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Evolving Russian Perspectives on Missile Defense: The Emerging Accommodation

**Foreword by
Amb. Max Kampelman**

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Prepared by:
Russian Senior Review Group

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Foreword by Amb. Max Kampelman..... | i |
| Executive Summary..... | iv |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Strategic Policy in Putin’s Russia | 6 |
| <i>Nuclear Weapons In Russian Policy and Doctrine</i> | 7 |
| <i>START II Ratification</i> | 8 |
| Russian Responses to U.S. Missile Defense Initiatives | 14 |
| <i>November 2000 to May 2001: Moscow Prepares for a New U.S. Policy</i> | 15 |
| <i>May 2001: Russian Reaction</i> | 22 |
| <i>Impact of U.S. Politics on the Russian Position</i> | 31 |
| <i>The June 2001 Ljubljana Summit</i> | 31 |
| <i>The July 2001 Genoa Summit</i> | 34 |
| <i>September 11, 2001</i> | 37 |
| <i>The Shanghai Summit</i> | 42 |
| <i>The Crawford (Texas) Summit</i> | 44 |
| <i>U.S. Announcement on ABM Treaty Withdrawal</i> | 46 |
| Conclusion..... | 53 |
| <i>Russian Perspectives on the Way Forward</i> | 53 |
| <i>Technical Cooperation</i> | 56 |
| <i>Clarity</i> | 56 |
| <i>Need for Mutual Accommodation Through Dialog</i> | 58 |

Evolving Russian Perspectives on Missile Defense: The Emerging Accommodation

Foreword

**By
Amb. Max Kampelman**

The 21st Century is beginning with encouraging signs that the Cold War may indeed be buried as a footnote in history. Other crises, such as the issue of terrorism, could well hasten that burial. Much will depend on whether the missile defense differences between the United States and Russia will, in spite of press reports and political hand wringing, dissipate and become, instead, a vehicle for stability between our two countries.

In 1983 President Reagan initiated the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) project to explore and develop new defensive technologies. He publicly, as well as privately, expressed his desire to work cooperatively with Moscow, especially given the fact that “rogue states” were developing missile technology capable of carrying nuclear, biological and chemical warheads of mass destruction. The Soviets were, however, highly suspicious of our motives at the time, and viewed the ABM Treaty as a critical tool for constraining our defensive technological capacities.

It was my privilege from 1985 to 1990 to head the United States Delegation at the Geneva negotiations with the Soviet Union on nuclear arms reduction and missile defenses. When our talks began, the Soviets informed us that they would not agree to any reductions in offensive nuclear missiles unless we agreed to end our strategic defense initiative. Endless discussions between us in Geneva, and between Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, strengthened by exchanges between Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev, led to treaties completely eliminating all intermediate range missiles and significantly reducing the number of strategic nuclear missiles on both sides. These treaties were not contingent on any change in our stated determination to proceed with our missile defense program! It was clear to me that the Soviets were beginning to waver in their concerns about our missile defense plans.

After the Soviet Union collapsed, the dialog continued with newly independent Russia. A constructive initiative by Russia’s President Yeltsin in 1992 demonstrated that they were beginning to re-evaluate the new missile threats. Harkening back to President Reagan’s vision of bi-lateral cooperation on missile defense, Yeltsin, at the United Nations, proposed the development of a joint United Nations global protection system. This followed a January 1992 statement by Marshal Shaposhnikov, the Commander of the Joint Armed Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States, who stated that it was essential to “control space so that no unauthorized employment of such weapons (ballistic missiles) can be undertaken by any third country.” He went on to say that “it is

time to think about a global defense system.” Vladimir Lukin, in October 1991, who was then Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Supreme Soviet and later became Deputy Chairman of the Duma, said, “. . .The United States is extending a hand to us for a real alliance in the nuclear sphere and the strategic defense system. If we agree on this, we could be talking about a strategic defense system for the whole of mankind -- that is, a situation will arise where we, together with the United States, Europe, and all democratic countries, will protect ourselves from people such as Saddam, capable of destroying mankind.”

As this valuable report narrates, the Ross/Mamedov high-level talks between the United States and Russia seemed to lead to further agreements and understandings between us with respect to how we could proceed with missile defenses within the context of maintaining stability between our two countries. Regrettably, the Clinton administration opposed, at that time, U.S. missile defense deployment, and discontinued the promising Ross/Mamedov talks. To fill that void, talks were carried on informally by Americans, who were not government representatives, with Russians who were assumed to be without governmental authority. The National Institute for Public Policy, under the able direction of Dr. Keith Payne, played a major role in this constructive undertaking.

In 1997, I had the privilege of testifying before the International Security Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. The subject of the hearing, chaired by Senator Thad Cochran, was the need for the United States and the Russian Federation to reach some accommodation on the subject of missile defenses and the future of the 1972 ABM Treaty. In essence, my position then was that the United States and Russia ought seriously to explore cooperative ways in which our respective national interests with regards to missile defense could be satisfied. I noted President Reagan’s pledge to share our research findings with the Soviet Union. I believed then that the United States and Russia could find a cooperative solution to the issue of missile defense. The thought remains valid.

This prospect may at first glance appear today to be anachronistic. The United States has already announced its intent to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, and Russian officials continue to voice their opposition to our missile defense objectives. Today’s news, however, represents only a single point along the path that promises to lead to a more cooperative future.

Prior to the adoption of the ABM Treaty, in the midst of the Cold War atmosphere, the United States argued that limiting rather than extending strategic defenses was desirable because it would eliminate the incentive to increase our respective offensive arsenals. The Soviet Union disagreed at the time, arguing that missile defense was a preferable alternative to relying primarily on offensive deterrents for security. With time and negotiations, Soviet concerns about the advancement of U.S. missile defense technology, accompanied by U.S. concerns about the expansion of the Soviet offensive arsenal, led both nations in 1972 to sign the ABM Treaty. It is important to note that even then, both sides recognized that they had not written the final word on missile defense. The Treaty’s Agreed Statement D dealt with the need for further talks to address new

technologies that would surely develop; and Articles 13 and 14 provided a mechanism for amending the Treaty. Article 15 also gave both sides the ability to withdraw from the Treaty should it cease to serve their national interests.

The sides continue to reassess their interests in missile defense today. Russia's President Valdimir Putin agrees with President Bush "when he says the world is changing very rapidly, and that new threats could emerge." He also publicly suggested a joint early warning system to be located in Russia. It would not take too much of a jump to extend this idea to include a joint missile interception plan as well. Putin has also called for "umbrellas" to "jointly protect all of Europe," a proposal which some knowledgeable Russians interpret as meaning "boost phase" defenses. More recently, he has proposed a "non-strategic" European missile defense program to protect armed forces and civilians. Putin must obviously appreciate that by encouraging European defenses, he implicitly acquiesces to the U.S. intent to find appropriate missile defenses for ourselves.

The study that follows is a valuable contribution to the subject of missile defense, designed to strengthen a process of cooperation between the United States and Russia as we look to arrive at a mutually agreed-upon strategic approach to stability in the 21st Century. President George W. Bush has defined this as seeking "a new framework" that once and for all removes us and Russia from the mutual threat of annihilation that is the foundation of our Cold War relationship and years of strategic planning. Russia is still struggling to accept the dimensions of that new relationship. This report deals with the influence of domestic politics in Russia, its international aspirations, and its strategic uncertainties. It appears that President Putin is interested in developing a new strategic relationship with the United States.

The National Institute for Public Policy has gathered a group of accomplished Russian scholars, who have presented a first-class account of what Putin's Russia believes about our current missile defense program, and why. The report presents a detailed account of Russian actions and perceptions. We in the United States may not agree with those perceptions and interpretations, but I am convinced that they will mature, and that understanding them is a key step toward the time when the United States and Russia can take a joint path toward the security of our nations.

A mutual accommodation has already begun. The United States, after extensive consultations, has expressed its baseline interest in missile defense by initiating the ABM Treaty-defined procedures for withdrawal. Our task now is to broaden the relationship between our two countries. Russia has muted its reaction to our withdrawal notice, and focused its attention on offensive force reductions as an essential part of the "new strategic framework." This new framework will probably evolve; the two sides are likely to move further down the path of accommodation on missile defenses, along with offensive reductions. The process for reciprocal understanding is underway. The paper that follows will make a significant contribution toward that end.

Evolving Russian Perspectives on Missile Defense: The Emerging Accommodation

Executive Summary

By the end of the 1990s, the bilateral U.S.-Russian strategic arms control process had reached an impasse. There are a number of reasons for this: domestic Russian turmoil, including intense rivalry between Russia's legislative and executive branches; stalled ratification of the START II strategic arms reduction treaty; crises in Iraq and Kosovo caused disruptions in Russian-U.S. bilateral relations; and both governments were preoccupied with other issues. However, the roots of this impasse lay in attempts by the Clinton and Yeltsin governments to artificially preserve an arms control process rooted in mutual assured destruction (MAD). The possibility of moving beyond MAD in the context of early 1990s Russian proposals for cooperative missile defense was undermined by U.S. administration commitments for Cold War era arms control. The Clinton administration regrettably summarily abandoned the Ross-Mamedov talks that had been convened to study the President Yeltsin's dramatic missile defense proposals. Later, nationalist and Communist politicians came to dominate the Russian legislature and Yeltsin's own administration proved increasingly distrustful of the West and ill disposed to cooperation with the United States.

The need for an accommodation over ballistic missile defense (BMD) and arms control remains evident, despite an increase in mutual suspicions. Despite strong internal sources of anti-Americanism, several factors remain in favor of accommodation on the Russian side: the growing realization that Moscow cannot prevent a U.S. National Missile Defense (NMD) deployment decision; the relatively widespread understanding that a limited U.S. national defensive system will not alter the overall balance of forces for the foreseeable future; and eagerness to get certain "trade-offs" within the arms control process. For such potential to bear fruit, it is essential that all the participants have a clear understanding of Putin-era Russia's stakes, both international and domestic, in the outcome.

As Yeltsin's handpicked successor, Vladimir Putin inherited awesome problems in every area of Russian domestic and foreign policy. However, military issues presented a particularly pressing problem for a government eager to assert Russia's rightful role as a "great power" in the world. This has led to a steady increase in the policy and doctrinal emphasis placed on Russia nuclear weapons--a trend begun under Yeltsin. It has also led to Russia's ratification of START II, a process that locks the United States into a relationship of "parity" with the otherwise declining Russian arsenal.

A new U.S. administration in 2001, with promises of a new emphasis on missile defense, has challenged Russian support for maintaining the strategic status quo. While waiting for the Americans to make their objectives known, Putin made a firm choice in favor of the "traditionalist" line as an opening gambit. This has taken the shape of: repeated refusals to consider amending or moving beyond the ABM Treaty; pledges of an "asymmetric" counter to NMD (e.g., installing multiple warheads on the new Topol M

missile); a “strategic partnership” with China; attempts to drive a wedge between the U.S. and its European allies on arms control; and a concerted Russian-Chinese effort to internationalize the ABM Treaty issue and broaden the constituency opposing U.S. NMD.

Putin’s choices apparently were suggested by: mounting internal pressures in favor of a “tough” foreign policy to match the Kremlin’s domestic exercise of power; growing apprehension about U.S. strategic plans; a desire to forestall a U.S. NMD deployment decision for as long as possible; and the intention to set the stage for future negotiations by establishing an opening position of Russian intransigence—the better to leverage future concessions from Washington.

President Bush’s May 1, 2001 speech outlining the administration’s broad BMD strategy and endorsing a new bilateral strategic framework was a jolt to the Russians. Many realized its potential significance as a watershed in bilateral arms control leading to the overhaul of the Cold War-based relationship. In response to the speech, Putin reconfirmed a long-standing Russian position that the existing status quo in bilateral relations is preferable to drastic changes. Russian officials and analysts continued to express skepticism of U.S. intentions, asserting that NMD was aimed at them and part of a U.S. attempt to secure geopolitical domination. Russia again emphasized its available “asymmetric” responses to NMD. The shift in control of the U.S. Senate, and its potential to slow Bush administration BMD plans, also encouraged firm Russian resistance to change in the status quo.

The June 2001 Ljubljana summit served several purposes: it allowed the leaders of both nations to meet each other directly and establish a personal relationship; both sides had an opportunity to clarify their positions on arms control and other issues; and the Presidents agreed on holding expert meetings on threat assessment and other BMD-related issues. The summit did not result in a major breakthrough in bilateral relations. At least as far as Russia is concerned, it appeared to contribute to the pessimistic perspective on the future of arms control.

By the time of the Genoa summit a month later, Moscow indicated a utility in accepting the idea of a substantive dialog on strategic stability; if only as the best possible alternative given U.S. determination to move forward on BMD and a recent successful test of NMD technology.

The terrorist attacks on the U.S. in September changed the dynamic of the bilateral relationship. From the Russian perspective, a new, closer Russian-U.S. relationship could, in effect, occur “over the head” of the bilateral disagreement on missile defense and facilitate other Russian interests, for example with respect to Chechnya and Russian concern about extremist Islam on its southern borders.

By the time of the Shanghai and Crawford, Texas summits, Russia continued to insist on no substantive change to the ABM Treaty thus, demonstrating the continued importance of traditionalists in domestic politics. For Putin, the cost (both in terms of domestic politics and international stature) of making a concession on the ABM Treaty sufficient

to satisfy American interests outweighed the value of a preserved Treaty for Russian prestige and security. The obvious value to both countries of a new, broader bilateral relationship overshadowed the impending dispute over the Treaty's future.

After the official U.S. announcement of impending ABM Treaty withdrawal the Putin government made only moderate objections. The Russian president demonstrated a willingness to maintain the bilateral relationship and continue engagement with Washington in pursuit of Russian interests. Although the Russian government was unwilling to make concessions sufficient to satisfy American BMD interests, it nevertheless refrained from extreme rhetorical or military technical responses. In effect, this is the beginning of a uniquely Russian accommodation of the American interest in BMD.

To a certain extent, apparently most of those involved in the arms control policy discussion in Moscow agree on some basic issues. However they disagree on the conclusions to be derived from those points of agreement. Traditionalists essentially support maintaining parity with the United States by rebuilding Russia's deterrence capability. Alternatively, there are Russian voices more inclined to moving beyond disagreement over BMD and reaching a more functional accommodation with the United States that would support the potential for broader Russian reforms.

Given its response to the U.S. withdrawal announcement, the Putin government appears reasonably pragmatic and ready to understand the limitations for Russia given the paramount need for to focus on internal problems rather than rivalry. Putin has given conditional personal support for the search of new openings in U.S.-Russian relations. He also recognizes that the West, in particular the United States, may be useful, if not necessary, in Russia's effort to address issues like the economy, internal security challenges, withstanding regional pressures, etc. The limited value and scope of partnerships with China and "rogue" states is also recognized.

Avenues for moving the dialog forward could involve:

- Technical cooperation in BMD is some incentive for accommodating the United States, but it does have important limits;
- Clarity in the U.S. position would be valuable because it would define issues in ways tractable for Kremlin decisionmakers. It appears that current Russian intransigence is as much a product of American ambiguity as of opposition to the substance of U.S. actions;
- Dialog involving, most importantly, restarting a bilateral exchange with a mandate as broad as that of 1992's Ross-Mamedov process; and
- A holistic approach from the American side that imbeds the strategic dialog in a broader web of bilateral relations including everything from agriculture to the World Trade Organization.

Washington must be cautious not to approach this process as something it imposes on Moscow's already fitful adjustment to the post Cold War world—but it must at the same time make its fundamental interests clear and direct. Only a high level of directness will allow Russia's elite to recognize the limitations imposed by intransigence. And only a sincere effort by Washington to court an accommodation between equals will allow Russia to accept the reality that changing the strategic status quo can possibly benefit Russia.

Evolving Russian Perspectives on Missile Defense: The Emerging Accommodation

Introduction

By the end of the 1990s, the U.S.-Russian strategic arms control process had reached an impasse. There were a number of reasons for this: domestic Russian turmoil, including intense rivalry between Russia's legislative and executive branches, stalled ratification of the START II strategic arms reduction treaty; crises in Iraq and Kosovo caused disruptions in Russian-U.S. relations; and both governments were preoccupied with other issues.

Ultimately, the stagnation of traditional arms control was rooted in attempts by the Clinton and Yeltsin governments to artificially preserve the Cold War era notion of security rooted in mutual assured destruction (MAD) that was the foundation of the traditional arms control process. During much of the 1990s, the United States, when it focused on the bilateral process at all, appeared determined to continue the Cold War dialog without regard for the changed global environment. Meanwhile, for Russia, arms control became a domestic litmus test of political affiliations and a diplomatic tool for maintaining the prestige of "strategic parity" with the United States. Arms control also became a tool for pursuing "multipolarity" via constraints on the United States as the sole remaining superpower—most notably in the area of missile defense.

