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THE STATE OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND U.S. POLICY TOWARD RUSSIA

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OPENING STATEMENT By Stephen Sestanovich

It is a pleasure for me to open today's discussion of Russian-American relations. In saying this, I should probably add that it's a pleasure that feels, at one and the same time, completely familiar and thoroughly unfamiliar. Familiar because many of us in this room have talked over and tried to interpret developments in Russia—and before that, in the Soviet Union—throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Unfamiliar because I never expected to carry forward this discussion in my current capacity.

Now, Washington being what it is, showing up in a new role is actually not quite as strange as it may seem. You and I have, after all, talked about Russian-American relations over many years in many different capacities.

Many participants in today's meeting are veterans of previous administrations. I myself first came to meetings here at Heritage as a Hill staffer, then as a member of the Reagan National Security Council, and thereafter as a colleague from sister think tanks downtown.

I can even boast of having been in the offices of The Heritage Foundation in Moscow, back when the Carnegie Center was located in the same building. We cooperated in many ways in those days. Those of you who visited either institution may recall that, the plumbing in some old Moscow office buildings being what it is, Carnegie and Heritage staffers often used to make joint expeditions to use the facilities in the Polytechnic Museum two blocks away.

There have been other changes in our discussions

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over the years. Until 1991, they were united by the conviction that Soviet communism was a unique source of danger—a present danger, we used to say—to us, to our friends, to supporters of freedom in other countries, to the international order, even to itself. The question for us was how best to deal with that danger.

Since 1991, we've had discussions of a different kind, united by the need to understand the opportunities created by the fall of Soviet communism. The question for us has been how to make the most of these opportunities—above all, how to do so in a way that advances American interests.

For those of us who didn't much like the old international order, the end of the Cold War has been a unique chance to start over. In Russia and, just as important, in Ukraine and the other states that were born or reborn when the USSR collapsed, we have dealt with governments possessing—for the first time—a mandate for democratic and market reform and a desire to work with us to refashion the international order.

This work involved transformations of a kind and on a scale rarely seen in history. It is often compared to the seminal policies of the late 1940s, but to my mind the changes brought on by the fall of communism have been in many ways even more fundamental.

First, there has been the opportunity to overcome the strategic nuclear standoff. This means the chance not only to pursue deep cuts in nuclear arsenals, but also to move toward the far more significant goal of putting mutual assured destruction behind us.

Second has been the job of creating a security order for Europe that truly reflects the end of its long, artificial division into two blocs. Doing this fully has meant opening key institutions to new members and mobilizing them to meet security challenges such as the war in Bosnia. It has meant negotiating massive reductions of military equipment and troops on the continent while reinforcing economic and political integration trends already underway.

Third has been the job of knitting together worlds that were isolated from each other by the bizarre political and economic structures of Soviet communism. Overcoming them has turned out to be a harsh and painful experience with a great deal at stake: Economic success can clearly affect the fate of democratic institutions and the growth of civil society.

A fourth and final task has proved central. I have in mind the importance of finding new partners (among old adversaries) for strengthening peace and security in sensitive regions such as the Persian Gulf. We have had a better chance—but also a greater need—to create alliances against the proliferation of the most dangerous military technologies.

Taken together, these challenges make up the American agenda for dealing with the post-communist world. Tackling them is perhaps the most important work of American foreign policy in this decade. And no part of it is more consequential than what I will talk about today: the unique opportunity presented to us by the fall of communism to forge a more cooperative and productive relationship with Russia.

The Clinton Administration, like the Bush Administration before it, has been determined to seize this opportunity. The President set this course five years ago and has held to it since then not because of romantic feelings toward a former adversary (although Americans are sometimes sentimental in such matters), not because of an unexamined attachment to one leader (Americans are said to make this mistake too), and not because of some starry-eyed assumption that the world of the future will be conflict-free.

To the contrary, we all recognize that the future will hold conflicts and new threats that we can only guess at now. Our conviction is that we will be able to cope with them more successfully if we can develop a cooperative relationship with Russia and the other countries of the former Soviet Union. And we aim to do so in a way that, as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has put it, “encourages Russia's

modern aspirations rather than accommodates its outdated fears.”

These are the judgments that underlie President Clinton’s policy. They will, I predict, underlie that of future Presidents as well, no matter who occupies the White House. The reason is simple: It’s the policy that best serves American interests.

In 1992, it’s fair to say, the wisdom of this policy seemed self-evident to most of us. In 1998, by contrast, it has become debatable. Today, Russian–American relations are subject to stricter scrutiny, and I think that’s both understandable and desirable. We need to take a hard look at our assumptions—in particular, at the hope that over the long term, Russian and American interests will converge enough to permit sustained cooperation and to justify the kind of support and attention that the international community has given Russia since 1991.

Let me try to contribute in a small way to this discussion by recalling a debate from a previous administration—a debate in which I don’t want to say I was wrong, but I will admit that in some ways I may not have understood what was happening as well as my boss at that time, Ronald Reagan.

When I worked at the White House in the mid-1980s, my colleagues and I on the NSC staff were sometimes puzzled by the President’s utter certitude that he knew where Mikhail Gorbachev was headed. And the explanation we got back when we raised this question also puzzled us: The President, it seems, had come to the conclusion, from his very first meetings with Gorbachev at Geneva and Reykjavik, that the General Secretary of the CPSU no longer believed in Marxism-Leninism. Now, did we understand why the President was so confident?

To me and to others working on Soviet affairs, this answer was not immediately satisfying, and maybe even a little naive. Surely the President could see that the Soviet leaders, no matter what their ideological views, might continue to define their national interests in ways that conflicted with ours? Well, of course he did. And that’s why, whenever they did (Afghanistan was what I worked on), our policy was as tough as it had always been.

But Ronald Reagan’s intuition was that something bigger was happening: that if the Cold War had really lost its ideological roots, it would necessarily wither—and not least because the Soviet system itself could not long survive the collapse of the beliefs that were supposed to justify it.

Looking back, I think one would have to acknowledge that, from an old President to his pseudo-worldly young aides, so convinced of the permanence of national interests, this was a pretty good answer. What some of us at first took for sentimentality or woolly-mindedness turned out to be the true realism.

Now, I have already said—and I’m not the first to say it—that the end of ideological conflict is not the end of conflict as such. The 1990s have already been far too bloody and tumultuous for us to indulge that hope. But if a post-ideological world isn’t free of conflict, what kind of conflict will it be? When we look at Russian–American relations, should we expect—as my NSC colleagues and I counseled President Reagan when we analyzed Soviet policy—an inevitable clash of national interests?

This is a very common forecast. I read it all the time, and I’m quite sure it will be voiced around the table here today. It certainly captures one crucial element of our relations with Russia: National interests will be the foundation of both countries’ foreign policies. But that is only to state the obvious. The hard question is whether these interests are bound to produce conflict. Answering that question is not quite so easy as deducing conflict from a fundamental ideological clash, for national interests are not holy writ, they are not dogma, they are not a matter of divine revelation. They are a matter of choice. They are the result of a political process. They change.

Sometimes, as people who used to be trapped behind the Iron Curtain found, they change in the most radical ways.

To my mind, there is no more important prerequisite for understanding how Russia will define its place in the world than recognizing that the idea of national interests is an open-ended one. In a coun-

try that has, in the course of the past decade, seen all the institutions of its national life turned upside down, the process of coming up with a workable definition of national interests may be a slow one. For it is inseparable from other transformations that are underway: the consolidation of new political institutions, the emergence of a new economy, the search for national identity, and the experience of dealing with new neighbors that are themselves consolidating their statehood and undergoing major upheavals. Russia has to develop a new consensus on where its interests lie in a world that has changed dramatically almost overnight.

Amid such changes, who can claim that national interests will be a constant? What we see instead is an open-ended process of defining those interests. New approaches will be tried out and discarded; others will hold. Some of these will create concerns and frictions with Russia's friends and neighbors; others will begin to identify common ground. I'll turn to some of our concerns in a minute, but first a word about the role we play in the way Russia defines its interests.

The United States cannot make Russia's choices for it. Only the Russian people can make choices that will last. But we need to understand what the choices are. As President Bill Clinton has said, Russia has "a chance to show that a great power can promote patriotism without expansionism; that a great power can promote national pride without national prejudice."

For some, the historic scale of this choice—and the likelihood that we will not know for years how much progress we have made—means that we should mute our differences with Russia when they arise. Others say that our differences will be insurmountable. The Clinton Administration's approach is different. Our job is to pursue American national interests, to defend our principles, and—anyone who works for Madeleine Albright learns this right away—to tell it like it is. And telling it like it is means, among other things, recognizing how important it is to build a seat at the table for post-communist democracies, including Russia, that are prepared to take a full and responsible part in resolving international problems.

To give you an idea of where this work stands, let me turn back to the four post-Cold War challenges I described earlier.

Of all the problems we want to address in Russian–American relations, none is more important than the future of nuclear weapons. And none makes the slow sorting out of Russian national interests more visible. After all, the Russian Duma has been debating the merits of the START II Treaty for five whole years now. Clearly some deputies consider a treaty with the United States providing for deep cuts in strategic nuclear forces as, *ipso facto*, contrary to Russia's interests.

Last year, Presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin sought to break this logjam by making clear what kind of START III agreement would be possible once START II is ratified. The target they agreed on—2,000 to 2,500 strategic weapons on each side—would represent a cut of approximately 80 percent from the highest levels of the Cold War.

They also agreed that these negotiations must improve transparency of our nuclear inventories and assure the irreversibility of warhead destruction.

It is this Administration's judgment that the ABM Treaty has made possible reaching agreement on deeper strategic nuclear weapons reductions; and, in this spirit, last September Secretary Albright signed agreements demarcating the ABM Treaty and our ongoing work on theater-missile defense (TMD). I should note that these agreements fully protect all of our TMD programs and that they will move forward as planned. These agreements will be submitted, along with the START II Protocol, for Senate advice and consent after Russian ratification of START II.

In the meantime, we will continue to pool our efforts with the Russians to fight nuclear smuggling and proliferation, to eliminate excess plutonium, and to enhance the security of Russia's nuclear stockpile.

The second challenge I mentioned was European security. No issue has stimulated more heated assessments of the irreconcilability between U.S.

and Russian interests than this one. As everyone knows, four years ago the U.S. launched the process of expanding the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Russia didn't like it. It doesn't like it now. And its leaders have said they will never like it. Yet both sides said their goal was a secure and integrated Europe. In 1997, the most important question for Russian-American relations was: Did that common goal mean anything?

In 1998, I think it's clear that the answer is yes. The U.S. Senate is about to consider the membership of three new NATO members. The NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council—created by the NATO-Russian Founding Act—is up and running. We have begun the process of adapting the CFE (Conventional Forces in Europe) treaty to Europe's new security realities. And American soldiers are serving shoulder-to-shoulder with Russian troops in Bosnia.

This record gives real meaning to the hope that Secretary Albright expressed to Yevgeny Primakov last fall, "that Russia will come to know the real NATO for what it is: as neither a threat to Russia nor the answer to Russia's most pressing dilemmas, but simply as an institution that can help Russia become more integrated with the European mainstream."

I should add that Russia is not the only post-Soviet state that we think should play a larger role in European security. This Administration has advocated greater cooperation between NATO and Ukraine in particular. And it seems to us no accident that the creation of new institutional ties between NATO and both Russia and Ukraine has gone along with the improvement of ties between them.

Similar changes are visible in Russia's relations with other neighbors. In two key conflict zones in the Caucasus—Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia—Russia has begun to work in tandem with international organizations in the pursuit of negotiated settlements.

Let me turn to economic issues. Last year, the Russian government brought inflation down to record lows and kept the ruble stable. With U.S.

support, the international financial institutions provided necessary assistance—linked, of course, to structural reforms and sound fiscal policy. The Russian stock market enjoyed a surge of Western portfolio investment.

