



Defence Academy
of the United Kingdom

Research & Assessment Branch

Russian Series

US – Russia Strategic Relations: Obama and Biden Visit
Moscow, Tbilisi and Kiev – Planned Contradictions?

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Key Findings

- The potential benefits of the agreements signed during President Obama's visit to Moscow are enormous, but only if both sides are ready to reach beyond sign-and-celebrate policies.
- Vice-President Biden's subsequent visit to Kiev and Tbilisi damaged Obama's standing in Moscow and raised questions of who is in charge of US policy towards Russia, or whether the US President means what he says. Moscow is likely to be more cautious when considering US proposals and initiatives.
- The two issues which both capitals are preoccupied with are the possible spill-over of the Afghan and Pakistani conflict to Central Asia, as well as the reduction in strategic weapons delivery systems and warheads.
- Nothing can be more counterproductive than attempts to divide Medvedev and Putin or presenting Moscow with contradictory policies and statements.

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Expectations

During the presidency of George W. Bush, US-Russia relations were the worst since the end of the Cold War, even though on a personal level Medvedev got on well with the US president. In fact, after Barak Obama's visit to Moscow in July 2009, President Medvedev went as far as to say that "I won't hide the fact that last year I found it more difficult to communicate with the US president at the time because our positions on very many issues differed. I would put it this way: it is just a pleasure to talk to George W Bush. He is a straightforward and quick-minded man but unfortunately this had no effect on bilateral relations and, to be honest with you, often had negative consequences".¹

Moscow expected that with the election of Barak Obama, US foreign policy would change, even though Russian experts viewed with apprehension his links first with Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's National Security Adviser, seen in Moscow not only as anti-Soviet but also as anti-Russian, and second with Michael McFaul, a noted authority on Russia. Russia was ready to improve relations with the USA and the West as a whole. In April 2009, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that even the possibility of relations improving would gain its own momentum, "irrespective of what decisions will be taken by Barak Obama's administration in the coming months".²

Before Obama's visit to Moscow, a Russian commentator summarised Washington's expectations as "help-in-Afghanistan-and-put-some-pressure-on-Iran" and Moscow's as "get-away-from-our-borders".³ Both sides are interested in the reduction of strategic offensive weapons, although Russia was certain to insist on the removal of the missile defence system from Poland and the Czech Republic.⁴

Although the positive statements on nuclear weapons reduction immediately following the visit were pre-scripted by experts and diplomats - Russia and the US agreed on all parameters on strategic arms reductions the day before the summit in Moscow⁵ - there was no guarantee that President Obama's visit would be a success.

In August 2005, Senator Obama's stay in Russia was clouded by a strange incident, when his passport mysteriously disappeared during the check-in procedure at Perm airport. How the passport of a visiting US senator could disappear for four hours, at an airport boasting a total of four check-in desks, three gates and four baggage claim belts, has never been explained.⁶

Moscow is incensed by Washington's support of what it terms the invasion of South Ossetia by Georgian troops in August 2008, and the way the US refused to acknowledge the previous indiscriminate shelling of the civilian population by the Georgian side. In this respect Barak Obama was seen as not much different from his predecessor. Already at the end of July 2008, before the brief Russo-Georgian conflict, Senator Obama had issued a statement on the tensions in the Caucasus region, saying in particular that "the fact that Russia has become a party to the conflict means that Russia is not qualified to play the role of a mediator".⁷ A month later, he strongly criticised Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia's independence in a written statement: "I condemn Russia's decision to recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states and call upon all countries of the world not to accord any legitimacy to this action".⁸ He also called for international isolation of Russia.

Moscow is not happy with the US Congress showing great interest in the fate of two imprisoned Russian businessmen, Mikhail Khodorkovskiy and Platon Lebedev. On 18 and 26 June 2009 the US Senate and House of Representatives passed resolutions describing the imprisonment of the two men as politically motivated and called for the charges against them to be dropped.⁹ The issue is complicated by the fact that President Medvedev has stated publicly that Khodorkovskiy is guilty;¹⁰ so at this stage, any US pressure on Russia can only damage relations between the two countries. Nevertheless, the Khodorkovskiy case provides the US Congress with an excuse to keep Russia under the Jackson-Vanik amendment.¹¹