The failure of the sides to fundamentally revise the arms control process is most clearly demonstrated by example. Soon after the formal proclamation of Russian independence, President Yeltsin proposed in a speech at the United Nations General Assembly "to deploy and operate jointly a Global System to Protect Against the Threat of Ballistic Missile Attack [GPS], based on a revised American SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] and advanced technologies developed by the Russian military-industrial complex."¹ A high-level group was established in accordance with the Joint Russian-U.S. Statement

¹ Aleksei Arbatov et. al., "Anti-Missile Protection and Russian Politics," *Implications of Strategic Defense Deployments for U.S.-Russian Relations*, Washington, D.C., 1992: p. 9.

adopted at the subsequent Bush-Yeltsin summit of June 17, 1992 to begin the implementation of the GPS proposal.²

The dialog, known as the Ross-Mamedov talks after senior U.S. and Russian participants Dennis Ross and Georgei Mamedov, had a broad agenda. That process ultimately demonstrated the willingness of both sides to modify the arms control regime built around MAD, particularly the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. For example, in a striking departure from Cold War tradition, Moscow declared that a joint ballistic missile defense (BMD) effort would not violate the ABM Treaty because the system would not be “national.” According to a senior Russian Foreign Ministry official, the Treaty “restricts national defenses, while a global defense system that is to be developed, created and operated jointly on a multilateral basis, is not viewed by us as a national system.”³

In the context of that progress on defensive systems, the sides also moved forward in addressing offensive weapons. On May 23, 1992, representatives of the United States, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Russia, and the Ukraine signed a Protocol to the START I Treaty in Lisbon, Portugal in which the four new nuclear states assumed the Soviet Union’s obligations under the Treaty.⁴ The Protocol also obligated Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to adhere to the 1968 Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear weapons states and to take necessary actions to that end.⁵ The Protocol allowed these three states to begin the removal of all nuclear weapons from their territories over the entire seven year period of the implementation of START I, theoretically until 2001.⁶

² The group’s mandate was to explore possibilities for sharing early warning data through the establishment of an early warning center and setting up cooperation in BMD technology and capability development; and review changes to existing treaties and the development of new ones to implement a Global Protection System. See Office of the Press Secretary, White House, “Joint U.S.-Russian Statement on Global Protection System,” Washington, D.C., June 17, 1992.

³ Press Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembski, “Statement of Foreign Minister Grigorii Berdennikov on Russian-American Consultations on Global Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense,” MID Press Center, Moscow, July 17, 1992.

⁴ Pamela Fessler, “With the Cold War’s Urgency Faded, The Senate Ratifies START,” *Congressional Quarterly*, October 3, 1991: p. 3069.

⁵ *The START Treaty: Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), p. 10.

⁶ Removal of all Ukrainian nuclear warheads into Russia was completed on June 2, 1996. By 1998, Ukraine was also supposed to destroy its last strategic ICBMs (130 silo-based SS-19s). Belarus completed the removal of its last ICBMs (SS-25s) by late November 1996, while all Belorussian warheads were removed earlier. See Vladimir Orlov, “The Non-Nuclear Argument of Minsk,” *Yadernyi Kontrol*, No 24, December 1996: p. 6.

Presidents Bush and Yeltsin agreed on June 17, 1992 to the basic principles of a START II Treaty.⁷ By signing START II, Yeltsin committed Russia to a ban on heavy land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and all land-based strategic missiles with multiple warheads—the traditional cornerstone of the Soviet strategic triad. It is important to reiterate that all of this progress took place within the context of a broader strategic dialog that, particularly in the case of Ross-Mamedov, recognized that a change in the bilateral strategic relationship was desirable.

However, that dialog proved short-lived. The Clinton Administration's priorities were defined by enthusiastic support for the traditional arms control process (i.e., they saw START II in that context rather than as a first step in transforming the strategic relationship) and antipathy towards the concept of strategic missile defense. U.S. proposals for modifying the ABM Treaty were withdrawn from negotiations. Despite significant Russian interest in continuing the Ross-Mamedov dialog, the United States abandoned the talks.

The U.S. insistence on “business as usual” in arms control can be seen as a *de facto* abandonment of an opportunity to revise the strategic underpinnings of the bilateral relationship. Under those circumstances, Moscow too proved unable to carry through with a desire for a shift in strategic paradigm. A host of domestic problems, and Yeltsin's inability to show results from viewing the Americans as “strategic partners,” undermined support for the Russian President. By the mid-1990s, nationalist and Communist politicians dominated the Russian legislature and Yeltsin's own administration proved increasingly distrustful of the West and ill disposed to cooperation with the United States.

Ross-Mamedov represents a lost opportunity to redefine the bilateral strategic relationship. However, the fundamental need for an accommodation over BMD and arms control remains evident, despite an increase in the sides' mutual suspicions. Strong internal sources of anti-Americanism notwithstanding, several factors are in favor of

⁷ Janet Hook, “The Pressure is on to Salvage 102nd Congress' Reputation,” *Congressional Quarterly*, September 5, 1992: p. 2629.

accommodation on the Russian side: the growing realization that Moscow would be unable to prevent an eventual U.S. National Missile Defense (NMD) deployment decision; the relatively widespread understanding that a limited U.S. national defensive system would not alter the overall balance of forces for the foreseeable future;⁸ and eagerness to get certain “trade-offs” within the arms control process.⁹

The emergence of the Vladimir Putin regime created new opportunities for bilateral accommodation. As a representative of the pragmatic breed of Russian politicians, Putin wanted to bring change to Russian internal and foreign policies in order to improve the country’s chances for revival. However, his regime also remained under the strong influence of ideas of Russian “grandeur” and superpower status.

Tactically, the Putin administration opted for a “two-track” approach to dealing with the U.S. on arms control and BMD. On the one hand, he started sending accommodating messages to Washington implying potential compromise on such issues as the revision of the ABM Treaty. On the other hand, Putin tried to keep up pressure on the U.S. in order to get the best possible terms should circumstances favoring compromise begin to emerge.

In line with the traditional Soviet “grand strategy” approach to foreign policy, Vladimir Putin tried to improve Russia’s position in the BMD controversy with the U.S. by allying with third powers, notably China and U.S. Western European partners. Moscow offered “non-strategic alternatives” to NMD, e.g. the European ABM shield. At the same time, it threatened to unleash a range of “asymmetric” measures in case the U.S. moves to deploy NMD.

⁸ In his July 11, 2001 interview with the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, Vladimir Putin emphasized: “In terms of assuring Russia’s security, unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty causes absolutely no concern on our part... Even if they have successful tests [related to the development of the U.S. NMD, according to our and American experts, they would be able to hit one, two, five, even twenty, and even hundred missiles, however if you talk about thousands, this becomes unrealistic.” <<http://president.kremlin.ru/events/259.html>>

⁹ In the opinion of Sergei Rogov, Director of the U.S. and Canada Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, “Washington’s decision [on NMD deployment] will be determined by purely technical and domestic political considerations.” See Sergei Rogov, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, February 8, 2000: p.3. See also Lev Semeiko, “It Is in Russia’s Interests to Say ‘Yes,’” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, March 24, 2000: p. 3.

A qualitatively new situation began to emerge in bilateral relation under the impact of the American approach to missile defense as presented by the U.S. President on May 1, 2001. The Russian leaders were pleased with the American offer of consultations on issues of strategic stability. Accommodating tendencies in the Russian position gained additional momentum as the result of the summits held between U.S. and Russian chief executives in summer-fall 2001, despite attempts by Russian “traditionalists” to prevent any rapprochement of the sides.

In response to tragic events of September 11, 2001, Vladimir Putin declared Russian readiness to seek partnership relations with the U.S. This created a favorable background for addressing key arms control problems. Until mid-December 2001, in intense exchanges, including negotiations at the presidential level, the U.S. and Russia looked for ways that might both preserve the traditional framework for arms control, including the ABM Treaty, (which was the Russian preference), and open up ways to the emerging BMD technologies perceived vital for protection against new security threats (the U.S. position). Both sides also concluded they would proceed with substantial offensive weapons reductions in view of the significantly improved bilateral relations. They announced their readiness to develop a specific framework for such reductions.

On December 13, 2001, the U.S. made an announcement of its decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty. The announcement was met with muted objections from Moscow. The Putin government had clearly decided that the value of the ABM Treaty was not worth the cost of being seen to make concessions in order to preserve it. This unusual form of accommodation created a qualitatively new situation in bilateral relations requiring fundamental rethinking and reshaping of arms control practices and regimes. The central issue at this point is whether the two nations will be able to take full advantage of the new opportunities that are open to them.

This report emphasizes the contradictory influences of competing power groups in the Russian ruling elite on the formulation and implementation of Russian arms control policy. Despite many twists and turns that have occurred since independence, Russian arms control strategy and goals remain heavily influenced by Soviet tradition. Movement

towards identifying the genuine interests of the new Russian state is slow and contradictory. To a large extent, Russian policy is reactive to the policies of other global powers, particularly the United States.

This report builds on the foundation laid by National Institute for Public Policy's earlier Joint U.S.-Russian efforts to assess the potential for accommodation on missile defense and the ABM Treaty.¹⁰ Those efforts accurately forecast the evolution of Yeltsin-era arms control and the current impasse in U.S.-Russian relations over NMD. The essential task of the current renewed joint effort of U.S. and Russian researchers is to assist in finding mutually acceptable ways out of that impasse.

Strategic Policy in Putin's Russia

At the end of his political career, Russian President Boris Yeltsin sought a successor who would assure his immunity from criminal prosecution after leaving office. Finally, he chose a little-known "apparatchik," a former Committee of State Security (KGB) officer in East Germany, official in St. Petersburg and head of the National Security Council, Vladimir Putin. Pro-Yeltsin forces invested heavily in electing Putin President of Russia in the national elections on March 26, 2000. To a large degree, Putin owed his ascendancy to the support of the Russian "oligarchs," the handful of men who represented much of the country's private wealth, and the "power ministers," who increased their political clout as the result of the renewed military campaign in the rebellious southern republic of Chechnya.

Putin inherited awesome problems in every area of Russian domestic and foreign policy. However, military issues presented a particularly pressing problem for a government eager to assert Russia's rightful role as a "great power" in the world. Russian conventional forces had deteriorated dramatically, as demonstrated by the failure of the regular army to defeat the Chechen insurgency during the 1994-1996 conflict.

¹⁰ "Cold Peace or Cooperation? The Potential for U.S.-Russian Accommodation on Missile Defense and the ABM Treaty," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 16 No. 2, April-June 1997: pp. 119-227.

Nuclear Weapons In Russian Policy and Doctrine

On June 28, 2000, Putin approved a new version of the “Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation.” In a major shift from his predecessor, who often disagreed with Western policies, particularly eastward North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expansion, but consistently tried to treat the United States and other Western powers as Russia’s partners, Putin did not hesitate to emphasize the primordial importance of the “Western threat” for the Russian Federation in the new “Concept.” This clearly reflected pressure from a military that had yet to come to terms with the “loss” of a traditional Cold War enemy. Colonel-General Igor Puzanov presented a typical assessment of the Russian military elite on the issue: “NATO remains our adversary even without any threats. Whether we want it or not, we should be ready to oppose the Alliance. This is not something that calls for idealism. I think and I hope that we will make the necessary moves in the proper direction soon. In any case, the army relies on the new President.”¹¹

According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, updating the “Concept” adopted by Yeltsin in his Directive No. 284-rp of April 23, 1993 was necessary since “certain plans related to establishing new, equitable and mutually advantageous partnership relations of Russia with the rest of the world... have not been justified.” The June 28 document was a stark departure from Yeltsin’s “Concept” as well as the “Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation” approved by Putin in Decree No. 24 of January 10, 2000. The statement held that: “New challenges and threats to the national interests of Russia are emerging in the international sphere. There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States... In many parameters, the current military and political goals of NATO do not coincide with the security interests of the Russian Federation. Occasionally they directly oppose these interests.”¹²

During the Yeltsin period, Russia officially declared in national security and military doctrines the intention to compensate for deficiencies in conventional power by greater

¹¹*Tribuna*, April 26, 2000: p. 3.

¹² Vadim Solovyev, “The Foreign Policy Concept Clarifies the Military Doctrine,” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, July 14, 2000: p. 1.

reliance on nuclear arms. Russia's new military doctrine took explicit steps toward emphasizing nuclear weapons. Approved at the meeting of the Security Council on April 2, 2000, the new Doctrine defined specific situations that might prompt Russian use of nuclear weapons. It also reconfirmed Russia's belief in the inviolability of the ABM Treaty. As explained by Colonel-General Valery Manilov, then Senior Deputy Chief of the General Staff:

Nuclear weapons may be used in response to the use of nuclear and other types of mass destruction weapons against Russia and/or its allies, and also in response to a large-scaled aggression with the use of the conventional arms in situations critical for Russian national security...The Military Doctrine clearly outlines the prospects for developing the deterrence potential, including its nuclear component. The approval of the START II Treaty, interlinked with the ABM Treaty, and opening up the way to START III... fully comply with the strategic goals of the Doctrine.¹³

However, despite this emphasis on nuclear weapons, and on the land-based component of the Russian triad in particular, Russian nuclear capability continued to deteriorate.¹⁴

START II Ratification

Many in Russia, including the government, recognized that maintaining even START II force levels would be an exceptional financial burden. Although it was possible for Russia to retain a much larger force, the government soon appeared interested in negotiating a ceiling of 1,500 or fewer warheads. Russia's series of strategic problems included:

- Maintaining force levels and operating tempo in the strategic nuclear submarine (SSBN) fleet;

¹³Valery Manilov, "Prevention, Deterrence, Partnership," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, April 25, 2000: pp. 1, 8.

¹⁴Colonel-General Vladimir Yakovlev, then Commander-in-Chief of the Strategic Missile Forces, explained the importance of his service in the following way: "Although the probability of a large-scale war against Russia has diminished considerably, the threat of her involvement in local conflicts grew dramatically. The proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world and growth of NATO's combat possibilities and the zone of its influence are alarming factors from the viewpoint of Russia's security. Since the general-purpose forces have been slashed, the strategic nuclear forces, based on the Strategic Missile Forces, are the only military element that can compensate for potential military threats to Russia. The application of the function of deterrence and prevention of war largely depends on the Strategic Missile Forces that have over 60% of warheads and delivery vehicles of the Strategic Nuclear Forces and can fulfill virtually all tasks in a counter-retaliatory nuclear strike and about half the tasks in a counterstrike." *Voyenniform Military News*, November 1999, LD1301224300.

- Decommissioning proceeding ahead of the START I schedule for economic reasons; and
- A drastic curtailment of procurement.

During the height of the Cold War, the Soviet Union produced more than one hundred nuclear missiles annually. In modern Russia, the deployment rate of new Topol M ICBMs is at best ten per year. Not a single new strategic nuclear submarine was completed in the 1990s. Construction of a new SSBN was begun, but funding and design problems made progress slow and sporadic. Production of submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) and new heavy bombers halted.¹⁵

As one of a new generation of pragmatic Russian leaders, Putin understood that the faltering economy, particularly the seriously weakened military-industrial sector, would not allow Moscow to maintain numerical parity with the United States at START II levels. The tragic sinking of the prized nuclear submarine *Kursk*, and the subsequent failed rescue efforts, had a powerful impact on Putin. He proceeded to develop a comprehensive plan to restore Russian military potential. An important additional goal of the plan would be to prevent the United States from achieving irreversible military-technological superiority before this renaissance of Russian capability could manifest itself. Arms control was an essential tool in implementing that goal.¹⁶

Putin moved swiftly to assure START II ratification in the Russian State Duma, the lower house of Russia's parliament. This was something that Yeltsin had been unable to accomplish. START II ratification removed a major stumbling block to further agreements with Washington on strategic arms reductions, which was crucially important if Russia intended to keep up with the United States. Ratification was also intended to demonstrate the new President's ability to get quick results by effectively mobilizing a newly found sizeable pro-government majority in the parliament.

¹⁵Alexander Pikaev, "Chapter 1: The Arsenal in Decline," in "The Rise and Fall of START II," *Carnegie Working Paper No. 6*, September 1999.

¹⁶According to Andrei Kokoshin: "In conditions of economic and military weakness, arms control regimes constitute a very important element of our military security. They increase predictability of the military-political situation... Active participation in limiting and reducing weapons confirms Russia's status as a great power, a superpower." See Andrei Kokoshin, "Disarmament Is In Russia's Interests," *Trud*, April 27, 2000: p.6.

While pushing for the ratification of START II in the Duma, the Putin administration was carefully tying it up with a package of demands that reflected Russia's vital interests in: preventing the United States from taking advantage of Russian weaknesses; barring U.S. advancement in the development of missile defense technologies; assuring a process of deeper cuts in strategic offensive weapons that corresponded to the "natural" attrition of the Russian nuclear triad; and gaining various concessions from the United States in the military and non-military fields.

Former First Deputy Defense Minister Andrei Kokoshin provided a succinct explanation of these Russian interests:

Russia needs this Treaty because we have to reduce our Strategic Nuclear Forces even without START II. From the military and political points of view we should make this process bilateral. Russia's economy does not allow us to maintain 3,000-3,500 strategic nuclear warheads. That is also why we have to start negotiations on START III as soon as possible and reduce the number of nuclear warheads to lower levels... And we must intensify the fight for preserving the ABM Treaty. In this, we have a lot of allies from China to India.¹⁷

In effect, these were the same goals traditionally pursued by the Soviet Union and Yeltsin's Russia in arms control. From this perspective, there was obvious continuity between the arms control policy of Putin and the governments before him.

