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Routing

Parting with Illusions *Developing a Realistic Approach to Relations with Russia*

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Executive Summary

A review of America's post-Soviet strategy toward Russia is long overdue. The illusions that once guided policy are now at an end. What is needed is a dispassionate approach to Russia, wherein Americans would neither magnify nor excuse the virtues and vices of the Russian Federation but would accept the following realities:

- Russia is unlikely to become integrated into the Euro-Atlantic community and is unwilling to adjust its foreign policy priorities accordingly;
- There is broad-based support within Russia for the direction in which Vladimir Putin has taken the country;
- Russia has undergone a genuine—if limited—recovery from the collapse of the 1990s;
- Washington lacks sufficient leverage to compel Russian acquiescence to its policy preferences; and

- On a number of critical foreign policy issues, there is no clear community of interests that allows for concepts of “selective partnership” to be effective.

Any approach to Russia must be based on realistic expectations about the choices confronting Washington. The United States has two options. It can forgo the possibility of Russian assistance in achieving its key foreign policy priorities in an effort to retain complete freedom of action vis-à-vis Moscow. Or it can prioritize its objectives and negotiate a series of quid pro quos with Russia. The latter choice, however, cannot be indefinitely postponed.

Seeking an accommodation with Russia is more likely to guarantee American success in promoting its core national interests while minimizing costs—but will require U.S. policymakers to accept limits on what can be demanded of Russia.

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U.S. policy toward Russia must be based on an honest assessment of U.S. needs, interests, and capabilities.

Introduction

Why does the United States find it so difficult to establish and sustain a durable and beneficial relationship with the Russian Federation?

The post-Soviet/post-Cold War U.S.-Russia relationship has been one of the most studied, discussed, and analyzed topics in international affairs. There is certainly no lack of advice and guidance on the matter. Many of the reports that have been written take a “rational actor” approach—that is to say, by laying out common interests and threats, these reports presume that a blueprint for joint action can be created that will serve as the foundation for a renewed relationship.

In contrast, this analysis seeks to examine the factors that have inhibited policymakers from solidifying the U.S.-Russia relationship.

Whereas all bilateral relationships involve a measure of give and take, this report does not seek to provide advice to Russia on what Moscow must do in order to improve the relationship. This is not to suggest that the Russians somehow are faultless. Indeed, one can easily amass a long litany of Moscow’s missteps, ill-conceived policy initiatives and needless provocations, ranging from the Kremlin’s inability to denounce the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact to its clumsy and ham-fisted efforts to use its energy resources to extract concessions from neighboring governments such as Ukraine or foreign companies working on Russian soil.

But U.S. policy toward Russia—or any other major power—should not be solely reactive to events; it must also be based on an honest assessment of U.S. needs, interests, and capabilities. And there are always risks when embarking on such a venture; policies can fail and new approaches do not always ensure success. There is never a guarantee that the other side will accept any U.S. offer; this does not mean that the effort was worthless or that the strategic assessments that served as the foundation for the policy should be discarded outright. Indeed, it is far easier to fine-

tune a policy or to discover a new tactical approach if there is clarity about not only America’s ultimate goals but also America’s willingness to absorb costs.

Regretfully, over the last 15 years, many have clung to illusions that the United States can achieve most of its objectives at little cost and without having to make much accommodation to the interests of others. That point of view was particularly prevalent with respect to Russia, which, having emerged from the wreckage of the Soviet Union, seemed at times to be in no position to thwart U.S. preferences but instead to have to accept any relationship on American terms. Increasingly, that is no longer the case, because of Russia’s own recovery from its mid-1990s nadir as well as clear signs of “superpower fatigue” affecting America’s ability to sustain power and influence on a variety of issues around the world.

The goal of this report is not to insist on any one particular policy blueprint but instead to focus attention on the need to make choices and to be prepared to live with the outcomes. Any U.S. policy toward Russia is going to require trade-offs. Russia’s own economic recovery in recent years, coupled with the emergence of alternate international networks that give other states the ability to bypass the United States altogether, has reduced Washington’s maneuvering room. The following piece of advice, by three respected analysts, and meant to apply to U.S. policy in general, perfectly sums up what this report hopes to achieve: “We must face head-on and lean into, rather than away from, the real choices that we confront. Some are gut-wrenching in the sense that they will force us to make truly hard compromises among sets of values, preferences, and expectations that we don’t want to trade off. That is no excuse to ignore or hide from those choices.”¹

The Failure to Consummate

Many Americans are tempted to look back with nostalgia at a supposed “better time” whenever there are difficulties in the U.S.-Russia

relationship. In his memoir, Strobe Talbott, former deputy secretary of state in the Clinton administration, recorded two such instances in President Clinton's conduct of policy toward Russia. The first, in late 1993, was Clinton's lament, in confronting the complexities of dealing with Boris Yeltsin (as well as the ongoing impact of the Soviet collapse), "Boy, do I ever miss the Cold War." Seven years later, after a particularly grueling session with Yeltsin's successor Vladimir Putin—someone prepared to be far less accommodating to American proposals—Clinton told Talbott, "Let's get this thing over with so we can go see Ol' Boris."² Today, as relations between Moscow and Washington continue to deteriorate, and as pundits ominously intone that a new Cold War is looming between the United States and Russia, even Republicans who were extremely critical of the Yeltsin administration during the 1990s look back at that time as preferable to the situation today.³

Despite the promise of a new and improved relationship between Russia and the United States in the immediate aftermath of 9/11—when Robert Legvold of Columbia University could write that "Russia and the United States both stand on the verge of fundamental foreign policy choices likely to change dramatically their mutual relationship" with an eye to crafting a true alliance between the two states⁴—the old patterns have reasserted themselves. Today, Legvold declares, "Gone is the talk of 'strategic partnership,' not to mention the fanciful vision of a genuine Russo-American alliance held by some . . . not so long ago."⁵

Has Russia—or the rest of the former Soviet Union, for that matter—changed so dramatically between 2001 and 2008 that an entirely new approach is required? It's true that the Russian economy has begun a dramatic recovery from the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR and the 1998 financial crash and that high energy prices have engendered what some call confidence and others "petro-arrogance" within the Kremlin,⁶ but over the last seven years, there has been no whole-scale change in Russia's strategic orientation that would justify a major shift in U.S. policy.

Either the opportunities were overstated or the differences are not so dire.