This should be the moment at which common economic interests become a major factor in Russian-American relations. To make that happen, Russia still needs to build the legislative framework and government machinery to improve the investment climate, to revitalize tax collection, to tackle crime and corruption, to protect private investors, to spur cooperation in the energy sector (both in Russia itself and in the Caspian region), and to join the World Trade Organization (WTO). We are working hard in a number of ways, including through innovative assistance programs under our Partnership for Freedom, to address many of these problems, each of which deserves a long discussion. Instead, let me state a one-sentence bottom line: Failure to resolve them will come at a heavy price in Russian national interests.

The question before us is whether Russian interests inevitably clash with our own. The issues that I have described so far offer cases of disagreement—sometimes major disagreements. But they also provide powerful evidence of common interests and of our ability to find common solutions. Whatever one's view of this matter, there is no doubt that the biggest challenge we face, and the greatest difficulty in finding common solutions, is in the Persian Gulf. I have in mind troubling developments in Russia's relations with Iran and our occasional differences on Iraq.

In the Iran case, we have a real problem on our hands. I'll be very blunt: Iran is taking advantage of Russia's economic woes and its large reservoir of defense technology and scientific talent to accelerate development of an indigenous ballistic missile capability. Russian authorities understand that Iran's activities could have grave consequences for stability throughout the Middle East and that Iran's ambitions to acquire weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems pose a direct security threat to Russia itself. President Yeltsin, Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin, and Foreign Minister Primakov

have repeatedly told us that they oppose the transfer of missile technology to Iran.

In response, we have launched an intensive dialogue on how to choke off Russian entities' cooperation with Iran's missile program. This is not a dialogue in the usual sense. What is involved is not just sharing information about the problem. Its aim is to identify concrete steps toward effective enforcement and monitoring. We have some progress to show, but a lot more hard work will be needed before we can say that the problem is on the way to being solved.

We also have concerns about potential Russian investments in Iran's energy sector. Energy investment in Iran, after all, only serves to strengthen one of Russia's most formidable regional competitors.

In Iraq, Russia and the U.S. agree on the need to uncover and end Saddam Hussein's WMD (weapons of mass destruction) programs. We also agree that Saddam must comply fully with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including full cooperation with UNSCOM. But there have been differences between us when it comes to defining and achieving full compliance.

In October, after much intensive consultation between us and in the U.N. Security Council, the

Russians played a role in bringing Saddam back into compliance. Iraq's attempt on Tuesday to exclude American and British inspection team members is the latest step in a long-standing Iraqi campaign to ignore, frustrate, and deceive the international community about Iraq's enormous programs to develop weapons of mass destruction. What I have said about other issues applies here: The test of whether our interests converge or clash lies in whether we can find common ground on the big problems, one at a time.

Let me close with a word about bipartisanship. To make the most of the opportunities created by the end of the Cold War, our strategy toward Russia—as much as any other element of our foreign policy—needs bipartisan support and needs public understanding. At the State Department, I am lucky to have a boss who is more committed to real bipartisanship and to active participation in public debate than any Secretary of State I can remember. No one who works for her is likely to have the kind of success she has had in these areas. But she has told us it's our job to try.

—Stephen Sestanovich is the Ambassador at Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State on the New Independent States, U.S. Department of State.

AMERICAN–RUSSIAN RELATIONS: AN ASSESSMENT

By Paula J. Dobriansky

In assessing the current American–Russian relationship, there are three areas in which, in my opinion, the Administration has not undertaken sufficient or appropriate action. The first two concern our relations with Russia and include the following: failure to combat or even counter rampant anti-Americanism emanating from Russia and the inability to develop active, appropriate relationships with emerging Russian democratic leaders. On the domestic front, the Administration also conspicuously proved unable to forge a bipartisan public consensus on the strategic importance of our relationship with Russia and the need to sustain targeted U.S. democratic assistance.

Let's consider each of these in turn.

Combating Anti-Americanism

Even a casual perusal of the Russian media evidences a profoundly disturbing phenomenon: Russian commentators, of whatever stripe, are hostile to American goals and policies. This criticism is not limited only to the hard-line, pro-communist newspapers. Both the reformist as well as the pro-government newspapers and magazines have been doing the same thing.

Significantly, the criticism is broad in nature. In addition, to complaining about Washington's poli-

cies on NATO enlargement, Iran, Iraq, Israel, the former Yugoslavia, etc., the Russian commentators routinely grouse about the unipolar nature of the existing international system, cite the evils of American hegemonism, and muse about the need to create offsetting power centers such as an anti-American alliance comprised of such powers as Russia, Germany, France, China, and Japan.

Most Administration officials have ignored this problem, some remembering that the Soviet newspapers were also full of such anti-American diatribes and some thinking that such rhetoric does not really matter. Others have blamed our actions for this backlash. For example, it was reported in *The Washington Times* that in early January, U.S. Ambassador to Russia James Collins blamed U.S. congressional efforts to influence Russian policy for fostering an anti-American backlash.

This is wrong. The commentaries should not be ignored—they do matter, and they are not prompted by congressional actions. While Russia is evolving along its democratic path, public opinion—especially elite opinion—matters a great deal. In fact, I believe that it can be said that there has never been a time in our bilateral relations when public diplomacy mattered more. The fact that most Russian opinion-makers appear to hate the current international arrangements and view the U.S. as Russia's enemy is very unsettling and has long-term negative implications for Russia's foreign policy.

The Administration needs to deal effectively with this problem. They need not only to address these allegations, but in some cases to counter and protest, especially when statements are made officially by the Russian government. We now have access in Russia to newspapers, radio, TV, and academic audiences and institutions. Consequently, we should use these outlets to rebut and combat Moscow's anti-Americanism and make cogent presentations through op-eds, speeches, and TV and radio appearances. I believe that, over time, convincing arguments made by American officials could make a difference.

Developing Relations with Russia's Emerging Democratic Leaders

While some progress in this area has been made, we have not taken full advantage of numerous opportunities to bolster the growth and institutionalization of democracy in Russia and to forge better ties with Russia's democratic leaders. For example, our routine contacts and assistance have been limited to a relatively small number of senior Moscow-based officials. Not enough has been done at the local and regional level, despite numerous opportunities to forge strong ties between American local and state governments and their Russian counterparts. The federal government can and should be a catalyst for such efforts.

Meanwhile, U.S. assistance programs to Russia, including those that have been properly targeted to assist in democratization and economic reform efforts, have been plagued by international bureaucratic warfare, poor coordination, and mismanagement. While some of the horror stories about the misuse of American aid and resources being wasted may be exaggerated, it is nevertheless highly significant that almost all of the Russian political leaders, across the entire political spectrum, are highly critical about the way in which American aid is being delivered. This stands in notable contrast with the way in which the Marshall Plan was perceived by its recipients.

Forging Bipartisan Public Consensus in the United States

Our relationship with Russia matters. The Administration has not forged a bipartisan public consensus about the strategic importance of the U.S.–Russia relationship and the need to provide sustained targeted assistance, thereby holding hostage to the vicissitudes of executive-congressional relations a variety of needed programs.

First, we need to articulate an intellectually compelling explanation of the strategic importance of our relations. Russia remains a key player in Europe and, as its economy and political stability improve, is likely to become even more influential. Also, Russia's democratic path matters to us and to the future of Europe. What happens there will ultimately have

political, economic, and security consequences for its neighbors and us. Consequently, what ought to be done now is to lay a solid foundation for a constructive relationship with Russia for decades to come.

Another point that I believe would resonate with the American public is that, given its nuclear arsenal, Russia remains the only military power capable of inflicting devastation on the American homeland.

Second, what is also needed is a realistic articulation of what levels of cooperation between Russia and the United States on various issues are conceivable, avoiding the two commonly seen extremes: undue euphoria about the Russian–American partnership and the knee-jerk pessimism which

ascribes the worst possible motives to every Moscow move or action.

What can be done? Russia-related themes, as defined above, should be more prominently featured in a variety of Administration statements, ranging from the State of the Union to major foreign policy speeches. Secretary Albright has already been making various addresses across the United States. These have been well-received and are helpful in better understanding current U.S. policy. However, I would recommend that the Administration devise a public diplomacy strategy with the goal of communicating to the American public our policy goals.

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PANEL I

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY TODAY: THE PRIMAKOV CHALLENGE

REFLECTIONS ON RUSSIA AND NATO ENLARGEMENT

By Stephen Blank

As NATO's enlargement is the crucial foreign policy issue facing Congress in 1998, it arouses much debate. Many attacks on enlargement focus on its impact upon Russia. Russia calls enlargement an unacceptable threat to its national security and vital interests and a vote of no confidence in its democratic prospects and acceptance of the status quo.¹ NATO enlargement also allegedly isolates Russia from Europe's most vital security system, divides Europe against Russia, disregards Russia's legitimate and vital interests, illustrates the West's unconcern for Russia and refusal to make Russia an equal partner with the United States and the West, and constitutes an existential potential threat given its overwhelming military superiority.

But there has been virtually no formal analysis of Russia's policy and goals toward Europe. U.S. official and unofficial assessments of Russian policy have ignored Moscow's proposals on European security as not meriting any sustained analysis.

Although NATO enlargement has united all of Russia's feuding elites against it, one searches in vain for the Administration's strategic analysis of Russian policy. All we hear is the reformer-reactionary dichotomy, falsely invoking President Boris

Yeltsin as a great democrat and asserting that Russia remains our democratic partner.

Actually, as Ambassador Stephen Sestanovich wrote before his confirmation, "On balance, there have been few signs that U.S. policy is shaped by calculations of any kind about Russian power—present or future, global or regional, nuclear or conventional."² He further writes that, while Warsaw and Prague openly distrust Moscow, Washington acted out of motives having little connection with Russian policy, democratization, restraint of Germany, concern for NATO's future, and prevention of future Bosnias.³

This essay presents such an analysis of Russia's NATO policy, mainly through the words of Russian leaders and leading political analysts. However, our analysis suggests that enlargement is, sadly, a richly deserved vote of no confidence.

Russian Policy in Europe

Russia's charge that enlargement in itself constitutes a permanent danger that can evolve into a future threat reflects the consistent militarization of Russian strategic thinking and the ubiquitous resort to militarized worst-case scenarios in defense and policy planning.

1. See the new National Security Blueprint, Moscow, *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, in Russian, December 26, 1997, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Eurasia (FBIS-SOV)* 97-364, December 30, 1997.
2. Stephen Sestanovich, "Why the United States Has No Russia Policy," in Robert J. Lieber, ed., *Eagle Adrift: American Foreign Policy at the End of the Century* (New York: Longman, 1997), p. 166.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

Russian military thinking has retained the Soviet "us vs. them" approach and the most sterile forms of correlation-of-forces theory.⁴ This militarized view of world politics and defense requirements inhibits Russia's desperately needed military reform. Russia still sees security mainly in military and zero-sum game terms where Russia must be an equal and opposing pole of the United States.⁵ Accordingly, Russia did not lose the Cold War and remains a great global power by virtue of its potential. Hence, it deserves a seat at all "presidium tables" of world politics, despite its manifold weaknesses.⁶ Moreover, Moscow holds that the West owes it something.

This combined militarized and entitlement mentality is not confined to the armed forces, nor do all military men promote it. But it is linked to and aggravates the fundamental structural defects of Russian policy by inhibiting a reconsideration of security policy and domestic reform. Adherents of this outlook demand equality with the United States in all political issues and great-power preferences and compensations equal to those of the United States.⁷

Russian threat assessments and military procurements from 1991–1997 stressed the threat of a war with the United States and its allies even as Russia demanded equality with the United States.⁸ Likewise, the 1997 national security blueprint perceives threats everywhere.⁹ The armed forces naturally tried to retain the maximum number of traditional strategic roles and missions, giving only lip service to new realities.

