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Towards a New Russia Policy

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TOWARDS A NEW RUSSIA POLICY

Stephen J. Blank

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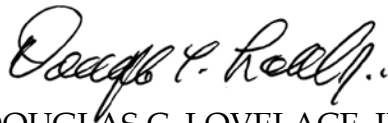
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FOREWORD

It is obvious that U.S.-Russian relations and East-West relations more broadly have recently deteriorated. Yet analyses of why this is the case have often been confined to American policy. The author of this monograph, Dr. Stephen Blank, seeks to analyze some of the key strategic issues at stake in this relationship and trace that decline to Russian factors which have been overlooked or neglected. At the same time, he has devoted considerable time to recording some of the shortcomings of U.S. policy and recommending a way out of the growing impasse confronting both sides.

This analysis, originally presented at the annual Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) strategy conference of 2007, was part of a panel that engaged the strategic challenges confronting the United States from Russia. As such, it was part of the conference's larger theme of analyzing regional strategic challenges to U.S. interests and policy across the globe. As the conference pointed out, these challenges are many, diverse, and growing in number, if not intensity. Therefore the need for informed and critical discussion of the issues raised by these challenges, a constant mission of SSI, is ever more necessary. We offer this monograph to help meet that need for our readers.



DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

STEPHEN J. BLANK has served as the Strategic Studies Institute's expert on the Soviet bloc and the post-Soviet world since 1989. Prior to that he was Associate Professor of Soviet Studies at the Center for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education, Maxwell Air Force Base, and taught at the University of Texas, San Antonio, and at the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Blank is the editor of *Imperial Decline: Russia's Changing Position in Asia*, coeditor of *Soviet Military and the Future*, and author of *The Sorcerer as Apprentice: Stalin's Commissariat of Nationalities, 1917-1924*. He has also written many articles and conference papers on Russian, Commonwealth of Independent States, and Eastern European security issues. Dr. Blank's current research deals with proliferation and the revolution in military affairs, and energy and security in Eurasia. His two most recent books are *Russo-Chinese Energy Relations: Politics in Command*, London: Global Markets Briefing, 2006 and *Natural Allies?: Regional Security in Asia and Prospects for Indo-American Strategic Cooperation*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2005. He holds a B.A. in History from the University of Pennsylvania, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in History from the University of Chicago.

SUMMARY

East-West relations have noticeably deteriorated, and Russia's behavior has become commensurately more self-assertive. Key arms control achievements are in jeopardy, and Russia claims to be facing an array of growing threats, most prominently from America. In fact, Russia demands more respect from and equality with Washington and a free hand in world politics. In key respects, Moscow's new foreign policy grows out of the logic of its ever more autocratic and neo-imperial political structure. As analyzed in the monograph, this structure reinforces the long-standing Russian tendency to view other states as being inherently adversarial, i.e., it has a disposition to see world politics in terms of a presupposition of a priori enemies. Thus it views arms control issues from the standpoint of deterring enemies not working with strategic partners.

The danger of a foreign policy that relies on truculent rhetoric, inflated and aggressive threat assessments, and an autocratic and neo-imperial political structure based on the ideology of Russia's desire for a free hand in world politics and ingrained belief that others are inherently the same is that it will stimulate precisely the adversarial behavior in Washington that it claims to see. There are already growing signs that certain sectors of the policymaking community are increasingly inclined to view Russia as a question mark, if not a rival of American policy. This is particularly the case regarding issues of arms control and nuclear policy. Thus the current rhetorical belligerence seen in Russian policy and the increasing amount of interest in higher defense spending and inflated threat assessments could bring about exactly what Russian elites already claim to observe.

Accordingly, it is necessary for the United States to understand the scope of the challenge posed by Russia and to take steps towards reformulating its policies so that they are more coherent and unified, more deeply engaged with Russia across a wide spectrum of issues, and also more coordinated with our European allies. This means that we must forego the idea that good relations between presidents suffice, or that we have no leverage on Russia, or that human rights should not be a major part of our concern. While Russian interests and concerns must be engaged with seriousness and respect, they cannot be allowed to overshadow our own interests and concerns. The need for permanent ongoing bureaucratic engagement with Russia remains a challenge for Washington, but it is one that can and must be met by means of a long-term strategically conceived policy. And that policy must engage Moscow across all the issues of topical concern to Washington.

TOWARDS A NEW RUSSIA POLICY

INTRODUCTION: THE ADVERSARIAL EAST-WEST RELATIONSHIP

Today speculation about a new cold war or arms race between Moscow and Washington is rampant, easy to come by, and even permeates official discourse. Indeed, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov characterized Russo-American relations as “alarming” in June 2007.¹ Similarly, at least some senior officials in the Bush administration now believe that, far from merely craving respect (although that certainly is the case), Russia has provided “overwhelming evidence” that it seeks to weaken America. Thus “wherever possible internationally,” they say, “Moscow will work to stop America from achieving success.”² And at the same time North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Sheffer is calling on Moscow to clarify its views on ties with NATO, and there are moves afoot in both Moscow and Washington to restrict foreign investment in their economies by tightening national security reviews of such proposed investments.³

Although Lavrov and Deputy Prime Minister (and former Defense Minister) Sergei Ivanov both explicitly rule out “Cold War” as a label for Russo-American relations, their subordinates are not so soothing.⁴ Thus Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr’ Losyukov, speaking in Tehran, said that Washington was using Korea and Iran’s proliferation as an issue to consolidate its global strategic position, i.e., invoking those two states to justify its missile defense program. If this issue cannot be resolved by diplomatic means, he warned, Russia will carry out a series of military acts to balance

and establish security. And this could prompt an arms race.⁵ This frosty warning, rather than the calculated, insincere, and misleading efforts to invoke Russo-American partnership, more accurately characterizes the present state of Russo-American relations even if they are far from the Cold War.

Recent Russian actions include two overflights of Great Britain, Finland, and Norway; flights to Guam of Tu-95s; the resumption of armed aerial patrols; repeated overflights and bombings of Georgia; suspension of compliance with the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty; threats to renounce the Intermediate nuclear Forces in Europe (INF) Treaty; threats to target the Czech Republic and Poland if missile defense installations are placed there; announcement of plans to refurbish the Navy's Mediterranean squadron; calls for a gas cartel; continuing regression towards ever more authoritarian political practices; arms sales to Iran and Syria, and recognition of Hamas; and the launching of an information war attack against Estonia for removing a Soviet war monument in Tallinn. All these imply the consolidation of a fundamentally adversarial position towards the West, not just the United States.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's speeches to the Munich Wehrkunde Conference in February 2007 and to the Russian Federal Assembly in April highlighted this trend and outlined many of Russia's grievances against the West and Washington in particular.⁶ Subsequently in his V-E day speech on May 9, 2007, he explicitly compared the United States to Nazi Germany.⁷ In the speech to the Federal Assembly, he confirmed that adversarial quality of bilateral relations when he announced the suspension of Russia's compliance with the CFE Treaty.⁸ Indeed, Russian Chief of Staff General Yuri N. Baluyevsky subsequently warned that

this treaty is on the verge of collapse.⁹ Since that treaty has no provisions for a moratorium, Baluyevsky's warning probably presages Russia's withdrawal from the CFE treaty.¹⁰ Thus Putin's decree of July 14, 2007, suspending Russian participation in the treaty, should not have surprised us, although apparently it did surprise some in Washington.¹¹

We and the West as a whole were clearly surprised as well by Putin's speech at Munich and by many other recent Russian policies. This complacency and unpreparedness is unwarranted as Russian unhappiness with U.S. policy has been growing since 2002-03. Neither should we be so complacent as to think that some high-level meetings, like presidential summits, can paper over this rift. Such meetings cannot substitute for a sound strategy and/or policy even when officials claim that Presidents Putin and Bush are confident that enough has been done to keep the positive momentum of the relationship going.¹² Russian analysts certainly do not make this mistake. Instead, they rightly point to the issue at stake, i.e., Moscow's insistence upon Russia's standing or status as a great power that demands Washington take its interests into account. Thus Ivan Safranchuk of Moscow's Office of the Center for Defense Information told U.S. reporters that,

In the United States there is an underestimation of how serious Putin and his team are. This team is ready to spoil relations with the United States as far as necessary. There are no limitations. Putin is doing this not because he wants a new Cold War, but because he wants the Russian state to be seriously revived.¹³

This demand lies at the heart of the issue because Moscow at the very least believes that the West as a

whole, and particularly America, do not take it or its interests seriously enough. And, as suggested above by a U.S. official, it is possible that we have an outright rivalry over the entire or most of the two states' bilateral political agendas whereby Russia's purpose is simply to fight American policy. Thus what is at stake in the Russo-American relationship is Russia's resentment of American power and the way it is displayed, particularly in regions that Moscow wants to dominate. In other words, Russia, like the late comedian Rodney Dangerfield, constantly laments that it doesn't get any or enough respect from America. Putin's presidential envoy for relations with the European Union (EU), Sergei Yastrzhembskiy, stated that this was Russia's main objection to recent developments in world politics.¹⁴ Similarly Russian Ambassador to America Yuri Ushakov recently echoed that statement.¹⁵

So while East-West relations have become essentially adversarial, the most visible stresses are in Russo-American relations. Baluyevsky said that cooperation with the West has not helped Russia; instead the situation has become more difficult. In fact, "the U.S. military leadership's course aimed at maintaining its global leadership and expanding its economic, political, and military presence in Russia's traditional zones of influence" is a top threat to its national security.¹⁶ However, rhetoric aside, there is no tangible military threat to Russia.¹⁷ Yet Moscow has issued endless complaints that America does not take Russia sufficiently seriously, i.e., at Moscow's own self-serving and inflated valuation of itself.

What Russia wants, though, is clear enough—enhanced status and a completely free hand vis-à-vis Washington and Europe on issues vital to it. Lavrov, in a televised address denounced U.S. unilateralism

and demanded “total equality, including equality in the analysis of threats, in finding solutions, and making decisions.” Likewise, Russia sees itself (or at least professes to see itself) as a sovereign, i.e., wholly independent, actor in world politics that should be regarded as a superpower equal to America and be able to constrain its policies while remaining free from such constraints on what matters most to it, i.e., the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Indeed, Putin at this Munich speech (and even earlier as well) called for a new “architecture of global security” and his actions before and after that speech indicate that Russia is acting to bring such a structure – which it deems to be a multipolar one – into being.¹⁸ Alternatively Russia argues that a multipolar world where Russia is a free standing independent actor is already taking shape.

Lavrov has also presented an elaborate assessment of America’s declining power and moral standing in the world as indicating and justifying the failure of the unipolar project.¹⁹ Thus Washington’s hoped for unipolar world cannot be achieved. Yastrzhembskiy echoed this by claiming that Washington faces growing international isolation due to the growing disparity between its views and those of other governments.²⁰

Putin’s litany of complaints in speeches going back to 2006 specified Russia’s complaints in greater detail. Putin specifically charged that,

- America is a unipolar hegemon which conducts world affairs or aspires to do so in an undemocratic way (i.e., it does not take Russian interests into account).
- America has unilaterally gone to war in Iraq, disregarding the United Nations (UN) Charter, and demonstrating an “unconstrained hyper use of force” that is plunging the world into an

abyss. It has therefore become impossible to find solutions to conflicts. (In other words, American unilateralism actually makes it harder to end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—hardly an incontestable proposition.) Because America seeks to decide all issues unilaterally to suit its own interests in disregard of others, “no one feels safe” and this policy stimulates an arms race and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

- Therefore we need a new structure of world politics, i.e., multipolarity and nonintervention in the affairs of others. Here Putin cited Russia’s example of a peaceful transition to democracy! Of course, Russia hardly has a spotless record with regard to nonintervention as Estonia, Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia illustrate.
- Putin expressed concern that the Moscow Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction Treaty of 2002 (SORT) may be violated or at least undermined by America which is holding back several hundred superfluous nuclear weapons for either political or military use. America is also creating new destabilizing high-tech weapons, including space weapons.
- Meanwhile the CFE treaty is not being ratified, even though Russian forces are leaving Georgia and only carrying out peacekeeping operations in Moldova. Similarly, U.S. bases are turning up “on our border.” (Here Putin revealed that for him the border of Russia is, in fact, the old Soviet border since Russia no longer borders either on Romania or Poland.)
- America is also extending missile defenses to Central and Eastern Europe even though no

threat exists that would justify this. In regard to this program, Putin replied to a question at the Wehrkunde Conference by saying that,

The United States is actively developing and already strengthening an anti-missile defense system. Today this system is ineffective but we do not know exactly whether it will one day be effective. But in theory it is being created for that purpose. So, hypothetically, we recognize that when this moment arrives, the possible threat from our nuclear forces will be completely neutralized. Russia's present capabilities, that is. The balance of powers will be absolutely destroyed and one of the parties will benefit from the feeling of complete security. That means that its hands will be free not only in local but eventually also in global conflicts.²¹

Thus he has bought the General staff's habit of thinking exclusively in terms of worst-case scenarios to justify a policy of threats and military buildup. Moreover, Baluyevsky and the General Staff all regularly argue that because there is allegedly no threat from Iran, these missile defenses can only be aimed at Russia and at threatening to neutralize its deterrent.²²

- NATO expansion (the Russian term in opposition to the Western word enlargement) therefore bears no relationship to European security but is an attempt to divide Europe and threaten Russia.
- Finally, America seeks to turn the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) into an anti-Russian organization, and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) are also being used by individual governments

for such purposes despite their so called formal independence. Thus, revolutions in CIS countries are fomented from abroad, and elections there often are masquerades whereby the West intervenes in their internal affairs.²³ Obviously this view projects Russia's own politics and policies of interference in these elections (e.g., the \$300 million it spent and the efforts of Putin's "spin doctors" in Ukraine in 2004) onto Western governments and wholly dismisses the sovereign internal mainsprings of political action in those countries, another unconscious manifestation of the imperial mentality that grips Russian political thinking and action.

It is hardly surprising, then, that Russian commentators regularly say that "Russia's strategic worldview is fundamentally at odds with the American one and perhaps with American perspectives on international security."²⁴ Indeed, Lavrov recently stated that the United States was perhaps Moscow's "most difficult" partner and should learn from its mistakes in world politics.²⁵ In that context, Russia's independence is the primary achievement of Russian foreign and defense policy.²⁶ Lavrov also observed in 2005 that "We can come to the conclusion that the whole complex of our [foreign] relations, the weight of existing military and strategic links between Russia and the [United States] . . . will be constantly declining. We will never separate, but drifting away from each other could have irreversible consequences."²⁷

But beyond that, Lavrov contended that while America seeks to secure its global leadership status based on military power, it lacks the financial, trade,

economic, “and—last but not least—moral resources to do so. [Thus], the West is losing the monopoly on establishing rules of the game.”²⁸ So, aligned to this adversarial relationship is Russia’s growing belief that its star is ascending, while the West and America are in steady decline. Consequently, Russia is, or should be, taking part in the formation of a new architecture of international relations and playing a role as a “system forming” power.²⁹ Yet, simultaneously, Russia’s ruling elite regime paradoxically regards itself and Russia as being under constant threat from within and without despite this ascent. This marriage of paranoia and truculent boastfulness is unfortunately a Soviet, if not tsarist, heritage of Russian diplomacy, especially when things are going well for Moscow, and contains more than a little imperial arrogance.³⁰

Neither is this expectation of tension in the bilateral relationship a uniquely Russian one. Russian truculence towards America increases the likelihood of comparable U.S. reactions over a broad range of issues. Director of National Intelligence Vice Admiral John McConnell (U.S. Navy Ret.), recently told the Senate Armed Services Committee that,

Russian assertiveness will continue to inject elements of rivalry and antagonism into U.S. dealings with Moscow, particularly our interactions in the former Soviet Union, and will dampen our ability to cooperate with Russia on issues ranging from counterterrorism and nonproliferation to energy and democracy promotion in the Middle East. As the Litvinenko murder demonstrates, the steady accumulation of problems and irritants threatens to harm Russia’s relations with the West more broadly.³¹

Department of Defense (DoD) Secretary Robert Gates’ testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in

February 2007 about “the uncertain paths of China and Russia, which are both pursuing sophisticated military modernization programs” and Putin’s overly alarmist reply to it at Munich, already reflects the danger of this element of rivalry and of reciprocal irritation that McConnell warned about.³²

Moscow’s argument that Russia does not get enough respect, whatever its validity, also omits those elements of Russian policy which have caused its image to suffer in the West. Putin’s speeches omitted mentioning the state-sponsored decline of Russian democratic tendencies and institutions; Chechnya; Russian intervention in Ukraine’s election in 2004; its habitual use of the energy weapon to intervene in Baltic, CIS, and East European governments’ policies, threaten Transcaucasian regimes, and limit Central Asian sovereignty; the fact that the expansion of the U.S. military presence in Europe and missile defenses were briefed extensively to Moscow since 2004-05; the fact that Russia has tested intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) (both the stationary and mobile version of the *Topol-M* or *SS-27*, as well as the short-range *Iskander* missile) that, according to Putin and Former Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, can beat any missile defense; and the fact that these missiles are now being mass produced.³³ These Russian charges also omit Moscow’s military intervention in Georgia’s ethnic conflicts, Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh; and its arms sales and nuclear technology transfer to states like China, Iran, Syria, and Venezuela.³⁴

Perhaps worse and more disheartening is that Putin’s speeches and those of his subordinates reflect that they still have a woefully incomplete and distorted understanding of the West despite 15 years of supposed democracy and freedom. Indeed, they are

prone to accept the worst-case scenarios of Russian intelligence services and elites who are notorious for presenting distorted and utterly mendacious threat and policy assessments. Either that or they share a wholly cynical, materialistic, virtually exclusively self-referential, and misconceived notion of Western weakness, Russophobia, and disunity. To partisans of this mindset, America does not count anymore as a partner because Iraq has distracted it and diverted its interest from Russia.³⁵ It also is quite probably the case, as defense correspondent Pavel Felgenhauer reports, that,

Russia has a Prussian-style all-powerful General Staff that controls all the different armed services and is more or less independent of outside political constraints. Russian military intelligence—GRU, as big in size as the former KGB and spread over all continents—is an integral part of the General Staff. Through GRU, the General Staff controls the supply of vital information to all other decision-makers in all matters concerning defense procurement, threat assessment, and so on. High-ranking former GRU officers have told me that in Soviet times the General Staff used the GRU to grossly, deliberately, and constantly mislead the Kremlin about the magnitude and gravity of the military threat posed by the West in order to help inflate military expenditure. There are serious indications that at present the same foul practice is continuing.³⁶

For example, Putin complained that American politicians are invoking a nonexistent Russian threat to get more money for military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. Putin's remarks represent a wholly fabricated analysis of Secretary Gates' testimony to Congress, but signify that he wants to believe the worst about American intentions as do the General Staff, intelligence agencies, and like-minded Russian political

leaders.³⁷ For example, in his press conference before the annual G-8 conference in Heiligendam, Germany in June 2007, Putin told reporters that Russia and the West were returning to the Cold War and added that,

Of course, we will return to those times. And it is clear that if part of the U.S. nuclear capability is situated in Europe and that our military experts consider that they represent a potential threat, then we will have to take appropriate retaliatory steps. What steps? Of course, we must have new targets in Europe. And determining precisely which means will be used to destroy the installations that our experts believe represent a potential threat for the Russian Federation is a matter of technology. Ballistic or cruise missiles or a completely new system. I repeat that it is a matter of technology.³⁸

Similarly, despite dozens of statements and briefings to the contrary, Russian generals and politicians insist that 10 missile defense radars and interceptors stationed in the Czech Republic and Poland represent a strategic threat to Russia and its nuclear deterrent not because of what they are but because of what they might be, just as Putin said above.³⁹ Russia also charges that rotational deployments of no more than 5,000 army and air force troops in Bulgaria and Romania represents an imminent threat to deploy forces to the Caucasus.⁴⁰ Russian spokesmen view these new bases and potential new missions of U.S. and NATO forces, including missile defense and power projection into the Caucasus or Central Asia, as anti-Russian threats, especially as NATO has stated that it takes issues like pipeline security in the Caucasus and its members' energy security increasingly seriously.⁴¹ Yet actually U.S. "bases" in Romania and Bulgaria are nothing more than periodic rotational deployments of a small number of Army and Air forces whose mission is primarily the

training of the forces of their host countries. They are anything but a permanent base for strike forces in the CIS and Moscow knows it.⁴² Indeed, in 2004 Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov publicly accepted the reasons behind America's realignment of its forces and global basing structure and did not find it alarming.⁴³

No less consequential than the observation about returning to the Cold War is that Putin's statements indicate his full acceptance of the General Staff's vision and version of ubiquitous a priori American and Western threats expressed in a worst-case scenario. Worse yet, he openly conceded their power to define and formulate those threats and on that basis formulate requirements for defense policy and strategy. Indeed, here he openly invited the General Staff – these military experts – to determine Russia's threat assessment and announced that the government would accept it. These actions seriously jeopardize any hope for effective civilian, not to mention, democratic control over the armed forces.

