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REPORT

DEFINING DIALOGUE: HOW TO MANAGE RUSSIA-UK SECURITY RELATIONS

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At present, Russian-British relations are in deep crisis. Will countries be able to restore a regular and systematic dialogue at the highest level? What are the prospects for cooperation between Russia and Britain in the sphere of security, combating international terrorism and countering extremism, including in the Greater Middle East? What mechanisms need to be worked out to strengthen confidence-building measures, prevent radicalization and develop cooperation in the fight against cybercrime. These and other issues related to the past, present and future of Russian-British security relations are discussed in the joint report of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) and the Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies (RUSI).

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Introduction

THIS PAPER OFFERS a summary of the first two rounds of the Russia–UK Track II security dialogue, held by RUSI in collaboration with the Moscow-based Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC). The dialogue also drew participants from UK-based organisations such as Chatham House, IISS, Foreign Policy Centre, European Leadership Network, the National Threat Initiative (NTI), the University of Birmingham, King’s College London and Moscow-based institutions including the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), the Russian Academy of Sciences, PIR Center and the Higher School of Economics (HSE), among others.

The starting point for the discussion was the mutual recognition that relations between the UK and Russia remain in a state of ‘deep freeze’, especially in relation to security issues. At the same time, UK policymakers have highlighted that, despite the political tensions with Russia, they are open to dialogue and potential cooperation where it could be beneficial to the interests of both sides. This attitude is shared by a large part of Russia’s political and expert community.

Many in Moscow believe that the British position on Russia reflects the ‘lowest common denominator’ of the very diverse and often inconsistent Western approaches to the Kremlin’s policies, while the UK has been repeatedly frustrated by contradictions between the Russian government’s words and its actions. It is therefore particularly important to engage bilaterally. It is notable that UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has agreed to visit Moscow to discuss bilateral relations, as well as issues such as Syria and Ukraine.¹ Moscow has expressed ‘cautious optimism’ about the renewed dialogue with the UK. Although a positive first step, such engagement must be focused and sustained.

The main objective of this dialogue was to therefore bring together Russian and UK academics, and think tank and policy experts to explore specific areas of the security agenda in order to identify potential common interests, which could form the basis of cooperative initiatives. The aim was to assist policymakers on both sides to identify realistic potential areas of engagement on topics of mutual interest, as well as to confirm areas that are unlikely to produce results.

The first bilateral event took place in London on 19–20 January with the second in Moscow on 20–21 February. Both events covered a broad range of topics, including: confidence-building measures; risk-reduction mechanisms; counterterrorism and countering violent extremism; the future of the Middle East; non-proliferation; cyber issues; information warfare; and conflict resolution. In future stages of the programme, a more focused agenda is planned, building on lessons of the first stage.

¹ James Landale, ‘Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson to Visit Russia’, BBC News, 4 March 2017.

Lessons of the First Stage

1. One of the main limitations in the discussions was the difficulty of assessing the political will to engage with or implement any of the suggestions made. The dialogue should therefore be upgraded to a 'Track 1.5', involving more government participants, policy practitioners and former policymakers, as well as more technical experts on specific issues. It should also take a more targeted 'working group' approach in order to spend more time on specific subjects of interest. From the discussions in London and Moscow, the most urgent areas for dialogue were defined as risk-reduction/confidence-building measures and measures for greater transparency in military activity, particularly between Russia and NATO. Combatting cybercrime and stabilising Afghanistan were also viewed as other areas of shared interest.
2. Russia and the UK need to ground discussions in the reality of the differences of interest and perspective between the two countries. This is more likely to happen through sustained but targeted discussions. Russian participants expressed the view that conversations based on interests rather than values will go further.
3. Many participants felt a discussion about the fundamental principles of the European security system, namely those enshrined in the Helsinki Accords, would be valuable in order to articulate differences in interpretations and narratives as well as opportunities to bridge or to narrow interpretation gaps. That is not to say that such principles will be altered as a result, but it would be a good starting point to determine genuine threat perceptions and define interests. This could be done through the OSCE 'structured dialogue' format.

