

The Duma-Senate Logjam Revisited: Actions and Reactions in Russian Treaty Ratification

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Summary.

This paper analyzes the political dynamics and debates surrounding the passage of five nuclear arms control agreements in the Russian State Duma during the last twenty years. It contends that treaty ratification has gotten easier in light of the increased degree of cohesion between the executive branch and the legislature's majority party in Russia. However, concentrating only on this centralization of foreign policy in the Kremlin over the past decade obscures the impact of internal parliamentary debates on Moscow's nuclear policy. Moreover, ongoing changes in Russia's political system are introducing structural uncertainty into Moscow's decision-making. The paper first introduces the "logjam" between the Duma and the U.S. Senate that thwarted implementation of the arms control agenda pursued by the Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin administrations. It then provides an overview of the Russian legislative branch, highlights its role in foreign policy and treaty ratification, and notes the changes in the legislature's political composition over time. The paper further offers an assessment of arms control treaty passage votes, recurring themes in legislative debates, and key points of ratification resolutions and declarations. The conclusion argues that political instability and the nationalistic mood in Russia coupled with prevailing attitudes in the U.S. Senate may open the door for another legislative "logjam" dynamic in future arms control treaties.

The Duma-Senate "logjam."

The domestic bipartisan consensus on nuclear arms control in the United States unraveled in 2010. That year saw the Barack Obama administration and the Senate wrangle over the ratification of the April 2010 New START agreement. For months, the executive branch wasn't sure whether it would have enough votes in the legislature to pass a treaty that had become unexpectedly controversial. As part of the treaty vetting process, Senate committees held 20 hearing on matters pertinent to the U.S.-Russian agreement that featured testimonies from current and former executive branch officials.² The legislators submitted nearly a thousand questions for the record and drafted a ratification resolution that voiced significant concerns. Ultimately, the accord passed in a dramatic December 2010 vote with the approval of 71 out of 100 Senators.³

New START in the Duma.

By comparison, the prospects of New START ratification in the Russian State Duma seemed substantially better. The nuclear arms control pact was of great importance to Russia's ruling

¹ This paper was prepared on the basis of presentations at CSIS PONI conferences at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Livermore, CA in September 2011 and at U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, NE in December 2011.

² John F. Kerry, "New START debate: John Kerry responds to Mitt Romney," *The Boston Globe's Angle* blog, December 3, 2010, http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/blogs/the_angle/2010/12/new_start_debat.html.

³ "The Status of the New START Treaty," National Public Radio interview with the Hon. Ellen Tauscher, November 17, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=131393368>.

tandem, President Dmitriy Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.⁴ Moreover, the fact that the United Russia party, which supports Medvedev and Putin, held the majority of seats in the Duma augured well for easy passage of the agreement.⁵ In July 2010, the Duma foreign affairs committee recommended New START for a floor vote, pending the pact's ratification by the Senate.

However, in November 2010, the Duma foreign affairs committee surprised Washington observers by withdrawing its support of New START.⁶ The lawmakers were concerned less about the treaty itself and more about the potential security implications of the Senate's accompanying ratification resolution, which included a set of declarations, conditions, and understandings of the bilateral agreement.⁷ Duma foreign affairs committee chairman Konstantin Kosachev noted that he was particularly troubled that the understandings pertaining to missile defense, rail-mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles, and strategic-range non-nuclear weapons systems could hold legal weight.⁸

Shortly thereafter, key committee members began to argue that simple advice and consent on the accord would no longer be possible. Meanwhile, Communist party deputies sought to delay and derail key votes on the pact.⁹ Nevertheless, accompanied by a newly-written ratification resolution of its own, the Duma passed New START in January 2011 with the support of nearly 78 percent of its lawmakers.

The 1990s “logjam.”

