

**Written Testimony of Vice Admiral James A. Winnefeld
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Chairman Skelton, Ranking Member McKeon, Committee Members, thank you for inviting me to address the Committee today. I concur with Ambassador Vershbow’s testimony and will reinforce his substantive points by focusing my comments on the military aspects of the Russia relationship, especially with respect to how we plan to move forward in creating a more constructive, working relationship. This remains a critical security relationship to manage well, especially in light of the destructive capacity of both our nuclear arsenals.

We have witnessed dramatic changes in our interaction with Russia, beginning a year ago with the invasion of Georgia and the resulting degradation of both bilateral and NATO-Russia relations. I want to emphasize that during several pivotal points in the Russia-Georgia conflict, the only constructive contact between our governments was the military-to-military channel. Indeed, back in October of 2008, I was privileged to accompany Admiral Mullen when he met his General Staff counterpart (General Makarov) in Helsinki. I was able to observe first-hand the critical necessity of maintaining a strong military relationship that can aid in the resolution of a crisis. Moreover, it represented a small but important step in reinforcing our working relationship as a foundation for future progress.

More recently, we have found a willingness on both sides to “reset” this vital relationship. We recognize the prospect that there may not be a smooth path towards greater partnership and cooperation. However, allowing our relationship to be defined only by the areas where our interests diverge limits the potential benefit of cooperating where our strategic interests overlap. We are committed to a course change—which began with the Presidents’ meeting at the G-20 in April, was further reinforced at the July Summit, and will continue to require focus, effort and discipline.

At this juncture, I would like to address in more detail those pertaining to military matters: specifically, military-to-military cooperation, Afghanistan, the START Follow-on Agreement, and the Joint Data Exchange Center.

Military-to Military Cooperation

As you are aware, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen recently visited Moscow twice, once in late June for discussions with Russian Chief of the General Staff Makarov, and again in July in support of the Presidential Summit. A key element of these discussions was rejuvenating the military channel of communication with frank exchanges on issues ranging from U.S. – Russia military cooperation to regional challenges, counter-piracy and missile defense. Indeed, positive relations between our militaries form a sound building block for good relations between our countries and we are working with the Russian Ministry of Defense and General Staff to improve on the military-to-military programs we had before they were suspended as a result of the conflict in Georgia.

During the summit, Admiral Mullen and General Makarov signed a new Framework on Military-to-Military Cooperation. This Framework is our combined vision to change the nature of our relationship, based on the principles of pragmatism, parity, reciprocity, balance, and synchronization with NATO. It will set conditions that raise military cooperation to a new level and deepen mutual understanding between our respective armed forces. Our interactions with Russia military officers will deepen their understanding of our society, and lay the foundation for future relationships such as that enjoyed by Admiral Mullen and General Makarov.

Admiral Mullen and General Makarov are also committed to leading the military-to-military working group of the Presidential Bilateral Commission to ensure that cooperative endeavors in the military realm remain on track and continue in the strategic direction the Presidents mandated.

The 2009 Work Plan approved by Admiral Mullen and General Makarov encompasses nearly 20 exchanges and operational events. These are meaningful and mutually beneficial exchanges. They include, among other interactions:

- Joint Staff Talks co-chaired by my counterpart on the Russian General Staff and me,
- Orientation for Russian military cadets at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point,
- Planning for a joint exercise to respond to a hijacked aircraft in national and international airspace,

- A visit of the faculty of the Russian Combined Arms Academy to the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Ft. Leavenworth, and
- A naval war game conducted by the Kuznetsov Naval Academy and the U.S. Naval War College.

In addition, the U.S. European Command and the Russian Ministry of Defense are postured to create an even more ambitious Work Plan for the coming year. Again, I want to reemphasize the utility of strong and consistent military-to-military relations, especially during crises. We nearly always regret severing such a relationship, as we did with Pakistan in the 1980s.

One important caveat I'd like to make in this context: our improved military relations with Russia need not come at the expense of our already positive and cooperative military relations with other important partners in the region. We do not believe it beneficial to engage in zero-sum gamesmanship in Eurasia and hope to convey that sentiment to our Russian colleagues through cooperative progress in areas of common strategic interest. We intend to continue our work with all parties to cultivate stability and enhanced transparency throughout the region.

For example, in the Black Sea region, U.S. naval activity is principally designed to achieve specific U.S. maritime engagement objectives with our partner countries in the region. Current engagement is actually at or below the level conducted prior to the August 2008 conflict in Georgia and is consistent with normal operations tempo. The only unforeseen increase in U.S. military activity in the region had to do with our humanitarian ship visits to Georgia immediately following the August conflict. Recent exercises in the region (e.g., COOPERATIVE LONGBOW and COOPERATIVE LANCER in Georgia) proceeded as planned. Where exercises have been cancelled or do not occur (e.g., SEABREEZE in Ukraine or IMMEDIATE RESPONSE in Poland), much of the time it is due to a general unavailability of forces from operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, or because of unmet administrative or legislative preconditions, as is the case in Ukraine. Russia also engages in military exercises in the region (e.g., KAVKAZ 09) to ensure adequate training, readiness and interoperability of its forces with other militaries in the region. We do not view such activities in a threatening light, nor should the Russians be sensitized to similar activities on the part of the U.S. and NATO forces in the region.