Confidence Building and Risk Reduction

1. Although some contact has been made, Russia and the UK should restore a regular military-to-military dialogue to assist with confidence building and risk reduction. Consideration should be given to this being done through a new dedicated bilateral forum. It could also be done through the NATO–Russia Council and the OSCE. There was some scepticism as to the full value of these multilateral organisations, particularly given the NRC's lack of engagement since the Ukraine crisis, but it was noted that reinvigorating existing formats would be desirable.
2. The UK could lead discussions between NATO and Russia on threat perceptions and deterrence to better understand more specific concerns each side has about the other's actions. An obvious area to frame such discussions would be NATO's enhanced forward presence in Eastern Europe, given the UK's role as a framework nation.
3. Both sides should consider how to communicate their actions through direct engagement or signalling in order to minimise misinterpretation. It was

noted that Russia could use Zapad 2017 for signalling greater transparency and better communication. There was also discussion as to whether a specific mechanism for transparency around snap exercises could be established.

4. More work could be done to improve and expand existing initiatives to address dangerous military activities. The Incidents at Sea Agreement works well, but it should be expanded to address submerged submarines and aerial encounters. A Euro–Atlantic Naval Symposium could be created based on the Western Pacific Naval Symposium.

Middle East and Afghanistan

1. Most agreed that there is little scope for cooperation on conflict resolution in the Middle East, given the current fluidity of the situation. However, Afghanistan was seen as an area of shared interest, in particular on stabilisation and counter-narcotics. Although differing geopolitical interests are clearly at play in this conflict, and the perception of the threat from Daesh and the Taliban also differs, participants believed that it is worth engaging on the stability of Afghanistan.
2. Both Russian and UK experts agreed that the current tensions between Iran and a number of Gulf Arab states constitute a fundamental challenge to regional security. Russia and the UK could work towards reducing such tensions, particularly through diplomatic channels. Russia and the UK could also widen expert cooperation on assessing the future development of the region.

Cyber

1. There was a high degree of scepticism that new ‘norm’ agreements could be explored on non-conventional approaches to warfare, such as cyber. However, it was agreed that discussions would still be useful, particularly to explore setting parameters for cyber attacks that at least avoid loss of life or the targeting of critical infrastructure. Engagement on the topic may provide each side with a better understanding of the other’s perspective.
2. Work could be done on encouraging UK–Russia cooperation on cyber security and cybercrime, particularly through the setting up of a bilateral hotline for crisis management. Dialogue on this should also involve private sector actors, and further research on this is recommended.

Arms Control and Non-Proliferation

1. It was noted that under the current circumstances it would be very difficult to create new legally binding agreements on arms control. Both sides also agreed that to engage a third nuclear power like the UK into the bilateral US–Russia strategic arms control discussion would be complicated and potentially unproductive.

2. However, discussions on arms control were viewed as a confidence-building measure, particularly given the risks facing current agreements such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty (INF). Despite being a US–Russia bilateral agreement, INF violations or withdrawal affect all of Europe. The UK should make this clear to both signatories, particularly given that the absence of a commitment to such agreements would likely cause an increase in arms development and deployment across Europe.
3. In a bid to enhance transparency and information sharing, taking a more asymmetrical approach to discussions on arms control – accounting for non-conventional and conventional threats – could add another framework for confidence building and risk reduction in particular.
4. Russia and the UK should agree to work through the P5 nuclear process to seek to multilateralise current US–Russian risk-reduction (hotline) arrangements. Talks could also extend to issues such as strategic stability and what this means in an age of fullspectrum warfare, where lines are more blurred.
5. The UK and Russia clearly have a shared interest in preserving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, commonly known as the Iran deal. Although the deal is not currently under direct threat, both countries should work together diplomatically to ensure the deal is sustained, particularly in light of comments from the US.
6. The UK and Russia share a common interest in strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime and in fighting against the threat of WMD-based terrorism. The two countries could also engage more on the risks posed by North Korea, and the importance of UN Security Council unity on this issue.

