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Russia and Arms Control
The Trials of Transition to a Post-Soviet Era

Sergei Fedorenko

FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES, the U.S.-Soviet arms control process was a centerpiece of superpower relations, the only functional channel of direct strategic interaction between the two nations. The very idea of strategic arms control, specifically the mutual limitation of long-range nuclear weapons, was a typical by-product of the Cold War mentality, anchored to an elegant but simplistic bipolar vision of the international system, to notions of enduring antagonism between the "communist" and "free" worlds, and the primacy of military power in national security policy.

The arms control process did not challenge these basic premises but aimed to adapt them to rapidly changing strategic realities. Like the American limited-war theories of the late 1950s, arms control was conceived as an intellectual response to the advent of the concept of mutually assured destruction and its paralyzing grip on the uses of strategic nuclear power. While limited-war theories were intended to provide effective and non-suicidal ways of employing American military power at intermediate and low levels of potential violence, the original arms control concept was focused on preserving the deterrent value of nuclear arsenals at the highest, or strategic, level. Maintaining a robust and stable assured-destruction regime was seen as the way to achieve this. From the outset, the notion of stable nuclear deterrence—defined as a posture in which the ability of both sides to inflict unacceptable retaliatory damage was guaranteed—prevailed as a common point of reference in the strategic arms control process. This approach was promptly reflected in the formal definition of the major objectives of strategic arms control, which were traditionally listed as:

- Reducing the risk of war,
- Reducing the cost of preparing for war, and
- Limiting potential damage if war were not deterred.

It is to be noted that the arms control process was never intended to halt U.S.-Soviet military competition or its most visible component, the nuclear arms

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race. Rather, it was aimed at making such a competition more predictable, less dangerous, less costly, and in some degree, more cost-effective. Arms control was seen as simply an expedient complement to unilaterally maintaining a proper state of balance in long-range nuclear weapons, a complement useful in areas where unilateral action alone could not assure a desirable outcome.

This inherent selectivity as to the scope of strategic arms limitation was prompted by a mutual desire of the two sides to gain or secure important perceived advantage in one or another dimension of the strategic nuclear balance—a natural attitude in a zero-sum superpower interaction. As a result, American-Soviet agreements in the field not only became increasingly lengthy and technical but always contained gaps and loopholes that allowed both sides to proceed, freely and legitimately, with intended strategic development. As a result, limitations agreed upon had little practical relevance, if any. As was repeatedly noted by their critics, both liberal and conservative, the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (Salt) and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (Start) at best ratified a current or projected state of balance without altering it in any important respect. Indeed, after two decades of active U.S.-Soviet arms control, the total number of deployed nuclear weapons of both sides had increased five or six-fold.

These ironies are a clue as to why the politico-psychological outcomes of the U.S.-Soviet arms control process were traditionally valued more highly than any immediate strategic military result. In fact, unrestricted qualitative weapons competition—justified by the very nature of the Salt and Start dialogues—progressively undermined over the years the very foundation of stability in nuclear armaments that both parties had solemnly pledged to preserve.

"Containment by Other Means"

Geopolitically, strategic arms control was intended to moderate the more potentially worrisome aspects of the protracted competition between the United States and the Soviet Union and to leaven essentially confrontational relations with some elements of tacit and limited cooperation. It was generally assumed that a continuing U.S.-Soviet arms control dialogue would play, as an established and direct line of superpower communication, a very useful role in transcending uncertainties and avoiding costly misperceptions with regard to issues closely related to national security. This valid assumption was usually coupled with expectations that involvement in (and commitment to) arms control could of itself stimulate useful elements of self-restraint in superpower conduct, inhibiting the willingness of each to damage the interests of the opposing side. It was also expected that such a predisposition to restraint in geopolitical behavior could be augmented by establishing an implicit linkage between desired progress in arms control and actions on related international lines.

