



## The United States and Russia: Ideologies, Policies, and Relations

By Leon Aron

Charles de Gaulle famously said that countries have no friends, only interests. He forgot to add: interests as they are perceived and interpreted by the elites and—in democratic regimes and only in the cases of long-term and expensive policies—by public opinion.

In turn, perception and interpretation of national interests are determined by the ideology of the regimes, that is, by their leaders' ideas of how their countries should live and what they should strive for. Thus, the relations between one country and another usually reflect the regimes' ideologies. The latter dictate foreign policy goals and shape the dealings with other countries depending on the roles they play in the attainment of these objectives.

The relations between the United States and Russia today are no exception. No cabal, plot, or personal ill-will is to blame for the fact that their ties have deteriorated markedly in the past three years and are likely to continue to get worse before they improve. Instead, the current state of affairs is the result of each side's pursuit of its ideologically determined strategic agendas and of its perceptions of each other's reaction to the implementation of these agendas.

### Neoconservative Foreign Policy

The ideology that guides the foreign policy of the Bush administration has been shaped by two

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interrelated factors, both traceable to the tragedy of September 11, 2001. The first is the preoccupation with Islamic extremism, the risk of another terrorist act in the United States, and, especially, with the possibility of the transfer of weapons of mass destruction (first and foremost, nuclear) from unstable, anti-American or fundamentalist states to terrorist organizations.

The other ideological "birthmark" of the Bush White House is its neoconservatism. There is much nonsense in the talk about the supposedly near-Bolshevik orthodoxy of the "neocons," their alleged "philosophy," and the unanimity of their views. Any objective observer would find all of this unrelated to reality. Neoconservatism is at most a sensibility, a set of general beliefs, not a coherent doctrine, much less, in James Q. Wilson's words, "a program of action."<sup>1</sup>

Yet to the extent that there are principles of a neoconservative foreign policy, three seem to be central. First, a world in which liberty is triumphant is a world in which America's security is much easier to maintain. A free world is America's best defense. This correlation has been the thrust of virtually every major national security statement by President George W. Bush in the past five years, including, most recently, his commencement address at the United States Military

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Academy at West Point, where he said: “We have made it clear that the war on terror is an ideological struggle between tyranny and freedom.”<sup>2</sup>

Of course, neoconservatives are far from being the first to emphasize the connection between the spread of liberty and U.S. security. The link had always been a major theme of U.S. foreign policy, including Jimmy Carter’s human rights crusade and Ronald Reagan’s fervent and so effectively expressed belief in the eventual victory of freedom over totalitarian tyranny. This leitmotif’s most powerful expression was President John F. Kennedy’s 1961 Inaugural Address, in which he let “every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.” But the Bush administration reemphasized the urgency of this goal.

Second, a regime’s foreign policy is an extension of its domestic behavior. Hence, the character of the regimes is crucial in determining their place in U.S. foreign policy and relations with Washington. Following from these principles is the third element of the neoconservative foreign policy—its activism. Demolished together with the Twin Towers on September 11 was the school of thought called foreign policy “realism,” which postulated stability as the overarching goal and which this White House inherited and initially adopted from the “realists” of George H. W. Bush’s administration.<sup>3</sup> The maintenance of the status quo suddenly turned out to be an unacceptable risk. America, which only a month, a week, a day before had rested on the laurels of the victory in the Cold War and seemed so invulnerable, so utterly self-sufficient, suddenly found itself on the hard and cold earth: bleeding, shaken but defiant, and looking for allies—genuine allies, not business partners like Saudi Arabia, where fifteen of the September 11 hijackers originated.

It was then that Russia suddenly burst upon the scene—crisply and competently, as if it had waited for this moment and had done all the “homework.” From President Vladimir Putin’s call to Bush minutes after the attack in New York (the first expression of condolences by a foreign leader on that day), to the permission by Moscow to overflights of Russian airspace by U.S. and NATO planes on the way to Afghanistan, to Moscow’s effective acceptance of U.S. bases in the former Soviet Central Asia, to the sharing of Russia’s vast intelligence sources in Afghanistan and the links to the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, Moscow acted decisively and

generously in every instance, without preconditions or diplomatic horse-trading. Along the way, Russia closed the Lurdes military complex in Cuba, which had been Russia’s largest military base and electronic listening post in the Western Hemisphere, and shut down the eavesdropping post and naval base in Cam Rahn Bay, Vietnam.

