

Rethinking European Security: Vienna Workshop

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Introduction

In May 2024, BASIC hosted a track 2 workshop in Vienna, Austria – with in-person and virtual participation – to discuss the present and future of European security. The workshop was the second of five regional workshops organised in fulfilment of the aims of the ‘Turning Point: Realising a Sustainable Security Architecture for Europe’ project, referred to as ‘Rethinking European Security’.

This project is driven by the need to address rising geopolitical tensions that have seen an increase in military conflicts and a breakdown of global rules-based order. Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 highlighted the collapse of post-Cold War diplomacy and the need for a new security architecture. New agendas and guidelines are needed to combat current and future security risks, including climate change and its effects on security. This project seeks to generate a new security architecture in Europe and beyond.

The workshop in Vienna was held under the Chatham House Rule and was attended by non-government experts from Russia. BASIC gives thanks to the participants for their active engagement in workshop discussions, with the main findings detailed in this report.

Main Findings

Understanding Russia’s place within today’s world order

Workshop participants were asked to consider the most urgent dimensions of security now and in the next decade. Foremost on participants’ minds were the geopolitical implications of Russia’s war against Ukraine.¹

¹ While ‘Russia’s war on Ukraine’ is referred to throughout this report, some participants referred to it as a ‘conflict’ or ‘military operation’.

Participants lamented that the war in Ukraine – and Russia’s larger conflict with the West² – has overshadowed all other matters of Russian domestic policy and foreign interests. In particular, multidimensional security threats including climate change, migration, food security, and energy security have held subordinated importance in comparison to the war. For example, participants pointed to Russia’s hydrogen production plans that have been on hold in the absence of Western partners. The workshop also observed that the Arctic Council and other Arctic institutions have slowed their activities, and speculated that their future configurations will largely depend on the outcome of the war.

While broader security challenges, and solutions, may be out of bounds for compromise or discussion in the present climate, participants agreed that there is value in considering a range of scenarios for a future security architecture. Participants also agreed that this calculus must consider what both the West and Russia will become after the war.

Participants articulated an array of views on if today’s divisions between Russia and the West constitute a new Cold War. Proponents of this view argued that there is a high risk of escalation to a Russia-NATO conflict, particularly as red lines continue to blur and anti-Western sentiments increase in Russia. Others vocalised that the current divisions present a situation worse than the Cold War because there is a hot, regional conflict in Europe where governments have become accustomed to peace. Others, still, asserted that the present situation is *not* a new Cold War because the war – nor the ideological differences surrounding it – has not reached a global scale.³

Regardless of participants’ views on the classifications of present divisions, there was broad consensus that the West should explore strategic areas of future cooperation.⁴ Attendees agreed that some changes in the relationship between Russia and the West are likely to be highly irreversible – for example, it is unlikely that a strategic energy partnership between the EU and Russia could be restored, nor will these actors ever be likely to cooperate in a regional conflict.

Participants were divided on what the preconditions should be for such cooperation. One participant suggested that there should first be a ceasefire and peace treaty that shows compromise, leading to a less divided Europe. Another participant suggested that Russia will first have to endure a war crimes tribunal, pay reparations to Ukraine, and reconcile itself with its own history. Participants largely agreed that there should be opportunity for Russia to reconcile with its own history, most likely through engagement with civil society. It was argued that if Europe does not allow Russia to have dialogue internally and to understand its past, that it would be difficult to develop a new European security architecture with Russia.

However, participants disagreed on how much progress – if any – Russia would need to make in this endeavour *before* being invited again into the ‘Western world’, a term that was not clearly defined. However, context indicates that the term was interpreted by participants as a liberal values-driven order.⁵ Whether before or after being re-integrated into the West - or into transatlantic Europe - a period of transformation within Russia to adopt liberal values was presented as necessary. In addition, participants disagreed on if Western cooperation should be offered to the Russian government, or just to what remains of Russian civil society with the hope that Russian civil society would bloom into a decisive driver of Russia’s domestic and global policies.

² ‘The West’ was a term that multiple participants used to discuss Europe and the transatlantic alliance. However, interpreted, ‘the West’ was discussed by participants as an entity that is largely at odds with, or opposed to, Russia.

