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PARTICIPANTS:

PANEL 2: ARMS CONTROL AND U.S.-RUSSIA RELATIONS:

Moderator:

ANGELA STENT
Senior Fellow
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

WALTER SLOCOMBE
Senior Counsel, Caplin & Drysdale
Former U.S. Under Secretary of Defense

STROBE TALBOTT
President, The Brookings Institution
Former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State

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PROCEEDINGS

MS. STENT: Okay, ladies and gentlemen, we're going to continue our conversation now after our very interesting first panel and probably discuss some of the same issues and then move and look a little bit forward into what we can expect during the next year.

We are going to talk about -- I think, we have two presidential transitions coming up in the next year. We know who the next president of Russia will be. We don't know who the next President of the United States will be. Oh, we do? Secretary Albright says we do. I stand corrected, Madam.

MR. TALBOTT: Brookings takes no position on that, by the way, Madeleine. I rarely dissociate myself from Madeleine, but --

MS. STENT: But what we do know, irrespective of who the President of the United States will be, what we do know from past experience is that during these presidential transitions it's very difficult to sustain the momentum of these kinds of negotiations. There's often a hiatus, a hiatus of a year, maybe even more, so that one of the challenges as we look forward into the future of these different arms control negotiations, missile defense and others, that I think our panelists will talk about is, how do we sustain that momentum and make sure that we don't slide back into a previous situation? How can we insulate these very important negotiations from domestic politics, both in the United States and in Russia? And I will just say, you've already heard mention of the conference that took place at a rival think tank yesterday, the Heritage Foundation, which was really a full-scale assault on the reset policy, including the arms control component of it, so that we know during our own election campaign we will hear debate about the wisdom of the reset.

And even in Russia where domestic politics is obviously conducted differently, criticizing America can also be and is part of the domestic debate there. So, how do we sustain this? How do we go forward?

There are obviously no people who are more qualified than our two speakers to discuss this. I've been told that I cannot give you a long biographical introduction for both of you. You have their bios in front of you. And our first speaker will be Walter Slocombe. He's the senior counsel at Caplin & Drysdale and he is the former under secretary of defense as well as many other positions he's held.

Strobe Talbott, president of the Brookings Institution, former deputy secretary of state

and also many other official positions. So, why don't we start with you, Walt?

MR. SLOCOMBE: Okay. Thank you. It's an honor to be here. It's always kind of cool to be in the situation where you're the -- you've got the former secretary of state, the former deputy secretary of state, a former national security advisor, and I'm just a former under secretary. It's nice to be down in the weeds.

I also certainly do not intend to talk much about U.S.-Russia relations with Strobe Talbott on the platform with me. Strobe has an amazing background in this. But I do think it's important as we think about the arms control implications to have some general sense of what the missile defense programs are and how they may be evolving and also, looking beyond the immediate questions, where do missile defenses fit in to the longer term and much more ambitious arms control agenda, which tries at least to think seriously about the possibility of either extremely low levels or actual abolition of nuclear weapons?

Now, I think it's important to begin thinking about these issues with the realization the United States Ballistic Missile Defense Program is not a single program and in particular it is not the defense of the United States as territory, the Homeland Defense Mission, which is the biggest part of the program or arguably the most important.

The limited defense of the United States itself is, of course, a major part of the program. There are now about two dozen deployed, ground-based interceptors, mostly in Alaska, a few in California, which were brought to an operational status in the middle of the George W. Bush Administration and are still operational and will continue to be operational. Indeed, the first generation of those missiles is being replaced by another upgraded version of that missile.

That system is designed and will work reasonably well against the North Korean threat. It's important, I think, to understand that all of these systems have limited capabilities because the easiest way to deal with a missile defense, if you have a very large force, is simply to overwhelm it. If there are 26 deployed missiles at Greely, the 27th will get through, even if they work extremely well.

It's a difficult challenge, even against the kind of threat which North Korea or Iran is likely to pose in the relevant period of time, which is, say, the next decade. But I think there's a reasonable assurance that the system can work and, in particular, that the so-called discrimination problem can be

overcome, that is to find the right part of the threat cloud that shows up on the sensors to intercept. And I think the Administration's position is that this system will be able to keep up with the evolving threat, and if the right things are done, that's probably also possible.

Work will continue on it and, in particular, as the Iranian threat emerges, or I suppose one is forced to say if the Iranian threat emerges, it will be probably necessary to make some changes in the system. Indeed, one of the elements of the program for the coming year is to build an additional communications link in the eastern part of the United States, which for technical reasons is probably necessary to have an equivalent capability against Iranian ICBM as against the North Korean, at least for the eastern part of the country. And as Secretary Albright points out, it is nice to defend the blue states as well as the red states. (Laughter)

MR. TALBOTT: A bipartisan view, by the way.

MR. SLOCOMBE: Well, so, in the process of defending the blue states you defend the southeastern part of the United States too as a sort of incremental benefit.

As some of the discussion earlier made the point, there's also a major effort to deploy defenses which will be effective for defending our friends and allies. The jargon is "regional defense." One is the European phased adaptive approach, which is based on the Aegis Standard Missile 3 system, which has kind of -- the phases are successive improvements in the missile, in the radars.

A good deal of that system is already in the process of being put in place. We routinely maintain Aegis qualified ships, missile defense qualified Aegis ships. Part of the complication is that the Aegis missile ships have lots of other things to do for the Navy besides sit around getting ready to shoot at missiles, but a certain number are equipped to do this. One is routinely maintained in the eastern Mediterranean, at least most of the time. We have a -- and that provides a considerable defense of most of NATO Europe -- not, obviously, of Turkey, which is too far forward -- most of NATO Europe against the kind of threat which the Iranians will be able, if they continue their present programs, or at least we have to assume, they'll be able to pose in the next decade or so. The phases consist of a continuing upgrading of the characteristics of the Standard Missile 3 and of its radar support.

And then there is a major part of the Ballistic Missile Defense Program, which is for the defense of deployed forces, mostly our own, in principle, other people's, and that's a wholly -- not wholly,

but substantially different technical problem because it's essentially defending against a conventional threat, not a nuclear threat. Long-range ballistic missiles are an extraordinarily expensive way to deliver high explosive, but they're a perfectly feasible weapon to be used in a tactical situation.