Before sending the bilateral nuclear arms control pact for approval by the U.S. and Russian legislatures, presidents Obama and Medvedev agreed to synchronize the accord's ratification. This move was designed to avoid the kind of political paralysis that resulted in the Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin administrations' failure to acquire the advice and consent of the Senate and the Duma for a handful of arms control agreements. The memories of the action and reaction dynamic that took the arms control agenda hostage, with the legislatures battling against the presidents while also pointing at each other as the cause for delay, were all too fresh in Washington and Moscow.

In a 1997 article in the *Nonproliferation Review*, George Bunn and John B. Rhinelander described a “growing logjam of arms control treaties” awaiting legislative approval in both capitols.¹⁰ This dynamic, they argued, hindered the passage of the Strategic Arms Reduction

⁴ Josh Rogin, "U.S. Officials: No Daylight between Medvedev and Putin on Nuke Treaty," *The Cable*, March 31, 2010, http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2010/03/31/us_officials_no_daylight_between_medvedev_and_putin_on_nuke_treaty.

⁵ See, for instance, comments by Konstantin Kosachev in "Russian MPs 'want to take their time' on arms deal ratification," RIA Novosti, July 6, 2010, <http://www.en.rian.ru/russia/20100706/159713750.html>.

⁶ "Russian Lawmakers Drop 'New START' Endorsement," *Global Security Newswire*, November 3, 2010, <http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/russian-lawmakers-drop-new-start-endorsement/>.

⁷ "Russian Lawmakers Could Reconsider 'New START'," *Global Security Newswire*, November 1, 2010, <http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/russian-lawmakers-could-reconsider-new-start/>.

⁸ Joshua Pollack, "What the Senate's New START Resolution Says," *Arms Control Wonk* blog, November 3, 2010, <http://pollack.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/3501>.

⁹ Nikolai Sokov, "Apparent Smooth Sailing Obscures Submerged Drama and Revelations," CNS feature story, January 25, 2011, http://cns.miis.edu/stories/110125_russia_new_start_ratification.htm.

¹⁰ George Bunn and John B. Rhinelander, "The Duma-Senate Logjam on Arms Control: What Can Be Done?" *The Nonproliferation Review*, Fall 1997, pp 73-87.

Treaty (START II) of 1993, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty of 1996 (CTBT), the 1997 amendments to the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty as well as the protocols for the Treaty of Pelindaba and the Treaty of Rarotonga (the latter two would create nuclear-weapons-free-zones in Africa and the South Pacific, respectively). In addition, the “logjam” had the potential “also [to] prevent progress towards START III and further bilateral nuclear reductions.”¹¹

Bunn and Rhinelander suggested that the “logjam” was actually the result of certain similarities between the U.S. and Russian legislatures, both of which were fresh out of an elections cycle. “[N]ew crops of post- Cold War legislators are focused more on domestic problems than on international relations [while] many remain suspicious of the other country’s intentions and therefore have adopted highly nationalistic attitudes towards arms control,” they argued.¹² Moreover, the restructuring of Russian government institutions provided the opportunity for the legislature to challenge the president, setting a historical precedent.¹³

Bunn and Rhinelander posited that there was no way to resolve this “logjam.” Instead, they concluded that Moscow and Washington had to wait it out until the nationalist rhetoric dissipated and the domestic political environment was more conducive to the passage of arms control agreements. In the meantime, the Clinton and Yeltsin administrations could pursue their agendas through reciprocal unilateral measures, political commitments, and executive agreements or, in other words, means other than treaties that required actions by their legislatures.¹⁴

The research proposal.

Looking back, the Bunn and Rhinelander analysis of the bilateral political dynamics appears prescient. The START II treaty, passed by the Senate in 1996, was eventually ratified by the Duma in 2002, but never entered into force. The CTBT, passed by the Duma in 1997, was never ratified in the U.S. Senate. The ABM Treaty succession package, which was agreed upon by the presidents in 1997, never passed and that treaty was abrogated in 2002. And, the protocols for the African and South Pacific nuclear-weapons-free-zone treaties remain unratified by the U.S. Senate to this day. (The Russian Duma has ratified the latter with conditions and is yet to ratify the former.)

