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**THOMAS DEVOLD**

# **US Policy toward Russia after 9/11**

**Between Cooperation and Containment**

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**OSLO FILES**

ON DEFENCE AND SECURITY— 03/2008

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Editor: Anna Therese Klingstedt



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## SUMMARY

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17 years after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the bilateral relationship between the United States and Russia is still one of the most important in world politics. Despite this, the US-Russia relationship seems to be described more often than not in terms of crisis and conflict. Russia has obviously contributed to this development, and the many deficiencies of contemporary Russian politics have been described amply before. This study takes a closer look at the American side of the relationship, and at the implications of US foreign policy on bilateral relations with Russia. The main argument is that US Russia policy has had a negative influence. Although the relationship seemed to be moving in a positive direction after the events of 9/11, several US actions, both in terms of its general foreign policy and its Russia policy, have undermined future positive developments and cut the relationship short of its considerable potential. The war on terror, which provided the initial impetus for closer US-Russia cooperation, ultimately highlighted disagreement and conflicting interests rather than facilitating further rapprochement. Many of these developments and the core issues of the bilateral relationship were often rooted in “hard security” issues. The Russian focus on this and their preoccupation with traditional security policy made cooperation resemble a zero-sum game, and it also diminished the level of trust in US-Russia relations, making cooperation in general more difficult.



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## INTRODUCTION

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17 years after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the bilateral relations between the United States and Russia are still among the most important in world politics. Despite this, the relationship seems to be described more often than not in terms of crisis and conflict. The aim of this study is to look more closely at the American side of the relationship, and at the implications of US foreign policy for bilateral relations with Russia. The main argument will be that US Russia policy has influenced the relationship negatively. Although it seemed to be moving in a positive direction after the events of 9/11, several US actions, both in terms of its general foreign policy and Russia policy, have undermined positive future developments and cut the relationship short of its potential. The war on terror, which provided the initial impetus for closer US-Russia cooperation, in the end highlighted disagreement and conflicting interests rather than facilitating further rapprochement. The Russian focus on “hard security” issues and the preoccupation with traditional security policy have made cooperation look like a zero-sum game, and this has also diminished the level of trust in US-Russia relations, thus making cooperation more difficult in general. From a Russian strategic perspective, the United States, taking advantage of its position as the dominant military power and the most powerful actor in the international political system, has been the driving force behind a geopolitical containment policy that has pushed Russian interests back all across Europe.

This new correlation of forces and the resulting dominant position gradually became clear to the United States during the 1990s; this opened up new possibilities for American foreign policy, but also created uncertainties regarding identity and purpose. Redefining the role and priorities of the United States in the international system is still very much work in progress. This process has been evident to most of the US’ partners and allies, but it has probably been even more tangible for its former main adversary and counterpart from the Cold War, Russia. Coinciding with the rise of the United States, Russia has experienced a tremendous drop in international status and prestige; this emanates from the inherent difficulties of a state in transition and a vast array of political, economic and social problems inherited from the Soviet Union. For well over a decade, this was a trend of accelerating asymmetry between the former superpowers.<sup>1</sup>

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1 This negative trend has been halted under President Vladimir Putin and started to change around 2003. Russia has reasserted itself and regained some of its former influence since. The additional bilateral implications of this will be discussed below.

The Soviet Union and the Cold War were defining factors in US foreign policy for over four decades. By default, the Soviet perspective had to be taken into account in every foreign policy discussion, and consequently possible Soviet reactions were a permanent constraint on US foreign policy. Decisions taken in this period had to be appraised in terms of the potential Soviet responses, and such functioned as built-in checks on US policies. When this mechanism ceased to be relevant with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the opportunity opened up for the United States to act more freely, and to some degree, less thoughtfully and cautiously, because the counterbalances to and constraints on American power were less clear than before. This has had serious implications for the conduct of US foreign policy and its relationship with Russia.

Since the early 1990s, the US-Russia relationship has been riddled with setbacks and bad publicity, and this does not seem likely to change in the near future. Observers have continually described the bilateral relations in negative terms, and discussions have been had about chills, freezes, new Cold Wars and “who’s to blame for ‘losing’ Russia”. But what can reasonably be expected from this relationship? Russia expert and diplomat Thomas Graham provided this assessment:

It is hardly a secret that US-Russian relations are at one of their lowest ebbs – if not the lowest – since the end of the Cold War. Gratuitous anti-Americanism, once confined to the fringe, has in the past few months become regular fare for the mainstream Russian press, while Russophobia is increasingly penetrating into American discourse on Russian developments.<sup>2</sup>

This statement could easily have been taken from any of a large number of analyses of the US-Russia relationship from the last couple of years, but in fact it dates back to early 2001. Just a year later, in 2002, there were serious discussions about a US-Russian strategic partnership in the global war on terror. However, when I started researching for this project, there was a debate about whether a new Cold War had started. This is indicative of the fluctuations and volatility of the relationship almost two decades after the Cold War ended. Why is this so? Any bilateral relationship consists of several levels of interaction, but the countries’ foreign policies, both in general and in terms of the policies directed specifically toward the other, are arguably of primary importance. On the US side, much time and effort has been spent on assessing the way in which

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2 Thomas Graham, “US-Russia Relations”, speech given at Wilton Park Conference, 15 March 2001 (Institute for Korean-American Studies [online 1 Apr 2007]).



developments in Russian politics influence, or should influence, US policy toward Russia. The National Security Strategy document from 2006 states that “strengthening our relationship will depend on the policies, foreign and domestic, that Russia adopts”.<sup>3</sup> However, there are few attempts to account systematically for the way in which different aspects of US foreign policy influence Russian policies, which, to an outside observer, would seem to be an equally important aspect of the relationship.

## Structure

The aim of this study is to examine how US Russia policy has developed under the Bush administration, and how it has affected the overall relationship. Much of the existing work on US-Russian relations looks mainly in a reactive perspective at US policy toward Russia. However, viewing US policy merely as reactions to Russian policies omits the political context in which Russian policies are formulated. Existing work on the subject has less often inverted this perspective and looked at the contents and effects of US foreign policy toward Russia and the perceptions and effects of these policies at the domestic level in Russia itself. The aim of this study is therefore to provide an outline of the policies of the Bush administration, and to point out some political implications and basic mechanisms that influence the development of the relationship. US foreign policy will be analyzed from two different angles: first and most importantly, US policies directly related to Russia (US-Russia policy); second, the relevant aspects of other American foreign policies that have more indirectly influenced Russia and her bilateral relations with the United States. The timeframe of the research project is from the inauguration of President George W. Bush in January 2001 up to the summer of 2006.

To develop a proper understanding of the intellectual context of US Russia policy, I shall establish a general framework for some different traditions and schools of thought within American foreign policy. This framework provides a backdrop against which some foreign-policy approaches toward Russia will be presented, discussed and reworked. These perspectives will then be used as the analytical framework for describing and analyzing US policies under the Bush administration. Within this process, I shall integrate official policy statements and documents to determine the guidelines for official US policy toward Russia at different points in time. To link official policy with the actual political developments, I shall provide an account of what constituted the main tenets of US

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3 Quote taken from the National Security Council: *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 16 March 2006 (White House [online 10 Feb 2007]), p. 39.

policy toward Russia and shall attend in particular to the range of issues that was prioritized by the administration and that roughly correspond to central aspects of the bilateral relationship. These areas are: strategic arms control issues; the alliance in the war against international terrorism; US policies toward former states of the Soviet Union; and energy cooperation.<sup>4</sup> The first two aspects will be dealt with in more depth than the two other issues. In the case of strategic arms control, this will be done to highlight what both countries regarded as the most important area of cooperation. In the case of energy cooperation, the aim is to indicate the solidity, depth and possibilities for new areas of cooperation between the United States and Russia. In using these cases, I shall seek to determine what the dominant approaches toward Russia under the Bush administration have been by examining the competition and changing interplay between the different schools of thought on US Russia policy. Finally, I shall provide some thoughts about how these processes have influenced and defined US policy toward Russia, and their implications for the bilateral relationship.

The aim of these analyses is to understand the broader context within which the relationship has developed in an attempt to elaborate on the following questions:

1. How has US Russia policy evolved between 2001 and 2006?
2. What has been the dominant policy approach toward Russia in this period?
3. How have these policies influenced the bilateral relationship?

The main preliminary thesis of this study is that the unresolved tensions and constantly changing dynamics between the different approaches and schools of thought create a lack of consistency. This makes it difficult to understand the forces and intentions underlying US foreign policy. Although the flexibility of these foreign-policy shifts has proven to be a strength for the United States in other circumstances,<sup>5</sup> it will be argued here that this has not been the case for US-Russian relations. In this case, the conflicting and contradictory tendencies of the foreign-policy process have made US policy toward Russia shifting and unpredictable, and therefore susceptible to misperception by Russian decision-

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4 This is a tricky delimitation. First and foremost, the term “former states of the Soviet Union” is meant to cover the CIS area itself, but in some respects, for example regarding NATO expansion, I also imply the Baltic states, which have never been affiliated with the CIS. This is the main reason for explaining the use of this specific term here.

5 See Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence. American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2003), pp. 40–44, for an elaboration of this argument.

makers. From the Russian perspective, this has created uncertainty about the basic intentions of the US, and this situation has consistently failed to produce the necessary levels of trust for the relationship. An important factor at work here has been the strong and persisting presence of Wilsonian ideals in American foreign policy,<sup>6</sup> and the use of the Wilsonian approach toward Russia and other former states of the Soviet Union.

I shall argue that variations of a Wilsonian foreign policy employed with regard to Russia have in sum had a detrimental effect on the relationship. This effect has been caused mainly by what I would call the “Wilsonian dilemma” in US foreign policy. This dilemma is caused by the fact that it is generally difficult to be certain about the motives or intentions of one’s counterpart in international politics, and that this problem of interpretation and perception is particularly acute when actors face idealistic or altruistic policies. This problem of interpretation is not new in international politics, and it is compounded by idealist rhetoric often being used to disguise or justify realist policies.<sup>7</sup> These factors, complicating the already difficult analysis of intentions, make it hard to obtain a good picture of one’s counterpart’s motives and intentions. In relationships without long-standing cooperation and little concrete basis, this creates infertile ground for building trust. Therefore, at the receiving end of Wilsonian policies there is always the possibility that other motives, more realpolitik-oriented ones, lie beneath. In the US-Russia relationship, this problem of interpretation may be linked to the existence of two of the foreign-policy approaches toward Russia that I shall discuss and elaborate on in the following chapter. In this sense, this study may be said to be located within the values-versus-interests conflict that has been an important dividing line in the debate about US foreign policy toward Russia;<sup>8</sup> and, to a certain degree, it is also located within the general idealism-versus-realism debate. Furthermore, talk of a strategic partnership between the two countries in the war against terror was not rooted in political reality, and therefore proved counterproductive in the end. There has also been a lack of

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- 6 Use of the term “Wilsonian” refers to elements of the foreign policy of President Woodrow Wilson, and will be explained in the next chapter outlining the theoretical framework.
  - 7 The point was made in 1939 by E.H. Carr. The mechanism, however, has probably been a prevalent problem in international relations for a longer time than this. See Carr’s *The Twenty Year Crisis 1919–1939* (London: St Martin’s Press, 1974).
  - 8 For recent examples of this debate, see the Council of Foreign Relations report *Russia’s Wrong Direction: What the United States Can and Should Do*, CFR Independent Task Force Report, no. 57 (New York: CFR Press, 2006) and the “Great Russia Debate” that took place in the *Journal of International Security Affairs* in 2006-07. This debate included articles by Stephen Blank (no. 10, Spring 2006), Nikolas Gvosdev (no. 11, Fall 2006) and a final retort by Stephen Blank (no. 12, Spring 2007).

willingness, or understanding, from the US to accept that Russia will follow its own priorities and national interests, even if they conflict with US interests. On too many issues, this is often confused as being an indication of a more assertive Russian foreign policy. In my view, it is futile to expect the Russian authorities to conduct US foreign policy.

## PERSPECTIVES ON US FOREIGN POLICY

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In this chapter, some focal points and a background for the analysis of American foreign policy toward Russia will be established by providing a brief outline of a general approach to American foreign policy; a basic idea about the main debates, groups and dividing lines in contemporary foreign-policy debate in the United States will be provided. This, I hope, will help put into perspective the discussion about what the main schools of thought and guiding principles are in the development of US Russia policy.

### General perspectives on US foreign policy

In his seminal work on the history of US foreign policy, Walter Russell Mead attempts to go to the roots of American foreign policy and presents a new paradigm for thinking about this theme.<sup>9</sup> He distinguishes between four main schools of thought named after presidents who embodied important traits of their respective schools. He argues that, contrary to conventional wisdom, foreign policy has historically played an important role in American domestic politics, and that it is possible to discern a number of foreign-policy perspectives that have had a lasting impact on both public opinion and decision-makers. These basic ways of looking at foreign policy have reflected contrasting and sometimes complementary ways of looking at domestic policy as well. Each is rooted in different economic, regional, cultural, and, in some cases, ethnic groups, and each has its own vision of American national interest. These schools of thought have influenced the dynamics of and competed for dominance within American foreign policy.

1. The *Hamiltonian* school is built on the conviction of the primacy of international economics.<sup>10</sup> It regards a strong alliance between the national government and big business as the key to both domestic stability through economic growth, and to effective action abroad. The Hamiltonians have long focused on the nation's need to be integrated into the global economy on favorable terms, and that the commercial interests of US companies should be a driver in American foreign policy. Hamiltonians also believed (and believe) that an effective international trading system is more beneficial than the zero-sum game of international

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9 Mead, *Special Providence*.

10 The term *Hamiltonian* refer to Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804). Hamilton was a leading politician during the early years of independence, and the first Secretary of the Treasury.

politics that has traditionally engaged statesmen. The American role as main proponent of a global free trade system was largely inherited from Great Britain, as the British Empire's own role and power in this system waned after the world wars. The Hamiltonian school of thought is often referred to as "American realism".

2. *Wilsonians* believe that the United States has both a moral obligation and an important national interest in spreading American democratic and social values throughout the world, thereby creating a peaceful international community that accepts the rule of law.<sup>11</sup> Spreading these values globally would in the long run increase the security of the United States and serve a double purpose. It was this school of thought in American foreign policy that first argued that democracies make better, more reliable and predictable partners than dictatorships, which did not reflect the real national interests of their countries. Although it has its roots in the American nineteenth-century missionary movement, the promotion of the values of the Declaration of Independence was made a guiding foreign-policy principle in the interwar years. This Wilsonian grand strategy has been an important facet of US soft power and one of the main global attractions of what might be called American ideology.

3. *Jeffersonians* have the preservation of the unique form of American democracy as their most central issue, and have historically been skeptical of Hamiltonian and Wilsonian policies that involve the United States with unsavory allies abroad that increase the risks of war.<sup>12</sup> Jeffersonians see foreign entanglements as a threat to both American values and independence. They also fear that excessive engagements abroad would lead to more focus on military power and a stronger executive, which in turn could limit the power of congressional scrutiny and thus endanger democracy. Consequently, American foreign policy should be less concerned with promoting freedom and prosperity by exporting American values, and more concerned with safeguarding them at home. The United States should teach its values by leading by example, as a "shining city upon the hill" that other states might look to.<sup>13</sup> Jeffersonians may be regarded as foreign-policy minimalists with elements of realism, for which the Monroe doctrine could serve

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11 The term *Wilsonian* refers to Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924), the president of the United States from 1913–21.

12 The term *Jeffersonian* refers to Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), president from 1801–09.

13 An almost classic quote in studies of US foreign policy. Originally from a work by John Winthrop in 1630.

as an example.<sup>14</sup> In this regard, they operate with a narrowly defined set of national interests, and a domestic-policy focus on their foreign-policy priorities. Jeffersonians will typically oppose foreign-policy objectives considered too ambitious and far-reaching, and encourage a reduction in international commitments.

4. The group that Mead calls the *Jacksonians* believes that the most important goal of the US government in both foreign and domestic policy should be the economic well-being and physical security of the American people; this policy thus has a popular ideal at its core.<sup>15</sup> Whereas Mead's other approaches can be seen as having a somewhat elitist political base, the Jacksonian tradition is deeply rooted in frontier and folk culture, and thus represents more of a mass approach to politics and to foreign-policy thinking. Foreign engagements that do not clearly serve national interests – narrowly defined – will rarely mobilize Jacksonians. They prefer to avoid conflict with the outside world and often rail at the complications of economic engagement. However, they also believe that if war comes, the United States should deploy all necessary power in pursuit of victory. In this regard, the Jacksonians are the warriors of American society and proponents of strong and effective action. Jacksonians are protectionists opposed to Hamiltonian trade strategies, highly critical of the foreign-policy complexities of the Jeffersonians, and contemptuous of the Wilsonians for the naiveté of their attempt to promote democratic values abroad. While they may have a limited view of America's global interests, and in this regard the approach has some elements of isolationism, they are prepared to act decisively if those interests are threatened. The use of military force is therefore regarded as a legitimate solution to international conflicts of interest. This Jacksonian impulse has given political support to high military spending and legitimacy to the use of military force, and ultimately, made America's rise to global primacy possible.

Mead's classification splits the four approaches along the traditional main lines of what could be called an isolationist and a more internationalist school of thought. Here the Jeffersonian and the Jacksonian can be seen to be more inclined toward variations of isolationism (one liberal and one more conserva-

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14 The Monroe Doctrine dates from 1823, when President James Monroe proclaimed that European powers should no longer colonize or interfere with the affairs of the nations of the Americas. The United States planned to stay neutral in wars between European powers and their colonies.

15 The term *Jacksonian* refers to Andrew Jackson (1767–1845), who served as president from 1829 to 1837.

utive),<sup>16</sup> whereas the Hamiltonian and Wilsonian lean more toward an internationalist approach to foreign policy (one is focused on protecting commercial interests; the other, on promoting ideals). Moreover, the Wilsonian and Hamiltonian schools of thought are based on values of a distinctly universalist character and global appeal. However, the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian schools have a more indigenous value-base at their cores, albeit of different types. Both these approaches believe that the protection of the unique cultural, social and political heritage of the United States should be the primary objective of US foreign policy. In sum, it is possible to say that both these schools of thought have an internal and domestic focus regarding foreign-policy priorities.

The policy process stemming from Mead's schools of thought resembles a mixture of a balancing act and a fierce competition between the proponents of the different types of policies. The approaches are present at the different stages of decision-making, and the resulting policies are a reflection of the demands of the concrete situation and the existing constellation of political forces at any given time. The strength of the different schools in the foreign-policy discourse generally reflects the importance of the special interests for which each school speaks, resulting in constant pressure on the policymaking process. In Mead's view, this constant competition to influence US foreign policy has had a beneficial effect on the final result in that "the endless, unplanned struggle among the schools and lobbies to shape American foreign policy ended up producing a policy that over the long run more closely approximated the true needs and interests of society than could any conscious design."<sup>17</sup> The possibilities of combining the approaches allow for flexibility in the short term, but also for continuities in the long run. In other words, Mead would claim that the successes of American foreign policy can be attributed to the United States having a truly democratic and responsive foreign-policy decision-making process, in which the most important interests and segments of society have the possibility to exert influence over foreign-policy issues.

One problem with Mead's interpretation of American foreign policy, however, may be found in the way in which he deals with different versions of *realpolitik*, which is often portrayed as a European invention and practice in his analysis. Mead claims that *realpolitik* has rarely had any appeal in the United States. This is a statement that would cause some consternation in many foreign-policy analysts in many places. Even though Mead's use of this term implies something other than what is commonly understood as *realpolitik*, it is nonetheless one of the weaker assertions in his interpretative analysis of US foreign

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16 The term isolationist is somewhat strong here, and something along the lines of minimal internationalism would probably be more appropriate.

17 Mead, *Special Providence*, p. 20.



policy. This also opens up for interesting analyses. If realpolitik or realist thinking in foreign policy has been relatively unpopular in the United States, and US policymakers themselves conduct policies based on other intentions, what happens when other actors interpret US policies in the opposite direction, and perceive a foreign policy based on realist thinking?

## Perspectives on US policies toward Russia

In the early 1990s, after over forty years of Cold War, the intellectual, cultural and organizational challenges of reorienting foreign policy away from previous lines were enormous. In addressing this question, American leaders also faced an old dilemma: was the United States a traditional great power involved in the global game of power politics and balancing, or was the United States a unique case in international politics with a special mission to uphold high ideals and assist others to build democracies and develop market economies? The new international roles of the former superpower adversaries also made the elaboration of US Russia policy more complex. The supremacy of the United States in global affairs was in ascendance during the 1990s, coinciding with a formidable plunge in Russia's status.

In searching for a new strategy for American foreign policy after the Cold War, there seemed to be broad consensus about two basic propositions.<sup>18</sup> The first one was the now undisputed role of the United States as the dominant military power; the second was that a democratic and market-oriented Russia moving toward Western integration would serve American national interests. The concrete policy dilemmas that emanated from this consensus were to provide the main dividing lines in US Russia policy for a long time. The question was: what priority should be given to the promotion of Russian transformation and integration, compared to policies directed at preserving the emerging and favorable international position of the United States?

There are a number of approaches to choose from when selecting theoretical perspectives on general US foreign policy since the body of scholarly work on this subject is so large. However, there is less relevant and usable material specifically about perspectives, groups and dividing lines in US policy toward Russia, probably because a more nuanced approach must be employed to analyze a more specific policy. In the following, I shall use existing literature on the subject and material gathered from interviews to develop a typology that

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18 James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose. US Policy toward Russia after the Cold War* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p. 5.

covers the main schools of thought and dividing lines in recent American Russia policy.

