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Vyacheslav Zaytsev, Accountant  
Oleg Kulakov, Layout  
Natalya Kharchenko, Distribution

**Printed in Russia**

**Address:** Trekhprudny Per., 9, bld.1b

Moscow 103001, Russia

**Phone:** +7+095-234-0525

**Fax:** +7+095-234-9558

**E-mail:** [info@pircenter.org](mailto:info@pircenter.org)

**Internet:** <http://www.pircenter.org>

Subscriptions worldwide (Russian and English editions): please, send requests to fax +7+095-234-9558 or e-mail: [info@pircenter.org](mailto:info@pircenter.org). Checks or wire transfers. Express mail delivery.

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**Commentary****THE TIME TO ENHANCE  
COOPERATION ON BROAD  
RANGE OF SECURITY ISSUES****by Vladimir Orlov,  
and Roland Timerbaev,  
PIR Center****[This article was originally published in  
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September-October, 2001]**© *Yaderny Kontrol*, 2001. All rights reserved© PIR Center, 2001. Translation into English.  
*Abridged version*

The establishment of a broad military-political antiterrorist coalition adds qualitatively new elements to the international relations and enables (moreover, makes it an imperative) Russia and the United States to seek the solutions to the problems of maintaining stability and security that continue to exacerbate the bilateral relations, despite over a decade of post-Cold War development. Swift coordination of efforts to counter international terrorism gives new opportunities to eradicate the deadlock in the area of strategic arms. And it would be an unforgivable mistake to miss this unique chance.

The parties should take into account the following things. In the last three decades, since the commencement of bilateral negotiations on strategic weapons, Russia and the United States have fairly been seeing the strategic stability, as a balance of closely intertwined strategic offensive and defensive arms. The US military-political establishment had initially developed the concept, and since 1965-1966 the United States had tried to convince the Soviet leadership. But the latter began to take it seriously only in 1970. Thus, by 1972 the parties approved the SALT I agreements, including the ABM Treaty, SALT I Treaty, the Agreement on Measures to Reduce the Risk of Outbreak of Nuclear War, and the Hot Line Agreement.

In 1983, the US position changed when President Reagan laid down the Strategic Defense Initiative. The idea of the missile-proof shield was transformed in 1989, when President Bush converted the SDI into the

Global Defense of Limited Strikes. However, even the development of a limited system might have affected the strategic balance of power, for such system might have neutralized the certain number of ICBMs of the opposite party.

However, until the late 1990s the parties have been maintaining the interlink paradigm. Although the Clinton administration started to plan the deployment of limited NMD, the ABM Treaty was still referred to as a cornerstone of strategic stability in all major bilateral documents. Even the early statements by George W. Bush (when he ran for presidency) spoke about going beyond the ABM Treaty's framework and the importance of a new strategic framework, but emphasized the commitment to the concept of strategic nuclear arms reduction to the lowest possible level. Hence, the aforementioned statements recognized the linkage between strategic defensive and offensive arms.

At the same time, President Bush has stated that he is determined to avoid prolonged treaty negotiations and endorsed the idea of unilateral initiatives on the offensive arms reduction. Vladimir Putin has emphasized the continuing importance of treaty-based legally-binding and verifiable measures, although he has indicated Russia's willingness to pursue some reductions either 'together or in parallel' down to 1,500 warheads or lower.

In order to assist the US and Russian Governments in developing the new strategic framework suitable for the post-Cold War environment and meeting the requirements of true partnership, two non-governmental organizations - the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (USA)<sup>1</sup> and the PIR Center for Policy Studies (Russia) assisted by a group of US-Russian experts - have attempted to set forth some recommendations for the authorities.

The following suggestions to address these issues were developed during a January-July series of workshops in Moscow, London, Washington and Moscow attended by more than 80 Russian and US government officials and nongovernmental experts. These suggestions draw on the dialogue that unfolded during the workshops, but they are not a consensus set of recommendations.

The participants agreed that the United States and Russia should work at the development of the new strategic framework that the two Presidents discussed during their summits. However, they pointed out that the parties should try to preserve the components of the current system that may ensure stability in the process of transition to the new strategic framework. Under these circumstances, there is a need for a phased approach. The structure of the phases may proceed from the following.

Firstly, although new nuclear reductions need not rely on an immediate negotiating process, they should be coordinated and discussed in advance between the two countries and, if possible, jointly announced by the two presidents. This would provide confidence to the international community that the new reductions complement positive relations between the two countries. Coordinated unilateral nuclear reductions of this type should be backed up within a reasonable time by a legally binding agreement, even if in an abbreviated form.