Since Moscow neither faces an urgent or imminent strategic or military threat nor does it claim to face one, the threat it perceives is psychological, one of influence and diminished status abroad. Thus when Putin proposed in June 2007 that Washington share the Russian radar at Gabala, Azerbaijan, with it as a compromise, Yastrzhembskiy stated that, "We consider this issue not a military question, but a political one."⁴⁴ Similarly the so-called threat from NATO enlargement, for all the Russian complaints about it, was and remains a psychological rather than strategic issue. The innumerable statements by Russian generals that their weapons could beat any missile defense confirm this point. This gap between rhetoric and reality suggests not just a desire to ratchet up threat assessments for

political and economic benefits for the military and political elites doing so within Russia, or a search for foreign policy gains, but also a deliberate mis or disinformation of the leadership and the population as Felgenhauer suggests.

Certainly Russian charges that there is no Iranian missile threat are unsustainable because Moscow's own analysts and Russian officials like Ivanov and Baluyevsky acknowledge it.⁴⁵ Commenting on Iran's launch in early 2007 of a suborbital weather rocket, Lieutenant General Leonid Sazhin stated that "Iran's launch of a weather rocket shows that Tehran has not given up efforts to achieve two goals—create its own carrier rocket to take spacecraft to orbit and real medium-range combat missiles capable of hitting targets 3,000-5,000 miles away."⁴⁶ Although he argued that this capability would not fully materialize for 3-5 years, it would also take that long to test and deploy the American missile defenses that are at issue. Equally significantly, Major-General Vitaly Dubrovin, a Russian space defense expert, said flatly "now Tehran has a medium-range ballistic missile, capable of carrying a warhead."⁴⁷ Naturally, both men decried the fact that Iran appears intent on validating American threat assessments.⁴⁸

Arguably Russia has accepted a threat perception for which ultimately there is no solution but an arms race. To take Russia at its own inflated self-valuation means to privilege its interests and security above those of every other state with which it either interacts or with which it has a border. While Moscow obviously wants that outcome, it is equally obvious that it would have strongly negative consequences for many issues in international affairs. Certainly doing so reinforces Russian temptations towards autocracy and neo-

imperial foreign policies for as the Russian philosopher Sergei Gavrov writes,

The threats are utopian, the probability of their implementation is negligible, but their emergence is a sign. This sign—a message to “the city and the world”—surely lends itself to decoding and interpretation: we will defend from Western claims our ancient right to use our imperial (authoritarian and totalitarian) domestic socio-cultural traditions within which power does not exist to serve people but people exist to serve power.⁴⁹

Taking these inflated threat assessments at Russia’s self-valuation and acting accordingly would therefore have calamitous consequences throughout Eurasia. Doing so only stimulates still more aggressive and overbearing Russian behavior, while not getting anything in return. This does not mean disrespecting or gratuitously provoking Russia, but it does mean that we should understand that its threat perceptions and pretensions are greatly inflated, and we should therefore defend our legitimate ground. While there are actual areas where Russia might legitimately feel that its interests are adversely affected by U.S. policies and that such an assessment might be justified (see below), most of what we have recently heard about threats should not be included among them.

Indeed, numerous commentators have observed that for some time Russia has cast itself as a “besieged fortress,” charging Washington with imperialism, launching an arms race, interfering in the domestic policies of CIS states (including Russia), expanding NATO, unilateralism, disregard for international law when it comes to using force, and resorting to military threats against Russian interests, etc.⁵⁰ This wide-ranging threat perception also embraces Russia’s

domestic politics as well. Regime spokesmen, e.g. Vladislav Surkov, also openly state that Russia must take national control of all the key sectors of the economy lest it be threatened by hostile foreign economic forces and so called "offshore aristocrats."⁵¹ In other words, this threat perception links both internal and external threats in a seamless whole (as did Leninism) and represents the perception that Western democracy as such is a threat to Russia. Therefore U.S. and Western military power, even if it is not actually a threat, is a priori perceived as such.

Thus the problem is not that Russia is insufficiently respected abroad but rather that it defines its interests in ways that postulate an intrinsically adversarial relationship with the West, particularly Washington. Russian policy operates, as the German philosopher Carl Schmitt would have said, on the basis of the "presupposition of enemies." Consequently, Moscow cannot accept that its problem lies not in Washington or in the stars but in itself as much, if not more than, in American policy. Indeed, the student of the Russian press would have no trouble discerning this besieged fortress mentality that permeates it and that can only be triggered from above.⁵² As in the Soviet past, Moscow, like Washington, remains wholly ethnocentric and self-absorbed in its attitudes and relationship to the external world. Russia's single-minded pursuit of its own concept of its interests also shows little respect for or understanding of the reality of other governments' policies or their opinions. Much of this syndrome is traceable not to American policy, but to the nature of the Russian political system. Hence the growing standoff with Washington.

Potential Consequences.

While (rightly or wrongly) nobody expects a resurrection of the intense Cold War global geopolitical, military, and ideological rivalry replete with the ever-present specter of nuclear war, the consequences of this rift are profound. First, this rift has already begun to stimulate renewed strategic arms buildups by both sides. Second, this rift highlights the failure to transcend the traditional agenda of past efforts at Russo-American (or Soviet-American) partnership—i.e., international security, strategic arms control, nonproliferation of WMD, and energy cooperation—to a true strategic partnership.⁵³ Therefore issues of regional security in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia have become enmeshed with horizontal or vertical proliferation threats in these regions, making them more intractable and complicating the situation within which Eurasian governments must operate.

At the same time, issues of regional security throughout the CIS borderlands and in areas like the Black Sea have also become a subject of Russo-American, if not East-West, contention. Some commentators, like American conservative Bruce Jackson, proclaim that Russia wages a “soft war” against Western influence in Eastern Europe, including the Black Sea zone.⁵⁴ But the soft war also partakes of a classical geopolitical East-West rivalry, e.g., Moscow’s attacks on the American military presence in and around the Black Sea and concern about Bulgaria’s and Romania’s overall pro-Western foreign and defense policies. Similar rivalries occur throughout the entire post-Soviet periphery, the Middle East, and Northeast Asia.

Finally, there is a significant ideological dimension to this struggle. If it is not as intense as the Cold War was, it is still a meaningful struggle over the issue of

democracy and its expansion. This “values gap” is expressed in Russian attacks on the OSCE and NGOs, and in the deliberately widely-disseminated official belief that Washington somehow is or was behind all the color revolutions and is now seeking to undermine other CIS governments, including Russia’s. As Robert Kagan has recently noted, “If two of the world’s largest powers [Russia and China-author] share a common commitment to autocratic government, autocracy is not dead as an ideology.”⁵⁵

The consequences of this adversarial relationship go beyond America, Russia, and their bilateral relations. They also encompass ties with other parties in Europe, the CIS, the Middle East, and Northeast Asia. Therefore this growing antagonism has significant global implications. And as it takes place in a less structured world than during the Cold War where both sides, to survive, had to acknowledge the other’s red lines, today neither side needs each other. As the natural deterring factors of the Cold War have evaporated, the resulting situation is potentially more volatile, if not dangerous.⁵⁶ Moreover, as this adversarial relationship grows in scope and in its multiple dimensions, those consequences are already making themselves felt among Russia’s neighbors, interlocutors, and peripheries: Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Therefore, this rift possesses potentially significant strategic implications for both Russia and the United States.

One view of these frictions is that they are tactical not strategic. Consequently,

It is not that Moscow and Washington have strategic interests that are directly opposed to one another. In fact, leaders in both capitals see eye-to-eye on the pressing issues of nuclear proliferation and terrorism, and on more long-term goals, such as managing a peaceful rise of China. The problems seem to lie more in the tactics

of achieving these strategic aims. Russian leaders have a hard time conceding global leadership to Washington; likewise many in the United States still harbor ingrained prejudices against the longtime adversary in Moscow.⁵⁷

However, that viewpoint clashes with the fact that the repercussions of the bilateral tensions in this relationship encompass so much of today's global security agenda. Second, this line of analysis plays down the truly serious differences between the parties and actually condescends towards Russian demands. After all, it is precisely American leadership that Russia is challenging. Third, this view also clashes with the fact that the differences between both states are not only strategic ones, they are also growing. Thus there is a hardening conviction among Russian elites that American policy in many of its dimensions, both strategic and ideological—i.e., its rhetoric of democratization—represents a fundamental threat to the integrity and sovereignty of Russia. Or at least they believe that no improvement in those relations is possible in the foreseeable future.⁵⁸

While we may regard such talk as an unmerited manifestation of a well-developed and long-cultivated Russian paranoia, Russia's elite increasingly professes that America resents Russia's recovery, and attempts to weaken it in order to ultimately undermine it. This pervasive and unfounded view in Moscow triggers the well-developed and long-cultivated psychological armory of Russian responses, including the growing truculence and resort to bullying of its neighbors that we have seen in the Soviet, if not Imperial, past. However, psychoanalyzing this relationship should not lead us to discount the profound and immediately tangible consequences of this rift for Russia's neighbors or interlocutors.

For example, in 2005 Lithuanian Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis observed that the issue of Russia's democratization was connected with key issues like the provision of energy supplies to the Baltic states as a whole; the inclusion of new members, e.g., Ukraine, in NATO; and, most of all, with security throughout the region. He stated that,

Finally, the strengthening or weakening of democracy in Russia itself will have a pivotal influence on the region. If Russia is democratic, Lithuania will find itself in the epicenter of very interesting events. If Russia will be non-democratic, it is possible that after a certain time period, something resembling the iron curtain will be recreated. If we do not succeed in preventing that, we will end up on the periphery of events. That is the essence of things – to make sure that the gas pipeline is not exchanged for silence about human rights and democracy in Russia. Finally, the geopolitical fate of the world in 15 to 20 years depends upon the question of Russia's democratization.⁵⁹

Similarly, Walter Slocombe, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy during the Clinton Administration, testified to Congress in 1995 that "Russia's development, both internal and external, is perhaps the central factor in determining the overall fate and future of European security."⁶⁰ However, this argument's validity is not confined to one man, or one government, or even to one continent – Europe – alone. What is true for the Baltic littoral pertains with equal force throughout Eurasia: As stated by Dr. Andrew Michta of the Marshall Center in Garmisch, i.e., "the extent to which regional security will balance between old and new tasks will hinge on domestic political developments in Russia as well as the progress of the current Russian military modernization program to be completed in 2010."⁶¹

The intersection of numerous and overlapping global developments and crises – the war on terrorism, Iraq, the energy crisis, and the rise of China and India in Asia – enhances the significance of geostrategic trends in Russia and its peripheries. And these trends certainly include regression towards autocracy for it encourages and allows the aggressive tendencies so visible in contemporary Russian foreign policy. As Kagan observes,

It certainly would be a strategic error to allow Putin and any possible successor to strengthen their grip on power without outside pressures for reform, for the consolidation of autocracy at home will free the Russian leadership to pursue greater nationalist ambitions abroad. In these and other autocracies, including Iran, promoting democracy and human rights exacerbates internal political contradictions and can have the effect of blunting external ambitions as leaders tend to more dangerous threats from within.⁶²

The common thread of perceiving America as a threat in both geopolitical and ideological terms has also united Moscow and Beijing in a common cause.⁶³ Already in the 1990s, prominent analysts of world politics like Richard Betts and Robert Jervis, and then subsequent Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) studies, postulated that the greatest security threat to American interests would be a Russian-Chinese alliance.⁶⁴ Arguably, that is happening now and occurs under conditions of the energy crisis that magnifies Russia's importance to China beyond providing diplomatic support, cover for China's strategic rear, and arms sales.⁶⁵

Several analysts of trends in East Asia see the confluence of the energy and other current international crises contributing to a Russo-Chinese alliance that

has already formed in opposition to American power and ideas. That alliance would encompass points of friction with Washington: strategic resistance to U.S. interests in Central and Northeast Asia; resistance to antiproliferation and pressures upon the regimes in Iran and North Korea; an energy alliance; an ideological counteroffensive against U.S. support for democratization abroad; and the rearming of both Russia and China, if not their proxies and allies, with a view towards conflict with America.⁶⁶ South Korean columnist Kim Yo'ng Hu'i wrote in 2005 that,

China and Russia are reviving their past strategic partnership to face their strongest rival, the United States. A structure of strategic competition and confrontation between the United States and India on the one side, and Russia and China on the other is unfolding in the eastern half of the Eurasian continent including the Korean peninsula. Such a situation will definitely bring a huge wave of shock to the Korean peninsula, directly dealing with the strategic flexibility of U.S. forces in Korea. If China and Russia train their military forces together in the sea off the coast of China's Liaodong Peninsula, it will also have an effect on the 21st century strategic plan of Korea. We will now need to think of Northeast Asia on a much broader scale. The eastern half of Eurasia, including Central Asia, has to be included in our strategic plan for the future.⁶⁷

Since then, Lyle Goldstein and Vitaly Kozyrev have similarly written that,

If the Kremlin favors Beijing, the resulting Sino-Russian energy nexus—joining the world's fastest growing energy consumer with one of the world's fastest growing producers—would support China's growing claim to regional preeminence. From Beijing's point of view, this relationship would promise a relatively secure and stable foundation for one of history's most extraordinary

economic transformations. At stake are energy reserves in eastern Russia that far exceed those in the entire Caspian basin. Moreover, according to Chinese strategists, robust Sino-Russian energy links would decrease the vulnerability of Beijing's sea lines of communication to forms of "external pressure" in case of a crisis concerning Taiwan or the South China Sea. From the standpoint of global politics, the formation of the Sino-Russian energy nexus would represent a strong consolidation of an emergent bipolar structure in East Asia, with one pole led by China (and including Russia) and one led by the United States (and including Japan).⁶⁸

Russia's tie to China certainly expresses a deep strategic identity or congruence of interests on a host of issues from Korea to Central Asia and could have significant military implications. Those implications are not just due to Russian arms sales to China which are clearly tied to an anti-American military scenario, most probably connected with Taiwan. They also include the possibility of joint military action in response to a regime crisis in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as suggested by the joint maneuvers of the Russian and Chinese militaries in 2005 and 2007.⁶⁹ Thus we could be on the verge of a new strategic bipolarity that bifurcates Europe and Asia and places Washington and Moscow on opposite sides in both peacetime and times of crises.⁷⁰ Equally disquieting is that many analysts in both Russia and America expect bilateral relations to worsen in the foreseeable future, not least because Russian observers expect the current Congress to be more anti-Russian than its predecessor.⁷¹

Despite occasional U.S. and European efforts to soften the rhetoric, chances are that this forecast of worsening relations will actually materialize. Even

though Putin has stated that the United States is a major, if not the only, partner for Russia on issues of disarmament and global security, nonproliferation, global health, combating poverty, and trade, and that this partnership could soon expand in ways not yet foreseen, Putin's visible contempt for Western policy at the 2006 G-8 meeting in St. Petersburg and afterwards, has manifested itself in even more sarcastic fashion than was previously the case.⁷² And the systematic flooding of the Russian media with anti-American propaganda certainly adds to the likelihood of long-term estrangement.

