

it would still leave international disposition vulnerable to political attack on cost-effectiveness grounds in the donor countries.

If all of this weren't enough, when we look beyond the physical dimension of irreversibility and into the political context in which it occurs, we uncover still further vulnerabilities that are better addressed now rather than later or not at all. The question here is whether and to what extent the Deal should be conditional on a supportive Russian public opinion. If sufficient public support cannot be had, donor-country governments and publics could find themselves in an awkward and even unethical position: having long made it their business to promote democracy in the Russian Federation, they could be asked to back the Russian Government against a majority of its own people in the name of international peace and security. If however the Deal were to be made conditional on the approval of the Russian people, the effort to get disposition going could conceivably be stopped in its tracks. Whether the trouble stems from events in Russia, controversy in the donor countries, or a mixture of both, no forward motion for disposition is part-way to a reversal of nuclear disarmament where weapon-grade plutonium is concerned.

The underlying theme of these introductory remarks is that a proactive conditionality is capable of anticipating and reducing safety, environmental, and irreversibility threats to a perennial disposition of excess Russian WGPu which has to move beyond 34 tonnes if it is to make sense. Precautions against foreseeable difficulty can and must be incorporated into a Multilateral Agreement. They should be woven proactively into the negotiation from the start. But even then, Russia is not a place where the provisions of an agreement can in themselves be counted upon to yield intended results. Nor can periodic assemblies in the form of review conferences, especially when the attention of donor governments has moved on to other things, as certainly it will after the Deal is done. What's needed in the years ahead is an enduring presence to guide the enterprise with the needs of conditionality fully in mind.

This study therefore argues that it's absolutely essential to get the MMC or management entity right if disposition is to be sustained. Although the Russian Federation has prime responsibility for disposition activity on Russian soil, donors cannot be expected to give Moscow great latitude in the expenditure of their contributions. Nor of course can they expect to micromanage the action in Russia themselves. As indicated, the parties will instead have to work out an arrangement which transfers to Russia, as rapidly as possible, control over the disposition management entity to a point where the authority of the Federation is fully acknowledged.

In the opinion of one of those interviewed in Moscow, what's important is not so much the specific arrangements that might be agreed and acted upon by donors and the Russian Federation, but the relationships that could come out of the interaction. Before we consider what, beyond the work of plutonium processing, might emerge from an interaction with Russia on our three conditionalities, let's look at the alternative approaches to disposition which are now being put forward for discussion by the United States.

2. Reacting to U.S. Positions

The Bush Administration has reaffirmed U.S. support for the September 2000 Agreement. It has declared its intention to consult with the Russian Federation and concerned allies on more cost-