

Addendum to the First Report of the Deep Cuts Commission, April 28, 2014

The report, “Preparing for Deep Cuts: Options for Enhancing Euro-Atlantic and International Security,” was completed in the weeks prior to the controversy over events in Ukraine in late-February and March 2014. It is based on the outcomes of research and discussions among Deep Cuts Commissioners in the fall and winter of 2013. The Commission continues to endorse the report’s main conclusions about the need to make further progress on nuclear arms control and we present the 18 main recommendations in the report for consideration by all parties as potential ways forward to resolve longstanding security challenges in the years to come.

As has been the case in years past, progress on U.S.-Russian arms control requires a suitable political climate, including the absence of major crises, and a mutual interest in reducing common security risks and increasing stability. While the U.S. and Russian governments appear to remain committed to the implementation of major bilateral nuclear risk reduction and confidence-building treaties now in force, including New START, the Vienna Document, and the Open Skies Treaty, the current crisis in relations undoubtedly makes it much harder for the United States and its European partners, as well as Russia, to successfully advance new arms control and disarmament initiatives in the near future.

While we are not entering into a new “Cold War” of global competition, proxy wars, and arms racing, it is important to recall that even during the darkest days of that era, arms control frameworks established stabilizing, verifiable limits on the most dangerous category of weapons, and they put in place mechanisms for maintaining the U.S.-Soviet dialogue that helped to avoid the cataclysmic scenario of a superpower nuclear exchange.

The situation today underscores the need for leaders in the United States, Europe, and Russia to maintain and deepen their strategic security dialogue and continue to support well-functioning arms control, disarmament, and nuclear risk reduction measures. U.S.-Russian nuclear arsenals still far exceed the numbers needed for deterrence. Mutual nuclear doctrines still contain dangerous rapid-response postures that do not allow national leaders enough time in a crisis for thorough evaluation. Conventional force deployments in Europe continue to represent a potential source of friction and concern. The mutual commitment of Washington and Moscow to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in all its aspects, continues to be a linchpin for international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons worldwide.

Now is not the time to scrap cooperative arms control endeavors, but rather to devise creative measures that address longstanding security concerns and help to increase stability, maintain transparency, and increase predictability. In order to avert potential misunderstandings and avoid a new arms race, efforts should be redoubled to devise measures for simultaneously strengthening the national security of the United States, the Russian Federation, and third states as well.

Therefore, even against the background of the downturn in relations between the West and Russia, we believe it is of crucial importance that policymakers in Washington, Moscow, and European capitals continue to devise and actively explore long-term concepts for stability and predictability at lower levels of armaments.

The Deep Cuts Commission