Alexei Arbatov noted that Russian armed forces' military requirements were still driven by contingency planning for major war with the United States, its NATO allies, or Japan. Therefore, he charged that "nothing has really changed in the fundamental military approaches to contingency planning." The military's interest in self-preservation, not threat analysis determining the true needs of the armed forces, drove its threat assessment, force structure, and deployment policy.¹⁰

Recent threat assessments openly accuse NATO of planning military aggression against Russia through enlargement. For example,

A number of political scientists are of the opinion that there can be seen

4. Major General Anatoly V. Bolyatko (Ret.), "Russian National Security Strategy and Its Implications for East Asian Security," in Stephen J. Blank, ed., *Russian Security Policy in the Asia-Pacific Region: Two Views* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1996), p. 34.
5. Daniel Williams, "Putting Russia Back on the Map," *Washington Post Weekly Edition*, February 2, 1998, pp. 14–15.
6. E-mail letter from Darrell Hammer, Johnson's Russia List, February 5, 1997; Dmitry Trenin, "Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy: NATO Expansion Can Have Negative Consequences for the West," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, February 5, 1997; J. Michael Waller, "Primakov's Imperial Line," *Perspective*, Vol. VII, No. 3 (January–February 1997), pp. 2–6; "Primakov, Setting a New, Tougher Foreign Policy," *Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. XLIX, No. 2 (February 12, 1997), pp. 4–7.
7. *Ibid.* and Williams, "Putting Russia Back on the Map," *op. cit.*
8. Stephen J. Blank, *Why Russian Policy Is Failing in Asia* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1997), pp. 27–34.
9. *FBIS-SOV*, December 30, 1997.
10. Alexei Arbatov, "Russian Air Strategy and Combat Aircraft Production: A Russian View," in Randall Forsberg, ed., *The Arms Production Dilemma: Contraction and Restraint in the World Combat Arms Industry*, CSIA Studies in International Security No. 7 (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 49–60.

in relations between the West [note: not just the United States, but the West as a whole] a “slow creeping into a semblance of standoff which threatens serious losses both for international security and security of individual countries, and for Russia.” It is caused by a whole number of factors. First, there is the apparent incompatibility of Russia’s and the United States’ current potentialities on the world scene which makes the prospects of their relations on a parity basis illusory [and] for which reason Russia is hardly going to settle for the role of junior partner.¹¹

If deterrence fails, Moscow must protect “sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the other permanent vital interests of the country.” However, pursuit of a security policy based on rivalry and equality with the United States and the West that states, “As before, the most important is readiness to carry out the tasks of deterrence on all azimuths” must presage another disaster for Russia.¹²

German defense analyst Reiner Huber observed that Russian models of offense and defense in Europe are based on frankly paranoid calculations that Russia, to feel secure in Europe, requires a potential successful defense of at least 90 percent if NATO attacks in a purely conventional war—and this excludes Russia’s nuclear retaliatory capability.¹³ Huber rightly observes that

This underscores the deep mistrust still prevailing in Russia vis-à-vis NATO and the United States. For

example, if we were to assume that the success of defense is equivalent to the failure of aggression, the defense sufficiency principle suggests that the Russians believe NATO will attack even if the chances of success were only about 10 percent. Obviously NATO and the United States are perceived as being quite reckless.¹⁴

Yet the economic, war-planning, and political requirements that flow from this paranoia and demand for absolute security at everyone else’s expense are plainly unsustainable. Efforts to obtain security on this basis will destroy the foundations of Russian military and economic power. Obviously, this discrepancy between strategic ends and means could lead to a disaster that could engulf all of Eurasia.

From the Military to the Political in Russian Policy

The failure to demilitarize the political process and the environment within which security policy is formulated and executed has had a decisive and lasting significance for foreign policy. Perhaps the deepest source of Russian objections to NATO enlargement and NATO’s superior power is that enlargement thwarts Russia’s and other states’ dream of a unilateral hegemony in Europe. Moscow’s imperial project reflects and is bound up with a revival of traditional modes of thinking and acting in foreign policy that graphically illuminates the failure to make or consummate a revolutionary break with the past. And Europe has duly noted that failure.

11. Major General A. F. Klimenko, “Mezhdunarodnaya Bezopasnost’ i Kharakter Voennykh Konfliktov Budushchego,” *Voen-naya Mysl’*, No. 1, 1997, p. 6.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10.

13. Reiner Huber, “NATO Enlargement and CFE Ceilings,” *European Security*, Vol. V, No. 3 (Autumn 1996), pp. 396–402.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 400.

Sensitive Russian observers like Vladimir Lukin and Alexei Arbatov know and state that a profound connection exists between the extent of Russia's stabilization and democratization and the fervor for NATO expansion.¹⁵ To the extent that the former fails, the latter grows, as has happened since 1993. And the revival of the militarized tradition in security policy betokens the failure to break through to a truly democratic, non-imperial ethos.

Nowhere is this more visible than in the failure to institute effective civilian, democratic controls over the armed forces. As a result of this failure, during the crucial years of 1992–1994 Russia undid Moldova's integrity, launched coups in Azerbaijan, dismembered Georgia and allowed Abkhazia to break away, transferred billions of dollars to Armenia in violation of its own Tashkent Collective Security treaty with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), invaded Chechnya despite signing Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) declarations prohibiting such activities five days earlier, failed to democratize control over the military, and waged intermittent economic warfare against the CIS's other members, especially in energy policy. The absence of control over the military and the willingness to defy Europe in pursuit of diminished sovereignty for the CIS bespeak Russia's failed democratic transition.

In short, Russia demands in military terms a sphere of influence, mainly in the guise of peace operations (though the Russian form of such operations hardly resembles Western concepts), and resists the legitimacy of effective and independent involvement of European security organizations in the CIS.¹⁶

The absence of effective civilian control and the quest for a privileged sphere and status go to the heart of the political issues connected with NATO enlargement. They set Russia apart from all of NATO's current and aspiring members because Russia's policies negate democracy as an important factor in international affairs. The expansion of a security community of peace based on mutual interests and democratic values remains a cornerstone of Western foreign policy because democracy among NATO's members and NATO's integrated political–military structure restrain members' and non-members' potential unilateralism in security policy.

NATO presents this internal harmony of interests among its members because it has formed a true security community where war among the members and purely unilateral national security policies are inconceivable. NATO's integrated military–political structure subjects current and future members to a rigorous international system of civilian democratic control concerning the use of armed forces at home and abroad.¹⁷

NATO's 1995 *Study on Enlargement* buttressed this democratic form of control by demanding it as a precondition of membership, and the OSCE's 1994 Code of Conduct also outlined a politically binding European agenda for such controls. NATO here staked its claim to democratize and internationalize controls over governments' defense and security policies.¹⁸ Everyone undergoes a legitimate democratic process of mutual restraint and thereby becomes more secure. By flaunting its defiance of those principles, Russia excludes or isolates itself from that community and forces all of its neighbors

15. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Moscow, in Russian, March 14, 1995, FBIS–SOV–95–053, March 20, 1995, pp. 5–7; *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, Moscow, in Russian, July–September 1994, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Central Eurasia (FBIS–USR)*, FBIS Report 94–129, November 29, 1994, p. 48.
16. John Borawski, "If Not NATO Enlargement: What Does Russia Want?," *European Security*, Vol. V, No. 3 (Autumn 1996), pp. 381–395; Lena Jonson, "In Search of a Doctrine: Russian Interventionism in Conflicts in the 'Near Abroad,'" *Low Intensity Conflict and Law Enforcement*, Vol. V, No. 3 (Winter 1996), pp. 440–465.
17. General Klaus Naumann, "NATO Is Changing," *Central European Issues: Romanian Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. III, No. 1 (1997), pp. 18–28.
18. *NATO Study on Enlargement*, NATO Internet, Brussels, September 28, 1995.

and interested partners to retain a hedge against its recidivism.

Moscow's failure to maximize its participation in the Partnership for Peace (PFP) process and learn NATO's modus operandi in a deep and long-lasting way symbolizes and signifies its attachment to an unbridled military unilateralism and to a deliberate, even willful refusal to accept NATO's true defensive character. Much Russian writing on NATO irresponsibly and willfully distorts what NATO is all about, as well as its post-Cold War record of disarmament and political-military transformation, even though some officers fully understand the reality.¹⁹ As three Russian military officers write, NATO is

Effectively the sole organization capable of generalizing international peacekeeping experience gathered by other countries. Use of its structures enables it to operate anonymously and to avoid the risk of awakening in states that are parties to conflicts fears regarding an upsurge in expansionist sentiments in one influential member of the international community or another.²⁰

Even analysts like Sergei Karaganov conceded that Yugoslavia's wars and the vacuum created thereby are legitimate reasons to expand NATO.²¹

Russia's demands for a privileged sphere of influence in its own "backyard" is unacceptable. This sphere cannot be maintained except through war and Russia's own ruination, because the CIS members will not accept what is clearly an unenforceable and illegitimate hegemony. Thus, Europe has

no option but to unite against Russia's exorbitant claims. Hence, Russian moves to integrate the CIS in economics, politics, culture, and defense from above invariably weaken Eurasian security and reinforce anti-democratic tendencies and the structural militarization of Russian policies and institutions. An imperial restoration is the single greatest threat to peace in Europe and Russia because Russia cannot afford that temptation, though it still chases after it. As former Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev noted, weakening NATO serves only those who wish for empire and autocracy.²²

Finally, the notion that Russia is a status quo partner which opposes NATO due to a merely psychological atavism that therapy by inclusion in the new Permanent Joint Council with NATO will mollify is not well-founded either. Russia is neither a stable nor a satisfied power. In September 1996, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov told the OSCE that

Today, the balance of forces resulting from the confrontation of the two blocs no longer exists, but the Helsinki agreements are not being fully applied. After the end of the Cold War certain countries in Europe—the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia—have disintegrated. A number of new states were formed in this space, but their borders are neither fixed nor guaranteed by the Helsinki agreements. Under the circumstances, there is a need for the establishment of a new system of security.²³

19. Valery N. Gorokhov and Dmitri Ye. Gorovtsov, "NATO Expansion: A View from the State Duma," *Demokratizatsiia*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (Winter 1998), pp. 65–77.

20. A. S. Skvortsov, N. P. Klokov, N. I. Turko, "Ispol'zovanie Geopoliticheskikh Faktorov v Interesakh Resheniia Zadach Natsional'no-Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti," *Voennaya Mysl'*, No. 2, March–April 1995, p. 22.

21. *Segodnya*, Moscow, in Russian, August 26, 1994, *FBIS–USR–94–099*, September 12, 1994, pp. 48–49.

22. Andrei V. Kozyrev, "NATO Is Not Our Enemy," *Newsweek*, February 10, 1997, p. 31.

23. *Address by Y. M. Primakov to the OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna, September 20, 1996*, p. 2; transcript made available by Embassy of the Russian Federation to the United States.

Surely this revisionism alone suffices to alarm every Russian neighbor and justify their search for NATO membership, as well as NATO's own decision to enlarge itself. Yet while Moscow cannot afford this policy of neo-imperial reintegration, it persists in it. One reason for persisting in this folly is to prevent disaffected groups from seceding from Russia, a classic 19th century imperialistic rationale.²⁴

Since Moscow still harbors neo-imperial and hegemonic goals in the CIS and vis-à-vis its neighbors, NATO's enlargement rules out an imperial or hegemonic restoration and extends the indivisible trans-Atlantic security community. This explains both Central European support for it and Russian opposition. Russia fears that NATO may act unilaterally against even Russia's vital interests (for example, the Balkans or the CIS). Therefore, two vital and traditional goals—obtaining a prior veto over NATO's activities and a free hand in the CIS—have dominated Russian policy.