Counterterrorism

1. Most agreed that there would be little movement on counterterrorism cooperation given political relations and differing approaches to terrorism, other than on an ad hoc basis. The 2018 World Cup was seen as a good opportunity for such cooperation. There was interest in knowledge exchanges on the study of terrorism and also comparative analyses of the countries' approach to tackling the issue. The issue of migration as a factor in counterterrorism was also raised as a common area of concern. Central Asia – and Afghanistan in particular – was seen as a region where discussions could focus.
2. Another angle of counterterrorism to discuss could be countering terrorist finance. Although information sharing may require more trust in the relationship, it was noted that cooperation would not require the sharing of sensitive information, but rather possible trends and patterns.

Threat Perceptions

Overall, there are few immediate ‘hooks’ in the Russia and UK security relationship that present an urgent need for engagement or cooperation. This is in part due to each country’s geopolitical priorities and the fact that much of the UK’s security engagement with Russia is through multilateral organisations such as NATO. It is also because of the lower inter-dependencies and inter-connectedness that the UK and Russia have with each other compared with other countries. Nevertheless, both countries are UN P5 nuclear-armed states and both at least have an interest in mechanisms to address risks around military escalation. Russia and the UK could choose to continue to have limited engagement as a point of principle or for future political leverage, but most bilateral participants agreed that an absence of contact increases the risk of misunderstanding and escalation.

The key remaining unknown relates to the extent to which political will exists to initiate or build on proposed engagements. This is why a key recommendation of this report is to upgrade the discussion from Track II to Track 1.5, and change the format to a set of more focused working group bilateral discussions, involving more government and practitioner participation from each side. This would focus on the most promising areas stemming from the dialogue, as set out in the summary above and expanded on below. Former Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov reinforced this point at the London workshop when he suggested creating a joint ‘High-Level Task Force’ involving a range of actors, including representatives from civil society, government, business and experts who could address specific issues together. Such an initiative would be aimed at preventing the incorrect interpretation of actions and intentions.

Naturally, the discussion often focused on the clearly diverging, and at times mutually exclusive, opinions on developments in security. Despite this divergence, it was still informative rather than confrontational. A criticism made by the Russian side was that the West had too often framed foreign policy relationships in terms of ‘values’, whereas Russia does so more in terms of interests. As Former Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind noted, Churchill’s quote about Russia being a ‘riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma’ is often left unfinished, continuing ‘but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interests’.²

NATO expansion and Ukraine were discussed. Although there were specific reasons expressed by both sides as to why Russia and the UK see things differently, part of the discussion also touched on broader historical explanations for the current state of relations, such as the disrespect and humiliation Russia felt from the West after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and especially during and after

² Winston Churchill, ‘The Russian Enigma’, speech broadcast on the BBC, 1 October 1939.

the 1999 Kosovo conflict. Although history is crucial to the understanding of how both sides think and how events have unfolded, it can also limit opportunities for the UK and Russian governments to discuss what they want from their relationship based on the reality of the current situation. As one participant noted 'hindsight is a useful thing, but where do we go from here in terms of avoiding similar scenarios in future?' Therefore, there is clearly a need for a bilateral channel of communication at the political level, if only for the two governments to inform each other of their concerns in advance, to avoid escalation. The first step has been taken, with Johnson agreeing to visit Russia to meet his counterpart, Sergei Lavrov. Such bilateral engagement should be sustained but focused.

Confidence Building and Risk Reduction

Topics that sparked the most animated debate in both workshops pertained to confidencebuilding measures and risk reduction. ‘Confidence’ to many implied trust, which – it exists at all – is currently low between the British and Russian governments. This has not been helped by Russia’s behaviour, demonstrated by actions such as President Vladimir Putin’s denial of the presence of Russian soldiers – the so-called ‘little green men’ – during the events in Crimea in February–March 2014, and the subsequent admission that they were in fact present. Most participants agreed that a particular challenge is the apparent absence of rules and the ability to effectively signal to each other, which had even existed during the Cold War. Therefore, the discussion focused mainly on ways in which agreed rules might be set, or restored, and within which parameters, with a particular focus on the objective of reducing escalation or miscalculation.