Since Russia is now experiencing a succession scenario which is the achilles heel of its political system but which will also drive all Russian politics even further in an anti-Western direction, Russian elites have every incentive to keep stoking this fire. But they and we must remember that the consequences of intensifying this adversarial quality of the bilateral relationship could be very negative for international security. In previous cases, Russian rulers have resorted to violence and fomented crises so as to secure domestic popularity and legitimacy, e.g., Yeltsin's war with Chechnya in 1994.⁷³ Likewise, several Western scholars, including this author, believe that the 1999 succession crisis was managed in such a way as to tie Putin's ascension to power to the incitement of the war in Chechnya.⁷⁴ The seizure of Yukos and the arrest of its chief executives, Platon Lebedev and Mikhail Khodorkovsky, in 2003-04 represent another example of the resort to direct force and the fomenting of a crisis to further narrow the possibilities for democratization and strike at Westernizing forces in Russia.⁷⁵ It is entirely possible, then, that this discernibly enhanced aggressiveness and threat-mongering are intended, as Gavrov and many

other Russian analysts suggest, to create a favorable domestic environment for the succession.⁷⁶

Under the most favorable explanation for recent political violence and assassinations directed against regime critics like Anna Politkovskaya and Alexnader Litvinenko, alleged “rogue elements” of the FSB are trying to impose one or another’s political scenario upon Russia and destabilize the Putin regime. If this is true, it hardly furnishes evidence of Russia’s reliability or stability with regard to world politics. And if the state committed those assassinations, then we are dealing with what truly is a criminalized and rogue state. This last charge is not as surprising as it may seem, for Russian and foreign observers have long pointed to the integration of criminal elements with the energy, intelligence, and defense industrial sectors of the economy.⁷⁷

Second, every succession since 1991 has been the result of violence or electoral fraud, if not both phenomena.⁷⁸ Consequently Russia’s importance as a major energy and military (and recovering military) power, its function as the sponsor of anti-democratic movements or trends and alibi of last resort throughout the CIS for such tendencies, its ability to block nonproliferation or to provide arms, nuclear reactors, know how, and substantial political support for anti-Western and anti-American regimes, e.g., Iran and Myanmar, and even for terrorist movements, and, finally, the link between its fundamental domestic instability and its foreign policy, leads it to figure prominently in many different potential threat scenarios. As one recent American assessment observes,

The central puzzle of Russian politics is that 15 years after the collapse of the USSR, the country still lacks any

stable and legitimate form of state order. The result is continuing pervasive political and social uncertainty—concretized in the palpable official fear that independent civil society organizations might promote additional “color revolutions” in Russia or other post-Soviet states and the endless rumors about various unconstitutional or semi constitutional schemes Putin might employ to stay in power after his formal second term ends in March 2008. Bearing in mind that Russia remains the world’s largest country by territory and still possesses thousands of nuclear warheads as well as large stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, such uncertainty could quickly become a major international problem as well.⁷⁹

These political conditions duly represent some of the reasons why even Russian analysts admit that Russia remains “a risk factor” in world politics, not the reliable pole of world politics that it claims to be.⁸⁰

Although some, including U.S. officials, may believe that Russia’s hostile rhetoric is connected with the upcoming succession to Putin, at best that is only partly the case.⁸¹ Russia’s adversarial posture towards America and the West is not just a ploy to mobilize support for the regime, though it is that. Rather, this policy is intrinsically linked to and grows out of Russia’s regression towards a police state, where the police rule through the state and the state enforces a stifling tutelage over the citizenry.⁸² In other words, as both foreign and domestic observers have written, this systematically inculcated authoritarian, anti-American line and gravitation towards China are systemically and structurally driven.⁸³ Or, as Lilya Shevtsova has written, anti-Westernism is the new national idea.⁸⁴ Thus Vladimir Shlapentokh has shown that an essential component of the Kremlin’s ideological campaign to maintain the Putin regime in power and extend it

(albeit under new leadership) past the elections of 2008 is anti-Americanism. As he wrote,

The core of the Kremlin's ideological strategy is to convince the public that any revolution in Russia will be sponsored by the United States. Putin is presented as a bulwark of Russian patriotism, as the single leader able to confront America's intervention in Russian domestic life and protect what is left of the imperial heritage. This propaganda is addressed mostly to the elites (particularly elites in the military and FSB) who sizzle with hatred and envy of America.⁸⁵

Similarly, Minxin Pei of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace observes that,

The rapid improvement in ties and growing cooperation between China and Russia owes, to a great extent, not to any Chinese new initiative, but to Russia's changing relationship with the West under Vladimir Putin's rule. As President Putin became increasingly authoritarian, he needed China as an ally in counterbalancing the West. The net strategic effect of Russia's reorientation of its policy toward the West has been tremendously positive for China.⁸⁶

Russia's threat perceptions are either oriented towards terrorism from the south, as was generally the case even until 2006, or more recently primarily to the West.⁸⁷ Key Russian officials now proclaim that the greatest threats to Russia come from the West, supposedly in the form of NATO's enlargement (although NATO is a shadow of its past military strength); American military power in both its conventional and nuclear aspects; or as President Bush himself has now recognized, in the form of demands for greater democratization.⁸⁸ Recently Putin himself, stated that,

You know, I think that the problem in international relations today is that there is increasingly less respect for the basic principles of international law. There is an ever growing desire to resolve this or that issue based on the political considerations and expediency of the moment. This is very dangerous, and it is precisely this that leads to small countries not feeling secure. It is also this that fuels the arms race in large countries.⁸⁹

Lavrov has duly echoed this assessment.⁹⁰ It is unlikely, though, that either he or Putin had Russian policy towards Chechnya, Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, the Baltic states, or Russian domestic policy in mind when they made these statements.

Military and Nuclear Issues.

The repercussions of this rift with the West are particularly visible in Russian military policy. Indeed, in the military, we find the threat assessments claiming that Russia faces a threat situation comparable to that of the 1930s America stated in Ministry of Defense and General Staff journals as a matter of course.⁹¹

Obviously this argument invokes the traditional specter of a large-scale continental or even inter-continental war and Western invasion of Russia to elicit more resources from the government. Yet it is not an inaccurate representation of Russian defense thinking. Putin's statements above (and below), as well as those by other key spokesmen and/or analysts, display the growing belief in a Western threat. Russian political and military literature abounds with charges that Washington seeks to "crush" Russia and is organizing secret plans to undermine or overthrow the Russian government by fomenting

new “color revolutions” to follow Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan.⁹² Neither are these apprehensions intended only for domestic consumption because they influence policy and force deployments in Russia and possibly in the United States as well, especially with regard to nuclear weapons. For example, Russian officials have blocked discussions of reducing tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) in Europe, not least because they see them as weapons to stop a NATO or American conventional offensive and restore intrawar stability and escalation control.⁹³ Thus Ivanov’s remarks about Russia’s capability to launch mass production of missiles apply to them as well.⁹⁴

Regarding strategic nuclear weapons and missile defenses, the situation is no better. Moscow regards Washington’s policies of leaving the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, building missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic, seeking to militarize space, and conventional and nuclear force modernization as posing a combination of threats to it. Thus beyond its own urgent, long overdue, and ongoing conventional modernization, it has announced plans for qualitative modernization of its strategic and tactical nuclear systems through 2020.⁹⁵ Evidently Moscow expects a confrontation involving the threat or even use of nuclear or space weapons and a concomitant urgent necessity of rebuilding its conventional and nuclear forces.⁹⁶ The program outlined below, according to Ivanov, will allow Russia to replace 45 percent of its existing arsenals with modern weapons by 2015.

Thus, Ivanov has recently unveiled plans to build by that date: 50 new *Topol-M* ICBM complexes on mobile launchers, 34 new silo-based *Topol-M* missiles and control units, 50 new bombers, 31 ships; and to fully rearm 40 tank, 97 infantry, and 50 parachute battalions. Forty *Topol-M* silo-based missiles have already been

deployed. In 2007 alone, the military would get 17 new ballistic missiles rather than 4 a year, as has recently been the case, and 4 spacecraft and booster rockets. It would overhaul a long-range aviation squadron, 6 helicopter and combat aviation squadrons, and 7 tank and 13 motor rifle battalions. In 2007 alone, 11 billion dollars will be spent on new weapons, and 31 new ships will be commissioned, including 8 fleet ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) carrying ICBMs (presumably the forthcoming *Bulava* missile). And in 2009-10, Russia will decide whether or not to build a new shipyard for the construction of aircraft carriers, and 50 Tu-160 *Blackjack* and Tu-95 *Bear* Strategic Bombers will operate over this period as well. Doctrinally, Russia will also retain its right of launching preemptive strikes.⁹⁷

In and of itself, this program does not necessarily revive the Cold War confrontation or an inherently anti-American program of arms racing; the modernization of Russia's weapons is desperately needed. But this program does betray a heightened threat assessment and the growing strategic importance and even utility attached by Moscow to nuclear weapons. The latter point, of course, is one for which America is often blamed, but has figured prominently in official Russian doctrine and strategy at least since 1993.⁹⁸ Indeed, it appears that Russia has unilaterally violated President Boris Yeltsin's commitment for disarmament of Russian attack or multipurpose submarines so that they would not carry tactical nuclear weapons (TNW) and is deploying these weapons on attack submarines "on combat patrols."⁹⁹ Moscow now advocates a legally binding treaty saying that U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals do not target each other in order to dispel this alleged threat.¹⁰⁰ This request appears to be purely propagandistic since Presidents Yeltsin

and Clinton agreed to this over a decade ago, and the required computer programs for targeting could be reinstated at a moment's notice. So it appears that we will see what Putin calls an "asymmetrical but highly efficient" Russian response, perhaps in its new *Bulava* or *Topol* missiles that supposedly can avoid or spoof missile defenses.¹⁰¹ But this reply also suggests the potential return of the competitive procurement spiral that featured so prominently during the Cold War.

This intensified threat assessment contradicts earlier statements by Ivanov and Putin dating back to 2001 that the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty may have been a mistake but not a threat to Russia. Alarmist threat briefings that these missile defenses, America's conventional force modernization, or its nuclear programs reflect an urgent and growing threat, display either a misunderstanding (whether deliberate or unintentional) of U.S. policy or an apprehension that the cherished dream of a closed bloc in the former Soviet Union and great power status are at risk.¹⁰²

Thus the outbreak of this rhetoric reflects deeper political exigencies that drive Russian policy, not some major change in what the Soviets used to call the correlation of forces. For example, the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) of 2002, also known as the Moscow treaty, essentially uncoupled U.S. and Russian strategic force modernization programs from each other. The treaty stipulated that both sides can build whatever nuclear forces they need within the treaty's limits without referring to the other side's programs or directly countering them in their own force building programs.¹⁰³ However, thanks to the controversy on missile defense, Russia now insists that if the United States unilaterally installs missile defenses in Eastern Europe, it will affect Russo-

NATO relations, create confrontations in Europe, and in general end civilization as we know it. Therefore, Washington must first involve Russia before it makes any such deployment.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, Putin and his minions say that if America accepts his proposals for missile defense cooperation based on the system at Gabala or alternatively on a new one being built at Armavir in the North Caucasus, then the bilateral relationship can become once again a strategic one and lead to a “revolution” in world politics. But if we do not accept this, then, of course, the regression to a neo-Cold War situation is implicit in those statements.¹⁰⁵

As part of this recent proposal for use of the Gabala installation and in the overall controversy over missile defense, Russia evidently again wants a veto or at least a “droit de regard” (right of regard) over U.S. and NATO military programs, particularly ones within what Russia calls the vicinity of its borders or interests. But these demands also show that with regard to Washington, Moscow operates its policies from the presupposition of enemies.

Given the several years of briefings and consultations involved among all the parties including Russia, American unilateralism is not the issue here. Rather, it is an attempt by Russia to force America to give Russia a veto over its policies and trigger further dissension in NATO. Thus Baluyevsky argued that “In our opinion, military activity by the alliance close to Russia’s borders should be comprehensible to Russia and commensurate with the new challenges and threats that are rising. At the same time Russia has an interest in having a predictable partner in the shape of NATO.”¹⁰⁶ This demand is, in fact, a tried, tested, but also tired Soviet and post-Soviet refrain. Obviously this is unacceptable to Washington, NATO, and its members.

Even though there is no military threat as Russian military men admit, and as did Putin in 2001, Russia, especially its armed forces and political leaders, cannot relinquish the belief in NATO and America as an a priori enemy. They are still tied to the presupposition of an enemy and to a relationship based on the expectation of a threat, i.e., a relationship of deterrence rather than of defense. Lavrov recently underscored this point. He told an interviewer for *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* that,

Our main criterion is ensuring the Russian Federation's security and maintaining strategic stability as much as possible. . . . We have started such consultations already. I am convinced that we need a substantive discussion on how those lethal weapons could be curbed on the basis of mutual trust and balance of forces and interests. We will insist particularly on this approach. We do not need just the talk that we are no longer enemies and therefore we should not have restrictions for each other. This is not the right approach. It is fraught with an arms race, in fact, because, it is very unlikely that either of us will be ready to lag behind a lot.¹⁰⁷

Thus he emphasized that in an atmosphere of political mistrust and where both sides' deployments are still based on the philosophy of deterrence and mutual assured destruction, strategic unilateralism is both unacceptable and indeed dangerous to all because it stimulates arms races across the world. In other words, American unilateralism is inherently a threat to Russia wherever it appears because Russia cannot but proceed from the a priori assumption of hostile American interest, i.e., the presupposition of an enemy.

Thus the problem and the threats that we face as this relationship erodes are not due to Russia's military modernization but rather to the overall deterioration of Russo-American relations or to the failure to break

out of past cognitive paradigms. And here Russia, precisely because it has reverted to previous policies, structures, and mentalities, is as much to blame as is the United States. Whereas the United States is moving or has sought to move toward a strategic relationship based on partnership with Russia, defense against and dissuasion of enemies, and lessened reliance on nuclear weapons and deterrence vis-à-vis Russia and other states, Russia cannot overcome the past.¹⁰⁸ It remains committed to a strategy and posture of deterrence that postulates an inherently adversarial relationship with the United States. Russian analysts recognize the continuing conformity of Russian policy with Schmitt's notion of the presupposition of the enemy as an approach to national security policy in Russia.¹⁰⁹ That failure to break out of past paradigms, however it is understood, inevitably heightens the impact of geostrategic rivalry across the entire Russo-American agenda and in international relations more broadly.

Thus Lavrov complains that "we are being called upon to fight a hypothetical threat (i.e., intermediate range missiles from Iran that could hit Europe) while a real threat to our security is looming." This statement falsely negates what Russian military men and Lavrov know to be a real and growing threat from Iran's missile, nuclear, and space programs.¹¹⁰ But the threat that really alarms Lavrov here, a nonmilitary one it should be noted, is one that has frightened Russian statesmen for centuries, namely the idea of a unified Europe from which it is isolated. So Lavrov went on to warn that NATO, the OSCE, and the CFE Treaty, the pillars of the European security system, are being converted into a bloc policy which would fold up the reform of Europe's security architecture that Russia desires and bifurcate Europe.¹¹¹ That Moscow's policy toward Europe

aspires to strategic bipolarity throughout Eurasia, as described below, seems to have eluded Lavrov here, but underscores the fundamentally psychological resentment of lost power and craving for status with America that drives Russian policy.

Potential U.S. Threats to Russia and Inflated Russian Threat Perceptions.

To say this is not to deny that possible changes in U.S. force structures and deployments could provide a threat or threats to Russia. Indeed, the best available studies of American nuclear policies, including modernization of those weapons, highlight the fact that these policies, including the introduction into practice of new concepts like dissuasion and preemptive, if not preventive, war, could, if they have not already done so, develop into perceived *potential threats* to Russia in the near future.¹¹² Oddly enough, though, these potential threats are hardly ever mentioned in Russian commentary. This suggests, once again, that it is internal Russian perceptions as much as actual realities that are driving policy. As an example of these potential threats, although the United States has upgraded its naval and other strategic forces and is gradually shifting them to the Pacific Ocean largely to meet potential North Korean or Chinese contingencies, those deployments also could threaten Russian forces.¹¹³ But Moscow has said little or nothing about these forces.

A second, equally negative possible outcome is that American policymakers will come to perceive Russia not just as a recalcitrant independent actor that does not want to cooperate with America, but as a potential or even active threat in its own right. As this potential inheres primarily in Russia's nuclear capability, the

developments cited here are already creating a climate among government circles in which Russia can quickly come to be seen as a potential military threat due to its political differences with America. For example, the recent Report of the Defense Science Board on Nuclear Capabilities stated openly that nuclear reductions agreed to in the Moscow treaty of 2002 and recommended in the Nuclear Posture Review of 2001 pointed to a new and benign strategic relationship with Russia after the end of the Cold War and the desire to forge a new bilateral strategic relationship that no longer was based on the principles of Mutual Assured Destruction.

Today, the Report observes, that presumption of a new benign strategic relationship with Russia is increasingly open to doubt. This is because, “Although United States relations with Russia are considered relatively benign at the moment [December 2006], Russia retains the capacity to destroy the United States in 30 minutes or less.” Moreover, its reliance on nuclear weapons to compensate for a weakened conventional military has led it to emphasize nuclear weapons for purposes of maintaining superpower status, deterrence, and potentially warfighting. Russia’s regression from democracy, and rivalry with America over Iraq, Iran, and Central Asia [other issues may well be added since then to the mix – author], suggest that the assessment of 2003 that nothing had changed since 2001 to justify revising the Nuclear Posture Review’s (NPR) presumption of a benign strategic relationship with Russia needs to be revised.¹¹⁴ Therefore, the Report recommends the creation of a permanently standing assessment “Red Team” “to continuously assess the range of emerging and plausible nuclear capabilities that can threaten the United States and its allies and

friends with potentially catastrophic consequences.”¹¹⁵ This team would monitor Russian, Chinese, and North Korean developments because,

Despite the desire for improved relations with Russia, the direction, scope, and pace of the evolution of U.S. capabilities must be based on a realistic recognition that the United States and Russia are not yet the reliable, trusted friends needed for the United States to depart from a commitment to a robust nuclear deterrent. Intentions can change overnight; capabilities cannot.”¹¹⁶

Other examples of a growing wariness about Russian intentions can also be cited.¹¹⁷ Thus there is a real danger that these perceptions can grow on both sides into self-fulfilling threat perceptions that will drive conventional and nuclear defense acquisitions and foreign policy decisions as well until they influence formal doctrinal and strategic pronouncements. Some Russian military observers have already openly postulated that Russia and America (or NATO) are still enemies. For example, Colonel Anatoly Tsyganok, a noted military commentator speaking about the increase in large-scale and regular Russian military exercises, observed that apart from the need to conduct such exercises as part of the Army’s regular routine, they are necessary to respond to American deployments in places like Hungary and Bulgaria. Both sides, he says, remain enemies, and these exercises are hardly antiterrorist ones but rather something else (i.e., he hints at their being intended to be anti-NATO).¹¹⁸ Certainly and similarly, the so-called “Ivanov doctrine” of 2003, formalized in a Russian white paper that did not name NATO, was oriented nonetheless to the primacy of a NATO/American threat.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless for such threats to be actualized and formalized in official state papers like defense doctrines, the political climate between Moscow and Washington would have to decline still further. Consequently, while we should not rush to restore the Cold War, the present trends on both sides are disturbing and destabilizing, not only for what they mean to each other but also because of their impact on regional security throughout Eurasia and how they affect the calculations of other nuclear states or states that seek nuclear weapons like Iran and North Korea. In other words, these tensions cannot be confined to discussions of bilateral strategy and politics but deeply impinge upon the problems of regional security, global proliferation, and deterrence.

In fact, in the context of charges raised in 2006 that the United States now has and has been striving for a usable first-strike nuclear capability against Russian forces—an argument that ignited a firestorm of polemics in Russia—such interactive Russian and American deployments of both conventional and nuclear forces do, in fact, raise the prospect of real as opposed to notional threats of an arms race where Washington seems to move for a supposed first-strike capability in both Russian and Western strategic analyses.¹²⁰ Thus David McDonough's analysis of U.S. nuclear deployments in the Pacific Ocean states that,

The increased deployment of hard-target kill weapons in the Pacific could only aggravate Russian concerns over the survivability of its own nuclear arsenal. These silo-busters would be ideal to destroy the few hundred ICBM silos and Russia's infamously hardened command-and-control facilities as well as help reduce any warning time for Russian strategic forces, given their possible deployment and depressed trajectory. This is critical for a decapitation mission, due to the highly centralized command-and-control structure of the Russian posture,

as well as to preempt any possible retaliation from the most on-alert Russian strategic forces. The Pacific also has a unique feature in that it is an area where gaps in Russian early-warning radar and the continued deterioration of its early-warning satellite coverage have made it effectively blind to any attack from this theatre. This open-attack corridor would make any increase in Pacific-deployed SLBMs appear especially threatening.¹²¹

Similarly, already in 2003 when the first reports of the Pentagon's interest in new low-yield and bunker-busting nuclear weapons became public, Russian analysts warned that even if such programs are merely in a research stage, they would add to the hostile drift of Russo-American relations.¹²² Events since then have only confirmed this assessment and their warning. Meanwhile, the trend continues towards increasing Russian reliance upon nuclear weapons against a perceived growing American threat. This threat perception and reliance upon nuclear weapons takes place despite American assertions that charges of excessive U.S. reliance on nuclear forces; that the United States is either not reducing nuclear forces or doing so fast enough; that the United States is building new and more dangerous nuclear weapons; that the United States is lowering the threshold for nuclear weapons use by emphasizing preemption; and that these alleged failures and the supposed failure to sign new arms control treaties are encouraging proliferation are myths.¹²³ So if we may paraphrase a famous movie line, "What we have here is a failure to communicate," while both sides appear to be sinking deeper into their self-justifying perceptions.