Lying at the source of this policy is the ingrained belief in Russian *Derzhavnost'*: the mystique of great power and the ideological penumbra surrounding this mystique. Russia, a state "foredoomed" to being a great power, allegedly cannot have security without hegemony and other states' lack of that security. Otherwise, it might then count for nothing or fall apart altogether. And hegemony is objectively needed because these new states cannot govern themselves and will then inevitably become a threat to Russia or an outpost of hostile, mainly Western powers. They are, *a priori*, hostile to Russia because

that is the nature of international politics, which revolves around Russia's place in the world. This viewpoint extends the Soviet viewpoint of ingrained bloc hostility and Russocentrism—the foundation stones of Soviet foreign policy.²⁵

Much Russian policy follows these precepts. President Boris Yeltsin and his officials still see NATO as an adversary. The new "patriotic consensus" clearly has rallied around a hard-boiled interpretation of international affairs that sees the West and Atlanticism as constituting a threat to Russia and a unique Russian or third way in world politics. Thus, anti-Americanism seems to dominate the current discourse in Moscow. In line with this mentality, despite the supposed absence of military threats, Defense Minister Igor Sergeev recently claimed that NATO's enlargement was the greatest threat facing Russia.²⁶ And Primakov states that Russia opposes NATO enlargement in principle, despite whatever arguments are made for it.²⁷

Russia's Agenda

Because the mystique of *Derzhavnost'* befores its vision, Moscow pursues policies it cannot sustain and forfeits opportunities to enhance its position in Europe. Russia has shunned a real dialogue with Central and Eastern Europe on regional security.²⁸ Instead, Russia steadfastly argues for a great-power deal and regional hegemony, cutting out the smaller states, and acts accordingly—exactly what it rails about NATO doing to it.²⁹

24. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, in Russian, September 23, 1995, FBIS-SOV-95-188, September 28, 1995, pp. 19-22.

25. Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question* (New York: International Publishers, 1942), pp. 76-77.

26. Gerhard Simon, "Russia's Identity and International Politics," *Aussenpolitik, English Language Edition*, No. 3, 1997, pp. 245-256; *Interfax*, Minsk, December 19, 1997, from *Johnson's Russia List*, davidjohnson@erols.com, December 19, 1997.

27. ABC, Madrid, in Spanish, May 4, 1997, FBIS-SOV-97-087, May 4, 1997.

28. Valery Ratchev, "Bulgaria and the Future of European Security," and Laszlo Valki, "Hungary and the Future of European Security," papers presented to the SSI-ROA Conference on Eurasian Security in the Era of NATO Enlargement, Prague, August 4-5, 1997; Stefan Pavlov, "Bulgaria in a Vise," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January-February 1998, pp. 28-31; *Izvestiya*, Moscow, in Russian, June 19, 1997, FBIS-SOV-97-169, June 18, 1997.

29. Monika Wohlfeld, "A Survey of Strategic Interests of the Countries of the European Security Space," in Guido Lenzi and Laurence Martin, eds., *The European Security Space, Working Papers by the European Strategy Groups and the Institute for Security Studies of Western European Union* (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, Western European Union, 1996), p. 12.

Although Russia cannot have a free hand in the CIS and restraints on NATO's enlargement, it seeks an undeserved great-power status in Europe but no responsibility for creating a durable European order. As Sergei Rogov, the influential director of the USA–Canada Institute (ISKAN) and advisor to the government, has written,

First of all, Moscow should seek to preserve the special character of Russian–American relations. Washington should recognize the exceptional status of the Russian Federation in the formation of a new system of international relations, a role different from that which Germany, Japan, or China or any other center of power plays in the global arena.³⁰

Elsewhere, Rogov has written that “The Russian Federation is unwilling to consent to bear the geopolitical burden of the defeat of the Soviet Union in the cold war or to be reconciled with an unequal position in the new European order.”³¹

This demand for an exceptional status fully conforms to the mystique of *Derzhavnost'*. From a government that is essentially a ward of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and which lost the Cold War, these demands are not only undeserved, unacceptable to Europe, and fantastic, but worse, are also unrealizable. As Talleyrand would have said, it is worse than a crime; it is a blunder.

Policy is now based on the premise that Russia must be seen as a great power equal to the United

States based on its potential, not its real power, which is steadily declining both absolutely and relatively.³² In fact, Russia, since enlargement first became an issue in 1993, has demanded an unequal role in European security.

That Russian power in all these areas is declining or becoming more irrelevant to the modern world while the government dithers and becomes less relevant to international issues eludes virtually all those involved in foreign policy. Russian invocations of multipolarity serve more to gain status or inhibit solutions than to assume responsibility or offer a positive agenda for multilateral action abroad.³³ And, obviously, in this relationship the security interests of smaller states will be an afterthought. As Yeltsin wrote to the major European governments and the United States in 1993,

On the whole, we are of the opinion that the relations between our country and NATO should be several degrees warmer than the relations between the alliance and Eastern Europe. The rapprochement between NATO and Russia, including the direct cooperation in advancing peace, could progress at much quicker pace. It would be possible to include the East Europeans in this process.³⁴

Tragically, Russia still pursues objectives and policies in Europe that its power does not merit, that are unsustainable, and which ultimately endanger its own security.

30. Sergey M. Rogov, “Russia and NATO's Enlargement: The Search for a Compromise at the Helsinki Summit,” Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Va., CIM 513, May 1997, p. 10.

31. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Moscow, in Russian, September 28, 1996, FBIS–SOV–96–211–S, September 28, 1996.

32. Trenin, “Transformation of Russian Foreign Policy”; Waller, “Primakov's Imperial Line”; *Trud*, Moscow, in Russian, June 25, 1996, FBIS–SOV–96–124, June 26, 1996, pp. 18–19.

33. Robert Legvold, “The ‘Russian Question’,” in Vladimir Baranovsky, ed., *Russia and Europe: The Emerging Security Agenda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1997), p. 69.

34. *Mlada Fronta Dnes*, Prague, in Czech, December 2, 1993, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Eastern Europe* (FBIS–EEU) 93–231, December 3, 1993, p. 6.

Russia seeks equality with the United States at the expense of all other states, an exclusive unchallenged sphere in the CIS, and the demilitarization of Central and Eastern Europe so that the great powers alone could later revise their status. It aspires to revise regional borders and still seeks to assign the Central and East European states, not to mention the CIS, a diminished sovereignty and legitimacy.

While it may not be politic to ask this question publicly, analysts and policymakers should at least

ponder it in private: Given these official outlooks and goals, is suspending NATO enlargement lest Russia be upset truly in America's, Europe's, or even Russia's true interests?

Does a state with such policies deserve a vote of confidence?

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PRIMAKOV AND THE MIDDLE EAST

By Robert O. Freedman

When he became Russia's foreign minister in January 1996, Yevgeny Primakov, an old Soviet Middle East specialist, was expected to put his personal imprint on Russian policy toward the Middle East, as well as do a better job in coordinating Russian foreign policy than his predecessor, Andrei Kozyrev, had done. After two years in office, it has become clear that Primakov has encountered many of the same problems of coordination Kozyrev faced, and his policy in the Middle East has closely resembled that of his predecessor,³⁶ with the exception of Russian policy toward the Arab–Israeli conflict, which has acquired a special flavor under Primakov.

To understand contemporary Russian foreign policy, it is first necessary to analyze the various elite factions that influence Russian foreign policy-making—factions that neither Kozyrev nor Primakov has been able to control. The first element to take into consideration is the Russian legislature, particularly the lower house, or Duma. Within the Duma are three major factions:

- The “Atlanticists,” who have supported a pro-American foreign policy (except on the issue of

NATO expansion), as well as rapid economic reform and a policy of cooperation with the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union (FSU);

- The “Eurasianists,” who advocate a balanced Russian foreign policy (east, west, and south) and a position of superiority vis-à-vis the states of the FSU as well as slower economic reform; and
- The grouping on the right of Russia's political spectrum of ultra-nationalists and old-line communists who, although they disagree on economic policy, are strongly anti-American and advocate a position of domination over the states of the FSU.

During the period that Kozyrev was Russian foreign minister, the Duma moved further and further to the right. Indeed, Primakov, known for his anti-American policies, was appointed foreign minister in January 1996 in large part as Yeltsin's reaction to the sharply rightward turn of the Duma after the December 1995 elections. In many ways, Primakov,

35. The views expressed here do not in any way represent those of the U.S. Army, the U.S. Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

36. For an analysis of Russian policy toward the Middle East under Kozyrev, see Robert O. Freedman, “Moscow and the Middle East Under Yeltsin,” in Robert O. Freedman, ed., *The Middle East and the Peace Process* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1998).

who opposes U.S. hegemony in the world and advocates a major role for Russia in world affairs, became Yeltsin's ambassador to the Duma, where he is well-liked. Nonetheless, Yeltsin still had to contend with a Duma where the balance of power had tipped toward the hard-line factions, and this clearly affected his foreign policy.

Within the executive branch of the Russian government, by the time Primakov had become foreign minister, there were a number of quasi-independent actors. In addition to the Foreign Ministry, there were:

- The energy companies, especially Lukoil and Gazprom, which were closely linked to Prime Minister Chernomyrdin and which openly contradicted Kozyrev's policy on developing Caspian Sea oil;³⁷
- Business magnates such as Boris Berezovsky and Vladimir Potanin, who have been in and out of government (Berezovsky served as deputy secretary of Russia's National Security Council from October 1996 to November 1997);
- The "Reformers," such as Boris Nemtsov and Anatoly Chubais, who entered the government in March 1997 and were particularly influential in Russian policy toward the FSU (they succeeded in watering down the Primakov-promoted Russian-Belarus unification plan) until their weakening in the fall of 1997;
- Rosvooruzheniye, the Russian arms sales agency, which seemed ready to sell arms to anybody;
- The Ministry of Defense, which was initially very active in Russian policy toward Transcaucasia and Tajikistan but has been weakened over the last few years because of the rapid changeover of defense ministers;
- The Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations; and

- The Ministry of Atomic Energy.

To achieve a modicum of cohesion in Russian foreign policy, it is necessary for Primakov, as it was for Kozyrev, to line up as many as possible of these quasi-independent actors, as well as the Duma, in favor of a particular policy. In the case of Russian policy toward Iran and Iraq, both Kozyrev and Primakov achieved a modicum of cohesion; in the case of Russian policy toward Turkey, the contradictions that existed during Kozyrev's era have been exacerbated under Primakov; and finally, in the case of Russian-Israeli relations, the once warm diplomatic relations of the Kozyrev era have become badly strained under Primakov, although cultural, economic, and even military cooperation has increased.

Finally, when he took office, Primakov had to face the fact that Russia, which was losing its war in Chechnya, was a very weak state and he was conducting foreign policy from a very weak base.

Russia and Iraq

Russian policy toward Iraq had started to shift away from strong support of the U.S. position as early as January 1993 when Yeltsin, under fire from nationalists and communists in the Duma, moved from a policy of actively supporting the anti-Iraqi embargo to criticizing the renewed U.S. bombing of Iraq. By 1994, the Russian government began to call for the lifting of sanctions, although Yeltsin was unwilling to do so unilaterally for fear of destroying the U.S.-Russian relationship, despite the fact that the Duma regularly voted for the lifting of sanctions. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz became a visitor to Moscow even before Primakov took office, and Kozyrev sought to defuse a major crisis precipitated by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein in 1994 (albeit without success), much as Primakov was to try to do in 1997 and 1998.

By the time Primakov became Russia's foreign minister, it was clear that Yeltsin had three major interests in developing Russia's relationship with

37. See Robert O. Freedman, "Russian Policy Making and Caspian Sea Oil," *Analysis of Current Events*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (February 1997), pp. 6-7.