When the character of the political regimes became essential for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, Russia in the fall of 2001 looked hopeful: a country with political freedoms, real opposition, and many political parties; freedom of religion; free press; uncensored culture; and a stream of free market reforms. It was a coincidence of some basic values and, as a result, of some key (although even then far from all) national interests that seemed to have given post-9/11 U.S.-Russian relations the character of a long-term, strategic partnership, perhaps even an alliance.<sup>4</sup> There followed a rapprochement between Moscow and Washington—unprecedented since the end of World War II—which included the first ever visit of a Russian leader to a U.S. president’s home.<sup>5</sup>

## A Modified Ideology

Yet it was precisely this neoconservative focus on the nature of domestic political systems that was to become an issue between Moscow and Washington when Russia began to modify significantly its ideological priorities and, as a result, its international behavior.

Beginning approximately with the second half of 2003, it became clear that the Putin Kremlin was no longer dedicated to the continuation of the strategic “line” of the revolutionary 1990s in politics and economics—albeit in the much advertised “cleaner,” “more civilized,” and “socially responsible” fashion. On the contrary, it seemed that the ideology of the regime was increasingly shaped by deep shame for what was now referred to as the “chaos” of the previous decade and, most of all, for the weakening of the Russian state.

In this emergent perspective, the policies of the 1990s were seen not as a consequence of a free and conscious, although far from perfectly implemented, choice of the majority of the Russian people—a choice confirmed by the election of Boris Yeltsin to the presidency of a still Soviet Russia in June 1991; the April 1993 referendum on economic and social policies; and the results of the June–July 1996 presidential and the December 1999 Duma elections, which removed the choking grip of the leftist “popular patriotic” majority on the Russian parliament. Instead, these and other fateful events were seen

as products of a vast plot, in large measure forced on Russia from outside, paid for by the super-rich “oligarchs,” and implemented by the venal (or, at best, shortsighted and weak) political leaders.

The traditional postulates of Russian state philosophy were returning in force: the state is tantamount to society, all that is good for the state is automatically good for the country, and the strengthening of the state means the strengthening of society. (Only two Russian leaders, Alexander II and Boris Yeltsin, understood that the weakening of the Russian state might be beneficial for the Russian society in a long run. Peter the Great [1682–1725] and Joseph Stalin [1929–1953] epitomized the opposite tendency.)

From this perspective, a state functionary, a bureaucrat (of course, enlightened, intelligent, hard-working and a model of probity), is a far more effective and consistent agent of progress than a free press (so corrupt, sensationalist, and concerned with profits instead of the good of the country); a voter (so naïve, uneducated, and fickle); an independent judge (such a bribe-taker); or, God forbid, a private entrepreneur.

The Kremlin now saw the radical decentralization of politics and economics undertaken in the 1990s as wrong in principle and harmful to the country’s interests. The situation had to be redressed by establishing an unchallenged preponderance of the executive branch over the legislature and the judiciary, bringing television and much of the print media under the state control or ownership, restoring Moscow’s authority over the formerly self-governing provinces, reclaiming the “commanding heights” of the economy, and returning the “diamonds” in the country’s economic crown to its rightful owner: the state.

## A Russia-First Realpolitik

The changes in foreign policy have followed logically. As with domestic reforms, the generally pro-Western vector of the previous regime was attributed not to the commonality of interests, the “all-human values” search for “a path to the common European house,” or making for Russia a place in the “civilized world.” All these Gorbachev-Yeltsin desiderata were now perceived solely as a result of the weakness brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union—an event that President

Putin declared “a major geopolitical disaster of the 20th century.”<sup>6</sup>

The integration of Russia into the family of Western capitalist democracies was no longer accepted even as a distant goal. Hence, the 1990s efforts to bring Russian domestic and foreign behavior in line with this objective have been discontinued. For instance, where Russia can, it will resurrect and strengthen the former Soviet ties. Those of the newly independent states that assist this effort will be rewarded. Those that oppose it are punished.