So, a lot of the things that you read about PAC-3, THAD, things like that are essentially tactical systems. And there's a very important subset of this, which I think has an important political implication, which is the Chinese are in the process of developing a major -- what they hope to be a major capability essentially to keep the United States Navy out of the Western Pacific if it came to a conflict. That would be a conventional conflict. The most interesting from the point of view of missile defenses is they're developing a -- not a long-range system, but a medium-range system, which will not only -- it will be a ballistic missile, so that it will have the characteristics of an extremely fast approach, a very small target, and it will also have a capacity, which is the hard part for them in designing it and developing it, to track a moving target and maneuver sufficiently in the end game to be able to, in principle at least, incapacitate if not actually sink an aircraft carrier.

And, therefore, a fairly substantial part of the conventional, the deployed forces missile defense effort is aimed at negating this Chinese capability, which has obvious political implications because it creates a tension between the United States' statements, which are true, that our other missile defense programs are not directed at Chinese nuclear capabilities, but quite obviously, since the Chinese are quite frank about saying they're developing this threat against the American -- against potential American forces in the Western Pacific, obviously this part of the tactical defense is.

Moreover, and I think this is something that undoubtedly there are plenty of people in the room who know a lot more about the technical details than I do, but people who don't focus on the technical details I think don't appreciate that the sensors, the satellites, the radars, and the communications systems, which support ballistic missile defense, are every bit a part of the system and are every bit as expensive and as technologically challenging and complicated as the interceptors themselves. And one of the things which is happening in ballistic missile defense effort is an increasing integration of different kinds of sensors for different kinds of missile defense.

The United States, for example, has already deployed the so-called TPY-2 radar -- there's one in Israel and there's one in Japan -- and those are important to the tact of the regional

defense. Also that radar is extremely important for the defense -- for the tactical defense and potentially even for homeland defense, and an important part of the phased adaptive approach is to increase the degree to which a given interceptor base doesn't have to rely entirely on its own sensors, but is able to use the information which comes from a variety of other sensors.

Some of these systems are already underway. SIBRS has begun to deploy. There is a debate about the degree -- as you would expect, there's a debate about the degree to rely on satellites or rely on ground-based systems and so on, but the critical point is that the sensors not only are a fundamental part of the system, but the missile defense program is going to increasingly integrate different kinds of sensors into the support of different parts of the program.

I don't think -- and this is one point which I think is worth making a comment on, which is slightly different from what was said in the previous session, I think as people talk about the defense budget there will be talk about cutting back on missile defense. I think that's extremely unlikely to happen on any significant scale. First of all, we don't actually spend that much money on missile defense. The appropriation for missile defense is on the order of \$10 billion a year, which is real money, but not compared to \$600 billion a year, so that the potential for savings is limited. And I think it's also important that, I think, to some degree this issue is not as controversial, at least at a congressional level, as it used to be.

It's the Obama Administration, which has committed to a very robust missile defense program. The changes, you can argue about the -- you can certainly argue about the subtlety with which they announced the change from the third site in Poland and the radar in the Czech Republic, but the basic commitment to homeland defense, to regional defense, to tactical defense, is a strong one. And I think that a combination of the politics and the military requirements are going to make this an area which will -- and the fact that there's not that much money there -- if you really want to save money in the defense budget, go after health costs and fighter planes, that's where the money is.

I realize there is or was an Air Force colonel here and I apologize. There are equally vulnerable -- there are equally expensive and vulnerable parts in the other services except, of course, for the United States Marine Corps, which is protected not only in the Constitution, but I believe in the Ten Commandments. (Laughter)

The implications of this for arms control are, first of all, I think you cannot look at this problem at a technical level and not realize that the problem is very hard against a limited threat. It is impossible against the Russian force. And the Russian -- it's easy to understand why the Russians are worried about where this might go in the future, not least because, as Steve Hadley said, the Russians are aware that the United States has in this area, if not in others -- and it does in others as well -- a big technological advantage, but in terms of what the United States military thinks it is feasible to do. The idea that this is going to be a threat to the Russian deterrent is very hard to take seriously. It's very hard, actually, to take seriously as to the Chinese deterrent, but it's extremely hard to take it seriously as to the Russian deterrent.

And you can understand the Russian concern, but I think that what is going to come out of these Track II discussions is that there are plenty of ways to deal with the legitimate Russian concern. And I would guess that when the agreement is reached on cooperation, it will be that the Russians have decided that they no longer are interested in this issue, not that now suddenly the scales have fallen from their eyes and they realize that 25 or a couple of dozen interceptors are not a threat to their defense.

But I think it also means that the ABM Treaty model is not going to be a feasible one in the future. The ABM Treaty model, dependent on the proposition that you could sharply distinguish between defenses against very long-range attacks and defenses against everything else, and the effort as the systems improved for everything else, it became harder and harder to come up with workable and verifiable and technically acceptable and sensible distinctions between defense at long-range and shorter-range defenses, so that any future arms control that addresses ballistic missile defense explicitly is going to have to do it in terms of transparency and cooperation and understanding what the systems do and how they do it rather than in the sort of model of a series of technical parameters which thou shall not do more than this and thou shall be totally free to do something less than that.

I also want to end on a note about the long-term implications of missile defense for the goal of an end of reliance on nuclear weapons. At heart, the fundamental concern about the model of abolition is what if somebody cheats? What if there is some way somebody manages to keep a few, develop a few? I don't by any means mean that defenses are a perfect answer to this question, but I think the arms control community is going to have to think about the relationship between missile

defenses as a backstop against cheating on very low levels or on even total abolition. And the problem, which also exists, that in some sense defenses pose a stability problem because they might serve as the backstop to defend against what you were not able to get with a preemptive strike. But I think that's one of the conceptual issues about missile defense and arms control that people who are serious about abolition have to begin to think about. Thanks.

MS. STENT: Thank you very much, Walt. Strobe?

MR. TALBOTT: I'm going to pick up on the last set of comments, in particular, that Walt just made and tie them back to a brief dialogue between Secretary Albright and Steve Hadley in the previous conversation. But first -- and I do this because I'm provoked by Walt's modesty -- is to just say what a pleasure it is to be with these two colleagues.