Formal conditions attached to the "Law on START II Ratification" included: direct linkage between the entry of START II into force and strict observance by the U.S. of the ABM Treaty; similar linkage between START II and the 1997 protocols signed by the two countries in New York; Russia's right to abandon START II and other bilateral arms control treaties if unsatisfied with the implementation of the above two conditions; and commencement of START III negotiations on further reductions of the American and Russian strategic arsenals.

Efforts to convince the State Duma to ratify the long-pending START II were based on a key argument that the treaty's implementation amounted to "disarming America" and

¹⁷Ibid.

keeping the strategic balance between the two countries intact. According to Vladimir Lukin, former Russian ambassador to the U.S. and Deputy Speaker of the State Duma:

Ratification of START II would have brought us more “pluses” than “minuses.” Today START II has become a purely political problem. Especially after we discovered new aspects related to the U.S. NMD. Given our financial resources, we are interested in the most drastic reduction of warheads, since it would in effect lead to the “disarming” of America. By decommissioning obsolescent hardware we [the Russian Federation] are moving toward START II levels anyway.¹⁸

On April 14, 2000, the State Duma finally ratified the START II Treaty.¹⁹ In a package deal, it also ratified the bilateral agreements signed by Russia and the United States in September 1997 in New York. In his last attempt to encourage favorable votes from the deputies, Putin declared:

It is vitally important for Russia to preserve the traditional structure of its nuclear deterrence system, oriented toward intercontinental ballistic missiles... [At the same time] we cannot run the risk of totally destroying the system of arms control agreements, and initiating an arms build-up which is beyond Russia's strength... The industrial cooperation system of the former USSR has been lost. Its fundamental, basic part was left in Ukraine, and deteriorated completely... The dismantling [of Russian ICBMs] is prompted not by START II, but by the expiration of their service lifetime... Our main objective is to make the United States reduce its nuclear stockpile, as stipulated by START II, to 3,500 warheads; and to aim toward the START III Treaty in accordance with the 1997 Helsinki agreements... Ratifying START II on the condition that it is implemented only if the ABM Treaty is strictly abided by, will make the U.S. face the alternative: either to become the one to blame in the eyes of the international community for destroying strategic stability... or to give up its policy of deploying a national anti-missile defense system... Ratification of START II is closely linked to the ratification of agreements on division of strategic and non-strategic anti-missile defense systems, signed in 1997. These agreements combined make up a mechanism preventing circumvention of the ABM Treaty during the process of creating non-strategic anti-missile defense systems, and preventing creation of forbidden kinds of strategic anti-missile defense systems under the guise of non-strategic ones. These agreements enable us to create effective non-strategic ABM systems that would become an important component of Russia's deterrence potential due to its geo-strategic position... The [ratification] will make it possible

¹⁸Vladimir Malevannyi, “Outer Frontiers of Security,” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, February 25, 2000: p.3.

¹⁹The result of the START II ratification vote was 288 deputies in favor, 131 against, with 4 abstaining. *Interfax*, April 14, 2000.

for us to reduce expenses and direct this money toward creation of new weapons, for making our armed forces more efficient and battle-worthy.²⁰

Representatives of the Defense Ministry formally concurred that the Duma decision on START II, adopted 7 years after the original signing of the Treaty, “was fully consonant with Russia’s national interests.”²¹ Putin declared that “further steps belong to our partners in negotiations,” meaning that the U.S. Senate would now have to respond to the conditions set by the Duma on the formal entry of START II into force. Primary among them was the American observance of the ABM Treaty.²²

On April 27, 2000, the Duma approved another long-pending international agreement, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). By insisting on CTBT approval, the Kremlin intended to reach still another goal—improve Russia’s international reputation and generate additional pressure on the United States on the package of unresolved arms control deals intimately linked, in the Russian mind, with the preservation of the ABM Treaty. By using the instrument of “proxy” pressure against the U.S. (e.g., international opinion) Putin again demonstrated his adherence to the traditional methodology of Soviet foreign policymaking.

Also, as was often done by Soviet leaders, Putin tried to take advantage of the American election cycle. Moscow believed that it would be much easier to strike a deal to its advantage with the outgoing U.S. administration than with a new administration whose arms control agenda might take a long time to take shape.²³ START II ratification, declared a priority by the Clinton administration, was to defuse tensions in Moscow-Washington relations that had been building over the last years of Yeltsin’s leadership

²⁰Editorial comment: “The State Duma Has Ratified START 2,” *Kommersant*, April 15, 2000: p. 2.

²¹According to Colonel-General Igor Puzanov, Commander of the Moscow Military District: “The ratification of START II was a purely political move. President Putin says so too. Refusal to ratify the Treaty would not have given us anything. Let us face it: all those missiles will be withdrawn from combat duty by 2007, with or without START II because their guaranteed performance lives will have expired by then. Neither should we forget that maintenance of these systems costs us dearly... The ratification of START II was not a mistake.” “Interview with General Igor Puzanov,” *Tribuna*, April 26, 2000: p. 3.

²²*Kommersant*, April 15, 2000: p. 2.

²³According to Vyacheslav Nikonov, leader of the liberal “Politika” Foundation in Moscow, “The prospects are not encouraging: it appears that the U.S., especially the republicans do not intend to conduct additional negotiations on disarmament control. It is possible that the U.S. does not need treaties with Russia based on parity.” Valeriya Sycheva, “Bill Clinton’s Publicity Project,” *Segodnya*, July 10, 2000: p. 2.

and to facilitate direct Putin-Clinton contacts. There are indications that the Kremlin was preparing for a major arms control breakthrough that they hoped Clinton would endorse before he left office.

In preparation for the June 2000 summit, and apparently with the tacit consent of the Russian political hierarchy, Russian experts sent out “trial balloons” exploring the potential for and limits of a compromise on BMD that would be acceptable both to the United States and to the “traditionalists” whose political influence in Russia remained strong. A trickle, and then a flow of publications appeared asserting that a limited U.S. NMD would not present a serious threat to Russian deterrence and that certain modifications to the ABM Treaty to accommodate the Americans were possible. For example, Lev Semeiko, researcher at the Academy of Sciences’ Institute of U.S.A and Canada Studies, published an attempt to reconsider the implications for Russia of a limited U.S. NMD. According to Semeiko, U.S. NMD would not undermine Russia’s retaliatory capability, therefore, “Russia could take a much more relaxed view of American plans to deploy a limited NMD... [Furthermore] in case of a compromise on limited NMD, we could enjoy new possibilities for the expansion of Russian-American military-technical cooperation.”²⁴

The majority opinion was that U.S. NMD should be limited to one site and 100 interceptors, as defined by the ABM Treaty.²⁵ However, some Russian experts and officials were prepared to accept two sites and 200 interceptors, which would require Moscow and Washington to agree on eliminating the 1974 Protocol to the ABM Treaty.²⁶

At the same time, the majority of Russians raising the possibility of ABM Treaty modifications insisted that the “lowest common denominator” for a compromise should include American acquiescence to deep cuts in overall offensive nuclear arsenals under START III as well as special concessions to Russia, such as permission to keep a limited

²⁴Lev Semeiko, “It Is in Russia’s Interests to Say ‘Yes,’” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, March 24, 2000: p. 3.

²⁵Vladimir Lukin, “Outer Security Borders,” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, Feb. 25, 2000: p. 4.

²⁶For example, see Alexander Saveliev, “The Future of the ABM Treaty” in *Russia and the West: Crisis of Relations in the Sphere of Security and the Arms Control Problem*, (Moscow: IMEMO, 1999), pp.52-59.

number of ICBMs armed with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRV).²⁷

A “historic deal” at the Moscow summit did not materialize due to political impediments on the U.S. side. However, at the summit, Putin achieved a minor victory when both sides reiterated their adherence to the ABM Treaty as “the cornerstone of strategic stability.” Moscow also hailed as a success of the summit the decision to set up a Joint Early Warning Information Exchange Center implementing an earlier Clinton-Yeltsin summit decision. The Russians were also trying to promote their idea of the Global System of Control Over the Non-Proliferation of Missiles and Missile Technologies, developed at a government-sponsored conference held in Moscow in March 2000.

Russian Responses to U.S. Missile Defense Initiatives

The U.S. election in 2000 brought into the White House a renewed interest in moving forward on BMD, and on NMD in particular. This presented a challenge for Putin and the Russian government’s arms control policies. As the new U.S. President took stock of his BMD options, Russian policy focused on setting the stage for the impending negotiations that waited on American clarity of objectives. Moscow observers noted “Russia can no longer maintain the quantitative nuclear weapons balance with the U.S. while the U.S. is showing obvious signs of moving away from the usual coordinated principles of securing strategic stability.”²⁸ The Russian Defense Minister lamented: “Contrary to the Clinton administration that used to take into consideration the negative reaction of Russia to NMD plans... the new administration is regarding the issue as a purely technological process, and that worries us a lot.”²⁹

²⁷Some Russian experts express doubts that the U.S. will agree to deep cuts in strategic weapons. According to Pavel Podvig, “The future of START III negotiations does not give ground for optimism... There is disappointingly little possibility for compromise. Moreover, the sides would be tied up by START II conditions, which for Russia means reduction of her strategic forces to the level of 1,000-1,500 warheads, regardless of the results of START III negotiations... Moreover, the U.S. will undoubtedly establish a rigid linkage between progress in START III negotiations with [Russian] concessions on the 1972 ABM Treaty.” Pavel Podvig, “Ratification of START II Loses Topicality,” *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*, January 28, 2000: p. 1.

²⁸Valentin Popov and Boris Stepanov, “Now That Russia Ratified START II, Does It Need START III?” *Nezavisimoe Voennoye Obozreniye*, No 1, January, 2001: p.4.

²⁹“Russia Has Developed Countermeasures In Case the U.S. Withdraws From the ABM Treaty,” *Strana.ru*, January 9, 2001.

November 2000 to May 2001: Moscow Prepares for a New U.S. Policy

While waiting for the Americans to make their objectives known, Putin made a firm choice in favor of the “traditionalist” line as an opening gambit. This course was apparently due to: mounting internal pressures in favor of a “tough” foreign policy to match the Kremlin’s domestic exercise of power; growing apprehension about U.S. strategic plans; a desire to forestall a U.S. NMD deployment decision for as long as possible; and the intention to set the stage for future negotiations by establishing an opening position of Russian intransigence—the better to leverage future concessions from Washington.

Interestingly, Russian arms control “liberals” were the first to panic. Aleksei Arbatov, Deputy Chairman of the Duma Armed Forces Committee, made a surprise appeal for abandoning efforts at START III altogether and demonstrating a will to maintain an arsenal of 5,000 to 6,000 warheads. In his view, the United States would use START III only “to force nuclear arsenal transparency” on Russia in an attempt “to establish control over [all] Russian nuclear weapon production.”³⁰ However, concern for Russian security might have been secondary to the desire to score an ideological victory and keep pace the evolution of domestic politics. Liberals were also disappointed that their prescription for “deep cuts” was not adopted by the Clinton Administration and were trying to make their resentment felt.

For several months after the U.S. election, while its BMD policy was still in the process of formulation, ignorance about real U.S. BMD plans and programs raised anxiety in Moscow. For example, the Head of the Duma Committee on International Affairs declared that the U.S. wanted “to transfer 100 missile interceptors to Alaska... which would be tantamount to the destruction of the main clauses of the ABM Treaty.”³¹

However, the underlying concern of the Russian political elite was not that NMD would substantively change the bilateral balance of forces, but that under the new U.S. administration, “Russia does not have a chance to make the U.S. change its mind on

³⁰Aleksei Arbatov, “Reliance on Nuclear Forces,” *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozreniye*, December 22, 2000.

³¹Interview with Dmitrii Rogozin, *Independent TV NTV.ru*, Moscow, January 15, 2001.

NMD.” In other words, Russia is viewed as irrevocably losing its clout and ability to influence U.S. military and foreign policy.³² As that observation implies, the anti-NMD campaign acquired important internal political significance for Russia, even during the Clinton years. In the opinion of respected journalist Alexander Golts; “for the Kremlin’s current leadership, if the missile defense issue didn’t exist, it would have to be invented. It is precisely the existence of this issue that enables the Kremlin to convince itself and its people that Russia is still a great state.”³³

Throughout late April 2001, Moscow continued pushing the anti-NMD campaign. Military leaders claimed they already possess various “asymmetrical retaliation weapons.” By necessity, the measures had to be asymmetrical in nature since Moscow could not balance U.S. NMD with a Russian system of comparable sophistication and magnitude.³⁴ The effort continued, making use of both the anti-Strategic Defense Initiative propaganda of the Soviet period and the propaganda of cost-effective asymmetrical responses during the Yeltsin period.

Recommended military-technological responses included retention of “heavy” Russian ICBMs slated for elimination under START II and MIRVing of the new generation of “Topol-M” missiles.³⁵ An additional option would be resumption of heavy missile production, which was hinted at by an official suggesting that negotiations with Kiev had begun on resuming joint production of “heavy” ICBMs at the *Yuzhmash* facility.³⁶

Additional potential measures included a shift either to the concept of a preemptive nuclear strike, which had already found some reflection in Russian military doctrine, or to the concept of “automatic counter-strike,” in which Russian ICBMs would be launched

³²See Oleg Odnokolenko, “Pardon and Submit,” *Segodnya*, January 17, 2001: pp. 1, 4.

³³Alexander Golts, “Time-Out for U.S. Nuclear Defense System,” *Russia Journal*, July 15-21, 2000: p. 8.

³⁴Only a limited number of Russian experts emphasize the importance and feasibility of Russia deploying her own NMD in the foreseeable future. One of them is Vladimir Basistov, General Designer of the A-135 system deployed around Moscow. Basistov insists that Russia “should upgrade (certainly with strict observation of the 1972 ABM Treaty) Moscow’s anti-missile system and expand its defense zone to the areas of deployment of the grouping of ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles in central Russia.” Vladimir Basistov, “Star Wars 2,” *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, February 5, 2000: p.3.

³⁵Lev Volkov, “Russia Will Find a Response to the ABM Challenge,” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, March 17, 2000: p. 1.

³⁶*Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, January 13, 2001: p.1.

automatically upon the receipt of signals from sensors registering nuclear explosions—the so-called “Dead Hand” system.

Putin added a new aspect to the pro-ABM Treaty/anti-NMD campaign by trying to turn it into a major global issue. While admitting that the proliferation threat is mounting, Moscow claimed that it should be dealt with via diplomacy and multilateral initiatives that would of necessity involve the participation of the so-called rogues. According to Putin, “The difference in our approaches lies in that we propose to move ahead jointly [in preventing the ballistic missile threat] while preserving the level of trust and the balance created as the result of the 1972 ABM Treaty.”³⁷ To further boost Russia’s image as an eager and reliable participant in traditional arms control regimes, Moscow also accused Washington of START I and ABM Treaty violations in connection with elimination of MX missiles, the production of the Hera target missile, and the deployment of a new U.S. radar facility in northern Norway.³⁸

This iteration of the Russian approach broadened the meaning of the word “stability” well beyond the traditional Cold War lexicon of strategic stability, first strike stability or crisis stability. Moreover, it shifted that context from the bilateral U.S.-Russian relationship to consideration of the “stability” of the entire “contemporary world.” In the opinion of Sergei Ivanov, then Secretary of the Russian Security Council and later Defense Minister:

The most important thing is to preserve strategic stability. In this connection, the importance of the ABM Treaty has long gone beyond the framework of Russian-American relations. In effect, it serves as a foundation of the entire balance of forces in the contemporary world. And the main danger we see is not that the Americans will cover themselves with a mythical shield, allegedly impenetrable by our strategic nuclear forces. Firstly, that goal is unattainable and apparently the Americans understand that themselves. Secondly, and this is crucial, only a madman may currently discuss the possibility of a missile-nuclear clash between Russia and the U.S., especially since there are no reasons for it. The violation of any component of strategic stability, and the ABM Treaty is its major component,

³⁷See interview of the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin with correspondents of *ORT*, *NHK* and *Reuters*, Moscow, June 11, 2000.