As with the general foreign-policy approaches, the most important bone of contention is whether US policies toward Russia should be based on values or interests. This of course also echoes the general debate in international-relations theory about idealism or realism as theoretical approaches, as well as the main dividing lines in Mead's exposition. This approach has been used as an analytical framework for earlier studies of US Russia policy,<sup>19</sup> but this tends to conceal other important aspects of contending strategies regarding how to engage and deal with Russia from a US foreign-policy perspective. It also says too little about the political differences between the groups of policymakers and differing opinions about what types of goals to pursue in US-Russian relations. A typology such as this oversimplifies a complex reality, since there will often be elements from both a values-based and an interest-based policy and varying power relations at work in the policy-formation process.

To develop analytical categories, one should attempt to integrate different types of interests and degrees of engagement into a single framework. Earlier typologies developed to distinguish between different schools of thought in the US foreign-policy community are useful to describe only some aspects of foreign-policy thinking toward Russia. Of the research that I shall expand upon here, Thomas Graham's approach is central. According to Graham,<sup>20</sup> there are four schools of thought regarding how to deal with Russia in the US foreign-policy community:

1. the "forget Russia" school, which would not devote much time or energy to Russia in the belief that she simply does not matter that much any longer;
2. the "proto-containment school", which believes that no matter what happens, Russia is bound to be a problem for the United States and therefore the goal should be to limit the damage Russia can do to US interests;
3. the "selective engagement" school, which would engage only on issues of key interest to the United States, largely in the security realm; and
4. the "broad engagement" school, which advocates engagement over a wide range of issues in the belief that only such an approach can restore the level of trust necessary for progress on first-order security priorities.

Graham's approach mainly describes the degree of engagement the US should seek, thereby focusing on the breadth of the bilateral agenda and the number of

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19 See for example Paige B. Sullivan, *US-Russia Relations: From Idealism to Realism* (Washington DC: CSIS Press, 2002).

20 Graham, "US-Russia Relations": 5.

issue areas US foreign policy should try to develop in cooperation with Russia. Although Graham's approach provides insights gained from both a theoretical and practical perspective, it is somewhat one-dimensional, and could benefit from elaboration.

Goldgeier and McFaul employ two categories; they argue that the main policy dividing line runs between regime transformers and power balancers.<sup>21</sup> Here, the category of regime transformers is roughly synonymous with Wilsonians, who believe that American leaders should use the full gamut of American non-military power to help bring about the internal transformation of Russia. Regime transformers will also claim that a market-oriented Russia would open up to international trade and seek membership of multilateral institutions like the World Trade Organization in the longer term. The successful consolidation of democracy and the market would reduce the risks of confrontation, and make Russia's military capabilities an irrelevant issue. However, power balancers would argue against the wisdom of the missionary zeal of the regime transformers. The argument employed is that the nature of Russia's domestic regime as a single factor would not dictate its foreign-policy choices or shape international behavior. The task of transforming Russia would also be too daunting, and would lie beyond the influence of the United States. Instead, focus should be on the balance of power between the United States and Russia, and the greater the imbalance in favor of the United States, the better. This implies more emphasis on securing and destroying Russia's nuclear stockpile, as well as supporting and ensuring the independence of the new states along Russian borders.<sup>22</sup>

Goldgeier and McFaul's approach is guided more by policy content and goals than by Graham's level of engagement, and also reflects the basic interests-versus-values conflict in the US foreign-policy debate. However, to acquire a more comprehensive typology, it would be more fruitful to combine these two approaches and develop a new one, containing both the level of engagement and the different types of interests that motivate actors in their dealings with Russia.

Based upon the research discussed briefly above and on my own research and interviews I have conducted, I shall employ the following four categories in my analysis of American policy toward Russia:

1. *Integrationists*. The integrationists emphasize integrating Russia into Western political and economic institutions to ensure a positive development in Russia over the long term. This group also advocates engagement on a broad range of issues. The belief in the importance of integration and engagement does not in-

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21 Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

volve the internal transformation of the Russian regime as a precondition. The integrationist approach has an overall focus on the internal policies of Russia. To some extent, this category conforms to what Graham calls the “broad engagement” school,<sup>23</sup> but as it is employed and understood here, it also includes political preferences concerning Russia’s internal developments. This group of policymakers (and scholars) argues that engagement is important in itself as a political tool, and that an interventionist approach to domestic issues in Russia would be both futile and counterproductive. The integrationist approach to some extent provides support and opportunities for commercial interests to engage with Russia, since it is difficult to imagine meaningful integration without substantial economic cooperation. To some extent, the integrationist approach has certain similarities with Hamiltonian thinking, in that it supports commercial interests.

2. *Transformationalists*. This group believes in the importance of integrating Russia and includes actors who regard regime transformation as a precondition for meaningful integration and engagement. Transformationalists focus more on internal political developments and the necessity of continued reforms, and believe that an unreformed Russia would be a more difficult actor to cooperate with to achieve concrete results. The transformationalist approach focuses on the link between the internal and the external policies of Russia. This view is one of the main arguments advocated in the Council of Foreign Relations’s report on Russia.<sup>24</sup>

The transformationalists would also argue that a democratic Russia would pursue a different foreign policy and not pose a threat to American interests. Consequently, the US should work toward bringing about a domestic regime transformation to realize the full potential of US-Russian cooperation. As it was briefly pointed out above, variations of Wilsonian idealism are a prevalent theme in American foreign-policy thinking, and political pressure in this direction seems to be present in the American political system almost as if by default. This school of thought would also be more focused on criticizing domestic policies in Russia, and work toward trying to facilitate regime change along democratic lines. For this group of policymakers, regime change is a means of enhancing American national security, in addition to the purely idealistic aspects of supporting the spread of democracy.

3. *Pragmatists*. The pragmatists do not view internal developments and regime transformation in Russia as more important than achieving concrete results by

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23 Graham, “US-Russia Relations”: 5.

24 Council on Foreign Relations, *Russia’s Wrong Direction*, p. 35.

cooperating on selected issues. In this regard, the group mirrors Graham's "selective engagement" category, but it also covers aspects of the "forget Russia" category, with the implication that it is only worth seeking out cooperation on those bilateral issues where there is a minimum of common interests present that could produce concrete results. This approach also implies that the US should not spend resources and seek to engage Russia on issues where the potential is of little significance and importance to US interests. Furthermore, it also means that there are issues where it is not necessary to consult Russia to achieve US goals. This category therefore covers elements of realist political thinking, and from the Russian perspective, also elements of what could be termed US unilateralism. Among the pragmatists, there is usually a focus on Russia's external policies, and on security-related issues.

4. *Primacists*.<sup>25</sup> The primacists' main aim is to seek to preserve America's current hegemony and prevent any challenges – or challengers – from arising and this has traditionally been one of the main tenets of US foreign-policy thinking both during and since the end of the Cold War.<sup>26</sup> The perspective is based mainly on a unilateralist approach to international relations, and the general preference would be for the US to operate without any international constraints. Such unilateralism also implies a zero-sum approach to politics, and there is little room for anything but US perspectives and national interests. This group of policy-makers doubts the usefulness of security cooperation with Russia other than on an ad-hoc basis. It also has similarities with what Graham calls the "proto-containment" school of thought, involving limited Russian influence in regional and international affairs being seen as positive in terms of ensuring a balance of power in favor of the US. Therefore, the primacist category embraces elements of what Goldgeier and McFaul call "power balancers".<sup>27</sup> Overall, a focus on the external policies of Russia is implied in the primacist approach.

The categories I have suggested here will function in the following chapters as benchmarks for describing important currents within different areas of US Russia policy. In my view, they should not be regarded as anything more than tools of simplification adopted to reduce the complexity of analysis.

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25 The term is used in Fraser Cameron, *US Foreign Policy After the Cold War. Global Hegemon or Reluctant Sheriff?* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 177, as one of the subcategories of American unilateralist policy perspectives.

26 See for example John Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier", *Foreign Affairs*, vol 80, no. 5 (2001) on this subject.

27 Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p. 5.

## Contextual factors

Furthermore, some important factors shaping US policy toward Russia during the late 1990s as well as the period covered by this study should be pointed out.

The first is the growing asymmetry of power between the countries, which was no obvious fact in the early 1990s, because at that time there was still considerable uncertainty about the real balance of power between Russia and the United States. Over time, and especially under President Clinton's second term, it became more evident that the US was leaving Russia behind on almost all important dimensions of power. The perceptions of this balance of power changed more slowly than the actual balance, and this caused a lag that in fact functioned as a constraint on the Clinton administration's Russia policy. By the end of the 1990s, it had become clear that Russia possessed little capacity to influence US foreign policy, even on issues within Russia's traditional spheres of influence.<sup>28</sup>

The second is the direction of Russia's development, and in the extension of this, the degree of threat emanating from Russia. As the 1990s progressed, the initial fears of a resurgent communist or a future fascist Russia seemed misfounded, and that at least rudimentary forms of democracy and capitalism had been established. This line of thinking linked domestic political developments and regime type with the way in which Russia conducted its foreign policy, and thereby also how serious a threat it could pose to the United States and the international system. This had obvious implications for how the United States chose (and still chooses) to deal with Russia and how US Russia policy is formulated.

The third factor is Russia's overall importance to the US foreign-policy agenda. This is a function of the first two factors discussed here, but it is also determined by developments in other sectors of US foreign policy.

## US RUSSIA POLICY 2001–2006

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In this chapter I shall provide an overview of the developments in US Russia policy in the period 2001–2006. First, however, I shall briefly summarize the Russia policies of the preceding administrations of President George Bush (1989–1993) and Bill Clinton (1993–2001) to place the following discussion into some perspective, and to try to identify which of the four approaches has been prevalent during the different stages of the period and in the various areas of US-Russian relations.

### Policies under previous administrations

During the Cold War, US policy toward the USSR was largely shaped by the containment strategy, based on the US commitment to limiting or halting the expansion of Soviet power and communist ideology in the world. The temperature of this Cold War relationship varied; there were periods of *détente*, when US policies shifted more in the direction of accommodative diplomacy, and when tensions were lower.

When the George H.W. Bush administration took office in 1989, there was a new period of *détente* in US-Soviet relations, initiated by the changes in the Soviet leadership a few years earlier and Mikhail Gorbachev's work to reform the Soviet economy and political institutions. From the outset, the Bush administration dealt with the Soviet Union in the rival superpower perspective, in which a new strategic balance was sought through nuclear and conventional disarmament deals. As Gorbachev had to face growing domestic challenges to the legitimacy of the Soviet political system, the position of the Bush administration remained conservative, and maintained a focus on Gorbachev as the only serious partner for dialogue. The demise of the Soviet empire in Central Europe and the subsequent fall of the Soviet Union itself in 1991 caught the administration largely by surprise. In this situation, their main fear was that the disintegration of the Soviet Union could lead to chaos, in the wake of which Soviet nuclear weapons could slip away from central control. This issue remained a US policy priority even after the dissolution of the Soviet Union had been finalized and Boris Yeltsin had replaced Gorbachev as the main interlocutor in what had by that time become US-Russian relations. Both sides agreed upon the principle that all former Soviet nuclear weapons would come under Russian control, thereby reducing the risks of proliferation and ensuring a single command and control system. In 1992, this continued to be a dominant theme, but toward the end of the Bush administration other policy issues crept onto the bilateral agenda. At this point there was growing criticism of the lack of US support for the domestic

political and economic reform processes in Russia. The Bush administration, being reluctant to invest more than rhetoric in Russian domestic reforms and uncertain of the actual strength of their influence over Russian development, continued to emphasize Russian foreign policy and not its internal transformation.<sup>29</sup> The administration did not attempt to promote regime change within the area of the former Soviet Union, and concentrated on dealing with important security issues stemming from the dissolution of the Soviet empire.

The Bush administration would come under the realist part of the analytical framework I employ here. It can be debated whether pragmatists or primacists were at the helm of US Russia policy in this period, but in my view it is clear that the pragmatists were prevalent on most issues and this is mainly due to the importance of security-related issues on which cooperative solutions were sought, but also to pragmatists occupying central positions in the foreign-policy establishment having a strong pragmatist alliance in President Bush, Secretary of State James Baker III and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft.<sup>30</sup> However, this did not prevent other key players in the Bush administration from working toward more primacist-oriented goals. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and then Undersecretary for Defense, Paul Wolfowitz, were clearly in favor of this idea. The work involved in formulating the Pentagon document “Defense Strategy for the 1990s” revolved largely around the principle of preventing potential rival powers from emerging, particularly in the military sphere.<sup>31</sup> This was also related to the Pentagon view of Russia as a potential reemerging threat.

The policy line changed fundamentally when the Clinton administration came to power in 1993. President Clinton was in many respects a Wilsonian liberal, and in terms of US-Russia relations he may be categorized as somewhere between an integrationist and a transformationist, depending on where in his presidency the assessment is made. Initially, Clinton favored integration preceding reforms, in the belief that integration would promote and foster internal transformation. Russia’s transition to democracy and a market economy became a key priority for the new administration, which saw a democratic regime change in Russia as a possible basis for a new security relationship. Unlike the Bush administration, Clinton and his team were determined to pursue policies designed to assist Russia’s dual transition as an important means of integrating Russia. This determination resulted in a comprehensive aid package at the start of Clinton’s presidency in 1993, though this was never repeated. Supporting President Yeltsin as the guarantor of continued reforms and a westward orien-

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29 Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, pp. 9-11.

30 Ibid.

31 Patrick Tyler, “US Strategy Calls for Ensuring No Rivals Develop”, *New York Times*, 8 March 1992.



tation was a stable feature of US Russia policy under Clinton, despite several instances of Russian actions suggesting the opposite, most notably the shelling of parliament in 1993 and the first Chechen war in 1994.

The initial enthusiasm for the promotion of democracy and a market economy gradually gave way to a growing disenchantment. The financial collapse in Russia in 1998 demonstrated the weaknesses of the economy and the fragility of the embryonic market institutions. This was a forewarning of events that would later take place within several spheres of interaction, contributing to a cooling down of the relationship. The expansion of NATO to include Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic in 1999 demonstrated that President Clinton was not restricted in his defense of US national interests, despite strong Russian objections. Russian opposition to the NATO air campaign in Serbia in 1999 also substantially chilled relations with the US. Russia accused the US of aggression toward a sovereign state under the pretext of humanitarian intervention, an interpretation of events not uncommon in Russian analyses of US foreign-policy intentions.<sup>32</sup> Later, the launch of the second Chechen war, followed by human rights' violations and a crackdown on media freedom, put an end to any remaining illusions of democratic consolidation in Russia. It seemed that by the fall of 1999, Clinton's Russia policy had ground to a halt, leaving the administration's attempts to support Russia's domestic transitions in disrepute.<sup>33</sup> Neither was the US-Russia relationship embraced by Yeltsin's newly appointed successor, Vladimir Putin. For most of his first year in office, President Putin refused to take part in any new initiatives with Clinton, whom the Russians viewed as a classic lame-duck president.<sup>34</sup>

## Foreign policy preparations and agenda

When President George W. Bush took office on 20 January 2001, he inherited a difficult bilateral relationship fraught with disappointments. Clinton's transformationalist policy toward Russia had stranded in 1998 when the Russian economy collapsed, and the administration never managed to recreate a new positive dynamic in US-Russia relations. This policy of transformation demonstrated the difficulties and complexities in conducting a foreign policy based on facilitating the reform of Russia's economy and political system. But it also demonstrated

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32 This is a good example of how Wilsonian politics can be interpreted, and the analysis quoted here may serve as an example of what I have called the Wilsonian dilemma.

33 Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, pp. 11–13.

34 Strobe Talbott, *The Russia Hand. A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy* (New York: Random House, 2002), p. 4.

how little influence the US actually had on domestic developments in Russia, a lesson the incoming administration intended to learn.

Before the new Bush administration took office, the process of devising a new foreign policy was mainly conducted by Condoleezza Rice, who served as Bush's leading campaign adviser on international affairs. Rice, with Paul Wolfowitz, ran the main working group that elaborated what was to be the foreign policy of the Bush administration.<sup>35</sup> She summarized the views of this group in an article in *Foreign Affairs* in early 2000. In the article, Rice argued that a new Republican administration should return to the basics of defending national interests with the pragmatic realism that had guided US foreign policy since the end of the Second World War.<sup>36</sup> Views on Russia revolved around the idea that the United States should "focus its energies on comprehensive relationships with the big powers, particularly Russia and China, that can and will mold the character of the international political system."<sup>37</sup> Russia, however, was seen as a great power riddled with weaknesses and threatened by possible destabilization. Rice argued that many of Russia's weaknesses were associated with the Clinton administration's exaggerated focus on relations with President Yeltsin to the detriment of overall reform efforts. She called for a disengagement from Russia's domestic policies, and although she underlined the necessity of reforms, it was left largely up to the Russians themselves to sort these problems out; she added that it could take at least a generation for the cultural preconditions for democracy to take hold in Russian society,<sup>38</sup> a point of view that changed significantly by the start of President Bush's second term.

In the meantime, US policy should focus on security issues, such as safeguarding the Russian nuclear stockpile and preparing for a changing nuclear threat, with more countries becoming nuclear powers.<sup>39</sup> At the center of this perception lay the emerging possibility of "rogue states" like Iran, Iraq and North Korea becoming nuclear powers. In the US-Russia relationship this also

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35 James Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans. The History of Bush's War Cabinet* (New York: Penguin, 2004), p. 252. In addition to Rice and Wolfowitz, the group consisted of Richard Armitage, Richard Perle, Dov Zakheim, Stephen Hadley, Robert Blackwill and Robert Zoellick. Regarding other important future players, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld played central roles in the foreign-policy elaboration, whereas Colin Powell did not seem to be involved to the same extent in the process.

36 Condoleezza Rice, "Campaign 2000: Promoting the National Interest", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 79, no. 1 (2000).

37 *Ibid.*: 47.

38 Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, p. 245.

39 This implied a continuation of the successful Cooperative Threat Reduction Program (popularly known as the Nunn-Lugar program) that was started in 1992. The program aimed at securing and dismantling weapons of mass destruction in Russia and other states of the former Soviet Union.

had implications for the continued existence of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty),<sup>40</sup> which was threatened by the desire of the US to develop a missile-defense system to protect against attacks by these rogue states. Rice wrote that the treaty was a “relic of an adversarial relationship” aimed at ensuring a “continued working deterrence during the Cold War”, and that it was no longer necessary. According to Rice and the Bush foreign-policy team, the treaty needed to be changed or abrogated in full, either cooperatively, or if necessary, unilaterally.<sup>41</sup> Rice also claimed that Russia had a problematic track record on proliferation that could cause problems for cooperation with the United States. Additionally, the Second Chechen War that started in 1999 was seen as “a reminder of the vulnerability of the small, new states around Russia and of America’s interest in their independence.”<sup>42</sup> Rice also pointed out that criticism and tougher action was needed to stop Russia carrying out its campaign in Chechnya; this included the possibility of halting international financial assistance to Russia.<sup>43</sup>

One study of the incoming Bush administration’s views on Russia policy made it clear that “Russia represents neither a central threat to American interests, nor a clear opportunity for achieving them across the board”.<sup>44</sup> Russia’s place on the US policy agenda was seen as a function of different factors. Russia’s weakness was one reason why it would play a less central role for the United States, and “the direct importance of Russia had therefore diminished on many issues, as it instead emerged in the context of other issues or relationships.” The administration’s view of Russia as a potential source of proliferation was underlined as a concern, and dealing with this would be an important facet of US Russia policy, especially in the case of Iran, which had been a constant problem for the Clinton administration.<sup>45</sup> The possibility of withdrawing from the ABM Treaty was left open, and NATO expansion was viewed by the Bush administration as a priority, with the interests of the alliance and the potential European candidates in focus. Russian concerns about and objections to this matter were not at the center of US attention.

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40 Signed in 1972 by the United States and the Soviet Union, the Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty stipulated limitations on the development and testing of missile defense systems in the two countries. The original treaty allowed for 2 such systems in each country, limited to 100 interceptor missiles and 100 launchers at each site. The US did not activate any such system, but the Soviet Union deployed a regional missile defense system around Moscow in the 1970s.

41 Rice, “Campaign 2000”: 54.

42 Ibid.: 54.

43 Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, p. 245.

44 Celeste Wallander, “An Overview of Bush Administration Policy and Priorities on Russia”, *Ponars Policy Memo*, no. 187, 1 March 2001 (CSIS [online 15 Nov 2006]).

