

CHAPTER SIX

Interlinked:

Assurance, Russia, and Further Reductions of Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons

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The internal NATO debate on the future of the remaining U.S. forward deployed non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNW) inevitably turns to the question of reassurance and the political links these weapons have to a U.S. pledge to use all its powers to preserve European security against attack. Extended deterrence is a construct developed in the 1950s, when there were many nuclear weapons in Europe, an ongoing arms race with Russia, and a common perception among Allies and the United States on threats. Since the end of the Cold War, the number of NSNW has reduced dramatically from the original thousands to an estimated 200 warheads to be delivered by dedicated aircraft of the United States and five Allies in Europe.

This chapter will examine key issues associated with reassurance—or more correctly “assurance”—for the Alliance, focusing on the critical related challenge of assuring Russia. The argument here will be that the security environment is far different now than before 1991 or the decade thereafter. Many officials and experts within NATO therefore favor adopting a wide range of credible assurance options, implemented together with a schedule for NSNW reductions by a time certain, if not eliminating this entire category from active deployment on European territory.

What complicates this task, however, is that it is almost inextricably paired with another quite different search for assurance: how to find a new positive role for Russia in European security. This is the major shift in Europe since 1991: Russia is no longer an adversary but not yet a partner in European security arrangements.¹

1. Some observers reject this intermediate category as anything other than transition to either friend or foe.

CHAPTER SIX: KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ There are many multilayered and multifaceted clamps that constitute assurance and the “existential deterrence system” of U.S.-NATO guarantees supported by continuing, if smaller, American conventional force deployments in Europe.
- ▶ The expansion of NATO into the former Eastern Bloc and perceived interference with Russia’s near abroad has become a constant sticking point in U.S.-NATO-Russian relations. Within Russia, expansion is frequently perceived as the ill-intentioned and illegitimate influence the West persistently seeks over Russia’s near abroad.
- ▶ In the two decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union, neither the West nor Russia has found a satisfactory solution to the question of an appropriate institutional framework to assure regular negotiations, bargaining, and even exchange of strategic information beyond bilateral channels.
- ▶ Future reductions of NSNW will depend on whether NATO, the United States, and Russia can develop a new process to discuss the nature and requirement of assurance and key security issues, within NATO and in existing NATO-Russia or U.S.-Russia discussions involving NSNW, missile defense, and/or conventional force deployments.
- ▶ Whatever the form, the steps toward reduction seemingly require a reaffirmation of the basic principles of the cooperative security approaches of the late 1980s and 1990s, and especially the key tools of transparency and accountability within an institutionalized arrangement of long or permanent duration.
- ▶ The NATO Russia Council (NRC) has at least the potential to be a new type of institutional platform for cooperation. The NRC, since its inception in 1997, has never received the attention it could have had or been fully exploited for its cooperation potential by either the United States or Russia. The increasing interest in the role of the NRC and the new responsibilities it assumed in Lisbon 2010 are welcome and should be reflected in the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR).
- ▶ To build trust between Russia-NATO-U.S., a series of options to strengthen assurance should be implemented, including renewing and reforming confidence building measures (CBMs) in the realms of conventional and nuclear deployments; reasserting the principles of inclusive cooperative security policies: cooperative missile defense; and revising and redefining the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty.

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BACKGROUND

While the reduction of NSNW in the early 1990s was implemented through paired U.S. and Russian unilateral presidential nuclear initiatives (PNI), NATO is now committed to seeking reciprocal reductions² with the far larger Russian arsenal (estimates range from 2,000 to 6,000 weapons). Many believe this process will take several years, and will involve balancing several weapons categories—precision conventional weapons, naval deployments of regional significance—in addition to missile defense.

Future success will depend on whether NATO, the United States, and Russia can develop a new process to discuss the nature of key security issues and the requirements of assurance within NATO and in existing NATO-Russia or U.S.-Russia discussions. These should also involve NSNW, missile defense, and/or conventional force deployments and a far greater degree of transparency and communication, vis-à-vis both public and elites, than has ever prevailed regarding NSNW. Further, it will likely require—on all sides—a transition away from the secretive decision making of the past toward fundamental innovations in accountability and self-regulating governance, perhaps on a regional basis but conceivably within a global framework.