Your titles were not chopped liver and you understand as much as anybody in this room, and I suspect as much as anybody in this capital, which means anybody in the world, the technology as well as the theology of the subject that we're talking about.

I'm going to quickly beat a retreat to the theology, which is where I feel more comfortable, but when I was a cub reporter working on my first book on arms control in the Carter Administration, this guy, I'm not going to say he was a source, but he was certainly a guru, and it's great to be back in harness with him on this issue.

Madeleine made a comment about the actuarial tables and the priesthood, which is also a priestesshood, and I think there is a very serious point there, which is this subject is back and it is really important that we build up the bench again and the pipeline. And I was most gratified to hear in the earlier panel that a number of questions came from people who were even younger than us and who were --

MR. SLOCOMBE: That's easy.

MR. TALBOTT: -- who are seminarians and novitiates for the priesthood and the priestesshood. And by the way, I'm also gratified that so many of you were willing to stick around for the second panel and I want to particularly acknowledge the presence of Joe Cirincione of the Ploughshares Fund, who has been another guru of a number of us in the room and who has been both supporting and participating in the Track II exercise that Madeleine and Igor Ivanov and Madeleine and I -- and Imimo

have been involved in, so I'm surprised you don't have something better to do this afternoon, Joe, but it's great to have you here.

Okay, let me go to the issue at hand. That was not just an extraordinarily civil, informative, and edifying conversation that we heard earlier, it was significant, I think, that there was as much overlap in basic points of view and both Madeleine and Steve stressed, to an extent, that we tend to underestimate the degree of continuity from one administration to the next. And that is a good thing to be reminded of, particularly in these crazy times and in this crazy town, if I can put it that way.

However, there was one very strong point of disagreement that was expressed forcefully on the part of Steve, and ever so politely on the other side by Madeleine. I'm going to shock you all by taking Madeleine's side on this point, but it's a very, very serious one, and it has to do with whether it was a wise decision or not for the George W. Bush Administration to break ranks with all of its predecessors going back to the Johnson Administration on the issue of whether the concept of strategic stability, aka MAD, aka mutually assured survival (*sic*), should be a bedrock of the U.S.-Soviet/U.S.-Russian strategic relationship.

That was a point that was key to the position that Lyndon Johnson and Bob McNamara took with Alexei Kosygin and whoever was with Alexei Kosygin at the time, it doesn't really matter, in Glassboro in 1967. And it was completely counterintuitive from the Soviet standpoint for the Americans to be arguing that it's against your interest -- you, Soviets -- to defend yourselves. But everybody in the room basically knows how that long story played out in the short form, which is that the Soviets bought it and it was written into the ABM Treaty during the Nixon Administration, and all subsequent administrations notably, including the George Herbert Walker Bush Administration made further progress in strategic arms control by preserving the principle of strategic stability, predictably, and that neither side would have the perceived ability, that is perceived by the other side, to carry out a preemptive first strike.

Steve alluded to the Dennis Ross-Georgi Mamedov conversations at the tail end of the Bush 41 Administration and I will never forget Dennis Ross calling me when he guessed, and I didn't have any idea I'd be coming into the Clinton Administration to kind of hand off that relationship, and we stayed at it through '99.

President George W. Bush made the decision to exercise the United States' right of

withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. And you heard Steve Hadley, as wise, as bipartisan minded a practitioner as -- and he's more than a practitioner -- an influential, defend vigorously that position and you heard Madeleine register that she has a different view, and so do I. And I want to just take a minute and elaborate on why that's the case and then tie it back to the last thing that Walt said.

Strategic deterrence, mutual deterrence, is like the tango; it takes two. It isn't enough to have one party say the Cold War is over; you're now a democratic country and a member of the international community. And we're not enemies anymore and that's why you shouldn't be worried about NATO enlargement, and that's why we no longer have to have MAD, which, of course, was a McNamara coinage, and he knew that that was a heavily ironic one, but it nonetheless carried with it some highly specific concepts which had been built into arms control before that.

The Russians don't buy it. The Russians include a lot of people, but the higher you get to the top and the more power they have, and particularly the more influence they have either in the political structure or the security and defense structures, the more they don't buy it. They worry that were we, the United States, to have the capability of carrying out a preemptive strike against them, we would either use it or use our capacity to use it, to disadvantage them, if not worse. And that means that they are going to take countermeasures. One was alluded to in the earlier conversation, which is the new heavy ICBM that they are developing. And it is, I think, unquestionably true, and this came out repeatedly, Joe and Steve and Madeleine, as they know, in our conversations with Igor Ivanov. And while that's a Track II exercise, it's a little more Track 1.5 or at least supervised Track II on the Russian side. I can say that and I think actually Igor Ivanov would be just as glad I would say that.

So, we came away in our conversations with our Russian counterparts convinced that unless the principle of the ABM Treaty -- I'll come back to the model of it in a second -- is preserved, there will be no more reductions in strategic offensive weaponry. And by the way, the ABM Treaty, as I'm sure, again, everybody in this room knows, does not prohibit defenses. It prohibits those defenses that could be construed or perceived as being strategic defenses that would make it easier to have a preemptive strike.

Now, that brings me up to, of course, the current administration. The current administration decided, just as President Bush 43 decided, to reverse however many presidents that was

before him -- six maybe, right -- President Obama decided to reverse President Bush 43 and put his administration back in line with all of those administrations since Johnson and McNamara. And he did so twice: once in signing a joint statement or a communiqué with President Medvedev, I think it was in April of 2009, when they met on the margins of the G-20 in the UK; and then again in the preamble to the New START Treaty. And I lay all of that out because that is a real debate, and it's a legitimate one. And knowing that Steve was not going to be able to participate in -- or to be here for the second panel, and we're mighty darn lucky that he was here for the first, I told him, I said, Steve, I thought it was terrific, but this is the one thing I'm going to take public exception to you on. And he said, absolutely, you should do it. It's an important argument and it will probably resonate in the 2012 election and beyond.