45 Ibid.: 2.

An important point in the study was the new administration's concern about Russia's relations to the countries of the former Soviet Union. Respecting their independence and sovereignty was regarded as important both for their own development and for Russia's. The view was that Russian dominance in economic and political affairs in this area would be inconsistent with continued reforms in Russia itself, and if Russia were to use its influence to interfere in these states, this would conflict with US interests in the region. With regard to Russia's own transformations, administration officials argued that there was not much that the United States could do to influence this. However, Russia integrating with the West was seen as important, not only from the economic perspective, but also from the perspective of norms and values that were central for the development of democracy and the protection of human rights. This perspective placed Chechnya on the agenda of the new Bush administration.<sup>46</sup>

These sources provide some indications of the changes and possible new directions of US policy towards Russia. The issues related to Russia that Rice's article raises points in the direction of an approach oriented toward great-power cooperation and a focus on security issues. On the issue of internal reform, Rice indicated that a long-term perspective was necessary, which can hardly be called transformationalist. However, it seems clear that the administration wanted to stay out of Russian domestic politics and not interfere in the reform process, and instead focus on Russia's external policies. Demonstrating a clear break with the transformationalist policies of the Clinton administration was important, and the return to realism in US foreign policy that Rice advocated also points in this direction. The Bush foreign-policy team gave missile defense top priority in its relations with Russia, implying a focus on a host of related security issues. Overall, the desire to move away from the Clinton administration's policies and the centrality of classic security issues place the incoming Bush administration in the pragmatist tradition. However, by prioritizing Chechnya and Russia's policies in the post-Soviet space, there were also minor elements of a more value-centered transformationalist approach to Russia, and the rhetorical picture of US-Russia policy was therefore mixed at the outset, although leaning toward a pragmatist perspective.

## **US Russia policy before 9/11**

After a brief synopsis of the foreign-policy thinking of the incoming Bush administration, I shall provide an overview of the administration's foreign-policy priorities prior to 9/11. This will provide a benchmark of the way in which the administration viewed Russia and how it planned to deal with it, without look-

ing at the relationship through the prism of the war on terror. To keep the outline focused and coherent, I shall deal with the subject matter thematically, not chronologically, and the selection of issues reflects the priorities of the administration. To evaluate US Russia policy in the period 2001–2006, I shall focus on four different aspects of the relationship, namely strategic nuclear issues, the war on terror, US policies toward the New Independent States (NIS) and energy cooperation. These issues represent priorities at different points in time during the Bush presidency, and can therefore function as indicators of the development of US policies in the period in question.

It became clear at a relatively early stage of the Bush administration that Russia was not high on the list of American foreign-policy priorities. To some extent, the incoming administration seemed to be making a point of ignoring Russia altogether. When the Bush administration took office, Russian officials in the Kremlin eagerly sought out an opportunity for a meeting between the two presidents, only to find their efforts resisted.<sup>47</sup> After Bush took office, the White House ordered a review of all policies on and aid programs for Russia.<sup>48</sup> This seemed to signal a cutback in aid and cooperation, especially when viewed in the light of the promise to disengage from domestic politics in Russia. However, this policy review never materialized, which was a contrast to the first Bush and Clinton administrations, under which dedicated Russia strategies and policy statements were worked out regularly and published every two or three years. Nonetheless, the State Department was reorganized; the formerly independent office of the Special Adviser for the NIS was merged with the general Bureau of European Affairs. Similar moves were taken at the NSC as well, signaling less focus on Russian affairs.

Other disturbing signals came from top officials of the administration. Newly appointed National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, said in an interview in February 2001 that “Russia constitutes a threat to the West in general and to America’s European allies in particular.” CIA director George Tenet echoed these comments in a US Senate Select Intelligence Committee hearing. Tenet claimed that Russia was selling sophisticated weapons technology to Libya, Iran and China, and that it was actively trying to halt American influence in post-Soviet states.<sup>49</sup> Comments like these did not bode particularly well for the bilateral relationship under the new administration.

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47 Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin’s Russia* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2003), pp. 196–97, 202.

48 This is routinely performed by each incoming administration in most issue areas.

49 Both citations quoted from Jeremy Bransten, “Observers Overview Relations”, *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 19 February 2001 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 10 Jun 2007]).

President Bush outlined his foreign-policy goals for the first time in a speech to State Department personnel late in February. There were references to the importance of Russia because of its large nuclear weapons arsenal and its transition toward democracy and a free-market system.<sup>50</sup> In other speeches, the Bush administration had repeatedly spoken about the diminished relevance of the existing arms control regimes, and had called for moving beyond the ABM Treaty; this had been indicated in several speeches and studies even before the administration took office.

### **NMD AND THE ROLE OF THE ABM TREATY**

Over the course of the first nine months of 2001, issues related to strategic arms control made up the bulk of the bilateral agenda with Russia. The ABM Treaty in its existing format was the main obstacle to the Bush administration achieving one of its main campaign promises. To deliver on this, the United States needed to start more advanced testing and eventually deploy a national missile-defense system (NMD). The issue had been controversial and fiercely debated domestically at the start of the 1970s when the ABM Treaty came into force. Moot points included the feasibility and effectiveness of such a system and the enormous costs of its development. The issue resurfaced during the Reagan presidency as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and was used very efficiently by the president, who managed to bring Mikhail Gorbachev to the negotiating table on additional reductions of nuclear arms in the mid-80s.<sup>51</sup>

The new administration's main argument was that the most urgent threat in the post-Cold War era stemmed from a small number of missiles in the hands of states like Iran, Iraq and North Korea, collectively termed "rogue states" at the time. This threat assessment increased the possibility of an unintended missile launch from Russia and stimulated a renewed interest in developing missile defense. Russia, China and the European allies of the United States were negative to the idea; the threat assessment of the activities of the rogue states was met with skepticism and there were concerns about the implications missile defense would have on international stability in general. In a speech at the

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50 President Bush address to State Department personnel, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2001. Quoted from Frank Csongos, "Bush Outlines Broad Foreign Policy Goals", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 16 February 2001 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 22 Mar 2007]).

51 John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2006), pp. 225–28. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) was proposed by President Reagan in 1982, and talks on this treaty took place sporadically during the 1980s. Although Gorbachev was adamant in his opposition to SDI, the issue probably softened his attitudes toward overall reductions. A final START treaty was signed in 1991, five months before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

National Defense University in Washington DC, President Bush argued the case for developing a national missile-defense system and underlined the importance of extensive consultations with other nations as the US prepared to proceed to build the system. The first step in this direction would be renegotiating or abrogating the ABM Treaty. Since Russia, as the only other effective party to the treaty would be the prime interlocutor on this issue, the speech also contained several passages on Russia:

Today's Russia is not yesterday's Soviet Union. Its government is no longer Communist. Its president is elected. Today's Russia is not our enemy, but a country in transition with an opportunity to emerge as a great nation, democratic, at peace with itself and its neighbors.<sup>52</sup>

It was obvious that the United States needed to engage its major international partners and allies in a dialogue on the issue. Speaking of the necessity to consult with other states on the development of missile defense, Bush said:

... These will be real consultations. We are not presenting our friends and allies with unilateral decisions already made ... Russia and the United States should work together to develop a new foundation for world peace and security in the 21st century. We should leave behind the constraints of an ABM Treaty that perpetuates a relationship based on distrust and mutual vulnerability. This Treaty ignores the fundamental breakthroughs in technology during the last 30 years. It prohibits us from exploring all options for defending against the threats that face us, our allies and other countries. That's why we should work together to replace this Treaty with a new framework that reflects a clear and clean break from the past, and especially from the adversarial legacy of the Cold War. This new cooperative relationship should look to the future, not to the past.<sup>53</sup>

The proposed systems architecture that had been the bone of contention in 2001 was more modest in design than had been its SDI predecessor; nonetheless, considerable technical difficulties and political challenges were involved. The institutional responsibilities for dealing with this matter had been divided up. The Department of Defense (DoD) controlled the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) and had overall responsibility for development, tests and eventual deployment. The Department of State (DoS) had been conducting negotiations with the Rus-

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52 George W. Bush, "Remarks by the President to Students and Faculty at the National Defense University", 1 May 2001 (White House [online 14 May 2007]).

53 Ibid.

sians about changing the ABM Treaty since the second term of the Clinton administration. The policy of the DoS, focusing on keeping the missile defense effort within the confines of a new framework for strategic arms control, reportedly also reflected the views of Colin Powell himself, a proponent of keeping the ABM Treaty in place.<sup>54</sup>

On the DoD side, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had long been a proponent of missile defense, the development of which he had worked on in a number of contexts. He favored the US withdrawing from the treaty, a point of view that had been prevalent in segments of the Republican Party for several decades.<sup>55</sup> There were conflicting interests between the DoS, which favored a policy of strong engagement and negotiation, and the DoD, which focused on the concrete aspects of preparing to deploy a workable system. From the DoD perspective, the ABM Treaty was an obstacle to the department's work to develop a missile-defense system. Some segments of the foreign-policy establishment in the United States had been generally opposed to arms-control agreements with the Soviet Union and Russia for a long time, mostly because any kind of limitation or reduction of nuclear options for the United States in their view amounted to a concession to Russia. These conservatives claimed that negotiating amendments with Russia was tantamount to a Russian veto on the issue, and therefore not an advisable course of action.<sup>56</sup>

Consultations with Russia on the role of the ABM Treaty took place several times during the first half of 2001. Secretary of State Colin Powell met his Russian counterpart on several occasions during this period, though no visible progress was made. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz met with his Russian counterparts for the first round of official talks about missile defense in May. President Bush and President Putin met for the first time in Ljubljana on 16 June and established a personal relationship.<sup>57</sup> President Putin's attitude to the missile-defense question was cautious and he warned of the dangers of unilateral action. Agreement was reached, however, on the need for a US-Russian partnership and closer dialogue in the future. The presidents met again a month later on the margins of the G-8 summit in Genoa. At this second meeting, the agenda was centered more on the strategic issues related to missile defense and the ABM

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54 Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, p. 314.

55 Ibid., pp. 253, 314. This school of thought was negative to arms control in general, and had its intellectual roots in the early 1970s from the debates around the negotiation of SALT I and the ABM Treaty.

56 Congressional Research Service, "Nuclear Arms Control. The US-Russian Agenda", *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, updated 3 October 2002, IB 98030 (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2002):12.

57 Breffni O'Rourke, "Bush-Putin Meeting May Signify New Cooperation", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 18 June 2001 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 29 Mar 2007]).



Treaty than than had been the case within the somewhat broader context of the first. The main result was that future dialogue about the ABM Treaty would be linked to a new round of talks concerning reducing the number of strategic missiles. Linking the issues of defensive and offensive systems was considered to facilitate providing fruitful ground for expanding the scope of future negotiations. Both sides had wanted for several years to move to lower numbers of strategic weapons, but this goal had proven elusive. President Bush was unclear about what he would regard as the preferred end-state of the process, and whether framework agreements on both defensive and offensive systems were desirable or feasible.<sup>58</sup> After the meeting, the tone of the Russian criticism changed, and reports also indicated that President Putin was willing to consider changes to the ABM Treaty. It seems probable that the initially positive personal dynamic between Presidents Bush and Putin created some momentum in the process, thereby providing the necessary direction for the process on the Russian side. Also, the United States and Russia announced that consultations would start on missile defense and strategic nuclear arms reductions.<sup>59</sup>

### NEGOTIATING THE SORT TREATY

The status of talks on strategic arms reductions in 2001 was connected to developments that took place under the former administration. During President Clinton's second term (1997–2000), the ABM Treaty was high on the bilateral agenda, and served to complicate ratification and further negotiation of a future START III. The Clinton administration oversaw the ratification of START II in 1996 after Presidents Bush and Yeltsin had signed it initially in 1993, and it was eventually ratified by the Duma early in 2000.<sup>60</sup> Reaching a new agreement with Russia on the further reduction of the number of strategic weapons proved difficult for the Clinton administration and when it left office, it had not achieved any breakthrough on the issue.

Much of the reason for this was the renewed focus on missile defense and the complications this created in negotiating force reductions with Russia. The Russian side wanted to cut the number of deployed warheads down to 1,500, but the United States had repeatedly resisted such high reductions. The neces-

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58 Ibid.

59 Congressional Research Service, "Russia", *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, updated 25 September 2001, IB 92089 (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2001): 14.

60 START II was ratified by the Duma contingent on the United States adhering to the ABM treaty. This view was also echoed by President Putin. For details on the process, see Congressional Research Service: "Nuclear Arms Control. The US ...": 6. This was connected to amendments made to the ABM Treaty in 1997 that were not submitted to Congress. This made the treaty, legally speaking, not binding.

sary number of warheads stipulated by the DoD was between 2,000 and 2,500, and the military leadership had rejected any additional reduction. According to US officials at the time, cuts to the level preferred by Russia were at this time only an option if Russia agreed to modify the limitations of the ABM treaty on missile-defense development.<sup>61</sup> When the issues of offensive and defensive capabilities reemerged in July 2001, the United States and Russia had no functioning treaty framework in place other than the outdated START I treaty. The Bush administration had earlier stated that it wanted to move away from formal arms control treaties, and that it wanted to adjust force levels and structure unilaterally. From the US perspective, the several rounds of consultations were seen as a forum at which to inform Russia of US plans about offensive and defensive forces, and to convince Russia to annul the ABM treaty. At the outset, the two sides were approaching the issue with relatively different solutions in mind. The consultations initially showed few signs of progress,<sup>62</sup> but they were not derailed by the events of 9/11, which demonstrates the importance of the issue.

The presidents met again on the sidelines of a summit in Shanghai in October 2001. Here, the Russians surprised the Americans with a proposal for liberalizing the ABM Treaty's restrictions in exchange for an agreement to keep the treaty alive for another period of two years. The proposed deal stipulated that the US could continue to test a potential missile-defense system as long as it was not further developed or deployed.<sup>63</sup> President Bush was positive to the proposal and "wanted to work out a deal if possible." However, the Pentagon was negative, and moved to thwart the proposal by giving the Russians a special briefing on the US missile-defense testing program. The briefing demonstrated a "maximalist view" of future testing that included "every conceivable type of testing that might be done".<sup>64</sup> This perspective on testing reduced to almost zero the room for compromise, and made it very difficult for the Russian side to uphold the proposed deal. Shortly after, when President Putin visited Washington in November, the chances of reaching an agreement had evaporated, and

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61 Congressional Research Service, "Nuclear Arms Control. The US ...": 7.

62 A high-level meeting between Secretary Rumsfeld and Sergey Ivanov in the middle of August did little but repeat earlier positions on the issues. See Mark Baker, "Rumsfeld Visit Fails to Bridge Arms Differences", *Newsline*, 14 August 2001 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 20 Mar 2007]).

63 Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *Kremlin Rising. Vladimir Putin's Russia and the End of Revolution* (New York: Scribner, 2005), p. 134. This proposal was not publicly known at the time, but has later been confirmed by both US and Russian officials. It was also hinted at in other reports, see Andrew Tully, "Public, Private Statements Conflict on Deal to Amend ABM Treaty", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 2 November 2001 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 20 Mar 2007]).

64 Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, p. 134.

President Bush announced that the US would unilaterally reduce the number of nuclear weapons in its arsenal:

Current levels of our nuclear forces do not reflect today's strategic realities. I have informed President Putin that the United States will reduce our operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads to a level between 1,700 and 2,200 over the next decade, a level fully consistent with American security.<sup>65</sup>

President Bush also made it clear that the United States would withdraw from the ABM treaty by the end of the year.<sup>66</sup> President Putin's public statements about the ABM treaty reverted to the stance that "Russia's view remains unchanged,"<sup>67</sup> after a short spell of public statements indicating flexibility on the issue. Although the proposed level of cuts suited the Russian side, there was still the matter of codifying and formalizing the agreement into some form of legally binding document, which the Russians very much wanted. According to several sources, it seems probable that President Bush agreed to start the process toward a minimalist version of a formalized agreement after Secretary Powell had ensured a muted Russian response to the US withdrawal from the ABM treaty when that time came. This was achieved when Powell traveled to Moscow early in December to state formally that the US was to withdraw from the treaty. Powell wanted to "show it to President Putin and hoped to coordinate the Russian response so the world could see that there was not a crisis."<sup>68</sup> On 13 December, President Bush officially declared US abrogation of the ABM treaty to the Russian side, effective as of 13 June 2002. This ended years of futile attempts by the Russians to renegotiate and keep the ABM treaty, but the Russian official responses were, as expected, muted.

Talks on reducing the two countries' strategic arsenals were resumed in January 2002. At the negotiations, Russia insisted on the "organic interconnection" of strategic defensive and offensive weapons, as Russia wanted specific assurances that the missile defense system would not undermine its strategic deterrent. During intensive negotiations in early 2002, the parties were very close to reaching an agreement on reductions. Powell said such an agreement "could take the form of a treaty or something else."<sup>69</sup>

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65 Andrew Tully, "Bush and Putin Begin Summit by Pledging Cuts in Nuclear Arsenal", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 14 November 2001 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 24 Mar 2007]).

66 Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, p. 135.

67 Andrew Tully, "Bush and Putin Begin Summit ..."

68 Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, p. 136.

69 Francesca Mereu, "Powell Says Washington and Moscow Close to Deal on Arms Cuts", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 10 December 2001 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 25 Mar 2007]).

Although Russian officials were pleased with the fact that President Bush had agreed to work toward a legally binding document, there were plenty of disagreements on the content of the agreement. The Russian Foreign Ministry said the agreement on nuclear weapons reductions had to be “radical, controllable and irreversible,” so that the arms cuts would not “remain only on paper.”<sup>70</sup> The DoD wanted to keep a broad set of options and an upward flexibility for handling possible future situations and developments. During the negotiations, the US proposed “more detailed exchanges of information, visits to particular sites,” and “additional inspections” to enhance confidence and help verify reductions. However, the two sides were unable to agree on the nature of these transparency measures; whereas Russia favored formally binding measures, the United States wanted a cooperatively oriented regime.<sup>71</sup> One of the sticking points at the negotiations that took the most time to solve was the rules for counting the number of warheads. Eventually this was solved by using the principle favored by the US. The treaty contained, however, the concrete limits on the number of warheads Russia had wanted.<sup>72</sup> An agreement between the parties in the form of a treaty was announced by President Bush on 13 May. President Bush and President Putin signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) in Moscow, thus ending a lengthy process that had been underway since the late 1990s.

In short, it is possible to say that the treaty encoded US proposals in content, and that it mirrored Russia’s desire for a formal document. The text of the treaty was very short, did not include any new monitoring or verification provisions, and left the transparency issue to be settled at some point in the future.<sup>73</sup> Through the SORT treaty, the Bush administration achieved several of its strategic objectives by acquiring more flexibility to and fewer restraints on its nuclear posture. The relationship between defensive and offensive aspects of strategic arms control issues and negotiations have always been closely intertwined, and attaining goals within one area usually implied some degree of concession within another. This seemed to be the case also for the Bush administration in its dealings with the Russians on arms control issues. To reduce the political and diplomatic effects of abrogating the ABM Treaty, something tangible had to be given in return to Russia. I think it is fruitful to view the SORT

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70 “Nuclear Arms Cuts Must Be Irreversible”, *Newsline*, 10 January 2002 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 25 Mar 2007]).

71 Phillip C. Bleek, “US and Russia At Odds over Strategic Reductions Treaty”, *Arms Control Today* (May 2002 [online 25 Mar 2007]).

72 Congressional Research Service, “Nuclear Arms Control. The Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty”, *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, RL 31448 (Washington DC: Library of Congress, 2007): 4.

73 The START treaty was left in place, and verification and monitoring procedures were retained from this document. See Congressional Research Service, “Nuclear Arms Control. The Strategic...”: 8.

treaty in this light. The Bush administration was positive to the treaty being very short, and that it contained few specifics and no detailed method of verification. All this implied that the treaty left the United States with considerable freedom of action concerning the future structure of the US nuclear arsenal. Ensuring flexibility, in addition to maintaining a large stockpile of nuclear warheads in storage, meant that the United States was preserving the option of maintaining comfortable nuclear superiority in relation to any possible future competitor on the nuclear scene.

From the offensive weapons perspective, the arms control agenda of the Bush administration was therefore driven by primacist concerns. However, there are also interesting differences in what seemed to be the approaches of the DoS and the DoD on this issue, in that the State Department pursued policies that sought to alleviate the somewhat more primacist policies of the Pentagon. This was demonstrated both in the ABM and the SORT processes. Secretary Powell seemed to work at length to keep the ABM treaty functioning by trying to renegotiate it, whereas the Pentagon seemed more eager to get rid of any legal instruments that limited the policies of the administration. In this regard, the SORT negotiations were geared more toward granting concessions to the Russian side than the ABM process, which was higher on the political agenda of the Bush administration.

### **NMD DEVELOPMENT DECISION**

On 17 December 2002, a year after formally abrogating the ABM Treaty, President Bush officially directed the Department of Defense to begin deploying an initial set of missile-defense capabilities by 2004–2005. This would serve as a starting point for the fielding of improved and expanded capabilities in the future. Furthermore, President Bush stated that the United States would begin a dialogue with Russia and other key nations to enhance transparency, build confidence, and explore areas of potential cooperation involving US missile defense plans. From a bilateral US-Russia perspective, this decision does not seem to include Russia as an active party; it is more about assessing the importance of Russian attitudes toward the issue, and the impact thereof, if any, on US decisions. The decision to renegotiate or abrogate the ABM treaty lay in the hands of US decision-makers, and it is doubtful whether Russian (or other European) opinions would matter very much in the final analysis. However, if the United States decided on abrogation, it would be preferable to have Russian acquiescence rather than public criticism; given the long-standing Russian attitudes on the issue, however, outright support was not very likely. Although consultations were important diplomatic and public-relations tools, it is hard to imagine that consultations would have influenced the United States to choose not to pursue missile defense. Given the history of the issue and its saliency to many members

in the administration, the key question was really whether the United States would manage to dampen overall criticism and gain Russian acquiescence on the issue, thereby ensuring public acceptance of the American missile-defense plans.