Iraq. First, through international diplomatic activity, to demonstrate both to the world and to a hostile Duma that Russia was still an important factor in the world, despite its weakened condition, and was both willing and able to oppose the U.S. Indeed, as Andrei Piontkowski of the Center for Strategic Studies in Moscow stated during the 1997 Iraqi crisis, "For 30 years we were a superpower equal to the United States. Now the political elite is in a difficult period, feeling diminished, and compensates at least by standing up to the U.S. on minor issues."³⁸

The second interest Yeltsin's Russia has in Iraq is in regaining the \$7 billion which Iraq owes to Russia, something that cannot be achieved until sanctions against Iraq are lifted. The third interest in Iraq is in acquiring contracts for Russian factories, oil and gas companies, although the actual activities of these companies also cannot begin until sanctions are lifted.

To spur the Russians to greater efforts to lift the sanctions, Saddam Hussein has cleverly dangled major contracts before influential Russian companies, such as Lukoil, which was part of a multibillion-dollar agreement to develop the West Kurna oil field. The deal, reminiscent of the oil concessions when Iraq was a colony of Britain, enabled Lukoil to keep 75 percent of the profit and also freed the company from paying Iraqi taxes.³⁹ Given the nature of this "sweetheart deal," Lukoil has become a major factor in the "Iraqi lobby," pushing for the lifting of sanctions. In addition, even before sanctions are lifted, Russia had become the major purchaser of Iraqi oil under the UN-approved oil-for-food agreement, and committed itself to purchasing 36.7 million barrels in 1997.⁴⁰

Given these interests, Primakov's behavior in the October–November 1997 Iraqi crisis is perfectly

understandable. Following the expulsion of U.S. weapons inspectors and the departure of the other inspectors, Primakov, with dramatic flair, called U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright back from her visit to India; met with her and other members of the U.N. Security Council at 2 a.m. in Geneva, Switzerland; and got their agreement to a deal whereby all the weapons inspectors, including the Americans, were allowed to return to Iraq in return for a vague promise to work for the lifting of sanctions.

While Saddam immediately began backtracking on the agreement reached with Primakov by prohibiting inspections of his palaces and other sites where chemical and bacteriological activities were suspected, thus precipitating a new crisis several months later, for the moment at least, Primakov and Yeltsin could bask in international acclaim for averting a U.S. attack on Iraq. As Aleksei Pushkov noted in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, "The denouement—perhaps a temporary one—of the latest crisis involving Iraq that was achieved by Primakov demonstrated the ability that Russia still has to influence world affairs, even in its current very weakened state."⁴¹

Yet, with all the diplomatic attention, Russia was very far from getting the sanctions lifted, although Primakov had succeeded, for the time being at least, in demonstrating that Russia was still a factor in world affairs. Should subsequent Russian diplomatic efforts fail to prevent a future U.S. attack, however, Primakov's diplomatic achievement—which in any case was made possible by U.S. willingness to make every diplomatic effort possible before an attack was made—may well pale into insignificance.

38. Cited in Charles Trueheart and David Hoffman, "France and Russia Differ from U.S. in Agendas on Iraq," *The Washington Post*, November 13, 1997.

39. Cited in Alexander Tutushkin, "Russia's Oil Companies Stake Out Iraqi Oil Fields," *Kommersant-Daily*, March 26, 1997; translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press (CDSP)*, Vol. 49, No. 12 (1997), p. 19.

40. Cited in Daniel Pearl, "Saddam's Deals Undermine U.S. Position," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 26, 1997.

41. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, November 28, 1997; translated in *CDSP*, Vol. 49, No. 48 (1997), p. 11.

Russia and Iran

The rapid development of Russian–Iranian relations has its origins in the latter part of the Gorbachev era. After alternately supporting first Iran and then Iraq during the Iran–Iraq war, by July 1987 Gorbachev had clearly tilted toward Iran.

The relationship between the two countries was solidified in June 1989 with Hashemi Rafsanjani's visit to Moscow, where a number of major agreements, including one on military cooperation, were signed. The military agreement permitted Iran to purchase highly sophisticated military aircraft from Moscow, including MiG-29s and Su-24s. At a time when its own air force had been badly eroded by the eight-year-long Iran–Iraq war and by the refusal of the United States to supply spare parts, let alone new planes to replace losses in the F-14s and other aircraft which the United States had sold to the Shah's regime, the Soviet military equipment was badly needed.

Iran's military dependence on Moscow grew as a result of the 1990–1991 Gulf War. Not only did the United States, Iran's primary enemy, become the primary military power in the Gulf, with defensive agreements with a number of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states—which included prepositioning arrangements for U.S. military equipment—but Saudi Arabia, Iran's most important Islamic challenger, acquired massive amounts of U.S. weaponry.

Given Iran's need for sophisticated arms, the pragmatic Iranian leader Hashemi Rafsanjani was careful not to alienate either the Soviet Union or Russia. Thus, when Azerbaijan declared its independence from the Soviet Union in November 1991, Iran, unlike Turkey, did not recognize its independence until after the USSR collapsed. Similarly, despite occasional rhetoric from Iranian officials, Rafsanjani ensured that Iran kept a relatively low profile in Azerbaijan and the newly independent states of Central Asia, emphasizing cultural and economic ties rather than Islam as the centerpiece of their relations.

This was due in part to the fact that, after more than 70 years of Soviet rule, Islam was in a weak

state in the countries of the former Soviet Union. The leaders of the Muslim successor states were all secular Muslims, and the chances for an Iranian-style Islamic revolution were very low. Indeed, some skeptics argued that Iran was simply waiting for mosques to be built and Islam to mature before trying to bring about Islamic revolutions.

Nonetheless, the Russian leadership basically saw Iran as acting very responsibly in Central Asia and Transcaucasia, and this was one of the factors which encouraged Russia to continue supplying Iran with modern weaponry—including submarines—despite strong protests from the United States.

During Kozyrev's period as Russia's foreign minister, Russian–Iranian relations rapidly developed. Not only was Russia selling Iran arms, but also nuclear reactors and other industrial equipment. Yet economic gain was only one of Russia's many interests in Iran. As in the case of Russian–Iraqi relations, Yeltsin could use the close Russian–Iranian relationship to demonstrate to the nationalists in his Duma that he was independent of the USA.

Oil and natural gas development was a third major Russian interest in Iran. Again, despite U.S. objections, in 1997 Gazprom signed a major agreement with Iran to develop the South Pars gas field.

Finally, a greatly weakened Russia has found Iran a useful ally in dealing with a number of very sensitive Middle Eastern, Caucasian, Transcaucasian, and Central and Southwest Asian political hot spots. These include Chechnya, where Iran kept a very low profile despite the use by the Chechen rebels of Islamic themes in their conflict with Russia; Tajikistan, where Iran helped Russia achieve a political settlement, albeit a shaky one; Afghanistan, where both Russia and Iran have stood together against Taliban efforts to seize control of the country; and Azerbaijan, which neither Iran, with a sizable Azeri population of its own, nor Russia wishes to see emerge as a significant economic and military power.

In addition, as NATO expands eastward, many Russian nationalists call for a closer Russian–Iranian relationship as a counterbalance, especially as

Turkey, seen by many Russians as closely cooperating with its NATO allies, is seeking to expand its influence in both Transcaucasia and Central Asia.

These interests and policies were already in place when Primakov became foreign minister, and he has sought to deepen the relationship. Nonetheless, he has also had to cope with increasing frictions in the Russian–Iranian relationship.

First, in December 1996, then-Russian Defense Minister Igor Rodionov, while Primakov was in Tehran, mentioned Iran as a possible military threat to Russia, given Russia's weakened position.⁴²

Second, because of Iran's own economic problems, it has not had enough hard currency to pay for the weapons and industrial equipment it wants to import from Russia. Indeed, despite predictions of several billions of dollars in trade, Russian–Iranian trade dropped to \$400 million in 1997, less than Russia's trade with Israel.

Third, Russian supplies of missile technology to Iran have caused increasing conflict with the United States (and Israel); and although Russia in late 1997 very publicly expelled an Iranian diplomat for trying to smuggle missile technology,⁴³ the issue has become a serious irritant in Russian–American relations, with particularly sharp criticism of Moscow coming from the U.S. Congress.

Finally, in the past two years, Iran has increasingly thrust itself forth as an alternative export route for Central Asian oil and natural gas. This comes into direct conflict with the efforts of the hard-liners in the Russian government to control the oil and gas exports of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan so as to limit their freedom. While Iran, which remains dependent on Russian exports of military equipment, has sought to defuse this problem by trying to organize tripartite projects with Russia and the Central Asian

states, Iranian availability as an alternate export route remains a major problem for Moscow—one that will become even more severe if there is a rapprochement between the United States and Iran that leads to the termination of U.S. efforts to prevent foreign investments in Iran's oil and natural gas pipeline and well infrastructure.

Russia and Turkey

Unlike Russian–Iranian or even Russian–Iraqi relations where the majority of key Russian foreign policy actors support close relations, thus making first Kozyrev's and then Primakov's stewardship of the relationships a relatively easy task, in the case of Turkey, there are sharp disagreements that continue to hamper Primakov's efforts to manage a coherent policy. On the one hand, Russia has numerous interests in pursuing a good relationship with Turkey.

First, trade between the two countries ranges between \$10 billion and \$12 billion a year, making Turkey Russia's main trading partner in the Middle East. Not only are Turkish construction companies active throughout Russia, even acquiring the contract for the repair of the Duma, damaged by the fighting in 1993, but there is a large flow of Russian tourists to Turkey, especially to Istanbul and Antalya, and Turkish merchants donated \$5 million to Yeltsin's re-election campaign in 1996.⁴⁴

Second, Turkey is a major purchaser of natural gas from Russia, thus giving Gazprom a real incentive to promote Russian–Turkish relations.

Third, Turkey purchases military equipment from Russia, including helicopters that had been embargoed by some NATO countries (including, until recently, the United States) because of concern that they would be used in Turkey's ongoing conflict with its Kurdish minority.

42. See Robert O. Freedman, "Russia and Iran: A Tactical Alliance," *SAIS Review*, Summer 1997, p. 99.

43. See Michael Gordon, "Russians Order Expulsion of Iranian Diplomat as Missile Spy," *The New York Times*, November 18, 1997.

44. Interviews by the author, Istanbul, Ankara, and Antalya, Turkey, June 14–28, 1996, and Dogu Ergil, "Russian Elections and the Future of Turco–Russian Relations," *Turkish Times*, June 23, 1996.

On the other hand, there are also serious problems in the relationship.

First, Turkey is competing for influence with Russia in the FSU, especially in Transcaucasia and Central Asia.

Second, Turkey is pushing an oil export route for Azeri oil that would go through Georgia and Turkey to its Mediterranean port of Ceyhan rather than to the Russian port of Novorossisk via Chechnya. In addition, concerned about the ecological dangers of supertankers going through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, Turkey has limited such traffic, thereby leading Russia to threaten to build an alternate route from the Black Sea through Bulgaria and Turkey's enemy, Greece.

Third, Russia has complained that the Turks were active in aiding the Chechen rebellion and thereby threatened Moscow's control of the North Caucasus.

Given these conflicting interests, it is not surprising that Russian policy toward Turkey has not been a coherent one, and the policy appears to have become even more incoherent since Primakov took power. Indeed, in looking at recent Russian-Turkish relations, it often appears that Russia's right hand doesn't know (or worse, perhaps, doesn't care) what its left hand is doing.