The U.S. and Russia share areas of both common interest and concern. I believe that the documents we signed in Moscow are a reflection of areas

in which we share common interest. Furthermore, militaries of the size and capabilities possessed by our two nations should remain engaged in constructive communications and dialogue not only to foster understanding and avoid unforeseen consequences, but to promote positive cooperation and enhance regional and global peace and stability. Perhaps by finding areas of cooperation we can alleviate or at least mitigate our areas of difference. Only through constant and routine interaction will positive change be cultivated.

Afghanistan

Today, the tension between alignment and divergence within our relationship with Russia is best represented by the situation in Afghanistan. Clearly, the U.S. and Russia share a common goal of building a secure and stable Central Asia, where neither terrorism nor narcotics spill over borders and threaten our citizens. However, Russia maintains a high sensitivity to long-term U.S. and NATO military presence in the region and seeks greater influence in achieving our collective end state. An excellent example of this is our basing agreement with Kyrgyzstan on the use of Manas Air Base. We have had a difficult journey over the past 6 months resolving this issue; however, I believe that the Russians now understand that the U.S. does not have long-term basing ambitions in Central Asia, which has assuaged Russian sensitivities with respect to our transitory presence in the region. We have consistently conveyed that our airbase at Manas is a transit center to support operations in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, as represented by the Joint Statement on Afghanistan and the Transit Agreement signed during the Moscow Summit, our nations have chosen to reject the false choice between cooperation on security and ceding a nation or region to the other's sphere of influence. Instead, we are choosing to work more constructively, with the intent that better cooperation creates trust, restores confidence, and provides a positive example for relations between Russia and NATO. Although the Transit Agreement is young and has yet to be utilized, the NATO-Russia non-lethal transit arrangement has already diversified and enhanced our logistical support to U.S. forces in Afghanistan, which has facilitated the movement of more than 1500 rail cars of vital supplies. Creating redundant logistical routes is an insurance policy on our strategic framework for success there.

START Follow-on Agreement

I'd like to add a couple of points on the subject of the START Follow-on Agreement. One of the Administration's main goals in our efforts to reengage the Russians is to negotiate a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty Follow-on Agreement (SFO). Despite the looming expiration of the existing START Treaty and the importance of these negotiations to U.S.-Russian relations, the military recognizes the criticality of getting the details right as we look at new strategic arms limits to replace the START limits. The United States has made a commitment to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and to strengthen global non-proliferation regimes. As we head in that direction, the Department of Defense has undertaken the congressionally mandated Nuclear Posture Review (NPR). The NPR is establishing the appropriate roles and necessary force structure for our nuclear forces and is a driver of our positions in the START Follow-on negotiations process—in no way are we reverse engineering our position.

As already mentioned, the Joint Understanding signed by Presidents Obama and Medvedev at the Moscow Summit established a framework for the remainder of the negotiations, and provided bounds to strategic offensive arms of 500 to 1100 strategic delivery vehicles and 1500 to 1675 for their associated warheads. While the final limits are still subject to negotiation, the reductions in the number of operationally deployed nuclear warheads are achievable, and are absolutely consistent with the latest NPR analysis. Reductions in the number of nuclear delivery systems are also achievable, though the U.S. and Russia are farther apart on this subject. To achieve lower numbers for the U.S. requires that some systems that are no longer part of the U.S. nuclear forces—but which are accountable under the current START Treaty—be excluded from the new treaty. For example, under START, 50 Peacekeeper missile silos and 50 Minuteman III silos that are currently empty and no longer usable (or intended for use) still count. Under current START attribution and counting rules, these unusable silos alone account for 550 nuclear warheads. They should not be accountable under a follow-on treaty.

Some of the other details captured by the Joint Understanding include:

- The definitions, data exchanges, notifications, eliminations, inspections and verification procedures, as well as confidence building and transparency measures, as adapted, simplified, and made less costly, as appropriate, will compare to the START Treaty.

- Inclusion of a provision on the interrelationship of strategic offensive and strategic defensive arms.
- A Treaty duration of ten years, unless it is superseded before that time by a subsequent treaty on the reduction of strategic offensive arms.
- The negotiators are to finish their work on the treaty soon so that the Presidents may sign and submit it for ratification in their respective countries.

The Joint Staff is deeply involved in the development of the negotiating positions and to ensure all Combatant Commander and Service equities are addressed. We recognize the stakes involved and the importance of achieving a successful START Follow-on negotiation to U.S. Russian relations as well as its importance in sending a message to the global community to demonstrate our leadership in non-proliferation efforts.

U.S.-Russia Joint Data Exchange Center

Finally, I'd also like to briefly mention the Joint Data Exchange Center (JDEC) that Presidents Obama and Medvedev discussed at the Moscow Summit. The Presidents reaffirmed the importance of the JDEC that was originally agreed to by both nations in 2000. The JDEC will be the first permanent joint operation in the strategic arena involving U.S. and Russian military personnel. These officers will work side by side to exchange ballistic missile launch information and reduce the risk of a false attack warning. The center is an important step forward in establishing transparency and confidence building measures between our two nations. A U.S. delegation has already met with their Russian counterparts and work will continue towards implementing the JDEC Memorandum of Agreement in the near term.

Summary

In conclusion, we have taken initial steps to get our military-to-military relationship with Russia back on a constructive footing and are moving toward the resolution of strategic disagreements that have long plagued the bilateral relationship. I'm confident that if we can retain the positive working environment that our Presidents established during the Moscow Summit, we will not only see continued success in our bilateral

military engagement with Russia, but we will create an excellent opportunity for addressing significant strategic issues in a coordinated and cooperative manner.