The path to NSNW reductions and eventual elimination runs through Russia accepting a different role in European security, a different arms balance in Europe, and a different consensus about next steps and key requirements. As Tomas Valasek of London's Center for European Reform recently commented, whatever actions the United States takes on NSNW reductions or European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) operationalization for a missile defense system, it must move forward:

The heart of the question on how to reassure Allies without upsetting Russia—any measures that NATO needs to take with regard to improved situational awareness/early warning/crisis management should be designed in such a way that they cover all directions. This would underscore the NATO preparations are not aimed at any particular country. For example, were NATO's new emerging threats division to start assessing conventional threats it will be important that the divisions look at threats coming from the south and the north as much as from the east. If so, NATO can tell Moscow with a straight face that it is “merely doing what all prudent alliances do,” and that its measures are not aimed against it.³

2. See NATO, New Strategic Concept, “Active Engagement, Modern Defense,” (Brussels: NATO, November 2010), and the conceptual bibliography related to it and its further development, available at <http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/index.html>.

3. Tomas Valasek, Director of Foreign Policy and Defense, Centre for European Reform, London, communication to NTI, August 2011.

Ultimately NATO, particularly the United States, will only achieve this progress by meeting and demonstrating inclusion of Russian security concerns in whatever new arrangements emerge. As such, these arrangements may have little or nothing to do with NSNW specifically; rather they will create space for cooperation, and cooperative endeavor on challenging strategic choices that have provided for stalemates in the past. These arrangements may involve formal treaties, hard-fought and subject to not only political winds but also hard-to-predict parliamentary battles. They may also follow equally valid patterns of the past—paired unilateral moves or independent national declarations about future behavior. Most should involve bilateral U.S.-Russian agreements but the Allies have new influence as reflected in the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept and the roles assigned to the NATO-Russia Council, the DDPR and the new NATO Arms Control Council.

Whatever the form, the steps toward reduction seemingly require a reaffirmation of the basic principles of the cooperative security approaches of the late 1980s and 1990s, and especially the key tools of transparency and accountability within an institutionalized arrangement of a long or permanent duration. As the last 20 years have demonstrated, cooperation on specific programs or missions may or may not be cumulative.⁴ Recognizing both convergent interests in stability and the primary security concerns of the others is fundamental to overcome the easy political rhetoric of confrontation and competition and to remind publics of what strategic partnership truly entails.

ASSURANCE: NATO, EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES

Assurance and the “existential deterrence system” of U.S.-NATO guarantees is multilayered and multifaceted, and has been generally unaffected by the numerous policy disputes and tactical disagreements of the United States with various partners during the eventful last decade. The NATO consensus may move exceedingly slowly and with many rifts and texts that paper over great divides, but its debates and planning constitute a constant communication stream and a chance to agree, either to forward motion or another round of debate.

The inextricable intertwining of the alliance in the political, economic, and social realms as well as those that directly concern the military sphere provide the foundation for U.S. assurance to its NATO Allies. Karsten Voigt, an SPD politician and former German transatlantic coordinator, often relegated the alliance relationship, and indeed the whole transatlantic complex of interlocking ties, to a special third category of international relations—too close and intimate to be

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4. See also Catherine M. Kelleher, “The Future of Cooperative Security,” (CISSM, University of Maryland, November 2011), <http://www.cissm.umd.edu/papers/display.php?id=560>.

governed by the simple concepts of sovereignty and the rules of international law but too separate to have the easy ability as in domestic politics, to make deals or extended political bargains to overcome disagreements.

