

safety and environmental protection, it will be up to Minatom's partners in disposition to insist on the need for care that otherwise is going to be hard to find within contemporary Russia. Nevertheless, the long-term outlook has to be good for a Ministry in which civil and military operations are housed together. Minatom will remain a prime source of international respect and leverage for the Russian Federation as a nuclear-weapons state. Until the economy creates new choices, its civil power operations will be secure against privatization. We are thus faced with a Ministry that's certain to be in some difficulty, and difficult to deal with, for years to come. But it is also a Ministry whose fortunes could eventually rebound.

When it comes to accountability and transparency, Minatom is actually quite untroubled in comparison with its counterparts in the established liberal democracies. After all, this is an old-line Soviet ministry whose closure to society was entirely normal for decades and is bolstered by the need for security and secrecy which still attaches to nuclear affairs. In fact, Minatom is so far removed from operative responsibility to the Russian people that the very mention of accountability and transparency is all but naïve. Why then raise these issues? Obviously because donors to a disposition programme will want to know what's going on. But also because long-term sustainability is involved. Nuclear safety and environmental protection are better cared for when there's a civil society to inform and pressure government about the doings of industry. To the extent that Russia's civil society is not what it might be, it could fall to a multinational management entity to do some of civil society's work in helping to secure Russia against disposition and, consequently, disposition against adversity in Russia.

But before we go any further with this line of inquiry, let us do a quick reality check. In the real world of disposition planning and multilateral negotiation who needs to consider civil society? Is this not an academic preoccupation that has no place in the work for a Multilateral Agreement?

The short answer is that the more information is withheld from civil society, the more difficult it will be for those in foreign jurisdictions to know what is going on. Derogation or denial of civil-society considerations is also indicative of an unexamined bias in favour of the nuclear industry's ability to get things right on its own. As already indicated, this is a bias that makes for surprise and accident. Disposition is done in a context. It cannot override its circumstances, society and customs included. To believe and act otherwise is to ask for trouble, and no more so than when disposition is to be done with international support in a country such as Russia.

Civil society is as an intermediate layer of players, institutions, and activities in the political space between society at large on the one hand, and the state and big business on the other. A civil society was emergent in Russia before the revolution. But that event ushered in a set of rulers determined to eliminate the middle strata and their capacity to resist the demands of socialism. For seventy years public accountability and transparency were nowhere to be seen, nor was anyone accustomed to such things. Now, more than a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, civil society and its institutions are rising again, as is the private sector. But civil society has a very long way to go. Consider, for example, the bane of the nuclear industry everywhere.

Environmental and nuclear-watchdog NGOs are something of a novelty in Russia. In recent years their principal issue has been Minatom's plan to make Russia a repository for nuclear waste from abroad. Despite the collection some two million signatures in opposition, the