³ At the time of the workshop, North Korean troops had not yet entered the war, thereby signalling a major escalation from Russia. For more information about this development, please see Joel Guinto and Jean Mackenzie, ‘Ukraine War: North Korea Confirms It Sent Troops to Fight for Russia’, BBC News, 28 April 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckg25wxvpy2o>.

⁴ The United States was not singled out as a state that warranted special consideration in this regard. The looming US elections were a point of discussion and concern was raised that a future Trump administration would pull out of long-standing treaties, such as New START.

⁵ One participant similarly defined an integration into the Western world as an opening for ‘those Russians who still share European values’.

Looking to the past to inform the present

There was a strong impulse amongst participants to look to past relations between the West and Russia. One participant looked back to the collapse of the USSR and the initial hopes that it brought for better relations with the West, but argued that Russia was made an enemy through NATO expansion. Another participant concurred that the enlargement of NATO and the EU left Russia outside of the European security architecture and was meant to deter Russia. Another participant, still, cautioned against referring to the 'Cold War narrative' of NATO acting as a threat to Russia because that only serves to bolster Russia's narrative of why it chose to invade Ukraine.

Other participants, still, asserted that it is incumbent upon all parties to look beyond NATO and its expansion. As one participant pointed out, Russia will continue to say that NATO expansion exemplified Western deceit whereas those who joined NATO during its expansion will continue to think that their membership is of no concern to Russia. Multiple workshop attendees asserted that rather than dividing nations based on alliances, such as NATO, a balance of powers should instead be considered, with the West allowing Russia to be on par with the US and the EU.

Other participants suggested that it would be unlikely for NATO to lose its importance anytime soon, as Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has cemented Western fears of Russia's aggressive policies. While not explicitly stated by participants, it was implied that the West should not embrace Russia, or make space for it as an equal power, without Russia meeting preconditions, such as those listed in the above section. A determination of shared values would play a large role in any future cooperation between the West and Russia. One participant gave examples of international norms that could be agreed upon, such as the norm that international institutions are still relevant, or the norm that nuclear weapons should not be deployed into outer space.

Some participants looked to the past to inform the future of divisions between the West and Russia. For example, one participant predicted that the outcome of the war could resemble the Berlin crisis of 1948/49 during which time the Soviet Union blocked Western Allies' access to West Berlin, with a period of high tensions following thereafter. Alternatively, this participant considered that the outcome could be like the Berlin agreements of 1971, which established a diplomatic relationship, and eased tensions, between West and East Germany; a similar approach to relations would allow for a more robust post-conflict European security architecture to form. Simultaneously, another participant rejected these Berlin scenarios, arguing that present-day Europe has more unity and resilience compared to past decades, not least due to the presence of unifying institutions such as the European Union; such resilience may lead to a totally different outcome altogether.

Regardless of participants' stances on past Western-Russian relations – and what they mean for the future – all seemed to agree that more must be done between the West and Russia to understand one another. It was raised in multiple contexts that the West has continuously lacked a strategic vision of Russia's place in the post-Cold War era. Participants pointed to both the West and Russia refusing to learn from their mistakes, which they argued causes them to behave reactively. As one participant raised, Russia is not the same as it was before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the West must work to increase its expertise on Russia.

Russia's positioning within larger geopolitical dimensions

Workshop participants considered the world order beyond Russia. Some suggested that the US and China are the main competitors for global dominance, leaving Russia and Europe behind altogether. In other words, Russia and Europe will be more likely to be the deal takers rather than the deal makers in the current geopolitical climate. One participant argued that it is positive that countries like China, India, and Türkiye are likely to have their own agendas separate from the war in Europe. However, another participant disagreed, stating that those countries – as well as countries like Brazil, South Africa, and many Middle Eastern countries – increasingly want a say in the decision-making of the global order, with the global architecture likely to impact a new European architecture.

Given the West's strained relationship with Russia, there was much agreement amongst participants that Russia would strengthen its relationship with China. It was said that it is likely that Russia and China would increase trade with one another, although business agreements may take years to finalise. Furthermore, participants broached the small possibility of China partnering with Russia to utilise its Northern Sea Route as a basis for marine transport.