This narrative of past opportunities lost in U.S.-Russian relations is compounded by major and dramatic disagreements within the American foreign policy establishment over how to view Russia. Indeed, one cannot help but wonder whether leading U.S. political figures are looking at the same country when they make pronouncements. In July 2007, following his meeting with President Putin, U.S. President George W. Bush declared, "Russia is a good, solid partner," citing in particular cooperation on a number of strategic issues.⁷ Senator Barack Obama, a leading Democratic candidate for president, had a much less positive assessment, telling the Chicago Council on Global Affairs earlier that spring that "Russia is neither our enemy nor close ally right now."⁸ But the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Joseph Biden (D-DE), went even further, identifying Russia under the Putin administration as one of the three principal threats to the United States.⁹

Although the United States may have contentious and difficult relations with other important countries—such as China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia—it is quite a sign of dissonance for a country like Russia to be described by senior officials and policymakers as both a strategic partner and an adversary at the same time. And such divergent positions make fashioning a coherent policy extremely difficult. Take, for instance, the question of preventing the proliferation of nuclear material. If the United States government is so divided over whether Russia is friend or foe, how can there be meaningful intelligence cooperation between the two countries? In a climate of suspicion, how can either side agree to grant access to sensitive facilities? It would be almost impossible, for example, for the United States to "help Russia obtain and maintain an effective, economic, and reliable space-based early-warning system" if a substantial segment of the U.S. foreign policy establishment was to decry the sharing of sensitive and advanced American technologies with an "enemy" state.¹⁰ Meanwhile, hostile rhetoric has surely stirred Russian suspi-

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cions about American intentions, further undermining the prospects for rapprochement. In such an environment of uncertainty, therefore, any policy that emerges is unlikely to be based on a dispassionate analysis of U.S. interests—and certainly not from a genuine strategic dialogue with Moscow.

A final ingredient to throw into the mix is an assumption shared by many that the default setting in any bilateral relationship between the United States and another country must be friendship. Richard Pipes provocatively titled his 1997 *Foreign Affairs* essay “Is Russia Still an Enemy?” but nonetheless began by noting that Russia’s pre-Soviet relations with the United States “were exceptionally friendly” and that “seven decades of U.S.-Russia hostility that followed the Bolshevik coup d’état were the result not of a conflict of interests but of the particular needs of Russia’s conquerors, the Soviet ruling elite.”¹¹ But what happens if the condition described by Senator Obama—a Russia fated to be neither a close ally nor an outright adversary to the United States—is the best outcome for the United States in terms of fulfilling most of its foreign policy objectives?

The many discussions, commissions, and committees that have advanced meaningful proposals for structuring U.S.-Russia relations since 1991 are remarkably consistent in their recommendations for a durable, “interest-based” relationship—one predicated on stemming nuclear proliferation, combating international terrorism, strengthening the United Nations as a more effective international actor, deepening Russian integration into the global economy, and promoting energy security.¹² Moreover, presidents Bush and Putin have publicly discussed these proposals at their summit meetings—in Moscow; Bratislava; and, most recently, Kennebunkport.

The problem is not the lack of an agenda—it is in getting Moscow and Washington to move to the execution stage, to make commitments and in so doing be prepared to foreclose other options. Both sides are at fault, but as former secretary of state Henry Kissinger noted in February 2001, it should

be possible to manage a relationship between Russia and the United States even when their “national interests sometimes are parallel and sometimes do not coincide.” However, Kissinger went on to say, this “requires of the United States that it have a clear sense of its own priorities.”¹³

The Crucial Questions

On December 31, 1991, the United Nations approved the request tendered by Yuli M. Vorontsov, the Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations, for the Russian Federation to be recognized as the sole successor to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in accordance with the protocol that had been negotiated among the republics of the Soviet Union in Alma-Ata (Almaty), Kazakhstan, three days earlier.

Had the collapse of the USSR fulfilled the conditions laid out by the administration of Harry S. Truman in NSC-68—the first formal attempt to define an official U.S. strategy for the Cold War? That document directed American policy “by all means short of war to (1) block further expansion of Soviet power, (2) expose the falsities of Soviet pretensions, (3) induce a retraction of the Kremlin’s control and influence, and (4) in general, so foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system that the Kremlin is brought at least to the point of modifying its behavior to conform to generally accepted international standards.”¹⁴ To the extent that all of these things occurred over the course of the Cold War, it is not clear how much was attributable to U.S. actions. In any case, a new set of questions must be applied to U.S.-Russian policy since the end of the Cold War, although these questions draw on lessons learned during the Cold War and even before.

No U.S. administration can hope to craft a sustainable, enduring policy toward Russia if it cannot provide definitive answers to three questions. Were the forces that drove the Soviet Union to expand its influence and led it into conflict with the Atlantic powers a prod-

uct largely of its Marxist-Leninist ideology, or were they rooted primarily in earlier, pre-Soviet Russian imperial tendencies? If the latter, does that mean that Russia's national interests will always set it at odds with fundamental U.S. security objectives whether tsar, commissar or democratically elected president sits in the Kremlin? Second, are American interests better served by promoting separatist tendencies across the Eurasian plain, or is the maintenance of a unified Russian state conducive to overall U.S. foreign policy goals? Finally, is the existence of Russia—in its current configuration—necessary for the functioning not only of a regional Eurasian political and economic order but also for a global international system that supports overall U.S. national interests?

Americans have often hedged their bets on these questions. Public Law 86-90, passed in 1959 and still on the books, identified “Russian communism” and its “imperialistic and aggressive policies” as a “dire threat to the security of the United States and of all the free peoples of the world,” without clarifying what was particularly Russian and what was particularly communist about the threat. In addition, a number of the “Captive Nations” whose liberation that legislation calls for are still constituent parts of the post-Soviet Russian Federation. An influential text of the early 1960s—Victor S. Mamatey's *Soviet Russian Imperialism*—described imperial expansion as part and parcel of Russia's historic aims and “expressed the aspirations of the great Russian people accurately enough.”¹⁵ George Kennan's famous “Long Telegram” of 1946 was more nuanced; while identifying pre-Soviet Russian expansionism as a problem, for Kennan it was in the “new guise of international Marxism, with its honeyed promises to a desperate and war torn outside world” that the threat posed by Moscow was “more dangerous and insidious than ever before.”¹⁶

American expectations have changed over time. When, in 1990, Alexander Solzhenitsyn suggested that Moscow, in addition to relinquishing control over the “outer empire” that was the Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe, should

also allow the Soviet republics of the Baltic States, the Caucasus and Central Asia to chart their own destinies, this was considered to be a radical declaration far in excess of stated U.S. objectives at the time.¹⁷ By 2004, the proposal for the creation of a common market (the “Single Economic Space”) that would encompass the territories Solzhenitsyn had identified in 1990 as part of a proposed “Russian Union”—Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Russia—was denounced in the West as an unacceptable manifestation of Russia's “imperial ambitions” and a plot to bring about a “reconstituted empire.”¹⁸

Dissonance in the U.S. approach to Russia could be managed during the 1990s when a weak Russia was significantly dependent on Western aid and when the Russian leadership was prepared to make major concessions to Washington in the hopes of accelerating Russian integration into the West. In turn, the United States was able to use a series of delaying measures and vague promises to postpone the inevitable day of reckoning—for example, using the “Partnership for Peace” as a hedge on the question of NATO expansion—with the hope being that the states of the former Soviet bloc and the former Soviet Union would never qualify for actual membership or that somehow the “Russia problem” would be solved. But sooner or later, this maneuvering room would run out, as NATO has expanded not simply to encompass the former Soviet satellites of Central Europe but states directly on Russia's own borders, and as countries such as Ukraine and Georgia continue to press for inclusion. Russia's recovery from the trauma of the 1990s has not only lessened American influence over Moscow but has allowed Russia to raise the costs of American indecision.