One of the unanimously agreed suggestions was that, to do this, more bilateral UK–Russia military-to-military engagement should be restored, with one UK participant saying ‘it is not a concession to Russia from the West and does not symbolise appeasement’. Although some efforts have already been made, more sustained engagement between UK and Russian military and political officials should be established. It was noted by one participant with UK government experience that the UK in particular was at the ‘back of the pack’ when it came to attempts at confidence building with Russia, and it seems to be ‘pulled along by Washington’ rather than setting its own narrative. A new dedicated UK–Russia bilateral forum should be co-founded to discuss risk management in particular.

The OSCE could be another strong forum for military-to-military engagement at the multilateral level, particularly given the failure of the NATO–Russia Council (NRC) to engage as a crisismanagement mechanism immediately after the events in Ukraine. The role of the OSCE should be explored further as part of any follow-up discussion. Participants were wary of creating new forums instead of reinvigorating existing ones, such as the OSCE forum, which could lead to duplication. Even within NATO, the UK could also use its prominent leadership role in a more targeted manner in relation to Russia. Given the UK’s role as a framework nation in NATO’s enhanced forward presence in Eastern Europe, this would be an appropriate topic on which to build confidence by encouraging transparency on commitments and actions. The UK could lead on broader military-to-military talks between the Alliance and Russia to better understand how Moscow reads and perceives its behaviour and which actions are the most alarming, and vice versa. From the Russian perspective, issues such as high-precision strategic conventional weapons are often a concern, reiterated by Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu’s recent comments.³ Such concerns should be

³ *Novosti Pridnestrovyia*, ‘Shoigu: visokotochnoye oruzhiye mozhet zamenit yaderniye vooruzheniya kak faktor strategicheskogo sderzhivaniya [Shoigu: High Precision Weapons May Replace Nuclear Weapons as a Factor of Strategic Deterrence]’, 12 January 2017.

explored more fully to understand where measures can be taken for reassurance that may minimise escalation. This will only be effective if any efforts are reciprocated.

The issue of transponders offers a good example of the value of talking through the difference between the perceptions and the reality of a security threat. In London, some participants felt Russia was owed an explanation as to why the transponder proposal, which would have required all planes in the Baltic region to fly with their transponders on, was not considered by NATO in September 2016. In Moscow, both UK and Russian participants agreed that this issue was a 'red herring'. As one expert noted, 'NATO made a big fuss about Russian [aircraft] flying with transponders off. Then it discovered that Allies on national missions did the same thing'. Misunderstanding on this issue arose partly because of inadequate coordination between civil to military practitioners. It was noted, however, that seeking methods and rules to minimise the risk of incidents in the air and at sea was a potential priority for further discussion.

Bilateral discussions could focus on dangerous military activities (DMA). If it is appropriate to multilateralise them, the UK and Russia could lead on establishing a NATO–Russia Military Crisis Group to avoid dangerous military incidents. There is already a hotline between the UK's MoD and the National Defence Control Centre that works for engaging on sensitive issues. In a bilateral context, it was also highlighted that the UK and Russia do have an agreement regarding the Incidents at Sea Agreement (INCSEA). This has been updated as the UK increasingly deploys in the Baltic region, but it could be expanded. One UK expert who attended the London workshop felt that, of particular note is the INCSEA's failure to include provisions on submerged submarines and aerial encounters, which are set to become increasingly frequent as Russia and NATO member states expand their military activities. The UK's adherence to the US–Russia de-confliction agreement in Syria shows that operational expediency can be an impetus for the swift implementation of new agreements.⁴

To address this, it is worth exploring the idea of a UK–Russia agreement on the prevention of DMA based on the US–USSR 1989 agreement, which would expand to encompass encounters on land and in the air. This would offer detailed procedures to ensure no further confrontation takes place if an incident occurs. It was also suggested that a Euro–Atlantic Naval Symposium could be created based on the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, of which both the US and Russia are members.