Thus, in January 1997, the Russian arms firm Rosvooruzheniye—which, as mentioned above, had been selling helicopters to Turkey that helped it suppress its Kurdish rebellion even as the Russian Foreign Ministry had been flirting with Kurdish nationalists by allowing formal Kurdish conferences in Moscow—agreed to sell a sophisticated surface-to-air missile system, the SAM-300-PMU-1, to the Greek Cypriot government on the divided island of Cyprus. While the Greek Cypriots claim that the missiles are there only to defend their section of the island against the Turks who occupy the northern section, the 150 km range of the missiles reaches

into southern Turkey, and if deployed would seriously complicate Turkish air maneuverability. Turkey has taken the threat of these missiles so seriously that it is inspecting, on various pretexts, ships going through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles and has warned that it will not allow the missiles to be deployed.

While tensions were rising between Turkey and Russia in the political-military arena, they were improving on the economic front. Gazprom chief Rem Vakhirev told *Itar-Tass* on November 3, 1997, that Gazprom would build a natural gas pipeline under the Black Sea from Russia to Turkey and would increase the supply of gas to Turkey from 3 billion cubic meters per year in the year 2000 to 16 billion cubic meters per year in the year 2010, thus providing Turkey with about half of its expected natural gas needs.⁴⁵

Chernomyrdin came to Turkey in mid-December 1997 to finalize the pipeline deal and also signed a series of other agreements. In an important political agreement, the two countries agreed to abstain from actions likely to harm the economic interests of either of them or to threaten their territorial integrity.⁴⁶ If taken literally, that would mean Russia would not interfere with the construction of the Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey pipeline if that route is selected as the main export route from Azerbaijan, and there have already been rumors that Turkey would hire Russian companies to help build the pipeline to Ceyhan.

Nonetheless, despite the good feelings engendered by the natural gas agreement and the Chernomyrdin visit, there was no movement by the Turks on lifting the limits on tanker traffic through the straits, and despite rumors to the contrary, no promise by Russia to drop the missile sale to Cyprus. Indeed, at the end of January 1998, Primakov stated that Russia intended to honor the deal in the absence of an agreement on the demilitarization

45. Cited in *Gligori@aol.com*, November 12, 1997.

46. Cited in Sanubar Shermatova, "Gas Brings Turkey and Russia Closer," *Moscow News*, No. 51-52, 1997 (December 25, 1997-January 8, 1998), p. 6.

of Cyprus,⁴⁷ something the Turks were very unlikely to agree to.

Clearly, if the missile deal goes through and the Turks make good on their threats to destroy the missiles—possibly killing a number of Russian technicians in the process—a serious blow will be dealt to Russian–Turkish relations. This may well lead to a showdown in the Russian foreign policy establishment, with those favoring improved economic ties with Turkey clashing with those, such as Primakov, who seek the geopolitical advantages of an alignment with Greece against Turkey. Whether Primakov or his policies can survive such a conflict remains to be seen.

Russia and Israel

The Russian–Israeli relationship, like the Russian–Turkish relationship, reflects a conflict between Russian economic interests seeking a good relationship with Israel and Russian hard-liners and geopoliticians who seek benefits for Russia out of the Arab–Israeli conflict. Unlike the case of Russian–Turkish relations, however, the geopolitical advocates did not come to the fore until Primakov, an advocate of close Russian–Arab relations, became foreign minister.

Russia has a number of interests in Israel.

First, on the economic front, there is extensive trade which crossed the \$500 million mark in 1995, making Israel Russia's second leading trade partner in the Middle East after Turkey.

Second, on the diplomatic front, a close relationship to Israel enables Russia to play, or appear to play, a major role in the Arab–Israeli peace process.

Third, with more than 700,000 Russian-speaking Jews now living in Israel, Israel has the largest Russian-speaking diaspora outside the former Soviet Union, and this has led to very significant

ties in the areas of cultural exchange and tourism, including plans for the construction of a Russian house of culture in Jerusalem.

The fourth major interest is a military–technical one as the Russian military–industrial complex has expressed increasing interest in co-producing military aircraft with Israel, especially since many of the workers in Israel's aircraft industry are former citizens of the Soviet Union with experience in the Soviet military–industrial complex.⁴⁸

During Kozyrev's period as Russia's foreign minister, there were relatively few diplomatic–political disputes, although Israel expressed displeasure at Russian arms sales to Iran, which Israel considers an enemy. When disputes between Israel and its Arab neighbors took place, as over Lebanon, Russia under Kozyrev took a very even-handed approach and was a strong supporter of the Oslo I and Oslo II accords and the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan in 1994. However, after Primakov took over as foreign minister, Russia became far more critical of Israeli activities, whether in Lebanon when Shimon Peres was prime minister or toward the Palestinians after Netanyahu took control of the Israeli government.

As the Israeli–Palestinian peace process floundered under Netanyahu, Primakov thrust Russia forward both as a mediator—to gain world recognition for Russia's increased diplomatic role, just as he did during the Iraqi crisis—and also to reduce Arab dependence on the United States, which was perceived by many Arabs as siding too closely with Israel.⁴⁹ The end result was a chilling of Russian–Israeli political relations, despite a rather successful visit by Netanyahu to Moscow in March 1997 during which Israel gave Russia a \$50 million agricultural credit and held a discussion over the expansion of trade and the possible purchase by Israel of Russian natural gas.

47. See Lionel Barber, "Russia Stands by Missile Sale," *Financial Times*, January 28, 1998.

48. For a detailed analysis of the Russian–Israeli relationship, see Robert O. Freedman, "Russian–Israeli Relations Under Yeltsin," *Israel Studies*, forthcoming Spring 1998.

49. Primakov's October 1997 visit to the Middle East is described in detail in the Russian Foreign Ministry publication *Diplomaticheskii Vestnik*, No. 11 (November 1997), pp. 25–28.

Indeed, even though political relations deteriorated (Netanyahu later canceled further discussion of the natural gas deal because of the Russian supply of missile technology to Iran), Russian and Israeli firms signed an agreement to co-produce an AWACS aircraft,⁵⁰ and the Israeli food manufacturer Tnuva filmed a “milk in space” commercial aboard the Russian space station MIR.⁵¹

As in the case of Russia’s relations with Turkey, Russian–Israeli relations may increasingly become a battleground within the Russian foreign policy-making establishment between those interested in good economic and even military–technical relations with Israel and those, like Primakov, seeking political advantages through a closer relationship with the Arabs. During the period that Chubais and Nemtsov were allied with such business magnates as Berezovsky, it appeared that their policies would prevail over those of Primakov. The split between the reformers and Berezovsky during the late summer of 1997, however, seems to have given Primakov more room to maneuver, but the outcome of the struggle over Russian foreign policy-making is still very much in doubt.

Conclusion

This analysis of Russian foreign policy toward the Middle East under Primakov has demonstrated that in many areas, especially in Russia’s relations with Iraq and Iran, Primakov has carried on the policies initiated by his predecessor, Andrei Kozyrev. It has also indicated that Primakov has not fully overcome the problems of coordinating Russian foreign policy that had plagued Kozyrev, given the existence of numerous quasi-independent actors in the Russian foreign policy-making establishment.

While Primakov has succeeded in giving Russia a higher profile on the world stage as a result of his mediation efforts during successive Iraqi crises and as the Arab–Israeli peace process faltered, the looming crisis in Russian–Turkish relations over the sale of missiles to Cyprus and serious divisions in Moscow over relations with Israel not only will challenge the ability of the Russian foreign minister to manage relations with the two countries, but also may determine whether he will succeed in staying in office.

—Robert O. Freedman is president of the Baltimore Hebrew University.

RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY: THE NEW PRAGMATISM

By Angela Stent

Since the collapse of communism, Russian foreign policy has evolved through a series of different stages.

The initial pro-Western agenda pursued by Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev—based on unrealistic expectations about how much the West was prepared to do to assist Russia in its transition—lasted less than a year. Under Kozyrev, relations with the CIS countries were initially neglected because of the difficulty of developing policies that dealt with the former Soviet states as independent countries,

as opposed to republics of the Soviet Union. A significant number of players in the field of foreign policy were unable to accept the end of the Soviet Union and harbored hopes that it could somehow be restored.

By the time Yevgeny Primakov came into office in January 1996, a new consensus on foreign policy had begun to emerge: Russia should continue to pursue closer ties to the West but should also cultivate its relations with China and other Asian countries. It should pursue a much more active

50. See Viktor Belikov and Viktor Litovkin, “Russian Arms Business Will Grow Through the Addition of Israel,” *Izvestia*, June 20, 1997; translated in *CDSF*, Vol. 49, No. 25 (1997), p. 28.

51. Reuters report, *The Washington Post*, August 21, 1997.

relationship with the former Soviet states, and it had a right to reassert its role as a great power.

But Russian foreign policy-making has become more complex. Indeed, talking of “Russian” policies oversimplifies the facts. “Russia” is no longer a single actor, a Communist Party that controls all aspects of foreign policy. Today, there are a multiplicity of actors who have an input into the making of foreign policy, and their interests are not always in harmony. In this sense, Russia is becoming a more “normal” power, in which the interests of the executive, the legislature, and the private sector both coincide and are opposed to each other, and in which foreign policy formulation is a constant process of bargaining between different groups.

In 1997, after Yeltsin’s return to the Kremlin following his long bout with illness, Russian foreign policy became more active and pragmatic, a trend that continues today. The neo-imperial mentality in the traditional ministries—Foreign and Defense—is still battling the more pragmatic and economically driven interests of many of Yeltsin’s own advisors. As Russian foreign policy has become more active, it bears the imprint not only of Primakov, but also of Anatoly Chubais, Boris Nemtsov, and those whose interests lie more in economic integration with the West than geostrategic influence.

The main themes of this new foreign policy are:

- **Resolving** long-term irritants in relations with the CIS, the West, and Asia;
- **Promoting** stability over instability in the CIS; and
- **Focusing** above all on pragmatic, largely economic goals, as opposed to the more traditional pursuit of geopolitical aggrandizement and neo-imperial dreams that we associate with the traditional foreign policy-making team.

Economic, and not political, considerations are increasingly influencing the direction of Russian foreign policy. Moreover, Russian foreign policy is also becoming increasingly “privatized”; that is, energy companies and industrial–financial groups are pursuing their own commercial interests, which do not always coincide with the agendas of the Rus-

sian Foreign or Defense Ministry—or even the Kremlin.

The struggle between the old, imperial Soviet mentality and the new, commercially oriented views will persist for some time. But President Boris Yeltsin has intervened to ensure that Russia does not erect needless political and ideological barriers to improving political ties with a wide range of countries. His decision to side with the economic reformers in the Kremlin was evident in the NATO–Russian Founding Act, in the agreements with Ukraine and Belarus, and in plans for a major improvement in Russo–Japanese relations.

The Privatization of Foreign Policy

The “privatization” of foreign policy has led to shifting coalitions among different government ministries and companies. Gazprom, for instance, pursues an active and largely successful investment policy in Western Europe, irrespective of the ups and downs of political ties between the Kremlin and Germany or France.

But “privatization” in the Russian context has a special meaning. Large companies and the banks that support them also have links to government officials. Industrial–financial groups, therefore, while they pursue their own commercial interests, are intimately connected to different, sometimes competing figures in the political establishment. The growing scale and sophistication of the private sector and its control of the media bring to the fore powerful players who are intent on pursuing a range of interests defined more by commercial competition and political rivalry than geopolitical hegemony.

Relations with the CIS

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, there have been dire warnings about impending conflicts between Russia and the former Soviet states because of Russia’s inability to accept the loss of its internal empire. Commentators who focused on the rhetoric of certain Russian politicians, Duma members, and commentators—as opposed to the deeds of the Russian government—made dire predictions about a future Russian–Ukrainian conflict or the

uprising of the Russian Diaspora in the CIS. But today, the Russian population, and much of the leadership, have come closer to accepting the breakup of the Soviet Union than at any previous time. And despite the nostalgia for the past, the majority of Russians are unwilling to pay the military or economic costs that any forceful reintegration of the former Soviet Union would entail.