³⁸Press release of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, Unofficial Foreign Ministry Translation, January 4, 2001.

may provoke a certain “domino effect” in countries that are mostly feared by the U.S.³⁹

Consistent with attempts to constrain U.S. freedom of action on missile defense, Moscow expanded its effort to deny the U.S. an ability to exploit any comparative advantage in space. A major event to this end was the convening of a Russian government-sponsored international conference “Space Without Weapons—Arena for Peaceful Cooperation in the XXI Century” in Moscow on April 11, 2001. Speaking at the conference, Deputy Foreign Minister Georgei Mamedov warned against U.S. missile defense efforts as hallmarks of an undesirable “weaponization” of space:

Russia cannot agree with the view that “Star Wars”... are “fatally unavoidable” as the result of the technological progress and the logic of the political development of the contemporary world. We are convinced that efforts at the so-called “weaponization” of space are incompatible with the very essence of the concept of strategic stability... Military space has the right to exist only to the extent it serves to reduce the risk of nuclear war, and helps control agreements in the sphere of disarmament.⁴⁰

This effort to “globalize” the NMD question was consistent with Russia’s increasing emphasis on supporting a “multilateral” international system. In many ways, multilateralism meant establishing counterweights to American power and influence. In service to this objective, Putin attempted to further strengthen strategic relations with the People’s Republic of China and India as a “counterweight” to the United States and its global “hegemony.” A significant element of this new strategic partnership was Russia’s consistent insistence that the proposed U.S. defensive system was primarily intended for use against China and Russia.⁴¹

China has proven receptive to this argument. Beijing has special concerns related to the ongoing conflict with Taiwan that could be significantly affected by the introduction of sophisticated American theater missile defense (TMD) systems in the Far East. In 1999,

³⁹Interview with the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Information Agency *Polit.ru*, July 13, 2000.

⁴⁰Foreign Ministry Statement on Outer Space, April 11, 2001 “Statement by the Deputy Foreign Minister Georgei Mamedov” at the International Conference *Space Without Weapons - Arena for Peaceful Cooperation in the XXI Century*. Official document of the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation.

⁴¹For example, Leonid Ivashov, “Russia Hopes the U.S. Will Observe the Terms of the ABM Treaty,” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, March 23, 2000: p. 1.

China was Russia's main supporter in a campaign leading to the adoption of the UN resolution in support of the ABM Treaty. In July 2000, President Putin visited Beijing where he cosigned a Joint Statement with Chinese President Jiang Zemin calling for preservation of the ABM Treaty and non-deployment of a limited U.S. NMD.⁴²

In the Russian view, it was inevitable that China would become "an invisible participant" in the U.S.-Russian ABM Treaty/NMD dialogue.⁴³ Significantly, before he left for his first meeting with President Bush in Ljubljana, Slovenia in June 2001, Putin conferred with Jiang again at the so-called Shanghai Forum, made up of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. According to observers, Putin wanted to present a "consolidated" Russian-Chinese position on the ABM Treaty/NMD issue at the summit.⁴⁴

Putin's efforts to reestablish Russia's influence in Asia also brought him to North Korea. Contacts with one of the "rogues" identified by the United States as a ballistic missile threat, was a calculated challenge to Washington. In Pyongyang, Putin offered North Korea Russian support in conducting "peaceful exploration of outer space." Together with the North Korean dictator Kim Jong-il, Putin appealed for preservation of the ABM Treaty.⁴⁵ Russia also reestablished technological ties with Iran, another irritant to U.S.-Russian relations.

Moscow believed that the resumption of arms sales to "rogue states" such as Libya, Iran, North Korea and Syria would put additional pressure on Washington and force reconsideration of NMD deployment.⁴⁶ In June 2001, just before the bilateral summit in Ljubljana, some Russian traditionalists actually proposed that Putin threaten the United

⁴²The statement accused Washington of "hegemonism" and of using NMD "to seek unilateral military and security advantages that will pose the most grave, adverse consequences" to China, Russia and the United States itself. Mr. Putin and Mr. Jiang said "the pretext of a missile threat [from rogues such as North Korea] is totally unjustified." They also criticized a U.S. proposal for a more limited ABM system to protect its troops and allies in East Asia, which Beijing fears would undermine its claim to Taiwan. In Christopher Bodeen, "Beijing, Moscow Hit U.S. on Shield," *Washington Times*, July 19, 2000: pp. 1, 11.

⁴³Dmitry Safonov, "Russia is Ready to Bargain and Deal on Missile Defense," *Izvestiya*, June 8, 2001: p. 3.

⁴⁴Yekaterina Grigoryeva, "Between ABM Defense and the Ballet," *Izvestiya*, June 14, 2001: p.2

⁴⁵Peter Graff, "Putin Surprises West With Kim Rocket Deal," *Washington Times*, July 20, 2000: pp. 1, 12.

⁴⁶Safonov, June 8, 2001: p. 3.

States with direct Russian assistance to rogues in developing their nuclear-missile arsenals.⁴⁷

At the same time Moscow courted allies against U.S. hegemony, it sought to sow dissension between the U.S. and its European allies. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union consistently pursued the goal of dividing the United States from its European allies. Revisiting this tactic in the hopes of delaying or preventing U.S. NMD deployment, Putin launched his own BMD plan to create a joint “non-strategic” ABM system in Europe. Former Russian Defense Minister Marshal Igor Sergeyev provided the following details on Putin’s “EuroABM” plan:

Putin’s suggestion to create a pan-European ABM system has once again demonstrated that the Russia-NATO Founding Act foresees the possibility of developing tactical ABM defense in Europe... Russia could assist European states in creating a tactical system capable of counteracting possible threats in Europe... First and foremost, we should toughen control over proliferation of missile technologies. And secondly, we should proceed to... a number of joint measures: evaluation of missile proliferation and possible missile threats; development of a concept of a common pan-European TMD system and the procedure of its creation and deployment; establishment of a pan-European multilateral center for early missile launch warning; staff exercises; research and development of TMD systems; deployment of TMD formations to protect peacekeeping forces and civilians.⁴⁸

The EuroABM system was called “non-strategic” since it was intended to deal with medium and shorter-range missiles, and was supposed to be based, initially, on existing TMD capable systems. According to Colonel General Leonid Ivashov, then in charge of the Defense Ministry’s international cooperation department, the system proposed by Russia would not affect major international arms control agreements and its would be deployed only after a lengthy process:

Our proposals talk about possible defense and only against non-strategic ballistic missiles. The creation of ABM systems capable of fighting ballistic missiles with maximal speeds of up to 5 km/sec and flight ranges below 3,500 km is allowed by New York agreements on demarcation between strategic and non-strategic ABM systems signed by Russia as well as Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine in 1997...

⁴⁷For example, see: *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, May 29, 2001.

⁴⁸Oleg Falichev, “Interview With Igor Sergeyev,” *Parlamentskaya Gazeta*, July 4, 2000: pp. 1, 2.

Cooperation is conducted in the interests of all European countries, and it would not lead to the emergence of new “problematic states.” Nor would it lead to increased tensions in relations with states that are occasionally referred to, without sufficient reasons, as potential aggressors. Concrete cooperative programs may be conducted at bilateral and multilateral foundations and, by absolute necessity, in accordance with specific stages... Firstly, we have in mind the evaluation of the nature and scope of ballistic missile proliferation and the threat of its use against European states; then the joint elaboration of the concept of the all-European non-strategic ABM system, and finally, the establishment of the order, scale and timing of the deployment of the non-strategic EuroABM. The proposed stages in the work are not ironclad. They reflect the logical sequence of the process of the creation of complex weapon systems that include ABM systems.⁴⁹

In addition to the proposal’s clear political intent, there was an economic incentive as well. Moscow’s EuroABM reflected the desire Russian TMD hardware producers to find markets. Nevertheless, some Russian specialists were openly skeptical of the proposal. In the opinion of Major General Vladimir Slipchenko:

Russia does not have the kind of weapons [needed for the construction of] a reliable non-strategic ABM system together with Europe. Some Russian officials claim that we will destroy enemy missiles at launch... This is a bluff. We can only rely on the S-300 and S-400 complexes. That is all we have. However, we do not have missiles for the S-400. These complexes still use S-300 missiles. And [S-300s] are pure anti-aircraft complexes... Moreover, S-300 is not a high-precision weapons system... In order to destroy an enemy missile at launch, S-300 or S-400 should be located somewhere nearby. Will North Koreans or Iraqis allow us to do that? The idea has still another serious flaw. Conflicts in the Persian Gulf in 1991 and 1998 and the war in Yugoslavia in 1999 have demonstrated that ABM systems based on active radars are helplessly outdated and should be eliminated. High-precision weapons will eliminate electromagnetic emission sources in the first minutes of the next war, leaving a [particular] country without [air defense] and ABM defenses. The A-135, S-300s, and S-400s all have active radar. The Americans are studying Russian proposals that have nothing in them worthy of serious study.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Maksim Baranov, “Russian Initiatives,” *Parlamentskaya Gazeta*, April 10, 2001: p. 2.

⁵⁰Tikhon Grigoriev, “The ABM System Is Not a Feasible Option for Russia,” *Delovoi Vtornik*, No 22, June 27, 2000: p. 3.

May 2001: Russian Reaction

President Bush's May 1 speech at the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington D.C. offering the broad outlines of U.S. BMD thinking was a powerful jolt to the Russians. Many realized its potential significance as a watershed in bilateral arms control leading to overhaul of the MAD-based relationship. As stated by Alexander Golts:

On 1 May 2001 an event took place that one could venture to call historic. It was emphasized that the proposed NMD system... would signify the revision of the foundations of bilateral security that existed since the signing of the ABM Treaty... The Kremlin should not turn aside from the new realities but should try with all its might to understand them... The United States is in effect embarking on a radical restructuring of its strategic forces and this basically destroys the system of relations in the military sphere that has taken shape over the past 30 years. They were based on the principle of deterrence or the maintenance of approximate equality of the nuclear potential of Russia and the United States, enshrined in a whole series of international treaties and agreements...⁵¹

Russian observers also noticed that the May 1 statement emphasized American readiness to include Russia in consultations on the proposed new strategic framework. This went against most of official Moscow's predictions about likely U.S. tactics. Where Moscow expected uncompromising toughness (that it was frantically preparing to oppose with its own intransigence), it suddenly found an invitation to a dialogue for the sake of mutual accommodation.

In his first reaction to the May 1 speech, Putin expressed agreement with the general outline of Bush's speech, and emphasized its non-adversarial tone:

It is hard not to agree with the U.S. President when he says the world is changing very rapidly and that new threats could emerge. I agree we must think about this... The President's statement that the USA, the administration and the President himself do not regard Russia as an adversary or an enemy is... noteworthy. In my view, this creates a good basis for a positive dialogue. We will see the results of this dialogue in the future.⁵²

However, Putin did reconfirm a long-standing Russian position that the existing status quo in bilateral relations would be preferable to drastic changes: "We must proceed from

⁵¹Aleksandr Golts, "The Sharp End of the Nuclear Umbrella," *Itogy*, May 4, 2001.

⁵²NTV *International Broadcast*, May 4, 2001.

the well-known principle that you shouldn't undermine what you have already achieved. In trying to improve and modernize the system of international security, we must not allow it to deteriorate."⁵³

Sources in the Russian administration confirmed the positive official reaction by the Kremlin, but stressed disagreement with the perceived American desire to revise the ABM Treaty. For example, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated:

In his speech, U.S. President George Bush, setting forth the general approaches of the United States administration to strategic stability issues, emphasized that Washington intends to consult most carefully with and take into account the interests of other nations, including Russia. Russia is ready for such consultations. We've got something to say.⁵⁴

Ivanov cautiously added a reference to Moscow's earlier proposals on deep reductions of offensive weapons, and to a linkage between START and the ABM Treaty:

Russian President Putin has put forward a comprehensive START-ABM program. This program incorporates, among other things, the willingness of Russia to go for a substantial reduction in strategic offensive arms, down to 1,500 nuclear warheads for each side, and perhaps even lower. As we see it, this proposal is consonant with the approaches of the current U.S. administration too. Our proposals include also a complex of measures to strengthen the regime for the nonproliferation of missiles and missile technologies... As for the ABM Treaty of 1972, this document, from our point of view, cannot be separated from the general architecture of arms control agreements that has been formed in the last 30 years and that has become the basis of international security.⁵⁵

In view of the international success of the May 1 U.S. initiative, some Russian ideologues even tried to completely reverse roles in setting the tone for arms control. Valeriy Manilov, then First Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation claimed that:

The speech that the President of the USA made on 1 May... actually was an answer to the proposal of the Russian President about a constructive dialogue, which consists of three parts. First, he called for a joint assessment as to just how real the threats are. Secondly, we have to think through, on the basis of this joint

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov's News Conference on President Bush's Remarks, May 2, 2001.

⁵⁵Ibid.

assessment, as to just what kind of system must be developed by us, working together, for parrying the threats. And, thirdly, we will make a decision as to how we are to act and what equipment and weapons are to be included in the countering and parrying the threats without destroying the system of strategic stability. Bush assured [us] that no responsible decisions whatsoever would be made without consultations with the allies, partners, and other states and conclusions made jointly with them.⁵⁶

Liberals jumped at the rare opportunity to reinvigorate their attempts to promote Russia's rapprochement with the West. A vocal call to stop opposing U.S. NMD and turn to close BMD cooperation with the United States came from former Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev: "It is important to 'take Bush at his word' as concerns his call to overcome the 'Cold War' mentality once and for all... [This is the] time... for pragmatism instead of outdated stereotypes."⁵⁷

According to Sergei Stepashin, Chairman of the Audit Chamber and a former Prime Minister: "Russia is not interested in a race or a competition [with the U.S.], but in ensuring the country's security, proceeding first of all from economic conditions... The situation where U.S. President Ronald Reagan announced the Star Wars program and the USSR got involved in an arms race, but could not handle it economically, became one of the reasons why the Soviet Union collapsed, and it should not happen again."⁵⁸

Together with other moderates, Vladimir Lukin stressed the relative unimportance of the proposed U.S. NMD for the overall balance of strategic forces. He also underlined common Russian and American interests, such as non-proliferation efforts, that could drive future bilateral negotiations:

The U.S. is ready to withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty, and this is a political reality... President Bush's statement on ballistic missile defense... opens up possibilities for serious negotiations with the Americans. The question of maintaining the agreements reached in 1972 is secondary today... the main thing for us is the essence of the matter, namely, maintaining the strategic balance of forces. At least for the next 15-20 years, Russia should be able to launch a counterstrike. Russia, like the U.S., is interested in the non-proliferation of

⁵⁶ITAR-TASS, May 12, 2001.

⁵⁷Andrei Kozyrev, "ABM - This is Our Chance," *Moskovskiy Novosti*, May 8, 2001: p.5.

⁵⁸Interfax, May 2, 2001.

nuclear weapons, and it is in our interests to conduct serious negotiations on the whole range of these issues.⁵⁹

Lukin proposed to negotiate with Washington regardless of the fate of the ABM Treaty:

Negotiations with the U.S. must be conducted whether or not Washington withdraws from the ABM Treaty... The creation of a National Missile Defense is the U.S. reaction to the existing danger of nuclear weapons proliferation... All nuclear powers have an interest in a joint discussion of and a resolution to this problem... The American administration's readiness to negotiate with Russia... creates serious grounds for joint negotiations.⁶⁰

However, for the traditionalists whose approach was most clearly reflected by Moscow's pre-May 1 comprehensive "nyet," such major changes in traditional arms control remained totally unacceptable. Sensing vacillation in the official Kremlin position, they stepped up the rhetoric in favor of protecting the ABM Treaty as "a cornerstone of strategic stability" and opposing any accommodation on BMD.

Senior levels in the Defense Ministry were particularly vocal. The real issues behind the military's hostility to any accommodation were summed up Professor Vitaliy Tsygichko, academician of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences:

Our leadership's initial reaction to the Bush proposals, voiced by Igor Ivanov, was positive and opened up good prospects for dialogue. But a fierce attack on the U.S. proposals was then organized under the leadership of the "civilian" Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov... This anti-American campaign is supported by some representatives of the military-industrial complex who make a living from the arms trade—not least with China—and by the criminalized business elite, for whom major economic cooperation with America involving the need to establish transparent economic activity would bring with it the threat of the loss of their hidden revenues... The U.S. NMD system will not impact on our nuclear potential—that is now common knowledge. The Europeans have long since been stating openly that they will not fall out with America over NMD, while China—for whom deployment of the U.S. NMD system does indeed devalue its nuclear deterrent potential—has officially stated that it does not object to the U.S. plans provided they have no impact on its relations with Taiwan. It is obvious that the issue of the ABM Treaty is merely an excuse for opponents of a new relationship with America to continue with today's unfathomable and often unjustifiably confrontational Russian foreign policy... It is an excuse for creating the

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰RIA, May 3, 2001.

semblance of the preservation of a situation of nuclear confrontation that no longer exists a priori...⁶¹

Speaking on behalf of the military “faction,” Lieutenant General Viktor Koltunov, a leading arms control negotiator, stated:

The 1972 ABM Treaty has no time limit... It is based on objective interrelationships between strategic offensive and defensive arms, which exist and will continue to exist irrespective of how old the Treaty is and how long it will remain effective. Moreover, the Treaty will become even more significant as further reductions in strategic offensive arms follow. That is why Russia regards the U.S. NMD as entailing extremely negative consequences for international security.⁶²

In a rare and notable exception to the negative reactions of the military establishment, an article in the moderate daily *Izvestiya* argued that, in U.S. NMD did not worry those in the military profession and the military-industrial complex whose job is to service the daily operations of the Russian military machine:

Only the military remained indifferent to what was taking place [after the May 1 speech]... Personnel reshuffles are under way in the military department, and the generals are exercised more about their personal fate. On the other hand the nub of the matter is the illusory nature of what the Americans ultimately want to create. In the United States itself there is still no clear notion of what they want to get as a result. Only the most general plans exist and the interim research and tests indicate that for the time being the United States is not in a position to deploy NMD... The generals from the Military Industrial Complex are also keeping mum. Russia does not have to react at all to the U.S. initiatives on revising the ABM Treaty—that was the opinion voiced to your *Izvestiya* correspondent by Yuriy Solomonov, deputy general designer at the Moscow Thermal Engineering Institute, where the most up-to-date Russian ballistic missile, the Topol-M, was created. He believes that any threats on our part will merely play into the hands of the Americans who are seeking any opportunity to talk about a danger of a missile strike... The designer is sure that the start of research work on NMD will not lead to any serious spurt in the sphere of improving the weapons or of the technologies connected with their production.⁶³

⁶¹Vitalii Tsygichko, “With the U.S.—Together or Separately,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, June 9, 2001, <http://www.ng.ru/politics/2001-06-09/3_together.html>

⁶²ITAR-TASS, May 12, 2001.