Other participants disagreed that China and Russia would deepen their relationship because they are *also* in competition with one another. Participants argued that Russia will want to maintain its dominance in the Arctic and that Russia does not want China to join the Arctic Council as it wants that space to remain regional rather than global. As one participant

concluded, this approach puts Russia in closer alignment with the views of the West in the Global North versus those of the Global South.⁶

In contrast, other participants argued that Russia strives to work with the Global South and the other BRICS countries to address global concerns like energy and climate security. Participants agreed that Russia seeks to build a parallel climate agenda to the West with many workshop attendees pointing to Russia's history of promoting nuclear technologies to the Global South. Despite these efforts, a participant privy to international climate negotiations asserted that the Global South, at times, excludes Russia from its conversations as it sometimes views Russia as part of the Global North.

Russia's identity crisis

The workshop questioned Russia's place in the world. If not a country of the Global South, is it European, Eurasian, or something different altogether? As one participant pointed out, Russia is treated as an outcast – not a Western or a European country. Some participants of the workshop questioned if European security, or European architecture, is most productive when contextualizing Russia. This was because some participants did not foresee an economic foundation that could be developed with Russia, which would be integral to an integrated European security strategy. Others argued that a security architecture is indicative of a structure with a formal design that is built from the top-down; they asserted that it would be difficult to envision high-level decisions and agreements being made with Russia amidst the back-drop of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Instead, it was suggested that Russia should be viewed through a lens of Eurasian security, as a participant claimed that Russia is more likely to take advice from the Eurasian South – such as China or India – than from the European West, such as the UK or the EU. Others countered this idea, as they argued that Eurasia's boundaries are defined differently by different states; further, a Eurasian architecture could lead to Russia and China competing for dominance, the prospect of which participants found concerning.

One participant suggested that Eurocentric architecture – with Europe as the centre of civilization – should be moved away from. Instead, there should be a 'New Global North' vis a vis a 'New Global South'. The New Global North would have three centres of power: the US, Europe, and Russia. It was argued that such a configuration would cause there to be less emphasis placed on NATO or the EU, but would instead be about putting Russia on par with the US and the EU. This participant argued that not only would this set-up be palatable to the Russian people, but – recognising that future divides will be between North and South – it would also help to counter the Global South's consolidation of power.

The idea of three centres of power was put into doubt by a participant who argued that the US and Europe cannot be split from one another, so Russia would not see itself as an independent centre to the West in this scenario. Other participants questioned the view that the US and Europe cannot be split due to a perceived crisis within the Euro-Atlantic partnership. Other participants were more confident in the Euro-Atlantic partnership, stating that it will continue to survive, even amongst ongoing challenges.

Avenues for cooperation between the West and Russia

Participants recognised the difficulty of creating and implementing a security architecture that addresses the diverse array of contemporary challenges. While the West may find it intuitive to exclude Russia from a European security architecture – or even design one against Russia – shared cooperation with Russia is needed to address climate security, amongst other global security challenges. What follows are some of the avenues for cooperation that the workshop discussed.

It should be noted, however, that one participant forcefully vocalised that the West must be careful in broadening its discussions with Putin on various forms of security challenges. The participant argued that it would only fulfil Putin's wishes to be seen to be engaging with world leaders yet again, which would signal that his actions in Ukraine could be overlooked.

⁶ Note that 'Global South' and 'Global North' are contested terms but this was the terminology used by participants. For more information about these terminologies, see Jean-Philippe Thérien, 'The North–South Distinction: From Consensus to Contestation', *Global Studies Quarterly* (Oxford, United Kingdom) 4, no. 4 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksae080>.

Risk reduction and arms control measures

The workshop praised the merits of arms control, confidence building measures, and risk reduction approaches. Participants reflected that these tools provide transparency, ensure stability, reduce misunderstanding, and manage conflict. Participants asserted that in a world that is ever-changing, with leaders making swift decisions, risk reduction measures are critical; there should be a common goal to prevent nuclear war.

Participants gave special consideration to how arms control can enhance deterrence and therefore assist in avoiding miscalculation. One participant put forward that deterrence has not been credible, with the concept gaining increased ambiguity. Other participants agreed that there has been an erosion of norms and practices around nuclear weapons and deterrence in general, with escalatory statements made by both the West and Russia which could lead to unexpected casualties.⁷ Participants expressed the need for more transparency, rather than ambiguity, in deterrence posturing.

The workshop also lamented the 'very deep crisis' that these tools are in, noting that the risk of a hot conflict has increased. One participant speculated that the reason these tools are in peril is because there has been a lack of willingness on all sides to display a readiness to adapt existing mechanisms. Whatever the underlying reason, some participants pointed to the fragility of the New START treaty, while others cited growing tensions within the P5 process and discussions, as well as the demise of presidential nuclear initiatives.