This particular geopolitical dimension of strategic arms control was first contemplated and, on the whole, successfully exploited by the Nixon administration, in linking its policy of détente to the Salt process. For the Nixon team, strategic arms control was a central element of détente, a purposeful lessening of the more dangerous aspects of superpower competition—which in turn was conceived essentially as "containment by other means." In other words, Nixon's widely publicized transition "from the era of confrontation to the era of negotiations" could be represented in functional geopolitical terms as a gradual shift from a rigid and vigorous containment to a more flexible containment policy supported by negotiations from strength. In the strategy of Richard Nixon

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and his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, the dialogue—sweetened by the unexpected and attractive granting of strategic parity and promises of more tangible benefits—was supposed to stimulate a Soviet willingness not to challenge the existing geopolitical status quo and the corresponding distribution of power. The latter was seen as the crucial element of the stable international environment necessary for an intended American movement toward disengagement from certain global involvements, itself aimed at closing a shortfall of national power with respect to interests and commitments.

On the Soviet side, the Salt process was widely regarded as a visible and cherished symbol of equality—however shaky and superficial—with the United States, one that the Soviet leadership could hardly (in its view) hope to secure in any other area or by acting on its own. This unexpectedly acquired status of equality helped to ease an acute Soviet complex of inferiority with regard to its wealthy, powerful, and envied geopolitical rival. Besides, as many Western analysts believed (and not without grounds), Salt and détente were seen in Moscow as useful keys to Western credits and technology that might supply some oxygen to an already suffocating Soviet economy. The Kremlin leadership also entertained a vague hope that a strategic *modus vivendi* with the United States might allow the USSR to spare scarce resources to deal with the problem of troubled relations with China.

There were clear indications that the Carter administration, in its turn, assigned arms control an even more ambitious geopolitical role than had its predecessor. By widening the scope of the arms control process, it seemingly intended to expand considerably the frontiers of containment-by-détente. All such initiatives, in turn, were to expedite a declared shift in superpower competition toward non-military areas, where the American side, endowed with superior economic power and technology, was expected to gain easily the upper hand.

For obvious reasons, Moscow was not enchanted with Jimmy Carter's grandiose arms control agenda, which promised to narrow considerably the only ground where the Soviet Union could successfully compete with the United States. Carter's active human rights offensive and his radical Salt-II proposals, which were brought to Moscow by Cyrus Vance in March 1977, only augmented an already alarmist Soviet outlook. Two alternative formulas for Salt-II offered by Vance were flatly rejected as unjustified and destructive departures from the sacred principles of parity and equal security (in Soviet terms) presumably stipulated by the Vladivostok agreement.[1] As a result, promising ideas that could have laid a solid foundation for a functional Salt-II outcome (one certainly preferable, especially for Moscow, to the ultimate failure of the negotiations) were buried without the serious and sober consideration they certainly deserved.

Unlike its predecessors, the first Reagan administration had no intention of consciously devaluating military power in international politics, through arms control or otherwise. On the contrary, it began by actively denouncing the traditional arms control process in its effort to demonstrate an American will and resolve to challenge the Soviets openly with a policy of vigorous and militant containment, a transition "from weakness to strength." Later, responding to harsh criticism at home and abroad, the Reagan team adopted a somewhat more flexible attitude, calling for radical, equal, and verifiable arms reductions. This initiative was backed by proposals that were meant to be simple, publicly attractive, and absolutely unacceptable to the Soviet side. In this way the concepts of Start and the Intermediate Nuclear Force (INF) "zero" and "double zero" options were born.[2]

For different reasons, the elderly Soviet leaders had no choice but to enter this game of "arms control with no chance for agreement." Struggling hard not to lose face, Moscow fought emotionally and often abusively against insulting American arms control offers. The showdown came in late November 1983, when talks in both Geneva (on Start) and Vienna (on INF and on Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction, or MBFR) were halted by the Soviet side on the pretext that the U.S. INF deployments in Europe rendered senseless any further arms control dialogue. The real driving force behind this hectic Soviet behavior was a deep frustration with the humiliating and seemingly inevitable perception that the American side—having placed offensive nuclear weapons as close to Moscow as the missiles near Havana in 1962 had been to Washington—was about to replay the Cuban missile gambit in a European version and, though holding the same "hand" the Soviets had lost trying to play two decades earlier, would win once again.