On the eve of Obama's visit to Moscow, US officials allegedly attempted to reduce Prime Minister Putin's role in the visit, a suggestion rejected outright by the Russian side.¹² And then, just before his visit to Russia, the US president said: "I think Putin has one foot in the old ways of doing business and one foot in the new, and to the extent that we can provide him and the Russian people a clear sense that the US is not seeking an antagonistic relationship but wants cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation, fighting terrorism, energy issues, that we'll end up having a stronger partner overall in this process."¹³

Obama in Moscow

Obama landed at Moscow's Vnukovo-2 airport, on 6 July and had, almost immediately, an approximately three-hour meeting with Medvedev.¹⁴ The same day, the two leaders signed a preliminary agreement to reduce their countries' nuclear arsenals. Medvedev described the agreement as "a basic element of our mutual security".¹⁵ Already in April 2009, during their first meeting in London, Obama and Medvedev had announced the start of negotiations on a new strategic arms-control treaty that would cut each

nation's long-range nuclear arsenal.¹⁶ In Moscow, the two leaders also discussed the situation in Iran and the North Korean nuclear programme, and Dmitriy Medvedev stressed that “the situation on the planet depends on the situation in the North Korean Peninsula, in the Middle East”.¹⁷ President Obama reportedly described the meeting as extraordinary and used the same term the following day, when speaking about Putin’s work.¹⁸ Before the meeting, the Russian president presented Barak Obama with a report on cooperation between the Russian Defence Ministry and the Pentagon on improving nuclear security, and several pre-revolutionary historical documents.¹⁹

The following day Obama had breakfast with Vladimir Putin. The beginning of the rather long breakfast, broadcast by many TV stations, did not have the air of a friendly encounter, and the US president’s praise of the Russian foreign minister’s English was answered briskly by an unsmiling Putin: “We’ve got lots of those”.²⁰ The meeting must have been reasonably successful as the two men spoke for two hours, instead of the one and half originally planned,²¹ despite Obama twice mistakenly referring to Putin as “president”.²² Both sides presented the preliminary strategic-arms reduction treaty as a major success of the visit. Yuriy Ushakov, deputy chief of staff of the government of the Russian Federation and a former Russian ambassador to Washington, said that Barak Obama had promised, in the next few weeks or at most months, to formulate the US policy on the missile defence systems in Central Europe, and to consider the Russian position on the issue.²³

Strategic weapons reduction...

The US and Russia possess about 95% of all the world’s nuclear weapons, and in the author’s opinion the two countries have no reason to fear any other potential adversary. Eighteen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union the two nuclear superpowers are not going to use their strategic arsenal to fight one another. The main problem for both sides is how they are going to dispose of them and how much it is going to cost.

The two countries agreed to cut the number of nuclear warheads to between 1,500-1,675 and the number of delivery vehicles to between 500 –1,100, which equates to one-eighth of the arsenal the two super-powers had in 1988.²⁴

In early 2009, the US had 450 Minuteman III ICBMs, including 300 Minuteman III-M and 150 Minuteman III-S; fourteen Ohio class submarines carrying 336 Trident II submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and 152 strategic bombers (eighty-four B-52s, fifty-two B-1Bs, and sixteen B-2As). The US therefore had 938 strategic weapon carriers, within the limits of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I).²⁵ However, the SORT (Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty), a.k.a the Moscow Treaty, signed by Russia and the USA in 2002, limits the number of strategic carriers to 862. The current total of US warheads is: 1665. Thus the US is already within the

boundaries of the recent agreement, both in terms of delivery vehicles as well as warheads.

A vocal but powerless group of Russian experts argue against the recent reduction agreement. Vitaliy Shlykov, a prominent member of the Foreign Policy and Defence Council and a former GRU analyst, argues that Russia has at the moment only about 600 launchers and the US has about 1200, which means an imbalance and the need for modest US cuts. The Russian critics also point out that Russia will have to destroy 50 warheads, and they want to set up a joint Russo-US missile threat evaluation group.²⁶ Maj-Gen Vladimir Dvorkin, one of Russia's foremost technical experts on SALT II, the INF Treaty, START I and START II, said that the proposed bracket of delivery vehicles: 500 – 1,100, is much too wide. He doubts whether the US will destroy the existing vehicles and thinks that the 1,500-1,675 warhead bracket, which both sides accepted, proves that the two countries “have not managed to reach concrete agreements”.²⁷