This paper examines the difficulty of passage of the START II, CTBT, the Moscow Treaty (SORT), and New START agreements. It focuses on the deputies' concerns regarding these treaties and the factors that delayed their ratification. The paper seeks to understand the impact of Duma political dynamics on arms control initiatives in the past and in the future.

A primer on the Russian legislature.

Before analyzing treaty ratification processes, a broad overview of the Russian legislative branch and its role in national security policy-making is in order. Over the past two decades, each parliamentary election in Russia has heralded interesting shifts in the political party composition of the Duma. Every shift, a reflection of public attitudes toward the executive branch, either decreased or increased the degree of consensus on arms control treaties.

¹¹ Bunn and Rhinelander, *op. cit.*, pg. 73.

¹² Bunn and Rhinelander, *op. cit.*, pg. 73.

¹³ Bunn and Rhinelander, *op. cit.*, pg. 73.

¹⁴ Bunn and Rhinelander, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-78.

Russia's bicameral legislature, the Federal Assembly, consists of a lower house, the State Duma, and an upper house, the Federation Council.¹⁵ The State Duma has 450 seats, which are elected every five years based on party lists with proportional representation. The Federation Council, in turn, has 166 seats, and representatives are chosen by regional officials. The legislature plays an important role in the ratification of treaties. Treaty passage requires a majority vote in the Duma (226 votes) followed by a majority vote in the Federation Council. The Duma is the instrumental body in this process, however. If the Federation Council rejects a treaty, the Duma can still override that vote with a 2/3 majority.

Shifts in Duma's influence.

As the "logjam" discussion above suggests, the Duma played a key role in thwarting the arms control goals of the Yeltsin administration. Indeed, the Russian lawmakers took a page from the playbook of their U.S. counterparts in threatening to defund programs, drafting ratification resolutions, and requiring executive branch reporting on nuclear policy. However, the legislature's direct impact on the policy-making process has waxed and waned over the past two decades. In stark contrast with an empowered institution that was willing and able to block action on issues of the highest importance to the executive branch, the Duma of the first decade of the 2000s has been much more compliant with the president's positions on national security.

This contrast has been the result of structural changes within the Russian political system. As Dmitri Trenin and Bobo Lo wrote in a 2005 manuscript, "political power has become recentralized [with the] field of public politics [shrinking] to its smallest since the beginning of Gorbachev's perestroika."¹⁶ To that end, "the legislature has been more or less the legislative arm of the Presidency." And, the speakers of both chambers, "both trusted lieutenants of the president, [have been] occasionally charged with foreign policy missions, but their real, as opposed to protocol, roles [have been] minimal."¹⁷

In turn, the role of the Duma and Federation Council foreign affairs committee chairmen is to shepherd treaties through the legislative process.¹⁸ Over the past decade, Duma foreign affairs committee chairman Kosachev and his Federation Council counterpart Mikhail Margelov have been closely aligned with one another, the United Russia party, and the Putin and Medvedev administrations.¹⁹ More recently, it's even been rumored that Kosachev, who was shifted from the chairmanship after the December 2011 parliamentary elections, would take a high-level post in the executive branch.²⁰ Predictably, these relationships have boded well for the policy agendas of Putin and Medvedev.

¹⁵ See additional information on the websites of the State Duma and the Federation Council, respectively, at <http://www.duma.gov.ru> and <http://www.council.gov.ru>.

¹⁶ Dmitri Trenin and Bobo Lo, *The Landscape of Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making*, a Carnegie Endowment for International Peace publication, 2005, pg 13.

¹⁷ Trenin and Lo, op. cit., pg. 13.

¹⁸ As Trenin and Lo also note, "[i]n comparison [to the foreign affairs committees], the defense and security committees of both houses do not deal much with foreign policy issues." Trenin and Lo, op. cit., pg. 13.