Participants agreed that arms control would be difficult to restore due to the complexity of the current military balance, with weapons used in space, through autonomous systems, and the like. However, in the absence of formal arms control and risk reduction measures, it was noted that 'soft' arms control is necessary to limit universal fears of the activities of adversaries.⁸ Several participants agreed that there could be progress made around signalling a common appreciation for shared values and norms regarding international institutions and legal constraints pertaining to arms control. This discussion, again, returns to the theme throughout the workshop that progress could be made when shared values are identified.

Ultimately, participants agreed that the future of arms control and risk reduction will be dependent upon the vision of what relations could look like after the war in Ukraine and what kind of a peace deal is eventually agreed upon. Participants struggled with providing concrete examples of what future arms control and risk reduction tools would entail. However, beyond these measures likely starting as informal and not legally binding, participants agreed that future tools must be rethought and reinvented. Some participants also asserted that a defeated Russia in a post-war settlement would not lead to promising security agreements; instead, the West should offer incentives to Russia to stimulate areas of arms control.

Collaboration to mitigate and adapt to climate change

Participants were asked to consider Russia's approaches to environmental and energy security. Along with analysis of Russia's geopolitical positioning, detailed earlier in this report, participants presented the following assessments. Participants shared that Putin-approved initiatives have committed Russia to addressing environmental security over the past several years. Some participants saw Russia as making great strides in this process, with its climate adaptation and mitigation strategies reinforcing one another, and through continued development of low carbon energy sources and engagement in geoengineering. However, others shared their perceptions of Russia's tendency to prioritise adaptation over mitigation, with Russia's long-term low carbon development strategy lacking action as well as a road map for fulfilment.

The workshop further considered how climate change will likely impact Russia's military strategy. One participant suggested that Russia strategises on how to avoid environmental threats to personal security from natural disasters and address operation capabilities. Specifically, it was suggested that Russia must consider the set-up of its military bases in the Arctic zone due to permafrost melting and the ice cover becoming unreliable. As described earlier in this report, participants identified a possible increase in engagement in the Arctic as the polar ice melts. Yet, participants disagreed over whether the full-scale war in Ukraine has led Russia to relax safety and security regulations regarding oil and gas production, and whether this could lead to poorer environmental standards in Russia with long-term consequences for nature protection and biodiversity.

⁷ While these participants recognised fault on both the West and Russia, criticism was mostly focused on the West with one participant citing Western-backed Ukrainian attacks on Russian early warning systems, for example. Although Russian strategic early-warning radar sites were targeted by Ukraine, it is not certain that these attacks were supported by Western allies. See Xiaodon Liang, 'Ukraine Strikes Russian Early-Warning Radars | Arms Control Association', Arms Control Association, August 2024, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2024-07/news/ukraine-strikes-russian-early-warning-radars>.

⁸ 'Soft' arms control is considered 'the vague discussions on military doctrines or experts' debates about new interpretations of strategic stability', whereas 'hard' arms control consists of 'verifiable limitations and reductions of weapons and troops'. Nadezhda Arbatova, 'Domestic Debate in Russia About Arms Control and Nuclear Weapons', in *Nuclear Risks and Arms Control - Problems and Progresses in the Time of Pandemics and War*, ed. Paolo Cotta-Ramusino et al. (Springer International Publishing, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-29708-3_8.

These assessments were in contrast to what some participants perceived as Russia's approach to energy and climate security. One participant insisted that the West has perpetuated geopolitical tensions by imposing an 'ecological agenda' on Russia and China. Another participant argued that Russia does not see the climate crisis as an international issue, but rather one driven by the West; it was speculated that Putin is surrounded by climate sceptics who may instigate this view. Yet another participant stated that the West's emphasis on a green economy, and its perceived move away from nuclear power and energy, is antithetical to Russia's industries.

One participant presented their perspective that climate change could be good for Russia geo-strategically, as it would open North Sea routes, thereby increasing Russia's influence. The participant went on to express scepticism towards human induced climate change. This perspective was quickly dismissed by the other participants, as they denounced climate scepticism and argued that any perceived benefits of climate change would be outweighed by the devastation experienced by Russia and the larger Arctic region.⁹ This exchange indicates that even amongst disagreements regarding Russia's priorities and policies pertaining to climate and energy security, participants held a broad consensus on global harms proliferated by human-induced climate change.