For example, even less plausibly, Russian spokesmen regularly and increasingly decry the U.S. intention to build missile defenses bases in Poland and in the Czech

Republic as threats to Russian security because they will really be used, so they say, against Russia, and not Iran, so as to render Russia's first or second strike capability impotent or to threaten such outcomes.¹²⁴ The ensuing nuclear blackmail would allegedly then be used to further reduce Russia's foreign policy and military capabilities, standing, and security. Lavrov and other officials have now frequently reiterated that "the military presence of the United States in Europe is becoming a strategic factor."¹²⁵

Baluyevsky too attacked this deployment because it could touch off an arms race in many countries (the hidden idea being that Russia could not keep up with the pace of America and China), and that these defenses are not needed because neither Iran nor North Korea has the capability to strike at Europe or America. Thus these missile defenses are there to threaten Russia and deprive it of access to key zones along its frontier—perhaps the real threat in political terms. Missile launchers could be converted to interceptors that strike throughout European Russia; the missiles will not actually defend against all incoming attacks (which is strange since he said there were no attacks to be expected); they create possible ecological nightmares or even wars in Europe, etc.¹²⁶ These rhetorical salvos are coming fast and furious even though dispassionate and thorough Russian analyses, e.g., by Alexei Arbatov of the Carnegie Endowment in Moscow, demonstrate that these missile defenses cannot possibly threaten Russia.¹²⁷ Hence the demand for more American transparency concerning those missiles and their purpose as well as some kind of binding agreement that Russia cannot be and is not a target of those missiles.¹²⁸ Furthermore, the internal contradictions among them, e.g., that Iran simultaneously is and is not a threat or

that Russian missiles could spoof defenses, etc., indicate just how seriously these threat assessments should be taken.

Thus, this demand for suspending the program, along with multiple complaints that Washington has not answered Russia's questions, etc., are one large bluff inasmuch as Russia also received over 10 technical briefings on this program.¹²⁹ The artificiality, not to mention systematic mendacity, of this campaign is all too redolent of Soviet tactics and suggests another attempt to divide Washington and Europe from each other by frightening the latter even as it reflects the abiding status insecurity that underlies so much of Russian foreign policy. And, of course, the other critical goal of this campaign is to prevent any American military presence in the former Warsaw Pact states, not to mention the former Soviet Union, so as to leave open the possibility of their remaining a Russian sphere of influence.

At the same time, this campaign also illustrates the Russian military-political elite's inability to reconcile themselves to a diminished budget and status, and finally their consistent belief that America and NATO are enemies of Russia. As Nikolai Sokov recently wrote, in regard to the study by Keir Lieber and Daryl Press about U.S. strategic capabilities that generated so much heat in Russia,¹³⁰

The reason why hardliners in Russia pay so much attention to the state of the U.S.-Russian strategic balance (and why they continue to discuss it in terms of "parity" rather than retaliatory capability) is that they conceive of U.S.-Russian relations today in the same terms as during the Cold War. The underlying unspoken assumption of the Lieber-Press study is that a systematic fundamental conflict either exists or could emerge in the future; this assumption is not lost on Russian hardliners.¹³¹

Other implications of the growing antagonism between Washington and Moscow have also made themselves felt in military affairs. Coordination with NATO has turned out to be much less than what was hoped for once it began in 2002.¹³² Indeed, Sergei Ivanov admitted that Russo-NATO cooperation in fighting terrorism has not reached the desired level, and that development of medium-term plans for cooperation in countering security threats in general is needed. Thus the NATO-Russia Council has been only a political factor with limited effectiveness in shaping military outcomes or a fundamental change in international relations.¹³³ Similarly U.S.-Russian and NATO-Russian planned exercises in Russia were suddenly cancelled just before they were supposed to start in September 2006.¹³⁴

Russian military writers likewise regularly inveigh against what they consider to be NATO and American plans to encircle Russia with both conventional and nuclear weapons at bases either in the Baltic, Poland, and Eastern Europe, or from attempts to place U.S. military bases within the CIS.¹³⁵ Lavrov, for example, warned that the failure of NATO members and the Baltic states to ratify the CFE treaty (which they will not do because of Russian deployments in Moldova and Georgia in violation of the OSCE's Istanbul accords of 1999) plus the enlargement of NATO, the resulting conventional imbalance, and the U.S. military presence in Europe all constitute a strategic factor, i.e., threats to Russia.¹³⁶ In addition,

Perceived foreign threats also include military build-up(s) changing the balance near the borders of Russia and its allies, anti-Russian policies of certain neighboring governments, and the US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty announced by the G. W. Bush [Administration].¹³⁷

As we have seen above, these so-called threats do not exist. Indeed, Sergei Ivanov as Defense Minister said as much in 2004.¹³⁸ Therefore these claims are essentially phantoms for justifying Russia's foreign and domestic policy goals as well as the military's campaign for more money and high-tech weapons against NATO and America. But because the real threats facing Russia are internal in nature, this perception of Russia as a besieged fortress and the primary global counterpole to America and the West demonstrate that Moscow's inability to find a point of domestic stability and legitimacy carries over into its foreign and defense policies. These facts also suggest that a fundamental problem in the Russo-NATO relationship is the unyielding opposition of the MOD and the government to genuine defense reform and strategic cooperation which would entail, among other things, eliminating the ingrained presupposition of enemies and policies deriving from that posture.¹³⁹

All these trends highlight an increasing Russian ambivalence about the arms control treaties of the 1980s and 1990s like the CFE Treaty of Paris of 1990 and the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Washington Treaty of 1987. Ivanov has frequently called all of these treaties, including the START I Treaty, relics of the Cold War.¹⁴⁰ Since then Lavrov, Baluyevsky, and Putin have threatened to withdraw from the CFE treaty, called it meaningless, and blamed NATO for not ratifying it (even though Moscow refuses to pull its forces out of Moldova) and for deploying forces in the states of new members.¹⁴¹ Clearly, the Russian debate over these treaties is closely linked to the issue of NATO's enlargement and their impact and continuation are seen in the context of that expansion. This debate also reveals the persistence of Cold War thinking in Moscow. But this debate over existing arms treaties also reveals that Moscow is unwilling to reveal or confront its true

threat perceptions and instead blames Washington for its failure to take Russian interests into account.

Much evidence also suggests that various political forces in Russia, particularly in the military community, are urging withdrawal from those treaties, not least because of NATO enlargement towards the CIS and U.S. foreign and military policy in those areas. In March 2005 Sergei Ivanov raised the question of withdrawal from the INF Treaty with the Pentagon.¹⁴² More recently, Ivanov has stated that the INF treaty was a mistake.¹⁴³ And since then Baluyevsky followed suit, threatening to pull out of the treaty unless Washington ceased its missile defense plans.¹⁴⁴

Indeed, withdrawal from the INF treaty makes no sense unless one believes that Russia is genuinely – and more importantly – imminently threatened by NATO, or Iran and China, but most of all by U.S. superior conventional military power, and cannot meet or deter that threat except by returning to the classic Cold War strategy of holding Europe hostage to nuclear attack to deter Washington and NATO. Similarly with regard to China and Iran, absent a missile defense, the only applicable strategy would be to use nuclear weapons to deter them, but this means admitting that these supposed partners of Russia actually constitute a growing threat to it. Since it is by no means clear that Russia can or should reply to any such threat by producing intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBMs), the desire to leave the INF treaty and reactivate missile production of IRBMs represents only the interests of the defense and defense industrial sectors, not necessarily Russia's state interest.

As part of this debate, General Vladimir Vasilenko also raised the issue of withdrawal from the treaty after Ivanov did so in 2005, though it is difficult to see

what Russia gains from withdrawal from that treaty.¹⁴⁵ Vasilenko, anticipating Baluyevsky, also stated that the nature and composition of any future U.S./NATO missile defense would determine the nature and number of future Russian missile forces and systems even though admittedly any such missile defense systems could only defend against a few missiles at a time. Therefore,

Russia should give priority to high-survivable mobile ground and naval missile systems when planning the development of the force in the near and far future. . . . The quality of the strategic nuclear forces of Russia will have to be significantly improved in terms of adding to their capability of penetrating [missile defense] barriers and increasing the survivability of combat elements and enhancing the properties of surveillance and control systems.¹⁴⁶

Obviously such advocacy represents a transparent demand for new, vast, and unaffordable military programs, similar to the demand for reactivating production of IRBMs regardless of consequences. But in that case, Russia's government and military, are, as Sokov suggested, thereby postulating an inherent East-West enmity that is only partially and incompletely buttressed by mutual deterrence.¹⁴⁷ That posture makes no sense in today's strategic climate, especially when virtually every Russian military leader repeatedly proclaims, as did Baluyevsky through 2006, that no plan for war with NATO is under consideration, and that the main threat to Russia is terrorism, not NATO and not America.¹⁴⁸ At the same time, that posture also is an open sign to Beijing and Tehran of Russian suspicions concerning their ambitions and capabilities. Still, Russian generals do not raise these issues unless told to do so.

Thus it would appear, as it does to Secretary Gates, that the real threat is the rise of neighboring states' short and medium-range missile capabilities, e.g., Iran and China.¹⁴⁹ This is a fine irony inasmuch as Russia was instrumental in providing the wherewithal for these states' military development. If Moscow withdrew from the INF treaty, that would allow NATO to station INF missiles in the Baltic and Poland as well as lead China and Iran to step up their production of intermediate range missiles as well. Furthermore, it is by no means clear that Moscow could regenerate production for both intermediate and ICBMs as their plant for such production systematically misses production goals. Thus withdrawal from the treaty could actually further diminish Russian security, not enhance it.¹⁵⁰ Yet Moscow dare not admit that the enemy of America is also its enemy lest its domestically based foreign and defense policy that postulates partnership with China and Iran be seen to be inherently contradictory and even dangerous.

Russia's Evolving Threat Assessment.

Under the circumstances, we should not be surprised that Putin's and Ivanov's recent threat assessments suggest that Washington and NATO or their policies are becoming a growing if not the main threat.¹⁵¹ Similarly, every account of Russia's forthcoming new defense doctrine similarly suggests that America and NATO are the main enemies and threats to Russia.¹⁵² Putin's remarks to the Federal Assembly in his annual speech on May 10, 2006, presaged his remarks in Munich and merit extensive citation for they indicate the evolving threat assessment, on the basis of which he likely has given his defense and foreign policy team

new strategic guidance towards postulating the source of threats to Russia and its interests.

Putin began this speech by stating that, as has been the case since 2001, the terrorist threat is the main one, but he then seamlessly linked it to what he perceives as a defining characteristic of much American foreign policy, i.e., the notion stated above that key American elites want to keep Russia tied down and weak.

The terrorist threat remains very real. Local conflicts remain a fertile breeding ground for terrorists, a source of their arms and a field upon which they can test their strength in practice. These conflicts often arise on ethnic grounds, often with inter-religious conflict thrown in, which is artificially fomented and manipulated by extremists of all shades. I know that there are those out there who would like to see Russia become so mired in these problems that it will not be able to resolve its own problems and achieve full development.¹⁵³

Putin then invoked the threat of nuclear proliferation, particularly to terrorists. Thus,

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction also represents a serious danger. If these weapons were to fall into the hands of terrorists, and they pursue this aim, the consequences would be simply disastrous. I stress that we unambiguously support strengthening the non-proliferation regime, without any exceptions, on the basis of international law. We know that strong-arm methods rarely achieve the desired result and that their consequences can even be more terrible than the original threat.¹⁵⁴

He then went on to berate Washington for abandoning arms control and raising the threat of using nuclear weapons against Russia:

I would like to raise another important issue today. Dis-

armament was an important part of international politics for decades. Our country made an immense contribution to maintaining strategic stability in the world. But with the acute threat of international terrorism now on everyone's minds the key disarmament issues are all but off the international agenda, and yet it is too early to speak of an end to the arms race. What's more, the arms race has entered a new spiral today with the achievement of new levels of technology that raise the danger of the emergence of a whole arsenal of so-called destabilizing weapons. There are still no clear guarantees that weapons, including nuclear weapons, will not be deployed in outer space. There is the potential threat of the creation and proliferation of small capacity nuclear charges. Furthermore, the media and expert circles are already discussing plans to use intercontinental ballistic missiles to carry non-nuclear warheads. The launch of such a missile could provoke an inappropriate response from one of the nuclear powers, could provoke a full-scale counterattack using strategic nuclear forces.¹⁵⁵

Finally, he concluded his threat assessment with an attack on the anti-Russian thrust of American foreign policy:

And, meanwhile, far from everyone in the world has abandoned the old bloc mentality and the prejudices inherited from the era of global confrontation despite the great changes that have taken place. This is also a great hindrance in working together to find suitable responses to the common problems we face.¹⁵⁶

This kind of threat assessment has several critical consequences. First, it closely resembles the assessment published by the Chinese government in its White Papers of 2004 and 2006 on Defense.¹⁵⁷ Thus the shared perception of both the location and nature of the common threats they face helps cement an anti-American Russo-Chinese alliance on a host of issues in the contemporary agenda of world politics. Second, the

results of this growing sense of threat from the West have not only restored the need for Russia to rearm with both conventional and nuclear weapons, they have all but undone the hopes for Russo-NATO cooperation after 9/11. As of 2003, the General Staff made clear its opposition to joint Russian-NATO exercises allegedly on the grounds of NATO enlargement and the improvement of missiles.¹⁵⁸ At the same time, both Ivanov and Baluyevsky made clear that if NATO remained a military organization, this could force Russia to make changes in its overall military doctrine and nuclear policies.¹⁵⁹ Baluyevsky went even farther by stating that "If the anti-terrorist direction of NATO continues, the threshold for using nuclear weapons will become lower and this will require a change of the principle for military planning of the Russian armed forces, including a change of military strategy."¹⁶⁰

Since the military had already stated in 1999 that circumstances (among them NATO's Kosovo operation) had led Russia to argue for lowering the threshold for nuclear use and broaden the circumstances under which tactical nuclear weapons might be used against purely conventional attacks, such remarks must be taken quite seriously.¹⁶¹ In fact, the military's enmity to NATO is not due to its policies but rather to the fact of its existence. As the Ministry of Defense stated in the so called Ivanov doctrine or White Paper of October, 2003,

Russia . . . expects NATO member states to put a complete end to direct and indirect elements of its anti-Russian policy, both from military planning and from the political declarations of NATO member states.... Should NATO remain a military alliance with its current offensive military doctrine, a fundamental reassessment of Russia's military planning and arms procurement is

needed, including a change in Russia's nuclear strategy.¹⁶²

Therefore, it is not surprising that first Moscow has tried, and recently with some success, to interest Washington in negotiating what would in effect be a START III treaty to reduce nuclear weapons on both sides.¹⁶³ Neither should we be surprised that Putin and his subordinates see a deteriorating threat situation that is drawing ever closer to Russia. Putin, in his speech to the Foreign Ministry on June 27, 2006, emphasized the increasingly threatening nature of the international system, the unilateral American use of force and supposedly indiscriminate attacks on Islam, and the possibility of proliferation as major threats coming closer to Russia. Thus he said that,

We need to be fully aware that, despite all our efforts, the potential for conflict in the world continues to grow. After the collapse of the bi-polar world order there exists a lot of unpredictability in global development. Perhaps this is why we continue to hear talk of an unavoidable conflict of civilizations that could become a long-term confrontation on the lines of the Cold War. I am convinced that we have reached a point today where the entire global security architecture is indeed undergoing modernization, and you have probably noticed this for yourselves. If we let old views and approaches continue to hold sway, the world will be doomed to further futile confrontation. We need to reverse these dangerous trends and this requires new ideas and approaches. Russia does not want confrontation of any kind. And we will not take part in any kind of "holy alliance." . . . I must say, too, that the causes fuelling the desire of a number of countries to acquire weapons of mass destruction and carry out other military programs include not just national ambitions but also the overblown importance given to force in international relations that is being foisted on us all. In this respect, the stagnation we see today in

the area of disarmament is of particular concern. Russia is not responsible for this situation. We support renewed dialogue on the main disarmament issues. Above all, we propose to our American partners that we launch negotiations to replace the START Treaty, which expires in 2009.¹⁶⁴

Again, Lavrov echoed this position.¹⁶⁵

Arms Control and European Security.

These strategic military issues extend as well into the conventional sphere and have direct impact on European security. We have already discussed the INF treaty above. The foundation stones of European and Eurasian security are the series of treaties beginning with the Helsinki treaty of 1975, its extension at Moscow in 1991, the 1987 Washington INF Treaty, the 1990 CFE Treaty, extended in 1999, the Paris and Rome treaties between NATO and Russia in 1997 and 2002, and the START and SORT treaties from 1991-2002. However, as noted above, some, if not all, of these treaties are apparently at risk.

Apart from Russian ambivalence about the INF treaty, we see the same thing happening with regard to the CFE treaty. Even before Putin suspended it and Baluyevsky warned that it might collapse, Ivanov and his subordinates said that Russia might withdraw from the CFE Treaty or that it might die a natural death.¹⁶⁶ Russia has claimed that the Baltic States' failure to ratify this treaty makes the Baltic a "gray zone" from which potential threats to Russian security could come even though they also admit that NATO's token forces there hardly represent a current threat.¹⁶⁷ Russia has also raised the question as to whether the projected American restructuring of its basing posture

in Europe, moving its forces to new bases in Romania and Bulgaria, violates the CFE treaty as well as the 1997 NATO-Russia agreement on the terms of NATO expansion.¹⁶⁸

The West's reply is first that these new U.S. bases do not violate either of those accords:

The Russia-NATO pact forbids the development of new bases in the territories of newly absorbed NATO members. However, the pact has no stipulations concerning the possibility of improving and expanding the existing military bases and infrastructures of new members, which is what the Pentagon is proposing to do. Additionally, the Pact limits the stationing of large military forces in new member countries, but Washington intends only to preposition equipment and rotate brigade-strength units (3,000 to 5,000 troops) through the bases. The planned basing of light forces, rather than heavy armor, also strengthens the Pentagon's argument that it is operating within the bounds of the CFE, which imposes limitations only on the amount of heavy military hardware and armor a state may possess. Therefore Washington has strong grounds to argue that its rebasing proposals are within the bounds of the established treaty framework.¹⁶⁹

In addition, Western officials argue that at the Istanbul 1999 OSCE conference they stated that the Baltic States would ratify this treaty when Russia withdraws its forces from Moldova and Georgia as it promised to do then. Russia has since then refused either to withdraw the forces from Moldova or accept that it had any legal or political obligation to do so. Thus a standoff ensued. Recently, thanks partly to Western pressure, Russia agreed with Georgia that it would withdraw from its bases there by 2008. But meanwhile it refuses to leave Moldova. Indeed, it seeks a 20-year lease on a base there to perpetuate its intervention on

behalf of a separatist and visibly criminalized Russian faction across the Dniester River.¹⁷⁰ Russian officials also talk of launching political gambits to formalize Russia's incorporation of Georgia's breakaway province South Ossetia into Russia.

