



PLOUGHSHARES FUND

**Meeting of the
Sustainable Partnership with Russia (SuPR) Group**

February 2-3, 2011

Gstaad

On April 9, 2010, a day when the New START Treaty was signed, PIR Center, a leading Russian NGO in the area of international security, and Ploughshares Fund, a San Francisco-based foundation key in promoting global nuclear nonproliferation, arms control, and disarmament, established SuPR (Sustainable Partnership with Russia) Group, with the main objective to guarantee continuing and long-lasting success in the efforts by both the Russian Federation and the United States to work as partners on the most important issues of the global security agenda.

Nuclear nonproliferation and nuclear disarmament are top priorities of SuPR Group though our agenda is not limited to them.

All members of the SuPR Group are leading experts on US-Russian relations, nuclear nonproliferation, and disarmament. While some members of the group are with the government, most of them are from the non-governmental sector, and each member acts in his or her own capacity. SuPR also invited one media representative from each side to make our work transparent for the public in both countries.

Since then, New START was ratified in both Russia and the United States and entered into force – a step all members of the Group fully support.

SuPR members met in Gstaad, Switzerland, on February 2-3, 2011, to discuss what the next steps by the two countries in nuclear disarmament should be.

They also discussed how Russia and the United States could better work together on the most urgent regional nuclear nonproliferation challenge in the Middle East.

Project Coordinator's Summary¹

If the United States and Russia are to develop a sustainable partnership, several steps must be taken into account in order to ensure the emergence of a stable relationship.

1. BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

1.1. The ratification of the New START treaty is a positive achievement but is only a first step in nuclear disarmament and cannot be seen as an end in itself. On the one hand the ceilings imposed on Russia's and America's strategic arsenals will not result in a reduction of the number of Russian weapons and will require hardly any actual reduction on the American side. On the other hand, the New START leaves it up to the states do decide how they want to implement it.

1.2. The negotiation of the New START allowed the United States and Russia to reset their relationship. But now, there is a 50/50 chance that this relationship will relapse into a cold pause and not find the momentum necessary for future cooperation.

1.3. Some members concluded that the two major unresolved issues are currently on the agenda: missile defense and conventional forces in Europe.

¹ This report is a summary of the meeting, which was held under Chatham House rules, prepared by PIR Center's Project Coordinator Ivan Trushkin. This summary is only his responsibility. It reflects the discussion at the meeting but is not intended at providing any consensus-type or any other agreed document.

- 1.4. Some members of the Group believe it is desirable to accelerate the reductions mandated by the New START ahead of 2017 implementation deadline. At the same time, according to them, 2011 should be the year of beginning of new bilateral negotiations aimed at further the reduction of strategic offensive nuclear weapons down to 1000 warheads or below.
- 1.5. Some members of the Group stated that further reductions of offensive weapons should be linked to reduction of defensive weapons. They believe that concrete actions toward defensive strategic armaments such as missile defense should be formulated and incorporated in a legally-binding format. As an initial step, according to these members of the Group, recent Russian proposal on the zonal missile defense cooperation in Europe should be accepted. However, Russia should be in a position to provide detailed explanations of its proposal to avoid any misunderstandings by the United States or its NATO allies in Europe.
- 1.6. Some members of the Group proposed that a joint US-Russian integrated early warning system should be developed for Europe, with participation of NATO. Its integration should include, inter alia, a mutually acceptable and tested computer software which would facilitate the process of response of this early warning system to a missile attack. Its functioning should be based on conclusions from a joint threat assessment by Russia. As a next step, Russia and the United States should start working on the creation of a common European missile defense system which, as those members of the Group believed, is a necessity. According to them, this should go well beyond simple sharing of information and joint threat assessment. Going beyond the goal of “interoperability” would be desirable. While Russia will unlikely be able to actively participate by providing its anti-missile systems, Russia’s active participation in the information component of this system will be essential.
- 1.7. Some members of the Group proposed that, for further negotiations to succeed, the United States and Russia should consider that all nuclear weapons be based on national territories. United States should reach

agreement with its NATO partners to formally eliminate any requirement to station the United States tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. Withdrawing its nuclear weapons from Europe might be the necessary step needed to start negotiating the reduction of tactical weapons arsenals

1.8. Some members of the Group indicated that the United States and Russia should not only be concerned by nuclear weapons reduction but should also focus on issues relating to conventional forces and non-nuclear strategic weapons. According to them, it would be important that negotiations on creating a new CFE begin soon. Stopping large-scale military exercises near borders would be the first step in this direction. CFE- and non-strategic nuclear weapons-related issues should be put in a broader context of re-building European security architecture.