Gorbachev and the Unthinkable

After Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power in 1985, the superpowers' geopolitical interaction in arms control assumed a somewhat different aspect. Not only did Gorbachev manage skillfully to escape from the hopeless dead ends created by his predecessors, but he also succeeded in gaining the clear politico-psychological initiative by redefining international security and arms control issues. This was accomplished by a combination of coordinated moves.

• A shift to a clearly non-confrontational, cooperative stance in dealing with the United States and the West;

• Adoption of the "reasonable sufficiency" concept and a defensively oriented military strategy, accompanied by a declared intention to make radical, unilateral, military cuts;

• Compromises and concessions on most major issues and stumbling blocks that were delaying the Geneva and Vienna negotiations.

With regard to the arms control process, Gorbachev's revolutionary approach meant much more than an unexpected embracing of American ideas of deep and verifiable reductions in military arsenals that in the recent past had been labeled by Moscow as absolutely unbalanced and unacceptable. Gorbachev made the unthinkable happen. The American side was made a hostage of its own ideas it had never seriously intended to exercise. What had been conceived in the United States as simple, propagandistic red herrings now turned suddenly into the flesh and bones of historic arms-reductions agreements. From there on, finishing the INF, Start, and Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaties became mostly a technical matter.

This unusual Soviet activism in arms control had very transparent and pragmatic roots. Its ultimate goal was quite simple: to expedite a decisive shift in the country's domestic and international policy to suit its real and pressing needs. At the initial stage, the logical (and probably the only available) ways to proceed were to reduce radically the excessive and exhausting politico-military burden, to promote a tranquil and less demanding international environment, and to concentrate efforts and resources on acute and aggravating domestic socio-economic problems.

It is worth noting that in its basic ideas this Soviet approach was reminiscent of that successfully used by the Nixon administration in its policy of détente linked to arms control. Both concepts were aimed at radically reducing the scale and scope of global military-political involvement. Both considered a non-confrontational international environment a key prerequisite for an intended redistribution of limited national resources. Finally, both relied heavily on arms control dialogue with a view to constraining a major geopolitical rival from taking advantage of the exposed vulnerabilities of the retreating side.

It was both symbolic and ironic that the final historic episode of the classic superpowers play, "Containment by Arms Control," was based on an original American script first enacted in a Nixon-Kissinger world premiere. This time, however, it was the Soviet side, returning the favor of containment, that stole the performance.

The Domestic Roots of Russian Arms Control

Gorbachev's revolution will, certainly, be long remembered as one of the most dramatic and significant landmarks in the history of the twentieth century. This revolution radically altered the global political landscape, inducing profound systemic changes in the pattern and nature of contemporary international relations. It also signaled the end to the era of the classic superpower arms control process. With the ultimate demise of the U.S.-Soviet global conflict—prompted by the rapid Soviet geopolitical retreat, degeneration of the Soviet threat, and eventual collapse of the former Soviet empire—the basic rationales for engaging in traditional bipolar arms control became practically irrelevant.

The validity of this point was well illustrated by the spontaneous reciprocal initiatives on tactical and strategic nuclear arms undertaken by Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev in the wake of the failed August coup, and by Secretary of State James Baker's frantic efforts to save the Start and CFE treaties after the Soviet Union formally ceased to exist.

The sweeping strategic arms reduction agreement signed at the first formal U.S.-Russian summit articulated with even greater clarity the present irrelevance of previous bilateral efforts. In fact, the radicalism of its departure from the old practice of arms control was specifically emphasized by President Boris Yeltsin when he proudly stated that "it took only five months—and not thirteen years—to negotiate reductions to one-third of the Start levels."