Of course, this does not amount to the recreation of Soviet foreign policy. The restoration of the “common political and economic space” on the formerly Soviet territory fits rather well into an imperative of national security of all large continental powers from ancient Babylon, Persia, China, and Rome to the United States until the

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1970s: stability and friendly (if not vassal) states along the borders to be maintained by all manner of bribery and roguery. Hence, Moscow’s equivalent of the support of what the U.S. decision-makers used to call “a son of a bitch but our son of a bitch” (as FDR said of the Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza in the 1940s) in the Belorussian autocrat Alyaksandr Lukashenka.

In contrast to the Soviet Union, Russian foreign policy today is pragmatic. It is aimed at creating the greatest possible freedom of action, positioning oneself “above the fray” for a greater advantage. Not to bind oneself with abstract principles (“Western civilization,” “democracy,” “liberty,” “human rights”), but to maneuver. Not to enter “ideological” alliances, but to “work” with other nations bilaterally. Again, very much unlike the USSR, long-term results are far less important than the role in the international process that Russia manages to arrogate for itself *today* and the dividends that accrue in the process. In Napoleon’s words, which Lenin liked to repeat, “On s’engage et puis on voit!” [Let’s get into a fight and then we shall see!] In short, realpolitik.

To follow the fashion for business terminology in the current Russian political parlance, a key instrument of this strategy is asset leveraging, that is the most effective (although often risky) deployment of available assets. The character of the political regimes is unimportant; the comparative advantages are paramount: nuclear technology for civilian use, conventional arms, and, of course, energy resources. Another integral part of Russia’s post-2003 behavior in the

world is engaging in a diplomatic arbitrage between conflicting actors in international affairs. Again, disregarding the substantive merits of their cases, Moscow seeks to arrogate for itself an indispensable role in the conflict resolution, with the goal of gaining maximum international prestige and, where possible, gaining or expanding export markets.

## The Middle East and Iran

This approach is illustrated by Russia's recent steps in the Middle East. The delivery to Syria of tactical air-defense missiles last year is viewed in Moscow as a means of restoring its influence in the Middle East after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The visit of the leaders of the terrorist organization Hamas to Moscow earlier this year was seen as a step in the same direction—as well as an attempt at a diplomatic arbitrage in the hope of obtaining important concessions (for instance, the recognition of Israel's right to exist and denunciation of terror) and thus achieving the reputation of an indispensable mediator between East and West.

The *locus classicus* of this strategy is Moscow's relations with Tehran. Russia has almost completed the \$1 billion construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant and continues to oppose any sanctions aimed at forcing Iran to halt uranium enrichment, which is a key step toward making a nuclear bomb. Despite insistent requests by Washington, Russia resumed arms sales to Tehran, which were suspended by Yeltsin in the summer of 1995. The most recent arms deal, signed in December 2005, will provide Iran with mobile air defense missile systems, MIG fighter jets, and patrol boats. The estimated size of the transaction is \$1 billion, with the delivery completed by 2008.

With Russia's gold and hard currency reserves approaching \$300 billion, the money, although important, is hardly Moscow's primary objective. Nor, unlike the Soviet Union, is Russia driven by ideological opposition to the U.S. "imperialism" or to its closest Middle Eastern ally, Israel. While the Kremlin staunchly defends Iran's right to a "peaceful development of nuclear energy" and resists all "non-diplomatic measures of pressure" on Tehran, on April 25, a Russian rocket launched from a Russian cosmodrome in the Far East carried into orbit an Israeli spy satellite which undoubtedly will "monitor" that very "peaceful" effort by Iran.