These actions not only violate Russia's 1999 agreement, putting the lie to claims that Russia has no juridical obligation to leave Moldova and Georgia, they also would shatter the basis of European security as outlined in the aforementioned treaties. Incorporation of South Ossetia, Abkhazia, or Transnistria by force not only invokes Soviet and Tsarist precedents, those actions violate the Helsinki and Moscow treaties and the Istanbul accords, and shatter the post-Cold War accords with NATO. Like Moscow's 2004 and 2006 intervention in Ukrainian elections, such actions betray Russia's continuing inability to accept the end of empire in Eurasia even though a Russian empire there inherently threatens Eurasian and even Russian security.

The efforts to withdraw from the INF and CFE treaties are also connected to Russian fears that Western military-political pressure will be used to consolidate post-Soviet states' membership in NATO and/or the EU or to compel democratizing reforms in Russia or elsewhere in the CIS where Moscow supports the reigning authoritarians. Since Russia cannot compete militarily with the United States, let alone NATO, it has openly discussed using its strategic and/or tactical (or so-called nonstrategic) nuclear weapons in a first strike mode in the event of a threat by either of those parties against it or its interests in the CIS.¹⁷¹ And Sergei Ivanov wrote in 2006 that Russia regards threats to the constitutional order of CIS regimes as the main threat to its security.¹⁷² But it is hard to see how "the threat of

democracy” or even of revolution in a CIS state is easily amenable to military reprisals from Moscow other than the use of Russian forces in a power projection and counterinsurgency mode. Even so, Moscow has tried to assert its unilateral security umbrella over the CIS. Indeed, it long ago gratuitously extended its nuclear umbrella to the CIS.

Accordingly, Russian military planners envision all kinds of potential military scenarios in Eurasia due to NATO’s enlargement that would force Russia to rearm or retaliate, if necessary with nuclear weapons. For example, in July 2005 Konstantin Sivkov of the General Staff’s Center of Military Strategic Studies stated that,

The Alliance has achieved strategic depth of operations in Russia. U.S. tactical aircraft operating from NATO airfields may now reach Moscow, Tula, Kursk, and other cities of Central European Russia. This is an important factor from a geostrategic point of view. . . . It means that there are no more strategic barriers between Russia and NATO. What may it lead to? It may lead to escalation of border disputes with NATO countries (say because of certain territorial claims, or problems with oil production at sea, and fishing matters) into armed conflicts. Dangers of this sort exist in the Baltic region (Estonia claims the Pyatlov District of the Pskov Region) and in North Europe. . . . the situation is such that a local conflict may promptly become international. When it happens, it will be the alliance as such or the United States that will be putting forth demands, not the initiator of the conflict. Weapons may be used if Russia refuses to make concessions – space weapons first and foremost.¹⁷³

Alternatively, informational weapons that were once thought of as science fiction weapons but are now usable might be deployed.¹⁷⁴ In any case, Russia must be prepared for what it sees as the threats to overturn the constitutional order in CIS states as its biggest threat and those efforts, pace Sivkov, could

then escalate.¹⁷⁵ Not surprisingly, Ivanov demands full transparency from NATO about its actions and plans and raised the issue (or had his subordinates raise the issue) of withdrawal for these arms control treaties.¹⁷⁶ Contingency planning for these kinds of threats could only truly be taken to its logical culmination if Moscow frees itself from these two treaties that are pillars of arms control and security in Europe, and renounces its interest in European security.

However, such an outcome reignites an arms race in Europe and around the CIS that, as Putin and Company know, Russia cannot afford and which is in nobody's interest.¹⁷⁷ Ironically, Russia actually depends for its security on the restraints imposed by those treaties upon NATO's members including Washington. Moreover, it depends on them for subsidies like those through the Nunn-Lugar Act or Comprehensive Threat Reduction program to gain control over its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons arsenals. Without that funding, the recent visible regeneration of the Russian armed forces would have been greatly impeded because at least some of those funds would have had to go to maintain or destroy decaying nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Russia also needs Western, and especially American help against terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, or Iranian and North Korean nuclearization, and is still interested, as recent agreements show, in curtailing those states or terrorists' access to these materials.¹⁷⁸ Therefore these efforts to withdraw from the relevant treaties are quite misguided even though Moscow's legal right to withdraw from a treaty is not at issue. But if Moscow persists in these gambits to weaken, eviscerate, or even leave these treaties, what does that signify concerning its goals and what then is the future of European and Eurasian security?

Therefore, an appropriate American response should be to maintain the validity of both the CFE and INF treaties, insist upon fulfillment of the former, and state U.S. willingness to reaffirm or extend the latter which is supposed to expire in 2009. Nobody, least of all Russia, benefits from a new arms race in a Europe that should be a model of security practices, not a case of a model gone bad. And Russia's announced desire to renegotiate the START I Treaty that is to expire in 2009 was rightly taken up as a new opportunity for further reducing the likelihood of nuclear weapons use or threats to use them among the two leading nuclear states.¹⁷⁹

Still, despite the agreement to renegotiate nuclear arms reductions, there appears to be a fundamental difference in approach to these negotiations between Moscow and Washington. Hitherto the Bush administration has evaded getting into a negotiation, claiming it does not want to return to the Cold War relationship where both sides' nuclear arsenals were the defining factor in their relationship. In other words, the Bush administration is still chasing the will of the wisp of strategic unilateralism in nuclear matters.¹⁸⁰ Even if it has accepted in principle the idea of negotiating a new arms control treaty, it is likely to adhere as far as possible to its previous thinking on verification and arms control treaties, including thinking of Russia more as a partner than as a nuclear enemy. Lavrov's approach, cited above, shows that while the administration is and has been prepared to move beyond deterrence with regard to Russia, Moscow cannot move beyond its inherited anti-Western strategic paradigm that sees America as the main enemy. Therefore it can only contemplate a deterrence relationship with Washington which inherently, protestations of friendship aside, is based

on Schmitt's concept of the presupposition of enemies. Thus unilateralism on one side encounters a posture grounded in that presupposition on the other that remains frozen in a hostile and deterrence posture. The results should not have been difficult to foresee.

Meanwhile, Russia's posture on other arms control treaties like the INF treaty, is no less dangerous. However, Washington's perceived quest for ever more credible options for deterrence, dissuasion, and even nuclear warfighting scenarios only stimulates everyone else's insecurities and desire to achieve their own means of deterring or dissuading America.¹⁸¹ Doing so would also further stimulate the trend toward greater reliance on nuclear weapons as warfighting instruments that have been in effect at least since 2000, and also possibly enhance the attractiveness of such weapons to would-be proliferators.¹⁸²

To say this however, is not to abandon the need to put pressure on Russia to fulfill the treaties it has signed whether they deal with nuclear arms control or conventional weapons and Eurasian security. Indeed, such a strategy is all the more necessary for our policy toward Russia because just as we seek to achieve our immediate defense and security goals by advocating democratization and the rule of law – albeit by chasing rhetorical abstractions or theological categories of good and evil and regime change vis-à-vis Iran and North Korea – so must we do so with regard to Russia. But we must not do so on the grounds that are commonly asserted, i.e., theological and liberal political universalism as interpreted by the particular administration in power at any given time. Rather, whatever our private beliefs might be about the justification for such pressure for reform, in political terms it is only sustainable on the grounds that the

treaties to which Russia is party explicitly invoke these values and processes and thus represent Russia's solemn commitments as well as the constitutional foundation of our present world order from which Moscow as well as Washington benefit.¹⁸³ Abandoning those treaties therefore undermines world order and directly counters both American and Russian interests.

The Domestic Basis of Estrangement.

This increasing mutual estrangement grows out of both American and Russian domestic trends. Certainly the rhetoric, posture, policies, and activities of the Bush administration and of its domestic coalition, or the spokesmen thereof, reinforce long-standing Russian and other perceptions of a rogue American power unfettered by concern or respect for its interests or international institutions, and threatening both the integrity and the vital foundations of the Russian state, i.e., its pretensions to great power status. Similarly America's unilateral invasion of Iraq clearly and conclusively convinced many Russian policymakers that partnership with Washington led nowhere and that America was itself a kind of rogue elephant in international politics that had to be restrained by countervailing power.¹⁸⁴

More recently there is an increasing belief that efforts to be America's partner are inherently unavailing because of America's fixed hostile position and that, in any case, America is in decline as Lavrov has now repeatedly stated.¹⁸⁵ The mounting Russian perception of increased military threats from America and NATO also plays no small role in this litany of grievances against Washington and the West.

While there is obviously no lack of foreign or domestic criticism of the Bush administration's policies or reasons for engaging in that practice, it is equally obvious that the administration now is hamstrung and isolated, largely due to Iraq and its repercussions. The outcome of a policy aiming to leave Washington with a free hand to act as it pleases in world affairs is that its hands are full, while its energies and legitimacy are depleted. This condition applies to U.S. policy in dealing either with North Korea, Iran, the Middle East in general, or, for that matter, Russia.

But the same relationship between domestic and foreign policy whereby the former profoundly conditions the latter in America holds true for Russian policy as well. Russian foreign policy grows out of the need to validate or legitimate both a revived autocracy and the accompanying neo-imperial pretext for it, and the mystique attached to the latter. Psychologically, it evidently is imperative for the Russian elite not only to believe that Russia is always a great power regardless of the actual reality, but apparently to internalize the belief of Soviet leaders dating back at least to Lenin that all world politics revolve around Russia and its trajectory.¹⁸⁶ Therefore foreign observers like Hryhoriy Nemyria, Director of the Kiev based Center for European and International Studies, has accurately stated that, "A significant part of Putin's legitimacy lies in his ability to control developments in Russia's near abroad."¹⁸⁷ The continuing existence of this and other associated convictions discussed below, is inextricably connected to the fact that the structure of the Russian state increasingly resembles that of late Tsarism with some Soviet or contemporary innovations.¹⁸⁸

As Russian succession struggles illustrate, the recurrence of corruption, subversion, and force

deployed against internal “enemies” is among the most important indicators that Russia’s elite refuses to be bound by or account to any system of laws or of legal-political institutions.¹⁸⁹ Western diplomats, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, have publicly expressed concern that Putin observe the terms of the constitution and not succeed himself in 2008.¹⁹⁰ This kind of injunction need not be directed at a truly self-confident and legitimate state. In Russia, autocracy logically entails empire, an autarchic and patrimonial concept of a Russian state that is owned by the Tsar, controlled by his servitors, and which can only survive by expansion.¹⁹¹ Therefore Nemyria’s observations are perfectly consonant with the internal logic of the regime.¹⁹² Similarly it is equally noteworthy that Russia now defines energy security as denoting its companies’, i.e., the state’s, access to Western firms while restricting Western access to its own firms. While Russia’s main weapon is energy, it apparently is toying with enlarging its territory at Georgia’s expense by fabricating grounds for annexing Abkhazia and South Ossetia, if not the Transnistrian Republic that it seized from Moldova.¹⁹³

It logically follows that such a regime will have difficulty accepting the conventions of international life, including solemn treaties that it finds burdensome. Beyond that, just as autocracy means that the autocrat is not bound by or answerable to any institution or principle at home, it also means that in foreign policy, as often happened under the tsars, Russia feels free not to be bound by its own prior treaties and agreements.¹⁹⁴ As Lilia Shevtsova of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow observes,

It is impossible not to see that Russia’s foreign policy is the hostage of Russian internal systemic problems.

Growing authoritarianism, redistribution of property, attempts to destroy political alternatives—all these elements result in Moscow's zig-zagging foreign policy. Quasi-democracy and quasi-market go hand in hand with Russia's quasi-partnership with the West. Attempts to preserve Russia's traditional system which strives to look modern, are likely to exhaust political pragmatism and increase the danger of unpredictability, especially when Russia discovers that the raw materials potential is more a weakness, than a source of power. The West, in turn, will have to decide what its partnership with Russia really means—an incentive to modernization or international legitimization of its slide towards traditionalism.¹⁹⁵

But this point about the “autocratic” nature of Russian foreign policy is profoundly true in a more general sense. German analyst Heinrich Vogel has formulated this point in a deeper way, namely,

Continuity of the kind [of leadership] described above also implies increasing volatility as the leadership has full sway in shifting political priorities in the agenda of foreign relations. Freed from any substantive balances or restrictions at home, Russian foreign policy is open in more than one direction.¹⁹⁶

This insight has immediate ramifications in East-West relations. For example, Vogel also observes that,

The partnership between [the] EU and Russia is shaped by the perceptions and ambitions of political elites on both sides who do not see eye to eye. Geopolitical analysts in Russia now even claim a chance to recoup political territory which was lost over the last 10 years. Any dialogue about a “common strategic vision” will therefore be particularly difficult if the leadership of one side, unconstrained by institutional balances, is hedging unclear or outright incompatible ideas about the rules of cooperation and competition in Europe. This is the case

with Russian policies of “liberal imperialism”: and the prevailing hegemonial approach of coaching and defending autocratic regimes in Belarus, Moldova, and Central Asia against any outside criticism. The unconditional support for antidemocratic practices and trends in Russia’s near abroad dovetails with a distinct trend toward authoritarian regime justified by the Russian elites of all political shades as the “Russian way to democracy.”¹⁹⁷

Russia and the Policy of the Free Hand.

There can be little doubt that Russia pursues a policy of the free hand above all. In 2005 Lavrov announced that Russia refuses to be bound by foreign standards or conform to them.¹⁹⁸ Lavrov also insists that the West respect Russian interests in the CIS but makes no reciprocal statement of respect for the treaties Russia has signed and violated.¹⁹⁹ These statements and actions that comprise the actuality of Russian foreign policy confirm Trenin’s warnings that Russia really does not want to *belong* to a larger institutional grouping and most of all wants a free hand in world politics, especially, but not only, in the CIS.

Russian observers fully understand that the demand for a free hand in world politics, and for a closed anti-democratic bloc in the CIS, is directly traceable to Russia’s domestic politics. As Dmitry Furman wrote in 2006,

Our system’s democratic camouflage demands partnership with the West. However, the authoritarian, managed content of our system dictates the exact opposite. A safety zone for our system means a zone of political systems of the same kind of managed democracies that we are actively supporting in the CIS and, insofar as our forces allow, everywhere – in Serbia, the Middle East, even Venezuela. The Soviet Union’s policy might seem quixotic. Why spend so much money in the name of “proletarian internationalism”? But if you do not ex-

pand, you contract. The same could be said about our policy toward Lukashenko's regime [in Belarus-author]. The system of managed democracy in Russia will perish if Russia is besieged on all sides by unmanaged democracies. Ultimately it will once again be a matter of survival. The West cannot fail to support the establishment of systems of the same type as the West's, which means expanding its safety zone. We cannot fail to oppose this. Therefore the struggle inside the CIS countries is beginning to resemble the Russian-Western conflict.²⁰⁰

We should note here the explicit statement that spread of democracy in and of itself is a mortal threat to Russia's rulers. Hence the demand for a free hand. But the demand for a free hand means an unconstrained foreign policy based wholly on power and the interests of the state conceived of in the most atavistic and unbridled form of realpolitik, another example of Schmitt's presupposition of being encircled by enemies.²⁰¹ The only limit to the exercise of that autocratic power, as in tsarist times, is the conscience of the tsar, and in Putin's case, that is a weak reed. Unfortunately, Lavrov and Furman do not speak for themselves alone. Rather, they articulate a consolidated elite mentality that sees Russia as an independent, revisionist, even autarchic actor in world affairs which merits recognition as a self-sufficient pole, even empire, in Eurasia. Other analysts too have discerned the ideational elements of this stance in the peculiar but deep-rooted conviction that Russia is a separate civilization, neither wholly Western nor Eastern, and therefore it merits a special role in Eurasia as a great power. John Loewenhardt reported in 2000 that despite the fact that this status as a leading pole in global affairs was then understood to be increasingly more rhetorical than real,

In one of our interviews a former member of the Presidential Administration said that the perception of Russia as a great power “is a basic element of the self-perception of high bureaucrats.” If a political leader were to behave as if Russia was no longer a great power, there would be “a deeply rooted emotional reaction in the population.”²⁰²

Six years of Putin’s invigoration of authoritarianism and of Russia’s imperial mystique have inevitably strengthened those tendencies, making them even more prominent in officialdom’s mentality and self-reinforcing public propaganda.²⁰³ And this ideological-political reinforcement has also created the basis for the perception of a perpetual Western or at least American ideological and domestic threat to Russia’s integrity and form of government which are inextricably linked in both the elite and popular mind.²⁰⁴ Since Russia still cannot accept its reduced status, its military-political elite still harbors unwarranted and unjustified assessments of Russia’s status in world affairs and equally unjustified demands for tangible benefits. For example, a 2005 article in the General Staff journal, *Military Thought*, says that, “Russia’s geopolitical situation enables it not only to effectively develop its own national economy but also to form a kind of geoeconomic region comprising the world’s largest nations – Japan, China, India, and other countries.”²⁰⁵

This concept also insists that none of the other former Soviet republics are genuinely capable of being self-standing truly independent states.²⁰⁶ Certainly numerous statements by Russian ambassadors to former Soviet satellites or CIS governments conclusively show that they do not really accept the full sovereignty and independence of the states to which they are accredited.²⁰⁷

Logically, then, any bloc including those states is a strategic as well as ideological threat to Russia and a stalking horse for NATO and the EU and their supposedly openly anti-Russian policy.²⁰⁸ The threat is not just to Russia's great power and imperial ambitions, but to its existence not only as autocracy but even as a state. Hence the flourishing of democratic states on its frontier is a constant threat to the survival of the state in the only form that its servitors can recognize it, i.e., an autocracy. This is one reason why Russian policymakers have evinced such panic and hysteria (not too strong a set of words) when confronted by "color revolutions" which they cannot believe originated in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan due to their internal political developments. Hence much of Russian foreign policy has been directed toward preventing such revolutions, e.g., Russian intervention in Ukraine's 2004 presidential election and its policies toward Belarus and Georgia.²⁰⁹

The idea that these states on Russia's border or in its vicinity might choose NATO and the EU of their own volition or feel genuinely threatened by Russia's heavy-handed and unsubtle policies is never even considered. Not surprisingly, Russian spokesmen decry the formation of any such blocs and state that without Russia they will inevitably fail. Alternatively, they look forward to the reunification of the former Soviet republics of the CIS under Moscow's auspices.²¹⁰

But what they always insist upon, i.e., their bottom line, is a unique and superior status for Russia above any kind of international political constraint. Thus Sergei Ivanov, Chizhov, and Yastrzhembskiy have publicly stated that Russia is economically, politically, and militarily self-sufficient and therefore really does not need partners.²¹¹ Chizhov, speaking about Europe, argued further that,

Russia has full rights and counts on participation in European affairs as an equal partner. It should not be isolated from the remaining part of the continent by new dividing lines and should not be the object of “civilizing influence” on the part of other countries or their unions but should be equal among equals.²¹²

Similarly, in 2002 the publisher Vitaly Tretiakov wrote an article for the journal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where he stated that,

We want to be regarded and treated as an ally of the West in all spheres, including export of energy and, probably, in the production of armaments. Otherwise, relations will follow a different pattern. This should apply to the security sphere. We also expect to be treated as equals in the sphere of economy and in cases of extending aid to us in the way this is done among allies.²¹³

In other words, treat us as equals or we will make endless trouble for you, while at the same time we insist upon a free hand for ourselves. Not surprisingly, this kind of policy amounts to extortion, or in other words to a protection racket. Close examination of much of Russian foreign policy reveals that such blackmail or intimidation tactics feature prominently in Russia’s diplomacy toward both the weaker states of the CIS and toward Europe and the United States.