Yeltsin's remarks were understandable, if perhaps self-serving. It should be noted, however, that his clear desire to draw a line between current Russian policies and those of his predecessor did not and could not mean that the new Moscow approach to arms control (and to broader problems of national and international security) had been developed from scratch. Yeltsin and his team could, of course, try to dissociate themselves from Gorbachev's political legacy, but they could hardly hope to isolate themselves from the acute economic and social problems that had predicated it. Yeltsin and his new Russia had inherited these problems in full. His team had also inherited a new, more rational and civilized mechanism for legislative oversight and executive decision making in the interrelated areas of security, defense, and arms control; these modes had arisen during Gorbachev's tenure (with or without his consent). Finally, the new Russian leadership eventually co-opted into its ranks the same civilian experts and advisors who had been largely responsible for Gorbachev's most radical innovations and departures in the military-political field. These factors are reason enough to expect a considerable measure of continuity in the new Russian arms control policy.

Under Gorbachev, and for the first time in the long history of Moscow's involvement in this business, the sources of Soviet arms control became clearly domestic. It was converted into an instrument of an inward-oriented policy of redistributing national resources that for decades had been exhausted in a blind and self-serving obsession with an invincible defense. In the post-Soviet era, this strong domestic bias is bound to gain ever greater prominence. Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, a career diplomat and arms controller, has written, "As far as Russia is concerned we see our goals—disarmament and limitation of the arms race—in terms of releasing as many resources as possible and creating the most favorable conditions for the implementation of our socioeconomic reforms."[3]

Indeed, the idea of reducing an exhausting defense burden to the level of "minimal necessity" through arms control and unilateral military cuts, an idea that emerged as a viable option in Gorbachev's tenure, is backed in today's Russia by a solid domestic consensus. It was promptly incorporated into Yeltsin's agenda by his key advisors (who had consistently advocated it while working for Gorbachev). More importantly, by spring 1992 this idea was embodied in the three basic documents—the Concept of National Security, the Law on Defense and State Security, and the Draft Military Reform (aimed at shifting to a relatively small professional force)—endorsed by the Russian government and legislature as formal guidance for issues of security, defense, and arms control. In practical terms the new consensus has already manifested itself in sweeping moves in strategic arms limitations and radical reductions of Russian military activity; U.S. intelligence reports estimate, for instance, that Russian military procurement for the first quarter of 1992 was cut by an amazing eighty percent below the same period in the previous year.[4]

One can assume that this is just the beginning of a long process. In addition to pragmatic economic considerations mentioned above, the validity of such an assumption is supported by important and visible changes in the current Russian politico-psychological atmosphere. Even in Gorbachev's time, an observer of the Soviet domestic scene could witness rapidly growing public sentiment in

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favor of reining-in and radically trimming the huge Soviet military-industrial establishment and for curing the Soviet national psyche of its tolerance for militaristic distortions. The active involvement of much of the top Soviet military leadership in the coup attempt of August 1991 significantly strengthened these popular feelings. On the governmental level, these sentiments were translated into a clear political resolve to limit and restructure the military in a manner that would minimize chances that it could violently and coercively interfere in the country's internal affairs.

Collectively, these economic and politico-psychological factors should stimulate active Russian interest in arms control as a useful tool for expediting military cuts for years to come.

There is one important caveat here. In the short run, translation of such an interest into practical action might be inhibited by the high immediate price associated with it. Large-scale arms reduction is a very expensive business; dismantling and destroying modern military hardware can carry quite an impressive price tag.[5] In fact, in some instances it might be cheaper to maintain or conserve sophisticated weapons (especially nuclear ones) than to dismantle and destroy them.