Now, to conclude, and this in a way -- so, that's theology, but it's rooted in technology. And Angela will be not just the moderator but a participant, but I hope at some point, Walt, you will come back to the question of how the obsolescence of the ABM Treaty as a model differs from, if, in your view, it does, from what I would strongly argue, which is that the principle of the ABM Treaty should be preserved.

MS. STENT: Thank you very much. Do you want to address that right now?

MR. SLOCOMBE: Yes. I think you can --

MR. TALBOTT: Madeleine, I'm going to disagree with you terribly on all subsequent issues that come up. (Laughter)

MR. SLOCOMBE: No, I think in fact that the principle can be preserved by the kind of measures that are being talked about in the Track II discussions, which will be a way of making clear to the Russians, if they're prepared to have something made clear to them, and that's the question, that it will make clear to the Russians that the American programs and the cooperation with our allies is not in any sense a threat to their deterrent. Because I agree that the foundation of the politics of stability is the recognition that it is very much in our interest that both sides understand that their deterrents are invulnerable or safe.

I have never been happy with the phrase that the ABM Treaty represented an acceptance of mutual assured destruction, because you can no more talk about accepting -- if you talk about accepting something it implies you have a choice not to accept it. It's like saying: I accept the law

of gravity. Thanks. (Laughter)

It's a physical fact. It's as close as politics comes to a physical fact. It is a condition which a country with significant technological and financial resources can impose on other countries regardless of what they do, and I think that it should certainly be possible -- assuming both sides want to do it, it should be possible to work out arrangements that make it work.

My point was the kind of effort to draw a sharp line between defense against intercontinental range missiles and defense against shorter-range missiles, which became very difficult even in the time when Strobe and I were in the Clinton Administration, has become increasingly difficult, so difficult as to be, for all practical purposes, impossible.

We can talk more about why, if you want to, but that's my view.

MR. TALBOTT: If I could just tag on something there. Madeleine also, I think at the very end or maybe it was at the beginning of her comments at the first panel, said something to the effect of the Russians may regret now having not accepted a deal that would have allowed modification or amendment to the ABM Treaty that Walt and I were working on at the end --

MR. SLOCOMBE: It seems to me it was a bizarre political mistake for them, because I think it would have been effectively impossible -- it should have been possible to reach an agreement, and that would have made it very much more difficult for the Bush Administration to get what Steve Hadley rightly described as effectively we reserve the right to criticize this but we will not make a big deal when you crater the ABM Treaty.

MR. TALBOTT: And just -- this is a completely analytical statement and not otherwise -- the reason that they did it, I am sure, is because Vladimir Putin, who was president of Russia at the time, decided to take a chance or a bet that there would be a new American president and not the one that he was -- well, he knew that it wasn't going to be the one he was negotiating with because that was Bill Clinton, but that there might be a change of party as well as a change of president in Washington and he would wait and see if he could get a better deal from the next president.

MS. STENT: Let me ask you one more question before we go to the audience. You're a participant in these Track II discussions with the Russians, which, as you say, are Track, maybe, 1.5. From the Russian point of view, how serious do you think the Track I in Russia is about reaching an

agreement with the U.S. on missile defense cooperation?

MR. SLOCOMBE: I think the previous -- my own sense, both from what I heard earlier in the afternoon, what I've heard from people on both sides, and what Joe, Steve, Madeleine, and I have heard from Igor Ivanov and company, is that they're not that serious for the reasons that were discussed, and the one reason they're not that serious is because they aren't sure we're in a position, we, the United States, are in a position to be serious about what they would regard as cooperative defense.

MS. STENT: So, it's still quite circular. Okay. Let me open the floor to questions, comments. In the back there, and if you could please identify yourself.

MR. MESHHA: Certainly. My name is Tyler Mesha. I'm a student at American University, and first off I'd just like to thank the panel for taking the time and coming down here to meet with us today.

MR. SLOCOMBE: You all say that and it's very nice of you. I'm much more impressed that you all took the time to come to this discussion. (Laughter)

MR. MESHHA: I'm very happy to have obliged you. We've heard a lot of things really interesting and insightful talk today about the -- talking about dealing with nuclear weapons and the spread of nuclear proliferation throughout the world. I wonder, though, one important aspect, to me, seems if arms control is dealing with small arms and conventional weapons, which arguably have killed more people throughout the world than nuclear weapons ever could, I wonder if -- what, if any gains, have been made by the United States and Russia in dealing with that threat as opposed to the nuclear threat? And I wonder if you could maybe -- does that come up at all in strategic -- in talks between Russia and the United States about dealing more with the spread of small arms and conventional weapons, or is it primarily focused on nuclear weapons? Thank you.

MS. STENT: Wait?

MR. SLOCOMBE: I think you'd have to say it's much more focused on nuclear weapons. By the way, I completely agree that a great many more people have been killed by conventional weapons since 1945 than by -- well, obviously, nobody's been killed -- a few tragic errors coming out of tests, nobody's been killed by a nuclear weapon. More people were killed, as everybody in the room I assume knows, more people were killed in the fire bombings of Tokyo and other Japanese cities than were killed at either Hiroshima or Nagasaki.

The small arms problem in particular faces the real dilemma that mercifully, so far, for all practical purposes, only nation states have the resources to build nuclear weapons. They don't have to be much of a nation state. If North Korea can do it, almost anybody can. But they do have to be a nation state. Whereas my guess is there are a handful of people in this room who have the technical knowledge to make a rifle, certainly people who would have the technical knowledge to make a landmine, and that's the serious problem.

There are negotiations, as I'm sure you know there are negotiations on trying to control the trade in small arms, trying to license them. Some of them come up against difficulties in the United States as a matter of Second Amendment principle. There are huge commercial interests, which make it even more difficult, but I agree, it's a problem I don't -- well, first of all, I think there are real problems about trying to address it primarily through the kind of state arms control. If you were to do it at all you'd have to do it through some kind of system of fairly strict controls over trade in small arms, and even that runs up against the problem of the ability to manufacture them relatively simply.