However, great power status cannot be conferred exclusively by virtue of unilateral assertion or by the threat of raising a ruckus if your demands go unheeded. To be recognized as a great or superpower – and many Russian analysts and political figures now argue that Russia is an energy superpower – a state must be able to project its power effectively into neighboring regions to create a legitimate and/or durable order and be

recognized as such by its interlocutors. Inasmuch as all projections of power abroad are “injections” into the world order and efforts to reshape it, we can see the fundamentally revisionist thrust of Russia’s project from its activities in the near abroad or efforts to bully European states with regard to energy.²¹⁴ It also habitually uses the energy revenues accruing to it to buy politicians and subvert regimes in its neighborhood.²¹⁵

Russia’s attitude of imperial unilateralism might be a “post-imperial” mentality rather than an imperial one as Trenin argues.²¹⁶ But this attitude’s practical implications as seen in ongoing demands for bases throughout the CIS; obstruction in CIS frozen conflicts; and the energy crises with Ukraine, Georgia, and Belarus in 2006-07, are unmistakably imperial in consequence and reflect a belief that Russia is an empire sufficient unto itself and thus above all of the other rules of international life; precisely what it attacks Washington for doing.²¹⁷ Certainly, Russian scholars know full well that Russia’s elites have long continued to see the Russian state in imperial terms. As Alexei Malashenko observed in 2000, Russia’s war in Chechnya is logical only if Russia continues to regard itself as an empire.²¹⁸ More recently Russian political scientist Egor Kholmogorov has observed that “‘Empire’ is the main category of any strategic political analysis in the Russian language. Whenever we start to ponder a full-scale, long-term construction of the Russian state, we begin to think of empire and in terms of empire. Russians are inherently imperialists.”²¹⁹

If Russia is such an empire, then it becomes clear why EU or NATO membership becomes a threat to Russian sovereignty. For as Deputy Foreign Minister Ivan Ivanov stated in 1999,

Our country is not in need of affiliation with the EU. This would entail loss of its unique Euro-Asian specifics, the role of the center of attraction of the re-integration of the CIS, independence in foreign economic and defense policies, and complete restructuring (once more) of all Russian statehood based on the requirements of the European Union. Finally great powers (and it is too soon to abandon calling ourselves such) do not dissolve in international unions – they create them around themselves.²²⁰

Not only does he here anticipate Trenin's observations about a solar system around Russia, Ivanov also listed as a reason for not joining the EU the idea that empire preceded independence. Here he also implied or suggested the deeply rooted belief among Russian elites that if Russia is not an empire, it is not a state. But the quest for great power and empire is the fetish invoked by Russian statesman throughout the ages to ward off the nightmare of being marginalized and no longer being a great power. This nightmare haunts the imagination of Russia's political elites and undoubtedly is one of the most primordial psychological and cognitive drivers of Russian foreign policy, even if it postulates only two possible outcomes for Russia – great or even superpower status, or oblivion and marginalization.²²¹ Indeed, in pursuing this mirage of being a great power which can act unconstrained in world affairs, Putin has sought to copy the Bush administration's doctrine of preemption or preventive war to justify its unlimited right to military intervention in the CIS with rather less justification than did President Bush, for there have been no foreign based attacks upon Russia.²²²

TOWARD AN AMERICAN RESPONSE: OVERCOMING WESTERN INTERNAL DIVISIONS

Notwithstanding these problems with Russia, it must be engaged, not ignored. Given the preoccupation with Iraq, it is by no means clear if our political class is paying sufficient attention to Russia. That the U.S. Government keeps being surprised by Putin is also a sign of insufficient attention to Russian issues or understanding of what is involved in them. Nevertheless as a recent study from the Congressional Research Office (CRO) observed,

Yet developments in Russia are still important to the United States. Russia remains a nuclear superpower. It will play a major role in determining the national security environment in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Russia has an important role in the future of arms control, nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the fight against terrorism. Such issues as the war on terrorism, the future of NATO, and the U.S. role in the world will all be affected by developments in Russia. Also, although Russia's economy is distressed, it is recovering and potentially an important trading partner.²²³

Similar statements were also presented above, e.g., Slocombe's testimony in 1995 and the observations by Andrew Michta of the Marshall Center concerning regional security.²²⁴ It should be noted that this balanced account by the CRO does not imply, as do many other statements on why Russia is important, that America's need for Russian support on these issues outweighs Russia's need for American support on these and many other issues. An essential requirement in getting Russia right, therefore, is a balance between what both

sides need from the other and can reasonably expect of the other side.

For this reason, a policy that merely lectures Russia without credible counteractions to offensive (in both senses of the word) Russian policies or actions that advance American interests has no value. If U.S. policy is to advance towards the goals of defending U.S. security and then promoting a better world order, it must take account of the powers that be, not those that ought to be in a perfect world. Thus a credible Russia policy must aim to overcome these defects in Russian policy, but to do so, it must begin (but not end) by realizing where Russia currently is and sees itself.²²⁵

Even bearing this admonition in mind, an intelligent policy towards Russia cannot let Moscow's objections deter American actions in support of the national interest where those objections undermine our ability to reach those interests. This should be the case even though we might have to pay a higher price for doing so. But intelligent policymaking towards Russia requires a fine judgment of what interests can or must be secured, at what costs, and finally unremitting attention to that end. It requires a deeper assessment of Russian realities and trends than the habitual American tendency (that began long before this administration) of indulging in the idea that personal relationships with the Russian leader are either substitutes for or the purpose of U.S. policy towards Moscow.

Acknowledging Russian realities does not mean giving Moscow a veto on our policies or overlooking the intrinsically self-seeking and opportunistic nature of the Russian regime that is structurally, not personally, determined. There are few "imagined" misdeeds in the record of the Putin government for which it is being attacked abroad. The Putin's regime's record is all too

transparent in that regard. Rather, there are all too many real deeds that deserve consistent international censure. Instead, acknowledging Russian realities means that our calculation of interest and of the costs we can pay to reach them must be better than has hitherto been the case because on all too many issues, particularly those connected with the regression from democratization, we have given Russia a pass.

Thus a sound American policy must also mean that Moscow must be made to acknowledge other realities besides its own self-interest. We must realize, and do so despite the critics at home, that Moscow needs American support far more than Washington needs its support. Second, to the degree that U.S. power is limited by other states' interests, so must Russian power be limited accordingly. U.S. policy must see to it that Russia does not get a free hand to act as it pleases in world affairs or be allowed simply to make trouble so that its status or importance will then grow. Accepting Russia's demands for a free hand, either actively or tacitly, or giving it a free hand, especially in the CIS, only leads to greater autocratic behavior at home and belligerence abroad. For example, precisely because it seeks a free hand in Eurasia and was not countered by effective action, it is now threatening to leave the CFE treaty and thus be free to do what it wants with its armed forces in Eurasia, thereby achieving a unique status among every other signatory of that treaty.

While Russia cannot be ignored in American policymaking on the issues listed above, its negative impact can and should be countered and reduced. This applies equally to Russia's domestic policies. Indeed, the strategy outlined below aims at integrating Russia over time into the Eurasian constitutional and political order and treaties that it has signed which govern both

domestic and foreign policy practices. In other words, our strategy must aim at integrating Russia into a world order that it has voluntarily accepted, and gradually eroding the possibilities for it to realize a free hand abroad. To the extent that we succeed in doing so, Russian governments will also then not be able to act with a totally free hand at home. Rather, they will be bound by the treaties and conventions to which they are a party. Over time, only that kind of policy will work to counter the authoritarian impulses that are so deeply rooted in Russian politics and culture. It must be realized that this is a patient, long-term policy, not one that seeks immediate gratification or is motivated by evangelical and theological beliefs about the superiority of democracy masquerading as certainties. And it also means that U.S. policies must be governed and thus restrained by the same constitutional order whose validity we seek to uphold and extend.

To achieve those goals, however, we must first dispel several myths and obstacles that obstruct coherent U.S. and Western policymaking and then take appropriate policy actions. The first obstacle is the widely accepted myth that we or the West as a whole have little or no leverage upon Russian policy and therefore must adjust to it or tolerate it silently.²²⁶ This, of course, is a highly self-serving tactic when stated by Russians who love to insist that the United States or the West cannot sway their policies, and that foreign motives towards Russia are invariably hostile and self-serving. Or else they argue that such criticism is pushing to a return of the Cold War.²²⁷ In the West, this precept amounts to a self-denying ordinance that paralyzes efforts to advance Western political objectives when it has the stronger hand in every dimension of international power. Moreover, obtaining such a condition of

Western paralysis or admission of defeat is actually the goal of all of the bad behavior displayed by Moscow in the hope that foreigners will assume nothing can be done. Therefore, the Russian media is all too happy to report frequently that the West “accepts” the nature of Russia’s “special democracy.”²²⁸ Indeed, at one point Lavrov even asserted that after a Putin-Bush summit meeting in 2004 “no concern was sounded” about the lack of democracy in Russia by the American side.²²⁹

But when uttered in the West, this observation represents a bizarre failure of applied political intelligence. We need not argue that American or Western power is unlimited or that its authority, legitimacy, and virtue are absolute—neither of which proposition is true—to realize that the strongest power in the world and the strongest alliance in the world do not lack the resources with which to influence Russian policy and that Russia has frequently adjusted to meet firm American policies. After all, George Kennan’s containment strategy was just such a strategy that sought to compel an eventual “mellowing” of Soviet domestic and foreign behavior by applying political and other external pressures abroad. Similarly, the judicious application of the total weight of the instruments of power available to the West in world politics would surely frustrate or at least blunt the imperial drive and the restoration of autocracy that underlies so much of today’s Russian foreign policy and force domestic changes as a result. As Vogel writes,

This logic of “mutually assured dependency” (the political dimension of interdependence) implies a world of rational choices. In this world, the structural deficiencies of the Russian economy and its integration and interdependence with the international community restrict Moscow’s ability to be uncooperative or engage in spoil-sport behavior in international crisis management.²³⁰

Arguing that we have no leverage is not only bizarrely misguided but also reduces the Western pursuit of a viable Russian policy to incoherence.

But beyond realizing that we have leverage and the right, if not the duty, to use it, both on our own and in tandem with our allies, to advance our interests, we need to overcome the second obstacle to a sound Russia policy. Namely, we must devise and implement a coherent strategy, first of all within our own government, and then together with our allies in order to deploy that leverage to its most efficacious use. This strategy must be implemented in regard to key issues: Iran; the Middle East; the Western presence in the CIS; the sanctity of treaties signed by Russia; energy; arms control; and Korea; to name only a few. Doing so requires, first, that we overcome the fact that on numerous key issues, including apparently policies toward Russia, and in regard to at least some of these aforementioned issues, our policy process has been and is still broken. Any attentive reader of the newspapers can quickly discern that there exist major divisions among the players in Washington that inhibit unified and coherent policy formulation and implementation.²³¹

Until and unless we can overcome those problems, any approaches to our European and other allies regarding these issues will be compromised from the start. Of course, the EU has to overcome its own incoherence and internal divisions, but lectures from Washington on that particular subject can only go so far. The EU's members themselves have to come to a consensus on what they see as their future demands upon Russia and Russia's role in Eurasia for their own sake, not just ours. And it is now very clear to the EU that it must achieve its own internal consensus vis-à-vis its Russian agenda.²³²

There is no doubt that divisions within the topmost echelons of the U.S. policy process exist on whether or not to press Russia systematically on the issues of dispute in our common agenda, not least democratization.²³³ Second, U.S. policy toward Russia as it is now carried out suffers from several shortcomings that obstruct realization either of strategic or democratic aims. The first problem is the false dichotomy that has existed among many commentators and in many administrations, including this one, that in order to achieve strategic goals, e.g., Iranian or North Korean nonproliferation, we have to soft pedal or even sacrifice democracy promotion, or vice versa. It is very clear that the current administration has opted for a relationship with Moscow that emphasizes strategic goals over democratization, for all its ringing invocation of universal democratic values.²³⁴ And the results are hardly worth the neglect of Russian democratic issues or the effort invested in achieving coordination with Russia at the expense of those democratic issues. In fact, Michael McFaul's assessment of U.S. democracy promotion policy towards Russia even calls it "anemic."²³⁵

But aligned to that false dichotomy between promoting security objectives and democracy are procedural errors that impede realizing both strategic and democratic goals. As Dov Lynch of the European Union's Institute for Security Studies observes,

U.S. policy toward Russia has been heavily presidential. This has meant that only decisions agreed at the highest level were recognized as being important by Moscow. This did allow the White House to "use" Secretary Powell – in the words of one U.S. official – as a "bad cop" on a number of occasions in 2004, but it did not always provide for the best result. As developments inside Russia and in Russian foreign policy became more worrying,

the U.S. administration faced the difficulty of seeking to revise the policy in some areas while maintaining others, all the while avoiding the image of a radical shift in relations. The appointment of Condoleezza Rice as Secretary of State in 2005 led to a discreet reassessment of U.S. policy. The priorities remain firm on counterproliferation and nonproliferation. However, the spread of democracy in Russia's neighborhood has risen to the forefront, and the Administration has become more vocal in expressing its concerns about democracy and the rule of law inside Russia. Still, U.S. policy remains largely strategically-driven and its thrust is still minimalist in terms of seeking Russia's transformation. Russia matters for the United States less for itself and more in terms of how it can affect U.S. interests in other policy areas.²³⁶

Lynch's assessment subsumes within it as well the unwarranted emphasis on a personal relationship with Putin. As a result of the policy described by Lynch on both sides, there is little governmental implementation of agreements or progress on issues while the relationship stays focused on personalities rather than programs. This fact, unfortunately extends a well-established tradition, but also makes it harder for the Russian government to reform itself or ensure policy coordination and fulfillment when it does concur with the United States.

Therefore it is essential that the Bush administration, or failing that, its successor, undertake policy actions that will compel both our government and the Russian government to interact with each other on the basis of ongoing and constant mutual dialogue. Specifically, the administration or its successor should propose the recreation of a contemporary analogue of the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission that operated under President Clinton. As former Ambassador to Russia James Collins observes, doing so would obligate senior

officials across a wide range of bureaucracies (not just the Pentagon and State Departments) to carry out serious projects that needed to be done. Second, this commission did and could again empower different ministry-department relationships that would force both the Russian and American bureaucracies to deal with each other on an intimate and permanent basis with a view to achieving real and constructive results.²³⁷ By having such a permanent structure in place, both governments would have to talk to each other more often, more frankly, across many venues, and at a lower level that could actually achieve positive actions. Otherwise we will have the same kind of bureaucratic drift that has characterized both sides' policies for too long and in the American case helped contribute to the flaws in our policy that are outlined above.

A third case in which our policy toward Russia is in error is the absence of any sign of a truly coherent energy policy designed to reduce our or our allies' dependence upon Russian supplies and potential blackmail. As Putin has gone on one successful offensive after another in 2006-07 to lock up Eurasian energy reserves and access, the EU has been divided, timorous, and incoherent, and Washington has always been too late in replying or in fashioning attractive counteroptions for interested parties. And while the EU wants to negotiate a deal with Moscow formalizing the bilateral energy relationship with Russia while it simultaneously seeks other sources of energy, it is very unclear if not unlikely that Moscow can currently be forced to accept its own agreements or refrain from trying to penetrate European economies and thus governments as it has sought to do throughout Eastern Europe and the CIS.²³⁸ Certainly Moscow has made it abundantly clear that it will not accept the EU's energy

charter anytime soon.²³⁹ Since energy is Moscow's main weapon in its current foreign policy, this absence of a strategy or of a policy puts us and our allies at a grievous political disadvantage and also makes it more difficult to help CIS members who are being blackmailed in various ways by Russia on this point or being threatened by Russia with unrelieved economic warfare and even Cold War.

This point is particularly urgent when we realize that due to the collapse of the Orange Revolution, Ukraine is approaching either a state of ungovernability or of enduring political stalemate which could allow Moscow to manipulate both the energy card and all the other resources of which it disposes in the Ukraine to destabilize that region or obstruct its democratization and Westernization. This also means that Ukraine's energy situation is one that at present makes it perpetually vulnerable.²⁴⁰ Belarus too succumbed in early 2007 to Russian pressure and is now frantically seeking to diversify its sources. Other CIS states escaped this threat only because Iran or Azerbaijan provided them with energy.

Energy security is not just a question of supplying Europe or Asia, or from Russia's standpoint of ensuring its ability to meet foreign and domestic demand at a fair market price. Rather, it entails the basic security and opportunity for progress of the former Soviet states whether in Ukraine or in Central Asia.²⁴¹ While it is in these states' interests, and Russia's, that their energy relationships be marketized rather than subsidized, there is little doubt that Moscow's policies have been aimed at political results first, and Russia still charges differential prices to its customers in line with its political prerogatives.