Disposing of military hardware, however, looks easy compared to problems of demobilizing the bulk of military personnel and shutting down a major fraction of defense industries. Even in such a rich country as the United States, relatively modest and gradual steps along these lines are causing much social (and political) stress and pain. In economically crippled and politico-psychologically tormented Russia, the problem of accommodating many millions of disadvantaged servicemen and their colleagues from defense industries appears formidable indeed.[6] The Russian leadership is trying desperately to find at least partial solutions to this problem by cultivating the idea of industrial conversion (shifting defense plants to civilian products), promoting sales of sophisticated defense and space hardware and technologies, encouraging joint ventures with the West, etc. A surprisingly unorthodox Yeltsin proposal to the United States to combine efforts in development of a global protection system against limited ballistic missile strikes is an apt illustration of these desperate moves.

Because the proposed global anti–ballistic missile, or ABM, system generated bitter controversy among top-level advisors, it also illustrates a precarious bureaucratic dimension of Russian policymaking in arms control.[7] In the small community of Soviet experts on security, defense, and arms control issues, bureaucratic and special-interest battles began to become common with the advent of Gorbachev, and have so continued. More often than not, they are conducted *around*, and not about, the real issues; they reflect frustrated ambition, envy and resentment toward more successful contenders, and desire to discredit and replace the latter in the "near-chief-executive orbit." For many reasons these games intensified after the failed coup attempt and Yeltsin's ultimate accession to power.

It must be noted that until the present, these scholars and politicians (such as those involved with the joint ABM dispute) have been decent and professionally well-qualified individuals capable of reconciling personal career interests with the ultimate goal of promoting constructive democratic transformations in society (or at least not interfering with them). Sadly, however, Yeltsin's volcanic rise to power brought into the political limelight a new and entirely different type: these are gamblers—ignorant, arrogant, ill-intentioned, or all of these combined. Such people have somehow reached the vicinity of the Russian president and have even penetrated his inner circle. So far, the substance of Russian national security policy has not suffered much from this incompetent breed; but many leading figures who have stood at the wellsprings of policy and once provided President Yeltsin invaluable intellectual input have already fallen victim, estranged from the policymaking process or sent away into honorable diplomatic or academic exile.[8]

The picture of the post-Soviet landscape of security, defense, and arms control would be incomplete without taking account of Russia's relations with its newly acquired and hyper-independent neighbors, the other former Soviet republics. In the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, this issue—especially the uneasy interaction with Ukraine, one often flavored by open hostility—emerged as a top-priority item on Moscow's security agenda.[9] In fact, deep apprehension with regard to the antagonistic and potentially explosive nature of these relations clearly overshadows Moscow's traditional preoccupation with external threats (imaginary or real).

As a result, one could observe, among other interrelated developments, a quite unusual, and perhaps unique, shift in Russian views as to the functional orientation of arms control. It is increasingly seen in Moscow as a convenient tool for maintaining a stable and predictable military balance (and deployment pattern) within the boundaries of the former USSR rather than a way of institutionalizing strategic and conventional parity with the United States and Nato. This important shift helps us to understand why the Russian leadership was so supportive of Secretary Baker's efforts to obtain commitments from the other inheritors of Soviet military power to honor Soviet obligations under the Start and CFE treaties. It also helps explain why Yeltsin's team so willingly accepted a highly restrictive formula, seemingly favoring the United States, in the latest strategic arms reduction agreement. In the latter case, the total ban on ICBMs with multiple independently targeted ("Mirv'ed") warheads was probably seen as an additional guarantee that Ukraine and Kazakhstan would indeed forgo preserving some nuclear status—an idea that they had recently played with.[10]

Russia assigns a special role here to the United States, whose influence over the former Soviet republics is thought to be a major factor in assuring their compliance with the new treaty. Moscow also seems to entertain hopes that the American side might be willing to assist it indirectly in remedying severe damage done to vital elements of the former Soviet defense infrastructure, especially to the command, control, communications, and intelligence (C^3I) network, by the radical alterations in the political geography. An active campaign by leading Moscow experts in support of joint Russian-American early-warning centers reflected this line of thought. Similar thinking could also be traced behind Yeltsin's offer of cooperation in the ABM field.