I know when I was in Iraq -- I always like to say Iraq -- well, oddly enough, one of the things that the Coalition Provisional Authority tried to do was to institute gun control. And so our proposal, after -- we were not as stupid as everybody says we were -- after consulting with some Iraqis, we said that the rule for gun control would be you could only have one AK-47 in each household. (Laughter)

And as an advocate of gun control I've always liked the line that Saddam Hussein's Iraq, where everybody had AK-47s, the population said, that doesn't work because we've got to have two: one to keep at home and the other to take in the car, because much of the problem is getting hijacked and robbed in the car. It was a country which was awash in small arms and I always liked to say that it was the decisive refutation of the NRA argument that no country with widespread private ownership of firearms was ever a dictatorship. (Laughter)

MS. STENT: Thank you.

MR. TALBOTT: I guess I would -- Walt has certainly answered the issue with regard to small arms, but I would just pivot from your question also to the issue of how effective the process of nuclear arms control has been with regard to nuclear arms. Not much. And, in fact, there's been real backsliding, and I think that's important to keep in mind, including in the broad context of missile defense.

By far the best way to defend ourselves against attack from other countries with ballistic missiles is to reduce the number of ballistic missiles in the world and to reduce the number of countries that have them. That's called nonproliferation and it is intimately linked to the subject of arms control that is front and center here, and even to strategic defense. And as you all know, the original premise of the Nonproliferation Treaty was that there was going to be only five nuclear weapon states, and that was the United States, the Soviet Union, China, France, and Great Britain. And there are, of course, now nine -- Israel, indisputably presumed to be a nuclear weapon state, India, Pakistan, and North Korea. And by the way, Pakistan is about to -- or already has, very close to -- exceed the United Kingdom in the number of nuclear weapon states it has. And, Joe, if I'm not mistaken, if it stays on its current trajectory it will pass France in due course.

And one of the concerns about the stalemating of -- well, let me back up. President Obama hoped, as did many, including a number of prominent Republicans that the ratification of the New START Treaty would set the scene for the ratification, whatever it is, 12 years later after the Senate refused to ratify it, of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. The chances of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty being ratified before the end of the first Obama term, which may be the only Obama term, are pretty close to zero if not less, and it will be a very tough go even if he is reelected, given what is likely to be further change in the party control of the Congress and the Senate.

And without any movement on CTBT by the United States, and without any movement on strategic defenses, it's very hard to see how even bilateral arms control between the United States and the Russian Federation is going to proceed, and that is only going to exacerbate an atmosphere internationally that is going to be conducive to other countries either increasing their arsenals, and there was appropriate stress on the importance of China in that regard, but other countries coming online as well.

MS. STENT: Thank you. Questions? This gentleman.

MR. FLETCHER: Hi. I'm Kenny Fletcher with Exchange Monitor Publications. I was hoping you could comment a little bit about proposed cuts to the weapons modernization program in Congress and the idea that that could hold back reductions of our nuclear arsenal.

MS. STENT: Who would like to start with that?

MR. SLOCOMBE: You mean the argument that if we don't maintain conventional superiority we'll have to rely more on nuclear weapons?

MR. FLETCHER: Right, that if we don't modernize we can't make reductions.

MR. SLOCOMBE: The United States spends on defense -- the United States certainly spends on procurement for military purposes more than the rest of the world combined. You can argue about whether the defense budget is bigger than the rest of the world combined. And, I mean, I am proud to have served in the Department of Defense. The American military are dedicated and committed. Our technological advantages are a critical national asset.

The idea that we cannot, after having doubled the defense budget in real terms in the last decade, cannot make modest reductions without having fundamental compromise of national security simply doesn't seem to me to stand up to analysis.

So, it's not that we're not going to modernize. It is at what pace are we going to modernize? It's not that we're not going to buy F-22s or F-35s. It's how many we're going to buy and at what pace.

I think there is room -- there's not room. You can't cut the defense budget in half safely, but you can certainly make the kind of cuts which are being talked about without damaging national security. There is lots of talk about Track II; you could probably fill this room with the publications of organizations which have come up with a lot of different ideas about how to make modest cuts.

I think some of the cuts are really going to have to be made in some of the things which are most difficult to touch politically. Some programs, which are not justified, which are continued for political reasons or continued for jobs reasons, and the Defense Department is a perfectly good way to pump money into the economy if that's what you want to do. The health care issue is a real one. Some of the benefits arrangements are real. There's still a lot of infrastructure which is probably greater than necessary. But I think it's -- you can't simply say that because we're talking about cutting the defense budget we're going to have to forego modernization.

MS. STENT: Strobe?

MR. TALBOTT: Nothing.

MS. STENT: Joe Cirincione, did you want to add something to that?

MR. CIRINCIONE: I'm Tweeting all this.

MS. STENT: Oh, you're Tweeting? Okay, all right. In the back there.

MR. LEVINE: Edward Levine, happily retired. I understand from the first panel and this one that we are learning much about the different levels at which arms control discussions occur and how they can mesh with each other. What I'm having a harder time doing is understanding whether any of our presenters believe the current U.S. policy on missile defense is doing anything wrong, my own sense being, all right, if we manage to find an area where we and the Russians can agree, so much the better. If we cannot find an area, because the Russians just don't feel like agreeing, we will yet have shown our willingness to negotiate and we will have shown to the Europeans that we are not engaging in unilateral activities. And meanwhile, we proceed with a modest missile defense program geared primarily to do the things that are readily done and that are readily needed against emerging threats from Iran and North Korea.

So, if there is a problem with that, I wonder if you would elucidate what the problem is.

MS. STENT: Strobe?

MR. TALBOTT: Ed, first of all, it's great to see you here and great to see you again. Ed is more than a priest, up in the sort of cardinal range, and working in the all-important Legislative Branch, which is, of course, pertinent to any sensible answer to your question.

My own view is that the current administration, by coming back into sync with all of its predecessors except the immediate previous one, has adopted a pretty sensible approach on missile defense, and I didn't hear great disagreement between Madeleine and Steve with regard to the good sense behind President Obama's adjustment of our plans and program to defend our allies. The problem is that we have not -- and it has had the beneficial effect, I think, of having all the allies on board and reassuring them, well, maybe not all of them. I think there may be one, the Czech Republic, that still has some pretty profound doubts because they feel that they may have been exposed by the decision to drop that aspect of the Bush plan.