Russia will never be a perfect partner to the United States; but very few nations are—not even America's close allies among the advanced post-industrial democracies. Either the strategic advantages Russia brings to the table make it worth overlooking Russia's obvious faults or the cost of Russia's help is too high in relation to the benefits.

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Washington would much prefer to avoid these hard choices. For example, the U.S. Congress is unwilling to graduate Russia from the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik legislation, which prevents permanent normal trading relations with a state that restricts emigration rights—even though Russia had been found to be in compliance with its requirements since 1994.¹⁹ Meanwhile, the Bush administration continues to express its desire for a closer relationship with Russia, but it is clearly ambivalent about the prospects and not sure about the price it is willing to pay to try to work with the Kremlin. That uncertainty will be passed to the next administration, which will have no better luck in crafting and maintaining an effective, coherent, and credible approach toward Russia unless it is willing to answer basic questions about Russia and to dispense with any remaining illusions that currently inhibit the formulation of a realistic policy.

Dangerous Illusions

Too often, outside observers have first created their image of Russia, and then located the appropriate facts and personalities to support their construction. Too often, hopes and aspirations have been substituted for facts when shaping policy.

Dispensing with the illusions that have guided policy toward Russia is a necessary precondition for moving forward—even if it requires abandoning cherished dreams of the “Russia that might have been.”

Illusion No. 1: By Cooperating with the United States, Russia Will Join the West

The first illusion is that Russia is destined to become a full member of the West and assume a position of leadership within the Euro-Atlantic community. That was a dream shared not only by many in the United States but in post-Soviet Russia as well. Alexey Pushkov, a leading Russian commentator who was part of Mikhail Gorbachev’s foreign policy team, recalled this:

Many of us thought the way forward as the Cold War ended would be the emergence of a new Europe, one not defined by blocs, and where the old confrontations and antagonisms would be gone. . . . In the beginning of the 1990s, the idea of a close partnership with the United States, even an alliance, was popular in Moscow. Although the Cold War ended in the fall of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new Russian elites were operating from the presumption that democratic Russia should not be treated as a defeated country. On the contrary, we thought, it should be included in the Western community as a new state that had decidedly parted with communism.”²⁰

Even at the beginning of the Putin administration, then-foreign minister Igor Ivanov was still touting the “development of a constructive partnership between my country, Europe and the United States” that is “united by a common responsibility for maintaining peace and stability in the vast Euro-Atlantic area” and declared that a goal of Russian foreign policy would be the “preservation of a unified Euro-Atlantic community, *with Russia now part of it.*”²¹

But were such expectations ever realistic? The likelihood that Russia was going to follow a path of internal development that would bring its domestic institutions into closer conformity with Euro-Atlantic standards was extremely low to begin with. Even if that had occurred, Russia, as a Eurasian-continental power, was going to have different interests and priorities than either the United States or Western Europe. Therefore, there could be no expectations that Russia would automatically support the general Western consensus on any given issue. How to secure Russian cooperation with Western initiatives without giving Russia a share of the decisionmaking authority was the dilemma the United States faced in considering Russian integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.²²

So the compromise position was to give Russia a “voice but no veto” in the deliberations

of the West. This was reflected in the negotiations that led to the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Russian Federation, signed on May 27, 1997. Washington hoped that, by giving Russia a formal association with NATO, the path could be cleared for enlarging the alliance by including former Soviet bloc states.²³

That compromise didn't work. If Russia was not going to join the alliance, Moscow's next preference was for an arrangement that would essentially create a system of joint decision making between Russia and NATO on major issues of European and Eurasian security. Moscow was especially insistent that any military operations outside the territory of the member-states of NATO would require either UN or OSCE sanction. The United States, in contrast, wanted to keep a good deal of European security matters designated as matters "internal" to NATO and not subject to the purview of the NATO-Russia Council.

In analyzing the effectiveness of the Permanent Joint Council, which was supposed to be the principal organ of the NATO-Russia partnership, Peter Trenin-Straussov, in an assessment prepared for the Berlin Information Center for Transatlantic Security, concluded:

The [two] sides . . . failed to agree on what the PJC would do and—as a result—they got a 'disabled child.' The council lacked a 'home' and a permanent secretariat. It was also hugely asymmetrical in operation—Russia was presented with a joint position of the NATO members, and could deal with NATO only *en bloc*. If the Russians made a bid, its NATO partners needed to go in retreat to discuss it and then present Russia with their joint reply. This was cumbersome, but 'safe', from the NATO point of view. The Russians, for their part, soon discovered that dealing with individual NATO member states outside the PJC was more effective and satisfying. The PJC quickly turned itself into a talking shop for rather stale dialogue.²⁴

The creation of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 to replace the PJC created a system where Russia could sit at the table with all other NATO members for discussion, but never resolved the fundamental dilemma of what weight Russia's "voice" should have in alliance deliberations. This has meant that Moscow is not really a stakeholder in the alliance, while making the partnership more effective has not been a major priority for NATO members. Major General Peter Williams, who headed the first NATO Military Liaison Mission in Moscow, made this assessment of the first 10 years of Russia's partnership with NATO: "Political will, structures and projects mean little without resources. . . . The resources committed for the execution of NATO-Russia Council policies and plans have been far below those suggested by the political rhetoric."²⁵

Meanwhile, the question of Russian membership in the European Union is also off the table as Russia and the Union attempt to develop their set of "common spaces." That has proved difficult. For example, at an EU-Russia summit meeting in Samara in May 2007, the president of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso explained that "Russia is a European country that is close to us [the European Union]," while Putin characterized the Russia-EU summit as a forum for "coordinating our cooperation."²⁶ Russia may be associated with Europe, but both sides have clearly come to the conclusion that Russia, for the foreseeable future, will remain outside the Union.