The recent global financial crisis provides a strong example of this, with the ever-clearer evidence that the economic link between the United States and the European Union is just as important as the transatlantic military link. By any measure, the United States and the European Union together have a commanding share (at least 42.4 percent) of the global economy.⁵ The level of communication and transparency ranks close to that in the domestic frameworks, and whatever the tactical policy disputes, there is ever growing evidence of shared processes and assumptions about acceptable financial risk and gain. There are huge disagreements over tactics and over which interests are to be protected first. But these do not undercut the existence of a fundamental transatlantic economic bloc, and primary trading community.⁶

For many experts, the greatest challenges to assurance of the Europeans will come from American doubts and reluctance to commit. Europeans question whether the United States will or even can remain involved with Europe given the predominance of its Asia ties and its perceptions of Chinese challenges, economic and military. They argue, as do some American experts, that China's rise necessarily means a lower status for Europe (particularly as personified by the European Union) in trade and political influence, in a region that is less turbulent or uncertain than East or South Asia. The fear is not of a renewal of American isolation but of American preoccupation with debt, domestic politics, and its own structural crisis, with a need to reallocate resources, and especially its military costs, in ways to meet what it defines as the 21st century challenges. The less Europe contributes to the common security effort, the more this concentration on Asia will seem justified. But without American leadership and capabilities, it is argued, the Alliance either will not act or will not act in time.

This is the quintessential European dilemma, and one observed and pondered since the 1950s. Objective evidence seems to show these fears to be unfounded or

5. The World Bank, "Gross Domestic Product 2010," <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GDP.pdf>; CIA World Factbook, "Field Listing: GDP (Official Exchange Rate)," 2011, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2195.html>; International Monetary Fund, World Economic and Financial Surveys: World Economic Outlook Database (2011), <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2011/01/weodata/index.aspx>.

6. In 2009 alone, half of all Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the European Union, \$1.73 trillion, came from the United States; two-thirds of all FDI in the United States, \$1.48 trillion, came from the European Union. Also in 2009, 16.71 percent of U.S. imports came from the European Union (second only to China) and 18.77 percent of U.S. exports to the European Union (the largest recipient); also, 11.3 percent of EU imports came from the United States (again, second only to China) and 18.0 percent of EU exports went to the United States (again, the largest recipient). Half of U.S. global corporate earnings come from the European Union.

refutable by the thick, strong everyday bonds—economic, cultural, political, and military—that bind the transatlantic community. However, no assurance formula, even the most serious of speeches or formal pledges, or the presence of physical capability, can provide absolute surety for issues of perception.

ASSURANCE: NEW NATO MEMBERS AND THE UNITED STATES

The geographical expansion of NATO has fundamentally shifted the debate on assurance within NATO. This expansion to a large degree has been shaped at every stage by U.S. presidential politics and leadership, which has led to a unique relationship between the United States and the new and smaller NATO members, who often appeal to the United States to be the “balance holder.” At a minimum, this means they expect the United States to represent their interests against larger European member states, or insist on protections and solidarity against what they see as Russian intimidation (e.g., the lagging support on the Russian blockade of Polish meat exports, or the lack of reaction to the Estonian cyber attacks).

The new NATO members, especially the Baltic states, and their Washington defenders, have successfully utilized bilateral channels to influence NATO policy outcomes, stressing historical burdens and debts owed at every instance of Russian misbehavior and bombast. Even these perceptions, however, have been tempered since 1991 by the dictates of domestic politics as well as size and diplomatic opportunity within the diverse Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) group.

Recent Polish experiences illustrate the roller-coaster effects of identification with a special U.S. guarantee. Poland is seen in the United States as the leader of “New Europe,” in the words of Donald Rumsfeld, former U.S. Secretary of Defense.⁷ Under previous Polish governments and the influence of the Georgian war, there has been great fear that NATO would not act quickly enough to come to Poland’s aid in a crisis.⁸ However, Poland has also taken the lead among the CEE states in finding ways to “normalize” their relations with Russia,⁹ to overcome

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7. BBC News, “Outrage at ‘Old Europe’ Remarks,” January 23, 2003, <http://www.news.bbc.uk/2/hi/europe/2687403.stm>.

8. In the wake of the Georgia-Russia conflict, when referring to the mutual commitment aspect of NATO’s Article 5 reassurance, Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that, “NATO would be too slow” in coming to Poland’s defense if Poland were threatened, and that the bloc would take “days, weeks to start that machinery.” Associated Press, “U.S. and Poland Agree to Missile Defense Deal,” August 14, 2008.

