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Russia–USA: limited change

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The course and the results of President Medvedev's visit to the USA (22-24 June) show that the improvement in Russian-American relations has not become permanent yet. On the one hand, there are noticeable elements of the new model of bilateral relations, the key feature of which is a greater, – if still limited – Russian readiness to co-operate on issues which are essential for the USA (including Iran and Afghanistan) and Washington's respect for the special interests of Moscow (e.g. limiting US activity in the post-Soviet area). On the other hand, many contested issues (such as missile defence or the future of European security and the role of NATO) were shelved. Moreover, a great part of the US establishment is quite reserved about the new approach to Russia, and a change of the administration or its weakening may lead to a reversal of US policy and reappearance of tension in relations with Moscow.

During the visit, ten joint statements were adopted regarding bilateral and international matters, however avoiding any contested issues. Both parties did their best to demonstrate a significant improvement in relations over the past year and a half as a consequence of the reset policy proposed by the USA. However, the positive impressions of the visit have been diminished by the detention of ten individuals by the US Department of Justice on 29 June on charges of spying for Russia. <MaK>