

**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**Senator Richard G. Lugar**  
**Opening Statement for**  
**Strategic Assessment of U.S.-Russian Relations Hearing**  
**June 21, 2007**

I welcome this opportunity for the Committee to examine U.S.-Russian relations. In recent months, newspaper stories have speculated about whether our relations with Russia were descending to the point where the Cold War would return. Clearly, Washington and Moscow have disagreed on many topics lately. We have disputed aspects of policy related to energy security, missile defense, the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, democracy, human rights, Iran, Kosovo, Georgia, Moldova, and other items.

While Americans prepare to celebrate Independence Day, President Bush will be hosting Russian President Vladimir Putin in Kennebunkport, Maine. I applaud President Bush's efforts to engage his Russian counterpart, and I encourage him to do so even more regularly.

The Kennebunkport meeting will not resolve all disputes, but establishing a commitment to diplomacy is important. The U.S.-Russia relationship is critical to the security and prosperity of the international community. Kennebunkport provides an opportunity for the two Presidents to give direction to their bureaucracies and to lead our countries toward a stronger partnership.

During the last fifteen years, the U.S.-Russian relationship has gone through a geopolitical rollercoaster ride. But throughout the highs and lows, both sides have understood that our work confronting the dangers of weapons of mass destruction was too important to be sidelined. We have worked together to implement nuclear and chemical arms control treaties. The two countries cooperated closely in the denuclearization of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Through the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, we have dismantled more than 2,000 intercontinental missiles; eliminated 1,000 missile launchers; and deactivated 7,000 nuclear warheads. In addition, our experts have worked together to remove nuclear material from vulnerable locations around the world and secure it in Russia. Such cooperation provides a foundation on which to rebuild trust and confidence.

I urge the Presidents to solidify new areas of cooperation on WMD. First, the United States and Russia must extend the START I treaty's verification and transparency elements, which will expire in 2009; and they should work to add verification measures to the Moscow Treaty. Unfortunately, some bureaucrats on both sides are balking at such efforts in favor of less formal language that is not legally binding. I am concerned that transparency and verification will suffer if legally-binding regimes are permitted to dissolve. The predictability and confidence provided by treaty verification reduces the chances of misinterpretation, miscalculation, and error. The current U.S. policy is at odds with the Bush Administration's assurances to Congress during consideration of the Moscow Treaty. Secretary Rumsfeld and others testified that the START regime would be utilized to bolster the Moscow Treaty, which did not include verification measures. The current Russian-American relationship is complicated enough without introducing more elements of uncertainty into the nuclear relationship.

A second area of cooperation relates to the coming surge in global demand for nuclear power, which may provide a pretext for more nations to seek their own nuclear enrichment facilities. The spread of this technology to additional states poses long-term risks for both the United States and Russia. While the technology may be intended to produce reactor fuel, it can also produce materials for nuclear weapons. Both Presidents have offered plans to establish nuclear fuel assurances. Senator Bayh and I have introduced S. 1138, which proposes that countries who give up their enrichment and reprocessing programs have an assurance -- either bilateral, multilateral or both -- of nuclear reactor fuel at reasonable prices. Under such a regime, nations would be prohibited from using the template of nuclear energy to develop nuclear weapons. I remain hopeful that the Chairman will hold a hearing on this important subject.

Third, the U.S. and Russia should be exploring how the Nunn-Lugar experience can be applied in North Korea. While difficult diplomatic work remains, we must be prepared to move forward quickly if the Six-Power Talks succeed. The Nunn-Lugar program would have a different orientation in North Korea than it does in the former Soviet Union, but the program has the authority, flexibility, and experience to adapt to the Korean situation. Equally important, Moscow and Washington have proven that former enemies can work together to achieve shared security benefits. Such a track record will be critical to a successful diplomatic process on the Korean peninsula.

Fourth, Russia and the United States must come together to address the threat posed by Iran's nuclear weapons program. For too long, our governments have been at odds over how to respond to Tehran's behavior. The differences in our approaches have narrowed recently, and there are prospects for continued cooperation between Moscow and Washington within the UN Security Council. I am hopeful that this renewed collaboration will extend to missile defense, as well.

Other subjects must be discussed at Kennebunkport, but weapons of mass destruction remain the number one national security threat to the United States and Russia. Success in this area would enhance international security and improve the prospects of U.S.-Russian cooperation in other policy areas.

This year is the 200th anniversary of U.S.-Russian bilateral relations and the 15th Anniversary of the Nunn-Lugar Program. These anniversaries provide an occasion for both Moscow and Washington to rededicate themselves to a close partnership to address common challenges.

I join in welcoming our distinguished witnesses, each of whom has been a good friend to the Committee. I look forward to their testimony.

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