9. See forthcoming, Carnegie EASI paper on reconciliation, which reflects Daniel Rotfeld’s role in the Russian-Polish historical reconciliation task force he co-chaired. See the official Polish commentary on the results of the work of the Joint Polish Russian Group for Difficult Matters, see <http://www.msz.gov.pl>.

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smaller disputes, and to defuse historical wrongs and popular rumors. Their preferred instruments have been both transparency (e.g., publishing the historical reconciliation project on disputed historical incidents) and accountability (e.g., the open investigation of errors and asserted blame in the April 2010 crash in Russia of Lech Kaczynski’s presidential plane).¹⁰

RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVES

The expansion of NATO into the former Eastern Bloc and perceived interference with Russia’s near abroad has become a constant sticking point in U.S.-Russian relations.¹¹ Russia’s near abroad includes all former Soviet republics, the most contentious of which include the Baltics, Georgia, and Ukraine. These countries are considered important for two main reasons: not only do these countries have considerable ethnic Russian populations, but they also represent what traditionally has been regarded as Russia’s “last line of defense” against invading forces. Dramatic decreases in tension levels in Europe and major leaps in both military and civilian technology have made the likelihood of invading armies essentially zero. Yet the symbolism and persistent memory of the horrible losses suffered in World War II remain eternally imprinted on the minds of all Russians.

By 2005, following his disappointments with American “strategic partnership” and George W. Bush, Vladimir Putin put a special spin on these arguments against NATO expansion. He constantly claimed the West was at loggerheads with Russia and that any reliance on the United States to grant Russia the status it deserved was a failed enterprise. In this narrative, the West had consistently indicated that it was unwilling to grant Russia the “respect” Russia deserved or the unquestioned authority it felt justified in asserting over its “rightful” sphere of influence, legitimized by its major investments and sacrifices of blood and treasure in Soviet times.

Putin and others, right and left in the Russian political spectrum, stressed that American and Western hostility underlined the dangers in Russia’s objective stance.¹² By many measures, Russia has since 1991 failed to secure the defenses it has long believed it needed against surprise attack or tactical airstrike, conventional or nuclear. The reason is partially its far lower investment in defensive measures for example, an effective replacement for the largely still-missing

10. See also Jacek Durkalec’s “Reductions of Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Unbinding the Gordian Knot,” PISM Strategic Files #16 (The Polish Institute of International Affairs, May 2011).

11. Russians are not the only ones who argued this. See, for example, the continuing commentaries of Michael Mandelbaum beginning with his *The Dawn of Peace in Europe: A Twentieth Century Fund Book* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996).

12. See Kelleher, “The Future of Cooperative Security,” for further details and historical data.

early warning system disrupted by the loss of republics on Russia’s northern and southern periphery where coverage had been deemed crucial during the Cold War. There have been alternative assignments both to other ground assets and those in space, but reportedly not enough to reassure Russian decision makers against their deep-seated fears of surprise attack—by tactical aircraft or a “bolt out of the blue” missile attack by a rogue state.¹³

But it is also the result of unreconstructed political symbolism in Russia, which for much of the past two decades has equated the United States and NATO in adversarial images and rhetorical terms almost identical to those of the Cold War. In 2008, the military threat from the United States, NATO, and the West ranked highest among a list of threats that concerned the Russian public (more so than terrorism, economic collapse, or the prevalence of social problems such as alcoholism and drug abuse).¹⁴

Russia also continues to face new and demanding threats—from its own south and east, where it believes it cannot necessarily count on support from the West. And, although there is no longer the same fear of escalation to nuclear standoff that occurred at times during the Cold War, Russia cannot afford to ignore the need to overcome its conventional inferiority and uneasiness. Its primary requirement continues to be the modernization of its conventional forces at all levels.

OPTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING RUSSIA-NATO-U.S. ASSURANCE

It remains important to consider options that would strengthen or substitute new elements of assurance for NATO members and Russia in the future. Listed below are what seem to be the most interesting options that might help build the confidence necessary for further NSNW reductions. Options are examined in terms of relative speed and ease of transition; range of popular response or approval; political impact within the Alliance and Russia; and organizational and operational impact.