In this regard, the US policy on strategic nuclear issues constituted an approach in the vein of what I called the primacists. Although the US sought out cooperation with Russia on these matters, Russia had few compatible interests or potential gains by agreeing to the US proposals. There is little doubt that the US would have proceeded with abrogating the ABM treaty and missile-defense deployment plans whether Russia had chosen to go along with it or not. It is again interesting to note that the DoS was focusing on the diplomatic negotiation process of trying to bring Russia on board, working in a direction more similar to the pragmatist approach. The DoD concerned itself much less with securing an agreement with the Russians, and worked more concretely toward abrogation of the treaty and securing a decision to develop missile defense. From the Russian perspective, it is highly probable that developments within offensive strategic weapons systems provided the necessary impetus to criticize less the ABM and missile-defense issues.

However, the US did not give any concessions to Russia by signing the SORT treaty, besides agreeing to a legally binding treaty format. The document was far too vague and general to limit substantially US offensive capabilities, and can therefore not be regarded as having had any significant impact on US strategic nuclear policy. Overall, the United States gave little and gained what it wanted on these issues, securing a high level of available warheads and the possibility of developing a working technology for defense against potential missile attacks by other states. These were both goals geared toward securing US strategic primacy in the future. Russia seemed content to be included in the process and did not display any particular criticism on the official level.

## **US Russia policy after 9/11**

As we have seen, the Russia agenda during the Bush administration's first year in office was dominated by arms control issues. Cooperation in other areas was not broad, and did not include many issues outside the traditional security area. Cooperation with Russia was guided by classical realpolitik, somewhat similar to the primacists, but also with elements of pragmatist policies more focused on engaging Russia. One clear difference in the US approach during the new millennium was that US policy toward Russia was mainly a function of other issues, and not a policy objective in itself. This was vastly different from the 1990s, when Russia was one of the top priorities of US foreign policy.

The events of 9/11 represented a watershed in US foreign policy that caused substantial changes in both approach and content. These changes also had implications for the relationship with Russia. The first wave of effects was largely positive, adding to the already productive dynamic of the relationship, whereas the second wave had a more detrimental influence overall.

### THE EFFECTS OF 9/11 AND PUTIN'S RESPONSE

President Putin's responses to the events of 9/11 became powerful factors in facilitating improved relations between the two countries and Putin was thus able to build on the relationship that had started to develop with President Bush over the course of their first meetings. Putin's conciliatory actions opened up possibilities for new areas of cooperation that could prove beneficial to Russia. The most important immediate effect of the 9/11 response was that the Chechnya issue went from being a central part of the problem in US-Russian relations to being part of the solution; the shared threat of domestic terrorism became the key factor in facilitating a closer relationship with the United States.

The events of 9/11 changed the priorities of US foreign and security policy overnight. The new priorities, threats and challenges to the United States were laid out in the new National Security Strategy (NSS) document, published in September 2002.<sup>74</sup> The dominant focus of this document was the threat from international terrorism, and the entire strategy was formulated with the aim of preventing new terrorist attacks. The document blended three elements of foreign policy advocated by important actors in the Bush administration.

First, the focus on terrorism paved the way for increased focus on the concept of pre-emptive war and the possibilities for the preventive use of military force. Second, the document adopted the self-image of the United States as a superpower without any serious competitors and with unrivalled military power. Third, the document also stated that the United States would seek to use its dominating position to promote democratic values overseas. The strategy seemed to signal a revival of Wilsonian idealism, this time linked with the use of America's unprecedented military power.<sup>75</sup>

In the document, the significance of US relations to the other great powers was seen through an anti-terror prism, and most of these powers were assumed

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74 National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 2002 (White House [online 5 Feb 2007]).

75 Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, p. 329.

to be on the US side in the war on terror.<sup>76</sup> This assumption also colored the role of Russia. The NSS document took a positive view on developments in Russia and argued that a “... consensus about basic principles was slowly taking shape.”<sup>77</sup> It further stated that the United States sought to “use this turn in Russian thinking to refocus our relationship on emerging and potential common interests and challenges. We are broadening an already extensive cooperation in the global war on terrorism.”<sup>78</sup> Written a year after 9/11, the NSS document reflected a belief that the relationship between the United States and Russia stood on the verge of a new era with the possibility of expanded cooperation.

Compared to earlier NSS documents, the 2002 version represented a new constellation of ideas. Although colored by many of the ideas of Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Vice President Cheney, the document was largely an initiative of the NSC, and was drafted mainly by Condi Rice, Philip Zelikow and Stephen Hadley.<sup>79</sup> The foreign-policy goals of the United States that were relevant in a US-Russia perspective after 9/11 can be briefly summarized as follows:<sup>80</sup>

1. To eradicate international terrorist forces through reducing financial and weapons flows that support them, strengthening the capacity with allies and partners who share this goal and promoting policy change, or as a last resort regime change, in states that do not.
2. Prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through a combination of strengthening the international non-proliferation regime and counter-proliferation efforts with allies and partners.
3. To maintain stable supplies of oil and gas at reasonably stable prices in order to sustain robust economic growth.
4. To promote and spread democratic values and free markets as a major underpinning of global order and integration.
5. Prevent the emergence of a peer competitor on the military and security front that could challenge US primacy.

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76 Svein Melby, et al., *Supermaktens begrensning. Perspektiver på Bush-doktrinens utvikling* [The Limitations of the Superpower. Perspectives on the development of the Bush-doctrine], IFS Info, no. 6 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 2006), p. 10. The assessments of the NSS 2002 document have been translated from this study.

77 National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy ... 2002*, p. 26.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

79 Mann, *Rise of the Vulcans*, p. 331.

80 Adapted from National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy ... 2002*, and Andrew Kuchins, et al., “US-Russian Relations: The Case for an Upgrade”, *Carnegie Endowment Report*, January 2005 (Carnegie Endowment [online 5 Dec 2006]), p. 5.



Most of these goals had always been of importance in US foreign policy, but what really changed after 9/11 was the ordering of the priorities and the importance of attaining the goals. These changes also affected the importance of and focus on Russia as a potential partner. Some of the goals would later also present the United States with difficult dilemmas concerning its relationship with Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union in connection with the global war on terror.

## **WAR ON TERROR**

The most important facet of the relationship was the concrete assistance Russia provided to the United States when US military forces went to Afghanistan to deal with al-Qaeda. Russia helped out by providing intelligence; it also increased humanitarian assistance and arms supplies to the Northern Alliance's campaign against the Taliban. Additionally, Russia opened up its airspace for humanitarian flights and promised to cooperate on search-and-rescue missions. Military operations in Afghanistan quickly led to bases in Central Asian countries becoming an issue. The countries of Central Asia were positive to the idea, and that Russia seemingly did not try to obstruct US access to air bases in the area removed a major obstacle to the US war effort. This was one of the key decisions taken by President Putin to assist US operations in Afghanistan. The Russians sought out guarantees, however, that these bases were to be temporary and would not constitute building blocks for any permanent US presence in the area.

9/11 did not just mainly affect the practical level of the relationship; it also created the psychological effect of binding the United States and Russia closer together as allies united against a common threat. For Russia, rapprochement with the United States also created positive momentum in relations with other Western countries and institutions, and this laid the foundations for a westward orientation and foreign-policy pragmatism not seen in Russia since the early 1990s. The alliance between the United States and Russia in the war on terror laid the basis for new areas of cooperation, and a renewed focus on old areas. One of these issues was intelligence cooperation, within which there had been some degree of contact even during the 1990s. Cooperation on topics related to terrorist networks, personnel, financing and WMD technology was obviously important to the US, but at the same time these were difficult issues. The US and Russian intelligence services had been harsh rivals during the Cold War, and there was little previous cooperation to build on. However, after the end of the Cold War, cooperation had taken place between the CIA and the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) and the Military Intelligence Service (GRU), and also between the domestic services of the country. In connection with the war on terror, GRU Director Valentin Korabelnikov visited Washington DC in an effort to enhance intelligence cooperation in February 2002. FBI and the Fed-

eral Security Service (FSB) signed an agreement on counterterrorism cooperation in 2004. There is little information publicly available on the subject, making it difficult to evaluate this area of cooperation. But as one Russian GRU official was quoted as saying, "... if we want to achieve real results in this difficult and dreadful war, the media must be completely disconnected from our joint work with our Western counterparts."<sup>81</sup> Some US officials lauded the cooperative efforts in this field publicly,<sup>82</sup> and even official statements have mentioned it several times. This cooperation seems to have had its most fruitful phase during the start of operations in Afghanistan. However, it is difficult to see on what specific issues intelligence cooperation could have been fruitful for both parties after the US military had taken control of Afghanistan. On most issues high on the US agenda, Russia often had diametrically opposed views (e.g. the case of Iraq and Iran), which meant that concrete cooperation on exchange of information would be of little relevance.

In the related field of counterproliferation, the issues and sticking points were familiar from earlier periods during the 1990s. In the view of the United States, cooperation with Russia on non-proliferation issues often proved to be difficult. On the one hand, there was a series of multilateral and bilateral efforts aimed at controlling, monitoring and limiting the spread of technologies that could facilitate the development of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, Russia had links and long-standing ties based on arms sales with several countries that the United States termed "states of concern".<sup>83</sup> This seemingly dual Russian approach, consisting of a blend of cooperation and a direct conflict of interests, was problematic for US counterproliferation efforts. Nonetheless, the United States and Russia did have several successful joint projects behind them on non-proliferation issues.<sup>84</sup>

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81 Vladimir Bogdanov, "Secrets Must Be Shared. Russo-US Special Services Collaboration Post 11 September Muddled", *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 4 December 2001.

82 Thomas Graham, "US-Russia Relations", conference remarks given at American Enterprise Institute, 14 October 2005 [online 24 Nov 2006].

83 Council on Foreign Relations, *Russia's Wrong Direction*, p. 41.

84 Among these, the Cooperative Threat Reduction programs (Nunn-Lugar programs), aimed at increasing the security of nuclear weapons, materials and technology, had been operating very effectively since their start in the 1990s. Also, the Highly Enriched Uranium Purchase Agreement Program, where Russia blended down decommissioned weapons grade nuclear materials for resale as regular nuclear fuel to civilian US nuclear power plants, had been a success, although little known. The non-proliferation cooperation between the United States and Russia was also of course founded on the general international agreements in this area, such as the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Cooperation within non-proliferation issues was hampered by Russian arms and technology to certain countries, especially Iran. This was also a major problem for the Clinton administration, particularly the Russian construction of the Bushehr reactor and other types of commercial nuclear cooperation. US officials argued that this type of cooperation with a country that was seen as sponsoring terrorism was counterproductive to non-proliferation policies and outright dangerous. Although these problems related to Iran and WMD were toned down in the aftermath of 9/11 and at the start of the war on terror, they resurfaced in US-Russia relations already in May 2002, when they were taken up by President Bush at the Moscow summit. Since then, Russian relations with Iran have been a major irritant to the US and a problematic issue in the relationship. Some analysts have called the US approach zero-tolerance as it is not giving Russia any room to maneuver on the issue, saying that "Russia is too committed to complete the Bushehr project as it has got a strong economic and political stake in carrying that project to fruition."<sup>85</sup> This approach was rooted in the view that all elements of Russian nuclear cooperation with Iran were detrimental to US interests, and would only serve to underpin Iranian efforts to acquire nuclear weapons.

This view has been problematic because it demonstrates little understanding of the Russian motives and interests in this case. Russia cooperates with Iran on a broad range of issues that involve substantial amounts of money. According to a long-term program approved in July 2002, Russia plans to construct up to six reactors at the southern Bushehr plant and other sites, expand conventional Iranian power stations, develop gas and oil deposits, jointly produce aircraft, and expand cooperation with Iran in communications and metallurgy.<sup>86</sup> From the Russian perspective, therefore, cooperation in Bushehr had broader implications for its relationship with Iran; indeed, accepting tougher policies and sanctions could jeopardize other types of cooperation, and thus hamper Russia's strategic interests in the Middle East. The issue of Iran in the US-Russian relationship is a complex one: although the US might prefer Russia to adhere to its view of Iran as a potential threat, this was hardly a practical or desirable option for Russian decision-makers.

On this issue, the United States was following a primacist policy toward Russia, mainly because US policy goals would severely limit Russian freedom of action in the Middle East. US perspectives provided Russia with little room to pursue its interest on this issue, which in general is the Russian desire to main-

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85 Francesca Mereu, "Analysts Agree Now Is Time to Resolve Standoff over Iran's Bushehr Plant", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 12 July 2002 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 1 May 2007]).

86 "Moscow Unveils Plans to Build Nuclear Reactors in Iran", *Newsline*, 26 July 2002 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 1 May 2007]).

tain an active presence in the region. Working from the point of view that US interests should decide Russian foreign policy was not a feasible option on this issue.

### THE JOINT DECLARATION

The signing of the Joint Declaration in Moscow, May 2002, constituted one of the definitive high points of the post 9/11 relationship between the United States and Russia. The text of the document stated that:

We are achieving a new strategic relationship. The era in which the United States and Russia saw each other as enemies or strategic threats to each other has ended. We are partners and we will cooperate to advance stability, security and economic integration, and to jointly counter global challenges and to help resolve regional conflicts.<sup>87</sup>

The document contained several potential fields of increased cooperation and focused on the political and economic sphere, non-proliferation policies and a new consultative mechanism on strategic security. In the economic sphere, working toward Russian accession to the WTO and repealing the Jackson-Vanik Amendment were, in addition to increasing energy cooperation, the main items on the agenda.<sup>88</sup> If successfully executed, these issues could act as important means toward increasing a westward orientation and integration. In the security sphere, increasing transparency and cooperation within missile defense issues were important.

The Joint Declaration document held the key to initiating cooperation within several areas, but US political willingness to give it real content was not particularly strong.<sup>89</sup> The most elaborate and sophisticated conceptualization of a radically improved US-Russia relationship came from the director of policy planning at the DoS, Richard Haass. Haass stated that:

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87 Office of the White House Press Secretary, "Joint Declaration on a New Relationship between the United States and Russia", 24 May 2002 (White House [online 3 May 2007]).

88 The Jackson-Vanik amendment (1974), named after its major co-sponsors, Sen. Henry Jackson (D-WA) and Rep. Charles Vanik (D-OH), denied most favored nation trading status to certain countries with non-market economies that restricted emigration rights.

89 The success or failure of the Joint Declaration was of course not only left to the United States alone, and Russia obviously played a big part in bilateral developments. US Russia policy is, however, the focus of this study, and would also probably be a more important factor in facilitating cooperation, given its international position and available resources.

Indeed, the most important and challenging task at this stage is to define a long-term positive agenda for the bilateral relationship. It has to be about more than eliminating old Cold War threats and fighting terrorism, important as those are. The relationship must be based on new opportunities for cooperation.<sup>90</sup>

Haass listed energy issues, the economic development of the Russian Far East and increased cooperation on Central Asia as concrete possibilities.

Officials at higher levels in the Bush administration had so far not provided any concrete outline of the outcome they sought for US-Russia relations,<sup>91</sup> and this was not a promising sign as far as Russia's position on the US foreign-policy list of priorities was concerned. The top people at the Pentagon had been more critical of Russia. Although they did speak of the change from potential adversaries to potential allies, they were not spending their time trying to figure out new ways to engage Russia; this was the responsibility of the DoS and the NSC. Although the United States welcomed the shift in Russian foreign policy, the US itself did not give much thought to developing its own Russia strategy after the SORT treaty had been concluded.

Given the weight of the Cold War baggage in the relationship, it was to some extent necessary to construct a new relationship. This would have implied investing at least some political and bureaucratic resources in engaging Russia, but not many in the administration had that in mind. Even fewer were inclined to prioritize this issue on a busy foreign-policy agenda, particularly when the war on terror shifted its focus toward the Middle East, and an invasion of Iraq seemed increasingly likely. In addition, the relationship became caught in a stream of developments within which the two countries' interests did not match. Many of the traditionally problematic issues and their cumulative effect probably destroyed much of the positive psychological dynamic that had permeated the relationship since 9/11.

### THE IMPACT OF THE IRAQ WAR

During the first term of the Bush administration, Iraq was probably the most difficult and damaging issue for the US-Russia relationship. The United States claimed that Iraq was playing an important role as a supporter of al-Qaeda and terrorism in general, in addition to posing a threat to international security

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90 Richard N. Haass, "US-Russian Relations in the Post-Cold War World", Speech given to RAND Business Leaders Forum, 1 June 2002 (US Department of State [online 4 May 2007]).

91 Robert Legvold, "US-Russian Relations 10 Months After September 11", *Aspen Institute Conference Paper*, August 2002 (Columbia International Affairs Online [online 21 Apr 2007]: 11, and Rose Gottemoeller, "From Summits to Sleepovers", *Moscow Times*, 17 June 2002 (Carnegie Endowment [online 21 Apr 2007]).

due to its continued possession of WMD stockpiles and development programs. The United States managed to secure a UN Security Council resolution (1441) on enforcing its earlier resolutions on Iraq, thereby giving Iraq a last chance to report on and eliminate its WMD arsenal. Whether Iraq was complying with the resolution and cooperating with the UN weapons inspection team divided the United States and its European partners and allies. Russia shared the rather less bleak assessments of Germany, France and other European states regarding the threat from Iraq's purported weapons of mass destruction.

In attempting to secure a Security Council vote authorizing the use of force, Alexander Vershbow, US ambassador to Moscow, threatened that "Russia should carefully weigh the consequences of how it votes." In his view, Russia's leadership faced a clear choice between condoning a US invasion, abstaining from voting, or facing an immediate deterioration in ties with the United States. He promised more economic and technological cooperation, and added that Russia's relationship with NATO was beginning to yield positive results and could improve additionally. All these projects would be harmed, he said, if Russia vetoed a US-backed UN resolution, leaving no doubt that bilateral ties would suffer across the board if Moscow chose to go against the United States on this issue.<sup>92</sup> This, however, was not enough to change the Russian position.

After this failed attempt to secure a resolution, the United States took the matter into its own hands, thus causing the opposition to harden. Russia was adamantly opposed to any unilateral US military action in Iraq, and President Putin repeatedly argued that an invasion would be a big mistake.<sup>93</sup> To Russia, the invasion of Iraq clearly demonstrated the unilateralist and primacist tendencies of US foreign policy. Also, the stated desire of the Bush administration to bring democracy to post-war Iraq to spark off the transformation of the Middle East region rang hollow in Moscow. Certainly, other potential motives for the Iraq war sounded more likely, but most importantly, the grounds for believing that democratic institutions and values could be exported and find fertile soil in a country without anything resembling such traditions seemed overly ambitious and not rooted in any realistic assessment of the most probable post-war scenarios. And if democracy was needed in Iraq and Iran, why not in Egypt and Saudi Arabia? This factor probably added to other negative assessments of the motives and reasons for the Iraq invasion. However, the lack of will to adhere to international law, work with institutions and listen to close partners and allies,

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92 Jeremy Bransten, "Moscow Unlikely to Be Swayed by Threat over "No" Vote on Iraq", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 13 March 2003 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 24 Mar 2007]).

93 "Putin Says He is Against Removing Hussein from Power", 9 February 2003, *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 24 Mar 2007]).

made up the most significant grounds for the fierce international opposition to the Iraq war, and the deteriorating international image of the United States.

Different perceptions of threats and interests regarding Iraq, and to a lesser extent Iran, eventually hampered the “special relationship” between the United States and Russia. This was made perfectly clear in the period leading up to the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003. To some extent, Russia managed to play a more subtle and subdued role in this conflict, and therefore the fallout with the US was not as serious as for some of the other actors involved.<sup>94</sup> Overall, this was the first issue in a longer series of disappointments in the bilateral relationship.

### **US POLICIES TOWARD THE NIS AND THE NEAR ABROAD<sup>95</sup>**

Many analysts have traditionally seen the policies of the United States and Russia concerning the area of the former Soviet Union as characterized by rivalry and strategic competition.<sup>96</sup> And up to September 2001, this is a relatively accurate description of events. The general rapprochement seemed to indicate a change even on this issue, with a seemingly more relaxed Russian attitude toward a US presence and policy in the area. How did US policy on this issue develop, and what implications did this have for the bilateral relationship?

US foreign policies with implications for Russia and the US-Russian relationship in this area are of two main types. Both of these strands of policy are rooted in the security sphere and have important geopolitical implications for Russia. The first is the policy of the NATO alliance, within which the interests of the United States are often decisive for the policies and actions of the organization. This is the case also for the main issue in this subchapter, the second round of NATO expansion.<sup>97</sup> The second type is the indirect geopolitical effects of the war on terror in the area of the former Soviet Union.

To the Russian foreign-policy establishment, these lines of policy were linked to another part of US foreign policy, namely the Freedom Agenda. The policies concerning US support for democratic movements and regime change in the area of the newly independent states will be discussed in the next section.

94 It was in this situation that the famous, but unattributed, Condi Rice quote about “forgiving Russia, ignoring Germany and punishing France” surfaced.

95 Newly Independent States (NIS), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the term “near abroad” have specific meanings in some contexts, but will be used here mainly to describe the geographical area of the former Soviet Union. Thus, the terms are not intended to have any particular political or institutional connotations.

96 See for example Zbigniew Brzezinski’s *The Grand Chessboard* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), pp. 30–56.