Participants argued that there could be windows of opportunity for Russia to collaborate with the West on environmental and clean energy initiatives. As described above, Russia holds business interests in its nuclear technologies. Participants pointed to Russian businesses' willingness before the full-scale invasion to pursue voluntary carbon projects, or buy carbon offsets, to present themselves as low carbon companies. Participants reflected that this was in response to the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM),¹⁰ and one participant questioned if – with this precedent – cooperation with Russia could be had again. Participants also largely welcomed the resumption of working group activities of the Arctic Council and saw this as a platform for future regional cooperation.

Collaboration to mitigate

Risk reduction and arms control measures, as well as environmental and energy security, were areas that participants spent most of their discussions considering as potential points of cooperation between Russia and the West. However, a few other possible areas were briefly explored as well, particularly applicable once a ceasefire of the war in Ukraine is had. One of these areas was described as 'normal diplomatic practices' which could include reestablishing consular services between Russia and the West, as well as the opening up of commercial air space. Another area that was identified was restoration of contacts and communication. This measure would include allowing Russian and Western diplomats – and institutions, such as NATO – to restart dialogues aimed at crisis management.

One participant suggested – in the absence of an imminent ceasefire in the war in Ukraine – that cooperation could be found to bring in 'guardrails' while the war is still hot. Possible measures that were listed included limiting the use of glide bombs, chemical weapons, and biological weapons, as well as ending the practice of military operations taking place around nuclear power stations. Other participants were less hopeful that any of these measures would be agreed upon by the West or Russia, with one participant questioning if Russia even participates in some of these practices – such as attacking nuclear power plants – to begin with.¹¹ When facts of this nature are disputed, it is difficult to see how compromises could be made with participation on both sides.

Participants largely agreed that because the war could end abruptly, and in an unexpected way, both the West and Russia must be ready to cooperate on steps towards better relations. It was stated that it is not just short-term issues that must be addressed, but also issues that will be of strategic future importance. Workshop attendees noted that the large problems the West and Russia are facing should be broken down into manageable pieces with an incremental approach adopted. It was suggested that processes and negotiations are most valued, and therefore working groups should continuously be engaged in dialogue, rather than just occasionally through formal, high-level meetings. These approaches would allow for the possibility that Russia will be brought back into Europe in the future.

⁹ Harms cited by participants included disruption to indigenous persons, devastation to Russian resorts located on coastlines, the breaking off of icebergs that inhibit shipping routes through the Arctic, as well as negative effects upon foodstuffs through disruption to agriculture and hunting.

¹⁰ 'Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism - Taxation and Customs Union', accessed 28 April 2026, https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism_en.

¹¹ It is indisputable that Russia engages in these practices exemplified through its armed attack and seizure of the Zaporizhzhia power plant in southeastern Ukraine. For a timeline of events, please see 'Ukraine: Russia-Ukraine War and Nuclear Energy', World Nuclear Association, accessed 12 June 2025, <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-t-z/ukraine-russia-war-and-nuclear-energy>.

Forums for cooperation

Architecture versus ecosystem

When discussing the future of European security architecture, many participants suggested that a European security ecosystem be considered instead. They reasoned that an architecture implies a top-down strategic design, with one participant suggesting that it was the top-heavy nature of the post-Cold War architecture that allowed Russia to easily dismantle it. Instead, participants argued that an ecosystem implies a bottom-up approach, which presents the possibility of a grassroots relationship developed between the Russian people and Europe. However, it should be noted that one participant questioned if Europe is still a concept that the Russian population would want to imitate.

The workshop deliberated on if the development of a security ecosystem could encompass the broader agenda of security issues – including climate, energy, and human securities – discussed. Participants seemed to agree that these initiatives, primarily concerning climate, would likely be the first to open up conversations between the West and Russia. However, it was noted that even with this broad agenda, serious progress would not be made until the end of the war in Ukraine.