Secondly, the two countries should establish an on-going, serious and structured dialogue to develop a new framework for the strategic relationship. This dialogue should take place with senior, but expert level leadership, possibly including both official and unofficial representation on both sides. Topics might include:

- fate of existing strategic reduction agreements and targets for START III;
- nuclear doctrine and policy of both countries, including development, modernization, and employment of weapons.

Thirdly, the starting point for the transition to the new framework is today, when the strategic stability relationship is regulated by formal arms control agreements. The end point is in the future, when strategic nuclear deterrence and arms control may have some residual importance to the relationship, but the emphasis will be much more strongly placed on *cooperation* in strategic matters. Such cooperation may include joint work on missile defenses, on management and control of nuclear weapons, and on broad efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This end point will be captured in the new framework for strategic cooperation. However, the way stations to achieving that framework will also be important, for they will

determine whether the process will be successful. The following phases in the transition might be considered:

*Phase 1:*

- A presidential joint statement that the strategic offensive forces and missile defense systems should not threaten the strategic forces of the other country. It could also state that the two countries will work together to move toward a non-threatening relationship in phases.
- Coordinated unilateral reductions in strategic nuclear forces that would accelerate the negotiated strategic arms reduction (START) process. Although President Bush has not yet decided on US force levels, these reductions could go as low as 1,500 warheads or even lower, as President Putin has suggested.
- Accelerated efforts to address worrisome practices that remain in place since the Cold War, such as deployment of strategic nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert. Early success could be achieved in deactivation of strategic systems and in construction of a joint early warning center; additional steps could be considered to further enhance early warning cooperation and reduce launch readiness.
- Cooperation on missile defenses that begins to build confidence for both countries that defenses do not threaten their strategic offensive forces. Such cooperation, beginning with the joint statement mentioned above, might continue in this first phase with joint consideration of the threat. It might include discussion of theater missile defense technology, as President Putin has suggested to NATO. It also might include joint consideration of the individual technologies being proposed.
- Early consideration of how the ABM Treaty could be adapted to continue assuring both sides that their strategic offensive forces are not threatened. Because the defense system to be deployed is not yet determined, comprehensive discussions of the future of the ABM Treaty would not yet be possible, but the parties may consider some amendments to allow certain activities. Besides, the treaty's potential use as a tool to build mutual confidence in the missile defense deployment process could be considered at this juncture.

Some experts assumed that many of the elements of Phase 1 could be accomplished by late 2002.

*Phase 2:*

- Agreement on legally binding measures to reinforce and assure smooth implementation of the unilateral reductions begun in Phase 1. In the early stages of the transition process, important changes in the strategic relationship that are undertaken unilaterally should be backed up soon after by a legally binding document. This need not be a complicated negotiation. The legally binding document might be an adaptation of an existing treaty (e.g. a simplified START I Verification Protocol) or a new agreement, which also could be simplified in its approach (e.g. an *abbreviated* START III Treaty).
- Establishment of a joint defense-military planning mechanism, to provide a window into the thinking and programs of each side. Such a venue could focus on expanding the role of joint defense-military planning, and broad exchanges on the threat, technologies and architectures. Offensive and defensive technologies should both be considered in this venue.
- Continued use of the high-level venue to resolve long-standing concerns in the strategic relationship. Issues to be addressed might include upload potential or reversibility, status of non-strategic nuclear weapons, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, threats that certain systems (e.g. precision-guided munitions or sea-launched cruise missiles) pose to national forces, and continuing concerns about *wars by accident*. These issues might be addressed through enhancements to transparency and confidence-building measures (for forces continuing in operation), through ceasing operations and eliminating weapons, or through policy enhancements (e.g. improved export control laws).
- Launch of a joint project on missile defense technology. This might involve a project to consider the specifics of how an existing technology might be usefully deployed (e.g. deployment of the S-300 as part of a NATO theater defense system). Alternatively, it might involve joint development work on a technology that was determined to be promising during the joint discussions of Phase 1.

- Determination of adaptation process for the ABM Treaty. As missile defense technologies prove themselves and as deployment decisions are made, decisions could be made about the future of the ABM Treaty. One option is that the Treaty would be usefully adapted to continue to provide confidence to the two sides that missile defenses are not threatening to strategic offensive forces. Another is that the two sides would decide that a different type of document is needed, which might be a comprehensive agreement to cooperate on deploying missile defenses rather than a treaty preventing deployment. A third option is that the two would decide to conduct programs in parallel, with transparency between the programs.

According to some participants, many of the elements of Phase 2 could be accomplished within the two years following the completion of Phase 1 (by late 2004). Several, however, would continue into Phase 3.

