

# Defusing the Ukraine Crisis through Arms Control, Transparency and Risk Reduction

Statement by the Deep Cuts Commission

The tensions between Russia, Ukraine and NATO create the potential for a disastrous war that can and must be avoided through serious and deft diplomacy. Among other steps, NATO and Russia should pursue agreement on common sense arms control instruments to help move away from the brink of disaster and promote stability and security in Europe.

Immediate military de-escalation is of utmost importance to avoid a war in Europe. Defusing the current crisis will create the conditions for a more productive political dialogue to address underlying reasons driving the tensions between NATO members and Russia and between Russia and Ukraine. Competing visions of a European security architecture are at the core of the current crisis.

NATO and Russia have advanced different ideas on conventional and nuclear arms control. Yet, the two draft agreements put forward by Moscow in December 2021 as well as the U.S. and NATO responses to

these texts submitted in January 2022 indicate there is room for negotiations designed to resolve mutual security concerns. Both sides have stated that they are ready to engage in talks on risk reduction and confidence building concerning offensive and defensive missile deployments in Europe, transparency on conventional weapons and military exercises, as well as on conventional force posture and arms control. Substantive discussions on these important issues as well as information exchanges and confidence-building steps offer a path to stabilize the current crisis and enhance European security in the longer term.

The Deep Cuts Commission calls on Russia, the United States, and NATO members to acknowledge the legitimate security concerns of the other side. They should immediately take simultaneous steps to defuse the current crisis through arms control, risk reduction and transparency measures and involve Ukraine, where appropriate, in such a process.

**NATO members and Russia** should agree in the NATO-Russia Council to:

- immediately meet for reciprocal briefings on each other's nuclear policies and postures and state their readiness to answer questions on current nuclear postures;
- arrange reciprocal transparency visits to NATO's Aegis Ashore sites in Romania and Poland as well as to two 9M729 sites of the Russian Armed Forces, as a confidence-building measure;
- exercise greater restraint in major military exercises and notify temporarily, on a non-binding basis, military activities at significantly lower thresholds than the Vienna Document and invite observers to relevant maneuvers along or near to NATO-Russia borders;
- agree on new guidelines designed to avoid close military encounters between Russian and NATO forces;
- set-up a Risk Reduction Centre that provides direct lines between Russian and NATO command authorities; and
- begin discussions on conventional arms control measures seeking to reduce the risk of military escalation and confrontation.

**Russia and the United States** in the context of the Strategic Stability Dialogue should agree to:

- immediately negotiate a balanced, verifiable moratorium on deployment of intermediate-range missiles between the Atlantic and the Urals;
- refrain from explicit or implied threats to deploy additional non-strategic nuclear weapons along the NATO-Russia frontier; and
- publicly pledge to refrain from using information technology to interfere with each other's nuclear command and control and early warning systems.

These steps can help to reduce the current tensions and demonstrate that neither side plans or intends to take further steps towards military escalation. By building trust and increasing transparency, the United States, NATO, and Russia can reduce nuclear dangers and build momentum toward additional arms control agreements that achieve further reductions in strategic nuclear arsenals, "tactical" nuclear weapons, and intermediate-range nuclear weapons as well as limits on strategic missile defenses that can undermine strategic stability.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Deep Cuts Statement "How the U.S.-Russian Strategic Stability Dialogue Can and Must Make Progress", Deep Cuts Commission, December 2021,

[https://deepcuts.org/images/PDF/Statement\\_Deep\\_Cuts\\_Commission\\_SSD.pdf](https://deepcuts.org/images/PDF/Statement_Deep_Cuts_Commission_SSD.pdf).

Commission members may not fully agree with each and every point included here, though as a group they are fully aligned in support of the recommendations.

### *About Deep Cuts*

The Deep Cuts Commission provides decision-makers as well as the interested public with concrete policy options based on realistic analysis and sound research. Since it was established in 2013, the Commission is coordinated in its deliberations by the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH), the Arms Control Association (ACA), and the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences (IMEMO, RAN) with the active support of the German Federal Foreign Office.

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