

run their business? If this were the way to go, a Russian and not a multinational entity would have the lead from the outset in managing the programme as per the Multilateral Agreement and with active donor-country oversight. Everything from licensing to quality assurance in spent-fuel management would be done by Russian and, as necessary, foreign industry according to donor standards or to standards agreed by Russia and the donors, who either way would pay for continuous or intermittent reviews. Oversight could be vested in an advisory board that included the Russian Federation as a participant observer. Furthermore, a separate panel could be set up to advise the advisory board on the Russian performance in matters of nuclear safety and environmental protection. Or in what would amount to a still more pronounced expression of add-on conditionality, oversight on behalf of safety and environmental standards could be provided under an arrangement negotiated separately from the Multilateral Agreement. Whatever the particulars, donors geared to can-do expectations could find favour with a set-up that gave Russia the lead in programme management.

Almost exactly the opposite is being urged here. Can-do expectations are not warranted in the Russian case. To rely primarily on Minatom and the Federation Government to get things right over the long haul is to court avoidable risk. Not can risk be reduced significantly under a management system that has donors in an advisory position, much less under an arrangement that separates safety and environment from the guts of the programme. Reliance on processes of review is not the way to go in reducing the likelihood of the programme being derailed by events in Russia. Far better to integrate application of standards with hands-on management by means of an MMC that is progressively subject to Russian control. Far better, too, the continuous effort of an MMC to build counterweights to business as usual by developing affirmative relationships with civil society and NGOs as well as regulatory agencies in the Russian Federation.

So, to return to the argument, a Corporation with NGO participation could do a number of things for Russia's nascent civil society and thus for the disposition programme. First, it would constitute a new departure, a precedent-setting demonstration of novel possibilities for citizen action which could be taken up in the handling of other nuclear-safety and environmental-protection issues. Early opportunities for emulation could arise in the event that the Corporation set up international safety and environmental impact assessment panels, or in the establishment of a counterpart Russian Federation entity to interact with the Corporation. However slight the incremental effects, they would bolster values and practices of civil-society participation in what's still something of an authoritarian political culture.

Second, NGO participation could be expected to reveal and help legitimize new means of achieving accountability and transparency in the provision of public goods in Russia. The good in this case would be sustained disposition of excess WGPu. The entity that provided it to the public, the MMC, should be accountable and transparent to that same public in some degree. Secrecy is the enemy of civil society. Glasnost is its friend. The cause of transparency would gain in Russia, however slightly, from NGO access to and ability to disseminate information pertaining to disposition except as constrained by proprietary rights. As to accountability, it should be aided by the precedent of stakeholder representation that extended beyond Russian insiders whose interests and predispositions, if left unbalanced, would surely tilt the benefits and deprivations of the programme against nuclear-safety and environmental values. Again, there's no revolution in Russian culture and practices to be expected here. But NGO participation points in the right direction. It also has potential to provide disposition with a widened social base and greater adaptation to the physical environment.