

Although the programme would be far and away the core of the job of those charged with disposition, donors should seize the opportunity for an active engagement with Russia's incipient civil society. But they should be clearly aware of a loose end here. It's the potential for a hostile public reaction to the programme in Russia.

For the G-8 (including the European Union as a non-voting member) to override a Russian majority clearly opposed to the programme would be politically very difficult, if not unthinkable. Dangers of a clear majority against, which are not evident today, arise first from Minatom's and the Federation Government's proposal to import high-level nuclear waste, and second from contamination of disposition with the waste issue. If disposition is to get anywhere, it is vital to decouple it from the waste-import proposal, and to begin doing so without delay.

What's needed is a strategy of reassurance which helps to set disposition apart from past practice and to make it relatively appealing. Everything said thus far about engaging civil society should stand in good stead here: a welcoming attitude to transparency, accountability, and above all NGO participation as proof the new attitude was authentic. Further, it could be well for the G-8, the Federation Government very much included, to acknowledge the potential for a veto of the programme by the Russian people, and to make clear in advance that a regional referendum, centred perhaps on the Chelyabinsk area, would be held if needed. To maximize donor-country and Russian public confidence in the outcome, the vote could be supervised by the G-8 if the Federation agreed. It might agree, since it has taken a position on the waste issue which could affect the decision. Furthermore, given international supervision of a referendum on disposition, the Federation Government itself could more readily campaign for a proposition which has yet to find either a champion or coherent opposition in the country.

Additional Points Toward a Strategy

Conditionality comes into play when we're leery, when an undertaking seems likely to go wrong or otherwise to fall short of expectation. If leerness is substantial, conditionality should be built into the enterprise from its foundations out to when the job is done. The discussion here suggests that in the areas of nuclear safety and environmental protection, today's Russia, on its own, is unlikely to perform according to standards required by donors. When we multiply this finding by a variable which sums up the extraordinary complexity and duration of disposition, a proactive conditionality seems fully justified. Furthermore, both the job and the situation in which it is to be done are sufficiently unusual, perhaps even unique, to warrant unusual measures in getting things right.

A strategy for sustained disposition might therefore be guided by three principles: indirection, agency, and reassurance. On the first, improved safety and environmental practices in Russia will to some extent be indirectly and informally derived, as well as being the direct outcome of formal prescriptions in a Multilateral Agreement and other instruments. The extent of informal influence is impossible to calculate. But indirection cannot be ignored in a high-content culture in which relationships provide context for calculations of interest. Indeed, as the theme of Russian clubworthiness suggests, a desire for certain kinds of relationships may drive behaviour in its particulars. For example, entry into the G-8 Nuclear Safety Working Group, which is something that Russia has sought as evidence of good standing after Chernobyl (and is now to be