13. Or even another Mathias Rust incident, in remembrance of the lone German aviator who on May 28, 1987, landed a Cessna in Red Square on the national holiday of the Soviet Border Guards, presumably unobserved. See Carl Wilkinson, “What Happened Next?” *The London Observer*, October 27, 2002.

14. Early in 2010, Russia issued a new national security strategy that downgraded NATO from “a primary danger” to only “a threat.” See Carolina Vendil Pallin, Fredrik Westerlun, “Russia’s Military Doctrine—Expected News” *Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut*, February 3, 2010.

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Organizational Reform in the Interest of Greater Transparency and Accountability within NATO¹⁵

Despite numerous attempts at reform and widened participation over the years, NATO still relies on a relatively small, closed circle to implement Allied participation and provide input into the NATO nuclear planning process. The Nuclear Planning Group and its associated national working contacts and bureaucracies appear not to welcome innovation or change easily. They have, for example, taken turns in blocking the disclosure of all but the most superficial data or information to even the expert public or NATO mission members outside of those with direct and self-certified “need to know,” on the grounds of “Alliance security.”¹⁶

To serve the goals of greater transparency and accountability, this process must be radically re-adjusted and opened up to greater scrutiny and reporting. The increasing interest in the role of the NRC and the new responsibilities it has assumed under the Lisbon 2010 decisions are welcome, but more needs to be reflected in the NATO DDP and in the still-nascent Arms Control subgroup.

Renewal and Reform of CBMs in the Realms of Conventional and Nuclear Deployments

From the 1970s to 1990s, a series of CBMs¹⁷ were developed to both defuse the conventional stalemate in Europe and to contain or mitigate fears of sudden offensive maneuvers across the Central German plain. Many of these were debated and formulated in relation to the Helsinki process. They later were attached to either the CFE treaties or directly to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). All were formed with the dictates of the geography of the Cold War stalemate but also reflected the political acceptability of transparency and accountability to both East and West. They provided a political “cushion” to address security doubts and data oversight during both the break-up of the Soviet Union and the transition to an enlarged membership in Europe. There was also a helpful re-orientation in the 1990s to regional stabilization.

15. See Stanley Sloan, “Permanent Alliance? NATO and the Transatlantic Bargain from Truman to Obama” (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010).

16. In my own experience, states sometimes had a certain relish in taking on the “bad cop” role in their turn. Often decisions declared not possible at NATO because of consensus requirements appeared all the more foolish in the face of national decisions to release documents. The WikiLeaks trove has only heightened this effect.

17. As used here, this term encompasses both those formally known as CBMs (Confidence Building Measures) and CSBMs (Confidence and Security Building Measures). For further background analysis, see the annual chapter reviews in the SIPRI Yearbook (Oxford University Press, 1990–present).

Despite neglect during the last 10 years, and the dismissal of CBMs by some American and European experts as “outdated” or “irrelevant,” most have survived.¹⁸ Their major defect at the moment is the Russian suspension of data transmission and access under CFE, and as will be discussed below, a path to Russian reinstatement is still very much debated. The problem is that they have not been updated or creatively reformulated to respond to strategic concerns about future European stability and security. In several geographic provisions, they currently exacerbate rather than reduce tension over force structures and movement restrictions on the “flanks”—in the Baltic or on the Turkey-Russia border in particular. Moreover, they tend not to integrate the data they collect in a way that is either user-friendly or of great relevance to anyone other than other inspectors or bureaucrats.

Many of these CBMs fall into three categories, all of which could contribute to a new level of assurance:¹⁹

1. Joint education and training, in a transparent mode and on a regular basis;
2. Notification and communication about military movements within specific regions or along NATO-Russia borders, special maneuvers, planned exercises, and major troop rotations or new deployments; and
3. Inspections, either on-site or from the air, under short notice, special permission, or by schedule, with newly constituted or existing organized multilateral teams, to test the presence of certain weapons or to examine items otherwise surveilled (often from the air) but not satisfactorily identified.