The manner in which military action is communicated could also assist in building a more constructive relationship and could assist in enhancing transparency if done sincerely. One Russian participant recalled that immediately after 9/11 Putin spoke to then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, who told the Russian leader that the US had put their nuclear forces on high alert but that this was not directed at his country. Russia said it would postpone nuclear exercises. This clearly took place in a different context and political atmosphere, but the

⁴ Thomas Frear, European Leadership Network, additional explanatory note, 27 January 2017.

UK and Russia need to articulate their position more clearly towards each other. The autumn Zapad 2017 exercises could be a good opportunity, provided that they are communicated in a manner that is consistent with the spirit of the Vienna Document, and refrain from repeating artificial methods of keeping these below notification thresholds. Another UK participant suggested that a discussion be had about mutual observation of snap exercises, given that they cause a high degree of concern for European countries.

The value of existing and possible new treaties was also discussed within the confidence-building context. The divergence in opinion has again been highlighted by the apparent degradation of key military agreements. Good examples include recent accusations that Moscow violated the INF treaty by testing and deploying a medium-range, ground-launched cruise missile, and that the US violated the treaty with the Aegis and MK-41 launch systems. It was noted that under the current circumstances it would be very difficult to create new legally binding agreements on arms control. However, discussions about arms control agreements were still viewed as useful confidence-building measure, particularly given that violation or withdrawal from the treaties affects wider Europe, not just the US and Russia. The UK should make this clear to both signatories, particularly given that the absence of a commitment to such agreements would likely cause an increase in arms development and deployment across Europe. There is therefore a need, during discussions on such issues, to look for other implementation assurances and guarantees. A Track 1.5 discussion, possibly in a multilateral format, would add more substance to this idea.

Some UK participants argued that a commitment to self-determination and territorial integrity for all signatory states, as enshrined in the Helsinki Accords, is clearly no longer shared between Russia and the UK. Many participants felt a discussion around the fundamental principles of the European security system, such as those enshrined in the Helsinki Accords, was valuable in order to articulate differences in interpretations and narratives as well as opportunities to bridge or to narrow interpretation gaps. That is not to say that such principles will be altered, but debating them would draw out the key problem areas in such principles.

Middle East and Afghanistan

It was unsurprising that there was some scepticism as to whether there could be much cooperation diplomatically or on conflict resolution in the Middle East, particularly Syria. This is not only due to the fluidity of the situation, but because there are clearly clashing approaches. One UK participant suggested an initiative on humanitarian aid in Syria, which would be valuable. However, the implementation of this could be challenging given the Syrian government's unwillingness to cooperate. Cooperation on de-radicalisation in the Israel–Palestine conflict was also proposed, but some felt this conflict was already too complex. Both Russian and UK experts did agree that the current tensions between Iran and a number of Gulf Arab states constitute a fundamental challenge to regional security. Russia and the UK could work towards reducing such tensions, particularly through their own diplomatic channels.

One area of shared interest could be Afghanistan. There are clearly differences between the UK and Russia as to which groups to engage with and how to stabilise the country, but the country's stability is still a shared interest. One Russian expert claimed that Russia takes a holistic approach to Afghanistan, trying to engage all sides, and it is 'not doing anything that others have not already done'. If this is the case, then the UK and Russia should discuss Afghanistan further.

Regardless of their respective approaches, both the UK and Russia clearly have strong experience in this area. One Russian participant complimented the UK on its strong analytical capabilities on Afghanistan, particularly David Mansfield's work on the narcotics economy, noting that the 'head of Russian counter-narcotics uses this data'. One UK expert who had spent time in Afghanistan said that, in Kabul, the 'Russian diplomats always knew the most'. Therefore, some form of bilateral or multilateral discussion on combatting narcotics in Afghanistan, possibly under the auspices of the OSCE, might be an entry point for engagement. This is also highly relevant to Central Asia, which suffers not only from the narcotics trade but also acts as a transit region for drugs to Russia, China and Europe. This could form the basis of a multilateral discussion and create a foundation on which to have broader discussions on the stabilisation of the country.