Russian sceptics also point out that Russia will have to get rid of their RS-18, RS20B and RS20V missiles. This will leave 60 single-warhead, silo-based Topol-M missiles, and a further 18 mobile Topol-Ms. In addition, Russia will be likely to manufacture 60 new multi-warhead Topol-Ms with six MIRVs²⁸ each. By 2017, therefore, Moscow may have 60 MIRV missiles, 60 single warhead silo-based missiles, and 18 single-warhead mobile missiles for a total of 438 ground-based warheads.²⁹

All five of Russia's Delta III (667BDR) Kalmar type SSBNs³⁰ in the Pacific Fleet will be decommissioned by 2017. They are to be replaced by Project 955 Borey (Yuri Dolgorukiy) class SSBNs with 12 (SLBMs) Bulava class and by Aleksander Nevskiy and Vladimir Monomakh subs, with 16 Bulavas each, making a total of 44 launchers with 264 warheads. The Northern Fleet has six 667 BDRM, Delta IV, Delfin class SSBNs, each carrying sixteen R-29RMU2 Sineva SLBMs with four MIRVs each, which translates into 96 delivery vehicles with 384 warheads. That gives Russia, in total, 140 submarine-launched missiles with 648 warheads.

The Russian Air Force has sixteen Tu-160 Blackjack strategic bombers and four more are to be produced by 2017. This fleet of 20 would be able to deliver 240 warheads. By 2017, Russia will still have about fifty Tu-95MS Bear bombers carrying six long-range missiles, 300 warheads in total. All these give the Russian Air Force 70 bombers with 540 warheads.

Russia therefore has a grand total of 348 delivery vehicles of all types, with 1,626 warheads.³¹

Some of the critics of the strategic weapons agreement appear to worry more about the speed of deterioration of the present Russian nuclear assets and the inability of the Russian military industrial complex to match even the reduced US arsenal. They are also aware that paper calculations do not match their country's real capabilities. According to former C-in-C of the Russian Strategic Missile Forces Nikolay Solovtsov, in mid-2008 Russia had 415 launchers capable of carrying 1575 nuclear warheads. In January 2009,

it had 385 launchers and 1357 warheads.³² Thus Russia's nuclear forces are undergoing a precipitate decline even before the signing of any reduction agreement.

Leonid Ivashov, the traditionally hawkish President of the Russian Academy of Geopolitical Problems, insists that the cut in the strategic offensive weapons must be accompanied by the US and their allies stopping the development of air defence/anti-missile systems, because the reduction of the nuclear arsenal would force Russia to compete with the US in the development and production of conventional offensive weapons. If the nuclear weapons are cut below the level of 1500 warheads, Ivashov says, by 2020 Russia would cease to be a member of the most powerful troika and would be relegated to the military second league, with France, Germany, Japan and others.³³

Both nuclear super-powers are ready to reduce their nuclear arsenal, but to achieve this, agreement will have to be reached on the US Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) programme, probably meaning Washington abandoning its missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic – a system which according to Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the State Duma's international affairs committee, disrupts strategic balance. Kosachev also described a US attempt to peg the unilateral deployment of this missile defence system to Iranian plans for development of missiles as a “non-starter”, and added that Iran should not serve as a bargaining chip.³⁴ The decision not to deploy defensive missiles in Poland and the accompanying radar in the Czech Republic is expected to be taken in Washington, without too much concern about the political fall-out in Warsaw and Prague, close NATO allies whom the US not so long ago tried to convince to accept the system.

...and other agreements.

The most important, immediate issue for the US delegation was air transit to Afghanistan, covering commercial and military transport flights.³⁵ Medvedev and Obama signed the air transit agreement. Similar agreements, on a much smaller scale, had been signed earlier with France, Germany and Spain, and one with Italy is expected to be signed in the near future. Only Germany has a rail-transit agreement with Russia but the Germans are yet to use it.³⁶

By using Russian and Central Asian air transit routes, the US is expected to save \$133m on fuel, maintenance and other transportation costs annually, although some sources argue that this sum would include the navigation fees which Moscow is apparently willing to waive.³⁷ Other sources argue that the transit agreement will save the US \$140m – the final saving will depend also on the price of fuel - and that Russia's decision not to charge the US for the use of its airspace will save another \$20m.³⁸ The annual limit of 4500 transit flights would give the US 12 -13 flights daily.³⁹ The agreement on transit comes into force sixty days after the signing, or 6 September 2009.⁴⁰