But, in general, we have the allies on board, but we don't have the Russians on board. So, we haven't been able to convert wise policy into successful diplomacy, and that is, at least in part, for the reasons that I alluded to earlier, which is the President's arms control policy has been stymied by the

overall political deadlock that we're experiencing in this town right now.

MR. SLOCOMBE: You also began by saying is there anything wrong with the things we do on missile defense. There are a lot of serious technical questions. Bizarrely enough, the House Armed Services Committee wants to kill -- it's not bizarre that you'd want to kill -- I have to be careful -- it's PTSS, which is Persistent, something or other, Space Surveillance. It's a very expensive, very complicated satellite system. There are a lot of things like that to argue about, about whether you think they're the right way to do it, but I think the basic course certainly makes sense. And, I mean, maybe going into a presidential election it's too optimistic.

I wish we could get missile defense policy in the United States so it would be like buying F-22s or F-35s. You would argue about whether you would need them, how many you need, which airplane -- what mix of airplanes you need, and not argue about it as a matter of theology in which one party insists that missile defense is the answer to everything and the other party insists that it's the answer to nothing.

Fortunately, we're getting past that, I think.

MS. STENT: Question, over there?

SPEAKER: Thanks for your comments. It's really good to hear from you. I'm a student at SAIS in the Russia-Eurasia department. My question to both of you is about something that I would like to coin as the Track Zero, the institutional framework that these talks occur in. Really the only institution left over from the Cold War era is NATO and I think that Russia sees this as implicitly a threat. The response of NATO after the Russo-Georgian War in 2008, by backing off of membership plans for Georgia and Ukraine effectively supports that conclusion.

So, is there a different institution or a different institutional framework that would be a better place for discussions? Could it be the EU? We heard about values during the last panel. Could it be the OSE? And if so, what is that?

MR. TALBOTT: Just to make sure I understand your question, are you calling into doubt either the efficacy or the wisdom of trying to pursue a NATO-Russia track with regard to cooperative missile defense? Is that --?

SPEAKER: I think there's an overwhelming opinion in the EU among colleagues there

that the substance of NATO is kind of being lost to the ether and NATO will come into any bipartisan talk here in the U.S. and it will come into any bilateral treaty with Russia. When we're talking about missile defense, we're not just talking about the U.S. and Russia; we're also talking about NATO. And so is that forum essentially relegating these discussions to failure before they even start? Is a different forum going to give us a better starting point?

MR. TALBOTT: I think the key forum is the bilateral relationship, the U.S.-Russian bilateral relationship, but the United States has, in my view, properly insisted on keeping NATO involved because of our obligations to NATO and because of our larger strategy and policy of trying to persuade the Russians that NATO is not an anti-Russian alliance, and that it has already demonstrated, in multiple ways which are not persuasive to many Russians, I acknowledge, that it is making a transition to a post-Cold War world.

I'm not sure what you mean by evaporating into the ether, but let me just say a word about Georgia and Ukraine. They are rather different cases. Ukraine -- neither has been excluded from eligibility, ultimate or even in the middle term, from a NATO membership and Russia has not been excluded in the long-term from what would be, of course, a rather radically transformed NATO and a rather radically transformed Europe and a considerably evolved Russia. But all doors are open there.

But with regard to Ukraine, public opinion in Ukraine has turned against NATO membership, so the issue really doesn't arise right now. NATO has never been in the position of trying to persuade a democratic country, and it is an alliance of democracies, to come in if the people don't want to.

And as regards Georgia, that's a more complicated case, because it was a core principle of NATO enlargement when President Clinton committed himself to it and, of course, Madeleine was very much involved in both the formulation and the execution of that policy. It was a core principle that the addition of a new member would have to enhance the security of all members in the entire alliance as well as protecting or enhancing the security of the new member, and that is almost impossible to reconcile with the new facts on the ground that have been created in Georgia, as was discussed in the earlier panel where you now have a pseudo independent state recognized only by Russia, Nicaragua, and --

MS. STENT: Nauru.

MR. TALBOTT: Thank you, Nauru, but what is in, in effect, annexed and occupied territory. So, that creates a stumbling block for NATO's being able to seriously consider Georgia at this time for membership, which indeed is part of the motive why the Russians went in.

MS. STENT: Wait?

MR. SLOCOMBE: I don't have anything. That -- I agree with all that.

MS. STENT: And, by the way, the current Ukrainian government has said it's not interested in NATO membership.

MR. TALBOTT: But it's also public --

MS. STENT: It's public, but Yanukovich himself has said that at the moment -- I believe that's true, Mr. Ambassador? Right?

MR. TALBOTT: And Mr. Yushchenko hasn't been heard from on this subject recently.

MS. STENT: She has not been heard from on this subject recently. Okay, yes, over here please.

MS. VANDERPOT: Good afternoon. My name is Diane Vanderpot. I'm from OSD Policy and I too would like to thank you all for having these discussions today because they've been quite informative, but I also have an ulterior motive. As anybody who has worked in the Pentagon knows, a few hours away from that building is always welcome, so thank you very much. (Laughter)

MR. TALBOTT: Although the country's a little bit less safe with you not in your office.

MS. VANDERPOT: I'll be back.

MR. SLOCOMBE: Especially since you're from Policy.

MS. VANDERPOT: My question is, we've had a lot of discussions, you've discussed the trust issue and potential ulterior motives that the Russians are very concerned about in these missile defense negotiations. During the first session Mr. Hadley had mentioned that he saw the conservative Russian generals as being a huge cog in the problem. So, my question is, do you see a divide within some of the Russian administration between the MFA and the MOD? And if so, if it's more on the MOD side, as these old generals start to retire, will there be an opportunity for more balanced negotiations or will Putin simply put the lid on everything?

MR. TALBOTT: Could I take a crack at that but with a condition attached? The condition is that obviously Walt will offer his views, but I'm only going to speak to it on the condition that Angela give us her views, because she really, as they say in Russia, knows this kitchen.

Yes, I think there are institutional and bureaucratic differences that are more than just nuance, but less than schisms, if I can put it that way, but I'd like to tie your question, or an attempt to answer it, at least partially back to the previous discussion on Prime Minister soon to be again President Putin, and the difference between him and President soon to be Prime Minister Medvedev.