¹⁹ However, during the ratification of the Moscow Treaty in 2002, the two foreign affairs committee chairmen butted heads. That was at a time when the Duma's foreign affairs committee head was Dmitry Rogozin, now famous (or infamous) for his role as Russia's ambassador to NATO and the special representative on missile defense.

²⁰ Kosachev was reportedly offered a variety of posts, including Russia's ambassador to NATO. Polina Khimshvshili and Natalya Kostenko, "Konstantin Kosachev May Leave the Duma for a Move Up," *Vedomosti*, February 22, 2012, available at http://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/1510718/v_pomosch_diasporam.

Duma party composition.

In a structural sense, a “logjam” of the 1990s magnitude has not been possible in the Duma since the early 2000s. As Table 1 highlights below, the Duma had become a much less dynamic political institution than it was in the past. In 1993, the legislature had six large political blocs, none of which numbered less than 20 or more than 65 deputies. In 2003, the number of formidable political blocs dropped to four, and the pro-Putin United Russia bloc was just six seats shy of a 2/3 voting majority. With Putin’s popularity rising, the public support for the majority party similarly increased.

Table 1. State Duma election results 1993-2011.

Party/ Coalition	2011	2007	2003	1999	1995	1993
United Russia/ Unity + Fatherland All Russia	238	315	220	73+66	-	-
Communist Party (KPRF)	92	57	52	113	157	42
LDPR	56	40	36	17	51	64
Fair Russia/ Rodina	64	38	37	-	-	-
Yabloko	-	-	4	20	45	27
Agrarian	-	-	2	-	20	37
Union of Right Forces/ Russia’s Choice	-	-	3	29	9	64
Women of Russia	-	-	-	-	3	21

Sources: summary of 1993-2007 election results is from Russia Votes, a Levada Center-University of Aberdeen research project, available at http://www.russiavotes.org/duma/duma_elections_93-03.php, accessed July 2011; the results of the 2011 elections are from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, available at http://www.cikrf.ru/banners/duma_2011/index.html, accessed January 2012.

In 2005, Putin pushed through a package of reforms that essentially reduced the number of parties in the parliament. The crux of the reforms was that the mixed-member system was replaced by proportional representation and only registered parties—a separate stringent party registration law was passed a few years prior—could now compete in the elections.²¹ Further, a party had to get seven percent of the votes (instead of five percent) in order to get seats in the

²¹ See “Duma Election Law: Details,” at Russia Votes, a Levada Center-University of Aberdeen research project, available at http://www.russiavotes.org/duma/duma_election_law.php, accessed January 2012.

Duma. There was also no minimum turnout for the election and the option to vote “against all candidates” was eliminated.²²

In 2007, only four parties gathered enough votes to pass the thresholds established by the new legislation. That year, the United Russia also captured seventy percent of Duma seats. Since then, the deputies of the Communist (KPRF), the ultra-nationalist (the so-called Liberal Democratic Party of Russia or LDPR) and Fair Russia parties have been in the “opposition.”²³

December 2011 election.

Overtime, the United Russia party began to lose public support. Backed by federal and regional government officials, the party became associated with corruption in government institutions and the concentration of wealth among ruling elites.²⁴ In the run-up to the December 2011 parliamentary election, the Communists capitalized on public discontent, also attacking United Russia as the “party of crooks and thieves.”

A November 2011 poll by Levada offered some insights into the public mood of that time. When asked which of the parties had proposals on issues that Russia was faced with today, 35 percent of those polled said that no such party existed while 33 percent didn’t know. And, 67 percent said that Russia needed a real opposition party that could genuinely impact policy.²⁵

That said, and fraud allegations notwithstanding, the results of the December 2011 parliamentary election did not yield a dramatic shift in the Duma party composition. While United Russia lost 77 seats, the party still commands a majority at 238 seats. The KPRF’s negative advertising against United Russia secured them 35 additional seats. In turn, Fair Russia and LDPR acquired seats and traded places. In sum, given the public’s frustration with the current state of affairs, the gains in seats by opposition parties are best interpreted as votes against United Russia (or perhaps as votes against all candidates).