⁶³Dmitriy Safonov, “We Have Something To Say About This,” *Izvestiya*, May 11, 2001.

The State Duma reinvigorated its own campaign against the perceived NMD threat to Russian interests. According to Deputy Chairman of the Russian State Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev:

President George Bush's speech at the National Defense University would produce a negative reaction among Russian parliamentarians concerned with U.S. intentions to withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty. This Treaty is the backbone of strategic stability... If the Americans unilaterally break the ABM, Russia and other nuclear states, such as China, for example, will have no other way than to follow suit: to develop their own anti-missile systems and resume building their nuclear arsenals... Russia should exert maximum efforts via talks and consultations to consolidate international public opinion against the U.S. plans... In military and political terms, we need to demonstrate that no new ABM system is fully reliable and effective.⁶⁴

State Duma Speaker Gennadiy Seleznev threatened that Russia would renounce START II in response to U.S. actions infringing on Russian security interests.

In the course of [future arms control] talks we have to clarify... to what extent will the 1972 ABM Treaty be destroyed and will this damage us? Second, why are they [the U.S.] not ratifying the START II Treaty? And third, do they realize that we can renounce ratification of the START II Treaty at any moment since it was a condition of our ratification that the 1972 Treaty would not be affected.⁶⁵

Dmitriy Rogozin, Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs in the Russian State declared that not only START II would suffer but also the entire structure of arms control regimes. Future agreements with the U.S. would become impossible:

The Russian parliament may table a motion to renounce the START II Treaty... We have directly linked the ratification of the Treaty with the mandatory preservation of the 1972 ABM Treaty. U.S. steps to abandon the 1972 ABM Treaty will entail the collapse of the entire security architecture that has been built to date... This will certainly influence the further course of negotiations on START III.⁶⁶

Duma deputies competed with each other in the bellicosity of their statements. Aleksey Mitrofanov, one of the leaders of the ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia

⁶⁴*ITAR-TASS*, May 3, 2001.

⁶⁵*Mayak Radio*, May 4, 2001.

⁶⁶*ITAR-TASS*, May 2, 2001.

(LDPR), promised increased Russia-Chinese cooperation to thwart U.S. NMD as well as abandonment of bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements:

The new ABM concept is aimed against Russia, and also against China. This is the reason why Russia should think of responsive measures, which should be concrete and precise, both in the political and in the military-technical sphere... We should also announce our withdrawal from the Missile Technology Control Regime and the nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime... Participation in the modernization of China's nuclear forces holds good financial prospects for us... While the U.S. is developing its NMD system, Russia should develop a high-tech program of its own.⁶⁷

On behalf of LDPR, Mitrofanov drafted a law censuring the United States "for its intention to create a National Missile Defense system," and calling for effective counter-measures. In particular, he proposed that "Putin consider the possibility of canceling the nuclear weapon nonproliferation Treaty and START II. In addition, LDPR thinks that Russia can launch its own program in the airspace sector... Russia must not rely on symmetrical responses. We must not think that we will be able to destroy American satellites with screw-nuts."⁶⁸

However, on May 23, 2001, the State Duma rejected a resolution initiated by Mitrofanov regarding the U.S. plans to deploy a National Missile Defense system. The State Duma found the LDPR's arguments "too shallow" and rejected his draft document without any further discussion.

Aleksei Arbatov concentrated on the linkage between Russian military reforms and the ease with which Washington was prepared to turn traditional arms control on its head:

The planned curtailment of the Strategic Missile Forces is the worst mistake [by the new leadership of the Defense Ministry]... As a result, Washington has lost interest in strategic arms reduction treaties because Russia is doing the reduction on its own... Worse things will follow. A National Missile Defense system and new nuclear powers will emerge on the scene.⁶⁹

⁶⁷*Interfax*, May 2, 2001.

⁶⁸"Deputies Propose Countermeasures Linked with Washington's Military Expansion," *Parlamentskaya Gazeta*, May 23, 2001: p.1

⁶⁹*Interfax*, May 24, 2001.

The Communists accused Putin of inaction in the face of American efforts to destroy the bilateral balance of forces. Moreover, they emphasized the Russian government's own rhetoric that NMD was aimed at Russia and part of a U.S. attempt to secure geopolitical domination. They asserted that to compromise with such an objective would be a disservice to Russian interests. To these voices for a traditionalist approach to arms control and strategic policy, responding with a build up of Russian capability was the appropriate answer. Vladimir Krylov, a pro-Communist military analyst, provided a statement typical of this mindset:

...We should have fitting deterrent potential to counter the potential of our adversaries! Otherwise aggression—in nuclear or non-nuclear forms—will become a reality... The threat to us is becoming extremely serious in connection with the plans of the Pentagon and American administration to build a system of NMD... We can deal with the United States only “from a position of strength”—and no other way... We are being given a unique opportunity to outstrip the United States in the anti-missile rivalry once again.... The country's defense must be made firm and not destroyed, which is effectively what has been going on for more than ten years now... The current generation of Russian politicians will have to resurrect the past might of Russia, including its military might. The era of disarmament has not yet ensued. If you want peace, prepare for war.⁷⁰

After listening to the moderates-versus-traditionalist debates, and no doubt responding to domestic political concerns for Putin's broader agenda, the Kremlin ultimately leaned towards the traditionalist perspective. Moscow believed that, in future bargaining with Washington, it would gain more with a starting position of intransigence than from a demonstration of “liberal weakness.” When asked whether Russia has softened its hard-line anti-NMD position in the past few weeks, Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko answered on May 5, 2001 that, “There has been no change and expressed confidence that Russia will be able to convince the Bush administration that NMD is not necessary.”⁷¹

Thus Russian officials soon rushed to “clarify” that the Kremlin's initial responses to the May 1 speech did not in fact amount to a change in the Russian position on NMD; Russia

⁷⁰Vladimir Krylov, “Pentagon Inspired,” *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, May 17, 2001.

⁷¹*Russian TV RTR*, May 5, 2001.

continued to endorse the strategic status quo and oppose any U.S. NMD. Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov himself rushed to clarify that:

A notification has been forwarded to all Russian representatives abroad reiterating that the position voiced by Russian President Putin in his statement on ABM and START issues on 13 November 2,000 remains unchanged... Russian President Putin's constructive policy provides for the continued reduction of strategic offensive weapons and preserving and strengthening the ABM Treaty of 1972, which is a cornerstone of strategic stability and the basis for further strategic offensive weapons reduction as was recognized by all five nuclear powers.⁷²

The new Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov declared that Russia might react to NMD deployment by giving up all relevant arms control agreements—a standard Russian position of recent years:

We are pleased to note that the Bush administration has recently embarked on a broad range of contacts but it is important for everyone to clearly understand that if the ABM Treaty loses its force in law, then this will bring repercussions that literally nobody can predict. Because apart from the ABM Treaty, there are 32 subsequent international agreements on arms limitation or nonproliferation of, for example, nuclear weapons, missile technologies and so on, and these agreements are directly linked to the Treaty. You cannot pull one brick out of the wall and expect the rest of the edifice to remain in place. Of course the whole thing will come crashing down. And it is virtually impossible to quantify the repercussions of this.⁷³

This affirmation of the traditionalist approach to Russian arms control thinking was amplified after a U.S. delegation discussed the issue with Russian officials on May 11, 2001. The Russians concentrated on what they believed was lack of substance in the U.S. position, arguing that deficiency discredited the rationale for NMD. At the same time, they reiterated, primarily for domestic consumption, their well-known position on effective asymmetrical countermeasures against NMD should it be deployed. Marshal Igor Sergeyev, newly appointed as Putin's assistant on strategic stability, remarked:

Consultations with the Americans had no influence on Russia's principle position on the ABM problem - we will continue to come out in favor of preserving the ABM Treaty of 1972 in its current form and against the realization of U.S. plans for the creation of a National Missile Defense... A proposal was made to the

⁷²“Igor Ivanov's letter to the Duma International Affairs Committee,” *Interfax*, May 10, 2001.

⁷³*Mayak Radio*, May 28, 2001

Americans to create a joint expert group made up of missile specialists in order to address possible threats in the language of science, and not politics.⁷⁴

According to Sergeyev, “We did not hear coherent arguments in favor of Washington’s plan to deploy the NMD system... Washington proposes to develop high-cost systems of uncertain efficiency. Judging by the consultations, the United States so far cannot imagine the way its system will be.”⁷⁵

Impact of U.S. Politics on the Russian Position

Traditionally, Russians pay considerable attention to internal U.S. political developments that affect bilateral relations. The redistribution of power in the U.S. Senate was an unexpected and welcome event that, in many Russian assessments, might slow down the implementation of the Bush administration’s NMD plans. Andrei Kokoshin, Vice Chairman of the State Duma Defense Committee, and formerly First Deputy Defense Minister expressed a conviction, shared by many in the Russian political elite, that:

Democrats, who are about to get a majority in the Senate, feel rather skeptical towards Bush’s idea. In the past, it was the Senate that stopped the SDI, so it has certain experience in dealing with such... initiatives. The U.S. missile defense system would really significantly undermine the level of strategic security for China and India. Therefore, they are very interested in preserving the ABM Treaty. So nothing has happened so far. The way ahead is long and complex talks.⁷⁶

The June 2001 Ljubljana Summit

The U.S.-Russian interaction on NMD took another turn with the first meeting of Presidents Putin and Bush in Europe the month following the Bush NDU speech. The summit in Ljubljana, Slovakia served several productive purposes: it allowed the leaders of both nations to meet each other directly and establish a personal relationship; both sides had an opportunity to clarify their positions on arms control and other issues; and the Presidents agreed on holding expert meetings on threat assessment and other BMD-related issues. The summit in Slovenia did not result in a major breakthrough in bilateral

⁷⁴*Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, May 18, 2001

⁷⁵*Interfax*, May 14, 2001.

⁷⁶Vladimir Zmeyushchenko, “PRO and Contra,” *Profil*, May 14, 2001. See also: Olga Shorina, “The Same People Who Are Giving Us No Peace Will Give Us a Hand,” *Vesti.ru*, May 28, 2001.

relations. At least as far as Russia was concerned, it strengthened the pessimistic perspective on the future of arms control.

Shortly after the summit, President Putin made several statements confirming that Russian policy continued to reflect the traditionalist position on the ABM Treaty and NMD. At a press conference for foreign correspondents held in Moscow on June 18, 2001, he reiterated Russian arguments against changes to the arms control status quo.

Putin's June 18, 2001 presentation made several important points. Putin emphasized that he shared President Bush core view that "Russia and the United States are no longer adversaries today, moreover they may become allies." He stated that increased mutual trust is the main result of the Ljubljana summit: "I think the... component of trust, is beginning to emerge... It is an essential achievement in our meeting with President Bush."⁷⁷

Putin also dealt in detail with the assessment of proliferation threats, acknowledging that "I think the [U.S.] President is correct: we need to think about the way armaments are developing at the most dangerous direction - the missile direction. And we certainly need to see what would happen in this sphere in 10, 15, and 20 years." At the same time, Putin rejected American arguments about the potential danger of ballistic missile technologies in possession of the "rogue" states, arguing that Soviet era short range missile technology does not lead to long-range threats of the sort used to justify NMD.

Putin admitted that, in principle, the ABM Treaty allows the parties to create strategic defense systems. In principle, Putin agreed to review the issue of modifying the ABM Treaty. However, before actually accepting such modifications, Russia needed to understand the specific reasoning for them. According to Putin, the two Presidents agreed that:

Our specialists should single out and talk concretely on issues of purely technical nature: i.e. what, in effect, we mean by the term "threat," and what prevents us from jointly or unilaterally, if such is the will of our partners, to oppose these

⁷⁷Vladimir Putin's press conference of June 18, 2001, <<http://president.Kremlin.ru/events/242.html>>

threats? Specifically, which elements of the ABM Treaty prevent overcoming these threats that we should moreover overcome jointly?

Putin emphasized that the proposal on expert consultations belonged to him and that the consultations should concentrate both on the issue of potential ballistic missile threats and adjustments to the ABM Treaty in case the Treaty prohibits systems relevant to dealing with those threats, e.g. by putting limitations on speeds:

We agreed (and that was my proposal) that our specialists should look not only at where there exist threats, but also at what in the 1972 ABM Treaty interferes with the prevention of these threats today, speaking concretely... We are talking about missile speeds, that define the concept of “strategic” or “tactical” ballistic missile defense.

In a parallel assessment, Putin tried to downgrade the likelihood that the United States could develop an ABM system that would operate at ICBM speeds of 7-7.5 km/sec in the context of a major Russian-U.S. exchange. Putin emphasized Russian fears that the development of potential components for U.S. NMD, such as radars in Norway, serve as an indication that the system would be aimed primarily against Russia. Importantly, Putin acknowledged a statement by the U.S. Secretary of State to the effect that “The U.S. does not intend to destroy the 1972 ABM Treaty” and that the ABM system the United States intends to create would be “effective, however limited in nature.” In Putin’s words, this statement was treated seriously in Moscow, and it may form the foundation for further bilateral talks and negotiations:

We paid attention to this statement by Powell. I think it is a very important statement. The U.S. is not geared to destroy the ABM Treaty. For us, it is a very important signal. We too think that ballistic missile defense should be effective. Mr. Powell said: “It should also be limited in nature.” We need to understand what that means. This is the subject of discussions, and negotiations. This is a serious statement.

However, Putin also reiterated the Russian theme that the ABM Treaty is the foundation of the entire system of arms control and non-proliferation regimes. Removal of that foundation would lead to the collapse of the superstructure leading to an arms race and proliferation. Consistent with that, Putin suggested that it was necessary to take the interests of other nuclear powers into account, notably China.

Though he did not believe U.S. actions would jeopardize Russia's national security interests, at least in the next 25 years, Putin confirmed that Russia remained wary of potential unilateral U.S. actions:

We regard the possibility of such unilateral actions [by the United States] with apprehension. I am convinced that in the next 25 years at least this would not create any substantial damage for Russia's national security. Any actions including the unilateral ones. Moreover, if we are confronted with unilateral actions and with the destruction of START I and START II, I think our nuclear potential would be strengthened. This would require practically no financial investments. If you look at START I treaty you would understand what is involved. Existing missile carriers can be equipped with new warheads. This is minimal cost, almost negligible. However, the Russian nuclear potential would grow manifold.

In comments offered later, June 23, 2001, Putin chose to emphasize not cooperation, but the threat of Russia's asymmetric response to U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty.⁷⁸ Reactions to this tough talk out of the Kremlin were mixed. While the traditionalists greeted Putin's threat of countermeasures with approval, their pragmatic-minded opponents maintained that Russia had no realistic means to prevent the United States from starting NMD programs, and that the Russian President's Cold War rhetoric was ill conceived and counterproductive. According to one such view:

The Russian side has no scenarios to enable it to keep the United States to the framework of the 1972 ABM Treaty.... That is why Putin is promising to withdraw from the START II Treaty and increase the Russian MIRVed missile arsenal... Moscow will be forced to channel its already meager state resources into building up and keeping secure its own already vast nuclear arsenal.... Not a very sensible solution, to put it mildly.⁷⁹

The July 2001 Genoa Summit

The U.S. and Russian Presidents met again at the July 2001 G8 summit in Genoa, Italy. At this meeting, Putin's rhetoric was much more conciliatory than his June pledges of an asymmetric response to U.S. NMD. The successful July 14 U.S. NMD intercept test was crucially importance for the evolution of the Russian perspectives and positions.