The task of reforming, let alone streamlining, these processes while simultaneously negotiating and testing new, more relevant force limits and exercise restraints is enormous and expensive. This is especially true if measured in terms of manpower required for renewing the inspectorate at the national level and perhaps establishing new critical equipment and infrastructure. The U.S. presence is also missing from most of them, both by desire not to be involved and by the insistence of some participants that the United States should not have a crucial role in purely European matters. Neither objection will necessarily pertain in a future re-working and the greater involvement of Americans in the process can help foster assurance. But the gain in confidence and trust both at the expert and public levels is already measurable and the practice of informal consultation and notification in times of surprise or crisis is already well established.

18. See, for example, the essays of several American CFE supporters in Chapter 2, in the only recent comprehensive volume, Wolfgang Zellner, Hans-Joachim Schmidt, and Goetz Neuneck, eds., *The Future of Conventional Arms Control in Europe* (Nomos, 2009).

19. For further analysis, see the essays in Zellner, Schmidt, and Neuneck, eds., *The Future of Conventional Arms Control in Europe*.

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Re-assertion of the Principles of Cooperative Security

Working with Russia in a cooperative security arrangement is an obvious solution to enhancing confidence, one often praised but so far not effectively practiced. What is needed is rapid implementation of a series of key cooperative security principles. One model might be an expansion and extension of the existing frameworks that are now largely unused or undervalued.

One example would be operating the Cooperative Airspace Initiative (CAI), which allows for early warnings regarding rogue airplane intrusions 150 kilometers on each side of the NATO-Russia border area.²⁰ The expansion of the monitoring area to other NATO and Russian zones would make more states “stakeholders” in this process; it probably would require other national monitoring nodes, more data exchange channels, and reorienting any remaining Cold-War geographic scope.

The involvement of more NATO states in this now-tested process should be an easy step; most European states already have both the compatible hardware and software needed under the European civil air traffic control and monitoring network. Extending the geographic reach or creating zones in depth will be somewhat harder and probably will or could stir debate about frozen conflicts, disputed territory spots, and conflicting claims for more information than states traditionally have been willing to part with. There are, however, obvious payoffs both for territorial defense and the anti-terrorist efforts now enjoying some popularity. Greater transparency could increase public support further and calm anxiety. With resolve, and perhaps the assignment of CAI to a more accountable multilateral governing body, it could be doable in the next four to five years.

Another option explored by Sidney Drell and Christopher Stubbs, is expanding the long-neglected Open Skies Initiative, a treaty-based regime that dates from the beginning of the 1990s and involves data collection and aerial inspections.²¹ Its extension to chemical weapons monitoring functions, and perhaps a more limited biological weapon oversight function, will allow cost-savings, arms control and defense synergies, and increase the scientific basis for international action and national sanctions. The regime’s pie-shaped areas, bilateral inspection quotas, and multinational monitoring techniques might provide unique answers to the usual concerns about inspections confined to Cold War geography or the unequal treatment of Russia.

Updating these regimes—building on the tradition of CBMs from the 1980s and 1990s—would require more powerful data exchange networks, data fusion centers, joint training regimes, and regular reporting exchanges. It could also

20. Anya Loukianova, *Cooperative Airspace Security in the Euro-Atlantic Region* which includes a review of all the earlier airborne monitoring systems.

21. Drell and Stubbs, *Realizing the Full Potential of the Open Skies Treaty*.

involve steps toward the design or cooperative production of monitoring equipment, or for training scenarios using the latest in social media techniques for popular participation.

Institutions Acceptable to All

In the two decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union, neither the West nor Russia has found a satisfactory solution to the question of an appropriate institutional framework to assure regular negotiations, bargaining, and even exchanging strategic information beyond bilateral channels. Russia expected to be treated well after 1991 because of its former superpower status and the way it had surrendered its identity, its territory, its CEE Allies, and its nuclear weapons. It was not. In some respects, it is truly a “dialogue of the deaf.” NATO, the European Union, the OSCE, or the CFE regime all placed Russia in the unenviable position of being the one against all the rest, the focus or the target of action of the others. Russia has been and continues to be unwilling to accept an unequal status; this is especially true when dealing with states it regards as its “near abroad” or “rightful” sphere of influence or that were former Soviet Republics. Russian sensitivities are perhaps highest regarding those in northern Europe for both political and strategic reasons but the sense of “special privilege” extends to all the Russian western and southern borderlands.