Treaty passage statistics, debates, and resolutions.

After a discussion of Duma political dynamics, this section examines the difficulties in ratifying the START II, CTBT, the Moscow Treaty, and New START agreements. As noted above, post-electoral shifts in the legislature’s party composition have either obstructed or eased the executive branch’s policy-making efforts. In addition, the fluctuation of nationalistic attitudes in the Duma has depended on electoral politics and external events.

START II.²⁶

The ratification of the START II agreement took over seven years and Yeltsin’s retirement from office. During that time, the debate in the Duma focused on many issues. Key among them was the concern that compliance with the treaty would require a costly modernization of

²² See “Duma Election Law: Details,” op. cit.

²³ Critics have charged that these parties have not been willing to challenge the executive branch’s agenda.

²⁴ See, for instance, an overview in Simon Shuster, “Russia Rising: the Blogger Who is Putin’s Greatest Challenger,” Time blog, December 29, 2011, www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2103203,00.html.

²⁵ See poll results (in Russian) at Levada website, <http://www.levada.ru/08-11-2011/reitingi-odobreniya-pervykh-lits-polozheniya-del-v-strane-elektoralnye-predpochteniya>, November 8, 2011.

²⁶ The key source for this section were the materials in the Russia country profile on the Nuclear Threat Initiative website, available at <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/russia/nuclear/>, authored by Nikolai Sokov and other Center for Nonproliferation Studies analysts, accessed July 2011.

Russian nuclear forces. Since it was in terrible economic shape most of that decade, Moscow couldn't and didn't want to afford this investment. Among security threats, deputies were concerned about missile defense and NATO expansion to Central & Eastern Europe.

The ratification was repeatedly delayed by internal political power struggles. The Yeltsin administration faced a challenging presidential election in 1996, the year after the Communists gained seats in the Duma. In addition, there was a range of other factors that affected the deputies' attitudes toward the treaty, including NATO operations in former Yugoslavia; the imposition of U.S. nonproliferation sanctions on Russian companies; and U.S. strikes in Iraq, Sudan, and Afghanistan.

Eventually, the Duma ratified START II with a push from Putin. The ratification was largely symbolic because the legislature also passed a ratification resolution that made treaty implementation impossible. The resolution linked START II entry into force to U.S. compliance with the ABM treaty (and the Senate's ratification of the 1997 ABM Treaty succession package) and the halt to NATO expansion.²⁷ The resolution also set a deadline for the negotiation of START III in December 2003. Finally, it obligated the Russian government to deliver an annual report to the legislature on strategic nuclear forces and treaty implementation.

However, even despite the symbolism of its passage, a third of the legislature voted against the agreement. This voting pattern, where the KPRF and LDPR rallied to defeat the treaty, would persist into the future.

CTBT.²⁸

Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin signed the CTBT in September 1996. However, Yeltsin submitted the bill for ratification only in November 1999, a month after the treaty was rejected by the U.S. Senate. The Duma took 6 months to ratify the agreement, and did so right after it approved START II. The final vote took place when Yeltsin was already out and Putin was in as president. The vote was more favorable of CTBT than of START II with only 74 legislators voting against the agreement.

The debate in the Duma focused largely on the state of the U.S.-Russian relationship at that time and voiced indignation about the actions by Senate. An additional factor was the concern among some lawmakers about the nuclear tests conducted in 1998 by India and Pakistan.

In turn, the CTBT ratification resolution noted the need to ensure funding for the development of nuclear forces, expressed concern about the U.S. inability to ratify (some deputies had suggested that the U.S. was keeping the door open to using "nuclear components" in "destabilizing anti-ballistic missile systems"), and called on other countries to ratify the treaty as soon as possible.