97 The Second post-Cold War round of expansion. Earlier expansion rounds are not included in this count.

## NATO EXPANSION

NATO expansion has always been a sticking point in US-Russia relations, particularly because Russia sees the United States' as the dominant actor of the alliance. Consequently, NATO policies are often seen as instruments of a broader US foreign policy. Before the announcement of the first round of NATO expansion in 1997, the Clinton administration sought to alleviate any negative fallout from the expansion process by simultaneously establishing a closer relationship with Russia within the NATO institutional architecture.<sup>98</sup> Russian opposition to NATO expansion in this period was ferocious and widespread in conservative and military circles, the general population and the media.<sup>99</sup> In its most extreme form, the rhetoric took the form of US conspiracies to weaken and encircle Russia. According to many analysts, the main goals of the US for expanding NATO to the former Warsaw Pact countries of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, were probably founded more on Wilsonian thinking and on ensuring the Western integration of these countries, rather than being developed along primacist lines of policy directed against Russia.<sup>100</sup> This did not, however, prevent most of the foreign-policy establishment in Russia from thinking about NATO expansion as a threat. Furthermore, some US actors did in fact regard the process of NATO expansion as a way of containing Russia.

No matter what intentions lay behind the decision to expand, one geopolitical side effect would be that NATO would be moving closer to Russia's borders, as a comparison between a geopolitical map of Europe from 1989 and another one from 15 years later would show. This was no doubt discomfiting seen from a Russian perspective. This change in geopolitical fortunes since the end of the Cold War is further underscored by the fact that most new NATO members were formerly close allies of Russia, which adds to the psychological dimension of the matter. The security implications of this undoubtedly zero-sum situation have caused the Russian political and military elite concerns, although of varying gravity at different points in time.

Relations between Russia and NATO worsened after the air campaign against Serbia in 1999, and there were few signs of positive developments when President Bush took office in 2001. Members of the Bush administration's foreign-policy team had been working in many ways toward NATO expansion since the mid-1990s. This included participation in the US Committee

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98 This was made by establishing the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) in 1997, giving Russia a presence at NATO HQ in Brussels and a voice on a set of issues of common interest.

99 For a detailed outline of Russia-NATO relations during the 1990s, see Sullivan, *US-Russia Relations*, pp. 77–88.

100 Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p. 185.



on NATO, one of the most important lobby organizations within this area.<sup>101</sup> Further NATO expansion was firmly on the foreign-policy agenda of the Bush administration, and the process toward the second round of expansion started to accelerate in 2001. Public statements on the matter focused on securing the freedom of the new European democracies and integrating them into Western institutions. US officials stated on several occasions that the expansion was not directed toward Russia, and that it posed no military threat. The reactions of the Putin administration were significantly more muted than during the first round in the mid-1990s, and this was attributed to the general pragmatism and westward orientation of President Putin's foreign policy. Some Russian officials described the policy of the Putin regime as "calmly negative".<sup>102</sup> On other levels, the criticism was as fierce as in the previous decade, particularly from conservative circles in the armed forces and the diplomatic service.

The new US strategy toward Russia was different to that of the Clinton administration. Under the Bush administration, handling relations with Russia on the question of NATO enlargement was not the focus of US policy, and beyond the rhetoric, alleviating Russian concerns was not a high priority. However, at British Prime Minister Tony Blair's initiative, Russia was invited to closer cooperation on an upgraded institutional architecture. Initially, the US foreign-policy establishment was split on the issue; closer integration of Russia into NATO was an idea that did not accord especially well with the views of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and this was another issue about which the Secretaries of Defense and State disagreed. Rumsfeld held the view that Russia was neither relevant nor trustworthy, and that integrating Russia more into NATO institutions would only undercut the efficiency and cohesion of the alliance. However, Secretary of State Powell held the view that Russia should be rewarded for its foreign-policy pragmatism.<sup>103</sup> At that point in time, Powell's argument had considerable merit, and it also echoed the position of the White House on the issue. This tipped the US position toward Powell's view, and laid the foundations for an approach focused more on engagement with Russia on the matter of expansion. This process eventually led to the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council

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101 Paul Wolfowitz, Stephen Hadley and Richard Perle served on the board of this organization. USCIN was founded in 1996 by Bruce P. Jackson, a central member of the Project for a New American Century.

102 Breffni O'Rourke, "Not Enemies, Not Yet Allies", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 16 August 2004 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 20 Mar 2007]).

103 Anatol Lieven, "The Secret Policemen's Ball: The United States, Russia and the International Order After September 11", *International Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 2 (2002): 9 and Colin McMahon, "NATO, Russia maneuver as Baltics watch", *Chicago Tribune*, 3 January 2001 (Center for Defense Information [online 18 Feb 2007]).

(NRC) in May 2002, which replaced the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) of the 1990s. The number of issue areas under the new council increased, although the fundamentals of cooperation remained the same as under the PJC. This implied an increased Russian presence in Brussels, and that its opinions would be heard in the NRC, but it did not have any powers of veto over NATO policy or decisions.

This policy was largely integrationist, focusing on engaging Russia. However, the initiative did not come from the US, and there was strong opposition in US conservative circles to greater integration of Russia with NATO. Although the US did finally settle on supporting a policy of integration, this consisted of a mixture of the different schools of thought employed in this study. In the Russian perspective, the implications of NATO expansion were first and foremost of a geopolitical nature. It is hard to argue against the fact that NATO expansion had indeed moved the former Cold War alliance closer to Russia's borders and that this, in the final analysis, was a development detrimental to Russian security interests.<sup>104</sup> Even though it was repeatedly underlined that the expansion processes were not directed against Russia, but instead served to integrate the Central European countries and secure their westward orientation, these explanations were not mutually exclusive. This created a foundation for Russian criticism and fed Russian suspicion of the reasons behind the expansion. Given the amount of Cold War attitudes both in the US and Russia, in addition to other elements of US foreign policy, this was hardly surprising. The rhetoric coming from the prospective NATO members also seemed to point in the direction of a more geopolitical and security-motivated reason for seeking membership. All in all, it was hard to disconnect the military and security implications from the more politically motivated reasons behind expansion. This would suggest a situation similar to what I described as the Wilsonian dilemma in a preceding chapter.

As discussed above, the Wilsonian dilemma is a problem of interpretation, in that it can be difficult or outright impossible to be certain of a counterpart's real intentions in terms of Wilsonian or idealist foreign policies. This boils down to an issue of rhetoric versus what we might call fundamentals. In this regard rhetoric is intangible and easily changed, whereas the fact that NATO was closing in on Russia could easily have had very tangible effects on security if bases were established or hardware deployed closer to Russia. It can be argued that intentions deduced from such tangible fundamental issues could be easier to take seriously than intentions reflected through rhetoric. The potential of an increased NATO military presence close to Russia's borders was more significant than verbal assurances as to the non-threatening nature of expansion. However,

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104 The inclusion of the Baltic countries in NATO would imply the alliance bordering onto Russia with less than 150 km to St. Petersburg.

given the Russian reactions to the first round of NATO expansion after the Cold War, the attitudes to the second round could hardly have surprised the Bush administration. There were of course voices of caution also in Washington DC. The architect behind the containment policy of the Cold War era, George Kennan, called NATO expansion the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era, and Kennan foresaw it leading to a restoration of suspicion and hostility and an increase in nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion.<sup>105</sup>

Although the official responses to NATO expansion were pragmatic and muted, Kennan was probably right on a deeper level. No matter what intentions lay behind the expansion, the net effect on Russian security was negative. Despite assurances as to the non-threatening nature of the expansion, Russian insecurity increased with regard to US strategic intentions. Moreover, by choosing to prioritize support to the new European democracies, the United States was also evidently giving relations with Russia a lower priority. In Moscow, these two factors could hardly be interpreted as conducive to a strategic partnership with the US.<sup>106</sup> This example of the Wilsonian dilemma demonstrated the uncertainty about basic intentions that the policy of NATO expansion created in the US-Russia relationship.

### **THE WAR ON TERROR: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE POST-SOVIET SPACE**

The war on international terrorism and military operations in Afghanistan led to an increased US military presence on the territory of the former Soviet Union. This presence, although it occurred initially with Russian consent, created tensions in US-Russia relations clearly demonstrated by the statements of many Russian officials at this time. Sending US military advisers to Georgia in March 2002 clearly exemplifies this.

This was a response to the deteriorating security situation in the Pankisi Gorge, where there had been reports of the increased presence of exiled al-Qaeda fighters in addition to Chechen terrorists. The US advisers were to train Georgian law-enforcement agencies to fight terrorism and help prevent destabilization of the area. It was reported that several hundred US Special Forces would

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105 Richard Lourie, "NATO Expansion May Prove a Fateful Error", *St. Petersburg Times*, 12 December 2006 [online 3 Apr 2007].

106 The official invitation to the Baltic republics was issued in November 2002, followed by invitations also to Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania. All these countries formally joined NATO in March 2004.

make up the bulk of the military advisers.<sup>107</sup> In response, Igor Ivanov stated that: “Regarding the possibility of US soldiers appearing in Georgia, from our point of view, this could further aggravate the situation in the region, which is already difficult enough. This is our position, and Washington is aware of it.”<sup>108</sup>

The United States also established a military presence in Kyrgyzstan to support operations in Afghanistan. This was meant to be more solid and long-term than the presence of advisers in Georgia, and consisted mainly of an air base at Manas opened in 2001 to provide support for military operations in Afghanistan. In addition, a significant presence in Uzbekistan was established, which consisted of the Kharsi-Khanabad facility, housing around 1,800 personnel also supporting the war in Afghanistan. US cooperation with Uzbekistan had been broad for well over a decade, playing up to Uzbek aspirations to be a regional player relatively independent of Russian influence.

Commenting on these issues, most Russian policy analysts asserted that the US was attempting to establish a military foothold in Central Asia, and that Russia was being pushed out of its natural sphere of influence in the region. An increased US military presence in the area was seen as a direct threat to Russian interests. This view was prevalent even at the start of the war on terror, although President Putin had a different opinion on the matter at that time. Russian statements often focused on the duration of the US military presence in the area, and this was also the subject of meetings between the presidents.

Dmitri Trenin argues that the fundamental reason for the crumbling of the strategic partnership stems from these developments, starting in early 2002.<sup>109</sup> At that time, the Kremlin made a series of conciliatory steps towards the White House while simultaneously presenting a list of requests.

The list basically boiled down to a single main point: a demand to give Russia a free hand in the countries of the CIS. Not only did the Americans not agree, but in 2003 they began to pursue a more active policy in the post-Soviet sphere. In that same year, Russian politics underwent a drastic shift in focus: from searching for a model of integration with the West to building its own center of power in Eurasia. With that, in the eyes of the Russian leadership, the US went from being a potential partner to being a rival.<sup>110</sup>

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107 “US Could Send Troops as Anti-terror Advisers”, *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 27 February 2002 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 4 Mar 2007]).

108 “US Could Send Troops ...”.

109 Dmitri Trenin, “Moscow’s Washington Tango. Russia Needs a New Strategy vis-à-vis the United States”, *Kommersant*, 15 November 2006 (Carnegie Endowment [online 20 Nov 2006]).

110 Dmitri Trenin, “Russia Leaves the West”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 85, no. 4 (2006).

There is little doubt that the US military presence in Central Asia was a thorn in Russia's side. In light of this, President Putin's initial foreign policy of condoning the US presence was doubtless unpopular domestically. It is hard to argue that the facilities in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan represented an attempt to push Russia out of Central Asia in a geostrategic game. The benefits of having these bases to support the war in Afghanistan are far too obvious for that. The increased presence in Georgia, however, fits more easily into a perspective more along supremacist lines. Since the end of the Cold War, Georgia had worked toward a closer relationship with NATO, the United States and several European countries. Regarding Georgia's aspirations to join NATO, establishing closer military cooperation with the US was seen in a more strategic and long-term perspective in Moscow. With the second round of NATO expansion, this perspective included the image of a more assertive US policy in the region aimed at establishing a strategic presence and a more active role for the United States. Such a presence would serve to limit Russian influence in the post-Soviet space, and create a balance of power favorable to the United States and disadvantage Russian attempts to restore its position in the near abroad. In this light, such policies would constitute a mild form of containment, and serve political goals stemming from a primacist perspective on US-Russia relations.

### **THE FREEDOM AGENDA**

The Freedom Agenda of the Bush administration was an integral part of the war on terror and was viewed as an important way of combating the root causes of terrorism. Its primary rationale was laid out in the National Security Strategy (NSS) document from 2002, but it was also driven by a more general Wilsonian impulse to spread democracy and freedom. This made the agenda an important aspect of the war on terror that linked in with fundamental currents in US foreign policy. In the foreword to the NSS from 2002 it is stated that:

... The United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe. We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world. The events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders.<sup>111</sup>

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111 National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy* ... 2002, p. 4.

The US national security strategy explicitly sought to expand the circle of development by opening societies and building democratic infrastructures. Seen together with the other dominating elements of the National Security Strategy, this constituted an agenda with the potential for regime transformations globally. Although it became an important part of the rationale for invading Iraq six months later and for aspirations toward the more long-term democratic transformation of the Middle East, it also became an important aspect of US policy toward some states of the former Soviet Union. Consequently, it constituted an indirect part of US Russia policy, as it had implications for the US-Russia relationship.

The Georgian Rose Revolution, a political upheaval toppling President Eduard Shevardnadze and replacing him with opposition candidate Mikhail Saakashvili after irregularities in the 2003 parliamentary elections, was the first case of this type of regime transformation happening in the CIS area. President Saakashvili had vowed to press ahead with radical economic, political and anti-corruption reforms to transform Georgia into a successful democracy. This project was given strong support from the United States, and this was linked to the Bush administration's policy aims toward the states of the former Soviet Union. This policy aimed at strengthening and supporting the sovereignty of these states, an approach that clashed with Russian interests in the area. In this case, the fact that the Georgian opposition had received financial and logistical support via NGOs from the United States made the revolution a very sensitive matter.<sup>112</sup> From the Russian perspective it looked like a political upheaval induced by the United States resulting in the installation of more pro-Western regime.

Though some regimes had not registered the link between the Freedom Agenda and the potential for regime transformation, the Russian political elites certainly had. In Russia, the Rose Revolution was seen as intimately connected to the new strand of US foreign policy, and Russian officials did not flinch from pointing out their doubts about the legitimacy of the revolution in Georgia. Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov disputed that the street protests had been a real revolution and that they had been facilitated by the "active role

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112 The Kmara movement was instrumental during the Rose revolution. Kmara received various forms of support from a variety of US and international NGOs during the upheaval. See Graeme Herd, "Colorful Revolutions and the CIS: Manufactured Versus 'Managed' Democracy?" *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 52, no. 2 (2005), pp. 3–18.

played by US nongovernmental organizations and governmental officials in the political turmoil.”<sup>113</sup>

The same logic underpinned Russian analyses of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine the year after, in November 2004. Due to Ukraine’s geopolitical importance and close ties to Russia, the issues at stake in the contested presidential elections were much higher than during the events in Georgia. This made the conflict of interest and the rhetoric between the United States and Russia, however indirect, fiercer than before. The opposition candidate, Viktor Yuschenko, had a pro-Western political platform based on integration with the European Union and aspirations to NATO membership. The candidate favored by Russia, Viktor Yanukovich, had been accused of election-rigging, and reports of fraud and abuse were supposedly not properly investigated. These issues triggered widespread protests that lasted for several weeks, until a new second-round runoff could be arranged in late December. Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that “we cannot accept this result as legitimate because it does not meet international standards, and because there has not been an investigation of the numerous and credible reports of fraud and abuse.” Powell added that failure to investigate the alleged fraud would lead to unspecified “consequences” in bilateral ties with Ukraine.<sup>114</sup> Again, Russia suspected US support to Ukrainian opposition groups, including the student-movement Pora, which played an important part in organizing the demonstrations during the upheavals. Events culminated with the pro-Western candidate Viktor Yuschenko being elected president, but a direct effect of this was a deteriorating US-Russia relationship. US support for free and fair elections crashed head-on with Russian interests in the near abroad, in an even clearer way than before. Suspicions of US manipulation and support for the popular movement in Ukraine, again directly related to the Freedom Agenda, constituted a threat to one of the most important issues in Russian foreign policy, its interest in the states of the former Soviet Union.

The Freedom Agenda also had a direct impact on US Russia policy, and paved the way for a stronger focus on internal developments in Russia itself. The culmination of the Orange Revolution in Ukraine coincided with the start of President Bush’s second term in office. US criticism of domestic developments in Russia had been largely muted during President Bush’s first term, and this was particularly true of developments in Chechnya. Internal developments in Russia from 2001–2004 show that there were quite a lot of issues that were

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113 Jean-Christophe Peuch, “Russia and the US Played Key Role as Events in Georgia, Azerbaijan Unfolded”, *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 11 December 2003 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 29 May 2007]).

114 Jean-Christophe Peuch, “Could Crisis Strain US-Russia Ties?” *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 25 November 2004 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 29 May 2007]).

problematic from a democratic and a human-rights perspective, and repression was increasing within several social sectors. The reason for not criticizing Russia at this point probably consisted of a wish to have a continuing positive overall relationship. Eventually, the Bush administration came under increasing pressure to step up criticism of domestic developments in Russia, and there seemed to be a change in US policy early in President Bush's second term.

The president's second Inaugural Address, held on 20 January 2005, focused heavily on the importance of liberty and democracy. It contained several points on the importance of spreading these values, and pledged support to democratic forces facing oppressive regimes around the world, stating that the United States would "... encourage reform in other governments by making clear that success in our relations will require the decent treatment of their own people."<sup>115</sup> At this point in time, criticism of the Russian handling of the situation in Chechnya also resurfaced.

President Bush's speech, with its strong focus on supporting democratic developments around the world, obviously made it difficult to maintain a policy toward Russia that largely ignored negative domestic developments. On other levels, there had also been an increasing amount of disappointing developments during the last couple of years that made the move to a more critical position natural.<sup>116</sup> The Russian actions taken and statements made during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine were probably one of the stronger factors motivating the White House to change its position. A month after the Inaugural Address, on the eve of the Bratislava meetings with President Putin, President Bush gave a clear message to Russia:

For Russia to make progress as a European nation, the Russian government must renew its commitment to democracy and the rule of law. We recognize that reform will not happen overnight. We must always remind Russia, however, that our alliance stands for a free press, a vital opposition, the sharing of power and the rule of law. And the United States and all European countries should place democratic reform at the heart of their dialogue with Russia.<sup>117</sup>

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115 George W. Bush, "Speech at the 55<sup>th</sup> Inaugural Ceremony", 20 January 2005 (White House [online 30 May 2007]).

116 The Chechen parliamentary elections and the Duma elections in 2003, and the Russian presidential elections in March 2003 were seen by most international observers as flawed from a democratic perspective. Increased governmental control over formerly independent media also played an important role here.

117 "Bush Speech Aims to Repair Trans-Atlantic Ties", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 21 February 2005 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 30 May 2007]).



This rhetorical change in US policy signified a move towards a more transformationalist approach to Russia. There had of course been criticism before, but mostly through lower levels of the bureaucracy, not from the White House itself. This new policy also implied that there had been a slight shift away from the pragmatic foreign-policy approach adopted after 9/11 in connection with the alliance against terrorism. Later in 2005, talk of democratic backsliding in Russia was prevalent at all levels of government. President Bush even called upon other leaders to focus more on domestic developments, and follow the US example of making the spread of democratic values a cornerstone of their foreign policies. The National Security Strategy from 2006 also pointed in this direction: “We must encourage Russia to respect the values of freedom and democracy at home ... Recent trends regrettably point toward a diminishing commitment to democratic freedoms and institutions.”<sup>118</sup>

Russia expert Richard Pipes argued strongly against criticizing domestic developments and said in an interview that:

It is not up to the American government to criticize the restrictions on democracy in Russia. I think that is kind of meddling in the internal affairs of another country, and Russians are very sensitive to criticism. That doesn't mean we shouldn't criticize them, but one should be very careful about what one says about what's going on in Russia.<sup>119</sup>

Russian sensitivity to criticism and lecturing was thus one important factor here. In addition, the Russians were skeptical of the US intentions behind the concrete implications of the Freedom Agenda for its own near abroad and for Russia itself. US public criticism of Russian internal and external policies peaked in May 2006, when Vice President Cheney gave a speech in Vilnius:

America and all of Europe also want to see Russia in the category of healthy, vibrant democracies. Yet in Russia today, opponents of reform are seeking to reverse the gains of the last decade. In many areas of civil society ... the government has unfairly and improperly restricted the rights of her people. Other actions by the Russian government have been counterproductive, and could begin to affect relations with other countries. No legitimate interest is served when oil and gas become tools of intimidation or blackmail, either by supply manipulation or attempts to monopolize transportation. And no one can justify actions

118 National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* ... 2006, p. 39.

119 “Richard Pipes Discusses US-Russian Relations”, *US-Russian Relations Special Reports*, 23 May 2006 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 4 Jun 2007]).

that undermine the territorial integrity of a neighbor, or interfere with democratic movements.<sup>120</sup>

This speech, coming from such a central and high-ranking actor in the Bush administration, obviously caused great problems in the bilateral relationship. Even though Vice President Cheney underlined that “Russia is not fated to become an enemy,”<sup>121</sup> the speech increased Russian negative attitudes and proved that public criticism was not Russia’s preferred way of dialogue. Two days later, Cheney went to Kazakhstan and delivered an overall positive message about the state of affairs there; this did little to alleviate Russian irritation over Cheney’s speech. From the Russian perspective, this was also another example of the Bush administration’s selective approach to the importance of democratization in the post-Soviet area.