The Commonwealth of Independent States is itself a very weak institution. It has failed as a military union, a currency union, and an economic union, and some CIS states now enjoy higher rates of growth than does the Russian Federation. Today, Moscow is pursuing a selective and multi-speed economic reintegration with some post-Soviet states—for instance, the Russian-sponsored alliance between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. However, so far these attempts at reintegration have borne little fruit. The new Minister for Cooperation with the CIS, Anatolii Adamishin, initially claimed that his main task was to “stand up for Russian national rights.” But he has also said that his ministry must concentrate on creating favorable conditions for Russian businessmen in the CIS.

Belarus: Watered-Down Reunification

The one CIS state that has sought reunification with Russia is Belarus, whose President, Alexander Lukashenka, has an ambitious political agenda of his own. But when the agreement between Minsk and Moscow was signed, it was a considerably watered-down version of the one initially envisioned by Belarus. It bears the imprint of the Kremlin’s reform team, which does not want to expend large sums of money on supporting the Belarus economy in return for questionable political benefits.

By the terms of the Russian–Belarus agreement, the two countries will develop a loose confederation and, despite provisions for a common citizenship, Belarus citizens will not be able to vote in Russian national elections. Moreover, a careful perusal of the treaty shows that, despite the talk of “spiritual closeness and common historical destiny,” there are few concrete provisions revealing how

much the Russian government will pay for this integration. Without considerable financial transfers for the Russian government, it is unclear what the Russian–Belarus treaty will amount to beyond a loose confederation in which both countries maintain their own sovereignty.

Ukraine: Settlement of *De Jure* Independence and Black Sea Fleet

Here, again, the economic reformers in the Kremlin managed to forge a consensus with the Foreign Ministry that it was important to remove this major source of uncertainty and tension in order to pursue other goals. Thus, the Russian government agreed to Ukraine’s requests to sign a long-delayed treaty that recognizes Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Moscow also will begin negotiations on the formal recognition of Ukraine’s borders, a step which it has not taken with many other CIS states and one that ultimately would make Ukraine eligible for European Union or NATO membership.

The other major settlement in this treaty is the disposition of the Black Sea Fleet. Russia will lease it from Ukraine for the next 20 years. Despite the benefits to Russia of resolving this issue, a broader question remains: The Black Sea Fleet is deteriorating and becoming obsolete, particularly since it no longer has to prepare to defend itself from the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Mediterranean.

The Black Sea Fleet arrangement reveals the persistence of traditional Russian military thinking over the realities of the post-communist world. Is the Fleet worth the cost to Russia? But the agreement with Ukraine, Russia’s most important foreign policy priority, also shows that the desire for stability and a lessening of tensions that will enable Russia to pursue other goals has prevailed.

China and Japan: Improved Relations with Economics First

The recent improvement in Russia’s relations with both China and Japan reflects a coincidence of interest between Primakov and Kremlin reformers interested in improving external economic ties. Today, Russian–Chinese relations are better than at

any time since Mao Tse-tung took power in 1949. Now that ideological rivalry is no longer an issue, past tensions have been defused.

Traditional geopolitical factors motivated both sides' agendas as they signed the Declaration on a Multipolar World and the Establishment of a New World Order last April. Reacting to the prospect of NATO expansion, Russia wanted to remind the West that it is a Eurasian power with options beyond a purely Western-oriented policy.

The Kremlin has stressed that its "strategic partnership" with China should operate on all levels. Yeltsin's visit to Beijing further cemented the relationship and confirmed that the long-simmering Sino-Russian border disputes are now almost completely resolved. China, like Russia, signaled its resentment of the United States' growing power and Washington's insistence on placing human rights on the agenda of its bilateral ties with Beijing—an issue that Russia barely mentions.

But the Russian-Chinese agenda is as economic as it is political. China is one of the largest purchasers of Russian arms and a lucrative market for Russia's military hardware, although bilateral trade, both cross-border and national, has fallen in recent years.

Both countries also signed demilitarization agreements with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan limiting troop deployments along these borders. Russia and China fear the rise of fundamentalist Islam on their borders and within their societies, and this has also brought them closer together.

The new Russian-Chinese entente may, in the longer run, represent the triumph of commercial interests over political rationality. There is a shared concern among widely different groups in Russia that China may become an expansionist economic giant in the next century, one that might have designs on Russian territory and economic assets. Why, then, sell advanced fighter jets and nuclear technology that can strengthen a potential adversary?

Russian-Japanese relations are also better now than they have been since Japan defeated Russia in

1905. The bilateral ties have been improving quietly but quite dramatically, given Japan's repeated refusal to form a partnership with Russia until the question of the Kurile Islands is resolved in Japan's favor.

Economic pragmatists have prevailed both in Tokyo and Moscow. Japanese economic ties with Siberia are steadily growing, but the relationship between Tokyo and Moscow has also warmed. Japan, wary of China's growing power and of the Russian-Chinese rapprochement, was more forthcoming in its dealings with Russia at the Denver G-7. In the end, pragmatic considerations may resolve the territorial dispute by compromising on how the islands are governed.

When President Yeltsin met with Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto last November, the meeting focused on large-scale projects in Siberia and the Far East. In return for pledging to sign a peace treaty with Japan by the year 2000 (the next presidential election year in Russia), Yeltsin secured promises of increased investment from Tokyo Gas and Japan National Oil. Both the Russian and Japanese leaders realize that there is now an excellent window of opportunity to come to an agreement on the Kurile Islands dispute, since reform-minded officials who are willing to compromise and disregard nationalist rhetoric now hold power in the Kremlin.

Russia and NATO

Ever since the United States and its allies first announced their intention to offer NATO membership to three Central European states, Russians from all sides of the political spectrum have inveighed against the plan to expand NATO and have warned of the dire consequences of doing so. But last May, it became clear that the Russian side was willing to compromise on previously non-negotiable issues and sign the NATO-Russia Founding Act. In return, Russia's role in the G-7 was upgraded and Russia has gained more international visibility and legitimacy, as well as potential membership in a variety of international economic institutions—the Paris Club and World Trade Organization—into which it seeks to be invited.

The NATO–Russia Founding Act created the NATO–Russian Permanent Joint Council, which meets every month to discuss a wide variety of issues. But questions surrounding this new body reflect a more general problem in the current Russian climate. The signing of the Act removed a major source of tension between Russia and NATO—but what use will Russia make of this new Council?

The first ministerial session of the NATO–Russia Permanent Joint Council in New York in September provided some clues about Russia’s future role. The meeting was more productive than many had initially anticipated, and the Council adopted a broad program for the next few months, including disarmament, peacekeeping opportunities in the CIS and elsewhere, military retraining, and scientific cooperation. Russia’s continuing negative rhetoric about NATO enlargement must, therefore, be seen in the context of the Kremlin’s pragmatic decision to participate actively in the NATO–Russia Council.

So far, there are several signs that Russia has entered into a more cooperative period in its ties with NATO. Despite its criticism of NATO’s recent policies in Bosnia, it continues to cooperate with the NATO-led Stabilization Force, and its military have benefited from this close working relationship with NATO under a U.S. commander. In September, moreover, Russian troops participated in the Tsentrazbat 97 peacekeeping exercises in Central Asia. Although the “Anti-NATO Parliament Group” in the Duma described the exercises as a “manifestation of hostility,” the Russian Defense Ministry had only praise for the maneuvers and asked for more.

Moscow now has an opportunity to play a significant role in NATO deliberations and establish itself as a serious and constructive player in European security matters and beyond. Moreover, this year Yeltsin will host the first in a series of annual summits with the leaders of France and Germany, designed to reinforce Russia’s role as a major European player. NATO countries want to facilitate Russia’s development as an active partner. But the major players, both in the Foreign Ministry and in the Kremlin, will have to make a concerted effort to devise a strategy for what they want out of NATO—and it remains to be seen whether they can and will.

Will the New Pragmatism Prevail?

As the crisis in Iraq unfolds, Foreign Minister Primakov has reasserted Russia’s right to be a player in a part of the world from which it was largely excluded under Gorbachev and during the first Yeltsin years. Russian policy reminds us that geopolitical factors continue to play an important role, although Russia’s economic stakes in Iraq are also considerable.

As Russia continues its difficult transition away from communism, the voices of pragmatism and economic rationality will continue to do battle with those of the old Soviet foreign policy elite. It will be a long process whose outcome will partly depend on the internal succession struggle after Yeltsin. But it will also be affected by how the outside world treats Russia and whether the United States and its allies continue to seek cooperative ties or return to a neo-containment policy.

—*Angela Stent is professor of government at Georgetown University*

PANEL II:
FRIEND OR FOE: BUILDING A U.S. POLICY TOWARD
POST-COMMUNIST RUSSIA

WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP? WHAT KIND OF RUSSIA?

By Ariel Cohen

The Clinton Administration, for five years since 1993, has painted an unrealistic and rosy picture of what the Russian state is and, consequently, has pursued a Russia policy which has only a tenuous link with the reality. I hope, on Steve Sestanovich's watch, this is going to change.

Often, when senior Administration officials talked about Russia, I would think, "This is all very well, but what country exactly is it that he has in mind? Are we talking about a small, nice, clean, Eastern European land, a Czech Republic or an Estonia? Or is this a large, messy, unruly, confused former superpower still aching from the pains of collapse—one which is nurturing grudges and dreams of grandeur past and future?"

When President Clinton compared Russia's war in Chechnya with the American Civil War, did he really mean to say that Boris Yeltsin is a latter-day Abraham Lincoln?

Ladies and gentlemen, Russia's internal conditions and politics bear directly on its foreign policy. They need to be studied, taken into account, and thoroughly understood. Only then can an appropriate foreign policy be developed.

Russia still is struggling with post-communist transition. Yes, great achievements have been made. But we are not out of the woods yet. We do not have a stable democracy, civil society, the rule of law, and truly free media in Russia. We do not have a thriving market economy in the Western sense, complete with a working legal and court system, a culture of small business, a system that is hospitable to the private sector and investment-generated growth.

What we have is a new type of state that combines elements of the market with a highly centralized economy, powerful business and political oligarchies, and a strong overlay of criminality. This state represents a threat to the United States, to the West, and to the Russian people.

The Administration has to deal with the harsh realities of this post-communist transformation. Crime and corruption in Russia surpass anything we have seen in Sicily and are approaching some Latin American models. They cause Russia to lose up to \$40 billion a year to capital flight, and scare away foreign investors. Crime is making the policy process, as well as business activities, in Russia murky and dangerous. In addition to having corrupt officials on the highest level in the Kremlin, we now read reports of price lists for individual Duma votes which circulate in Moscow. Key bills, such as the Land Code, the tax reform bill, and production-sharing agreements for oil exploration were stalled in the Duma.

Crime and corruption, especially in the armed forces and the military-industrial complex, are threatening the world with an unprecedented proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Yeltsin's own chemical weapons adviser, General Kuntsevich, was arrested for attempting to sell large amounts of binary weapons components to Syria. According to Russian newspapers, Iran has spent \$25 million bribing senior Russian Defense Ministry officials and generals in order to acquire nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities. Russian foreign trade experts told me repeatedly that Russia is creating an impression of upholding the law while violating the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) vis-à-vis Iran. For an appropriate sum of

money, you can buy today anything that was found in the Soviet arsenal—and those were some very nasty toys.

Political stability in Russia is as deep as the surgeon's stitches on Yeltsin's coronary blood vessels. Several candidates with unsavory business associates—and large and questionable business holdings—are jockeying for the best position to run for the presidency in the year 2000. The lines between federal and local politics, big business, and criminal activities are blurred. Former presidential adviser and bodyguard General Alexander Korzhakov uses criminal jargon in a press conference, while former Deputy Secretary of the Security Council Boris Berезovsky was a target of a gangland-style explosion.

