an effective and affordable “edge” for Russia in the military-space sphere. Argues Admiral Smirnov, deputy director of the Scientific-and-Production Company of Breakthrough Technologies “Vityaz XXI century”:

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Vyacheslav Baskakov, “Space Troops as Guarantee of National Defense,” *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, October 1, 2004.

Given the potential reduction of the effectiveness of air- and sea-based components of SNF... the most effective response to the U.S. desire to unilaterally deploy the NMD in its strategic version may most probably be found within the framework of the Space Troops... This may be done for example by creating special space means based on new physical and design principles that can neutralize the most important components of the NMD and make it “impotent”. If such means are created, Russia could assure its security for a long time to come.<sup>44</sup>

### **Non-Proliferation Treaty**

Moscow continues to insist that “the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has been and remains the most important instrument for containing nuclear weapons’ spread.” This official comment was recently made by the Russian Foreign Ministry in connection with “reports in the Western media that the United States would like to raise the question of concluding the Non-Proliferation Treaty on new terms.”<sup>45</sup>

As emphasized in the Ministry’s statement:

New problems in the non-proliferation area against which the world comes up can and must be resolved on the basis of the consolidation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty whose potential is far from exhausted... All the complicated matters of the operation of the Treaty will be discussed in detail at the conference in May. We proceed from the view that it will confirm the Treaty’s viability and will suggest specific steps for the future to strengthen the Treaty and make it universal.” the ministry stressed.<sup>46</sup>

### **De-Alerting**

After the signing of SORT, the discussion of strategic arms reduction issues has somewhat subsided. Occasional expert proposals do however emerge from time to time on “deepening, expanding, accelerating, etc.” this process. An example at hand may be found in a recent paper by Pavel Podvig prepared for the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford. In it, he examines “new approaches to de-alerting.”<sup>47</sup> In Podvig’s view:

De-alerting has never come to the forefront of the U.S.-Russian arms control and disarmament agenda... in large part... a result of the changed nature of the U.S.-Russian relationship, which effectively removed incentives to enter into any

---

<sup>44</sup> Radomir Smirnov, “‘Star Wars’: New Version. Deployment of U.S. National BMD Presents Strategic Threat to Russia and the Rest of the World,” *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, October 15, 2004.

<sup>45</sup> Ksenia Kaminskaya, “Russia Says Non-Proliferation Treaty Contains Spread of Nuclear Arms,” *ITAR-Tass*, March 17, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Pavel Podvig, “Reducing the Risk of Accidental Launch: Time for a New Approach? Center for International Security and Cooperation,” Stanford University, February 2005.



bilateral arms control agreements... The problem is, however, that it now prevents our countries from eliminating the relics of the past adversarial relationship. The launch-on-warning posture is admittedly one of the most dangerous of these...<sup>48</sup>

According to Podvig:

The discussion of dangers associated with the launch-on-warning posture usually concentrates on the decline of the Russian early-warning and command and control systems. As a result, the efforts to reduce these dangers tend to center on finding ways to convince Russia to reduce the level of readiness of its nuclear forces. Any specific de-alerting measures that are proposed on the U.S. side are seen primarily as a way to create incentives for Russia to reciprocate. This line of argument, however, seems to overestimate the degree to which the Russian strategic forces rely on launch-on-warning as the primary response to a possible attack in their day-to-day operations... The efforts to reduce the risks associated with the launch-on-warning postures of Russian and U.S. strategic forces should... treat measures that reduce the level of readiness on either side as net benefit regardless of whether these measures have a chance of being reciprocated. The Russian early-warning system is broken, so don't fix it.<sup>49</sup>

Podvig argues that thus far, intrusive verification procedures have doomed de-alerting. However, in his view, transparency is not required if de-alerting is understood in terms of reducing risks associated with the launch-on-warning postures: "Verification would be necessary only if de-alerting is considered a substitute for elimination of delivery platforms, but this is exactly the role de-alerting should avoid."<sup>50</sup>

Podvig proposes the mechanism of unilateral steps that, in his view, will make de-alerting a reality:

Most of the skepticism about U.S.-Russian arms control in the recent years stems from the unwillingness of these countries to get involved in negotiated agreements that would impose limits on their strategic forces. However... to be successful in achieving its goals, de-alerting does not have to be either reciprocal or verifiable. In fact, it seems to be ideally suited for unilateral non-binding declarations that might work in the current situation. Practically speaking, Russia and the United States could begin with a public commitment to de-alert a portion of their strategic arsenals. Of course, there will be plenty of questions about the value of a commitment that is neither enforceable nor verifiable. But this value would be quite real if both sides follow on their commitment and change their practices and procedures to exclude at least part of their arsenals from the launch-on-warning arrangements. The risk of a catastrophic accident will be reduced and

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

these practices could then be extended to a larger part of the arsenal, reducing the risk further.<sup>51</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Arms control has been and remains an important tool in Russian military policy and diplomacy. It is widely used to promote Russian interests. However, to Russian eyes, reflecting the existing balance of forces in negotiated agreements and regimes is a less significant element of the arms control process. A much more important goal is to “compensate” for Russian weaknesses and/or deficiencies, and to prevent breakthrough advances of other competing powers, particularly the United States.

While Russia remains committed to all treaties and regimes it has entered into, it may well be assumed that it will not make its better interests “hostage” to specific obligations that do not correspond to these interests as perceived. Recent “feelers” on adherence to INF are a good example. Russia is also unhappy with the agreement on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), and insists on the need to adapt it to the changed realities in the continent following the collapse of the USSR and the expansion of NATO.

One of the most urgent items on Russia’s foreign policy agenda is the prevention of “militarization” of the outer space. Fully aware of its inability to compete on the par with the U.S. in advanced space-based technologies, Moscow wants to use the negotiation process and mechanisms to deny the U.S. the opportunity to gain superiority in this vitally important sphere of military activities and potential warfare.

A particular problem for Moscow is finding the right kind of balance between cooperation and competition with the U.S. On the one hand, it needs Western assistance and support in resolving such overwhelming problems as getting rid of obsolescent military hardware and dangerous materials: nuclear, chemical, biological, etc., and assuring security and safety at numerous installations that carry WMD and related materials. On the other hand, given its vulnerability to internal pressures, it does not want to “lose face” by relinquishing “too much control” over such installations to foreign powers. The controversy over these matters linked to the Bratislava summit serve as an illustration to the so-far unresolved dilemma in front of the Russian leaders.

At the current stage, Russia remains generally disposed to compromises with the U.S. and NATO. Moscow will hardly allow recurring disagreements to grow into outright conflicts that may disrupt the relationships it was meticulously trying to construct over the past decade. If nothing else, the example of several neighboring CIS countries that went through sudden albeit peaceful regime changes should teach the Russian leaders caution. Western support, or at least neutrality, is also badly needed in dealing with the remaining internal challenges of secessionism, irredentism, terrorism, etc.

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.