In the color revolutions, Russia saw, rightly or wrongly, the US as an instigator working toward exchanging relatively pro-Russian regimes with anti-Russian regimes behind a cloak of democratic elections. No matter what the US intentions behind its support to these regime changes were, the Russian analyses clearly suffered under the uncertainty of the basic intentions of the United States. This way of thinking has been mentioned as one of the most problematic attitudes on the Russian side.<sup>122</sup>

At the outset of this study, I called this type of uncertainty connected to the conduct of idealist foreign policies the Wilsonian dilemma. The same argument could be used with regard to criticism of the Putin regime itself. Critique of the regime’s policies and the alleged US support for democracy, NGOs, civil society and political liberties in Russia really only demonstrated the US’ desire to remove the incumbent regime and install a more pro-Western regime. However faulty these analyses, they point to a problem connected to idealist foreign policies and the intentions behind them.

## Energy Cooperation – entrenching the relationship?

After the alliance in the war against terrorism, a need was perceived to use the positive momentum and transfer it to other areas of cooperation, of which energy cooperation was regarded as one of the most promising; this was also of huge importance both to the US and Russia. Being the world’s largest consumer and importer of oil, ensuring the energy security of the United States was high on the agenda of the new Bush administration when it took office in January

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120 Dick Cheney, “Remarks at the 2006 Vilnius Conference”, 4 May 2006 (White House [online 12 Jun 2007]).

121 Ibid.

122 Thomas Graham, “The Dialectics of Strength and Weakness”, *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 2 (2007).

2001. The administration conducted a broad study of US energy policy under the auspices of Vice President Dick Cheney in May 2001, and the report recommended new policy directions that also indicated more focus on Russia and the NIS states encircling the Caspian Basin.<sup>123</sup> On the commercial side, American oil companies needed to augment existing production with new reserves that they were unable to acquire from the Persian Gulf, since investment here was largely blocked. Growing shortages of domestically produced natural gas in the United States also made Russia an interesting partner.<sup>124</sup> From the Russian perspective, the country's energy sector needed partners and foreign investment, particularly in high-risk exploration and in technologically challenging projects. In an extensive research paper from 2004, this argument was underlined by a claim that it was a policy priority for the Russian president to work toward increased energy cooperation with the United States, and that this had the potential to become a cornerstone for an improved bilateral relationship.<sup>125</sup>

Increasing US-Russian energy cooperation had been attempted earlier, and it was high on the agenda of the Gore-Chernomyrdin commission for several years during the Clinton administration, though no substantial breakthroughs were reached. During the 1990s, several US companies had become a part of projects in Russia, but most of these were minor projects in Western Siberia.<sup>126</sup> Established in 1996, ExxonMobil's 30 percent share in and role as operator of Sakhalin 1 meant this company was one of the more substantial American commercial presences in Russia.<sup>127</sup> Another substantial project established in the late 1990s was the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), with Chevron Texaco as the largest private shareholder.<sup>128</sup> The CPC crude pipeline system, running 1,510 km from Tengiz in Western Kazakhstan to the new marine terminal in Novorossiysk on the Black Sea in Russia, was the largest operating investment project involving foreign participation in the entire territory of the former USSR and came into operation in October 2001. The US presence in the Russian energy sector

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123 National Energy Policy Development Group, *National Energy Policy*, 16 May 2001 (Washington DC: Office of the President, 2001), pp. 8.12–8.14.

124 Edward Chow, "US-Russia Energy Dialogue: Policy, Projects or Photo Op?" *Foreign Service Journal*, vol. 80, no. 12, (2003): 34.

125 Martha Brill Olcott, *The Energy Dimension in Russian Global Strategy* (Houston: James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy, 2004) (Carnegie Endowment [online 27 May 2008]), p. 3.

126 See appendix for complete overview of US presence in the Russian oil and gas sector.

127 ExxonMobil's Russian affiliate ExxonNeftegaz holds the 30 % stake, and is a signatory to the PSA together with a Japanese company, an Indian company and a Rosneft affiliate.

128 Chevron Texaco holds a 15 % interest representing about \$ 800 million. Other shareholders are Transneft (24 %), Kazakhstan (19 %), Oman (7 %), Mobil Caspian (7.5 %), Rosneft-Shell (7.5 %) and Lukarco (12.5 %).

by 2001 was not large, but US companies controlled important and highly visible projects. The US-Russian rapprochement after 9/11 created the potential for a broadened cooperative economic agenda between the United States and Russia. How did this potential play out?

### **THE ENERGY DIALOGUE: FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION**

In May 2002, during the summit in Moscow where the SORT treaty was signed, Presidents Bush and Putin launched a bilateral US-Russian Energy Dialogue to facilitate deepened cooperation within the energy sphere. This dialogue set out to “strengthen the overall US-Russia relationship, enhance global energy security and international strategic stability.”<sup>129</sup> In this process, an Energy Working Group (EWG) was established and the two presidents aimed to attain ambitious goals through the energy dialogue, focusing on facilitating commercial cooperation, investing in the Russian energy sector and promoting access to world markets for Russian energy.<sup>130</sup> The first event of this new dialogue was the Commercial Energy Summit held in Houston, Texas, in November 2002 at which it was agreed to establish a Commercial Energy Dialogue (CED), a forum led by the private sector initiated to identify barriers to energy trade and investment.<sup>131</sup> There was significant optimism among the actors involved and both the EWG and the CED met extensively in various formats during 2002, 2003 and 2004, but after this, the frequency of meetings was more sporadic.

On the US side, there were several institutions engaged in the energy dialogue. The Department of Energy (DoE) obviously played a central role, but the Department of Commerce (DoC) and the Department of State (DoS) were also important. Furthermore, the White House had taken a leading role in initiating the process, and worked to place energy cooperation on the agenda. This was also the main cause of the high public profile of the energy cooperation. The US companies were increasingly important at later stages in the process, but it does not seem likely that they were the ones most actively seeking the establishment of an energy dialogue or lobbying for it at the time of its conception. Most of the companies that were interested in doing business in Russia had already established projects and a presence there in the early 1990s. The interests of the US actors reflected their diversity, ranging from engaging and integrating Russia

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129 Office of the White House Press Secretary, “President Bush, President Putin Announce New Energy Dialogue”, 24 May 2002 (White House [online 7 Oct 2006]).

130 The EWG constituted the political and government-to-government part of the dialogue, and was created by the US Department of Energy (DoE) and the Russian Ministry of Energy.

131 “US Russia Commercial Energy Summit Fact Sheet”, 27 September 2002 (White House [online 26 May 2008]).

in Western economic cooperation, to diversifying the supply base of the United States and acquiring access for the companies to fresh petroleum resources.

However, the main part of US policy statements focused on the need for reforms of the Russian energy sector to improve the commercial framework for US companies doing business in Russia. The need for reforms had implications for the Russian legal system: unstable contractual laws, tax regimes and laws regulating the extraction of subsoil resources had hampered foreign investments during the 1990s. These problems had in some instances been alleviated by the establishment of production-sharing agreements (PSAs), but these had to be worked out on a case-by-case basis in complex negotiations, and did not provide the overall predictability many government commercial actors wanted. Moreover, many Russian legal problems had deeper general roots: corruption, a lack of independence within the judicial system and the general business culture all needed tackling by general legal reform. This was not just important to the commercial actors: US government actors were also keen to see this implemented, thereby underpinning a policy that called for a transformation of parts of the Russian state and society. The US government was rarely in a position to front specific commercial projects, due to the fact that the US companies themselves were competing for access to Russian partners and resources. Therefore, the creation of stable framework conditions and a transformationalist approach became the main priority of US government agencies.

Although the energy dialogue documents had stipulated several goals, a more concrete set of potential cooperation issues eventually emerged. One of the most central was increasing the volume of oil exported from Russia to the United States. Traditionally, Russian oil exports went mainly to Europe by pipelines, and Russian companies did not compete in the US. To be able to supply the United States with significant quantities of oil, Russian production would have to increase. Furthermore, the location of available petroleum resources in Russia was concentrated in the Western parts of Siberia, so developing the infrastructure of the port of Murmansk, the only ice-free deep-water port in the Northwestern region of Russia, emerged as an alternative for increased exports to the US. This would imply the construction of a new pipeline from Western Siberia to Murmansk.<sup>132</sup> In 2002, Russian exports to the United States amounted to one percent of total imports, and some Russian executives stated that this share could be increased by up to 13 percent if the export infrastructure were expanded.<sup>133</sup> Several private Russian companies were supportive of the \$1.5 billion

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132 James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University: *US-Russia Commercial Energy Summit*, Baker Institute Study, no. 21 (Houston: James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy at Rice University, 2003), p. 5.

133 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Murmansk project, and it was given considerable attention by US companies and government officials. The Yukos company demonstrated the greatest interest in forging ties with the US oil market, and this helped boost the company's positive image in the West.

The initial meetings also focused on technically difficult projects in the frontier areas, such as Sakhalin in the Far East and the Arctic shelf. One of the most interesting and complex projects for which international partners had not yet been chosen was the gigantic Shtokman field in the northeastern Barents Sea; the field quickly became one of the most hyped potential projects of the energy dialogue, and attracted considerable interest from American companies. Development of it could both diversify US supplies and promote access for US companies to the Russian market. Moreover, the structure and domestic role of Gazprom were important items on the agenda. Dismantling Gazprom's monopoly in different areas of business was discussed in the various energy dialogue formats.<sup>134</sup> Ending its monopoly on gas transportation was especially important: the US repeatedly raised this issue.

Although some analysts voiced skepticism of the outlined goals of the energy dialogue,<sup>135</sup> expectations were high. The closing statements of the first CED meeting from the Secretary of Energy, Spencer Abraham, returned to focusing on working toward stabilizing and modernizing the commercial framework for US companies in Russia:

To succeed, the US and Russian governments do have an important role to play. Our job is to create the framework of laws and rules that will allow our companies to form partnerships with confidence in the security of the arrangements, including the sanctity of contracts.<sup>136</sup>

His Russian counterpart, Igor Yusufov's statement, shows quite a different approach:

... we made a uniform conclusion at the summit that companies from our countries must work together to resolve this problem of world energy market stability by increasing supplies and by participating in joint projects, both in Russia and in third-world countries, where knowledge and experience of our specialists are out to use [sic]. When the transportation network is established and expanded, Russia will be able to regularly supply oil and oil products to the American

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134 Covering Gazprom's roles in production, sales and distribution.

135 See for example Fiona Hill and Florence Fee, "Fueling the Future: The Prospects for Russian Oil and Gas", *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 10, no. 3 (2002).

136 James A. Baker III Institute ...: *US-Russia Commercial Energy Summit*, p. 11.

market. We invite American companies and financial institutions to support implementation of such projects ... we await specific proposals for them.<sup>137</sup>

These two statements pointed in the direction of different approaches to the energy dialogue and to energy cooperation; one focused on transforming the Russian energy sector to facilitate increased US investments, while the other basically just sought increased direct US investments in Russian energy projects. This demonstrates a discrepancy between the two sides' perceptions of the goals of the energy dialogue. The Russian statement indicated a positive attitude toward US participation, although it made little mention of the changes to the commercial framework that the US companies felt were necessary to increase investments. On the Russian side, there was a clear dividing line between those favoring increased foreign participation in the energy sector, and those commercial and political actors who had a more negative attitude:

The opportunities for US companies to invest in Russia are not clear and straightforward. Russia has gone through a series of changing attitudes towards western investment and its desirability and necessity. When oil prices are relatively low, or the Russian economy weak, western investment has been attractive and Russian policymakers have been active promoters of it. With a more robust Russian economy and higher oil prices, Russian policymakers have changed their tune. Regulatory, legal, and tax and other fiscal policies reflect this changing environment.<sup>138</sup>

The power of the structural reform arguments was stronger during the 1990s and in the early years of the new millennium, when the state of affairs in the Russian energy sector was more negative and oil prices were low. The often-used argument about the Russian energy sector needing western investments, technology and management skills also lost most of its power and validity after the oil price hikes from 2003 onward. The new economic conditions secured the Russian state and private energy companies' fiscal autonomy and the possibility to buy the services they needed to develop the sector.

### **POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE ENERGY DIALOGUE EFFORTS**

Even though the two presidents had decided that commercial cooperation was to play the key role in the energy dialogue, the dialogue's main content seemed to consist of policy statements and bureaucratic processes in the Energy Work-

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137 Ibid.: 12.

138 Leonard Coburn, "US Cooperating with Russia, Central Asia on Global Energy Security", 30 April 2003, testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (USinfo.state.gov [online 7 Dec 2006]).

ing Group (EWG), while the Committee for Economic Development (CED) created little concrete output in the form of economic cooperation. Reports from the first CED in 2002 claimed that “while the meeting did not create any deals, it did produce several announcements.”<sup>139</sup>

Despite repeated US efforts to open up the Russian market to capital investments from American companies, successes are few and far between. In addition to the existing projects mentioned earlier in this study, the only really significant new one started between US and Russian companies was between ConocoPhillips and LUKoil, announced in September 2004.<sup>140</sup> It seemed that after the initial optimism regarding the possibilities for US direct investments in Russian projects, political realities, especially on the Russian side, caught up with the energy dialogue.

Although President Putin’s own writings on the development of the Russian oil and gas sectors indicated that foreign investments were necessary for the strategic development of the sector, he had not specified the level of investments, nor their desired country of origin.<sup>141</sup> With the exception of Sakhalin, neither the Russian government nor the Russian industry was particularly welcoming to direct foreign investment in the oil and gas sectors, in spite of public rhetoric.<sup>142</sup> The investment of British Petroleum in TNK early in 2003 was one of the few exceptions to this.<sup>143</sup>

The attention given to diversifying US oil imports in the EWG and in the CED can hardly be claimed to have contributed to an increase in US imports from Russia early in the new millennium. US petroleum imports from Russia stood at roughly 70,000 barrels per day (b/d) in 2000 and by 2005, the figure amounted to around 410,000 b/d.<sup>144</sup> Despite this relative increase, Russia could hardly be said to constitute a vital source of supply for the United States. Total

139 Michael Lelyveld, “Officials Hail Energy Partnership”, 4 October 2002, *US-Russia Relations Special Reports* (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 9 Dec 2006]).

140 ConocoPhillips and LUKoil established closer cooperation when the US company bought a 7.6 % share of LUKoil in a strategic equity alliance. The total cost of the initial investments was close to \$ 2 billion, with an option to increase Conoco’s stake in LUKoil to 20 %. As of March 2006, the stake had reached 17.1 %. See “ConocoPhillips buys Lukoil stake”, *BBC Business News*, 30 September 2004 [online 26 May 2008].

141 See Harley Balzer, “The Putin Thesis and Russian Energy Policy”, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 21, no. 3 (2005) for more information on this subject.

142 Edward Chow, *United States Energy Security: Russia and the Caspian*, statement before the US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, 30 April 2003 (United States Senate [online 7 Dec 2006]).

143 BP paid \$ 6.75 billion to get a 50 % stake in the merger of the petroleum-related holdings of the Alfa group and Access-Renova.

144 Energy Information Administration, “International Petroleum (Oil) Imports and Exports” [online 11 Dec 2006].



petroleum imports to the US in 2005 were on average 13.7 million b/d, and the increase in imports from Russia was therefore of little significance. For Russian exports to have a more significant impact on the US petroleum market, there would have to be a substantial increase in overall production, and this would have to include bringing new projects and new infrastructure online. During the timeframe of this study there have been few signs that this was happening beyond rhetoric and the planning stage.

The US also highly prioritized efforts to reform the Russian economy, legal system and the energy sector in general. As I pointed out, there were two main approaches to the energy dialogue on the US side. On the one hand, there was a focus on getting into and starting up concrete projects with the Russians; on the other, there was the more long-term and difficult work of making the case to the Russians of implementing reforms in the energy sector. It seems that Russian attitudes toward this were more positive at the start of the energy dialogue than at later stages. Public discussion of the benefits of reforming the two entities controlling oil infrastructure (Transneft) and gas infrastructure (Gazprom), seemed to die out, and had ceased altogether by 2003. If there were genuine hopes among US actors of broad-ranging structural reform and an opening up of the Russian oil and gas sector, these were extinguished by the political fallout and the economic effects of the Yukos case.<sup>145</sup>

Of all the developments on energy issues in the period 2001–2006, it is hard to find an issue with a more negative effect on the bilateral relationship than the Yukos case. The sequence of events demonstrated clearly that the visions of the United States and Russia with regard to energy cooperation had parted ways fundamentally. The increasing levels of state control implied by the takeover of Yukos were not a policy conducive to opening up the market to US companies. Even worse were the implications for the regulatory framework for foreign companies operating in Russia. The renationalization of Yukos, and the way in which it was executed by the Russian authorities made it very difficult for the US to continue the dialogue on general reforms and was a heavy blow to the efforts aimed at this transformation. However, this backlash was probably more damaging for the government-to-government contact than for the commercial actors. US companies defied official warnings against entering into new projects in Russia. The ConocoPhillips deal with LUKoil mentioned earlier is the most evident example of this. Overall, the Yukos case indicated a policy shift on

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145 It would be too daunting a task to try to give even an outline of the events of this case. For readers particularly interested in the subject, I can recommend Ariel Cohen, "The Khodorkovsky Verdict: A Setback for US-Russian Relations", *Heritage Foundation Webmemo*, no. 753, 2 June 2005 [online 15 Dec 2006].

the Russian side that would constitute a more assertive and statist approach to energy issues, and a rebuff of the transformationalist US approach.

The Murmansk pipeline and the Shtokman LNG project had solidified as symbolic projects of the energy dialogue. By the time of the second EWG meeting in September 2003, the possibilities for a Murmansk pipeline seemed dim, and conflict between the private companies and Transneft about the project had erupted in public. By working against the project, Transneft demonstrated its complete lack of will to participate in or condone any kind of infrastructure project outside the company's own direct control.<sup>146</sup> The debate about the Murmansk pipeline ended with the process against Yukos and Mikhail Khodorkovsky, which coincided with a government reshuffle that removed some of the more outspoken economic liberalists in February 2004. Although the US side continued to push for the Murmansk project ahead of the CED meeting later that year, it has still to materialize.

The debate about developing the Shtokman field was never as controversial as that about the Murmansk project, probably because it was never as concrete. Even though the Shtokman project was floated at an early stage of the energy dialogue, it took much longer to mature. However, the project was a central issue during the second CED meeting in September 2003. The prospect of sending liquefied natural gas (LNG) to the US was said to be a natural marriage of interests, while Secretary of Commerce Evans claimed that "Russian gas could compete with Canadian and even Mexican gas."<sup>147</sup> Gazprom presented a short-list of potential partners for cooperation on the project in September 2005, and there were two US companies on the list, Chevron Texaco and ConocoPhillips. As the selection process dragged out, the US government increased pressure on the Russian authorities, and grew increasingly impatient. At the time of the G8 summit in St Petersburg in July 2006, no decision had yet been taken about foreign participation on Shtokman, even though this was expected. This represented a serious setback for the energy dialogue and the US companies wanting to participate in the project.<sup>148</sup>

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146 Michael Lelyveld, "Government Seeks Compromise with Big Oil Companies", *Newsline*, 31 January 2003 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 19 Dec 2006]).

147 Sophie Lambroschini, "Summit Focuses on Increasing Energy Exports, Especially to US", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 24 September 2003 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 24 Mar 2007]).

148 Gazprom announced Total and StatoilHydro as participants in Shtokman in the second half of 2007. At the time of writing, it seems unlikely that more foreign partners will be included in the project.

## ENERGY COOPERATION, POLICY APPROACHES AND GOALS

Looking at the energy dialogue with the power of hindsight, there seemed to be good possibilities for increased commercial cooperation up to 2002–2003, but when the Russian state reasserted its control of the oil sector, these possibilities largely disappeared. In addition, the vastly increased profits provided by high oil and gas prices reduced the Russian energy sector's need for foreign capital. The serious repercussions of the Yukos case itself were particularly evident at a political and diplomatic level. However, it is interesting to note that the largest single private investment deal was made a year after the Yukos case started and consisted of substantial US involvement in a privately owned Russian oil company. For Russia, energy security was “about the state's retaking the control of the commanding heights of the economy and extending that control downstream, over the export pipelines that provided a substantial part of government revenues.” Whereas consumer countries were focusing on security of supplies, security of demand was the most important factor to Russia. For the United States, “energy security meant security from severe supply disruptions, and creating a semblance of energy independence domestically.”<sup>149</sup>

In retrospect, the energy dialogue can be seen largely as a political construct; the role of the White House was important here, and the energy dialogue played an important role in underpinning other policies toward Russia; it was also a potential showcase for the improved US-Russian relationship. Russia was interested in an increased US presence at the start of the energy dialogue process, but increased oil prices changed these circumstances fundamentally. The main indicator of a successful energy dialogue would be a substantial increase in US petroleum imports from Russia. However, as discussed above, the actual import levels in the period in question were insignificant and little more than a blip. The concrete projects constituting the bulk of the public part of the dialogue, the Murmansk pipeline and the Shtokman project, both failed to materialize within the medium term, and the changing conditions for the projects also seemed to have made them less interesting to US actors. On a project level, American subcontractors and service companies seem to be the most successful, although most of them maintain a low public profile in Russia.