All of this should lead U.S. policymakers to the conclusion reached by Cliff Kupchan of the Eurasia Group: "The reality of today's international system is that Russia is rapidly becoming a major non-aligned power more along the lines of China or India than a junior partner or disciple of the West."²⁷

Illusion No. 2: A Democratic Russia is a Pro-American Russia

The second illusion casts the Russian masses as anxious to support a U.S. global agenda, but for the authoritarian tyrants who suppress the will of the people. Those who embrace the

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“democratic peace” theory maintained that as Russia moved further away from its authoritarian Soviet past, its interests would necessarily converge with those of the United States. Congressman Robert Wexler (D-FL) declared at a 2003 hearing on the U.S.-Russia relationship that “the success of Russia’s democratic transformation will largely determine and shape the present and future possibilities of cooperation and engagement” with the United States.²⁸

It is a common assertion now in Washington that how Russia governs itself shapes its foreign policy and that continued disagreements between the United States and the Russian Federation over foreign policy issues can be attributed to a growing authoritarian trend in Russia.²⁹ The implication is that a more democratic Russian government would make fundamentally different choices. It might decide not to object to its neighbors joining the NATO alliance or drop its efforts to export its energy resources directly to Germany and other Western European markets, bypassing the transit countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Although such views are commonly held, they are badly mistaken. First, it is important to stress the wide support Putin receives among Russians for his policies—something the results of the December 2007 Duma elections confirm.³⁰ In recent polls, 72 percent of Russians agree with the assessment that Putin has moved Russia “in the right direction” and identify with his call for a resurgent Russia capable of playing a major role in world affairs. While some might dismiss Putin’s strong ratings as the product of a slick propaganda campaign, his popularity is based rather in the public’s assessment that his government has improved the quality of life for most ordinary Russians. Some 66 percent believe that Russians in 2007 live better than in the Soviet Union of 1991 (immediately before the economic collapses of the 1990s).³¹ And among 18- to 24-year-olds—the demographic that supplied the foot soldiers for the democratic “color revolutions” in Georgia and Ukraine—the Putin administration has a 57 percent approval rating.³²

Second, one cannot find a strong reservoir of support for U.S. foreign policy among Russians. Some 73 percent of Russians agree with the statement that “the United States cannot be trusted,” and 66 percent believe that “U.S. foreign policy does not take Russian interests into account.” More than 60 percent of Russians see the United States as having a negative influence in the world; more than half believe that the United States is unfriendly to Russia.³³ Those sentiments are especially true among young Russians aged 16 to 29—the post-Soviet generation. In a 2007 survey, almost 70 percent disagreed with the notion that the United States “does more good than harm”; 64 percent saw the United States either as an “enemy” or at least a “rival” to Russia. (China, in contrast, was viewed by only 27 percent of respondents in the same way.)³⁴

Even if President Putin had been inclined in the early years of his relationship with President Bush to join the “coalition of the willing,” he would have had to defy the overwhelming majority of Russians to do so, since 89 percent opposed any participation of Russian forces in an American-led coalition in Iraq. With regard to Iran, a 2007 poll indicates that 45 percent of Russians consider Iran a friendly country; only 20 percent agreed that a military strike would be justified if sanctions failed to stop Iran’s uranium enrichment.³⁵ A 2006 poll conducted by the Pew Research Center showed that by a two-to-one margin Russians were more likely to view the U.S. presence in Iraq as a greater threat to global peace than Iran’s uranium enrichment program.³⁶

Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of any Putin foreign policy decision of the last several years that would have been reversed by a more democratically accountable Russian government.

So, would a more democratic Russia be more inclined to accommodate U.S. preferences? Would it agree to implement punitive sanctions against Iran? Or to restructure its energy industry to meet our needs?

In a word, no. A more democratic Russia would still not see eye to eye with the United

States on a number of pressing issues—for the same reasons that the United States and France, despite both being democracies, have fundamental disagreements over foreign policy.

None of this is to deny that a more democratic Russia would benefit the United States in some ways. Governments that are open and transparent, and subject to scrutiny and criticism, are generally more constrained than authoritarian regimes and, in some ways, more predictable. But we should not fall into the trap of believing that if Russia were to become more liberal, have genuinely free and competitive elections and strengthened rule of law, that would automatically translate into a foreign policy more aligned with U.S. priorities. The two countries have different objectives.

Illusion No. 3: Russia Is about to Collapse

The third illusion that must be dispensed with is the assertion that Russia is near collapse and that its recovery is but a house of cards—and that, therefore, there is no need for the United States to take Russia’s interests or preferences into account when shaping policy. While such sentiments have receded in the last several years, they were quite pronounced when the Bush administration first took office. Perhaps the most famous example of this thinking was a May 2001 essay in the *Atlantic Monthly* provocatively entitled “Russia is Finished.” Written by Jeffrey Tayler, an American journalist who had lived and worked in Russia during the 1990s, the article chronicled the “unstoppable descent of a once great power into social catastrophe and strategic irrelevance.” Tayler described post-Soviet Russia as “Zaire with permafrost.”³⁷ Conservative analyst General William Odom, who headed the National Security Agency during the Reagan administration, picked up this assessment when he characterized Russia as “weak, poor and ambling along [its] own paths headed nowhere in particular” and a “marginal power.”³⁸

Russia continues to face massive problems—notably in its health care system and in coping with an aging infrastructure. Its great-

est challenge is a very low life expectancy for its male population that portends a labor shortage and deprives the economy of decades of potential productivity from the premature demise of its citizens. But the Russia of 2007 is far more capable than the Russia of 1997 in coping with these challenges.

Russia has experienced robust economic growth for the past several years, an average of 6.8 percent per year. Russia is displaying many signs of economic health. The government no longer runs a budget deficit (and for the last two years the federal budget surplus has exceeded 7 percent of GDP), while the state’s foreign debt has shrunk dramatically; it was 100 percent of Russia’s GDP in 1999, today it stands around 8 percent. By July 2007, Russia had accumulated gold and foreign exchange reserves of \$413.1 billion—the largest in its history. On August 1, 2007, the Finance Ministry announced that there was \$127 billion in its Stabilization Fund—and it set up that same month a reserve fund that, over time, would be expected to total 10 percent of Russia’s GDP and would exist solely for the purpose of cushioning the federal budget in the event of an oil price plunge.³⁹

One cannot rule out the possibility of some major disaster that could reverse Russia’s recovery—but American policy seems based on the belief that Russia will forever remain in the debilitating condition of the 1990s and will have no choice but to accept Washington’s diktat. Any policy that assumes that Russia will accept a status quo in Eurasia and the world, or that is predicated on an assumption of perpetual Russian weakness, is foolhardy and dangerous.

Russia will never return as a superpower to rival the United States. And Lehigh University’s professor Rajan Menon, a leading expert on Eurasian affairs, is absolutely correct to counsel Americans not to overreact to Russia’s recovery.⁴⁰ But Russia is resuming its position as a major regional power with some ability to influence the overall global agenda—especially to raise costs for the United States to act. That is multiplied if Russia can act in concert with other major powers, especially China.

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Neither the United States nor Europe is prepared to undertake the massive effort that would be required to displace Russia as Eurasia's economic and political center of gravity.