In a broader perspective, it is only logical to assume that a loss of many vital land-based C^3I installations (in Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltics) will significantly increase Russian reliance on corresponding space systems. As applied to arms control, this would mean that Russia will be increasingly interested in establishing an appropriate regime of cooperation, confidence building, or limitations in space that could promote transparency and predictability in military uses of space and, simultaneously, enhance availability and survivability of space-based C^3I systems. In practical terms, this might entail a revitalization of the old idea of banning anti-satellite (Asat) weapons and related technologies, etc. At first glance, there appears to be a contradiction between pursuing limitations on Asat and promoting a joint venture in ABM development (which could, in principle, yield technologies applicable to anti-satellite attack). Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes apparent that involvement in a cooperative exercise in the field might be a good way to inhibit or prevent such a diversion.

On the whole, one could certainly expect that pragmatic economic and political considerations, and not military ones, will continue to dominate Russian approaches to international dimensions of security, defense, and arms control. With the task of geostrategic disengagement virtually accomplished, a priority here would probably be expediting (or at least not inhibiting) cooperation and economic assistance from the West. The latter is deemed by the current

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democratic Russian leadership to be vital for its near-term political survival. For these purposes, as the latest strategic arms reduction agreement clearly demonstrated, Moscow might be willing to compromise a number of politico-military sacred cows, including one so long cherished as "robust strategic parity with the United States." Yeltsin's team probably understands that most such compromises would have to be achieved through unilateral cuts and gestures; it seems resolved to proceed with whatever such steps it can without risking domestic social explosion. One could obviously assume that the current Russian leadership will be more than ready to collect intended or otherwise desirable moves into an arms control package for blessing by the United States if the American side is willing.

As was noted above, there is a solid consensus in Russia that its defense burden should be brought down to the level of "minimal necessity." In this connection it might be expected that in major military sectors this level will be set slightly below projected American efforts and deployments; there are two valid reasons why this could occur. First, by reducing its arsenals below American levels or at least stating its commitment to do so, Moscow could hope to neutralize effectively a powerful argument (used by opponents of large-scale Western aid and assistance to Russia) that its military efforts still exceed its real defense needs. Secondly, such an approach, while providing needed guidance for pending defense cuts, would allow the Russian side to maintain at least a symbolic claim to major international status and an image of quasi-equality with the U.S. The same purposes could be served by a continuing Russian involvement in a bilateral arms control dialogue with the single remaining superpower, the United States.

The Western Response

It is clearly in the American interest to promote current pragmatic Russian approaches to defense, security, and arms control. These approaches are intended to expedite a process of democratic transition in the former USSR and to limit drastically its military influence in the international system. It is obvious, as Dimitri Simes has pointed out, that if democracy fails in Russia, the most probable result will be large-scale violence (which could spread well beyond former Soviet borders) and the emergence of militant, chauvinistic, totalitarian regimes—which the West would have to pay an immense price to keep at bay.[11]

The United States can and should support positive trends in Russian policy in a variety of ways. First, it should continue to utilize its considerable influence among the leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States, encouraging them to promote (or embrace) stability and orderly change in the former USSR. In pursuing this line, it might be expedient to establish an implicit understanding among the former Soviet republics that American ability to support and lead Western aid and assistance programs could be hampered by irresponsible domestic or international behavior on their part. It might be assumed that such a message was conveyed and proved an effective stimulus in connection with the Start and CFE agreements.

In supporting trends towards stability and orderly change in the former Soviet empire, Washington could try to explore the delicate option of moderating major inter-republican conflicts that could block and endanger these trends. This applies, first of all, to existing and potential military-political disputes between Russia and Ukraine. Here, an expedient American approach could entail politico-diplomatic encouragement to Moscow and Kiev with regard to initiating a confidence and security-building regime in the European zone of the former USSR (one that might be open to any party willing to join it). Such a process could be initiated under the umbrella of the Council on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) or in some connection with it.