²⁷ Former lawmaker and current Medvedev administration official Dmitry Rogozin maintains that the linkage was his idea. See discussion in Dmitry Rogozin, *Vrag Naroda (Enemy of the People)* (Moscow: Algoritm, 2008), pp. 327-328. For a background on the 1997 agreement, see "The 1997 START/ABM Package at a Glance," an Arms Control Association fact sheet, undated, available at <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/pack>.

²⁸ The key source for this section were the materials in the Russia country profile on the Nuclear Threat Initiative website, available at <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/russia/nuclear/>, authored by Nikolai Sokov and other Center for Nonproliferation Studies analysts, accessed July 2011.

The Moscow Treaty.²⁹

The Moscow Treaty (SORT), signed in May 2002, was submitted for ratification that December. However, the passage of the agreement took about a year because the bill had to be resubmitted after its rejection in committee due to concerns about funding for nuclear forces and about cutting systems that had not yet reached the end of their service lives. Further, the deputies were concerned about the U.S. ability to upload reserve nuclear warheads for a first strike (upload potential).

The ratification also got tricky because the chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the Duma, Dmitry Rogozin, disagreed with his Federation Council counterpart Margelov. Deputy Rogozin argued that the Moscow Treaty should be delayed because of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. In the end, however, this delay never happened. The final vote was similar to START II with nearly a third of the deputies voting against.

The ratification resolution mandated presidential reporting on nuclear force developments and noted that key legislators should be included in interagency planning. And, though withdrawal provisions were discussed in all the past resolutions, this one was notable because it showed concern about the development of not just U.S. strategic forces and missile defenses, but also those of other states. Finally, the resolution also offered a list of additional arms control measures, especially in the bilateral context, and called on the U.S. to ratify the CTBT.

New START.

The New START Treaty was signed in April 2010. The debates in the Duma were attuned to the back-and-forth between Obama administration officials and the Senate about the treaty and the discussions about the future of U.S. nuclear forces, missile defense, and prompt global strike. As discussed above, the Senate voted in December and the Russian ratification came—after a brief delay—the following January (a total nine month wait). The final vote, the result of a coalition between United Russia and Fair Russia, was 350 for and 96 against.

The New START resolution called on the president to adopt a nuclear posture program and report to the Duma on its progress and its funding needs.³⁰ It argued of the need to monitor the balance between offence and defense and reported concern about the forces of “other countries.” The resolution noted the need to discuss new offensive systems, such as those related to prompt global strike, in the bilateral verification commission before these systems were deployed. And, crucially, instead of seeking to address tactical nuclear weapons in the next arms control agreement, it argued of the need to address prompt global strike, space-based systems, missile defense, and conventional force imbalance issues.³¹

²⁹ The key source for this section were the materials in the Russia country profile on the Nuclear Threat Initiative website, available at <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/russia/nuclear/>, authored by Nikolai Sokov and other Center for Nonproliferation Studies analysts, accessed July 2011.

³⁰ See a translation of the resolution in Jeffrey Lewis, “Russian New START Resolution,” *Arms Control Wonk*, January 15, 2011, <http://lewis.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/3481/russian-new-start-resolution>.

³¹ Sokov has noted that, in writing the resolution, the deputies closely cooperated with executive branch officials, essentially echoing their talking points. See Sokov, *op. cit.*

The “logjam” revisited.

For a third of the Duma, arms control consistently has remained a contentious issue. The following section offers a glance of legislative action timelines and final votes on the five arms control agreements over twenty years. It also discusses some of the limitations on the future of bilateral nuclear reductions.

As Table 2, below, suggests, New START ratification took much less time than the preceding four arms control agreements. An assessment of their passage suggests that the cohesion between the administration, foreign affairs committee chairmen, and the United Russia party has made treaty ratification much easier. By contrast, if the number of KPRF and LDPR lawmakers in the Duma had been greater, treaty ratification would have been impossible.