Illusion No. 4: The U.S. (and Europe) Can Fundamentally Transform Eurasia at Little Cost

The fourth illusion is that the United States, in partnership with the European Union, is capable of fundamentally transforming the geopolitical and geoeconomic realities of Eurasia. A related conceit is of building a network of stable, prosperous, pro-Western states all along Russia's periphery that will give Moscow no choice but to accept these new realities.⁴¹

For starters, the pace of European Union and NATO expansion has slowed considerably. Absorbing Central and Eastern Europe placed great strains on both the Atlantic alliance and the EU; continuing with further expansion is highly unlikely, especially in the near term. Romano Prodi, when he was president of the European Commission, made this perfectly clear at the close of 2002, when he declared, "The integration of the Balkans into the European Union will complete the unification of the continent." While Prodi conceded that the process of EU enlargement "has worked very well," he went on: "We cannot go on enlarging forever. We cannot water down the European political project and turn the European Union into just a free trade area on a continental scale."⁴²

Expansion fatigue contributed to the rejection of the European constitution in France and the Netherlands and led then-German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to vehemently oppose any increases in the EU budget (and in Germany's contributions) for 2007–2013. And there is no sign that new leadership in Europe is prepared to resume eastward expansion of the European Union.⁴³

But even if full membership in Euro-Atlantic organizations is not forthcoming, what about extending a number of the privileges of membership, including free-trade agreements, visa-free travel, and rights to live and work in Western countries? The European Union has been willing to consider the extension of free-trade agreements, but with exceptions in place for agricultural products and some industrial goods (such as steel), which

would nullify the benefits of access to European markets for countries such as Ukraine. The U.S. government, meanwhile, has been reluctant to take any such steps, other than support for Ukraine's inclusion into the World Trade Organization.

The bottom line is that neither the United States nor Europe is prepared to undertake the massive effort that would be required to displace Russia as Eurasia's economic and political center of gravity. Fifteen years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, more than 75 percent of the GDP of the states of the former Soviet Union is generated by Russia. Russia remains Ukraine's and Kazakhstan's largest trading partner. The International Monetary Fund estimated that guest workers from post-Soviet states living in Russia send home \$12 billion annually. Official remittances from workers in Russia, as recorded by the IMF, make up approximately 16 percent of Moldova's GDP.⁴⁴ Grandiose schemes for a new Black Sea Commonwealth that bypasses Russia look wonderful on paper but don't correspond to realities on the ground.

Illusion No. 5: The U.S. Version of "Selective Partnership" Is a Viable Policy Option

In theory, selective partnership is not a bad concept. It was the basis of the "Grand Alliance" in World War II, as well as the anti-Taliban coalition that emerged in the weeks after 9/11 between a disparate group of nations. Indeed, most relationships between states—even those who consider themselves close allies—are often in reality "selective partnerships"; it is extremely rare that interests and priorities between two different countries are aligned 100 percent of the time.

Given the disillusionment of many in both Russia and the United States over the failure to build an effective working relationship as allies or close strategic partners, selective partnership, on paper, seems to be the most feasible alternative. In this vein, the 2006 Council on Foreign Relations task force report on Russia tries to lay out a strategy for "how to make selective cooperation—and in some cas-

es selective opposition—serve important international goals.”⁴⁵

Unfortunately, “selective partnership” has been interpreted—both by some in the Congress as well as in the current administration—as meaning that Washington can expect and will receive full Russian cooperation on a whole host of important matters to U.S. national security while being free to ignore Russian concerns that conflict with American preferences.⁴⁶

For selective partnership to work, both sides must have similar perceptions of threats, and of the benefits of cooperation. As we are seeing with Iran, however, this is not the case. U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice staked out the U.S. position, “that Iran constitutes the single most important single-country strategic challenge to the United States and to the kind of Middle East that we want to see.”⁴⁷ That is certainly not Moscow’s perspective. Russia is not in favor of additional countries gaining nuclear weapons, but those in the United States who repeat the mantra that an “Islamist” Iran with nuclear weapons would fundamentally jeopardize Russian security are seemingly unaware that, from Moscow’s perspective, Iran has, on the whole, behaved as a “responsible citizen” in Russia’s neighborhood—not extending support to Islamist rebels in the North Caucasus, working to achieve a peace settlement in Tajikistan, and cooperating with Russia in aiding the Northern Alliance against the Taliban. Indeed, Russia’s attitude toward Iran is not unlike that of India toward Iran—this despite the fact that India is the world’s largest democracy and an emerging strategic partner of the United States.

Like India, Russia may be prepared to pay a price to accommodate U.S. concerns, even at the expense of valuable economic ties with Tehran—but achieving a non-nuclear Iran on a U.S. timetable and leaving Washington free to frustrate Russian interests elsewhere in the world is an insufficient reward. This reticence to cooperate grows stronger when, as some U.S. foreign policy commentators have advised, ending the nuclear stand-off with Iran would open up its vast energy reserves to

U.S. investment, allow for new energy transport routes to bypass Russia, and enable America to further counter Russia’s overall energy ambitions.⁴⁸

Yet many in Washington continue to use the rubric of “selective partnership” to argue that Russian concerns about the expansion of NATO or the increased American presence in Central Asia are unjustified or at least overblown. They further maintain that the security challenges that threaten the United States, including nuclear proliferation and violent Islamic extremism, are also such a threat to Russia that Moscow will have no choice but to cooperate with Washington, and therefore there is no need to accommodate the Kremlin’s preferences.⁴⁹ But there is a big difference between token cooperation and the sort of active, engaged effort (including more effective intelligence sharing or closer working relationships between armed forces) that could lead to major breakthroughs. General Peter Williams points out, “It will take courage to change this political and military culture of noncooperation,” between Russia and the West, but this cannot occur if neither side feels that partnership serves their interests.⁵⁰ At present, breaking the diplomatic logjam requires the United States to offer much more if it wants Russian help. In discussing Russian reluctance to embrace the U.S. position on Iran, Graham Allison and Dimitri Simes made this point clear: “Getting what the United States needs . . . will require not only penalties but incentives.”⁵¹

There is still hope for a partnership without illusions in some key areas where both sides have common interests, such as nonproliferation or combating nuclear terrorism. Neither the United States nor Russia, for example, is interested in a nuclear-armed Iran or witnessing a nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan. Russian analyst Alexey Pushkov contends that “Putin has not dropped the idea of partnership with the United States altogether, but he has definitely moved away from some of the more grandiose proposals in favor of a much more limited arrangement.”⁵² But for Russia this means obtaining clear and tangible

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benefits, not vague assurances of future goodwill.

Making Choices

When we strip away these five illusions, we discover a series of “inconvenient truths”—the “democracy paradox” of Putin’s regime enjoys broad-based public support; Russia, especially now that it is in the midst of a major recovery, remains the dominant Eurasian power; and the United States is no longer in a position to assume or compel Russian acquiescence to its policy preferences. Recognizing these facts forces us into a long-overdue discussion about U.S. foreign-policy priorities and where Russia fits in, taking us away from “having our cake and eating it too” scenarios in favor of assessing whether the costs of partnership with Moscow are worth the benefits.

Reasonable people can disagree in terms of their assessments of Russia and how to best achieve U.S. interests. For example, many Americans are displeased that Russia under Vladimir Putin has moved in an authoritarian direction and is in no way a “reliable” partner for Washington on a variety of issues. Many U.S. interest groups are not happy with the restricted zone of civil and political liberties in Putin’s Russia. In the end, the question we need to ask is not whether the Russia that has emerged is a Russia we like—it isn’t. The more important question is whether it is a Russia we can do business with, and more importantly, whether or not the United States can achieve some of its most pressing objectives without Russian help.

