strategy, and to structure action to suit. Needless to say, a discourse of conditionality is not conducted in isolation from other instrumental values. Nor does it take precedence over them. But it should be a familiar topic of conversation if we are to avoid trouble down the road and maybe sooner.

Key Findings

Given its complexity, its openness to contingency, cost, unwieldiness, and other features we have come across, the disposition of excess Russian WGPu cannot be called a certainty. This study nevertheless proceeds on the assumption that until we are presented with a better alternative that is or could soon be actionable, we are best advised to hold to the present international effort to support the Russian Federation in a reactor-based disposition of 34 tonnes.

Disposition is a political as well as a physical process. It consists not only in the capacity to make WGPu conform to the spent-fuel standard, but also in the capacity to commit WGPu to treatment in the first place. The capacity to commit, which is political, has primacy. Without it there is nothing to disposition physically.

Of our trio of conditionalities, irreversibility trumps nuclear safety and environmental protection. Disposition is done for international security purposes. Safety and environmental protection are derivative concerns which arise from disposition as a physical act. They do however have the potential to work out very badly for Russians and their environment, and therefore to threaten irreversibility as a political process.

Russian and U.S. hedging contravenes the spirit of irreversibility. It does harm to the integrity of disposition and of those who would contribute to it. Committed and potential donors should consider ways of bringing the two principals to acknowledge the contravention and to start cutting the hedge.

Irreversibility as a political process is also threatened by loss of credibility which stems from contravening Russian intentions to start breeding large amounts of RGPu once 34 tonnes of WGPu are dispositioned and possibly before the job is done. Readiness of the part of donors to accede to breed-up, which is accentuated in certain of the current U.S. negotiating approaches, could yield the widespread perception of G-8 members helping to finance the substitution of one amount of Russian plutonium for another. Breeding civil plutonium later in Russia flies in the face of donor efforts to make the disposition of Russian WGPu irreversible now. Rather than allow disposition to be used in support of breed-up, it's more cost-effective for donors to assist Russia in converting and storing the WGPu until needed for commercial purposes.

If disposition is to be sustained in the long haul, and if the managers of the programme are to have a mission that's widely respected and therefore draws top performers, the Multilateral Agreement will be structured in a way that minimizes subsidy for Russian reliance on breeder reactors and closed fuel-cycle technology.

If a way could be found to reconcile export-only or breeder-reactor approaches with the needs of irreversibility as a political process, sustained disposition would become very largely a problem of nuclear safety and environmental protection. Of the various approaches suggested by