The development of energy cooperation between the United States and Russia seemed to be guided in part by a number of mechanisms and assessments, rather than by the general bilateral relationship. Whereas the presence of American energy companies in Russia can hardly be called broad or deep, it has grown persistently in the last 16 years. Furthermore, the level of activity and the occurrence of breakthroughs in energy cooperation do not necessarily seem to be

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149 Daniel Yergin, “What Does ‘Energy Security’ Really Mean?” *Wall Street Journal*, 11 July 2006.

closely connected to developments in the general relationship or the diplomatic rhetoric at any time describing the relationship. This indicates that energy cooperation, and economic cooperation in general, are guided by criteria other than diplomatic relationships and the concomitant evaluations of political developments. A case in point here is the American energy companies' continuing interest in participating in new projects in Russia, despite the increasingly gloomy official evaluations of the Russian energy sector and the negative trends in the bilateral relationship coming from the White House and the State Department. The lack of tangible successes stemming from the energy dialogue demonstrates first and foremost that it is difficult for governments to do anything but try to facilitate cooperation. Identifying potential partners and projects are best taken care of by the companies themselves.

The choice between economic cooperation and integration through projects (an integrationist approach) on the one hand, and the efforts directed at transforming the legal and economic framework of the Russian energy sector (a transformationalist approach) on the other hand, did not seem to be clear to the US actors involved, and this was not necessarily a choice that anyone wanted to make. Transformational efforts were probably more important in a long-term perspective, and concrete projects were highly visible and gave short-term credibility to the process. The policies directed at transformation suffered a serious setback due to the Yukos case which basically negated the policies that the US preferred. However, the project approach had few successes to show for itself. The main reason for this was the policy change in Russia, which reduced the freedom of action of the energy companies. Even though an integrationist policy focused on projects was preferable to any general transformation of the sector, the main problem for US energy actors was ultimately that there were few Russian policymakers who actually wanted, or felt they needed, a large US presence in what they regarded as "their" energy sector.

The transformationalist approach was a much more ambitious and difficult project than merely focusing on getting US companies into Russia. Nonetheless, the US authorities seem to have chosen to continue demanding reforms and transformation, having achieved little success with the integrationist approach. It is difficult to argue that advising Russia to change its domestic energy policies produces better results than working with US companies to gain access to the Russian market. The policy of lecturing Russian authorities also provokes Russian sensitivities, given the Russians' long-held focus on sovereignty and their desire to make their own energy policies without the interference or criticism of outsiders. The adherence of the US to a transformationalist approach in the face of such challenges is an important source of tension in terms of energy cooperation with Russia. This tension remained unresolved within the timeframe of this

study, as were the tensions between the integrationist and the transformationalist approach to energy cooperation.

## **Prevalent policy approaches and summary of findings**

From the material I have discussed here, it is possible to discern some patterns to the prevalence of the different schools of thought that I presented in chapter 2. The outline of strategic arms-control issues indicated a relatively clear orientation toward the primacist school of thought; the material also indicated that there was a difference in approach between the DoS, working along the lines of an integrationist approach, and the DoD, approaching the issue in a manner similar to the primacists. In the war against international terrorism, there was a marked tendency toward a pragmatic US approach to Russia; cooperation on issues was sought out where possible. Regarding energy cooperation, which had been identified as a new area of cooperation with great potential, the Bush administration never really chose between important elements of the transformationalist or the integrationist approach. From a short-term commercial perspective, being allowed to participate in projects was more important than the overall transformation of the Russian energy sector, and this was reflected in US policy. It proved difficult, however, not to resort to the transformationalist approach when the framework conditions for foreign companies deteriorated in the aftermath of the Yukos case. However, this approach was far less agreeable to the Russian side, and it did little to facilitate access to Russian resources for the US companies. Given the fact that US authorities had little leverage over Russian energy policy, the transformationalist approach was a rhetorical construct with little practical use or content.

US policy on NATO enlargement and toward the newly independent states in Russia's near abroad is more difficult to evaluate. From the US perspective, this policy was seen more in relation to the former Soviet satellite countries than directly related to Russia. This move away from a "Russia first" principle in US policy was in itself a problem. Furthermore, the drive for NATO expansion could easily be interpreted as a long-term encirclement strategy with the goal of containing Russia and limiting its potential to regain control over its former allies. Furthermore, it would also limit the potential of Russia rising to a level at which it could compete with the US on a global level. This interpretation would put US policy in the primacist school of thought. Ensuring a controlled geopolitical environment for Russia while anchoring the newly independent states of Eurasia in Western institutions was a policy that in fact contained both a primacist policy toward Russia while having a Wilsonian rationale for integrating former Warsaw Pact countries. The effect of containing Russia within a framework of an enlarged NATO alliance closer to Russia's own borders was, regardless of how

US policy was interpreted, a very real negative effect on Russia's geopolitical situation. Much of the same dual effect was present with regard to the Freedom Agenda. It could hardly be argued that working toward democratization in the post-Soviet space was a negative policy, but when this democratization implied several regime changes that led to these states having a more Western orientated direction, it was difficult to see the benefits for Russia in this.

The proclaimed new partnership between the United States and Russia had a great potential to serve the interests of both countries. However, given the asymmetry in power and influence that lay at the foundation of the relationship, a successful partnership meant Russia entering the relationship as a junior partner to the United States. This might have been feasible in 2001, but as Russia's economic power grew with the rise in oil prices, so did Russian assertiveness, and being a junior partner of the US was a less tempting option in 2004 than it had been a couple of years earlier. In addition to the effects that economic revitalization had on the freedom of action in Russian foreign policy, it also coincided with the continued focus by the US on a selection of states in the CIS area, a focus that had lasted since the breakup of the Soviet Union, but had been renewed and revitalized with the war on terror.

Some of the problems that plagued the execution of US Russia policy were of a bureaucratic nature. Even though both the DoS and the NSC were supposed to have a coordinating role in the elaboration of foreign policy, the interests of the other departments often proved difficult to influence and integrate. This was the case with the energy dialogue, within which DoE had a leading role, and especially with strategic nuclear issues, where the Pentagon largely dictated policy. On other types of issues there were several different Russia policies that were directed by separate bureaucratic and political forces, and these were not properly coordinated. This lack of coordination led to policy inconsistencies that in turn created problematic policies. The problem of coordination was exacerbated by the fact that there was no consistent focus on Russia at the White House. To some extent, Russia had an important place on the political agenda during the first years of the Bush administration. These positive developments culminated with the signing of the Joint Declaration in 2002. As the war on terror spread beyond Afghanistan, and its geographical impact widened, the administration had little time or resources to focus on other issues. The war on terror became an all-encompassing issue that eventually bogged down the top decision-making levels of the Bush administration. The increased geographical scope of the war on terror also put US foreign policy at odds with vital Russian interests in the area of the former Soviet Union.

There were also important differences between the first and the second term of the Bush administration. During the first, there was less emphasis on the need for transformation of the political and economic system in Russia; in

the eyes of some observers, the administration's policy seemed to be integration without transformation. This was also seen as an important precondition for the improved bilateral relationship, at least from the Russian perspective.<sup>150</sup> However, the absence of a transformationalist agenda was more important than the integrationist tendencies, which Moscow regarded as shallow and insignificant compared to what was viewed as Russian concessions to the US in the war on terror.

During President Bush's second term, however, the US approach changed. The centrality of the Freedom Agenda led to a heightened preoccupation with democratization, also in Russia and the other states of the former Soviet Union. This created a pressure within the United States to focus more on regime change and on the need for domestic transformation in Russia. At the same time, the negative developments in Russia's relations with Georgia and Ukraine made the case for reforms in Russia even stronger in the eyes of many observers in Washington DC. After 9/11 and especially during the second term of President Bush, there was no longer any real or useful distinction between idealism and realism. Democracy crusading now served the purpose of national security, as had been stipulated in the National Security Strategy document.

Concerning US policy on security issues, the overall trend leans toward a primacist approach to Russia. A majority of the issues on which the US and Russia had competing interests were resolved in a way that little emphasized compromises. It is of course the privilege of all sovereign states to take foreign-policy decisions to maximize their own interests, but it should hardly come as a surprise that such policies can adversely affect a bilateral relationship. This demonstrates how difficult it can be to pursue and strengthen cooperation when important security interests are at stake. In most cases it is evident that hard security interests are more important than other concerns.

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150 Goldgeier and McFaul, *Power and Purpose*, p. 322.

## RUSSIAN PERCEPTIONS OF US POLICY

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Although the topic of this study is US Russia policy, it is important to discuss some of the Russian side's thoughts. I shall thus now move on to include some important factors that form the Russian worldview and contribute to shaping Russian perceptions of the United States and the US-Russia relationship. To illuminate the way in which the Russians view international relations and the United States as an actor in the international system, I shall present a list of attitudes and perceptions that functions as a "filter" when the Russian political elite thinks about foreign policy.<sup>151</sup> As I mentioned in the introduction, there is a tendency in the United States to see the sources of Russian foreign policy as a function of the character of its domestic regime, implying that democratization would change the direction of Russian foreign policy. That view is not necessarily incorrect, but it isolates Russia as a factor in itself, and does not take into account how the policies of other actors influence Russian policies and positions. The perspective taken in this outline focuses on how policies of outside actors influence Russia, and primarily views Russian foreign policy as reactions to American foreign policy.

### Russian interests and perceptions

*First*, and most importantly, Russia wants to be a key actor in international relations. Therefore, it is important for the Russians to perceive that they are being respected and treated as equals when dealing with the United States; this elevates Russia's own standing in the world, and provides legitimacy to the regime domestically. The mechanism may also work in the opposite direction; there is a tendency for the Russians to take obstructive positions and launch countermeasures on any kind of issue or development that does not give them a say or a place at the main negotiating table in international institutions.

*Second*, the Cold War is over. The collapse of the Soviet empire, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the demise of Soviet communism eliminated the fundamental building blocks of the Cold War international system. This accelerated the erosion of bipolarity and reshuffled the relative standing of the various dimensions of power. The economic dimension, which was truly multipolar with

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151 Many of these points have been discussed in and come from other research. See Graham, "US-Russia Relations" for points 1-5, and Leon Aron, "The United States and Russia: Ideologies, Policies and Relations", *American Enterprise Institute Russian Outlook*, 29 June 2006, and Kuchins et al, "US-Russian Relations: The Case for an Upgrade" for more background and thoughts on this subject.



the United States, several European states, and Japan acting as centers of power, rose in importance, as the bipolar strategic nuclear dimension declined. Even the bipolarity of the strategic nuclear equation was attenuated as the US and Russian arsenals were reduced and nuclear-weapons capabilities were developed by, and proliferated to other states. As is the rule in history, however, perceptions lagged behind reality and practice behind perceptions. Though the US and Russia talked of the post-Cold War, they both continued to operate within its conceptual framework. Well into the 1990s both countries viewed the world through the prism of relations with one another, and there was a sense that the US-Russian relationship would play a decisive role in shaping the post-Cold War world. That view, however, was predicated on the assumption that Russia would swiftly begin to recover from the multiple ills of its Soviet inheritance, even though it was clear that full recovery was a matter of years or decades. That, of course, did not happen.<sup>152</sup>

*Third*, Russia is in many respects a backward-looking power. Acutely aware of its own weakness, Russia wants to delay the consolidation of a new international system until it has greater capacity to shape it. It also seeks to slow changes that would further erode its standing in the world. This is one reason for its adamant opposition to any form of national missile defense, no matter how limited, and insistence on maintaining arms-control treaties as the framework for strategic issues. Nuclear parity is its last remaining attribute of great-power status. Therefore, acting to restrict the exercising of US power and limit its superiority is important, as this is thought to reduce the asymmetry between the countries.

*Fourth*, Russian policymakers view foreign-policy actions through a geopolitical prism. Their focus on geopolitics is important as a factor when analyzing Russia's own foreign policies, but it is also so ingrained in Russian political culture that it largely precludes any notion of political idealism in Russian foreign policy.

Russian leaders continue to operate with a zero-sum, 19<sup>th</sup> century geopolitical or Cold War mindset, insisting that Russia is a major pole (even if they harbor deep doubts on that score). President Putin spent the first years of his time in the Kremlin seeking to create strategic partnerships capable of eroding America's preponderance, or to divide Europe from the United States. While he has underscored the need to rebuild Russia's economy, he has moved aggressively to sell Russian weaponry abroad, in part because this helps maintain Russia's military capabilities."<sup>153</sup>

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152 Graham, "US-Russia Relations": 2.

153 Ibid.: 4.

This focus on geopolitics obviously extends into the realms of military and security policy, which are of primary importance. The factors of military deployment and the potential projection of military power are essential in this worldview. For Russia, what happens in the security sphere usually takes precedence over other international developments, a view that has been especially prevalent when reading the geopolitical map of Eurasia and its development since the end of the Cold War. The geopolitical and security-focused understanding of foreign policy has created and maintained several of Russia's main problems and grievances toward the United States during the 1990s. It is of course in relation to this factor that Russian resistance to NATO expansion in Eastern Europe and states of the former Soviet Union must be seen. US policies toward the CIS area, where Russia sees itself as a primary actor with special rights and responsibilities, also play strongly into this equation. From the Russian perspective, few factors will weigh more in the analysis of foreign policy than these, and there is a tendency for these to trump other concerns and actions, making other issues less important and relevant.

*Fifth*, Russia continues to act as if the United States viewed the world through the prism of its relations with Russia. Russian elites have yet to reconcile themselves to the fact that much of US policy treats Russia at best as a secondary consideration. This is true even of the security realm, where Russia still has more weight than any other actor. Russian leaders insist that the national missile defense is directed against them. The reality is that the United States' first concern is so-called rogue states – North Korea, Iran, and Iraq – with accidental launches from Russia, resulting from the deterioration of Russian command and control systems, a lesser concern. NATO enlargement is focused first of all on promoting democratic development in Central and Eastern Europe, bolstering security, and maintaining the United States' position in Europe; it is not directed against Russia. Multiple pipeline routes from the Caspian are about energy security; they are not aimed first of all at undermining Russia's presence in the region.<sup>154</sup> But this mode of foreign-policy analysis that places Russia front and center of US foreign policy has detrimental and negative side effects. Since US policies are seen to have directly negative effects on Russia, they serve as justification for the view that US policies attempt to undermine, encircle and weaken Russia. This psychological filter has, together with the geopolitical analytical mindset discussed above, worked to perpetuate a Russian suspicion of US intentions, policies and actions in Eastern Europe and the CIS area.

*Sixth*, there has been a huge and growing asymmetry between Russia and the United States in power, wealth, attitude and perceptions for a considerable period of time. This asymmetry has precluded a wide-ranging, substantive rela-

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154 Ibid.

tionship of equals, corrupted communication, and fueled suspicions.<sup>155</sup> However, since President Putin was reelected in 2004, this asymmetry has been reduced. The growth of the Russian economy and increased state revenues from the energy sector have in some respects reversed important aspects of this trend, and this has also increased Russian self-confidence on the world stage. Putin's Russia is awash with oil money, and this, coupled with Russia's new image and role as an energy superpower, have made possible a re-entry on the world stage of powerful nations, the main achievement of the Putin regime.<sup>156</sup> The reduced asymmetry and strengthening of Russia has probably made the relationship with the United States more problematic, not less. In Russia's own view, its new wealth and more prominent position entitle it to more respect and a more central role, a view not always supported by the United States.

*Seventh*, Russia often accuses the United States of applying double standards in its judgments and assessments of different states.<sup>157</sup> Russian domestic and foreign policies seem to be judged by tougher standards than those of other countries, making Russia a target singled out for US criticism. The view that Russia is being judged more harshly than other states in the former Soviet Union on the development of democracy and the degree of authoritarianism is one example of this line of thinking. Making this point not only weakens the grounds for criticism, but it also opens up for the argument that concerns about the lack of democratic development in Russia are caused by other intentions than the merely idealistic. The Russian political establishment in general finds it difficult to trust the United States, and it also views the basic intentions of the United States toward Russia negatively. These two factors increase the negative impact of US double standards.

*Eight*, Russia is strongly nationalistic. This does not only involve portraying Russia as a patriotic country, but also portends a deeply held conviction that Russia has the right to decide for itself how to govern and along which path it chooses to develop its political institutions, society and economy: in short, this means ensuring sovereignty and political autonomy. National pride and the status of Russia as a great power also play a role here. Nationalism of this kind also has implications for the way in which Russia defines its national interests and its relations to other states. Even though Russian leaders did talk of a partnership with the United States for some time after 9/11, this never implied ceasing to fol-

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155 Ibid.: 5.

156 The basis for Russia's oil wealth and resurgence, i.e. mainly high oil prices, is regarded by many observers to be shallow and of a passing nature. The real question is how the Russian elites themselves view the solidity of their recent upswing in status.

157 See for example Stephen Hanson, "On Double Standards. Toward Strategic Liberalism in US Russia Policy", *PONARS Policy Memo*, no. 368 (2005).

low Russian interests in China or Iran or ceasing to engage diplomatically with states of concern unacceptable to the US. Despite such policies causing tensions in relations with the United States. Russia is determined to play its role in international relations as an independent actor, seeking to develop a position that is not bound to the policies of other actors, unless this serves Russian national interests. This is a condition for partnership that is not commonly accepted in the US.

### **Specific Russian interests in the period 2001–2006**

According to Lilia Shevtsova, during the 2000 election campaign the consensus in the Kremlin was to prefer a Republican as the next US president;<sup>158</sup> this was based partly on earlier Russian experiences with American presidents. There seemed to be a belief that relations were better and more stable under Republican presidencies than under Democratic ones. The Republicans had less of a tradition to interfere with the domestic affairs of other countries, and were more likely to engage in traditional security issues where Russia still counted. The Democrats, however, had often seemed more preoccupied with promoting democracy and human rights, on which the Putin administration preferred not to be lectured. This would roughly translate into a Russian preference for the integrationist approach over the transformationalist approach. The transformationalist approach would more likely involve US efforts to change the domestic regime through US foreign policy. On the other hand, proponents of the integrationist approach would work more directly toward engaging Russia on several sets of issues, without having democratic or economic reforms implied as preconditions or goals for cooperation. Favoring the integrationist approach could also give Russia the possibility to reap the benefits of increased cooperation, such as direct foreign investment in its energy sector, without necessarily having to implement reforms. There would also be a US policy of non-interference in domestic affairs, thereby satisfying the important Russian goal of sovereignty and political autonomy. The integrationist approach would from a Russian perspective therefore be seen as the easiest way to more cooperation.

Regarding the other two approaches, those of the pragmatists and the primacists, it would be relatively easy to predict the Russian political elite's preference. The main view of the pragmatist approach is that achieving concrete results through cooperation on selected issues would be preferable. This line of thinking would not imply preconditions other than a commonality of interests as a basis for cooperation. However, the primacists' approach would be the least preferable one to deal with; their agenda of ensuring US dominance and he-

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158 Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, pp. 154–55.

gemony leaves little room for pursuing important Russian foreign-policy goals and some aspects of this approach would make it difficult for Russia to play a vital role in the CIS area. This logic follows from some of the perceptions listed above that are often seen as efforts directed at undermining Russia's international position and status. Other aspects of the primacist approach that favor freeing US foreign policy from international constraints and a unilateralist US foreign policy would counter Russian desires to contain and limit US freedom of action. The Russian foreign-policy establishment's concerns about US unilateralism are among the more serious, because US unilateral actions, especially military ones, could cause regional instability and other unintended consequences in states geographically close, for instance, to "states of concern". From a Russian perspective, the United States would probably not be interested in protecting anybody from the fallout of such actions. Destabilization in neighboring regions would impact negatively on Russia's own security, especially during periods of relative weakness.

#### **THE ALLIANCE IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM**

The alliance between the United States and Russia in the war against terrorism after 9/11 was a promising start for a future strategic partnership. From the perspective of the Russian foreign-policy elite, this promising start came as the answer to a series of conciliatory measures from Russia. Cooperation and consultations with the United States enhance the status and prestige of Russia, but this presupposes a certain degree of US political will to come up with something deliverable in return. From the Russian perspective, cooperating with the United States in the war on terror has yielded few rewards. Russian authorities have complained of a lack of reciprocity after conceding to several US wishes and demands. The largely unilateralist approach of the US to preparing and starting the war in Iraq seems to have proved their point. A similar argument can be used about Russian policy toward Iran. The US attitude toward this relationship did not change in any way after the anti-terror alliance with Russia, and US criticism has continued with few efforts to understand Russian positions on the matter. In a situation involving expectations of some kind of breakthrough or a new relationship, there are also ample grounds for disappointment.

## US POLICIES TOWARD THE CIS

Apart from Iraq, where Moscow had to relinquish most of its influence, Washington also made itself felt even closer to home, appearing to frustrate Moscow's diplomacy in the CIS. Russia traditionally sees itself as an economic and political centre of gravity in Eurasia, and especially in the area of the former Soviet Union. Securing Russia's special role in this area is one of the highest priorities of Russian foreign policy, possibly *the* main foreign-policy priority of Russia today. Russia likely expected some understanding for this from the United States, particularly after Russian assistance in the war against terror in the aftermath of 9/11. However, instead of more sensitivity for Russia's special interests in the post-Soviet territory, Moscow saw these interests neglected or challenged by the anti-establishment color revolutions. The US efforts aimed at supporting democratic movements and popular mobilization were seen as attempts at regime transformation in the CIS area. The color revolutions were also perceived as directed against Russia and at reducing Russia's role as the predominant actor in the area. They were also seen as inspired, if not orchestrated, by the United States.<sup>159</sup>

The second round of NATO enlargement including the Baltic States was also regarded as an undue expansion of US interests on the territory surrounding Russia. This attitude was even stronger when it came to military bases and installations in this area. From a Russian perspective, the discussion of establishing bases in Central and Eastern Europe increased the uncertainty of what kind of intentions lay at the core of the expanding NATO alliance.<sup>160</sup> Some US analysts even claimed that these new sets of policies served as a signal to Russia that Central Asia now constituted a significant sphere of US influence.<sup>161</sup> The Kremlin's irritation at American policies in the area of the former Soviet Union touches on all facets of the relationship. This area is of particular importance to Russia, and Russia's main geopolitical area of interest. If there at any point in time was a possibility for a strategic partnership between Russia and the United States, this possibility started to wane as US geopolitical interests and presence in the area took precedence over having a productive relationship with Russia.