Broadly speaking, I think, that the significance of the decision that was announced how many weeks ago? September --

MS. STENT: September 24th.

MR. TALBOTT: On September 24th -- see, I told you, listen to her more closely than me -- has been exaggerated. Putin has been number one throughout. Nothing's important in any field that the president of Russia has done during the Medvedev presidency was done over the objections of Prime Minister Putin. So, it is not, in that sense, a huge deal what is happening and what will happen.

However, I do think that President Putin represents a background and, therefore, a foreground, if I can put it that way, an approach to the future based on his past. We all are who we are, but we are also who we have been, and he is an alumnus of the KGB. Many of his -- a number of his formative years were spent in the GDR, a country that no longer exists. And I think that the preoccupation, which I find to be backward-looking or certainly shortsighted, with the presumed, alleged, and largely phantom threat from the West, is more deeply engrained in President Putin than it is in -- in Prime Minister Putin than it is in President Medvedev, and that could make for at least nuances of difference as in Russian foreign policy depending on what happens to American policy in coming years.

MS. STENT: Walt?

MR. SLOCOMBE: I'm interested in hearing your thoughts.

MS. STENT: Well, thank you. I'll just give you my two cents' or kopeks' worth. I mean, first of all, you know, the Ministry of Defense in Russia like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs isn't a monolithic organization just as our own, you know, obviously, the Department of Defense, Department of State are, but it's the same in Russia, so they're different groups. It's true, obviously, that there is a group of the

older and more powerful colonels that may have a view of this, but there are others, you know, who don't share those views. It's very hard because one doesn't read publically about this very much, but one knows from discussions that, you know, there are debates going on there but the question is: who prevails? That's one point.

And the second thing about Mr. Putin announcing that he's going to be president, I mean, Strobe's quite right that you have to assume that any decision that was taken in the U.S.-Russian relationship under Medvedev, including New START and everything else, was taken with Putin's blessing. It wouldn't have occurred had that not been the case, and that, therefore, in that sense, you might expect continuity.

But, you know, we also know -- our evidence from the last eight years of Mr. Putin's presidency and then three and a half years of being prime minister, is that his world view and his view of the United States, it's -- you know, he obviously has had relationships with U.S. presidents, more particularly President George W. Bush where there was cooperation. I mean, there was, you know, a reset after September 11th and then, you know, that eventually deteriorated over a number of issues, including the questions of missile defense.

Now, there are some people out there in our community of kind of Russia watchers who say, well, maybe there will be Putin 2.0, right? He comes back as president and there's going to be a new -- he could surprise us, he could be new. Obviously, one would assume that on the basis of what we've seen so far one would have to be a little bit skeptical about this but it's always possible. And I think probably the general view has been, and again, I'm not involved in any of these Track II negotiations, that one of the major reasons for Russia engaging with the United States and talks about missile defense cooperation, is to understand what the U.S. program is, to understand how it's evolving. And we heard in the previous panel that sometimes it evolves so fast one doesn't hear all the elements of it, and Walt talked about that, too, whether it's actually possible to come to an agreement with them is another issue. But as long as we're engaged in negotiations with them, at least, you know, we keep the process going. So, I would assume that the process will keep going, but I'm not sure about, you know, coming to an agreement.

In the back there.

MR. NIKURADZE: Thank you. My name is David Nikuradze. I represent Georgian television station Rustavi 2 in Washington, D.C. The United States Government urged Moscow many times to fulfill its commitment on ceasefire with Georgia, but we still see that Russia is not going to restore its troops to prewar positions. Do you believe that this regional issue could be an obstacle for a reset policy for proper relations between the United States and Russian Federation? Thank you.

MR. TALBOTT: Yes. It will be a continuing obstacle for exactly the reasons that you mentioned. And I thought Steve Hadley was, as on other issues, forceful and correct, and in particular when he was by, I would say, deftly fending off some of the criticism of the Bush Administration. The Bush Administration, I think, did not overreact to the -- let's call things by their own names, as they say in Russian -- the Russian invasion of Georgia in August 2008. That was absolutely a proper reaction, and just to put it, since we all have American domestic politics in mind looking forward, let's look backward. Senator Obama, as he then was Candidate Obama, was, I would say -- what's the word? -- back-footed a bit, on it, did not immediately take a strong position.

If I'm not mistaken he was in Hawaii at the time and paid a price, not a lasting price and not a big price, but it was noted that he wasn't sure quite what the reaction should be to the fact that, once again, Russian combat boots were clomping around in a neighboring country, which is what it all came down to. And they are still there, still clomping around, and that will be an obstacle, and not just in U.S.-Russian relations, but in Russia's relations with all of its neighbors and particularly with Europe.

MS. STENT: Yes. Over there.

MS. GRAY: Thank you. My name is Angel Gray. I'm studying foreign policy at American University. It's been mentioned that there's like a heavy suspicion between -- of U.S. intentions concerning policy. So, my question -- from the Russian perspective -- so my question is, do you see Russia capitalizing on its weapons relationship with China in order to sort of balance its relationship with the U.S.?

MR. SLOCOMBE: Yes. I think the Russians -- first of all, China is a major export market for Russian arm sales. They don't sell -- even the Russians are not prepared to sell the very best stuff to the Chinese, but they'll sell almost anything else. And I think also -- and I'd be interested in Strobe and Angela's view -- I think the Russians made a quite deliberate decision to try to, at a minimum, to balance

their relations with China to eliminate the Sino-Soviet split, to relegate that to history along with the rest of the Cold War, particularly in Central Asia. And I think the arms relationship is an aspect of that.

I also think in the long-term -- by the way, I hesitate to criticize this, but the -- I thought that what Secretary Schlesinger said, and I actually thought it was Secretary Brown, Harold Brown, for whom I worked, was that fortunately it is the Soviet Union and not the United States that is surrounded by hostile communist countries.

MS. STENT: Actually, I think it was the Soviet Union is the only country in the world that's entirely surrounded by hostile communist countries.