⁷⁸Vladimir Putin's press conference of June 23, 2001, <<http://president.Kremlin.ru/events/249.html>>

⁷⁹Vasily Sergeev and Aleksandr Kornilov, "Putin Surprised Only the West," *Gazeta.ru*, June 19, 2001, <<http://www.gazeta.ru/2001/07/19/putinudivil.shtml>>

Reflecting the majority opinion in Russian policymaking circles, analysts from the major Russian daily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* remarked that:

The successful ABM test would allow the American President to feel confident in negotiations with Putin in Genoa... It has been confirmed that the U.S. is capable of creating a workable ABM system allowing the defense of the territory of the country against single ballistic missiles... An adequate Russian “anti-missile” response is hardly possible, primarily for economic reasons.⁸⁰

Publicly aired criticism of Moscow’s position on missile defense intensified on the eve of the summit. According to Vadim Solovyev, editor-in-chief of the popular *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, “...Russia, by clinging essentially to the old methods and forms of relations, is unable to define a dignified place for itself in the new geopolitical circumstances.”⁸¹ Official Moscow and Russian observers thus appeared to be coming to grips with the reality of a changed U.S. attitude toward traditional arms control. As one of the leading proponents of the traditionalist perspective on arms control, Marshal Igor Sergeyev, stated shortly before the summit:

The fate of the ABM Treaty will be decided by October, when the U.S. finalizes [its] strategic review... The most plausible [scenarios] are the following: unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the treaty, or its modification... The first sign of U.S. withdrawal from the treaty would be putting the first cement into silos in Alaska and the construction of radars... The Americans would not hide the fact of the withdrawal from the treaty and would make an official announcement on that... Simply stated, the U.S. wants to have its unilateral advantages materialized—I can destroy you, but you cannot destroy me.⁸²

It is also noteworthy that two leading, vocal uniformed opponents of compromise on the ABM Treaty, Colonel Generals Ivashov and Manilov, were retired from their posts prior to Genoa. Solovyev, writing after the summit, suggests these dismissals were a “lesson” for others intent on obstructing Putin’s latitude for compromise with the United States.⁸³

⁸⁰Mikhail Khodoryenok and Elena Shesternina, “Bush Again Has Aces In His Hands,” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, July 17, 2001, <http://www.ng.ru/world/2001-07-17/6_bush.html>

⁸¹Vadim Solovyev, “Washington Moves Steadfastly Towards Deploying the NMD. Moscow Relies Only on Negotiating Process,” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, July 20, 2001: p. 1.

⁸²*Gazeta.ru* July 19, 2001, <<http://www.gazeta.ru/2001/07/19/na995544780.shtml>>

⁸³ Ivashov was in charge of the Ministry’s Department of Military Cooperation and Manilov was First Deputy Chief of the General Staff and Ministry Spokesman. Vadim Solovyev, “Russia Replaced Anger With Charity: Kremlin

Faced with U.S. determination to move forward on NMD, Moscow appeared to find utility in accepting the idea of a substantive dialog on strategic stability. At Genoa, President Putin agreed to bilateral discussions of both offensive and defensive systems. The brief Joint Statement signed by the Presidents announced that:

We agreed that major changes in the world require concrete discussions of both offensive and defensive systems. We already have some strong and tangible points of agreement. We will shortly begin intensive consultations on the interrelated subjects of offensive and defensive systems.⁸⁴

As was the case after the Ljubljana summit, Russian Foreign Ministry and Kremlin officials tried to balance the Genoa language by stressing that Moscow has not made concessions to the United States and that any talks would take years to conclude. For example, an anonymous Kremlin official emphasized the lengthy nature of the pending discussions, telling *Izvestiya* that:

In-depth talks on the whole range of strategic offensive arms and all international acts and bilateral agreements associated with it are possible. It is also theoretically possible to move toward new schemes of accords that would take account of the interests of Russia and its strategic partners, but such work would take several years.⁸⁵

Other officials have also noted the “lack of progress” during the U.S. National Security Adviser’s post-Genoa Moscow visit to discuss these issues. Security Council Secretary Sergei Ivanov chose to emphasize that the specifics of an agreement on a new strategic framework had yet to be identified and, therefore, talk of Moscow compromising was premature. According to Ivanov, “to say whether or not we are prepared to compromise, we need to know theoretically what exactly this compromise is to be like. At the moment we have no idea of it.”⁸⁶

Accepted Conditions of the Strategic Game Proposed by Washington,” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, July 27, 2001: p. 1.

⁸⁴Office of the Press Secretary, White House, “Joint Statement By Us President George W. Bush and President of The Russian Federation Vladimir V. Putin on Upcoming Consultations on Strategic Issues,” July 22, 2001, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/07/20010723-10.html>> (July 30, 2001).

⁸⁵Svetlana Babayeva, “Interpreters,” *Izvestiya*, July 28, 2001.

⁸⁶*Interfax*, 636GMT, July 31, 2001.

September 11, 2001

Terrorist attacks against U.S. targets on September 11, 2001 had a major impact on Russian thinking on foreign policy in general and bilateral relations with the U.S. in particular. As noted by a leading military commentator Mikhail Khodarenok, the events took the Russian leadership by surprise, and instantly put into question prior policies based on principles of superpower rivalry inherited from Soviet Union. The greatest issue that Moscow had to face was its role in the emerging new alliance of Western powers against the terrorist threat:

The sharp transformation of the military-political situation after September 11... proved to be totally unexpected for the leadership of the Russian state and its armed forces. The customary balance has collapsed instantly. The analyses and prognostications of the Defense Ministry and the General Staff... that used to treat the US as the most vicious enemy... have hardly any relevance... Russia should now take a difficult choice... that would define the direction of its development for many decades ahead... Long-term efforts to combat terrorism... may at some point acquire the form of a military coalition between the two countries. However, there is no unanimity on this highly important issue in the Russian political circles... Russia is stuck in the conflicts in the Caucasus, and, in all fairness, the limited capabilities of our state and its military machine do not allow “war on two fronts”... Indeed, Russia favors the elimination of international terrorism. However, what will be its role and contribution to the forthcoming conflict? The answer will define whether it becomes an integral part of the global community, or will persist in self-isolation inherited from the USSR.⁸⁷

In a series of speeches in September 2001, president Vladimir Putin unambiguously declared that Russia intended to be squarely on the U.S. side in the war against terrorism. A publication at the *Utro.ru* website identified several overriding reasons for the Kremlin’s position, however, it also emphasized that Moscow’s increased openness towards the West might be sabotaged by “second-tier” officials particularly at the Defense and Foreign Ministries:

Even though... the support promised by Putin to America... does not look all that substantial (Russia is offering use of its airspace only for humanitarian and certainly not for military missions), in the West his statement was greeted, it may be said, with cheering... Why, despite the numerous negative factors

⁸⁷ Mikhail Khodoryenok, “Russia Makes a Strategic Choice. The Decision on Supporting US military Efforts in Fighting Terrorism Will Define the Development of the Country for Many Decades to Come,” *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, September 21, 2001.

involved for Russia in supporting the US actions unequivocally and especially in backing that support with practical assistance, did Putin act the way he did? Commentators are unanimous in picking out three main reasons. First, extremist Islamic forces, especially the Taliban and Bin Laden's organization, constitute a direct threat to the Russian Federation's Central Asian "underbelly" as well as to Russia itself. Second, under the flag of the common struggle against international terrorism it is easier to conduct the political and military campaign against the Chechen separatists (whose links with Bin Laden are considered proven). Finally, third, Putin was determined to take advantage of the unique chance sent his way by the will of fate to make a major breakthrough in relations with the West... From the very start of his presidency Putin has been clearly driving in the direction of the West (just consider his repeated, albeit extremely cautious applications for membership of NATO and the EU), even if, because of internal and external limitations, that movement has not been able until very recently to pick up the desired speed... The members of his closest entourage (including both Ivanovs [Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov and Foreign minister Igor Ivanov]) are following with total discipline in their leader's wake, albeit veering to one side from time to time out of old-fashioned inertia. So the President has to gently correct them and not permit too great a deviation from the general line. In addition, a quite powerful latent resistance to the common course can be observed in the second echelon of power (at the level of deputy leaders of federal departments and below) -- in the Defense Ministry, in the Foreign Ministry and in the enforcement structures. Trench-warfare thinking has put down such strong roots in those places. It is precisely blind bureaucratic resistance coupled with the inertia in the higher echelons that constitute the main internal obstacle to the President's strategic plans. There are reports that, in elaborating Moscow's official position on the action being prepared by the United States, high-ranking individuals in the General Staff and the special services advocated more "neutral" forms of words, not implying any commitment... According to them, Russia should not help the United States as long as Washington is trying to expand NATO and planning to abandon the ABM treaty. These experienced, high-ranking military men still enjoy significant influence in the Russian corridors of power, where their deputies and protégés nowadays hold leading posts.⁸⁸

Taking advantage of the Kremlin's new rhetoric, many Russian liberals hoped to revive movement towards a bilateral Russian-American alliance:

In Ljubljana and Genoa both the Russian and the US presidents... actually understood one another. It is too soon to guess, but it may happen that, following the 11 September tragedy, the new, trusting relations between the leaders will be the prologue to new, allied relations between our countries.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ "Putin Seen To 'Smash Outdated Stereotypes' in Backing U.S." *Utro.ru*, October 2, 2001.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

On September 25, 2001, speaking in the German Bundestag, Vladimir Putin seemed to have offered such an alliance to the West based on the need to give up Cold War mentalities and practices, and recognize the existence of new threats to civilized humanity:

We continue living under the old system of values—we talk about security, however in reality we have not learned how to trust each other. Despite endless sweet talk, we continue to tacitly oppose each other. We either call for loyalty towards NATO or debate the rationality for its expansion. We still cannot agree on problems of ballistic missile defense. For many decades during the 20th century the world lived under the reality of the two opposing systems... We have become accustomed to live in anticipation of the catastrophe to such an extent that we still fail to comprehend and evaluate the changes that are happening in our world. We almost refuse to recognize that the world is no longer divided into two hostile camps... The world has become much more complex. We do not want or cannot comprehend that the structure of security that has been created over previous decades and has been effective to neutralize former threats is today unable to deal with new threats... The readiness of our partners to join forces in opposing real and not imaginary threats would demonstrate their seriousness and reliability. What do we still need to cooperate effectively? Despite all positive achievements of the last decades, we could not develop an effective mechanism of interaction. Coordinating bodies that have been created so far, do not provide Russia real opportunities to participate in the process of preparing and adopting decisions. Today, decisions are often adopted without our participation, and then they only insist that we support these decisions. And then they again talk about loyalty to NATO... Is this true partnership? Today we must once and for all declare: the Cold War is over! We are at a new stage of development. We understand that without a contemporary, solid and stable architecture of security we would never be able to create the atmosphere of trust in the continent... Today we must say that we relinquish our stereotypes and ambitions, and henceforth we would be providing for the security of the populations of Europe and the world jointly.⁹⁰

In making his broad offer of cooperation with the U.S., the Russian president tried to avoid any mention of a *quid-pro-quo*. He expected Washington to take the initiative in setting favorable conditions for Russian participation in the anti-terrorist front. It was assumed that, as the result of several rounds of bilateral consultations in previous months, the American side had fair knowledge of the concessions Russia hoped for in strategic relations with the U.S.: lenience on Russian actions in Chechnya, deep offensive weapons

⁹⁰ Official website of the President of the Russian Federation. September 25, 2001.

reductions, preservation of the ABM Treaty, admission to the World Trade Organization (WTO) if not NATO, etc.

The BMD-oriented debate became particularly lively with this shift. The liberals and realists in Moscow were particularly active in promoting mutual accommodation. One of their goals was to tone down Russian rhetoric calling for asymmetrical measures to NMD deployment. Military expert Sergei Kreidin summarized these views:

Tragic events of September 11 would most probably strengthen American belief in the need to improve the entire system of national security, starting with special services and ending with the NMD shield called upon to protect the U.S. from the threat of repeated terrorist attacks in their missile variant... In this situation all Russia can do is either to look from the side at the destruction of the “cornerstone of strategic stability”, or to move towards closer [bilateral] positions on problems of strategic stability and U.S. National BMD. In Ljubljana... the Russian president made an unprecedented declaration on Russian readiness to discuss possible changes to the 1972 ABM Treaty. Analysts received this even like the bolt from the blue... In principle, the parties may pursue their policies without paying attention to each other. But eventually, no one would benefit from such a course; rather, everyone would lose. Suppose we failed to come to agreement and the U.S. withdraws from the ABM Treaty unilaterally. Russia responds by fitting its [single warhead] missiles with additional nuclear warheads. Traditionally, Washington is wary of our land-based MIRVed missiles, and it has spent a lot of effort to assure their banning under the START II Treaty. However, formally, U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty relieves us of the obligations under other treaties, including START I and START II. The resulting situation appears less than acceptable for both sides. For Russia, it would create if not a colossal than additional burden for the tight state budget. Moreover, no concessions or compensations from the U.S. would be forthcoming in that case. For the U.S., guarantees of national security in confrontations with the rogue states would entail partial return to the times of the Cold War and the reduction of crisis stability in conflict situations with the Russian Federation which is hardly in Washington’s interest... The objective foundation of the possible compromise over the fate of the 1972 ABM Treaty is the inability in principle of the prospective U.S. NMD to block in a guaranteed way retaliatory actions of the strategic forces of the Russian Federation... This understanding fully agrees with the words of the Russian president who talked about the non-obligatory nature of specific measures in case the U.S. fails to observe the obligations taken upon itself to limit its ABM shield. For example, the withdrawal by the Russian Federation from the START I and START II treaties is possible but not at all mandatory in case of the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty. Moreover, there is another possibility when we respond to the U.S. NMD withdrawal we respond not by increasing the number of our warheads but by their certain reduction accompanied by simultaneously fitting strategic carriers with

ABM penetration devices. All this sets a rather wide field for possible compromise decisions on the new modernization of the contours of strategic stability.⁹¹

However, Russian traditionalists continued to express suspicion of the United States. They maintained that the NMD effort, spurred by the antiterrorist campaign, reflected the U.S. urge for global dominance and needed to be opposed by Russia. According to Professor Viktor Slipchenko:

It is clear that the U.S. does not want parity dependence on nuclear Russia. Sooner or later it will destroy the 1972 ABM Treaty... Under the cover of the acute “need” to possess the NMD to defend against certain future missile-nuclear rogue states (e.g. North Korea, Iran and Iraq) the U.S. pursues a... very important goal for itself: by financing the capital-intensive NMD, it wants to assure financing of the creation of the space-based information echelon and the land-based information infrastructure that would be used for purposes of the ABM system and in order to conduct contact-free wars... The space-based information echelon, to be created allegedly in the interests of the NMD, would allow the U.S. to get a lead on Russia and other countries in the ability to conduct wars of the next generation, and to maintain that lead for at least 10 years. Already with the beginning of the deployment of the NMD unavoidable new geopolitical factors would emerge overturning the entire strategic stability on the planet.⁹²

In sum, the events of September 11 ultimately did not change the position of the traditionalists or liberals with respect to U.S. interests in missile defense. However, sympathy with the United States and the possibility of a new, more broadly-based collegial relationship with Washington proved to be important in shaping Russia’s response to continued U.S. interest in BMD. A new Russian-U.S. partnership in combating terrorism could, in effect, occur “over the head” of bilateral disagreement on missile defense while facilitating other Russian interests, for example with respect to Chechnya and Russian concern about extremist Islam on its southern borders. Such a new relationship also could soften the blow of U.S. ABM Treaty withdrawal.

⁹¹ Sergei Kreidin, “Getting Out of the Impasse. Terrorist Acts in the U.S. Force Moscow to Look for Ways to Resolve the ABM Problem,” *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, October 5, 2001.

⁹² V. Slipchenko, “The U.S. Needs the ABM Shield Like a Fish Needs an Umbrella” <http://www.nasledie.ru/oboz/N09_01/9_14.HTM>.

The Shanghai Summit

The economic meeting in Shanghai in late October 2001 allowed Vladimir Putin to continue contacts with his American counterpart. In public appearances, while reiterating his belief in the importance of the ABM Treaty for strategic stability, Putin talked about “progress” on BMD with the U.S.:

I believe we realize that we can reach an agreement [concerning the ABM issue] with due account to the national interests of Russia and the United States and the need for consolidating the international stability in that vital sphere... We [Russia and the United States] have somewhat progressed in the ABM issue. We agree that we must think about the future and adequately react to possible future threats. We are ready to discuss that with our American partners if they offer us particular parameters for these debates... The ABM Treaty is a crucial element of the international stability... It is hard for us to agree with fears about terrorists seizing a strategic intercontinental missile.⁹³

Commenting on the results of the summit, Sergey Karaganov, head of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, claimed that Russia had gained some “room for maneuver” allegedly because the U.S. had also “toned down its position” on withdrawing from the ABM Treaty. However, he saw pitfalls in revision of the Russian position:

It is entirely obvious that George Bush has been toning down his position somewhat. This undoubtedly provides some room for maneuver, but, at the same time, it creates a very dangerous trap. Since Bush has stated the possibility of talks on withdrawing from the ABM Treaty, those talks could lead to confrontation. Consequently, it would be more expedient to hold broad political consultations in the process of which the Americans could withdraw from the treaty unilaterally. In this situation Russia will neither support them nor participate and, correspondingly, it will not share the blame for the withdrawal from the treaty. Thus, we can avoid the ambiguous situation where it will be necessary to put up stiff opposition, as well as avoiding a humiliating situation after the Americans have nonetheless withdrawn from the treaty.⁹⁴

A well-known liberal deputy of the State Duma, Boris Nemtsov, saw no danger in the removal of the ABM Treaty and even suggested that the creation of U.S. NMD would “open up the possibility for negotiations: it will be possible to insist that the US national missile defense system be developed with the active technical cooperation of Russia and

⁹³ *Itar-Tass*, October 21, 2001.