Another potential avenue to containing conflict in relations between the major inheritors of Soviet power (and to easing their security concerns) involves existing Nato institutions. A few years ago, when politico-military implications of the imminent German reunification were subjects of serious concern in Moscow and other European capitals, the argument that Germany's membership in Nato was the best available way to limit its (hypothetical) expansionist ambitions played a decisive role in securing the necessary four-power agreement. Today, with a disintegrated Soviet empire representing a dangerous source of potential military-political instability in Europe, there is no compelling reason why the well-established and respected Nato framework could not be judiciously utilized to inhibit the new hypothetical threat. In fact, the intention to seek Nato membership or association repeatedly expressed by Yeltsin and other CIS leaders could be used as an informal stimulus in that direction. A logical first step here might entail CIS participation in Nato political, security, and confidence-building activity, projected into the formerly Soviet European zone.

As has been rightly suggested by many, the United States, in its dealings with the former Soviet republics, should avoid taking sides or playing one against the other. What is equally true is that the American side cannot, and should not, try to escape from the necessity to accord special attention to developments in Russia. Russia, by virtue of its remaining and potential power, and its crucial role in the survival of democracy in the former Soviet empire, will remain a major factor in shaping the character of emerging geopolitical landscape. This alone justifies its recognition as a major American and Western partner in post–Cold War world affairs.

In pursuing a partnership with the new Russia, the United States should avoid actions which might feed perceptions that this partnership is uneven or that America is taking advantage of Russian weaknesses and vulnerabilities. An acute inferiority complex and feelings of lost and humiliated greatness could be dangerous companions on a voyage through rough seas of severe economic, political, and social turmoil.

The United States and the West would lose nothing and could gain a great deal if they assist Russia to transcend its geopolitical grievances and mischiefs. If a continuing arms control process can help Russia preserve its self-esteem and sustain the process of democratic transformation, such a privilege should obviously be granted, especially inasmuch as arms control could still serve many other practical purposes. The problem here, of course, is that the traditional arms control agenda, inherited from the times of global ideological conflict and geostrategic bipolarity, is practically exhausted (if one does not count the solvable task of implementing the CFE and strategic arms reduction agreements). However, it should not take too much imagination to identify new (or previously ignored) problems and areas of acute politico-military concern in the post–Cold War environment that could be constructively tackled in a U.S.-Russian arms control process.

One obvious (but not the only) area of this kind is the proliferation of sophisticated arms. Resolution of this problem is universally seen as a prerequisite to effectively approaching the broader problem of regional stability and security in conflict-prone areas of the Third World. It is absolutely clear that a Russian contribution here, depending on whether it constrains or fuels proliferation of sophisticated arms, could make a considerable difference in the final outcome. Moscow's position on this issue is far from settled. Yeltsin's team is torn between an understandable desire to project a positive image in the West (hence a declared commitment not to supply arms to parties involved in military conflicts) and an equally understandable temptation to obtain hard currency compensation for the immense resources already wasted on Soviet weapon stockpiles (which are now to be eliminated).

In contrast to the mid-1970s, when the Soviet side first deadlocked arms-transfer talks initiated by the Carter administration and then abandoned them, today the United States has enough leverage to help Russia find a way out of its weapons-trade dilemma. A little diplomatic persuasion backed by positive economic incentives would most probably do the trick.[12] It hardly needs to be argued that a constructive Russian approach to containing weapon proliferation (and to other undertakings aimed at promoting regional security and stability) would greatly benefit the United States and the West both in the immediate and long terms.