During the past twenty years, ratification has generally been delayed by domestic elections, U.S. and NATO military activities, and actions by the Senate. In addition, Duma deputies have sought to express their concerns through debates and lay out policy guidance through ratification resolutions. Frequent themes in these debates and resolutions have included concerns about Russia’s security in light of missile defense developments and deployments, NATO expansion, and nuclear forces of other states (not just the United States, but the UK, France and, also, increasingly China), as well as a call to modernize nuclear (and sometimes conventional) forces and support the defense industry. Predictably, the absence or presence of these delay factors has either propelled or imperiled arms control agreements in the Duma.

Table 2. Statistics on arms control treaty passage in the State Duma.

Treaty	Timeline (signing to ratification)	Votes (226 needed for passage)
START II	7+ yrs (Jan 1993-Apr 2000)	288 Yes 131 No 4 Abstained
CTBT	3 yrs, 9 mo (Sep 1996-May 2000)	298 Yes 74 No 3 Abstained
SORT	1 year (May 2002-May 2003)	294 Yes 134 No 22 Abstained
New START	9 mo (Apr 2010-Jan 2011)	350 Yes 96 No 1 Abstained

Sources: materials in the Russia country profile on the Nuclear Threat Initiative website, available at <http://www.nti.org/country-profiles/russia/nuclear/>, authored by Nikolai Sokov and other Center for Nonproliferation Studies analysts, accessed July 2011.

In the post-2011 election Duma, if Russia’s president chooses to negotiate and conclude an arms control agreement, the legislature should have no trouble ratifying it. The United Russia party still has more than a two thirds majority votes on its own to pass a treaty and, like with the New START agreement, it will probably to get 60 votes of support from Fair Russia on arms control.

In contrast, KPRF and LDPR, traditionally backed by conservative military elements in their national security policy positions, will continue to vote against bilateral arms control initiatives. At present, they have 148 solid votes. In practice, this means that a third of the

Duma still doesn't support any kind of engagement with the West, especially if it involves security cooperation.³²

Moreover, it should also be noted that Duma foreign affairs committee chairman Kosachev, a moderate and experienced United Russia deputy and a proponent of eventual nuclear abolition, recently seceded his chairmanship to a newly-elected United Russia lawmaker, Alexey Pushkov.³³ Pushkov, a former TV show host with a resume that includes a stint as a speechwriter to Mikhail Gorbachev, is arguably one of Russia's more vocal critics of NATO.³⁴ In light of this development within United Russia, and, given the default position of KPRF and LDPR noted above, the legislature as a whole will not be a constructive player in the ongoing U.S.-Russian and NATO-Russian dialogue on missile defense and future nuclear reductions.

Conclusion.

In both the United States and Russia, the successful development and implementation of arms control policy is a matter of consensus on national security within the legislature and between the executive and legislative branches. The degree of this consensus shifts with the changes in the domestic political cycle. It is also closely related to the perceived legitimacy of the executive branch and the resonance among the public of the nationalist arguments put forward by current officials and candidates for office.

In the next five years, Russia's willingness to negotiate an arms control agreement with the United States will depend on the perceived legitimacy of Russia's next president. Traditionally, the country's governing elites have played on the public's nationalist sentiments to assert their legitimacy. Presently, presidential candidate Putin appears more than willing to argue that internal political instability is a product of Western meddling into domestic affairs. His arguments, while of questionable credibility, effectively erode support for future nuclear reductions.

To be sure, as astute U.S. observers have noted, it is in Moscow's interest eventually to negotiate further nuclear cuts with Washington simply due to the pending obsolescence of certain nonstrategic weapons.³⁶ However, if he is elected to serve his third term as president, Putin's future options for security engagement with the United States may be severely limited. At present, his hostile rhetoric retrenches nationalist and isolationist tendencies at home and

³² See Konstantin Kosachev, "The Goldilocks Conundrum in Russian Foreign Policy," Valdai Discussion Club, August 24, 2011, <http://valdaiclub.com/politics/30300.html>.

³³ See Khimshvili and Kostenko, *op. cit.*, for a discussion of Kosachev's future; also, both Kosachev and Margelov are signatories to Global Zero. See <http://www.globalzero.org/full-list-signatories>.

