

Session 7: Engaging China and Russia on Nuclear Disarmament

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Summary

Alexey Fenenko from the Russian International Security Studies argues that there has been a consistent position in Russian thinking about disarmament and what constitutes "strategic stability." At a famous 1989 meeting in Wyoming, then Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and American Secretary of State James Baker reached a compromise based on de-linking cuts in offensive nuclear weapons from missile defense and space. Similarly, the 2010 New START agreement was made possible by a Russian and American compromise on missile defenses in Europe. Those compromises made possible the modest cuts of New START but still hinder deeper reductions of offensive strategic nuclear weapons between US and Russia. Russia concerns about high-precision conventional weapons, including the concept of Prompt Global Strike. Dr. Fenenko said Russia regards arms control with China in the Russian national interest, the view is shared with Dr. Lewis, because China has a great potential for mobilizing strategic military systems.

Lora Saalman from Carnegie Endowment and Carnegie Tsinghua Center for Global Policy points out Chinese view of arms control requires the necessity of understanding Chinese conception which is different from the US. A survey of hundreds of Chinese scholarly articles on the issues reveals contradictions that support disarmament that bolster American hegemony. China regards ballistic missile defense and prompt global strike are major problems, which is the same as Russian point of view, because these systems potentially undermine the strategic balance. Expecting China to see arms control or disarmament in its national interest is a premature concept, because Chinese believe Americans wants to lock China into a permanent state of strategic inferiority. It is of

importance in understanding Chinese viewing itself as a target.

Jeffrey Lewis from Center for Nonproliferation Studies acknowledges Russian and Chinese fears that missile defense might serve as a "mopping up" capability in the aftermath of a surprise U.S. first strike. One comment from the floor suggested the United States had under President Obama agreed to deploy a Phased Adaptive Approach missile defense system in Europe to deal with an Iranian nuclear program and as a result put on hold on the more elaborate missile defense system the George W. Bush administration had planned to deploy. However, even so, Russia has given the President Obama nothing in exchange for this concession. Instead, Russia and China both complain about American conventional forces, as though somehow what would amount to unilateral disarmament is now being sought as part of an arms control bargain. Jeffrey Lewis thus concluded the outlook for deeper reductions in strategic forces is negative.

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