Events in early 2010 and up to the present demonstrate that the Russian leadership wants to return to the international game, making specific proposals and seeking advantage rather than engaging in simple oppositional diplomacy. In part this is reflected in the positive turn of the arms control negotiations, which President Dimitri Medvedev and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov have fostered and defended on numerous occasions. The Russian leadership clearly welcomed Obama’s avowed willingness to “reset” and his transformation of Bush plans for missile defense, even while publicly declaring that missile defense plans would remain a problem in the future. Despite tough and sometimes confusing public rhetoric and hard bargaining in private, the Medvedev government has been rather responsive to Obama administration requests.²² The favorable responses include increasing rights to overflights to Afghanistan; supporting nonproliferation bilaterally and at the UN vis-à-vis Iran; signing the New START treaty in 2010; renewing and continuing arms control/missile defense talks at Brussels, Geneva, and elsewhere; and avoiding further turbulence in Europe on the level of previous energy shutdowns or food boycotts, let alone the use of military force as in Georgia.

22. The question for the next months is the degree to which Vladimir Putin’s decision to return to the Russian presidency after the March 2012 elections will change these choices.

Central Asia is
for now and the
immediate future
a key area where
U.S. and Russian
interests intersect . . .

The NRC has at least the potential to be a new type of institutional platform for cooperation. Since its inception in 1997, however, the NRC has never received the attention it could have had or been fully exploited for its cooperation potential by either the United States or Russia. Both the Lisbon decisions and the appointment of important Russian and U.S. representatives have changed its image and it clearly now has a profile that might well be solidified with achieving a new significant agreement that goes beyond its formal status or a simple bilateral arrangement. The NRC, however, is not an institution that itself can or will change the fundamental relationships.

NATO-COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANIZATION LINKAGE? Zbigniew Brzezinski argued in 2009 to create a new basis for engagement with Russia and partnership in global security cooperation.²³ Russia is clearly not going to join NATO and the OSCE and the CFE treaty will not be restored to their former glory in their present forms. Why not therefore link a NATO relationship with the Russia-led CSTO for functional cooperation as appropriate? Brzezinski saw a critical near term task: linking NATO's efforts to ensure stabilization or the deployment of peacekeeping forces post-Iraq and/or post-Afghanistan to Russian stakes to its south and the provision of forces or logistics.

Central Asia is for now and the immediate future a key area where U.S. and Russian interests intersect because NATO needs access to Central Asian airfields and Russian airspace for supplies. However, it remains to be seen whether the American drawdown in Afghanistan will affect these relationships and how the manpower needed to prevent a Taliban restoration or to avoid a division of control over either Kabul or the hinterland would be constructed and maintained. Moreover, the Kremlin blames the war in Afghanistan for the extremely high heroin usage rates throughout Russia.²⁴

The region has also become increasingly important for China, who has no desire to see foreign military forces near its western border. Brzezinski suggests that eventually the new partnership arrangement with Russia might lead to a link with the Shanghai Cooperation Council, where China plays a leadership role, albeit one focused primarily on regional economics. It might also allow for an easing of the friction that the membership of some Central Asian states in both the CSTO and Partnership for Peace has generated in the past, and enlarge the agenda for training and engagement of the emerging military forces and the border police in the region.

23. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "An Agenda for NATO," *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2009, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65240/zbigniew-brzezinski/an-agenda-for-nato>.

24. CNN Global Public Square, "Russia's Afghan Addiction," July 25, 2011, <http://globalpublicsquare.blogs.cnn.com/2011/07/25/russias-afghan-addiction>.

Missile Defense in Europe: A Game Changer in Waiting

The search bilaterally and within NATO for new cooperative mechanisms in European missile defense represents an ambitious effort to craft game-changing strategies that meet strategic concerns or permit measurable perceptions of risk reductions on all sides.