³⁴ For an example of Pushkov's views, see Alexey Pushkov, "Broken Promises," *The National Interest*, April 16, 2007, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/broken-promises-1535>. In a column written in November 2011, he noted that Russia should pass legislation that mirrors the Jackson-Vanik amendment if the latter is not rescinded by the U.S. Congress. See "Vstupleniye Rossii v VTO—eto eksperiment na zhivom organizme" (Russia's entry into the WTO is an experiment on a live organism), November 15, 2011, <http://www.km.ru/spetsproekty/2011/11/14/peregovory-o-vstuplenii-rossii-v-vto/vstuplenie-rossii-v-vto-eto-eksperiment>. For a selection of Pushkov's columns in Russian, see <http://www.km.ru/pushkov>.

³⁶ See, for instance, remarks by Barry Blechman and the exchange with Linton Brooks, "Next Steps in U.S.-Russia Arms Control: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," transcript of talk and discussion at National Defense University and National Defense Industrial Association Capitol Hill Forum, on October 14, 2011, available at <http://www.stimson.org>.

provides ammunition to certain constituencies, such as the opponents of arms control in the U.S. Senate, abroad.

As of this writing, Moscow and other major cities remain a stage for organized protests against government corruption. With an eye toward a March election, key Putin allies have called on the government to annul the results of the December 2011 parliamentary elections.³⁷ The outcome of these protests remains difficult to determine.³⁸ To be sure, the development of a stronger party system and a parliament with greater independence from the executive branch is in the best interest of Russia's polity. However, combined with nationalist attitudes, such a system also creates the structural conditions for another Duma-Senate "logjam."

In any case, the evolution of Russia's political institutions toward greater representation of and accountability to the public will have an increasing impact on Moscow's security cooperation with the West. Russian public opinion suggests that more than a half of Russians today have a positive attitude toward the United States and the European Union.³⁹ That said, a third of those polled still believe that Western states pose an external threat to Russia.⁴⁰

In thinking about the future, it is important to remember that, 20 years into Russia's new history, there is still no domestic consensus on its identity or agreement on how Russia should engage the West. Kosachev, a self-described "reasonable mean" politician, has noted that the spectrum of cooperation lies somewhere between the "pseudo-patriotic isolationists" that preach "the self-imposed isolation of the Cold War" such as the KPRF and the LDPR and the "geopolitical utopianists" who bring to mind the "similarly unilateral, naive openness of the 1990s" among unelected liberal politicians.⁴¹

Nuclear policy is bound to remain at the heart of the most important questions about Russia's identity. This paper has argued that the Duma is possibly the only political institution in the country that has reflected Russia's dramatic diversity of opinions on this matter during the last twenty years. It is thus the perfect bellweather for national attitudes toward arms control initiatives of the future.

³⁷ See, for instance, Kathy Lally, "Putin Allies Urge Him to Take Protesters' Grievances Seriously," *Washington Post*, January 8, 2011, pg. A13.

³⁸ For an excellent attempt at this determination, see Simon Saradzhyan and Nabi Abdullaev, "Putin, the Protest Movement and Political Change in Russia," publication at the European Union Institute for Security Studies, February 17, 2002, www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/putin-the-protest-movement-and-political-change-in-russia/.

³⁹ See a September 2011 Levada poll (in Russian) at <http://www.levada.ru/18-10-2011/rossiya-na-mezhdunarodnoi-arene>.

⁴⁰ A July 2011 Levada poll suggested that 32 percent of those polled saw an external threat in Western states and 29 percent in Islamic states. Yet, only 15 percent of those polled were certain that Russia was faced with an external threat while 36 and 32 percent suggested that it was possibly or possibly not, respectively, faced with one. Available in Russian at <http://www.levada.ru/category/rubrikator-oprosov/strana-i-mir>.

⁴¹ See, for instance, discussion of contrasting views in Kosachev, op. cit.