For the last several years, the Bush administration has tried to compartmentalize the relationship, hoping to preserve cooperation on issues that are central to the United States (such as counterterrorism and nonproliferation) while maintaining that acrimonious exchanges on other matters (such as questions of democracy promotion or Russia’s relations with its Eurasian neighbors) need not damage U.S.-Russian relations. But at some point the

two countries have to move beyond symbolic declarations and “agreements in principle” if there is to be real progress on any shared U.S.-Russia agenda. President Bush, as well as all the leading candidates who would succeed him in January 2009, have identified the same three foreign policy priorities: protecting the United States from further mass-casualty terrorist attacks; preventing “rogue” states from acquiring nuclear weapons; and stopping the spiraling costs of energy from destabilizing not only the United States but the entire global economy. The record as of February 2008 shows that much work remains to be done: Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri remain at large; Afghanistan and Iraq are in serious trouble; Iran is on the path to becoming a nuclear power; and energy prices are at record levels.

U.S. policymakers have to decide whether a resurgent Russia, the growing authoritarian trend of the Putin administration, and Russia’s expanding leverage over energy markets—namely its ability to restrict flows of natural gas to other former Soviet states and to EU members—prevents the United States from achieving its principal foreign policy priorities or otherwise directly threatens core U.S. interests. We may already have one clear answer: Vice President Cheney’s Vilnius speech in 2006 implied that he believed, as Russian political analyst and Putin adviser Gleb Pavlovsky concluded, that it was time to eliminate “the vestiges of strategic partnership between Russia and the United States” and that as long as Russia remained under its present government it would be nearly impossible for the two countries to find common ground on key international issues.⁵³

If the Bush administration has been committed to a policy of confrontation with Russia, however, then U.S. policy has been extremely deficient in making the arrangements that would be needed for the U.S. to move ahead with its international agenda against more active Russian opposition. One would expect, for instance, a much greater effort to expand NATO eastward coupled with much more generous amounts of aid to con-

struct a true cordon sanitaire against a reviving Russia, certainly much more than the paltry steps undertaken so far to encourage the emergence of an alternative to a Russian-led Eurasia via the creation of the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development.⁵⁴

On the foreign policy issue of greatest concern to Washington—Iran—moving into a position of greater hostility to Russia would also severely complicate matters. Not only would it effectively torpedo any remaining diplomatic efforts to resolve the problem (including being able to threaten genuinely effective sanctions), it would mean American policymakers will be left with only one real option: a massive military strike. Such an attack would be likely to precipitate a wider war that would require major spending to overhaul and expand the armed forces already severely weakened by the Iraq war.⁵⁵

Finally, a more aggressive posture toward Russia would require the United States to reassess its relationship with China—not only for the financial support Washington would need to gear up for these new challenges but also to impede the development of any sort of Sino-Russian axis designed to counter the U.S. position in the world.⁵⁶

Those who argue that Russia has little of value to offer the United States in coping with its most serious challenges might reach similar conclusions. If the United States were to assume the burden of stabilizing what Brzezinski has called the “Global Balkans”—a geographical “swathe of Eurasia between Europe and the Far East,” encompassing primarily the Middle East and Central Asia⁵⁷—and if it were to attempt to do so without Russian support, then Washington has been remiss in taking the necessary steps to ensure it has the necessary resources and capabilities at its disposal.

The reality is that, simply put, Americans are understandably unprepared and unwilling to shoulder the costs that moving to a more confrontational stance with Russia would entail. Meanwhile, many policymakers would agree with the proposition that the United States has bigger problems in the world than

focusing on Russia’s faults—notably protecting itself against a major mass-casualty attack and safeguarding the economic health of the country. And finally, Russia is indeed in a position to assist the United States in achieving its principal foreign policy objectives. For all of these reasons, a confrontational policy should be rejected.

The problem, however, is that meaningful cooperation is not possible if Russia is seen primarily as an enemy who just happens to be, at this particular time, a less immediate threat. If Senator Biden was sincere in his assessments of threats to the United States, it is difficult to understand why Russia would cooperate closely with Washington in dealing with Iraq, Iran, and North Korea—in essence to remove them as challenges to the United States—so that Russia itself could then become the primary focus of U.S. attention.

The outward show of good personal chemistry between presidents Bush and Putin and their willingness to let this camaraderie define their joint public appearances has counteracted some of the voices in both countries that are arguing against closer relations. An assistant secretary of state or deputy foreign minister who might be inclined toward confrontation does not want to publicly contradict his or her respective chief executives. But there is no guarantee that Bush and Putin’s successors will have a similarly cordial relationship. Moreover, forging a climate of mutual comfort—if not real trust—that will allow for greater U.S. access to Russia’s sensitive intelligence information and its military and nuclear sites (not to mention closer working relations with Russia’s diplomatic and business establishments) cannot be accomplished overnight. Moreover, it is not something Russia can be bullied into for the long haul. So any sort of grandstanding that blocks real cooperation without measurably improving U.S. security could be very costly—and that is not a price worth paying.

But what price is worth paying in exchange for better relations with Russia? Is it worth giving Moscow something beyond vague assurances of goodwill? In particular, what about Russia’s demands that its paramount position

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in the lands of the former Soviet Union be recognized by the United States and that Washington cease what Moscow perceives as attempts to interfere in Russia's domestic affairs?

Russia has consistently maintained that its primary interest is to ensure that no other Eurasian state can obstruct Russian engagement with the outside world and that no foreign troops are based anywhere in Eurasia without Russia's blessing (for example, to combat international terrorism). As a result, Moscow maintains that no Eurasian state should belong to a military bloc or alliance of which Russia is not also a member. Russia has also expressed continued interest in creating a single economic zone so that Russian capital and goods can move more efficiently across borders. Within limits, Russia has no objection to other Eurasian states developing supplemental political and economic ties to other states, as long as Russian vital interests are respected. But Russia wants to create a Eurasian economic and political zone where Moscow sets the overall agenda.

Is acceding to such a vision something Washington should consider? There is broad agreement about what the United States is *not* prepared to concede. No one argues that Russia should have a blank check to use force against its neighbors or to forcibly incorporate them into a new version of the Soviet Union and still have a "business as usual" relationship with Washington. Russia should be held accountable for all obligations (whether in treaties, conventions or contracts) it has voluntarily assumed—especially when Russian interests are being safeguarded by reciprocal arrangements. Nor is the United States inclined to give Moscow a veto if a core U.S. interest is at stake—such as maintaining military bases in Central Asia to sustain the ongoing efforts in Afghanistan. Finally, Washington is under no obligation to pretend that Russia is a democracy (in the Western understanding of the term) or to refrain from criticism of the Russian government's slide toward authoritarianism.⁵⁸

Between Russia's stated preferences and these bedrock American priorities remains a

great deal of room for finding consensus positions. Unfortunately, however, such a discussion is not taking place. Consider this: In March 2007, the U.S. Congress decided, by large margins in both houses, that NATO membership was the way for the post-Soviet states to safeguard their independence, when it approved legislation providing support for Ukraine and Georgia's bid to join the Western alliance.