⁹⁴ Viktoriya Ivanova, “We Could Not Have Expected Any More,” *Moskovskaya Gazeta*, October 22, 2001.

Europe... Another possibility is the resolution of a whole range of economic problems we have, for example, attracting investment to Russia.”⁹⁵

However, shortly after the meeting in Shanghai, and in expectation of the next bilateral summit in the United States in November 2001, a skeptical view began to take root in Moscow to the effect that Washington had by and large ignored the Russian offer of a “historic alliance.” Skeptics argued that the United States wanted to pursue the war against terrorism without involving Russia in a way that would entail a compromise on key issues that still separated the two countries, particularly the ABM Treaty.

It was not surprising then that Moscow continued its campaign in favor of preserving the ABM Treaty. In particular, together with Belarus and China, it reintroduced a pro-ABM Treaty resolution at the fall session of the UN General Assembly. However, at the same time, apparently in anticipation of the almost inevitable U.S. withdrawal from the Treaty, appeals began to be heard for Russia to give up the “artificial” constraint of arms control agreements in order to develop its military potential in a way that corresponded to Russian interests.

Another idea gaining momentum was to pressure the U.S. indirectly by improving Russia’s standing in the Third World, particularly in Asia where the Americans face serious challenges. Improved political relations with China, India, Iran, etc., were expected to carry the message of potential Russian military involvement on behalf of regimes and forces targeted by the U.S. in its global campaign against terrorism.

Some of the most optimistic liberal hopes for a new alliance with the United States similar to the World War II relationship were clearly shown to be wishful. However, the Putin government continued to hold up the new, closer bilateral relationship as an important success for Russia. Putin also chose not to antagonize traditionalists by offering the U.S. ABM related compromises to preserve the 1972 treaty—an important position going into the next meeting between the Presidents in Crawford, Texas.

⁹⁵ *Ekho Moskvy*, October 20, 2001.

The Crawford (Texas) Summit

There are indications that Vladimir Putin was heavily pressured before the summit by the military trying to prevent any unfavorable compromise between him and his American counterpart on key strategic issues, particularly the ABM Treaty. According to Vadim Solovyev, editor-in chief of *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*:

Several events on November 10-12, on the eve of the three-day meeting between presidents of Russia and the U.S. revealed the far from harmonious relations between the Generals and the Supreme Commander... Contradictions with the Kremlin started to evolve some time ago, however the mechanism of the political control over the command of the armed forces prevented them from going into the open... With the beginning of the antiterrorist war a military man – Commander of the General Staff Anatolii Kvashnin had stepped forward... Career military now believe that they may influence the president and his surrounding in a purely political sense. Strategic parity with the U.S., geopolitical balance in Central Asia and the Middle East, and the social procurement for the military are, as a minimum, three key issues in which that the military want to influence the country's leadership. Regardless of any declarations the president may make on the readiness for a compromise with the U.S. on the 1972 ABM Treaty, acting Generals stick to their point of view completely in accordance with the Soviet tradition, i.e. the Treaty should not be changed under any circumstances! It is better to let the Americans withdraw from it unilaterally than to agree to a compromise. People around Putin feel this position is tantamount to going back to the Cold War. The other day, the current Kremlin's appointee in the Defense Ministry Sergei Ivanov recognized that when he called the ABM Treaty "a relic of the [Cold War] period." Such a declaration could not but enrage the Generals, particularly at the background of the policy of reducing the Russian missile nuclear potential approximately fourfold, i.e. down to 1,500 warheads. Intuitively, the Generals should understand that their social worth would decrease by the same order or even more... Discontent is also fueled by the Kremlin decisions to scrap bases in Vietnam and Cuba, reduce Russian peacekeeping contingents in Bosnia and Kosovo, and by the reduction of Russian military presence in the Trans-Caucasus and the Trans-Dnestr region, while NATO comes closer and closer. The president's military policy... gives little reason for enthusiasm either.⁹⁶

Domestic reactions to the summit results demonstrated that the Russian policy elite remained divided on the fundamental issues shaping the bilateral relationship. The majority of liberals hailed the unique new style of friendliness and trust between the

⁹⁶ Vadim Solovyev, "Top Brass Put More Pressure on the Kremlin," *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie*, November 16, 2001.

leaders of the two nations, and their general readiness to reduce nuclear arsenals. The announcement that the U.S. and Russia would continue consultations on strategic defense and the ABM Treaty “in the broad context” of a new strategic relationship was also noted as a favorable development.⁹⁷

Some public commentary suggested that the fact that the ABM Treaty survived the summit was evidence that the American position was softening. According to Sergei Rogov, Director of the Institute of U.S.A. and Canada Studies, “The U.S. administration’s rejection of its announcement of unilateral withdrawal from the ABM Treaty was a fundamentally important result of the [summit].”⁹⁸ It was hoped that instead of abandoning the Treaty, the sides would come to a mutual accommodation allowing the U.S. to continue testing elements of its NMD system, while making further reductions of the strategic offensive arsenals of both countries.⁹⁹

However, the jubilation of the liberals about the generally accommodating tone of the summit was marred by the absence of specific formal agreements that could translate good intentions into concrete actions.¹⁰⁰ In effect, the apparent American desire to abandon formally negotiated treaties on arms control in favor of unilateral initiatives confused and irked not only the liberals but also most other commentators in Russia. In the predominant Russian view, non-binding unilateral steps on arms reduction could be slowed down, stopped or altogether reversed at any point by future administrations in both countries for various unpredictable reasons. Verification and control would be dubious if not impossible in this situation.¹⁰¹ A less formal relationship was also understood to be a diminution of Russian influence and stature.

⁹⁷ *Itar-Tass*, November 13, 2001.

⁹⁸ Interview With Sergei Rogov, “Has Meeting Between George Bush and Vladimir Putin Justified Expectations?” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, November 17, 2001, pp. 1-2.

⁹⁹ Vladimir Kuzar, “A Compromise Is Possible, But With the ABM Treaty Preserved,” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, November 15, 2001.

¹⁰⁰ See, Andrei Kozyrev, “What Do We Need From America,” *Moscow News*, November 22, 2001.

¹⁰¹ *Interfax*, November 17, 2001. *Itar-Tass*, November 17, 2001.

As far as the anti-Putin opposition was concerned, it rejected the summit results, particularly the proposed further cuts in offensive weapons, as a final blow to Russia's status and security. According to communist leader Gennadii Zugarov:

During his visit to the United States, Russian Federation President V.V. Putin stated his intention to sharply reduce Russia's strategic nuclear forces. This is an astonishing statement. For two generations the country made the most difficult sacrifices for the sake of creating a nuclear missile shield. About one-third of the Soviet Union's national income was invested in it. And now Mr. Putin, with a degree of ease bordering on irresponsibility, is moving toward the destruction of this shield, which, even 10 years after the collapse of the economy and the Army, still ensures Russia's security and its status as a great power... G. Bush's verbal statement about the United States' alleged readiness to make a similar reduction should not be the reason for Russia to disarm unilaterally. The United States has a huge superiority in conventional armed forces. America retains a powerful military-industrial complex and is capable of swiftly building up its nuclear forces. Mr. Putin's "disarmament" plans directly open the way for the United States to create an antimissile defense system, which is definitively destroying the balance of forces in the world... In essence, Russia's ruling group is in the process strategic capitulation to the West.¹⁰²

Officially, Russia's continued insistence on no substantive change to the ABM Treaty demonstrated the continued importance of traditionalists in domestic politics. In sum, for Putin, the cost (both in terms of domestic politics and international stature) of making a concession on ABM Treaty sufficient to satisfy American interests outweighed the value of a preserved Treaty for Russian prestige and security.

U.S. Announcement on ABM Treaty Withdrawal

Russian response to the December 13, 2001 announcement of the U.S. administration's decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty in accordance with procedures in Article XV was, to the surprise of many, quite muted. Putin's short statement in response to the American withdrawal announcement made the following points:

- The U.S. has the legitimate right to abandon the Treaty in accordance with Treaty provisions;
- Though an American "mistake", the withdrawal decision does not create immediate threats to Russian security;

¹⁰² "Statement by Gennadiy Zyuganov, chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and chairman of the People's Patriotic Union of Russia," *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, November 17, 2001.

- Abandonment of the ABM Treaty leads to the emergence of a legal vacuum in the elaborate system of agreements in the sphere of disarmament and the nonproliferation;
- That “vacuum” should be filled up by rapid elaboration of a “new framework” of strategic mutual relations;
- Under that “framework” considerable reductions of offensive weapons should take place (preferably to the level of 1,500-2,200 warheads for each side).¹⁰³

In an interview to the *Financial Times* of London, posted on the presidential website on December 17, 2001, Vladimir Putin expanded on his December 13 statement:

- While the U.S. has the legal right to withdraw from the Treaty, a better way would have been to modify it to accommodate American interests in NMD testing;
- Moscow was prepared to agree to modifications needed by Washington, however, the Americans never actually defined their modification requirements;
- The withdrawal creates no new direct threats to Russia. The NMD system will take years to build, and in any case it would be ineffective against Russian ICBMs.

At the same time, according to Vladimir Putin, the elimination of the ABM Treaty and the U.S. BMD push would:

- Disturb the balance of forces;
- Increase the potential of offensive weapons;
- Lead to the arms race in space;
- Prevent leading nuclear powers from restraining third parties involved in the arms race.

Putin noted the option to increase Russia’s offensive arsenal through MIRVed ICBMs, however, he maintained that this is not an unavoidable step, and that everything would depend on the “quality of bilateral relations.” The Russian president stated that “If

¹⁰³ See, Vadim Markushin, “Bad News for the World Community: Russian Federation President V.V. Putin’s Statement,” *Krasnaya Zvezda*, December 15, 2001.

[bilateral] relations are built according to the partnership or alliance model then nothing terrible would happen even if we do not have a legally binding treaty.”¹⁰⁴

Other officials of the Putin administration generally echoed his statements. Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov reflected the interest of his agency in preserving as much of the traditional structure of arms control agreements as possible, and in engaging the U.S. in further negotiations. Talking to journalists during a visit to Namibia on December 14, 2001, Ivanov expressed hope that, after withdrawing from the ABM Treaty, Washington “will not make similar moves in relation to other treaties and agreements in the arms control sphere.” He also stressed that, in deciding to pull out of the ABM Treaty, “the U.S. was not guided by security reasons.... This is a political decision reflecting a certain ideology.” At the same time, the Russian Foreign Minister appreciated “the willingness publicly aired by the U.S. administration to immediately start negotiations with Russia on a new framework of strategic relations and on drafting treaties on radical reductions of strategic offensive weapons. This is a good chance to demonstrate devotion to the principles of strategic stability.” Ivanov said he hoped that “Russian-American contacts, which have been active of late, will be continued, so as to approach mutually acceptable agreements on the most important problems of strategic stability.”¹⁰⁵

Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, formally a civilian, who consistently tried to project himself as a reformer of the Russian military establishment and a liberal, followed closely in Putin’s steps describing the effects of the U.S. decision:

The Russian Defense Ministry will not take any drastic direct or indirect steps [in connection with the U.S. withdraw from the ABM Treaty... We have plans about the development of the Strategic Missile Troops, which were drafted long before that... mistaken decision. But it has no effect on our military security... We hope that this vacuum [created by the abandonment of the ABM Treaty] will be filled, in particular, with a Russian-American treaty on radical cuts of strategic offensive armaments under strict international control and verification. Personally, I take the US decision rather calmly and I think that it is more ideological and economic than anything else.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ See: Official website of the President of the Russian Federation, December 17, 2001.

¹⁰⁵ Interfax, December 15, 2001.

¹⁰⁶ Interfax, December 17, 2001.

Marshal Igor Sergeev also picked up on Putin's idea about "filling up the legal vacuum" in the area of arms control:

Without doubt, the most dangerous thing is to be in the kind of legal vacuum, where we find ourselves today, or in which we will find ourselves on 13 June, if I remember correctly. It will take six months. So, both sides should make full use of this period up until the withdrawal from the treaty to ensure that a replacement for the ABM treaty takes shape, and to formulate a new framework of mutual relations between the USA and Russia. We also need to give real substance to this, which will guarantee global stability. This includes strategic stability between our powers, assuming that we are now partners, and not enemies. I think that these framework agreements will reflect the fact that the two presidents have agreed on approaches to defense and attack systems. I think that it is imperative to resolve what the limitations are of the missile defense system, so that we understand that this has been specified.¹⁰⁷

Leading Russian arms control expert Dmitrii Gornostaev provided several explanations for the muted Russian official reaction to the U.S. withdrawal announcement:

- Moscow wants to avoid building up tension in bilateral relations;
- It had been prepared politically and psychologically for the U.S. decision for some time;
- It is too early to threaten Americans with specific countermeasures;
- Moscow still hopes that the U.S. will either review its decision, or will agree to negotiate a new agreement to replace the ABM Treaty;
- Russia understands that the NMD will not be able to undercut its deterrence capability for many years to come; and
- Moscow may be able to offset the growth of the U.S. military potential by entering into an alliance with major Asian powers China and India.¹⁰⁸

Predictably, there were some harsh reactions to the U.S. announcement. Some in the military essentially contested the President's assertion that U.S. missile defense would not jeopardize Russian security. According to Chief of the Russian General Staff Anatolii Kvashnin, the U.S. decision "would change the military-political situation and have a

¹⁰⁷ RTR TV, December 16, 2001, *Vesti Nedeli* Report.

¹⁰⁸ Dmitrii Gornostaev, "Putin's Answer to the Destruction of the ABM Treaty Was Moderate. The Complex of Measures in Response to the U.S. Withdrawal from the ABM Treaty Has Long Been Known. The Question Is When They Would Be Applied," *Strana.ru*, December 13, 2001.

negative effect on the whole of strategic stability. It will untie the hands of a number of countries and may bring about a new phase of the arms race.”¹⁰⁹ The retired Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov argued that “it will be not so much launch complexes as global information systems (GIS) that will dominate in the antimissile system that is being formed in the United States, which will enable the Pentagon to control almost the entire world space, including Russia.” In his opinion, through GIS, Russian territory, its strategic weapons, and also the most important economic and administrative facilities will be under constant threat and the United States will have the opportunity to exert pressure on them using even conventional weapons.¹¹⁰

Some liberals expressed concern that the military would use the withdrawal notice as an excuse to press for massive rearmament. In the words of the deputy chairman of the Duma faction of the Union of the Right Forces Viktor Pokhmelkin, the U.S. move “may lead to an arms build-up in Russia, to the great pleasure of our own hawks.”¹¹¹

Vladimir Lukin emphasized the long-term negative political effect of the American decision for bilateral relations:

For the U.S. to unilaterally settle such issues after our close and confidential cooperation during the antiterrorist operation is, of course, a bad sign for future development of our relations, for the level of trust in the future... It is a bad sign for our leadership. It is a bad sign for our public opinion that started shifting gradually towards trusting the U.S.¹¹²

Sergei Rogov predicted serious trouble for the U.S. in its relations with Russia and the American allies in Europe, as well as internally:

Washington’s decision is a disaster not only in Russian-American relations... The White House acted very rudely towards its European partners. It put its NATO allies before a *fait accompli*... Washington’s withdrawal... would create very serious problems for the White House in its relations with European allies... The

¹⁰⁹ *Interfax*, December 13, 2001.

¹¹⁰ Aleksandr Orlov, Leonid Ivashov, “Withdrawal From ABM Treaty Will Enable United States To Control Almost Entire World Space,” *Strana.ru*, December 17, 2001.

¹¹¹ *Interfax*, December 13, 2001.

¹¹² Vladimir Lukin, Bad Omen: “We support them, they do what they please” The NTV News Program “*Segodnya*,” December 13, 2001.

unilateral withdrawal... would exacerbate the political struggle inside the U.S. It would seriously damage the construction of relations between the U.S. and Russia and would complicate the realization of possibilities that have appeared in recent months... The decision by the Bush administration... does not mean that the issue is closed once and for all. There is a powerful democratic opposition in the U.S. congress. Moreover, the democrats have levers of influencing the government, including through the procedure of adopting the budget for the Pentagon. The monolithic unity that has emerged in the congress after the tragic events of September 11 is split. Currently, the ABM issue is becoming the main issue in the political contest between the republicans and the democrats.¹¹³

Head of the Duma Committee on International Affairs, Dmitrii Rogozin raised the possibility of specific Russian countermeasures:

We are left with only one alternative, for which we have already prepared, without publicizing the fact. That is to plan in what way our strategic nuclear forces can best be linked to our new requirements, our economic capabilities, and the geography of the country. This means, I think, that we can return wholeheartedly to the policy of in one way or another maintaining or developing a new capability for our heavy missiles, strategic missiles that may now be equipped with multiple warheads, which in principle was forbidden under START II in the case of ground-based missiles.¹¹⁴

Other Russian commentators denounced the U.S. decision because, in their belief, it would “stimulate the race in missile-nuclear weapons in Asia. This decision would most probably entail appropriate actions by others, beginning with China and ending with Iraq. It eliminates the system of control over armaments.”¹¹⁵ In the opinion of Aleksei Arbatov, the Chinese leadership might revise its program of developing strategic nuclear forces in the wake of the U.S. administration’s decision: “China can increase [its current nuclear arsenal of 20 missiles] to 1,000 units over a short period of time.” A chain reaction will follow including India and Pakistan. However, Arbatov drew the line at cooperating with China in the strategic arms sphere, “otherwise, it may pose a threat to Russia’s national security.”¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Olga Koleva, “The ABM Treaty Would Die On June 13,” *Vesti. Ru*, December 14, 2001.