Instead, Moscow's Iranian policy is an instance of the same overarching purpose: the enhancement of Russia's

role in the world. According to a leading Russian expert on Iran, Russia "has a unique and historic chance to return to the world arena once again as a key player and as a reborn superpower. If Russia firmly stands by Iran in this conflict [with the United States] Russia will immediately regain its lost prestige in the Muslim world and on the global arena at large . . . and no lucrative proposals from the United States can change this situation strategically."<sup>7</sup> Hence, too, Russia's diplomatic arbitrage between the United States, Britain, France and Germany, on the one hand, and Iran on the other. For as long as possible Moscow delays the "moment of truth," when it will have to choose sides, postponing the "sale" of Russia's support in order to bid up the value of its diplomatic assets.

## Different Times and Values

In other times, this policy may have not caused serious complications in the relations with the United States. After all, Washington did get used to (although never without irritation) the diplomacy of France, which also tried to compensate for the loss of its superpower status after World War II by practicing similar pragmatism and arbitrage in its relations with the opposing sides in the Cold War.

But the times are different—and so are the values. The post-9/11 activist U.S. foreign policy, which perceives the promotion of liberty and democracy as the key strategic means of ensuring America's security, cannot but be increasingly at odds with the Kremlin's post-imperial "restoration," the essence of which is political and economic recentralization at home and an omnivorous *realpolitik* abroad. Even on the territory of the former Soviet Union, where under different circumstances the United States may have been more inclined to be indulgent of the Russian interests, Moscow's opposition to democratization and liberalization in the post-Soviet space, which tends to create pro-Western regimes (Georgia and Ukraine)—now viewed by the Kremlin as inherently anti-Russian—and its support for some of the region's most repressive governments (Belarus and Uzbekistan) cannot but cause serious friction with the United States.

## The Anchors of Common Interests

As a result of the growing divergence in values, the ships of U.S. and Russian foreign policies began to drift away

from each other. That they have not yet moved as far apart as to lose visual contact is due to the anchors of each side's strategic assets that are central to the other's national interests.

For the United States, Russia is crucial in the global war on terrorism; nuclear nonproliferation; the world's energy security; and the containment of a resurgent authoritarian China, which increasingly threatens the interests of the United States and its allies in South-east Asia.

In Russia's strategic calculations, America is featured as an ally in the struggle against domestic terrorism emanating from north Caucasus. Second, Washington is expected to show an "understanding" of Russia's "special role" (and, therefore, "special interests") on the post-Soviet territory, where 25 million ethnic Russians live outside Russia and where most of the people and industry are kept warm, lit, and working by Russian oil, gas, and electricity, until recently provided essentially on credit. Third, Moscow hoped for the U.S. decisive assistance in Russia's integration into the world economy.

But perhaps the key American resource, the most desirable thing the United States can give Russia is esteem and equality. No matter how much America is castigated in the pro-Kremlin or Kremlin-owned newspapers or television channels; no matter what is being said about "Asia" or "Eurasia" as new national destinations, today, as under Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Gorbachev and Yeltsin, for people as well as the elite, a parity with America—be it in strategic nuclear missiles or corn, meat or steel, democracy or coal, outer space or Olympic medals—and its appreciation of Russia have always been a key legitimizing domestic political factor. When it comes to Russia's national self-respect, no one else—neither Europe, nor Asia, nor yet Germany, China, France, or Japan—even comes close.<sup>8</sup>

### . . . and the Rusting Chains

This list of core mutual interest is hardly new. A novel development is the erosion of the assets' value, no longer

sufficiently sustained and renewed by ideological commonality. The anchor chains have started to rust.

From Washington's point of view, in the past year Russia's reputation as a partner in the antiterrorism campaign has been significantly compromised by Moscow's attempt at forging its own position vis-à-vis Hamas; the sale of air-defense systems to Syria, a terrorism-sponsoring dictatorship; and by the export of fighter jets and helicopters to Sudan, which is on the State Department's list of terrorist states and which practices genocide against its own population.

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Although a massive confrontation and a descent into a new Cold War are highly unlikely, the situation is not likely to improve and may get worse. The ships will not collide. But there will be a great deal of tossing, rocking, pitching, and seasickness. Don the lifejackets and stay calm.

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In nuclear nonproliferation, Russia's assistance in restraining a former Soviet client, North Korea, has proved disappointing. Still more frustrating for the United States was Russia's reluctance to join the opposition to Iran's effort to develop nuclear weapons. It is possible that here Russia has already passed the point of no return, when no amount of hedging could avert serious losses when Moscow is forced to abandon its position.