*Phase 3:*

- Further reductions in strategic nuclear forces to numbers below 1,000 in each country. This process should include agreed transparency into the elimination of both strategic and non-strategic warheads and delivery systems, although it might not require a legal-binding agreement at this point.
- Incorporation of other countries that have tested nuclear weapons into the reduction process<sup>2</sup>. These countries might be engaged in discussions during Phase 1 and 2, but actual reductions in their forces would only begin once the United States and Russia had completed significant reductions.
- Continued routinization of joint defense-military planning. This might include joint weapon acquisitions and extensive interaction of military industries in Russia and NATO countries.
- Large-scale joint project or projects to deploy missile defenses in theaters or at national levels. By this time, differences over the ABM Treaty should be resolved.

Phase 3 is likely to take an additional four to eight years beyond the completion of Phase 2 (i.e. by late 2008-2012).

Transparency and confidence-building measures should be used to provide on-going windows into the activities of the two countries

during the transition period, and is important at each phase of it. Considerable transparency already exists through the arms control verification and monitoring process and through additional programs, such as Cooperative Threat Reduction, that give the United States access to the Russian nuclear complex. The special non-reciprocal access to Russian nuclear facilities that the USA currently enjoys as a result of its CTR assistance program will have to be balanced at some point by *compensatory reciprocity* of some kind at US nuclear facilities. One option might be to permit Russian companies to bid on weapon elimination work at US nuclear sites (as is currently the case with US companies at Russian sites).

Developing additional transparency measures as the overall relationship improves will be possible, and will be helpful in resolving long-standing issues such as the deployment status of Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons or US sea-launched cruise missiles. Eventually, however, formal transparency will be less necessary as mutual access and joint cooperation expand.

Although the experts have failed to come to compromise on some petty issues (this was not the case anyway), the major value of the aforementioned proposals is that they are based on the principle of ensuring bilateral strategic cooperation and the importance of *phased* transition to the new framework. The recommendations were submitted to the senior officials of the two countries and one may assume that they were considered (albeit there was no direct response). We are sure that the current situation and the recent new opportunities for the constructive dialogue make the aforementioned proposals even more topical.

At the Bush-Putin summit in Genoa in July 2001, the parties made a joint statement naming strategic offensive and defensive arms as *interrelated issues*. A certain progress became evident during the Bush-Putin meeting in Shanghai on October 21. President Bush argued that the United States would reduce its nuclear force to the level sufficient for preserving peace, taking into account the reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>3</sup>. In November, during the Washington-Crawford summit, Presidents Bush and Putin reaffirmed their commitment to the interdependence of strategic offensive and defensive arms.

The reaction of the Congress on the US NMD plans is mixed. Democrats, who won the majority in the Senate, and Republicans have launched a dramatic debate on NMD deployment. Nonetheless, after September 11, Democrats decided to defer the differences at this stage and agreed to the administration's request for funding for the development of missile defenses.

Vladimir Putin on his part said, 'I assume that we have an understanding that we may come to an agreement [on missile defense - Ed.], bearing in mind US and Russian national interests and taking into account the need to strengthen international stability in this important area.' According to his assessments, 'we [Russia and the United States - Ed.] have some progress, as far as missile defense is concerned.' Meanwhile, Vladimir Putin noted that Russia 'regards this [the ABM Treaty - Ed.] as the most important element of stability in the world.'<sup>4</sup>

After the US-Russian summit in November, we hope that the aspirations for reasonable and mutually acceptable cooperation in maintaining stability in the world will prevail. Such stability should be based on the linkage between strategic offensive and defensive arms and on steady and irreversible reduction in nuclear arsenals. Nowadays, the parties have a *real* opportunity to make a right choice.

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<sup>1</sup> On the part of the CEIP, the project was coordinated by Rose Gottemoeller, Alexander Pikayev, and Jon Wolfsthal.

<sup>2</sup> Some Russian participants of the project, including the authors of this article, insisted on involving other nuclear weapon states (even non-recognized) in disarmament. The wording 'that have tested nuclear weapons' was included upon request of the US participants, for whom the Israeli factor was quite sensitive. However, there is evidence that Israel has conducted sub-critical tests. It is also suspected of conducting an atmospheric nuclear explosion in 1979 in the southern part of the Indian Ocean in collaboration with South Africa. The Russian experts assume that Israel should be involved in nuclear disarmament. As far as we understand, the US participants believe the same.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Washington Post* of October 22, some US military would like to preserve the US arsenal at the level of 2,200-2,500 warheads.

<sup>4</sup> *ITAR-TASS*, 2001, October 21.