The need to establish a new crisis/early warning system ideally would involve cooperation with the Russians on a continuous basis. Russian cooperation with the Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Military Defense/European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) arrangements is a critical element of most European missile defense plans and could be a functional “game changer.” It has the additional advantage of involving all NATO members as stakeholders. First the Lisbon Declaration of 2010 emphasized the primary NRC responsibilities in this field. If implemented as currently under discussion in unofficial NATO-Russia encounters and Track II discussions such as the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative group,²⁵ the European missile defense framework will involve interceptors from several nations—at a minimum, Great Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Spain—and the radar/sensors located throughout the region to support an early response mission. Other NATO members will presumably have the chance to participate in the early warning system, the data exchanges, and the specialized training that will be required. Russian cooperation in all of these activities will allow for a broader geographic sweep and the use of radar on Russian territory to deal with missile threats coming from the South (presumably from Iran) and the East (perhaps North Korea or China).

There is no question that hardliners, particularly in the military, still see a looming follow-on threat in U.S. conventional strategic superiority, and the plan for EPAA as the first step toward a series of linked regional missile defense schemes, for example in East Asia and the Gulf. There is, however, a better fundamental state of strategic cooperation on which to build and that can be expanded to support American and Russian interests and tradeoffs. There are some elites among the NATO Allies—for example, in government circles in Germany—who see missile defense as itself providing a new form of deterrence. It is also worth noting that it would build on the over 100 strategic data exchanges that have taken place between the United States and Russia, and which resumed in March 2011 under the terms of New START.

25. For further details, see the EASI website, www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/special/misc/easi/. Reports of EASI working groups are to be published by February 2012.

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Revising and Redefining the CFE

The revision and redefinition of the CFE Treaty is an enterprise that could—as in the past decade—consume years in long, detailed negotiation fraught with dangerous involvement in presidential electoral politics and technical details. Russia’s suspension of its CFE participation in reporting and allowing prescribed inspections over time has led to a hardening of positions despite there being no new threats or risks visible, at least publicly. Many in Moscow—but also in Washington—dismiss CFE as either too hard to tackle or too inconsequential because some of its detailed arrangements still reflect Cold War concerns.

It is hard, however, to imagine any movement on NSNW that does not involve movement on the basic issues of transparency and accountability that CFE encompasses. The decisions made in 1999 on the flank problems and the removal of Russian bases in Georgia and Transnistria have to be swept away with a face saving formula for all, given the objective facts of the Georgian war and NATO’s de-facto air policing in the Baltic region. Moreover, if the European missile defense scheme goes forward, maps for inspection and verification, and their underlying political assumptions, will surely have to be redrawn—especially if Turkey’s recent decision to site early warning radars on its territory hold true.²⁶

Not everything has to be resolved at once. There are ways to take immediate action to indicate future cooperative intent, for example, an immediate unilateral or paired unilateral force level freeze in the critical categories at present levels—establishing present maxima below the formal treaty limits.²⁷ More profitable might be designing a set of phased experiments involving all CFE countries in dyads or triads to test the contribution new technologies might allow to the verification regime. These could be done in designated regional “slices” redrawn to be acceptable to all, thus overcoming Russian fears of singularity, and allowing inspection skills to be refreshed and mutual discussions to occur.

THE WAY FORWARD

Searching for credible substitutes for NSNW is in many respects a foolish construction whether pushed by the United States, the NATO Allies, or the Russians themselves. To reiterate: there is no totally satisfactory replacement for what is essentially an intellectual construct tied rather imperfectly to a weapons category

26. Rick Gladstone, “Turkey to Install U.S.-Designed Radar, in a Move Seen as Blunting Iran’s Missiles” *New York Times*, September 3, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/03/world/europe/03missile.html>.

27. See Ulrich Kuehn, “CFE: Overcoming the Impasse,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, July 7, 2010, http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/CFE:_Overcoming_the_Impasse-14892.

that has shrunk and changed in character over the years. At its core, assurance is about political beliefs and perceptions, and therefore political stakes. Identifying and protecting these are crucial. It will not be sufficient to leave future developments to what is often cited as the last refuge of scoundrels and politicians: a call for greater leadership or political will.