Unwilling to jeopardize the G8 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia in the end is likely to vote with the United States, Britain, and France for the sanctions against Iraq in the UN Security Council, or at least to abstain. Iran is almost certain to respond by formally abandoning the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty regime and thus triggering a set of punitive measures that are likely to target not only civilian nuclear projects, but also cooperation with Tehran in conventional defense, finance, or investment in nonnuclear energy development, such as natural gas.<sup>9</sup> In all these areas, Russia

today is invested more deeply than anyone else,<sup>10</sup> and it is hard to imagine a scenario in the unfolding Iranian saga in which Moscow can avoid very considerable long-term damage to its prestige (not to mention its purse).

In energy security, the change of economic policy has resulted in the Kremlin's scuttling the Western Siberia-Murmansk pipeline that would have carried oil from Russia's largest field to its only all-year-round deep-water port for export to the United States. Erasing the prospect of a significant substitution for oil imports from the Persian Gulf, the Kremlin's action was in effect a veto on all private alternatives to the state-owned

pipeline monopoly, Transneft, which is notoriously inefficient and corrupt, and already incapable of handling the current output, let alone any future growth in Russian oil production.<sup>11</sup>

A few years later, the concerns about the reliability and expansion of Russia's energy supplies were heightened by the de-facto renationalization of the country's two most modern, transparent, and profitable private companies, YUKOS and Sibneft. The increase in production fell from the average of 8 percent between 1999 and 2004 to 2 percent in 2005. In the same year, for the first time since 1999, the volume of Russian oil exports fell in absolute terms.

No sooner had Europe gotten over the shock caused by the sudden decrease in the flow of Russian natural gas last January (due to the interruption of gas exports to Ukraine because of the price dispute and the siphoning off of the "European" gas by the Ukrainians), when in April the heads of the state-owned natural gas monopoly Gazprom and Transneft threatened Europe with the decrease of Russian energy supplies (and their transfer to the East, mostly China) if the Europeans continue to be less than enthusiastic about Gazprom's efforts to acquire retail assets in the West. A few days later, Vladimir Putin repeated the warning.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, even if one takes with a very large grain of salt the Sino-Russian protestations of friendship, the massive and incessant flow of weapons and defense technology from Moscow to Beijing—the largest buyer of Russian weapons and defense technology—renders illusory any common U.S.-Russian position vis-à-vis China.

## The Devalued U.S. Assets

A parallel drop in the value of U.S. assets in Russia has been just as steep. Instead of "sensitivity" for Russia's "special interests" on the post-Soviet territory, Moscow saw these "interests" neglected or challenged by the anti-authoritarian and anti-corruption "color revolutions," which are perceived as aimed against Russia and inspired, if not orchestrated, by Washington. (Permeated by cynicism, so typical of post-revolutionary restorations, be it Charles II in England or Napoleon III in France, the Kremlin leadership seems to have completely forgotten Russia's very recent history and appears incapable of imagining a mass popular protest not engineered and paid for "from outside.") After the lightning-fast acceptance of the former Soviet republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into NATO, Moscow interprets the U.S.

"sponsorship" of future Ukrainian and Georgian memberships<sup>13</sup> as the establishment of NATO's monopoly over Russia's "sphere of influence."

The hopes for support of Moscow's antiterrorist fight have been largely frustrated as well. Instead of help—at least moral support or silence—the State Department, U.S. nongovernmental organizations, and mass media continue to expose and criticize human rights violations in Chechnya and refuse (as do most Russians) to see the "Chechnization" of the war as a lasting solution. In addition, following the example of Great Britain, Washington has shown no desire to cooperate with Moscow on the extradition of those whom Russia accuses of assisting Chechen terrorists.