¹¹⁴ *Ekho Moskvy*, December 12, 2001.

¹¹⁵ Vyacheslav Nikonov (President of the “Politika” foundation), “U.S. Withdrawal from the ABM Treaty Would Lead to Arms Race in Asia,” *Strana.ru*, December 13, 2001.

¹¹⁶ *Interfax-AVN*, December 17, 2001.

Only rare comments avoided blaming the U.S. for the collapse of the ABM Treaty regime. In the opinion of liberal arms control expert Pavel Podvig from the center for Disarmament, Energy and Ecology of the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, Moscow bears its own share of responsibility, and should not count on responding to the U.S. in kind:

The U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty would become a testimony of the serious debacle in Russian policy and not necessarily because the U.S. would acquire the ability to create the ABM system that can change the Russian-American strategic balance. The system under creation would not be able to affect that balance since it would be unable to intercept Russian ballistic missiles with any effectiveness. For the same reason, it should not be expected that the disappearance of the ABM Treaty would become the beginning of some kind of an arms race: none of its potential participants, including Russia and China, simply have the need to increase their nuclear arsenals. The defeat of the Russian policy will consist in something else: U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty would create the precedent of the termination in activity of a serious international agreement... The irony of the situation is that... while trying to underline the role of the ABM Treaty as “the cornerstone of strategic stability”... the Russian government did nothing to prevent the collapse of the treaty... Moreover, recent Russian policy failed to contribute to the preservation of the Treaty. On the contrary, it was rather leading to its demise. The emphasis, apparently, was made on that the refusal to compromise on ABM issues that Russia demonstrated recently, would help put the entire responsibility for the collapse of the treaty on American shoulders.¹¹⁷

What is clear, and remarkable, is that despite the alarm and despair from both liberals and traditionalists, the Putin government has been carefully moderate in response to the U.S. move. From the traditionalist perspective, the Russian president “stood up” to the Americans by not agreeing to extensive Treaty modifications. From the liberal perspective, Putin demonstrated a willingness to maintain the bilateral relationship and continue engagement with Washington in pursuit of Russia’s broader interests. Importantly, the Russian leadership has also left open its options regarding “asymmetric” responses to U.S. ABM Treaty withdrawal and focused on impending talks about offensive force reductions. In effect, this is a uniquely Russian accommodation of the American interest in BMD.

¹¹⁷ Pavel Podvig, “At the Broken Up Treaty,” *Smi.ru*, December 14, 2001.

Conclusion

Russian Perspectives on the Way Forward

To a certain extent, most of those involved in the arms control policy discussion in Moscow agree on some basic issues. The primary theme is that the current situation in which Russia finds itself after the end of the Cold War is unacceptable. The U.S. decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty in some respects underlines the Moscow's loss of parity with Washington. U.S. BMD programs are perceived as potentially damaging to Russia, since it cannot emulate them. Some Russian politicians equate the threat of ballistic missile proliferation to Russia with the threat of U.S. NMD to strategic parity. From this perspective, as stated by Deputy Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Oleg Chernov: "We regard U.S. intention to deploy the National Missile Defense system under the pretext of threats from the so-called rogue states . . . , within the same category."¹¹⁸ However, moderates and supporters of traditional arms control arrive at different conclusions from this common perspective.

The traditionalist vision of the future essentially amounts to rebuilding Russia's deterrence capability commensurate with that of the United States. Their main concern is the preservation of the quasi-superpower position of Russia. These traditionalists lay special emphasis on the need to maintain the Strategic Missile Troops as the only realistic answer to overcoming prospective U.S. NMD. As formulated by Major General Vladimir Dvorkin:

A future transformation is already visible even though the ABM Treaty is still valid. I mean that START II does not have any future, much less START III. . . In response, Russia may build up its Strategic Missile Forces and their ability to penetrate territorial ABM defenses, or it may change the structure of the Strategic Missile Forces. For example, Moscow may decide to abolish numerous restrictions on the improvement of the Topol M ICBM or improvement of the naval RSM 54 ICBM. The number of warheads on ICBMs and effective means of anti-ABM penetration may be increased. All of this will make the NMD system ineffective. As I see it, these asymmetric measures are what Russia in its current position can afford.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸Oleg Chernov, "Globalization of World Development Forces Russia to Treat New Missile Threats Particularly Seriously," *Yadernyi Kontrol*, January-February, 2001, <<http://www.pircenter.org/english/news/index.htm>>

¹¹⁹Dmitry Safonov, "The U.S. Will Create the NMD No Matter What," *Izvestiya*, January 22, 2001: p. 3.

Proposals to conduct arms reductions on a unilateral basis extended by the Bush administration are unacceptable to many Russian arms control traditionalists. These supporters of traditional arms control are quick to point out that the nonobligatory nature of unilateral steps would deny Washington the sort of predictability and transparency that comes with formal treaty regimes.

Other Russian voices warn that a renewed strategic competition with America would undermine the potential for broader Russian reforms. According to Sergei Rogov:

Fundamental changes in the economic and geopolitical structure of the world, and new technological challenges undermine the foundations of the arms control regime that appeared at the final stage of the Cold War... After the collapse of the bipolar system of international relations, the principle of parity (equality in the quantity of certain types of conventional and strategic weapons) became ineffective... In the foreseeable future, Russia may not count on military superiority in case of a conflict in the West or in the East... There is a tendency of the growing distortion of the military strategic balance in favor of the U.S. in view of Russia's inability to maintain parity at levels foreseen by START I and START II. The United States is determined to proceed to the deployment of the National Missile Defense system. In 15-20 years, the continuation of these tendencies may put into question the effectiveness of the Russian nuclear deterrence potential... In the long-term perspective, Russia may preserve the status of the great military power by increasing its military expenditures to the level of such states as China, Japan, Germany, France and Great Britain (i.e. 15-20% of the U.S. military budget)... Return to the arms race is against Russia's interests... The scenario of the "embattled garrison" is incompatible with the continuation of the democratic political process in the country.¹²⁰

Moderates believe that so-called "asymmetrical countermeasures" are not a viable solution. Rather, Russia should attempt to involve the United States in negotiations to develop a changed arms control regime. Some Russian moderates offer concrete proposals for regimes that might replace the philosophy of MAD as codified by the ABM Treaty. For example, Professor Konstantin Cherevkov, academician of the Tsiolkovskii Academy of Cosmonautics, called on the Kremlin to involve Washington in negotiations

¹²⁰ Sergei Rogov, "The Priority of 'Assuring Equidistance' to the Centers of Power," *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, December 29, 2000: p. 3.

on a new arms control regime that would replace reliance on the ABM Treaty with a flexible formula that covers the offensive and defensive capabilities of both sides.¹²¹

In a similar vein, General Alexander Piskunov, a Duma deputy and arms control expert, has recommended “softening” Russia’s anti-NMD position by developing “a new long-term non-proliferation Treaty” that would address U.S. concerns about the growing missile threat in combination with deep offensive cuts to 500-600 warheads “regardless of delivery vehicles.” The “freedom-to-mix” provision should be accompanied by “an agreement on a limited U.S. NMD that would be able to deal with accidental launches” and rogue launches.¹²²

As noted above, Vladimir Putin appears responsive both to moderate and traditionalist influences. On the one hand, the government understands Russia’s limitations and the paramount need to focus on internal problems rather than rivalry. Putin has given conditional personal support for the search of new openings in U.S.-Russian relations. He also recognizes that the West, in particular the United States, may be useful in Russia’s effort to address issues like the economy, internal security challenges, withstanding regional pressures, etc. On the other hand, Putin remains dependent on various powerful traditionalist interest groups. He may have a limited personal stake in arms control and BMD, however he is bound to deliver on his promises to the military-industrial complex—one of the main sources of his support in Russia.

Under these circumstances, how the U.S. moves forward in the context of this emerging accommodation over BMD becomes crucial. Both states need to clarify certain basic concepts that seem to divide them unreasonably at the intellectual level. For example, the concepts of “deterrence,” “sufficiency,” “strategic stability,” and “parity” are understood and defined differently, and have different connotations in Russian and American usages. In particular, when Russians talk about “preservation of MAD” and the ABM Treaty as the “foundation of strategic stability” they appear to have in mind the need to preserve

¹²¹Konstantin Cherevkov, “Stability At A New Foundation,” *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, February 2, 2001, <http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2001-02-02/4_stability.html>

¹²² Odnokolenko, pp. 1, 4.

the basic element of mutuality in arms control, and not necessarily the ability to inflict unacceptable damage to the United States in retaliation.

The idea of fighting a real nuclear war with the United States has been thoroughly discredited in Russia. Although aloofness, if not animosity, toward the American socio-political system still guides many in the Russian elite, few would object to pulling Russia from under the nuclear sword of Damocles.

Technical Cooperation

There are significant benefits to cooperative technical programs like the ongoing Russian American Observation Satellite (RAMOS) project. They help establish positive relationships that undermine the climate of mistrust that is present in many sectors of Russia. Cooperation also allows activities, like the series of joint TMD exercises conducted by Russian and American militaries, to provide the sides with tangible evidence of successful bilateral endeavors; it demonstrates that Russia can work with the Americans and be treated with respect. It should not be forgotten that Russia does have extensive experience with missile defense technologies and currently operates the only ABM system deployed in the world. Any sort of global approach that the U.S. may ultimately work toward could only benefit from Russian experience and capability.

Russian proposals for increased expert consultations on the threat also offer avenues for the sides to explore technical issues together and gain trust—which is a far more valuable commodity than the actual product of any technical exercise. An expert level exploration of the concept of strategic stability would also be helpful because it would offer Russians a role in defining the terms and concepts that will be necessary to articulate any post-MAD framework American's might envision. It would also increase the clarity with which Russia is able to view American intentions.

Clarity

The prospect of losing the MAD-based paradigm entails more than just the change in offensive retaliatory capability. In the Russian mind, it threatens to replace the existing status quo, admittedly tenuous and imperfect, with chaos and unpredictability. This is a

fearful prospect for Russia that has had to face internal chaos, unpredictability and accompanying degradation for the last two decades.

This may explain the most extreme reactions to the still-amorphous U.S. plans for building missile defense. The greatest challenge comes not from the specific architecture of the system (in effect, Russians are reasonably convinced that no NMD presents an existential threat to them in the next 20, 50 even 100 years), but from the unknown—the fact that it lies outside the customary rules, regulations and limitations of bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements. The simplest calculations indicate that the affluent and ambitious United States. would fare much better under these new, so far unpredictable circumstances, than would Russia.

Of greatest help in preventing unbalanced Russian behavior is clarity in the U.S. position. The measured official reaction to the U.S. ABM Treaty withdrawal announcement suggests that in all probability, Russian leaders could master enough pragmatism, composure and sensibility if they understood the scope of the problem (i.e., NMD) they were facing. It appears that Russian intransigence is often as much a product of American ambiguity as of opposition to the substance of U.S. actions.

Expressed U.S. intentions to overcome MAD in bilateral relations and to put strategic arms reductions on a unilateral basis are interpreted in Russia as excessively destructive and void of positive content. Many quarters also assume that any transition preferable to the United States would be one in which Russia is by definition disadvantaged. One of the reasons for this interpretation may be Russia's own experience in trying to eliminate all vestiges of the Communist past without having a blueprint of the future society it wants to build. Russian leaders and the public at large have difficulty visualizing what would come in place of the proverbial "32 arms control treaties" that supposedly form the foundation of the current "strategic stability." They are afraid of the vacuum that may be worse than imperfect current regimes.

Russia may react positively to U.S. offers of developing new structures or regimes for bilateral and multilateral military-political relations, the same way there was a positive initial response to the idea of President Bush to create a new "framework" for these

relations in the BMD area. Various tentative ideas on the shape of these regimes are afloat in Moscow: from amended ABM Treaty and renewed START III to a cardinally new treaty that combines offensive and defensive arms. Some thought has already gone into debating advantages and disadvantages of unilateral, albeit coordinated moves in the area. Many in Russia believe that it is on the basis of concrete new forms of bilateral interaction that the two nations may perform the long overdue task of fundamentally redefining their relationship in the post-Cold War era. However, again, the issue of clarity becomes paramount. Without clear U.S. plans and objectives, Russian thinking drifts toward the default traditionalist opposition to change.

Need for Mutual Accommodation Through Dialog

At the level of practical diplomacy, Moscow has signaled its preference for debates and formal negotiations as prelude to a changed relationship with the United States. Though the main goal may be to delay real changes in the system of bilateral strategic relations, discussions on a broad range of issues is also intended as a “safety valve” against precipitous or irreversible actions, and an opportunity to vent Russian frustrations. A large number of individual Russians of various backgrounds—military and civilian—would strongly appreciate being involved personally in official and unofficial contacts with Americans, particularly if the latter are financed out of American sources but assure “parity” in the status of the participants. One important step in making dialog a productive process, rather than a stalling maneuver, would be to restart a bilateral exchange with a mandate as broad as that of 1992’s Ross-Mamedov process. From the perspective of Russians who see the strategic problem as “holistic,” any discussion that remains limited to resolving technical issues associated with various ABM architectures cannot resolve their fears and concerns. The political situation in both countries has evolved drastically since 1992. That the talks occurred at a high level, could embrace the entire framework of the strategic relationship, and demonstrated U.S. willingness to treat Russia as a partner in the process are all still important factors in Moscow’s world view. There will be much Russian skepticism to overcome and the United States may have to demonstrate significant patience along with its firm position that the strategic framework must be revised.

In terms of the rhetorical “accompaniment” of bilateral contacts and talks, Russian leaders react with extreme pain to any American statements that, either explicitly or through omission point to Russia’s inferior status in the post-Cold War world. Primarily out of hurt pride, they may rush into actions that would eventually be self-defeating and perhaps even damaging to Russian interests—and may also seriously destabilize bilateral and international relations.

Washington should not underestimate the level of work required to move Moscow away from the comfort of arms control’s Cold War foundations. Nor should Americans assume that arms control can be separated from the entire web of bilateral relations. This means engaging Russia on a variety of topics—and not just those in which the United States has a complaint to lodge against Moscow’s behavior (e.g., relations with Iran) or seeks a concession. Issues could range from capital flight to counterterrorism, from the WTO and banking reform to Russian housing and medical needs. Moving the dialog to high levels, and outside of traditional strategic force forums could help signal U.S. seriousness. The Putin administration clearly hopes that a new bilateral relationship based on anti-terrorism can produce a dialog of rough equality.

Within the context of broader negotiations, the United States could also benefit from accepting Russia’s invitation to discuss expanding nonproliferation cooperation. Although many Americans doubt Russia’s sincerity on this issue, accepting Russia’s initiative would be a powerful signal to Moscow that the United States is interested in treating Russia seriously and not in imposing Washington’s views and positions by fiat.

Washington may also have to react to Moscow’s idea about involving other nuclear and even non-nuclear states in the arms control dialog. Of central importance for both sides is the future Chinese defense posture and behavior. Positions of regional “mini superpowers”—India and Pakistan are also of importance. Currently, Moscow may be counting on the support of these and other powers in creating “counterbalances” to U.S. global influence, and, in particular, in its attempt to prevent the United States from exiting the MAD-based paradigm of bilateral relations. However, in the future, alliances may change, and not to Moscow’s advantage. Therefore, establishment of broader “rules

of the game” for regulating global military-political relations, and preventing the emergence of adversarial alliances (which apparently is one of the goals of the so far ill-defined Russian concept of “global strategic stability”) may be both in Russian and American long-term interests.

Much of Russia’s attitude toward the issue of U.S. BMD is reactive. If Russia were to respond positively to U.S. interest in revising the strategic framework and rethinking the roles of offense and defense in strategic stability, it could only be as the result of a shift in calculation of costs and benefits of Moscow’s relationship with Washington. Washington could help redefine both the costs and benefits involved, with full appreciation that Russian behavior reflects an array of concerns beyond the technical impact of defense deployments on force exchange models. It will reflect concerns about status, suspicion as a response to lack of data, domestic political necessities, and the difficulties of managing force modernization and military reform in the face of severe constraints. Washington must be cautious not to approach this process as something it imposes on Moscow’s already fitful adjustment to the post Cold War world—but it must at the same time make its fundamental interests clear and direct. Only a high level of directness will allow Russia’s elite to recognize the limitations imposed by intransigence. And only a sincere effort by Washington to court an accommodation between equals will allow Russia to accept that changing the strategic status quo can possibly benefit Russia.