## Partnership and reciprocity

By strongly supporting US President George Bush in the wake of 9/11 and offering his backing to America's war on terrorism, President Putin had hoped for a

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159 Aron, "The United States and Russia": 6.

160 Andrew Tully, "What is Strategy for Bases in Former Soviet Bloc?" *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 7 December 2005 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 9 Jun 2007]).

161 *Ibid.*: 2.

new level of bilateral cooperation that would offer financial, military, and geopolitical dividends. This change of foreign policy on Putin's side did not emerge without political costs in Moscow. The criticism of President Putin's US policy was not necessarily founded on anti-Americanism or hostility. A broadish portion of the political elite lent at best tepid support to the rapprochement with the United States, "unpersuaded that the US meant to reciprocate or unimpressed by the bargains that Putin had struck to this point."<sup>162</sup>

Already in late 2001, there were voices in Russia claiming that president Putin had made too many concessions to the United States without getting anything in return. This situation had a historical parallel in the criticism of then President Yeltsin in the early 1990s. At this point many Russians expected a new Marshall plan or something of that kind in return for what they saw as considerable concessions to the West in voluntarily and peacefully dismantling the Soviet empire. Instead, Russia saw a US administration determined to pursue its own interests on all fronts, eagerly utilizing its economic and military advantage at every opportunity. A security analyst at RAND in Europe put it this way:

On the Russian side, I think there is definitely a sense of almost betrayal. There was a hope that a strategic partnership would be established. And in fact, what they have seen is a much tougher American position that, from their point of view, goes straight against their own interest.<sup>163</sup>

On the military front, Russia regarded America's planned troop reorganization in Europe, which could see the opening of US bases in Poland and even further east, as another example of US high-handedness.

A lot of changes, of course, are afoot in American military posture that have nothing to do with Russia, but are still perceived in Russia as being a direct threat to it. Now, here again, the Russians thought that they had an implicit promise by NATO and by the United States that none of this would happen, that no significant military presence would move eastwards.<sup>164</sup>

Important groups operating within the Kremlin still see the United States and their NATO allies as representing an external threat that actively undermines

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162 Legvold, "US-Russian Relations ...": 10.

163 Jeremy Bransten, "Powell's Trip to Address Growing Rifts in US-Russia Relations", *US-Russia Relations Special Reports*, 23 January 2004 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 10 Jun 2007]).

164 Ibid.

Russia's sovereignty and ultimately would like to force the collapse of the Russian state.<sup>165</sup>

In this perspective, attempts at regime change from the outside are seen as a possibility. This idea and the fear of outside intervention grew stronger after 2004, when the several color revolutions took place in Russia's near abroad. Some Russian officials saw external enemies "as working in Russia through a fifth column of pseudo-liberals and Nazis" who shared "a common hatred of Putin's Russia."<sup>166</sup> The ultimate Russian fear is military intervention somewhere in the area of the former Soviet Union, or the worst-case scenario, in Russia itself.

As the war on terror progressed, the geopolitical map of Eurasia changed. Areas that formerly lay within the Russian sphere of interest drew increased attention, and in some instances, also a US military presence. In addition to this came the expansion of NATO that brought the alliance even closer to Russia's own borders. Taken together, these developments corresponded poorly to a closer relationship with the United States, which was seen as the main architect of these events. Even though the intentions on the US side were supposedly not intended to encircle, weaken or attempt to bring about regime change within Russia, the Russian political elite's accumulated perceptions of these events made it difficult to argue otherwise. The use of what we can call Wilsonian arguments on the US side did little to change these perceptions. In the worldview of important Russian decision-makers, such arguments only concealed the real US intentions aimed at securing American primacy by keeping Russia down. Whether primacists or transformationalists were in the driving seat of US foreign policy, whether the ingrained impulse to spread democratic values, work toward regime change or to integrate former Soviet states into Western institutions, these policies were hardly conducive to an improved bilateral relationship with Russia. In some respects, it could be argued that the default Wilsonian settings of American foreign policy damaged the relationship with Russia more than any concerted effort to weaken or encircle it.

The strategic partnership in the war on terror and the prospects of an improved relationship created expectations of more understanding for Russian interests in the post-Soviet space. However, these expectations proved futile as long as the United States, instead of giving Russia a free hand in the area, was

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165 Ian Bremmer and Samuel Charap, "The Siloviki in Putin's Russia Who They Are and What They Want", *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 1 (2007): 89.

166 Presidential administration deputy Vladislav Surkov stated this in an interview. Quoted from Viktor Yasmann, "Kremlin Articulates its Ideological Platform", *Russia Political Weekly*, 13 October 2004 (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty [online 15 Jun 2007]).



increasing its own presence. The sum of these policies and the domestic political pressures they created in Russia signified the end of Russian pragmatism, and laid the foundations for a Russian policy to regain geopolitical control over its former sphere of influence in Eurasia. In turn, this policy created a reaction on the US side that escalated the level of criticism and increased suspicion of Russian motives. These developments, coupled with other negative events, constituted a cumulative mass that created a structural downturn in the bilateral relationship.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

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The goal of this study has been to provide a systematic account of some important aspects of US foreign policy toward Russia in the period 2001–2006. As a backdrop to this, I have developed a set of political approaches based on different schools of thought concerning how to deal with Russia from a US foreign-policy perspective. To shed further light on the period in question, I have selected examples of prioritized issues on the Bush administration's foreign policy agenda. Russia has been the primary policy object of some of these issues; others have been more general foreign-policy objectives. Having outlined the US policies in these selected areas, I have attempted to gather analyses of Russian perceptions of these policies. The purpose of merging these two approaches has been to try to ascertain how US policies toward Russia have worked out. In this final chapter, I aim to sum up some of the findings I have made, and to make some tentative conclusions about what effects US policy has had on the relationship with Russia.

### Main findings

Much due to the reduced influence of Russia, but also due to the expansion of the foreign-policy agenda because of other issues emerging and being given primary importance, the relationship between Russia and the United States has decreased in significance, particularly so for the United States. The relationship has also shown itself to be highly volatile and susceptible even to minor influences at various times during the early years of the new millennium. To some extent, this was of course a result of the uncertainties stemming from Russia adjusting to a dramatically changed domestic and international situation, but it was also an indication of a bilateral relationship that increasingly contained few issues of vital importance to the parties involved. Cooperation has been most successful on issues related to traditional security policy, many of which can be regarded as inherited from the US-Soviet relationship. Cooperation in areas such as arms control and non-proliferation, where Russia can still act with a semblance of parity with the US, have thus constituted the most solid ground in the relationship. These have also been the areas with the highest content of shared interests.

The political will of the United States to involve Russia in other issues has varied. One of the main problems has been the huge costs linked to comprehensive assistance programs to a country Russia's size and the lack of domestic support in the US for launching such endeavors. Consequently, the United States has propagated the necessity for political and economic reforms, but without back-

ing up the rhetoric with the resources or political clout to facilitate the process. Thus US policy toward Russia in the area of political and economic reforms has mainly taken the form of criticism or rhetoric.

In reality therefore, Russia has often been on the margins of issues on the US agenda, and rarely as the object of US foreign policy per se. In such cases, US and Russian interests have been in conflict, and neither the United States nor Russia have made conciliatory measures a rule of thumb. Both due to a heritage from their being Cold War antagonists, but also due to very different geopolitical, military, economic and political circumstances, there are not that many issues on which the United States and Russia have shared perspectives or a commonality of interests. The marginalization of Russia has led to policies that have prioritized other issues, countries and regions; this development has in turn had a detrimental effect on Russian national interests and the bilateral relationship. When this marginalization is coupled with official and rhetorical US policy toward Russia, there is a considerable disparity. At the height of positive developments in the relationship in 2002, the Joint Declaration pointed toward a host of issues that could serve as a basis for a renewed and improved bilateral relationship. However, as the war on terror progressed, Russia fell out of the Bush administration's focus, and the considerable potential of US-Russia relations fell short of its promise.

Another important factor is the vastly asymmetrical relationship between the two countries, and the effects, primarily psychological, this has had on developments in the relationship. Russia's political and economic decline ended sometime in 2005, and from this point on Russia again started defending its interests confidently. Since then, US authorities have had difficulties dealing with Russia being back in the game as an important actor; repeated claims of a more assertive Russian foreign policy serve as one indication of this development. In this regard, many policymakers and analysts in the US have confused the effects of regime type on the conduct of foreign policy. This confusion is primarily related to the relationship between a lack of democracy and the pursuit of Russian national interests. When the US and Russia have had conflicts of interest, these have been attributed to characteristics of Russia's regime type, and not to national interests. Analyses such as these have brought about more criticism of a lack of democratic development, when in reality the crux of the matter is conflicting interests. The pursuit of national interests by Russia has therefore been made illegitimate by the United States, coupling it with idealist notions of a link between regime type and foreign policy.

Furthermore, the lack of trust between the political elites of both countries has hampered positive developments. Both the United States and Russia claim from time to time that the other side is still waging the Cold War, and this is to some extent true. It is most clearly discernible with regard to NATO expansion,

but also very much alive in the assessments coming from Washington DC of developments in Russia. Russia's basic distrust of US intentions has also impeded the development of "normalized" economic relations, especially in the energy sector. The sector's strategic importance and the desire to limit foreign access to it have been reasons for the difficulty. When the US-Russian agenda was cleared of issues related to strategic arms, there were few signs of anything resembling a special relationship or a strategic partnership. Discussions between Russian foreign-policy analysts about whether Russia had been treated by the US in a way that resembled the concessions they felt Russia had given started surfacing as early as the summer of 2002, little more than half a year after President Putin's 9/11 telephone call to President Bush. From the Russian perspective, what was seen as Russian concessions led to expectations of some kind of payback from the US, especially on trade issues. The most important aspects here were WTO membership and the abolition of the Jackson-Vanik Act. Despite the Bush administration's repeated promises on both these issues, the US did nothing to facilitate Russia's entry into the global trade system. Although WTO accession involved complex negotiations which depended on other actors as well, lifting Jackson-Vanik would have been relatively easy for the Bush administration if it had been willing to spend the necessary political capital. These two issues came to signify the case of the "missing payback" from the United States and clearly showed that the US could not be counted on to deliver on its promises. Russia had evidently hoped for a new level of bilateral cooperation that would offer financial, military, and geopolitical dividends. Instead, Russia saw a US administration determined to pursue its own interests on all fronts, improving its own economic and military advantages at every opportunity. The Kremlin's irritation at this trend in American policies has had a detrimental influence on all facets of the relationship.

For Russia, esteem and a semblance of equality are the most important desirable things the US can give. Any kind of parity with the US and the acceptance of a special role for Russia have always been a key legitimizing domestic political factor in Moscow.<sup>167</sup> Therefore, whenever the US has chosen to support independence and democracy in the post-Soviet area, this choice has also involved prioritizing cultivating relationships with other countries to the detriment of its relationship with Russia. This argument goes to the core of the way Russia perceived its "special role" in the area, and the understanding it thought it had with the US on this. An end to the long-standing "Russia first" principle of American policy toward the states of the former Soviet Union was also implied. Overall, this led to a situation in which the US seemed to challenge

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167 Aron, "The United States and Russia": 5.

Russian policymakers on what was arguably the most important issue on Putin's foreign-policy agenda.

## Dominant approaches

At various points in chapter 3, I argued that the most central issues in the first period of the Bush administration were dominated by a primacist line of policy. In this period, the administration steered clear largely of including domestic politics and developments on its agenda with Russia. After making democratization and regime change an integral part of the global war on terror, it became increasingly difficult to keep domestic issues off the agenda in the relationship with Russia. This was made even more difficult as the domestic situation in Russia grew more problematic as Russia continued to deviate from the path of democratic development. As a reaction to this, US criticism of political developments in Russia gradually increased. Early in the second term of the Bush administration, this eventually shifted the policy over toward a transformationalist policy, and an increased focus on democratic development was argued for. These assessments do not imply that US policy was made solely along the lines of these schools of thought, but it implies a preponderant policy direction. How does this play out in relation to the preferences of the Russian leadership?

Returning to the discussion in chapter 4, I argued that a majority of the Russian elite preferred Republican presidents to Democratic ones. The main reason for this was the relative predictability of dealing with Republicans; they tended to have a pragmatic foreign-policy orientation, but also sought out possibilities to gain the upper hand if possible, thereby also implying a more primacist direction. Democratic administrations, on the other hand, tended to focus more on domestic issues and the promotion of democracy and human rights. In the Russian point of view, the Bush administration seemed to possess negative traits from both political camps. The US working along primacist lines in the security-policy sphere with a largely unilateralist stance on negotiations and an increasingly interventionist policy in Russia's near abroad was not what Moscow had hoped for from the Bush administration. Later, when this was combined with a solid focus on the need for democratic regime change in the near abroad and in Russia itself, it should hardly surprise the US that these lines of policy would adversely affect developing closer cooperation on other issues with Russia. This fact also aggravated Russian suspicions about the pretext for this type of criticism of internal Russian affairs. Russians would usually expect Democrats to use these types of arguments; Republicans using them, however, concerned the Russians; it was felt that the Republicans were using them to influence international opinion on Russia.

It can also be argued that the meager traditions for idealist foreign policy in Russia make it less inclined to believe in the honesty of such policies. This would again refer to what I have discussed earlier and called the Wilsonian dilemma. This analytical dilemma, in addition to few examples of Russia employing idealist policies, could point in the direction that Russia is more comfortable with actors working from a pragmatist or primacist perspective. This is also linked to the earlier analysis of Russia preferring Republicans to Democrats, so there are reasons to believe that Russia has a clearer understanding of pragmatist and primacist policies than the transformationalist line of policy. The integrationist line of policy would probably be preferable to Russia, but hardly a likely course of action given the degree of concessions this would imply for the US.

## The Wilsonian dilemma

In my opinion, the focus on democratization and regime transformation issues have tended to undermine other initiatives taken in the foreign-policy sphere between Russia and the United States. This has to do with the analytical dilemma associated with idealist policies. The actor on the receiving end of idealist policies can never be certain whether Wilsonian policies are being pursued because of underlying idealist intentions or whether they are in fact policies motivated by primacism. This obviously concerns the general problem of trust in bilateral relations between states. In addition to this, the United States has not conducted a consistent policy of democratization and regime change. From the Russian perspective, a number of countries with problematic track records on democracy and human rights have experienced considerably less public criticism than Russia. A Freedom Agenda that only applies selective democratization is therefore likely to further exacerbate the Wilsonian dilemma. This policy demonstrates that US idealism is variable, and that the use of transformationalism is selective, and it also points toward the fact that concrete security or economic interests are often more important than values.

Conducting idealist and realist policies simultaneously creates the danger that even issues clearly based on mutual interests that could have provided fertile ground for cooperation become influenced by the distrust and suspicion caused by Wilsonian policies; other areas of cooperation that could have been easier to pursue, given higher levels of trust, could thus be undermined. The mechanism indicated here could also undermine the foundation of mutually beneficial cooperation in the longer term because it creates uncertainty regarding the basic directions of the counterpart's foreign policies. This does not imply that idealist goals should not be pursued, but that they are inherently more complex to conduct, especially in relationships without a solid track record based on mutual interests and trust, thus making a somewhat more strengthened case for pursu-

ing a clear and interest-based policy focusing on security and economic issues. The critique of a transformationalist policy toward Russia is two-pronged: first, there is the Wilsonian dilemma itself; second, there are huge economic and political costs linked to engaging in a transformationalist policy beyond the rhetorical level. This is linked to the complexities and difficulties of regime transformation in foreign countries, and to the problem of dealing with domestic lobbies that pull in opposite directions at the same time. On one side, there is the Wilsonian school of thought, arguing for the necessity for democratization; on the other, there are the Jacksonians and Jeffersonians not wishing to engage in such projects, and working to limit the funding for and timetable of the Wilsonian efforts, thereby undermining the feasibility of pursuing this line of policy in the first place. This mechanism and the influence of the other schools of thought on the pursuit of Wilsonian politics create a problem of credibility in the long-run. This point is of a general kind, but it had specific effects on the relationship with Russia. The lack of long-term commitment with regard to the transformation of the country had a great impact during the 1990s. Even though there was US support for reforms in Russia, there was no will to see the process through and no resources – financial or political – to back it up. The United States seems to have trouble clearly seeing the long-term consequences of its own policies in this regard, and the implications this had for building trust.

## **Developments toward 2009**

For the US and Russia to be able to continue to have a bilateral relationship that constitutes a central facet of international affairs in the post-Cold War world, the basic premises would probably have to be reworked. This seems unlikely in the foreseeable future, with presidential campaigns and elections coming up in both countries. Most analysts therefore predict a bilateral turn for the worse before the relationship has any chance of improving again. The rhetoric in both countries' presidential elections could easily increase tensions and strain relations even more.

It is discouraging to realize that the relationship does not seem to be moving forwards or backwards, but rather in cyclical fluctuations, which on the surface seem connected to the presidential election cycles; this demonstrates that the bilateral relationship between the USA and Russia is shallow and fragile, with little real substance or solidity. US-Russian relations have always been a government-to-government relationship without the mutual trade and economic dependencies characterizing and solidifying Russian relations with Europe. This has made the overall relationship volatile. In this regard, it is fair to say that the rapprochement after 9/11 and the alliance in the war on terror represented the

exception to and not the rule in US-Russia relations. When looking at the relationship over a longer time span, this becomes increasingly clear.

Partnership with Russia would be difficult to establish and maintain if the US continues to pursue policies that do not take Russian interests into account. Trying to pursue a policy of selective cooperation that reaps the benefits of partnership in some cases, while working against vital Russian national interests in others, will simply not work for the United States. As I pointed out earlier, the expansion of NATO resembled from a Russian perspective an encirclement strategy designed for containment. In the future, this could become a source of serious friction between the United States and Russia, especially if the US continues to engage persistently in Russia's top geopolitical priority – the near abroad. This perceived containment was hard to combine with efforts to increase cooperation, especially when any talk from the Bush administration of a strategic partnership with Russia was very far from the political reality. The strategic partnership mentioned so often in 2001–2002 lacked both content and intentions from the US side, and this was definitely a lower priority than many other issues on the US foreign-policy agenda. The administration's decisions about issues regarding the relationship with Russia also reflect this. Time and again the Bush administration demonstrated a lack of will to take decisions that involved any kind of political price to enhance cooperation with Russia.

Therefore, it seems that US Russia policy is driven more by politics than by foreign-policy strategy; a strain of containment has thus been an easier political option than working toward more cooperation. Under the next administration, this will probably have to change if the relationship is not to deteriorate any further. Whether this a feasible policy and whether it can garner any kind of political attention and support is a different matter.



## APPENDIX

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List of names and titles of people that have been used as sources for background information in this report. Some of these meetings were informal conversations and others were more structured interviews that took place between October 2006 and June 2007. The people I interviewed, at their own request, are not quoted directly.

**AAMOT, LARS ERIK**

Energy Counselor at the Norwegian Embassy, Washington DC.

**CHOW, EDWARD**

Senior Fellow at the Energy and National Security Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC.

**DAY, CHRISTOPHER**

Adviser, Department of Energy.

**EKIMOFF, LANA**

Section Head for Russian and Eurasian Affairs at the Department of Energy.

**GOLDGEIER, JAMES**

Senior Fellow for Transatlantic Relations at the Council of Foreign Relations and Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at George Washington University, Washington DC.

**GRAHAM, THOMAS**

Adviser at Kissinger MacLarty Associates. Former Director of Russian and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council, Washington DC.

**GUHA, SUMONA**

Bureau of Russian & Eurasian Affairs, Department of State.

**HILL, WILLIAM**

Visiting Professor at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington DC.

**JENSEN, DONALD**

Communications Director and Russia specialist, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Washington DC.

**KUCHINS, ANDREW**

Director of the Russia & Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

**LIEVEN, ANATOL**

Senior Research Fellow and US-Russia relations specialist at the New America Foundation, Washington DC.

**OLCOTT, MARTHA BRILL**

Senior Associate with the Russian & Eurasian Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC.

**SANDERSON, TOM**

Deputy Director and Senior Fellow in the CSIS Transnational Threats Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC.

**SIMES, DMITRIY**

Director of the Program on U.S.-Russian Relations and President of the Nixon Center, Washington DC.

**SMITH, KEITH**

Senior Associate at the Energy and National Security Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC.

**STENT, ANGELA**

Professor of Government and Foreign Service at Georgetown University. Former National Intelligence Officer at the National Intelligence Council for Russia and Eurasia.

**WALLANDER, CELESTE**

Visiting Professor at Georgetown University. Former Director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

**WOLFSTAHL, JON**

Senior Fellow with the CSIS International Security Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC.

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