What was amazing was the near-total lack of debate in the United States over what was to be gained by including Ukraine or Georgia in NATO. Few dared to ask whether the continual expansions of the alliance have weakened its ability to function as a collective security organ. Likewise, what the inclusion of those states would contribute to solving the major challenges to U.S. and Western security posed by Iran, Afghanistan, North Korea, and international terrorism was never addressed, nor was the likely impact on U.S.-Russia relations.

A zero-sum mentality for Eurasia—where the United States is confronted by a binary choice that only permits one of two outcomes (Ukraine in NATO or Ukraine "lost" to the West altogether)—flies in the face of America's ability to successfully balance multiple and sometimes conflicting priorities in other parts of the world. In a number of complicated bilateral relationships, Washington has been able to avoid embracing the maximalist positions of either side in order to find acceptable, if imperfect, compromises.

Early last year, Anatol Lieven, a long-standing critic of U.S. policy toward Russia, proposed an arrangement whereby the United States would agree to "abandoning NATO enlargement to [include] Ukraine and Georgia in favour of mutually agreed restraints on western and Russian behaviour on the territory of the former Soviet Union."⁵⁹ In practical terms, this might lead to a situation where the United States would drop its opposition to Russian-led multilateral institutions in which other Eurasian countries participate on a voluntary basis (such as the Common Economic Space or the Collective Security Treaty Organization)—

in return for Russian guarantees that any Eurasian state is free to seek membership in the European Union. (This would also then put the onus on Brussels to decide when and where to halt EU expansion.)

These sorts of compromises do not satisfy politicians in Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, who would like nothing better than for the United States to put its full political, military, and economic might into changing their geopolitical position. It is equally unsettling for a number of American politicians who are unprepared to recognize that the unipolar moment has passed. But such an approach seems to have the greatest chance of satisfying the greatest number of U.S. objectives—acquiring some security guarantees for Russia’s neighbors, keeping the door in Eurasia at least partly open, and paving the way for closer cooperation with Russia on other issues.

Is There a Way Forward?

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has often stressed the “excellent relationship” between Presidents Bush and Putin, noting that the two leaders “feel that they can discuss anything.”⁶⁰ However, this personal relationship has not been translated into effective cooperation between the bureaucracies of the two countries. It is unlikely that presidents Bush and Putin will bequeath a lasting legacy of cooperation to their successors.

On the Russian side, in fact, officials just one level below Putin have shown little enthusiasm for making the case for renewed cooperation with the United States. The July 2007 resignation of Igor Ivanov, the former foreign minister who then became the secretary of the Security Council, marked the departure of the last high-level Yeltsin-era foreign policymaker as well as someone who was still an advocate for closer ties with the United States.⁶¹ Skepticism toward U.S. intentions is now the norm in the Russian foreign policy establishment. While this view may not be accurate or fair, it nonetheless exists, and it hampers further cooperation. It also suggests that the alter-

native to a difficult partnership with Putin is not a better relationship with someone else.

On the U.S. side, the Bush administration, from the beginning, found little support for its efforts to engage Russia either in Congress or within the U.S. foreign policy community. There were constant irritants—some of which were caused by the Kremlin’s own actions, to be sure—which made it difficult to argue the case that a closer and more cooperative relationship with Russia outweighed the concerns.

By contrast, the United States has managed to design a sound policy toward China, a country which is much less free and could pose a much greater challenge than Putin’s Russia to U.S. interests not only in East Asia but around the globe. Serious concerns—about human rights, the environment, Taiwan, and so on—are nonetheless balanced within a cohesive, and what we hope will remain a durable bi-partisan, framework of engagement. The same could be said of U.S. policies toward other undemocratic, yet strategically important, states such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan.

Moscow isn’t waiting for Washington to reconcile these inconsistencies. As the U.S.–Russia relationship has stumbled along, Russia, especially in the last five years, has begun to evolve into a “post-American” country. There are still several critical issues where Moscow and Washington continue to interact—control of nuclear arms, negotiations in the Security Council, and so on—but in terms of many of the day-to-day matters that underwrite any bilateral relationship, including trade, tourism, and other people-to-people exchanges, the Russia-Europe and specifically the Russia-Germany relationships are much more important. Moreover, an increasing percentage of Russia’s trade—and not only in weapons systems—is with the largest and richest countries of the developing world, especially China and India. Moscow has also begun to accelerate the development of new international institutions that bypass the United States, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.⁶²

The sense that Russia is increasingly moving outside of an American-led system has

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contributed to a new feeling of self-sufficiency in Moscow. In fact, Russia is now much more likely to see itself evolving into an independent center of global power.

What that means, therefore, is that, at present, there is simply no basis for an alliance or major partnership between Russia and the United States, no matter how many reports stress common interests. In the absence of major linkages—particularly in terms of connecting the two countries’ business, military, and intelligence establishments—the U.S.-Russia relationship lacks the ballast to navigate through the tempests that arise over their differences.

What is far more feasible, given the climate in both capitals, is to have a relationship characterized by a pragmatic approach to resolving issues and preventing disagreements from flaring up into full-scale crises.

That might not seem like much, especially in the aftermath of grandiose rhetoric about alliances, a world with no blocs, or the promise of a new global order. And as memories of the Cold War fade, it may not be apparent that the state of affairs today is far preferable to what preceded it—when U.S. policy was focused on dealing with a Soviet state attempting to dominate both Western Europe and East Asia and trying to make inroads in Africa and Latin America with an eye not only to an encirclement of the United States but the very destruction of our way of life.

For the time being, the U.S. government, barring a profound transformation of the Russian state, should be concerned largely with Russia’s behavior beyond its borders and be prepared to deal with Moscow on a quid pro quo basis. That will require a change in attitude, away from a post-Cold War American triumphalism back to a more realistic approach. As former senator Gary Hart noted, “Until recent years, when U.S. foreign policy assumed a theological aura, we consistently sought self-interested relations with disagreeable nations.” The same holds true today and into the future. “A working relationship is not a favor to the Russians but an advantage to us.”⁶³

It is difficult to conceive of a solution to any of the most pressing challenges facing the United States where Russia does not have some part to play. That may be galling to those who reveled in the period of the immediate post-Soviet collapse when Russia was a supplicant nation and where the U.S. could move ahead with its own vision for how to structure global affairs without much consideration for Moscow’s perspective. But the situation has changed—and nothing makes that clearer than Russia’s newfound position as the third-largest holder of dollars in the world (after Japan and China).

The United States has two options. It can forgo the possibility of Russian assistance in achieving its key foreign policy priorities in order to retain complete freedom of action vis-à-vis Moscow. Or it can prioritize its objectives and negotiate a series of quid pro quos with Russia. This choice, however, cannot be indefinitely postponed.