Russia and the US agreed also to improve their military cooperation. Alexander Vershbow, Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security, stated that Russia is one of his main priorities and that the US will try and restore defence and security relations. Vershbow added that the two countries need better communication channels.⁴¹

During the visit, Russian Chief General Staff Army General Nikolay Makarov and Chairman of the US Armed Forces Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen signed a framework document on the development of cooperation between the armed forces of the Russian Federation and the United States, as well as a memorandum approving a working plan for upgrading military cooperation between the two countries' armed forces. The United States and Russia agreed to carry out "almost 20 interdepartmental exchanges and operational measures before the end of this year", including a strategic dialogue between the US Armed Forces Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Russian Armed Forces General Staff, the planning of a joint exercise, and familiarization trips by cadets of Russian military schools to West Point Military Academy.⁴²

Obama and Medvedev have also agreed to set up a presidential commission, chaired by themselves, with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton jointly in charge of coordinating its work. The new body will replace the "Chernomyrdin-Gore" commission and will consist, initially, of 13 working groups including:

- nuclear energy and nuclear safety,
- arms control and international security,
- foreign policy and combating terrorism,
- countering drug trafficking,
- business, trade and economic relations ties,
- energy and environment,
- agriculture,
- science and technology,
- space cooperation,
- health care,
- emergencies,
- civil society,
- educational and cultural contacts.

More groups and subgroups are likely to be set up in the future.⁴³

With the exception of some disarmament sceptics, Barak Obama's visit is seen in Moscow as a positive sign and a step in the right direction. Mikhail Margelov, chairman of the Russian Federation Council International Affairs Committee, commented that the visit made a start at unfreezing relations between Russia and the USA.⁴⁴ The day after President Obama's departure, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrey Nesterenko said that "the presidents heeded and understood each other, which made it possible to come closer on a number of important issues. Of course, we did not solve all

problems, but a clear guideline was set to arrange regular, systematic movement to clearly understood goals."⁴⁵

Vice-President Biden – the other face of US foreign policy

The Russo–Georgian conflict was one subject Moscow and Washington couldn't agree on. During his Moscow visit Barak Obama declared that "Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected".⁴⁶ The problem with Georgian territorial integrity is that Washington and Moscow disagree on where Georgia starts and where it ends. The attitude of both Medvedev and Putin during the brief military conflict in August 2008 was angry and uncompromising. Even recently Dmitriy Medvedev described the Georgian attack on South Ossetia as "loutish".⁴⁷ As long as Mikhail Saakashvili is president of Georgia, the chances for talks and compromises are practically zero. While the verbal support given to Georgia by President Obama was measured and diplomatic, Vice-President Biden's loud criticism of Russia and his in-your-face support for Saakashvili damaged relations between Washington and Moscow. Biden is seen in Moscow as Obama's Dick Cheney. His July interview with The Wall Street Journal⁴⁸ was received as anti-Russian, especially when he claimed that Russia's economy is "withering" and that this trend will force Moscow to be more accommodating on a wide range of security issues. "Some argued the last administration made a deal on Chechnya in return for no response on Iraq. We are not going to do that. It is not necessary to do that," Biden said in the interview, and furthermore that "these guys aren't absolute average-intellect ideologues who are clinging to something nobody believes in. They are pretty pragmatic in the end".⁴⁹ The interview led even to the moderate Nezavisimaya Gazeta newspaper commenting that Biden may ruin, or at best, slow down, normalisation of US-Russia relations.⁵⁰

Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov described Biden's interview as "a copy of a speech by leading officials of the George W Bush administration."⁵¹ Only President Medvedev, probably in anticipation of Barak Obama's visit, didn't criticise the US Vice-President's interview but sounded uncompromising when referring to Russo-Georgian relations in his monthly media interview.⁵²

Biden's two day visit to Kiev started on 20 July. The following day, Vice – President declared that the US does not see Ukraine as a part of Russia's sphere of influence and that Ukraine has the right to choose whether to join NATO or not.⁵³ At the moment, Moscow hopes that the independent policy of President Yushchenko will disappear, in the not too distant future, with his political demise. Argument over the Crimea may turn ugly in the future but not quite yet.