Fourth, there are major divisions within the administration on how to deal with major proliferation

issues like Korea which have led us to outsource our Northeast Asian policy to Beijing, which, in turn, allied increasingly with Moscow, aims to supplant American influence there, if not elsewhere.²⁴² Fifth, on Iran, it is unclear how far we are prepared to go to stop Iranian proliferation, and it certainly is even more unclear how far our European allies will go toward the same objective. Indeed, numerous commentators and the former Foreign Minister of Great Britain Jack Straw have said that European participation in a war with Iran over its nuclear threat is “inconceivable.” But it is quite likely that without the threat of robust action, Iran will not acceded to demands to stop enrichment or its overall military nuclear program. Nor does the European response to the Lebanon crisis suggest any interest in playing a truly robust role in bringing peace to the Middle East either in part or in whole by disarming Hezbollah which is using Russian weapons supplied by Iran and Syria who bought them from Moscow.²⁴³

Certainly it is clear from the crisis generated by Hezbollah’s unprovoked attacks on Israel in July 2006 that Moscow is not prepared to restrain Iran or its proxies. Indeed, even though the Foreign Ministers negotiating with Iran were finally driven by Tehran’s dilatory tactics to agree to bring its nuclear program to the Security Council with a threat of sanctions, Lavrov has firmly and consistently opposed any effort to impose sanctions on Russia’s arms trade with Iran.²⁴⁴ In addition, there have been leaks suggesting that despite tough rhetoric our officials inwardly accept the fact that at the end of the day, Iran will have a usable nuclear weapon.²⁴⁵ While much of this is due to the consequences of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, it also is the case that both Moscow and Beijing resolutely oppose

doing anything that will injure Iranian interests or apparently impel Tehran (or Pyongyang, too) to stop building nuclear weapons even if they now recognize that Iran's nuclear program has military purposes that can threaten them.²⁴⁶ If anything, they have aided Iran's, Pakistan's, and North Korea's quest for nuclear energy and for conventional weapons, including missiles, and deterrence capabilities against the United States.²⁴⁷

Finally, there are major divisions within the administration even now on how to proceed to deal with the challenges facing us in Central Asia which are posed by both domestic conditions favoring dictatorship and foreign threats, not the least of which is the Russo-Chinese alliance against reform, and to suppress the foreign policy independence of those states.²⁴⁸ Furthermore, due to our own dilatoriness and overextension, Russia is gaining the upper hand in its efforts to marginalize American influence there, too.²⁴⁹

Until and unless those and other such differences among policymakers are overcome, no coherent Russian policy is possible, let alone imaginable. But overcoming our own internal divisions on these issues is only the beginning of wisdom. For any approach to Russia to succeed, it must not be merely a unilateral one, but rather one shared by and with our European allies on the basis of genuine consultation and consensus. And it must be attuned to both Russia's domestic and its foreign policy behavior which are mutually reinforcing. Despite unity with the EU on Iran to date, it is by no means clear if the Transatlantic Alliance has achieved a truly significant recovery since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 which shattered both the Transatlantic Alliance and any hope of a unified European common foreign and security policy. Thus after having edited another volume in the seemingly endless series of publications

examining the troubled Transatlantic Alliance, Marcin Zaborowski concludes that,

It is clear that the greater congruence of policies between both sides of the Atlantic was not followed by the convergence of principles and ideologies. Most importantly, the EU and the United States continue to have fundamentally different views on the role and importance of international institutions and agreements. The legacy of this disagreement is not just ideological, but it affects transatlantic cooperation in some specific policy fields, most prominent in the Middle East.²⁵⁰

These same observations may be invoked concerning Western policy toward Russia for even where assessments of Russian developments converge, policy recommendations and outcomes currently diverge. Even if there is a unified American position, if it is not coordinated with and implemented by our European allies and Japan in the Far East, it will fail to register with full force in Moscow whether it is about human rights, the frozen conflicts in the CIS, Central Asia, or energy. So beyond the reestablishment of our own internal policy coherence, there must be close coordination and a united course of action with our allies regarding an agenda of East-West negotiation. As Lynch writes,

Transatlantic coordination is crucial for ensuring that Russia remains a positive player on the world stage, an inclusive player in its neighborhood, and a state led by the rule of law. Whether the agenda is thick or thin, internal developments cannot be divorced for long from external behavior. What happens inside Russia impacts on the nature of Russia as a partner for the EU and the US. At a time when Europe and America have less leverage over Russia's domestic development than they had, transatlantic cooperation becomes all the more vital. In

this the EU and US should build on areas of overlap in their agendas, such as regional security questions in the Balkans and the Middle East, ensuring positive momentum in the former Soviet Union, and raising concerns with domestic developments in Russia.²⁵¹

This also means that on occasion Washington will have to defer to the collective wisdom of its partners and even to China and Russia's arguments. But it also means that the United States needs to stimulate NATO and the EU to do better than they have in coming up with coherent policies towards Russia as regards Ukraine, Moldova, the Caucasus, energy issues, Central Asia, and democratization; for today the prevailing trend is towards incoherence and disunity within both organizations on these agenda issues.²⁵²

Strengthening Nonproliferation.

It should now be clear that we cannot achieve our basic and primary strategic aim of strengthening the nonproliferation regime by tying Iranian and North Korean nonproliferation to externally imposed regime change or the threat of it by unilateral American military action. Our power and understanding of what needs to be done over both the short and long term in such cases are both limited thanks to our experience in Iraq. Moreover any such efforts, in the absence of forceful provocation by those or other states, will enjoy no support anywhere, further overtaxing the resource base for American power and limiting our capacity to preside over any kind of security order in the relevant region.

If our fundamental objective is nonproliferation, our resources should be focused on achieving that goal since the effort to link it to coerced regime change in

Northeast Asia or the Gulf enjoys no support by the other negotiators and cannot be reached by any means available to the United States now or anytime soon. Objectionable as these regimes are, we have neither the means nor the legitimate international authority to change them by force, nor the wisdom to know how to achieve a legitimate order in these areas afterward by unilateral action.

Furthermore, by decoupling this demand from our demands for nonproliferation, we actually gain more flexibility to send a robust message to Iran, Syria, and North Korea should they then proliferate because they no longer have even the semblance of a justification for their position. Even if the invasion of Iraq may have given them a supposed justification for proliferation and sponsorship of terrorism, the fact that they will subsequently be held to account on the basis of existing international agreements to which they are parties to desist from proliferation and sponsorship of terrorism creates a sufficient justification for the use of pressure or the threat of force and releases us from the position of making threats that cannot currently be carried out. If we can change the international behavior of these regimes, by political means preferably but by force if absolutely necessary, then their current foreign and domestic policy behavior will gradually be rendered increasingly dysfunctional, forcing change upon them from within, not from outside. To the extent that they cannot then mobilize domestic or foreign support against the Bush administration, they will be compelled by force of circumstances and superior Western power to adjust their behavior over time. Admittedly, this is a slow process, but Iraq shows what happens when we seek instant, forceful, and externally imposed regime change. That lesson should induce behavior change in

Washington first before we seek to persuade other key interlocutors of the soundness of our position.

Therefore, to effectuate change within Russia and other challenging states, we must change the external environment within which they operate by engaging them politically. This engagement also includes holding Russia to account for treaties and conventions that it has violated. Indeed, careful examination will show that there is no other realistic alternative. Despite all the inherent traps and snares in a dialogue between Pyongyang and Washington or between Tehran and Washington, we cannot compel their denuclearization by our refusal to talk to them; quite the opposite. Here we cannot hide behind multilateralism because all our partners except possibly Japan have urged Washington to engage in precisely such a dialogue with North Korea. Avoiding such dialogues and clinging to ringing but empty rhetorical positions only deepens our internal divisions and disputes with our negotiating partners and allies while failing to achieve denuclearization. If anything, the threat of coerced regime change powerfully accelerates these countries' nuclear programs which enjoy tacit or covert support from Moscow and Beijing precisely because they are joined in rejecting any further unilateralism by Washington, a position in which they are joined by both South Korea and our European allies.²⁵³ While it would be satisfying to punish these states, e.g., Iran for its actions in provoking a war in Lebanon, our capabilities are circumscribed and limited.

Consequently we need a strategy that will force these proliferators to change their behavior over time by mitigating their and our security dilemmas and rendering their current behavior even more dysfunctional than is presently the case until it is no longer feasible to carry it out. Furthermore, such an

engagement will work over time to dissolve the bonds linking China, Russia, and in the Korean case, South Korea because neither Moscow, nor Pyongyang, nor Seoul wants China to be the deciding voice in Northeast Asia, whatever their criticisms of Washington. But that is where our obstinacy is driving us with regard to the Korean peninsula where Beijing rather than Washington will become the arbiter of that peninsula's destiny. Endless statements from Beijing and Moscow reiterate the identity of these states' views about Korea and much else because we have done everything possible to drive them together. For example, with regard to Korea, we see the Russian and Chinese governments' oft proclaimed identity of interests and proposals.²⁵⁴

Indeed, Russian scholars now state that Russia works with China to coordinate their proposals in the Korean nuclear negotiations and numerous communiqués cite an "identity" of views on this topic.²⁵⁵ Removing many of the reasons for their shared positions regarding either North Korea or Iran helps erode their unified position in these and other issues. As experts have argued that a working Russo-Chinese alliance is the greatest security threat we could face, a negotiating strategy designed to uncouple these two potential rivals against us but also against each other, makes perfect sense.²⁵⁶

This policy's wisdom would also be underscored by the fact that an examination of the historical record strongly suggests that a precondition for effective nonproliferation is mutual cooperation between Moscow and Washington as happened in 1986-96 and which has since evaporated due to Russian domestic regression to autocratic rule, American unilateralism, and the perception thereof abroad.²⁵⁷ Once proliferation

is uncoupled from regime change, it becomes much easier to fashion both a strong negotiating coalition against the former, which is the main threat, and to do so strictly on the grounds of international security and international treaties that must be observed. This allows us and the other treaty signatories to create a different security environment around proliferators, complete with binding accords, supervision, and inspections—an environment that safeguards their internal security but which contributes to rendering their form of rule even more dysfunctional than is now the case. But most importantly, it facilitates the reaching of verifiable agreements on these states' nuclear program which is the key point.²⁵⁸

Without the ability or rationale to justify threat-based programs, in the absence of a threat these states must then deal much more urgently with economic and political questions at home for which they have no answer and for which their structures are woefully inadequate, if not illegitimate. And since contemporary scholarly research suggests that proliferation policies are the product of various coalitions of domestic interest groups in these states, a policy that transforms the playing field on which these coalitions maneuver has a much greater chance of success than does unilateral rhetoric which in reality cannot be implemented except at ruinous cost.²⁵⁹ That process, as was the case with Moscow in 1986-91, will generate a process of change that will be all the more powerful for being domestically generated rather than externally coerced.

Arms Control.

The foundation stones of European and Eurasian security are the series of treaties beginning with the Helsinki treaty of 1975, its extension at Moscow in

1991, the 1987 Washington Treaty on Intermediate Nuclear forces in Europe (INF), the 1990 Paris Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), extended in 1999, the Paris and Rome treaties between NATO and Russia in 1997 and 2002, and the START and SORT treaties from 1991-2002. However, some, if not all, of these treaties are apparently at risk. And that risk has grown with Putin's announcement that Russia is suspending its participation in the CFE Treaty for 150 days (even though there is no legal basis for doing so in the treaty) in July, 2007. It also should be noted that there were numerous Russian warnings to this effect, e.g., Sergei Ivanov and his subordinates' warnings that Russia might withdraw from the CFE Treaty or that it might die a natural death.²⁶⁰

Recently, thanks partly to Western pressure, Russia agreed with Georgia that it would leave its bases there by 2008. But meanwhile it refuses to leave Moldova. Indeed, it seeks a 20-year lease on a base there to perpetuate its intervention on behalf of a separatist and visibly criminalized Russian faction across the Dniester River.²⁶¹ Russian officials also talk of launching political gambits to formalize Russia's incorporation of Georgia's breakaway province South Ossetia into Russia.

These actions not only violate Russia's 1999 agreement, putting the lie to claims that Russia has no juridical obligation to leave Moldova and Georgia, they also would shatter the basis of European security as outlined in the aforementioned treaties. Incorporation of South Ossetia or Abkhazia or Transnistria by force not only invokes Soviet and tsarist precedents, those actions violate the Helsinki and Moscow treaties, the Istanbul accords, and shatter the post-Cold War accords with NATO. Like Moscow's 2004 and 2006 intervention

in Ukrainian elections, such actions betray Russia's continuing inability to accept the end of empire in Eurasia even though a Russian empire there inherently threatens Eurasian and even Russian security. Russia also claims that the Baltic States' failure to ratify the CFE treaty makes the Baltic a "gray zone" from which potential threats to Russian security could come even though they also admit that NATO's token forces there hardly represent a current threat.²⁶²

The INF treaty, too, is at risk. Clearly the efforts to withdraw from the INF and CFE treaties are also connected to Russian fears that Western military-political pressure will be used to consolidate post-Soviet states' membership in NATO and/or the EU, or to compel democratizing reforms in Russia or elsewhere in the CIS where Moscow supports the reigning authoritarians. Since Russia cannot compete militarily with the United States, let alone NATO, it has openly discussed using its strategic and/or tactical (or so-called nonstrategic) nuclear weapons in a first strike mode in the event of a threat by either of those parties against it or its interests in the CIS.²⁶³ More recently, Sergei Ivanov has threatened once again to put missiles into Kaliningrad if NATO does not take up Russian complaints about these treaties.²⁶⁴ Moscow already did this in 2001 and created a scandal thereby, indicating a continuing inclination in at least certain circles to conduct unilateral and even menacing political and strategic actions using Russian nuclear weapons.²⁶⁵ For instance, Moscow long ago gratuitously extended its nuclear umbrella to the CIS even though none of those states invited it to do so. But such contingency planning could only truly be taken to its logical culmination if Moscow frees itself from these two treaties that are pillars of arms control and security in Europe and

renounces its interest in the continuing stabilization of European security.

However, such an outcome reignites an arms race in Europe that, as Putin and Company knows, Russia cannot afford and which is in nobody's interest. Ironically, Russia actually depends for its security on the restraints imposed by those treaties upon NATO's members including Washington. Moreover, it depends on them for subsidies through the Nunn-Lugar Act or Comprehensive Threat Reduction program to gain control over its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons arsenals. Without that funding, it is quite likely that the recent visible regeneration of the Russian armed forces would have been greatly impeded because at least some of those funds would have had to go to maintain or destroy decaying nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Russia also needs Western, and especially American help against terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, or Iranian and North Korean nuclearization and is still interested, as recent agreements show, in curtailing those states or terrorists' access to these materials.²⁶⁶ Furthermore, it is no less at risk from Iranian missiles than anyone else (except possibly Israel), given the two states' hidden rivalry in the Caspian basin. Thus it needs to cooperate with the West on proliferation concerns, too. Therefore these efforts to withdraw from the relevant treaties are quite misguided insofar as Russia's real interests are concerned even though Moscow's legal right to withdraw from a treaty is obvious. But if Moscow persists in these gambits to weaken, eviscerate, or even leave these treaties, what does that signify concerning its goals and what then is the future of European and Eurasian security?

Therefore, an appropriate American response should be to maintain the validity of both the CFE and INF treaties, insist upon fulfillment of the former, and state U.S. willingness to reaffirm or extend the latter which is supposed to expire in 2008. Nobody benefits from a new arms race in Europe which should be a model of security practices, not a case of a model gone bad. And Russia's announced desire to renegotiate the START I Treaty that is to expire in 2009 should similarly provide an new opportunity for further reducing the likelihood and perceived value of nuclear weapons use or threats to use them among the two leading nuclear states.²⁶⁷ Doing so would also reverse the trend toward greater reliance on nuclear weapons as warfighting instruments that has been in effect at least since 2000, and also possibly reduce the attractiveness of such weapons to would-be proliferators.

To say this, however, is not to abandon the need to put pressure on Russia to fulfill the treaties it has signed whether they deal with nuclear arms control or conventional weapons and Eurasian security. Indeed, such a strategy is all the more necessary for our policy toward Russia because just as we seek to achieve our immediate defense and security goals by invoking rhetorical abstractions of democratization vis-à-vis Iran and North Korea, so must we do so with regard to Russia where there is a legal justification, based on solemn international treaties, for doing so. Whatever our private beliefs might be about the justification for such pressure, in political terms it is only sustainable on the grounds that the treaties to which Russia is party explicitly invoke these values and processes and thus represent the constitutional foundation of our present world order.²⁶⁸

Democratization.

Putin and his clique, including Lavrov, regularly charge that demands for democratization are purely politically motivated and neo-colonialist in their rhetoric and an attack on Russia's system of governance, indeed an attempt to change it.²⁶⁹ Actually they are partly right. Such attacks do represent an attack on Russian governance because that governance is increasingly at variance with solemn international accords that Russia freely signed and to which it must be held. Just as the United States resents attacks on conduct at Guantanamo or at Abu Ghraib but is nonetheless compelled to redress those situations through legal and democratic pressure and processes, so too is Russia subject to the same international constraints and standards that it freely accepted. However, it is clear that Moscow would prefer a relationship with the United States like that among realpolitikers in the 19th century, i.e., no discussions of democracy and rather a concentration on concrete bilateral interests.²⁷⁰ For example, Lavrov protested the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council complaints about democratic deficits in Russia. He charged that this was not part of the Council's remit and duplicated the work of organizations like the OSCE which Russia, not by accident, also seeks to deflect from making such complaints as part of its remit.²⁷¹ At the same time, the demand for an end to these attacks and this kind of defense by Putin *et al.* reflects both Moscow's demand for a free hand and its endless status insecurity or anxiety.

Indeed, the demand for an end to such attacks along with the assertion that America seeks to undermine all the other CIS governments as well as Russia had become a staple of Russian foreign policy argumentation even before Ukraine's Orange Revolution in late 2004.

Already in July 2004, Russian commentator M. Chernov wrote:

The American Administration is beginning a campaign to topple the regime of Islam Karimov in Uzbekistan. . . . By all appearances Washington has decided to get rid of Karimov, relying on the successful experience of revolution in Georgia and using elements of the "Kosovo scenario," establishing control over the territory by creating "managed conflicts" in the Uzbek provinces [primarily in the Fergana valley] and bringing in peacekeeping force.²⁷²

The exact parallel of this so-called American strategy to Russian strategy in Georgia and Moldova is testimony, as psychologists have long observed, that the projection onto "the other" is a hallmark of paranoia, the latter being a long-established tradition in Russian politics, not least where foreign influence in the CIS is concerned. Not to be undone, two other commentators, Yevgeny Myachin and Aleksandr' Sobyenin, argued as well that Washington and European governments pursue a strategy of managed conflicts using terrorism to achieve their aims. Thus Sobyenin argued that the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) located in Afghanistan and Pakistan "works in close cooperation with Western intelligence services."²⁷³

The persistence of such neo-Soviet tactics and mentalities in Russian public discourse underscores the distance separating Russia from true democratization. By early 2005, Moscow's paranoia about the supposed democracy campaign orchestrated by Washington had merged with its anxieties about securing for itself an exclusive primacy in the CIS. The newspaper *Kommersant* reported on February 24, 2005, that,

In response to the U.S. side's criticisms regarding Russian domestic and foreign policy, the Kremlin, according to Kommersant's information, has begun preparing counter-criticisms connected first and foremost with the growth of the West's planned activity aimed at replacing the ruling regimes in the CIS. In Moscow they are convinced that the velvet revolutions which have taken place or are being prepared are the result of the activity of Western nongovernmental organizations and the special services, which are nurturing and training opposition forces. In the Kremlin's opinion, such activity is particularly dangerous in regard to the countries of Central Asia where the export of revolution could lead to serious, long-term destabilization. Nor does Moscow like the military-political activity of the United States on CIS territory, in particular the intention to station military bases in Georgia [which has never been the case-author] and AWACS south of Kyrgyzstan, and also to assist in the creation of an association of Central Asian states (without the participation of Russia, China, and Iran). [There is no public record of such a proposal as of this time-author.] In the Kremlin they believe that all this could be perceived as the implementation of the strategic task of ousting Russia from the post-Soviet area, and they are suggesting that the United States cooperate in strengthening the "security zones" around Russia's borders so as to hinder the proliferation of international terrorism.²⁷⁴

But as long as it is not a democracy and an international law-breaker, Russia cannot expect to be acknowledged as a true member of the G-8 or any democratic club or as a great power, certainly not a great European power. Neither can it be exempted from what is now the common practice whereby all governments' internal policies are subjected to constant foreign scrutiny. And Russia, based on its record, certainly cannot be entrusted with an exclusive sphere of interest around its peripheries based on "security zones" when

it is a prime fomenter of regional instability. Indeed, such policies only ensure the ultimate crash of the present Russian status quo.