One participant warned that it is imperative for a security ecosystem to be developed quickly, as the workshop perceived that a European architecture is presently being built against Russia to deter and defeat it. It was argued that as this architecture is strengthened, there is less chance for a security ecosystem to develop and thrive. Another participant greatly welcomed the building of a European security architecture against Russia due to its invasion of Ukraine. This view was much to the dismay of other participants. These participants argued for the necessity of improved relations between Russia and the West, with some asserting that a post-war strategy is needed to engage Russia in a constructive manner.

Some participants were opposed to the idea of a security ecosystem. This was because, to them, the word 'ecosystem' did not hold much meaning. It was not completely clear to them how a security ecosystem would be constructed in the absence of a formalised structure, or architecture. It was not discussed how it would be determined which organisations or individuals would constitute parts of this ecosystem or the logistics of its decision-making, if any. This was made all the more poignant as participants agreed that civil society is all but non-existent in Russia.

Existing institutions for cooperation

The workshop discussed the dire crisis of the global security architecture. Participants argued that the post-World War II system and institutions have not been effective, listing the United Nations and its Security Council as examples. Participants also included Arctic institutions, such as the Barents Euro-Atlantic Council, as part of a 'degradation of the institutional framework' which has led to less workable institutions for regional cooperation. Participants argued that the ineffectiveness of regimes and institutions is not a new phenomenon, but something that has been continuous since the late 1990s. One participant reflected that rather than create new institutions, a mix of new and old security institutions have been joined together, such as the NATO-Russia Council, which participants deemed ineffective.

A couple of participants were proponents of new security institutions. They echoed that Cold War institutions were inadequate for the post-Cold War, and now the post-post-Cold War period.¹² Reasoning that old institutions develop their own logic and repeat the same patterns, new institutions would likely need to be created for progress to be made. Yet, not all participants agreed with this assessment. As one participant argued, developing a new institution could take hundreds of years to take full shape from the idea it originated from; this would be even more likely to occur due to the impacts of the war in Ukraine, which could carry on into the twenty-second century.

Many participants were proponents of the OSCE as an effective institution. They reflected that the OSCE seemed to have potential as a forum for debates on environmental, economic, and human securities. Some participants argued that for the OSCE to be more effective, however, reforms would need to be made to prevent the institution from being bogged down by the same unsolved issues between states that have been at odds for many years. It was suggested that the OSCE's veto consensus mechanism could be reformed for better decision-making processes to take shape, for example, leading the OSCE to be an institution for collective European security.

The potential for cooperation beyond the presence of any institutions was also discussed. Some participants noted the impossibility for a serious institutional framework or integration to develop and argued that dialogue and arms control, risk reduction measures would allow for small windows to discuss practical issues recognised by Russia and the West. An

¹² Post-Cold War refers to the era after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting geopolitical realignments. A post-post-Cold War indicates that a new geopolitical ordering is emerging, one where Russia is more at odds with Europe, and the broader transatlantic region, which came to a head with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

attendee questioned if developed bodies and complementarity between institutions should even be the norm, as there are risks associated with having security built on a balance of power. Instead, it was argued that progress may happen on an ad hoc basis, as states take uneven paths towards understanding common issues.

Values versus institutions

In the absence of institutions or a European security architecture, participants similarly argued that cooperation could be had through shared values held by the West and Russia. As discussed earlier in this report, participants kept returning to this concept throughout the workshop, questioning if these values exist, what they are, and in which ways they could be drawn upon. In particular, participants pointed to the importance of differentiating shared values held by Russian and Western societies versus their political leadership.

In the absence of a formal framework for arms control and risk reduction measures in particular, participants suggested that progress could be made around recognising a common appreciation for shared values and international norms. A participant reflected that, even with the suspension of New START, both the West and Russia give each other notice of ballistic launches, as an example of a shared norm. Similarly, this participant related that Russia's withdrawal from the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) ratification still exemplified respect for the institution. Participants disagreed on how much engagement with specific measures – such as limitations on the quantitative build-up of nuclear weapons – was needed, rather than a general shared appreciation for the concept of arms control.

Lastly, participants considered how the domestic policies of countries inform their abilities to make progress through international forums and mechanisms. One participant referred to this consideration as 'value gaps', where scenarios must be considered where value gaps close or remain. In the case of Russia, this participant argued that gaps are more likely to widen than to close. Another participant reflected that shared interests do not always mean shared actions, which must be taken through domestic policies rather than international agreements. Other participants concurred with these statements, observing that relationship-building between the West and Russia will largely depend upon how Russia domestically evolves.

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