Biden's trip to Georgia was bound to upset Moscow; US military assistance to Tbilisi and uncritical support of Georgian foreign policy has never been forgiven. Biden arrived in Tbilisi on 22 July and the same day, during an

official dinner, expressed his whole-hearted support for the Georgian position on South Ossetia and Abkhazia, amplifying his commitment with the statement: "President Obama asked me to come back, to send an unequivocal and clear simple message to all who will listen and those even who won't listen that America stands with you at this moment and we will continue to stand with you".⁵⁴ Biden's declaration that the US partnership with Georgia "involves meeting security challenges" was responded to calmly but pointedly in Moscow. Konstantin Zatulin, first deputy chairman of the State Duma committee on CIS affairs, commented on the US Vice-President's visit to Georgia: "This is natural, given last year's experience, when the visits and calls to Tbilisi by officials from the US administration were perceived by Tbilisi as *carte blanche* to start military action in [South] Ossetia."⁵⁵

Conclusions

Barak Obama's visit to Moscow and Joe Biden's visits to Kiev and Tbilisi upset Moscow because their statements looked like a simplistic attempt to conduct two contradictory foreign policies, with the US hoping somehow that Russia wouldn't notice. The Russians may have joked that the reason why Hilary Clinton didn't accompany Obama was because she couldn't pronounce "Medvedev",⁵⁶ and noted that her attempt to reset/overload US-Russia relations indicates incompetence among her team,⁵⁷ but they found the continuing and robust US support for Mikhail Saakashvili less amusing. The suggestion of US Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon that Washington is not ruling out Russian membership in NATO won't be seen in Moscow as a realistic policy but yet another short-term media tease. Even if the unthinkable were to happen and Russia agreed to leap over all the required hurdles to join NATO, several new members would immediately veto its membership.

Moscow may be ready to reduce the number of its launchers, delivery vehicles and nuclear warheads, because it is in its own interest, but that doesn't mean that Russia will not defend its interests robustly or make it any less likely that this may put her on a collision course with the US and other NATO members.

The potential benefits of the agreements signed during President Obama's visit to Moscow are enormous, but only if both sides are ready to reach beyond sign-and-celebrate policies. The Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission, set up in 1993 to build a new partnership between the US and Russia could have achieved more, in spite of several international conflicts which saw the two sides in the opposing political camps. The commission achieved very little because Russia was going through a difficult period and was not treated as a serious partner by the US. Sixteen years later, Russia is a different country but the USA has still not learned to devote the effort required to deal with both its challenges as well as its opportunities.

