

effective approaches to Russian disposition (White House, 2001). And now, the G-8 have ordered the negotiators to conclude a Multilateral Agreement in 2003. The effort to comply is certain to evoke divergent views. There is, for example, the question of whether on balance to hold to the framework specified in the Agreement, or to try and work out a way that's considerably faster and cheaper. Diverse parties are sure to have diverse opinions on this and other matters. Still, the United States has been and will continue to be the chief provider of direction and money for the programme. Though in the normal course of events a consideration of conditionality might be deferred until the parties were pretty well decided on what it was they wanted, this study is driven by a belief that challenges to the sustainability of the Russian programme are such that conditionality must be brought to the fore now. To begin, this means looking at U.S. positions in a new light.

The United States has invited discussion of several scenarios or alternative approaches in which rate of disposition, type of reactor, and location of particular disposition activity are the key variables. The alternative approaches are these:

- (1) disposition to be done in Russia with four VVER-1000 reactors (plus two in reserve), the BN-600, and BOR-60 all together irradiating two tonnes of WGPu per year (the base case scenario);
- (2) (2a) add three VVER-1000 and irradiate four tonnes per year in Russia; or (2b) obtain a rate of four tonnes per year by irradiating two tonnes in Russia and two tonnes abroad;
- (3) build and operate new reactors in Russia (BN-800 or VVER-1500) at some point in the process, for an annual rate of more than two tonnes;³
- (4) achieve an annual disposition of seven to nine tonnes by irradiating the whole lot abroad, including possible amounts beyond 34 tonnes; and
- (5) make a separate and early financial commitment to the construction and operation of a conversion facility in Russia, this to restore momentum to the G-8 disposition effort.

Alternatives (3) and (4) obviously hold the greatest potential to change the programme from what was agreed in September 2000. They are entirely consistent with Article V of the Agreement, which enjoins the parties to accelerate the work of disposition. They are also compatible with the December 2001 report of the Russian-U.S. Working Group on Cost Analysis and Economics in Plutonium Disposition (Joint U.S.-Russian Working Group on Cost, December 2001).

This latter report, it should be noted, cautions against viewing such alternative approaches as anything more than means of bringing out the cost implications of disposition. For our part, we will regard them not as opposed options but as variations on the general theme of disposition which may be packaged, repackaged, and supplemented with still others as the Multilateral Agreement takes shape. Let us see how the U.S. variants fare when we view them through the prism of conditionality and what makes for and takes away from long-term sustainability.

³ Construction of a BN-800 was withdrawn from further consideration following a report (July 2002) on the option from the Joint Russian-U.S. Working Group on Cost Analysis.