Cyber Security

Discussions on cyber and information were more constructive than anticipated. There was discussion around whether cyber ‘norms’ could be developed to contain the threat from cyber weapons. There have been attempts at this, as shown by the Tallinn Manual and also by the work done by the UN Group of Governmental Experts on cyber issues, which attempted to set out voluntary norms in information and communication technologies, published in July 2015.⁵

As one Russian participant mentioned, even Microsoft has put forward six norms to reduce conflict in cyberspace by which states should abide.⁶

Many felt that, realistically, the UK was ‘very unlikely to have engagement from Russia on norms in cyber’ and that cyber is ‘too politically useful’ for Russia to have such norms. That is not to say a conversation would be pointless, as one suggestion was to at least engage in a discussion to attempt to set boundaries on, for example, loss of life through cyber attacks, attacks on critical infrastructure or infection of IT products with malware.

More realistically, experts in Moscow proposed setting up data exchange channels in the case of cyber security crises. This is particularly relevant to vulnerable sectors, such as banking. The use of private companies would be useful since, even in politically difficult times, at the corporate level ‘people can pick up the phone’. Public–private partnerships worked well in destroying the Avalanche criminal server in November 2016, involving Europol, Interpol, Germany and private players such as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.⁷

Creating a cyber hotline would also be useful. One Russian participant noted that such a line was used between Russia and the US during the Sochi Olympics in 2014 in order to warn Russia of any known criminal hackers acting from the US. Although it did not work as quickly as it should have, it was still a significant confidence-building measure.

To further explore this in-depth, reference was made to a joint study conducted by Moscow’s Higher School of Economics and Harvard University on opportunities for US–Russia cooperation in cyber security. Similar research – between the UK and Russia – would greatly refine suggestions and also be a bilateral confidence-building measure in itself.⁸

⁵ UN General Assembly, ‘Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security’, A/70/174, 22 July 2015.

⁶ Paul Nicholas, ‘Six Proposed Norms to Reduce Conflict in Cyberspace’, Microsoft Secure Blog, 20 January 2015.

⁷ European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs, ‘“Avalanche” Network Dismantled in International Cyber Operation’, 1 December 2016.

⁸ Thomas Remington et al., ‘Toward U.S.–Russia Bilateral Cooperation in the Sphere of Cybersecurity’, Working Group Paper 7, Working Group on the Future of US–Russia Relations, May 2016.

Arms Control and Non-Proliferation

Part of the challenge of any discussion on arms control is that it is less of a UK–Russia bilateral issue and more a US–Russia one. As mentioned, it was acknowledged that in the current climate it would be very difficult to create any new legally binding agreements on arms control. One Russian participant also claimed that there would be a lack of political will, stating that ‘nuclear arms control is not a top priority for Russian leadership today’. Both sides agreed that to engage a third nuclear power like the UK into the bilateral US–Russian strategic arms control discussion would be complicated and potentially unproductive.

There was also a large degree of concern towards the future of existing agreements. Apart from the previous suggestions regarding INF, both sides agreed that there needs to be commitment to New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty renewal as well as on reinforcing commitment to treaties that seem to still work, such as the Treaty on Open Skies, which establishes a regime for unarmed aerial observation flights between the US and Russia. However, in 2014 the US did accuse Russia of failing to observe this treaty by restricting flights over Kalinin-grad.⁹ The UK should encourage both sides to fully respect these agreements.

Despite this scepticism, arms control was still viewed by some as a mechanism for increasing channels for information sharing and transparency, potentially within the NATO context. This is something the UK could facilitate. The current asymmetries of conventional and nonconventional capabilities were pointed out as necessary for future discussions on the issue. As one Russian participant commented, ‘we should think not about the arithmetic, but about algebra about arms control’.

