

US-Soviet Cooperation on IAEA Safeguards: Parameters of Interaction and Applicability Post-Cold War

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Milestones

- Soviet period: “superpower cooperation” (NPT negotiations, Comprehensive Safeguards, London Club)
- 1990s: “Russians were constructive” (Iraq inspections, Additional Protocol)
- “conflictual cooperation” or “cooperative conflict” (State-Level Concept)

Elements that Have Remained Unchanged:

Nonproliferation, including strong safeguards, remains shared interest/shared values.

Cooperation on technical aspects of safeguards – consistent, no variation. Shared concern for efficiency of procedures, strong technical and financial support for the IAEA safeguards capacity.

Article III Milestones:

- 1965: Soviet Union accepts principle of on-site inspections;
- 1967: joint US-Soviet NPT draft; placeholder for Article III;
- Key challenge – individual vs. group safeguards for Euratom. US divided over adherence to strict safeguards and conceding to alliance solidarity (1958 US-EURATOM cooperation agreement provided precedent);
- Consultations in Geneva: pivotal role of personal relationship. Roshchin draft to Washington and Foster draft to Moscow.
- SU could have insisted on stricter language, but bowed to US concerns.
- Other points of agreement – sufficiency of item-specific safeguards (INFCIRC/66) and establishment of the Safeguards Department.
- SU did not join Zangger Committee, but announced it would adhere to its rules.

Parameters of Compromise (1):

- Agreement on key issue (Euratom) achieved primarily as a result of Soviet concession.
- Shared motivation (support for NPT) made that concession possible. Moscow understood US problems (alliance relations) and made choice in favor of bigger (and shared) interest.
- Soviet decision-making more concentrated – decisions may be slow, but decisive turns more likely.
- Moscow could treat nonproliferation as isolated issue; Washington could not.

Parameters of Compromise (2):

- Opposite preferences for mode of cooperation: SU – superpower condominium extending experience of NPT negotiations; US – carefully avoiding bilateral interaction, insisting on consulting allies *before* the issue is negotiated with Moscow.
- Shared attitude toward international regimes: preference for legally binding negotiated arrangements, but not averse to informal agreements as necessary (SU on Zangger).
- Confidentiality of consultations.
- Personal trust between negotiators, power to make ad-hoc deals.

Conflict over State-Level Concept in the Application of Safeguards (2012-14?):

- SLC developed by the IAEA in early 2000s to optimize use of resources. Initially supported by Russia; US and Russian positions similar if not identical.
- Russian concern – possible political motives behind IAEA decisions, influence of national intelligence, etc. Legacy of Gulf II, conflict over Iran, overall worsening of relations with the West.
- Conflict subsided in 2014 after two rounds of clarifications by the IAEA that addressed Russian concerns.

Parameters of US-Russian Interaction on Safeguards in 2012-14:

- For both, nonproliferation is not isolated from other issues, but Russia allowed exogenous influences to a greater extent.
- Neither displayed interest in bilateral channels (change particularly visible for Russia). No confidentiality of interaction.
- Neither sought to suppress/limit disagreements; instead, these were exacerbated, especially by Moscow.
- No informal cooperation; Moscow strongly adhered to narrow interpretation of legally binding regimes, US developed preference for informal regimes.
- Russia factored in interests of third countries – “defender” of countries like Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, the Philippines, South Africa, etc. US continued consultations with allies.

Summary

	Soviet Union	US	Russia
Issue exclusive (isolated)?	Yes	Yes (Cold War) No (After Cold War)	No
Interaction bilateral?	Yes	Yes/No (Cold War) No (After Cold War)	No
Impact of other countries	No	Yes (friends and allies)	Yes (NPT skeptics)
Primacy of international organizations	Yes	Yes (Cold War) No (After Cold War)	Yes
Impact of other issues?	No	No (Cold War) Yes (After Cold War)	Yes

Conclusion

Two principal changes: international system and decision-making in Russia.

Although US and Russia continue to share interest in nonproliferation, elements that facilitated cooperation are no longer present. In the future, it will remain difficult to translate shared interest into action.