The latter is the better course. Seeking broad accommodation with Russia is more likely to guarantee American success in promoting its core national interests—especially in a changing international environment where the sources of power that sustain American global leadership are weakening—but it will require U.S. policymakers to accept limits not only on what can be demanded of Russia but also on the satisfaction of American preferences. If we are willing to accept this compromise and part with our illusions, we can move forward. If not, then U.S.-Russia relations will continue to deteriorate, and proposals for cooperation will languish.

Notes

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3. For example, Vice President Dick Cheney’s remarks in Vilnius in 2006 called for a “return to democratic reform” as the precondition for improved relations between Russia and the West.

- Dick Cheney, "Vice President's Remarks at the 2006 Vilnius Conference," Vilnius, Lithuania, May 4, 2006, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060504-1.html.
4. Robert Legvold, "All the Way: Crafting a U.S.-Russian Alliance," *The National Interest*, no. 70 (Winter 2002/03): 21.
 5. Robert Legvold, "US-Russian Relations: An American Perspective," *Russia in Global Affairs*, vol. 4, no. 4 (October-December 2006), http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/docs/2006_english4.pdf.
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 7. George W. Bush, Joint Press Conference, Kennebunkport, Maine, July 2, 2007, www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/07/20070702-2.html.
 8. Barack Obama, Speech delivered to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, April 23, 2007, <http://my.barackobama.com/page/content/fpccga>.
 9. Joseph Biden, Comments made at the Democratic primary debate in Orangeburg, South Carolina, April 26, 2007, www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18351722/. North Korea and Iran were the other two threats mentioned.
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 11. Richard Pipes, "Is Russia Still an Enemy?" *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (September/October 1997): 66-67.
 12. See, for example, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the (Russian) Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, "U.S.-Russia Relations at the Turn of the Century," November 2000; Nixon Center, "U.S.-Russia Relations: A New Strategic Partnership," The Nixon Center, January 2002; and "An Agenda for Renewal: U.S.-Russia Relations," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2000. Even more recent and critical reports return to the same overall agenda. For example, Council on Foreign Relations, "Russia's Wrong Direction: What the United States Can and Should Do," March 2006; and Hudson Institute "U.S.-Russia Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?" June 2007.
 13. Kissinger's remarks constitute the foreword to a report released by a panel of the Nixon Center's board members and senior staff led by the center's advisory council chairman James Schlesinger and offered as a guide for the then-incoming Bush administration. Nixon Center, "What Is to Be Undone? A Russia Policy for the New Administration," February 2001, p. iii.
 14. "NSC 68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (April 14, 1950)," www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68-6.htm.
 15. Victor S. Mamatey, *Soviet Russian Imperialism* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1964), p. 24.
 16. "The Charge in the Soviet Union (Kennan) to the Secretary of State," Telegram, February 22, 1946, www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/documents/episode-1/kennan.htm.
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42. Romano Prodi, “A Wider Europe—A Proximity Policy as the Key to Stability.” Speech delivered at “Peace, Security and Stability International Dialogue and the role of the EU,” Sixth ECSA-World

Conference, Jean Monnet Project, Brussels, December 5, 2002.

43. See, for example, the comments of French president Nicolas Sarkozy, "Making France a Power for the Future, Part I," *National Interest* online, April 17, 2007, www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=14044.

44. Unofficial estimates for remittances are far higher. For complete information on the flow of remittances among Russia and its neighboring country, see the data compiled by the IMF's "Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Statistics," www.imf.org/external/np/sta/bop/remitt.htm.

45. Council on Foreign Relations.

46. Nikolas Gvosdev and Dimitri Simes, "America Cannot Have It Both Ways with Russia," *Financial Times*, April 6, 2006, p. 19.

47. Quoted in Ewan MacAskill, "America Offers Arms for Allies against Iran," *Guardian*, July 31, 2007, www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,,2138736,00.html.

48. See, for example, Zbigniew Brzezinski's comments in "Hegemonic Quicksand," *The National Interest*, no. 74 (Winter 2003/04): esp. p. 16.

49. See, for example, the discussion on NATO expansion by former ambassador at large for the ex-Soviet states Steven Sestanovich in testimony before the House International Relations Committee, March 18, 2004, http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa92612.000/hfa92612_0f.htm. See also his comments as broadcast on the Voice of America program "Focus," February 17, 2004, www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2004/02/mil-040216-35e7cc0d.htm.

50. Williams, "Partnership Has a Price."

51. Graham Allison and Dimitri Simes, "Churchill, Not Quite," *The National Interest*, no. 85 (Fall 2006): 7. Robert D. Blackwill, who served as deputy national security advisor in the Bush Administration, proposes some possible incentives including a "timeline of U.S. ABM deployments to Eastern Europe; the issue of entry of new NATO members from the ex-Soviet space; the status of Kosovo; the contours of the CFE Treaty; the future of strategic-arms control; [and] Russia's entry to the WTO." See Robert D. Blackwill, "The Three R's," *The National Interest*, no. 93 (January/February 2008): 72.

52. Pushkov, p. 52.

53. Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "VPOTUS in Vilnius," *National Review* online, May 8, 2006, <http://article.nationalreview.com/?q=ZmJlNjIjMTEzYWWE0ZjQzMdNiMmMyZmU5NDEyMGQ4ODg=>.

54. GUAM encompasses Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova; Uzbekistan was affiliated from 1999 to 2005. After a number of fits and starts, the organization now has a headquarters in Kiev and is moving to establish its first peace-keeping battalion.

55. See also Justin Logan, "The Bottom Line on Iran: The Costs and Benefits of Preventive War versus Deterrence," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 583, December 4, 2006; and Justin Logan, "Grasping the Nettle: If Diplomacy Fails in Iran," *Foreign Service Journal*, June 2007, pp. 32–40.

56. Many analysts and politicians are captivated by the notion that the United States, in close alliance with Europe and other democracies, holds such a preponderance of global power that it is possible for China and Russia both to be contained. Such an assumption is implicit in proposals advanced by Senator John McCain and others for a "League of Democracies," which ignores the fact that the Europeans have strong vested interests in managing their relationship with Russia, especially, while democratic India has no desire to force a confrontation with either China or Russia.

57. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), p. 42.

58. Allison and Simes summed up this consensus.

59. Anatol Lieven, "The West Must Set a Strategy for a Resurgent Russia," *Financial Times*, March 9, 2007.

60. Quoted in Peter Baker, "Bush, Putin Put Tensions aside for Moscow Meeting," *The Seattle Times*, May 9, 2005, http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2002268288_bush09.html.

61. See Alexei Venediktov, "Igor Ivanov's Resignation Reinforces Kremlin Isolationism," *New Times*, no. 23, July 18, 2007, pp. 14–16; also "Ivanov Resigns as Russian Security Council Secretary," *Press Trust of India*, July 9, 2007.

62. These trends are discussed in greater detail in Barma, Ratner and Weber, pp. 23–30.

63. Gary Hart, "Don't Lose Russia," *The National Interest*, no. 88 (March-April 2007): 23.

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