Almost as disappointing for Moscow was Washington's third strategic asset: help with the integration into the global economy. On the contrary, America turned out to be perhaps the largest block on the road to Russia's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO). Among around thirty issues that U.S. businesses want to be resolved before Russia's admission, two are particularly important: enforcement of copyright protection in entertainment industry and the end of rampant piracy of intellectual property (music, films, and computer programs), which cost the U.S. businesses about \$2 billion in 2005 alone; and the access to Russian retail banking and insurance, including the unlimited ability to open branches in Russia.<sup>14</sup> Here the White House follows powerful economic interests, rather than leads, yet the Kremlin, which is by now used to lording it over entrepreneurs, blames Washington for the failure to pacify America's "oligarchs."

The difficulties with the WTO have reopened the old wound of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. The 1974 legislation denies the normal Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status to countries with non-market economies that restrict their citizens' right to emigrate. Post-Soviet Russia has removed all the restrictions on foreign travel and immigration and was found to be in formal compliance with the emigration provision of the amendment in 1994. Even after the effective renationalization of the two largest private oil companies, YUKOS and Sibneft, at least 65 percent of the country's GDP today is generated in the private sector.<sup>15</sup> Still, unlike China, which was granted the MFN status in 2000 despite the clear noncompliance with both requirements, the affront to the Russian national dignity continues in violation of the letter of America's own laws.

Corroding in and of themselves, all these unfulfilled expectations eat away at the most important American resources: equality and respect for Russia. As a result, there have been calls in Moscow to force the United States into arms control negotiations by accelerating the construction and deployment of the Topol-M (SS-25) multi-warhead intercontinental ballistic missiles. As the current Russian cache of strategic weapons is many times over what is required for effective deterrence, the main objective seems to be making the United States reckon with Russia as an equal. "Of course, no one is planning to attack Russia," one of the advocates of this strategy explained on Russian television last March. "But they also refuse to conduct negotiations with her."<sup>16</sup> Two months later, in his 2006 state-of-Russia speech to the joint session of the chambers of the Federal Assembly, President Putin endorsed this position.

## No Cold War II

Built into the ideology of the regimes, the alienation between the United States and Russia will not diminish till at least 2009, when new administrations take over in both countries. Until then, the tension is likely to increase because of the political calendars in both Moscow and Washington.

In the United States, Russia has been "lost" every four years, as the contenders for presidency rake the White House incumbents over the coals for the many failures on Russia's road to free market economy and liberal democracy. This time the cycle will start earlier because of the December 2007 Duma election, in which there are almost certain to be more than enough violations of democratic procedures to justify censure. For his part, Putin's anointed successor for the presidency will have to return the fire—in addition to the dose of anti-Americanism initially prescribed for the 2008 campaign by his "political technologists."

Yet the probability of a frontal confrontation and a new Cold War remains very remote for at least three reasons. First, despite the erosion, the countries' geopolitical assets are still very weighty, as the bedrock issues of anti-terrorism, nuclear nonproliferation, and energy will continue to force them to seek common ground and at least limited partnership.<sup>17</sup>

Second, the "restorationist" foreign policy notwithstanding, the three basic elements of the 1992–1993 national consensus on the foreign policy and defense

doctrine remain largely the same. Russia is to stay a *nuclear* superpower and the *regional* superpower, but it seems to have settled for the role of one of the world's *great* states, rather than a global superpower engaged in a worldwide competition with the United States. While these desiderata will continue to cause occasional sparring with the United States, they are no longer dedicated to the attainment of goals inimical to the vital interests of the United States and are not likely to ignite a relentless antagonistic struggle to the bitter end.

Lastly, despite the muscular rhetoric emanating of late from the Kremlin, unlike the Soviet Union twenty years ago and China today, Russia is not a "revisionist" power. It does not seek radically to reshape the geopolitical "balance of forces" in its favor. Moscow may rail at the score, but it is unlikely to endeavor to change the rules of the game. For that, one needs a different ideology and, as a result, a different set of priorities. Yet even in today's Russia flush with petrodollars, the share of GDP devoted to defense (around 3 percent) is not only at least ten times smaller than in the Soviet Union, but also below the 1992–1997 average in a Russia that inherited an empty treasury from the Soviet Union and that was, like every revolutionary government, unable to collect taxes. Calculated in purchasing power parity, Russia's defense expenditures in 2005 (\$47.77 billion) were less than one-eleventh of what the U.S. spent (\$522 billion).<sup>18</sup>

## Divergent Paths

Changed sharply since they were discussed in these pages four and a half years ago,<sup>19</sup> U.S.-Russian relations have followed the trajectories of shifting ideological priorities in Moscow and Washington. Formerly coinciding or running in close parallel, the paths began to diverge or even cross. This state of affairs will continue until one or both sides revise the vision of their nations' interests.