A quest for a new world order, which only the United States could lead, will have a better chance to succeed if it elicits early and active Russian participation. A readily available way to expedite such participation is arms control. Notwithstanding the diminishing relevance of the military dimension to the international security agenda, that dimension—and accordingly arms control, as a logical way of stabilizing it—will continue to demand special attention for years to come. To make the arms control process a really effective tool in building a stable and lasting structure of international peace and global order, what is needed first is a coherent vision that will logically anchor all these interrelated categories one to another and treat them in a harmonious manner. No such vision was ever developed or even contemplated in the past—which was one of the main reasons for previous arms control failures—and it is long overdue.

Notes

1. Brezhnev's leadership traditionally insisted that these sacred principles were formally endorsed by [illegible] during the Vladivostok summit, something never confirmed by the United States.

2. The "zero option" envisaged complete elimination of U.S. and Soviet INF deployments in Europe. "Double zero" extended this idea to Asian deployments as well.

3. *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1992, p. 13.

4. *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1992, p. 34. Official Russian sources give even more impressive figures: 87% reduction in defense production and almost 80% decrease in the overall military budget (from 22-25% to 4.5% of the GNP). See *The Los Angeles Times*, 25 January 1992.

5. According to some leading Russian experts, the cost of implementing the INF and Start treaties in purely mechanical terms could run up to six to eight billion rubles in old Soviet prices.

6. According to Russian and American estimates, intended Russian defense cuts could severely effect seven to eight million military and military-industrial families, or up to twenty-five million people.

7. The ABM proposal probably involved Andrei Kokoshin, a prominent expert on American affairs who has long and actively promoted cooperation between Russian and American defense industries. In recent months, Kokoshin and his friend and patron Academician E. Velikhov have staged a vigorous press campaign advocating international collaboration in anti–ballistic missile defense. There is irony in this, inasmuch as in the 1980s the two energetically argued exactly the opposite; they had played a key role in the Committee of Soviet Scientists, whose major function was to expose the "provocative and dangerous destabilizing nature" of the Reagan Strategic Defense Initiative.

The reversal of logic did not go unnoticed. The proposed joint venture was harshly attacked by another well known Russian expert, Alexei Arbatov, and from the same grounds used in the Cold War—by himself, Kokoshin, Velikhov, and others—against SDI. See *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 4 March 1992, where Arbatov's comments are ostensibly directed toward not Kokoshin and Velikhov but a former Arbatov subordinate, Alexandr Savel'ev, now of the Institute of Strategic Studies.

He was joined by Georgi Arbatov, father of Alexei and director of the USA and Canada Studies Institute, who labelled the ABM proposal "a recipe for blocking conversion and perpetuating the interests of the U.S. and Russian military-industrial complexes." See *Izvestiya*, 10 February 1992.

8. The most prominent cases have been the appointments of Vladimir Lukin (former chairman of the Foreign Policy and Foreign Economic Relations Committee of the Russian parliament) and Yuri Ryzhov (former chairman of the Special Committee on National Security) as Russian ambassadors to the United States and France.

9. Such hostility is to a considerable extent a direct product of the character of current Ukrainian policy towards Russia, which arises from the nationalistic zeal of the recently converted Ukrainian leader, Leonid Kravchuk.

10. All ICBMs deployed on Ukrainian and Kazakh territories are Mirv'ed. Ukraine has 176 SS-19 and 30 SS-24 (six and ten-warhead) missiles, while Kazakhstan possesses 104 SS-18 (ten-warhead) missiles.

11. *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1992, pp. 77–78.

12. Such incentives could include technological and managerial assistance in defense conversion as well as purchase of Russian militaty hardware and technology. The latter is not totally unrealistic. For instance, this year the U.S. Air Force, through its congressional liaison, actively probed the option of using Russian launchers for putting Air Force payloads into space. With current military budget constraints, this could have saved the Air Force many hundreds of millions of dollars and would have allowed it to soften the impact of pending personnel cuts.

Ψ

History is always negotiable.

Robert S. Wood