Therefore that pressure for democratization must not only continue, it should grow and be regularly invoked by American leaders even as they seek to advance the grounds of human rights and adherence to democratic norms of conduct precisely because Russia and other Eurasian governments have signed all these treaties, going back to the Helsinki treaty of 1975. The cornerstone of our demand for this kind of policy is the basic building block of world order, namely the doctrine of *Pacta Sunt Servanda* (treaties must be obeyed). And the conditions that gave rise to those treaties with regard to democratization in Europe have not been fully overcome as Russian and even more Belarusian policy illustrate. Like it or not, Russia or its potential satellites cannot successfully pretend that they are being confronted with double standards, or talk about Russia being a sovereign democracy as it now does. The treaties now in effect clearly outline a diminution of unbridled sovereignty and arguably any recognized international treaty does so as well. That argument should be the cornerstone of our demands to treaty signatories coupled with meaningful sanctions, not just economic, for failure to uphold these treaties.

Of course, there are also equally good security or strategic reasons for upholding democratization at every turn even as we seek avenues for negotiation. It is not just because we believe, with considerable justification, that states which reach democracy are ultimately stronger, even if they have to cross through dangerous waters to get there, it also is that, as noted above, Russia shows no sign of wanting responsibility for its actions and their consequences, e.g., in the frozen

conflicts in Moldova, Georgia, or in Ukraine, let alone its support for the repressive regimes of Central Asia or its arms sales abroad. To the extent that violence, crime, and authoritarian rule flourishes in these states, they are all at risk of upheaval, even sudden upheaval as we have seen in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and in the repeated manifestations of internal violence that shook Uzbekistan in 2004-05 and could easily do so again. Such violence and instability could easily spread to Russia as the example of Chechnya and the North Caucasus suggests.

Not pushing for reform even as we seek these states' security from attack by terrorists or from their incorporation in a Russian sphere of influence avails us little. For, as Tesmur Basilia, Special Assistant to former Georgian President Edvard Shevardnadze for economic issues, wrote, in many CIS countries, e.g., Georgia and Ukraine, "the acute issue of choosing between alignment with Russia and the West is associated with the choice between two models of social development."²⁷⁵ Indeed, even some Russian analysts acknowledge the accuracy of this insight. Thus Dmitry Furman writes that, "The Russia-West struggle in the CIS is a struggle between two irreconcilable systems."²⁷⁶ Indeed Furman even accepts the repressiveness of the current regime, saying that "Managed democracies are actually a soft variant of the Soviet system."²⁷⁷

The aptness of these observations transcends Georgia and Ukraine to embrace the entire post-Soviet region, since it is clear that Moscow opposes "exporting democracy" to it. Indeed, it regards the idea with contempt and thus attracts the local dictators who cleave to it for support against Western pressures for democratization.²⁷⁸ Basilia also pointed to the local perception of Russia as security threat.

Nowadays there are many in the West who believe that Russia has changed – and, having reformed, seeks to interact with neighboring countries in conformity with international norms. Some Eurasian countries would disagree with this opinion, and believe instead that the Russian mentality has not changed much, and that Russia continues to deem the “near abroad” as its sphere of social influence. After the second war with Chechnya, many think that Russia regards violence as its major tool for resolving social and political problems, especially with regard to non-Russian peoples from the former empire. Thus integration into the international community should be viewed as a guarantee for security and further development.²⁷⁹

The current silence or relative silence on democratic issues facilitates the exportation of Russia’s sphere of influence and style of rule throughout the CIS, while strengthening Georgian, Ukrainian, and other democracies not only forestalls chances for internal upheaval in those states, it also rebuffs Russian imperialism and thus helps strengthen domestic Russian calls for reform. More urgently it reduces Russia’s chances to engineer long-standing reversals of both Westernization and democratization in Ukraine and elsewhere, outcomes that only reduce security throughout the CIS.

The logic is the same as George Kennan’s even if containment is not the policy choice here. By standing on the basis of international law and the democratic choice of those states’ peoples, not our own unilateral and hegemonic power, and by working intensively with those states which wish the benefits of association with the West, we can create examples of progress that will resonate in Russia and elsewhere while checking the spread of deformations of governance that only add

to Russia's and our own insecurity. NATO was and is correct in observing that its and the EU's expansions enlarge the domain of security in Europe and Eurasia to the benefit of Russia if not that of its elite which can only survive by imperialism and predation.

Ultimately then the tenacious, insistent, and unceasing proclamation by Russia of deviations from its own promised course of action are legally and strategically strongly founded and mutually invigorating. A strategy that engages not only Russia on its vital issues and agenda, but also the CIS on an equal basis with Russia and does so while unceasingly proclaiming that democratic values enshrined in treaties must be upheld, benefits everyone except Russia's rulers. But it certainly redounds to the benefit of the long-suffering Russian people.²⁸⁰ Neither does it represent an effort to overthrow Russia unless one wants to accept at face value the self-serving pronouncements of the ruling group. What must be understood as a guiding strategic principle here is that Russian autocracy and its corollary, Russian imperialism, are the gravest security threats facing Eurasia (including Europe and Russia itself) and are ultimately incompatible with any progress of the Russian people, or Eurasia, to security, liberty, and prosperity.

Precisely because such a state constitutes a standing invitation to uncontrolled military adventurism—of which there has been much in Russia's brief history and not least due to the absence of democratic control over the power ministries—it has to be checked.²⁸¹ There is no contradiction between engaging Russia on the great issues of proliferation and arms control, and cooperating with it against the common enemy of terrorism, while at the same time insisting on its behaving according to European norms that it has

accepted in the treaties it has signed, all with a view to integrating it with its European neighbors. While this is certainly difficult in practice, it is hardly less difficult than the policy we now are conducting which has left us attacked by unending crises with few if any governments willing to help us.

In fact, a policy that bases itself on treaties and laws rather than upon unilateral assertions of power is actually more effective than that alternative even if it means narrowing the scope of freedom of action for unilateral American ventures.²⁸² As Robert Wright's recent argument for reforming U.S. foreign policy in general towards what he calls progressive realism contends,

There is principle here that goes beyond arms control: the national interest can be served by constraints on American behavior when they constrain other nations as well. This logic covers the spectrum of international governance, from global warming, (we'll cut carbon dioxide emissions if you will) to war (we'll refrain from it if you will).²⁸³

Indeed, democratization is essential, first of all in regard to Russia's power agencies. The armed forces still regard NATO and the United States as their main enemies and their exercises confirm it, even to the point of often involving missile and nuclear strikes or large-scale conventional exercises against alleged terrorists. Second, although Putin and Ivanov have endeavored to restructure at least some of the armed forces to fight primarily against terrorist attacks, which are the current main threats to Russian security, this use of the military in a counterterrorist or counterintelligence force can have the most serious negative domestic outcomes as we have seen in Chechnya. Moreover, these forces

could also easily be used, as Gorbachev and Yeltsin had sought to use them, i.e., against democratic reform at home.²⁸⁴

Third, the tendency to adventurism that led Moscow into its so called peacemaking operations in the Caucasus and Moldova have now embroiled it in situations where the threat of war, particularly with Georgia, is constant and where Russian policy seems mainly to consist of provocations of Tbilisi in order to get it to launch a violent conflict, or of responses to Tbilisi's own penchant for provocative acts.²⁸⁵ So dangerous a policy inevitably has unforeseen consequences. The recent signs of military adventurism, buzzing Scotland, flights to Guam, the resumption of long-range air patrols, and submarine races to plant the flag of sovereignty in the Arctic, only serve the armed forces' myopic interest of "walking tall." They do nothing to enhance Russian security. And, finally, the lack of democratic control over the armed forces has been a constant and lethal aspect of Russian policy toward Chechnya which has resulted in frightful violations of human rights and which has generated in response a running series of low-intensity conflicts across the North Caucasus for which Moscow has no solution.

While democracy is not a panacea, it is safe to say that a democratically controlled military would have behaved differently as would its masters also. Indeed, it is arguable that what Russia's military fears most about NATO expansion is that it generates an external pressure that is supported by domestic reformers to democratize the entire range of Russian national security policy and subject it to civilian and democratic accountability under law, something that is anathema to that military-political elite.²⁸⁶ Thus ultimately there

are compelling geostrategic reasons why the vigorous and ongoing insistence on reforms as signed in international treaties is an essential and indispensable part of any sound Western policy toward Russia.

Energy Policy.

Every day Americans feel the lack of a sound energy policy. At the same time energy, in Putin's words, "is the heart of our economy." Thus, for Russia, its energy assets are the equivalent of a political Viagra making it seem that it is a great power and allowing the state and its servitors to amass fabulous wealth. Nonetheless, due to the organization of the Russian economy which follows the autocratic model of a rent seeking elite dealing with a rent-granting autocracy, it is very likely that by 2010, according to Russian analysts, Russia will be suffering from an energy shortage, in oil, gas, or electricity, if not all of these.²⁸⁷ This also helps explain Putin's new nuclear power initiative.²⁸⁸

Neither the effort to blackmail Ukraine, the Baltic states, and Europe, nor Russia's need to dominate Central Asian and Caspian producers in order to retain its political-economic structure, is in America's interest. Neither are such policies in the interests of those states that would be victimized by such Russian policies, other key consumers like Europe and China, nor ultimately those of the Russian people who must bear the direct costs of an inefficient and autocratic petro economy, that is, in fact, growing more slowly than almost all the other post-Soviet states. Obviously, here we need to have a coherent and comprehensive domestic policy that reorients use of energy to more efficient systems, or other sources as they become affordable. But we should not delude ourselves that cheap oil or gas can return any

time soon. This is due not only to our demand which is the greatest in the world, or to surging Asian demand, but also because approximately 80 percent, if not more, of world oil supplies are state-owned. These states are, except for Canada, Norway, and Great Britain, all too prone to use oil as a state weapon and turn into an economy dependent on energy rents. Cartels, in this environment, are the rule, not the exception.

Accordingly, Washington must fight fire with fire. It is already the case that numerous Asian and American scholars have called for an international energy association in the belief that such a system would not only alleviate North Korea's need for energy which it uses to justify its nuclear program, but also assist other Northeast Asian and Pacific states to satisfy their needs as well.²⁸⁹ Such an organization also, or so they profess to believe, could lead to a stable structure or security discussions and peace in that region of the world.²⁹⁰

Whether or not that is the case remains to be seen. But it is quite important that China, Japan, South Korea, and India be integrated into global energy organizations and that the possibilities for energy rivalry with China, which fill policymakers here and in Beijing with anxiety be reduced.²⁹¹ Certainly one way to do so is to facilitate the integration of India and China into the International Energy Agency. Nevertheless, it clearly is in the geopolitical interests of Washington and its allies including the members of the International Energy Agency (IEA) to integrate the largest Asian consumers and do everything possible to persuade them of the benefits to them of such integration and of reliance on the global market compared to the wasteful and dangerous current practice of exclusive long-term supply deals.²⁹²

Another and possibly complementary tactic is to do everything possible to encourage national oil companies in other producer states and in consumer states to invest in increasing their productive capacity.²⁹³ Indeed, the only way to do so is to demonstrate to Russia that its current method of oil and gas production cannot satisfy its own domestic needs, let alone the claims of importers who then remit to Russia valuable foreign currency. And without such investment at home and the accompanying transparency that it would generate, foreign direct investment in Russia's energy sector will not materialize, leaving it behind. If we cannot get the producers' attention in this fashion, it might be worthwhile to form the equivalent of a countercartel or at least a consumers' association through the IEA which would be made up of the EU, the United States, China, Japan, India, and South Korea, and which could influence the price of oil and/or gas by announcing that each member of the group as a whole is prepared to buy its entire energy needs, or even a large percentage of them at a fair market price and auction, making sellers compete for those contracts. Obviously, to the extent that this is possible it forces prices downward.²⁹⁴ Beyond forcing prices downward, this group should disseminate best technologies and practices among its members, allowing them to move toward ever greater efficiencies in energy use and to alternative sources of technology, particularly cleaner coal use which benefits the United States and China the most. Inasmuch as China has long been consciously seeking to reduce the energy intensity of its economy and per capita energy consumption, possesses enormous coal reserves, and is a large investor in alternative energy sources, such a policy would reduce demand and exercise downward pressures on prices.²⁹⁵

Third, such an organization would reduce the growing Sino-American tensions in the Gulf and Middle East which could contribute to an overall improvement in Sino-American relations and unite those governments around a compelling common interest.²⁹⁶ Fourth, inasmuch as Russo-Chinese energy relations are tense and even rivalrous, if not a case of both sides seeking to exploit the other, such an organization would magnify those things that divide Russia and China while reducing those that divide China and America.²⁹⁷ And since a new Russo-Chinese alliance is believed to be the greatest security threat we could face, this kind of outcome would represent no small achievement.²⁹⁸

Fifth, at the same time, such a solution would allow Russia to sell its oil and gas in Asia by creating a regularized forum at a fair market price and would help overcome the obstacles that have held back its ability to develop this market. If it stops trying to swindle its partners besides China, i.e., South Korea and Japan, as it has been doing for the last 3 years, it might actually get the investment it needs from them in return for a reasonable program of sales to them.²⁹⁹ Then Russia would get a fair market price and could more easily participate in the regeneration of North Korea as part of any overall solution to its energy and security problems. Indeed, an energy association would answer Pyongyang's needs if it were to become serious about bargaining over its nuclear program. And facilitating such a settlement inviting Russia to become a major contributor to North Korea's future energy sources has long been a major objective of the Putin government.³⁰⁰

Russian participation under market conditions in such an arrangement would force reforms in its energy

industry, and thus its government. Such reforms might then allow for foreign investment, particularly in Siberia and its infrastructure, which is essential for the historical task of reviving Siberia, and rejuvenating Russia as a reliable Asian power. Russia would play a recognized role in a framework of security for Northeast Asia but it would not be able to blackmail its partners to the West and South because they would be able to build more pipelines to global markets and not be compelled to rely only on Russian pipelines. Finally, to the extent that the energy industry in Russia undergoes genuine reform and is unable to monopolize its customers, it will have to change. So, too, will the state; and hopefully other economic centers of excellence will arise in Russia, freeing it from its historic dependence upon a cash crop for export.

This strategy too depends upon transforming the external environment through creative U.S. statesmanship in order to effectuate change over time both in Russia and in the global order. In all cases of this strategy, whether it be proliferation or energy issues, the threat of force is existentially present as it always is, but it need not be invoked or called into play other than in cases of overwhelming threat. If carried through successfully, this strategy has the potential, in ways that force deployed unilaterally does not have, to bring about desirable changes over time in the world order on the basis of a shared consensus among America's partners operating under our leadership or in tandem with us.

CONCLUSIONS

We urgently need to rethink many of our policies, especially as they are linked to one another. To get

Iran to renounce nuclear weapons, we must deal with Russia's plan for becoming a global center for nuclear power and spent fuel.³⁰¹ One could easily multiply such examples. But this very interconnectedness, plus the fact that the problems Russia poses are essentially nonmilitary and must not be allowed to reach that stage where they become military, call for a coordinated multidimensional strategy using all the instruments of power across a global backdrop. We cannot impose our favored form of regime upon Russia nor should we try, but we cannot passively allow it to flout international agreements and embark upon a course of autocracy, empire, and adventurism, that has repeatedly proven to be ruinous for its people and its neighbors.

Moreover, we cannot be either complacent or despairing. The oft-cited and even widely accepted ideas that we have little or no leverage, or its analogue that we need Moscow more than it needs us, are ridiculous.³⁰² Unfortunately those notions are tied to a belief that complex political issues can be solved in the blink of an eye, not by what Henry Kissinger called the "patient accumulation of nuance." Thus, some fallaciously argue that if we cannot fix the problem at once by Russia's capitulation to our pressure, it is supposedly hopeless to try. Yet it is clear that the agenda of issues with Russia goes far beyond strict bilateral U.S.-Russian relations in both geographical scope and complexity, and requires precisely a combination of patience and superior insight.

Neither can we yield to the opposing complacency that other issues are too urgent, or that we can wait for another time to tackle the Russian agenda, or that we can simply browbeat Russia because of our superior power and virtue. Conditions in Eurasia are already and rapidly becoming ever more crisis-prone. Russian

analysts admit that Russia remains “a risk factor,” not a reliable or autonomous pole of world politics.³⁰³ The North Caucasus, as noted above, remains out of control, with some 250,000 Russian security personnel from the armed forces and Ministry of Interior, as well as the so-called multiple militaries being stationed there.³⁰⁴ Russia’s relations with Georgia could very easily spill over into active violent conflict over Georgia’s breakaway province, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, and its ties to Moldova are a permanent violation of the treaties it has signed with the West. In fact, at least some governments and militaries reject this complacency even if they defend against their anxieties sotto voce.

Although never voiced publicly by elected European officials, there is concern about Russia. It is rarely announced as policy, but the force structure of the Bundeswehr—still, all these years after the end of the Cold War, organized to defend the homeland against tanks coming from the east—makes it obvious. In a way that frustrates and confounds its NATO partners, Germany still de facto prioritizes conventional territorial defense even if it pledges allegiance to the Petersburg tasks which presume force projection capabilities.³⁰⁵

Moreover, as former Secretary of State Colin Powell stated, in the current threat environment,

This means we must do something statesmen have been reluctant to do since the birth of the modern state system. We have to understand and try to influence not just what states do *outside* their borders, but in some cases what goes on *inside* their borders. This marks a strategic rebalancing made necessary by circumstances.³⁰⁶ (Italics in the original.)

Perhaps even more urgently, the current crisis in Ukraine which has brought the country to the brink

of ungovernability, owes much to continuing Russian subversion and intervention there. If it is allowed to continue unchecked and the Ukrainian government is not strengthened to the point of being able to put its house in order, its democratization and Westernization processes will be set back for years. That not only means another quasi or virtual democracy as was the case before, but also a new satellite for Russia. Here we should always remember that Russia without Ukraine cannot threaten the peace of Europe because it is not an empire, just an aspirant to it. But with a Ukrainian satellite, Russia will be emboldened to carry further its efforts to destabilize neighboring regimes in Europe, only this time they will be NATO and EU members, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, the Baltic states, and especially Poland. Finally, the condition of too many Central Asian states once their rulers depart the scene is too perilously close to violence or to failed state status to be complacent about trends in Central Asia. All these challenges, if not crises, are critical points in the East-West relationship because ultimately "The main reason why the West cannot remain complacent about Russia's actions is the fact that Russia's 'near abroad' is, in many cases, also democratic Europe's near abroad."³⁰⁷

In other words, time will not wait upon us. To quote David Ben-Gurion, "time works for us or against us depending on what we do with it." Neither will other states wait passively for us or let us off the hook of our responsibility, i.e., developing a coherent policy, the means to carry it out, and harmonizing it with our allies. Iraq cannot be the only issue in our foreign policy for it already bids fair to suck up all the oxygen needed to conduct a global security policy. In any case, neither Russia, its interlocutors, nor other states or issues will

let us merely act in an ad hoc tactical fashion with no thought for long-term consequences or strategy. Like it or not America, for better or worse, is in Colin Gray's term "the sheriff" of world order.³⁰⁸ We, as Lincoln said, "hold the responsibility and bear the burden." Therefore it is incumbent upon us to exercise this responsibility for and to the world judiciously, but we cannot let it evaporate due to inattention, fecklessness, or the lack of a strategic approach to our interests and those responsibilities.

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