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Tactical nuclear weapons and the NATO-Russia dialogue

Moscow, Russian Federation, IMEMO RAN (Profsoyuznaya ul., 23), March 12, 2012

A roundtable jointly organized by the Arms Control Association (ACA), the British American Security Information Council (BASIC), the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH), and the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO).

With support by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The NATO-Russia dialogue on nuclear arms control has been dogged by a number of complex issues and developments that challenge the traditional arms control approach. Russian officials are exercised by the onward march of US technology and the possibility that a combination of missile defense, conventional prompt global strike, expansion of NATO and growing conventional capability imbalances could render Russian deterrence vulnerable. The political commitment in Washington to missile defense and the development of conventional capabilities seems as strong as ever, despite pressures on the defense budget.

NATO's contribution to arms control, nonproliferation and disarmament is a key issue for the Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR) in the run-up to the May 2012 summit in Chicago. The newly-created WMD Control and Disarmament Committee has itself been feeding into the DDPR process. NATO has linked reductions of US nuclear weapons deployed in Europe to reciprocal steps by Russia, though there are competing interpretations about the meaning of reciprocity. The United States is committed to including tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) under a New START-follow on accord and proposed steps to increase transparency on holdings of tactical nuclear weapons. Several NATO nations have advanced similar steps to build confidence between Russia and NATO on tactical nuclear weapons. All of these measures would have an impact on NATO's nuclear posture.

Russia, however, has shown little interest in an arms control dialogue involving TNW at this stage and linked transparency over and reductions of the role and number of TNW to progress on a range of other security issues, including ballistic missile defense cooperation and widening gaps in the balance of conventional capabilities. The announcement by President Medvedev of counter-measures that Russia would pursue because there had been no progress in meeting Russia's concerns over the US Phased Adaptive Approach and in discussing cooperation over missile defences highlights the challenges and importance of the issue.

Against this background, the seminar will aim to discuss ways to break the stalemate on bringing TNW onto the nuclear arms control agenda, and identify the barriers facing those who seek to do so. The roundtable will place reductions of the role and number of TNW in the broader context of European security and the relationship between European states and Russia. Experts will also debate proposals to solve the particular political and technical challenges associated with an arms control approach to TNW.

Questions to be addressed include:

- What are alternatives to strategic competition between NATO and Russia? What steps can both sides take so that military competition is transformed into political cooperation?
- How can arms control play a positive role in strengthening Russia's confidence in its security vis-à-vis NATO, and in strengthening the confidence of central and Eastern European countries in their security vis-à-vis Russia?
- What are the principle objectives of each party in the next round of the New START follow-on process? What sort of approach will such negotiations focus upon?
- At what stage and on what issues should other nuclear weapon states be brought into the process?
- What is the role for the NATO-Russia Council in fostering a more cooperative relationship between Russia and NATO?
- What are the real political, military, technical reasons for the lack of progress on tactical nuclear weapons, and what options are there for overcoming or by-passing these challenges?
- What are the options and practical prospects for addressing tactical nuclear weapons under a New START follow-on accord?

The seminar will take place under Chatham House rules.

Agenda

March 12, 2012 (Monday)

10:00-10:30 Registration of participants

10:30-11:00 Welcome by the organizers & introduction by IMEMO Director Academician A.A. Dynkin, Head of Moscow Branch of F. Ebert Stiftung, Dr. Reinhard Krumm, Dr. Oliver Meier, ACA/IFSH

11:00-12:30 Panel 1: The problems of arms control

Chair: Alexander Savelyev

- "US arms control objectives for Chicago and beyond",
Harry Heintzelman, US Department of State
- "Russian interests and aims in the arms control sphere",
Mikhail D. Ulyanov, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russia
- "Europe's role in fostering progress on nuclear arms control and disarmament",
Niels Annen, Social Democratic Party Executive Committee, Germany

12:30-12:45 Coffee

12:45-14:15 Panel 2: Arms control problems in the sphere of tactical nuclear weapons

Chair: Paul Ingram

- “Building confidence and increasing transparency on tactical nuclear weapons”, Rolf Nickel, Federal Foreign Office, Germany
- “Tactical nuclear weapons control: opportunities and perspectives”, Evgeny P. Buzhinsky, PIR-Center, Russia
- “Tactical nuclear weapons & (sub-)regional security: Comparing NATO and Russia doctrines”, Hans Kristensen, Federation of American Scientists
- “The change of the role of conventional and nuclear weapons in guaranteeing security”, Pavel S. Zolotaryev, US and Canada Institute, Russia

14:15-15:00 Lunch

15:00-16:30 Panel 3: Perspectives of strategic arms reduction talks

Chair: Sergey Oznobistchev

- “The reset in NATO-Russia relations: the role of arms control”, Jerry Taylor, US Department of State
- “The perspectives of the New START follow-on agreement”, Viktor I. Yesin, US and Canada Institute, Russia
- “Balancing divergent interests and military asymmetries under a New START follow-on agreement”, Steven Pifer, Brookings Institute, USA
- “Next steps in nuclear arms control: Europe’s role”, Matthias Karadi, Senior Advisor, Social Democratic Party in the German Bundestag

16:30-16:45 Coffee

16:45-18:15 Panel 4: The relations between Russia and NATO: from discord to cooperation

Chair: Oliver Meier

- “The dilemma of cooperation between Russia and NATO”, Sergey K. Oznobistchev, Russia
- “Reciprocity and NATO-Russia relations: prerequisite or stumbling block for cooperation?”, Tomasz ŁękarSKI, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Poland
- “Non-political aspects of NATO-Russia cooperation”, S. Pechurov, General Staff, Russia
- “Cooperative NATO-Russia relations: A view from NATO” Robert Pszczel, NATO Information Office, Moscow

18:15-18:45 Concluding discussion, closing of the conference

19:00 Dinner

Background

The seminar is one of a series of events on ways to reduce the role of tactical nuclear weapons in European security, organized jointly by ACA, BASIC and IFSH over the last two years, under a joint project supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Past roundtables were organized in Ankara, Berlin, Brussels, Helsinki, Rome, Tallinn, Warsaw and Washington. More information on the project and past events can be found at www.tacticalnuclearweapons.ifsh.de.