One UK participant suggested examining the prospect of more information sharing on ballistic missile defence (BMD) in Europe and on Russian tactical nuclear weapons in a bid to allay each side’s fears. BMD is clearly a sticking point for Russia and, in both London and Moscow, UK participants suggested that there be some form of BMD verification mechanism so that Russia could be reassured that US/NATO capabilities were purely defensive, or, alternatively, that there could even be a revisiting of the ‘burden sharing’ approach to BMD. It was acknowledged that this is highly unlikely to result in any formal agreement, but further discussions on transparency and information sharing could add another framework for confidence building and risk reduction in particular.

Non-proliferation was another point of shared concern. The UK and Russia have a mutual interest in ensuring that the Iran deal is sustained and they could therefore work together to ensure interest remains, both from the US and Iran, in observing the deal both in spirit and letter. The UK and Russia could also engage

⁹ Eric Schmitt and Michael R Gordon, ‘Russia Wants Closer Look From Above the U.S.’, *New York Times*, 22 February 2016.

more on the risks posed by North Korean proliferation. It was mentioned that both should use the P5 process to seek to multilateralise current US–Russian risk-reduction (hotline) arrangements, particularly for nuclear crises. Talks could also involve issues such as strategic stability and what it means in an age of full-spectrum warfare, arms control and the NPT.

There were some more creative suggestions for topics for engagement that may appear less political. One included risks around radiological weapons. The idea was raised of discussing cyber in the context of the command and control of nuclear weapons of third-party states, such as North Korea. However, cyber specialists noted that anything to do with nuclear in this context would likely be too sensitive for cooperation.

Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism

As expected, there was a high degree of scepticism that, at the political level, there could be meaningful comprehensive cooperation on counterterrorism and countering violent extremism, particularly given the challenges of intelligence sharing. A challenge remains as to how each side defines the threat, identifies terrorist groups and individuals, and approves the methods to counter them. For now, it is more likely that cooperation will take place at an ad hoc level. The 2018 World Cup could also form another such ad hoc instance of cooperation on security to prevent terrorist acts and protect those citizens attending.

In practical terms, it was noted that there could be more academic exchanges on the drivers behind radicalisation, on typologies, forensic science, foreign fighter flows, the threat posed by right-wing extremists and government policies towards tackling such issues. One Russian counterterrorism expert was particularly interested in learning more about the UK's Prevent strategy, suggesting that a comparative analysis of both the threat posed to the UK and Russia on these issues and each state's response would be useful. The issue of migration as a factor in counterterrorism was also raised as a common area of concern. Examining issues of radicalisation in other regions, such as Central Asia, which is highly relevant to Afghanistan, was also suggested.

Another potential point of cooperation could be on countering terrorist finance. Although, again, this may be too sensitive given the need for intelligence sharing, it was noted that nonsensitive information could also be shared. The UK's Joint Money Laundering Intelligence Taskforce, which has been replicated in other countries such as Singapore, was highlighted as a potential model for Russia.

About RIAC and RUSI

The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) is a non-profit international relations think-tank on a mission to provide policy recommendations for all of the Russian organizations involved in external affairs.

RIAC engages experts, statesmen and entrepreneurs in public discussions with an end to increase the efficiency of Russian foreign policy.

Along with research and analysis, the Russian Council is involved in educational activities to create a solid network of young global affairs and diplomacy experts.

RIAC is a player on the second-track and public diplomacy arena, contributing the Russian view to international debate on the pending issues of global development.

Members of RIAC are the thought leaders of Russia's foreign affairs community – among them diplomats, businessmen, scholars, public leaders and journalists.

President of RIAC Igor Ivanov, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation from 1998 to 2004 and Secretary of the Security Council from 2004 to 2007.

Director General of RIAC is Andrey Kortunov. From 1995 to 1997, Dr. Kortunov was Deputy Director of the Institute for US and Canadian Studies.

The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) is the world's oldest and the UK's leading defence and security think tank. Its mission is to inform, influence and enhance public debate on a safer and more stable world. RUSI is a research-led institute, producing independent, practical and innovative analysis to address today's complex challenges.

Since its foundation in 1831, RUSI has relied on its members to support its activities. Together with revenue from research, publications and conferences, RUSI has sustained its political independence for 185 years.

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