Although a massive confrontation and a descent into a new Cold War are highly unlikely, the situation is not likely to improve and may get worse. The ships will not collide. But there will be a great deal of tossing, rocking, pitching, and seasickness. Don the life-jackets and stay calm.

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## Notes

1. James Q. Wilson, *On Character* (Washington, D.C.: AEI Press, 1995), 8.

2. President George W. Bush, "President Delivers Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy at West Point," Office of the White House Press Secretary (Washington, D.C.: May 27, 2006), available at [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060527-1.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060527-1.html) (accessed on May 30, 2006).

3. Three weeks before the Soviet Union was undone by the national liberation movements in the Soviet republics and the democratic revolution in Russia at the end of August 1991, in Kiev, President George H. W. Bush solemnly warned the Ukrainians of the dangers of "suicidal nationalism." Labeled the "Chicken Kiev speech," that oration has become "exhibit A" for the critics of "realism."

4. See Leon Aron, "Russia's Choice," *Russian Outlook* (Winter 2002), available at [www.aei.org/publication13639/](http://www.aei.org/publication13639/).

5. Vladimir Putin stayed at the Crawford Ranch on November 14–15, 2001.

6. President Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," (Moscow: April 25, 2005), available at [www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031\\_type70029type82912\\_87086.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029type82912_87086.shtml) (accessed on June 16, 2006).

7. Radzhab Safarov, director of the Iranian Studies Center in Moscow, as quoted in Alissa J. Rubin and Kim Murphy, "Russian Bridge to Iran Has Twists," *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 2006.

8. Despite periodic "spiking" of the anti-American sentiment because of Iraq or unfair treatment of Russian skiers and figure skaters at the Olympics, in March 2006, 66 percent of the Russians polled described their attitude toward the United States as "good" or "very good" versus 17 percent who classified their sentiment as "bad" or "very bad"—a proportion that virtually has not changed since December 2001. "Sotsial'no-politicheskaya situatsiya v Rossii v marte 2006 goda" [Social and political situation in Russian in March 2006], Levada Center, April 11, 2006, available at [www.levada.ru/press/2006041104.html](http://www.levada.ru/press/2006041104.html) (accessed on April 15, 2006). As to their feeling about the American people, the share of those who thought of them well has hovered around 80 percent from February 2000 to September 2004. "Rossiya i SShA" [Russia and the USA], Levada Center, available at [www.levada.ru/russia.html](http://www.levada.ru/russia.html) (accessed on April 15, 2006).

9. "Should no agreement be reached, the West would do everything in its power to isolate Iran economically, financially, technologically and diplomatically, with the full support of the international community." Joschka Fischer, "The Case for Bargaining With Iran," *Washington Post*, May 29, 2006. The author

was Germany's foreign minister and vice chancellor from 1998 to 2005.

10. For instance, with Russia and Iran together controlling almost half of the world's proven reserves of natural gas, the Russian state-owned natural gas pipeline monopoly Gazprom has sought to become the largest partner and investor in Iran's natural gas exploration and transportation.

11. For details and analysis, see Leon Aron, "Russian Oil: Natural Abundance and Political Shortage," *Russian Outlook* (Spring 2006), available at [www.aei.org/publication24251/](http://www.aei.org/publication24251/).