Endnotes

- ¹ BBCM: Vesti, 10 July 2009
- ² Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn, 5/2009, p.7
- ³ BBCM: REN TV, 6 July 2009. Medvedev was the first foreign leader to meet Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad, in Yekaterinburg, in June 2009, after Ahmedinejad's "victory". <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE55F0YA20090616>
- ⁴ Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Carl Levin's visit to Poland and the Czech Republic in the mid April 2009 made both capitals unhappy as it became obvious that the two countries will not be able to influence in any way Washington's decision concerning the removal of the air defence system for which in the past it lobbied so hard in both capitals.
- ⁵ Interfax, 6 July 2009.
- ⁶ Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 6 July 2009 and <http://www.azworldairports.com/airports/a2365pee.cfm>
- ⁷ http://www.sras.org/official_statements_on_russia_georgia_conflict
- ⁸ <http://www.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSN2636190820080826>
- ⁹ Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 1 July 2009
- ¹⁰ Medvedev, by Nikolay and Marina Svanidze, Moscow: Amfora, 2008, p293.
- ¹¹ The Jackson-Vanik amendment of the Trade Act of 1974 was aimed at allowing religious minorities, mainly Jews, to emigrate from the USSR. After a unanimous vote of support by both houses of the US Congress, President Ford signed the amendment into law in January 1975. The Russians regard the amendment as a Cold-War weapon used inappropriately in the post Cold-War world in order for Washington to advance its trade and political interests in Russia. The amendment has also caused a tug-of-war between the president and Congress. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/19734/>
- ¹² Vedomosti, 20 July 2009, pA4
- ¹³ The Guardian 2 July 2009. The Daily Telegraph 3 July 2009
- ¹⁴ <http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/obama/2009/07/06/obama-medvedev-agree-to-limit-nuclear-warheads.html>
- ¹⁵ RIA Novosti, 6 July 2009
- ¹⁶ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/01/AR2009040100242.html>
- ¹⁷ RIA Novosti, 6 July 2009
- ¹⁸ Vesti, 7 July 2009; <http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/obama/2009/07/06/obama-medvedev-agree-to-limit-nuclear-warheads.html>
- ¹⁹ Novyye Izvestiya, 7 July 2009
- ²⁰ Euronews TV, 7 July 2009; Vesti, 7 July 2009
- ²¹ Vesti 7 July 2009
- ²² Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 8 July 2009
- ²³ BBCM: Kommersant 8 July 2009
- ²⁴ Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 9 July 2009
- ²⁵ Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) was originally presented as a proposal by the USA in 1982. It was signed by the USSR and the USA in July 1991. The treaty expires in December 2009. Moscow was never happy with the treaty as the USSR fell apart five months later, leading to Belorussia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan sending their nuclear weapons to Russia and the whole geostrategic situation in the region changing to Moscow's disadvantage.
- ²⁶ Gazeta, 7 July 2009
- ²⁷ Interfax-AVN news agency 6 July 2009
- ²⁸ Multiple independently-targeted re-entry vehicle – in other words multiple warheads on a single missile.
- ²⁹ Voyenno Promyshlenniy Kurier, No27, 2009, pp1&6
- ³⁰ SS - submersible ship, B - ballistic missile, N - nuclear powered.
- ³¹ Voyenno-Promyshlenniy Kurier, No27, 2009, pp1&6. Various Russian sources mention different figures when referring to launchers, delivery vehicles and warheads. According to one source, Russia has 3909 nuclear warheads and the US, 5576. Vremya Novostey, 23 June 2009.
- ³² Izvestiya (Moscow edition) 22 June 2009
- ³³ Nezavisimaya Gazeta 6 July 2009

³⁴ Vesti 8 July 2009

³⁵ Vesti, 7 July 2009. For transit corridors to Afghanistan the US also needs the cooperation of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

³⁶ Vesti 7 July 2009

³⁷ Vremya Novostey, 8 July 2009; Krasnaya Zvezda, 8 July 2009; Novaya Gazeta, 13 July 2009; Afghanistan News Centre

<http://www.afghanistannewscenter.com/news/2009/july/jul72009.html#9>

³⁸ BBCM: Izvestiya, 9 July 2009

³⁹ Vesti TV 7 July 2009

⁴⁰ Vremya Novostey, 13 August 2009

⁴¹ Vremya Novostey, 13 August 2009

⁴² Krasnaya Zvezda, 8 July 2009. Russian CGS Makarov later said that the planned exchanges will not be implemented this year. Argumenty Nedeli, No 27, 2009

⁴³ ITAR-TASS, 6 July 2009

⁴⁴ BBCM: St Petersburg Rosbalt, 7 July 2009

⁴⁵ BBCM: Vesti, 9 July 2009

⁴⁶ BBCM: 24 Saati, 6 July 2009

⁴⁷ Vesti 13 July 2009

⁴⁸ Wall Street Journal 23 July 2009

⁴⁹ *Ibid*

⁵⁰ Vremya Novostey 28 July 2009, Nezavisimaya Gazeta 27 July 2009

⁵¹ MID, www.mid.ru; 1225-05-08-2009; Интервью Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова телеканалу «Вести», 28 июля 2009.

⁵² BBCM: NTV, 26 July 2009

⁵³ BBCM: Kiev UT1, 21 July 2009

⁵⁴ BBCM: Rustavi-2 TV, in Georgian, 22 July 2009

⁵⁵ BBCM: Ren TV, 23 July 2009

⁵⁶ During a TV debate, in the Democratic Party presidential race, Hilary Clinton was unable to pronounce “Medvedev” and concluded her two failed attempts with “whatever”.

⁵⁷ Hilary Clinton’s famous “red button” suggesting “overload” rather than “reset” in US-Russian relations was not only an error of fundamental incompetence in not asking a qualified translator, but it was not even written in Russian.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this paper are entirely and solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect official thinking and policy either of Her Majesty's Government or of the Ministry of Defence.

ISBN 978-1-905962-71-6

Published By:

Defence Academy of the
United Kingdom

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ISBN 978-1-905962-71-6