MR. SLOCOMBE: Anyway --

MR. TALBOTT: We got that straight. (Laughter)

MR. SLOCOMBE: I think in the long run there is a potential for considerable tension between a rising, increasingly assertive, heavily populated, resource poor China and Russia, which is what Russia is.

MS. STENT: I would just say, I mean, Putin's first trip after he announced that he was going to be president again -- run for president again was to China to make a point to the West. But I think if you look at the trajectory of it, obviously the relationship is much better today than it was in the days when they were shooting each other in 1969 or when they had a very hostile relationship, but it really is, as one of my colleagues has described it, an axis of convenience.

I spent some time in China this summer talking to the Chinese about the relationship with Russia and it's clear that, you know, Russia's a useful energy market, although they still haven't signed a pipeline deal -- gas pipeline deal. They've been negotiating for years because the Chinese don't want to pay what the Russians are asking. And they do buy Russian arms; although they're actually buying fewer than they did before and they've reverse engineered some of those already and are producing them themselves.

But the interesting thing about the Chinese is they say, you know, Russia supports us in all issues that are really important to us like Taiwan, Tibet, a multipolar world, issues where they have differences with the United States. But when you talk to them about Russia's economy or its domestic system, I would say they're pretty skeptical, to put it mildly. So, I think they view this in a very, very

pragmatic way.

And from the Russian point of view, I think there's a realization that, yes, China is a good arms market, maybe not as good as it was; and yes, the Chinese would like to buy their energy, but, as Walt said, there are huge problems. The Russian Far East is depopulated. The most dynamic parts of the economy in the Russian Far East are run by Chinese migrants, you know, who live there and then go back to China. So, there's a deep, fundamental concern about the longer-term viability of a country, Russia, whose population is shrinking, and China, whose population is expanding.

MR. SLOCOMBE: I'm struck by the analogy -- a similar question was asked -- a friend of mine asked a similar question about the Turkish relationship with Russia and was told the Turkish relationship with Russia is strictly emotional. (Laughter)

MS. STENT: Very good. Strobe?

MR. SLOCOMBE: Well, I think there's a bigger strategic element with China.

MR. TALBOTT: Exactly. It's a lot more than that with China and Walt absolutely nailed it: resource rich, people poor. I don't know what else to say about Siberia, the maritime Russian Far East, cheek by jowl with the most populous country on the planet for another couple of decades until India overtakes it, and a country that is resource poor. That is, you know, all of us are students in one way or another of both classical and perspective geopolitics, which is also geo-economics, that is a formula for trouble, which is neither to hope for nor to predict that there will be another Sino-Soviet split or that there will be gunfire on the little islands -- Damansky Island, or whatever it's called in Chinese, and the Amur and Usuri and stuff like that, or that there will be another Russian contemplation of a preemptive nuclear strike against Lapnor. But trouble, big time, and certainly a very strong incentive for no Russian leader who is thinking at all strategically to, for example, provide MIRV technology, which is an issue that has arisen at least in the public press and, therefore, I assume has arisen to the Chinese.

MS. STENT: Yes.

MR. THIELMANN: Greg Thielmann, Arms Control Association. I wanted to ask for a clarification for a point that I think Walt Slocombe was making about evolving technology making it even harder to differentiate strategic missile defense from theater missile defense, in light of the fact that the two governments demonstrated they can, in fact, agree to differentiating the two in the 1997 protocol to

the ABM Treaty, because it does seem to me that the problem is not technological. The Russians are giving all kinds of signals that Phase 1 and 2 are okay, Phase 3 and 4 are not, in the phase adaptive approach. The problem is theological, that there's a large and powerful portion of the U.S. Congress that is diametrically opposed to any kind of constraints on national territorial missile defense and that the George W. Bush Administration bought on to that theology and, in fact, took actions to conflate theater and national missile defense by, in fact, even eliminating program distinctions and even the word so that the problem is not a technological one, it's a theological one.

MR. SLOCOMBE: Well, I understand that argument but, for example, the difference between Phase 2 and Phase 3 has partly to do with the diameter of the propulsion unit. You know, that's not just a theoretical -- there are important technical reasons why, if you want to continue to maintain the capacity of the system to provide regional defense, you need to make those kinds of improvements. And the current version of Phase 4 is, in fact, to upgrade to this Block 2B version of the missile so that it would be able to make a contribution to both homeland defense and to expand in defense.

I'm actually -- the rational part of the Russian objection, it has always seemed to me, is -- and most serious Russians will say, you know, we're not arguing about 26 or 30 ground-based interceptors, we're arguing about the fact that you're building this big infrastructure, particularly the sensors, you're building the technology. You know, the Ted Postons of the world say discrimination can't work. We worry it might work, even against us. And if you're going to get a technical constraint, it's going to have to be a constraint which says, we need to be able to -- and that you could -- I'm not saying you couldn't have technical agreements. It's that I don't think they can be based on the distinction between there is one part of the world which is strictly regulated, intercontinental defense, and another part which is not regulated hardly at all, indeed not least from the Russian point of view, because what the Russians say, which is not totally crazy, is something which is forward deployed may have some -- even though it's not -- the relevant issue is the distance between the launch point of the interceptor and the intercept point, not the distance between the launch point of the target -- the attacking missile and what its target is.

I just don't see that the kind of effort, which the '97 protocol exemplified, but which was a can of worms, put real constraints on the American programs for nonstrategic defense. I just don't see that as being something that is -- you know, if you can come up with the scheme that doesn't

unreasonably constrain what we need to do against other countries, that's fine, but I just am very doubtful it will be possible. And I focus particularly on the increasing integration of the system so that one approach to long-term homeland defense is the first shop comes out of an Aegis shop supported by a TPY-2 radar, and anything subsequent comes out of Greely or wherever you put them comes out them, supported by XMN. I mean, and that's not going to be an easy problem to solve because the Russians are going to be worried about the Aegis and we're going to be worried about missing the first shot.

MS. STENT: Strobe?

MR. TALBOTT: No theology on top of that theology.

MS. STENT: Okay. We've had a great discussion. You started with the theological metaphors. I think we've heard two high priests of missile defense, arms control, and everything else.

MR. SLOCOMBE: Go and sin no more.

MS. STENT: Please join me in thanking both of our speakers. (Applause)

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