12. Natalya Grib and Petr Sapozhnikov, "Evropa na brovyah: Moskva grozit povernut' truby na Vostok" [Russia is threatening to turn the pipelines East], *Kommersant*, April 25, 2006, available at [www.kommersant.ru/content.html?IssueId=30077](http://www.kommersant.ru/content.html?IssueId=30077) (accessed on April 26, 2006); and Andrew E. Kramer, "Putin Talks of Sending Oil to Asia, Not Europe," *New York Times*, April 27, 2006. The United States responded by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's promoting in Ankara a gas pipeline from Azerbaijan to Turkey, bypassing Russia and the reception in the White House of Azerbaijani president Ilham Aliiev, who inherited power from his father, the long-time strongman Geydar. Less than two weeks later, in an effort to persuade Kazakhstan president Nursultan Nazarbayev to export oil through Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey (the Baku-Supsa-Ceyhan pipeline), instead of via Transneft to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, Vice President Dick Cheney suspended the neoconservative principles in his own attempt at realpolitik. Cheney praised "strategic partnership" with Kazakhstan and professed friendship and "great respect" for Nazarbayev, a likely president-for-life, who received 91 percent of the vote in the last year's election, after which one of his main political opponents was shot to death by the Kazakh security forces and the other arrested. Glenn Kessler, "Rice Warns against Russian Gas Monopoly," *Washington Post*, April 26, 2006; and Peter Baker, "Cheney Switches from Scowls to Smiles," *Washington Post*, May 6, 2006.

13. See, for example, Vasily Sergeev, "Bush prinyal Ukrainu v NATO" [Bush has accepted Ukraine into NATO], April 26, 2006, available through [www.gazeta.ru](http://www.gazeta.ru) (accessed on April 27, 2006).

14. Marina Pustilnik, "Russia-WTO: A Failed Courtship?" *Moscow News*, April 14, 2006. The International Intellectual Property Alliance claims that Russia is the world's largest distributor of pirated optical disks and estimates that there are about fifty-two illegal optical plants in Russia, producing up to 400 million disks a year. Christopher Swanning, "IP Vital to Russia WTO Hopes," *Financial Times*, May 3, 2006, available at <http://news.ft.com/cms/s/da3b5d12-da41-11da-b7de-0000779e2340.html>.

15. Anders Aslund, "The Folly of Renationalization," *Moscow Times*, May 23, 2006.

16. An entry in the author's travel diary, Moscow, March 22, 2006. The expert, Alexei Arbatov, was a Duma deputy from a liberal party Yabloko until 2003.

17. For instance, in June 2006 Russia and the United States reached an agreement on extending for seven more years the 1992 Cooperative Threat Reduction Agreement—a multi-billion-dollar program, paid for by the United States, to secure or destroy the Soviet Union's biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons.

18. Julian Cooper, "Military Expenditure in 2005 and 2006: Federal Budgets of the Russian Federation, research note, 15, table 5: "Trend of Russian Military Spending in Real Terms: 'National Defense' Plus Military Pensions" (Center of Russian and East European Studies, The University of Birmingham); and Alexey Ventsiolovskiy, "Kvartiry, l'goty, samolyoty" [Apartments, privileges, planes], *Krasnaya Zvezda*, January 26, 2006. The 2005 U.S. military budget of \$522 billion (including

funding for Iraq and Afghanistan) is from "U.S. Military Spending vs. the World," Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation (Washington, D.C.), February 6, 2006, 1. The dollar equivalent Russian 2005 expenditures (651,362 million rubles as projected by Cooper, op.cit.,) is calculated on the basis of \$1=R28.3 the average exchange rate for 2005 to yield \$23 billion or \$45.77 billion in a Purchasing Power Parity equivalent. The Russia/USA ruble/dollar PPP factor of 1.99 for 2005 has been calculated by comparing the dollar equivalent of per-capita Russian GDP, \$ 5,364, with the same statistic (projected to 2005) in PPP terms: \$10,700. (The Russian per-capita number for 2005 is from "VVP udvoilsya za tri goda" [The GDP has doubled in three years], *Vedomosti*, February 3, 2006, available at [www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article.shtml?2006/02/03/102420/](http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article.shtml?2006/02/03/102420/); the PPP equivalent is from "Rank Order-GDP-Per Capita (PPP)," *CIA World Factbook*, available at [www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html) (accessed on May 17, 2006).

19. Leon Aron, "Russia's Choice."