Business concerns allied with presidential candidates are busily acquiring newspapers, radio stations, and TV channels while security services are using eavesdropping against members of the government to acquire compromising materials for their political enemies. When Boris Yeltsin dies or steps down, all hell will break loose. And while I hope that the players will understand that following the path of law and the constitution in the minefield of Russia's politics is in their interest, no one can be certain that this is what will happen. The high courts of Russia have not yet established themselves as the guarantors of the constitution and the rule of law.

Under the watch of Foreign Minister Primakov, Russia has increasingly pursued an anti-Western and anti-American course. In my recently published Heritage paper, I document a long trail of anti-American activities the Russian foreign minister was involved in during his 40-year illustrious career as a propagandist, active measures specialist, and intelligence chief for the Soviet and Russian state. Having made anti-Americanism his career, he now received his reward. He got the foreign policy portfolio from Boris Yeltsin and enjoys the trust of

the Secretary of State—as was evident in our interaction with Russia over the latest Iraqi crisis.

Primakov is looking to re-establish Russia's sphere of influence in the Middle East. His close and personal friendships with Saddam Hussein, Yassir Arafat, Hafez al-Assad, and Muammar Qaddafi go back 30 years. And if Russia, because of its weakness, is incapable of restoring a real, exclusive sphere of influence, at least it will receive lucrative oil deals for its powerful companies, such as Lukoil and Gazprom, and contracts to build tanks, planes, and missiles for Middle Eastern dictators and mullahs. Increasing the critical mass in the Middle East aimed against the U.S. is an important pillar of Russian foreign policy.

But Primakov is looking beyond the Middle East that he knows so well. Russia's foreign policy elite is in the middle of yet another anti-Western swing of the sort we have come to witness for the past 300 years.

That elite is basically the former Soviet foreign policy and security elite. Those few who were brought to the Foreign Ministry building on *Smolenskaya Ploshchad'* during the tenure of Eduard Shevardnadze have left or were pushed out. There were very few civilians who were introduced into the MO building on *Arbatskaya Ploshchad'* or into the security decision-making process in the presidency, such as the former national security adviser Baturin. They, too, were pushed out or coopted.

While “democrats,” despite all accusations of corruption, made their mark in the economic policy realm, the Defense Ministry, the military, the security services, and the foreign policy apparatus remained untouched, almost pristine in their Soviet mindset. The “inside the Ring Road” crowd—the Moscow equivalent of our inside-the-Beltway milieu—is still sore from losing the Cold War.

—Ariel Cohen, is a Senior Policy Analyst at The Heritage Foundation

THE FUTURE OF UNITED STATES–RUSSIAN RELATIONS

By Mark Gage

I would like to say “thank you” to Ariel Cohen of The Heritage Foundation for inviting me to participate in this panel. I should also say, at the outset, that the remarks I will make should not be interpreted as reflecting the thinking or opinions of any Member of Congress or of the House International Relations Committee.

The topic before the panel today is the future of U.S.–Russian relations. Of course, no one can predict the future. I will try to do so, however, and make the prediction that the U.S.–Russian relationship will quite likely deteriorate over the next few years. I say this because the relationship has already deteriorated substantially over the past few years.

Let me say, in anticipation of the question, that the relationship has not deteriorated because the West has not done enough to aid Russia since 1991. If you consider U.S. aid provided to Russia in all its forms through the Agency for International Development, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Defense, and other U.S. government agencies, and then add in other forms of assistance—the assistance provided by the European Union; the bilateral aid provided by other countries, such as Japan; the contracts provided to the Russian Space Agency for participation in NASA’s Space Station program; the investment guarantees, loans, and feasibility studies done to encourage investment and joint ventures in Russia; the generous debt rescheduling provided to the Russian government by the Paris Club of official creditors and the London Club of commercial creditors, which will save the Russian government several hundreds of millions of dollars in annual budget expenditures for several years; and the low-cost loans provided by the International Monetary Fund and those approved and made available to Russia by the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development—you realize that a sizable amount of aid has been provided over the past five to six years.

Let me outline how the U.S.–Russian relationship has already deteriorated.

- **Bilateral security issues:** Russia still has not ratified the START II Treaty despite certain “concessions” on a prospective START III Treaty given by President Clinton at the March 1997 summit with President Yeltsin in Helsinki. Russia also continues to accept Nunn–Lugar demilitarization assistance to help it meet its obligations under the START I Treaty, but continues its research and development on advanced weapons.
- **Internal economic reform:** Russian President Yeltsin’s irresolute support for reform over the past five years has left Russia with an economy in a strange state of “quasi-reform,” stifling market-based economic growth and allowing the spread of corruption at all levels. (The Clinton Administration’s attempt to move the focus of our aid program to regions of Russia that we believe are interested in reform may be the clearest sign yet that reform at the center in Russia has slowed to a stop.)
- **Democratic reform within Russia:** Yeltsin’s tendency to do only those things that serve to protect his power has proven the biggest obstacle to such reform, but two additional blows against democratic reform have been struck by the Yeltsin government: first, the disastrous military operation in the separatist region of Chechnya—begun without parliamentary approval and conducted without regard to human rights or human life—and second, the extent to which the Yeltsin administration manipulated the media and the government’s budget to gain a victory in the 1996 presidential elections.

I would like to ask two questions in regard to the latter point. First, who exactly were those two guys arrested during the election coming out of the Government House in Moscow with half a million dol-

lars in cash in a briefcase? It is worthwhile to check out the connections between the two, to my mind. Second, weren't the profligate spending and tax breaks granted by Yeltsin to vested interests during the campaign the cause of much of the fiscal breakdown Russia is witnessing today?

I also believe that Russia has followed policies that are detrimental to stability across Eurasia.

First, Russia is arming and assisting Iran: Just how many contracts can Russia claim had existed before Yeltsin's September 1994 pledge to close out arms sales to Iran after existing contracts expired?

Second, Russia is providing advanced military technology to China.

Third, Russia has actively supported—with covert arms and direct military support—ethnic separatist rebellions in Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Fourth, Russia has tried to manipulate the New Independent States of Central Asia by closing off their energy exports through Russian-controlled pipelines.

With regard to European security, time and again Russia has supported Slobodan Milosevic and the ethnic Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia, despite the allegations of war crimes and ethnic cleansing tied to them, and had to be dragged into agreeing to a more forceful approach to ending the violence in Bosnia while being given a role in the NATO-led force as a bow to Russia's claimed interests in the Balkan region.

In the region of the former Soviet Union, Russia has consistently sought to promote the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), an organization which it dominates, as the sole peacekeeping force in the region, relenting only at the December 1994 summit in Budapest of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, where it agreed to an OSCE-led force if there is a resolution of the conflict over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan—a big “if.” Russia continues to oppose deployment of United Nations-led peacekeeping forces in the region, which it considers its “sphere,” and continues to seek to replace NATO—

a concrete military alliance—with an OSCE-type security organization for Europe.

President Yeltsin's recent statement that Europe doesn't need an “uncle” involved in its security betrayed once again a continuing Russian desire to undermine NATO, with the ultimate objective of effectively getting the U.S. out of Europe—and that much further away from those areas Russia considers its sphere: Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia.

While some would argue that Russia's agreement to a NATO–Russia Council shows a new willingness to accept NATO and its expansion eastward, I would instead recommend that they watch closely how Russia seeks to influence the individual NATO allies and how it seeks to use the revisions in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, now underway, to change basic security arrangements in Europe that will, in turn, affect the role of NATO.

In short, Russia cares more about its future ability to affect affairs in Europe than about maintaining an effective organization that—along with the European Union—can link all of Europe into a cohesive, cooperative whole while dispelling traditional differences through mutually supported security.

With regard to fighting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, here, once again, Russia is playing a role intended to regain its power over its “sphere” rather than to combat this global threat.

First, the cooperation between Russia and Iran is extensive and, as we have all heard reported in the press, now appears to involve the sale of missile components and technology in addition to the advanced conventional weapons and civilian nuclear reactors it has previously encompassed.

Second, Russia remains a friend to Saddam Hussein, the dictator in Iraq. That friendship is exhibited in the negotiations at the United Nations, where Russia seeks to lessen the sanctions on Iraq even as Hussein refuses to meet U.N. requirements for inspections of suspected WMD sites. (With regard to Iraq, has there yet been a satisfactory answer to the questions, raised in a press report a

few years ago, that Russian ballistic missile gyroscopes were found to have been smuggled into Iraq?)

Third, it is reported that Russia is seeking to reinvigorate its military sales to Syria—sales that may include some advanced weaponry, perhaps including chemical warheads.

The object of Russian policy seems not so much to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as to lay the groundwork for a series of challenges to America's ability to project military force successfully around the world. Whether in the Persian Gulf or the Straits of Taiwan, Russian military technology is creating the groundwork for those challenges today, as we speak.

Such challenges—creating the “multipolar world” that prevents the United States from exercising global leadership—will stretch American forces to the limit and, *de facto*, will make the U.S. less able and willing to assist or support states beyond the regions I have just mentioned. In other words, the U.S. will be less able to assist or support the states neighboring Russia as they seek to consolidate their independence from Russian domination.

Let me say just a few things about what I call the interesting case of Belarus, and how it illustrates the Russian government's true objectives.

In the United States, Belarus is given little attention, but it seems fair to say that most Americans see that the new leader there—President Alexander Lukashenka—is a dictator. However, many of us have the vague impression that Moscow finds him distasteful. That may be true, but it seems that some in Moscow find his rule in Belarus useful. In fact, Lukashenka survives in power in Belarus because the Russian government forgives Belarus's large gas debts and provides it with favorable customs treatment.

Why does the Russian government support Lukashenka in this quiet but effective manner at a time when the Russian government's budget is close to collapse? Its support is due to the fact that Lukashenka serves several Russian interests.

First, the “integrationists”—those who want to resurrect some kind of unified, Russian-dominated political entity on the territory of the former Soviet Union—see him as the first step in creating that entity.

Second, the Russian natural gas company Gazprom (40 percent owned by the Russian government) sees Belarus as good real estate across which gas pipelines can cross, without transiting the territory of the more independence-minded Ukraine, to ensure greater West European dependency on Russian gas. In my view, such West European dependency on Russian gas supplies is as much a strategic goal of Yeltsin's Russia as it was of Brezhnev's Soviet Union.

Finally, Belarus provides a possible frontier with Poland if Russia wishes to “rattle the saber” with regard to further expansion of the NATO alliance into Eastern Europe.

While it is important for us to realize how Moscow benefits from Lukashenka's rule in Belarus, it is just as important that we also consider the corrosive effect he may well be having on the progress of democratic reform in the other New Independent States of the former Soviet Union. To other leaders of the New Independent States, Lukashenka may show that the old, Soviet-style authoritarianism can still be applied and can still work—and gain useful economic support from Russia in the bargain.

Are we that certain of the progress of democracy in the New Independent States that we can continue to ignore the indirect yet important influence Lukashenka's model may have on it, or that we can ignore the role of Russia in supporting his rule?

My point in raising the interesting case of Belarus is that, once again, Russian policy is undermining key American objectives for the countries of the former Soviet Union. The deterioration in U.S.–Russian relations has already begun. It will simply become more obvious—and will continue—unless the Administration finds a new way to deal with Russia.

Let me point out to you the interesting *Washington Post* story on Russian President Yeltsin in this

morning's edition—an article that underlines Yeltsin's dubious value in moving ahead with reforms within Russia. Let me also point out a December 21 column by Jim Hoagland—also in the *Washington Post*—entitled “A Policy Based on Wishful Thinking.” I believe the points I have raised in

this short presentation are buttressed by the authors of those two pieces.

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