1.9. Some members of the Group noted in this context that Russia and United States, as leading European players, should work jointly with other European nations on it. European Security Treaty (EST) initiative should be viewed as an invitation for an open-ended debate, with a goal that the vision of a functional security community “from Vancouver to Vladivostok” must one day materialize itself.

1.10. Some members of the Group believed that reducing operational status of nuclear weapons (de-alerting) should be a priority of both governments. A Cold War heritage, the level of alert is not an intrinsic military or technical condition but simply a matter of political will. De-alerting has to be seen not only as a technical fix but also as a strategic step in deemphasizing the military role of nuclear weapons.

1.11. Some members of the Group believe that the Cold War concept of deterrence needs to be overcome because such a concept is useless when faced with new non-territorial threats. In addition, it prevents the United States and Russia from rethinking their relationship. However, despite the latest evolutions, deterrence is still based on numbers (number of warheads and

increasing budgets) instead of being based on a minimal or even virtual deterrence.

1.12. Some members of the Group suggested that it is necessary to reassess national nuclear policies and role of nuclear weapons in them. This should include banning the development of new types of nuclear weapons, reducing their role in national policies - especially the role of strategic weapons for the United States and that of non-strategic weapons for Russia - and reducing the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons. During this reassessment phase, the two partners need to establish common definitions of what they include in non-strategic, sub-strategic and tactical nuclear weapons

1.13. SuPR Group suggested that Russia and the United States should comply with all recommendations contained, in the form of Action Plan, in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and avoid a “pick-and-choose” approach addressing only the actions that coincide with their national security policies

1.14. Some members of the Group indicated that transparency on both sides should be increased. They believed that this measure of confidence should not only be applied to nuclear warheads but also to missile defense cooperation

1.15. Regarding transparency and confidence building by both sides, some members of the Group proposed that Russia and the United States, starting from now on, make public unilateral annual declarations when they eliminate their nuclear warheads including data on how many warheads were eliminated and how much nuclear material was extracted and, when applicable, converted for civilian purposes.

1.16. Some members of the Group noted that in the next round of negotiations, the sides should discuss limits on deployed strategic systems

(warheads and delivery vehicles), deployed and non-deployed launchers, non-strategic nuclear weapons and non-deployed strategic warheads².

1.17. Some members of the Group indicated that if the United States and Russia pushed for further reduction of their nuclear arsenals, including all types of nuclear weapons, the process would have to be opened to other nuclear-weapons states. Non inclusion of other states, whether nuclear or not, according to those members, is an oversimplification of the issue because it would not prevent some of these states to either develop or increase their nuclear arsenals.

1.18. Some members of the Group proposed the signing a set of joint declarations in the form of UN resolutions from the five nuclear states of the Security Council stating that national arsenals won't be increased from now on and that nuclear weapons won't be deployed outside their respective national territories. Some participants of the Group, though not expressing the view of the whole Group, indicated that negotiations on limitation and reduction of sub-strategic nuclear weapons should be only multilateral with the participation of all de-jure and de-facto nuclear-weapon states.

1.19. Ratification of the CTBT by the two remaining nuclear weapon states still outside should be put on the agenda soon so that its entry into force is

² Some members of the Group, though not expressing the view of the majority of the Group, recommended that it is time for the United States and Russia to apply a single limit to all nuclear warheads (treating separately those awaiting dismantlement). The next negotiation should aim for an overall limit of 2500 nuclear weapons each, with a sublimit of 1000 deployed strategic warheads. Each could choose how to allocate its additional 1500 warheads between non-strategic and non-deployed strategic weapons. This approach, according to some members of the Group, would result in a two-tiered verification system. Using procedures built on New START, each side should have high confidence in its ability to monitor limits on deployed strategic warheads and strategic delivery vehicles. Assuming the sides are not prepared for "anytime, anywhere" challenge inspections, they would have less confidence in their ability to monitor limits on non-strategic and non-deployed strategic warheads.

unblocked. As some participants of the Group noted the United States should decisively play a leading role in this process

1.20. Some members of the Group indicated the need of the opening of a multilateral negotiation process on the issue of banning nuclear weapons from outer space. They believed that negotiations' starting point could be Russia's and China's draft treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, or another mutually acceptable draft. Trilateral consultations on this issue between the United States, Russia, and China could be helpful

1.21. Some participants of the Group reminded that a joint US-Russian efforts in lobbying for the transformation of the INF treaty in a multilateral agreement should be reinforced.

2. COOPERATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

2.1. Regional cooperation in the Middle East is hindered by political instability, lack of trust and lack of unity. The situation is difficult but it should not be considered fatalistic.

2.2. Members of the Group agreed that practical cooperation in the region can be developed between the United States and Russia and may even be the first step toward a sustainable partnership contributing to a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

2.3. Some members of the Group believed that Moscow and Washington should encourage a wider participation of the Middle East states in the international architecture of nuclear weapons control, especially regarding the CTBT, BWC, CWC and the Additional Protocol

2.4. Confidence-building measures in the region must be enhanced. Some Group members called for the inclusion of Middle East states in international

discussion forums such as the Nuclear Security Summit, the creation of joint monitoring and managing measures including commitments on no use of force against civilian nuclear installations in the region

2.5. Some members of the Group emphasized that the United States and Russia should facilitate the success of the 2012 Conference on establishing a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction by taking concrete actions toward the preparation of the Conference. No delay on this front can be justified.

2.6. Some members of the Group indicated that the objectives and universal safeguards of the IAEA should be reinforced by the ratification of the Additional Protocol by all states of the region

2.7. Some members of the Group suggested that Russia and the United States should develop a project on cooperation and joint efforts in the Persian (Arab) Gulf which should have counter-terrorism and nonproliferation components.

2.8. The development of nuclear regional programs will go forward in the region. According to some members of the Group, it should be the United States' and Russia's role to ensure the development of peaceful nuclear cooperation and give support to the construction of nuclear power plants. Such policies will be positive for a long and predictable development of the region. However endorsement for the creation of nuclear power plants in the region, according to some members of the Group can only be given under certain conditions such as creation of international nuclear fuel banks providing LEU; and creation of international centers for management of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste and systematic implementation of a provision on the return of spent fuel to the country of origin.

2.9. Assessment of the origin and urgency of threats coming from the region differed among the Group members. Some members believed that currently two states strongly threaten the nonproliferation regime in the region: Israel

and Iran while others indicated that it is Iran which presents the most urgent threat.

- 2.10. Regarding the case of Israel, some members of the Group stated that the main risk is that Israeli territory is outside IAEA safeguards. They recommend that Moscow and Washington push for the ratification of the NPT by Israel as an ultimate goal. As the first step, those members of the Group said, key to the success of the 2012 Conference, transparency should be provided on the actual state of the Israeli nuclear arsenal. This should be achievable with a little advice from the United States, those members of the Group added.
- 2.11. Assessing Iran's missile capabilities, some members of the Group concluded that Iranian missile threat to Europe, though should not be ignored, should not be exaggerated. According to their estimates, Iran should not be able to strike Western Europe before 2014 or the United States before 2020 – at the earliest. They believed that the military utility of Iran's current ballistic missiles is limited because of its poor accuracy, so missiles are not likely to be decisive if armed with conventional, chemical, or biological weapons.
- 2.12. At the same time, the latent Iranian nuclear program is not going to disappear by itself, some members of the Group argued. Thus, in their view, it is Moscow's and Washington's role to reduce the risk of Iran obtaining nuclear weapons by re-energizing bilateral consultations on the issue, elevating its level and making certain joint conclusions and assessments public to demonstrate to Iran that both have same or similar position on Iran.
- 2.13. Though such consultations should be primarily on Iran, it should not be limited to this country and should cover the whole Middle East, some members of the Group added. But this can only be possible if they have a common understanding of the risks, manage to produce a common list of options, promote an intensification of diplomatic actions and prevent any military strike against Iran.

- 2.14. Any military strike against Iran, under any pretext, as some SuPR members emphasized, would be dangerous and counterproductive.
- 2.15. In a view of some Group members, as the talks with Iran by the “nuclear five” and Germany continue, it would be helpful if the fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor is fabricated by the end of this year in order to have it in a timely manner in case the negotiations with Iran regarding this issue turn into a positive mode.
- 2.16. At a certain stage, some members of the Group suggested, Turkey can be invited to such consultations as the third party or as an observer.
- 2.17. At a later stage, some members of the Group suggested, Russia can and should facilitate the United States direct bilateral talks with Iran.