Russophobia
This page intentionally left blank
Russophobia
Anti-Russian Lobby and American Foreign Policy

Andrei P. Tsygankov
For my parents, Svetlana Luchinov and Pavel Tsygankov, and grandfather Aleksandr Prisekin, and in loving memory of my grandparents Mikhail Luchinov, Afanasi Tsygankov, and Yevgeniya Tsygankov, soldiers of World War II
This page intentionally left blank
Give them time; let them be Russians; let them work out their internal problems in their own manner. The ways by which people advance towards dignity and enlightenment in government are things that constitute the deepest and most intimate processes of national life. There is nothing less understandable to foreigners, nothing in which foreign influence can do less good.

(George Kennan, “America and the Russian Future,” Foreign Affairs, 1951)
This page intentionally left blank
Contents

List of Figure and Tables xi
Preface xiii
1 The U.S. Russia Policy after 9/11 1
2 The Anti-Russian Lobby 21
3 The “New Cold War” and the American Sense of History 47
4 The Chechnya “Oppressor” and U.S. Objectives in the Caucasus 69
5 “Authoritarianism at Heart” and Washington’s Democracy Promotion 93
6 “Expansionism by Habit” and American Security 117
7 Russia’s Energy “Imperialism” and U.S. Interests 137
8 Toward an Alternative Russia Approach 161
Appendix: The Lobby’s Russia Ideology and Examples of Its Activities, 2003–2008 169
Notes 173
Index 231
Figure and Tables

Figure

2.1 American view of Russia: A partner or a threat? 41

Tables

1.1 U.S.-Russia perception and policy after 9/11 9
1.2 Three core myths about Russia 15
2.1 The Lobby’s objectives for the U.S. and Russia 34
2.2 Conditions enabling American Russophobia 38
2.3 American public opinion of Russia 40
Preface

In the spring of 2006, U.S. criticism of Russia became especially acute. The Council on Foreign Relations released a bipartisan report titled *Russia’s Wrong Direction*, condemning the country’s “de-democratization” and foreign policy. Vice President Cheney traveled to Vilnius to denounce Russia’s “energy blackmail” and rollback of democracy. And politicians, such as Senator John McCain (R-Az), insisted on expelling Russia from the G-8, while the country’s leadership was preparing to host the organization’s summit in St. Petersburg. In addition, the March–April issue of the establishment magazine *Foreign Affairs* published an article by Kier Lieber and Daryl Press, which presented Russia as a severely handicapped nuclear adversary that could no longer survive a possible nuclear attack from the United States.

These unfriendly reactions were puzzling for two reasons. First, however problematic the Kremlin’s policies might have been, they were overwhelmingly supported at home. Both elites and the general public were firmly behind the new course, and there was little, if anything, that the United States could do to change it. Second, in a world of new security threats and growing energy competition, Russia was increasingly important. After the years of international disengagement, Russia was back on the world stage, and the United States should have been interested in having it as a partner.

It was during the spring of 2006 that I began this project. I wanted to investigate whether the growing volume of criticism toward Russia, sometimes by people who could hardly claim to be knowledgeable about the country, concealed a political agenda. As I researched the subject, I discovered evidence of Russophobia shared by different circles within the American political class and promoted through programs and conferences at various think tanks, congressional testimonies, activities of NGOs, and the media. Russophobia is not merely a critique of Russia, but a critique beyond any sense of proportion, waged with the purpose of undermining the nation’s political reputation. The focus of this book is on the media and policy community; a different book would need to be written to address the subject of Russophobia in U.S. academia and cultural products.
Although a critical analysis of Russia and its political system is entirely legitimate, the issue is the balance of such analysis. Russia’s role in the world is growing, yet many U.S. politicians feel that Russia doesn’t matter in the global arena. Preoccupied with international issues, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, they find it difficult to accept that they now have to negotiate and coordinate their international policies with a nation that only yesterday seemed so weak, introspective, and dependent on the West. To these individuals, Russophobia is merely a means to pressure the Kremlin into submitting to the United States in the execution of its grand plans to control the world’s most precious resources and geostrategic sites. In the meantime, Russia has grown increasingly resentful, and the war in the Caucasus in August 2008 has demonstrated that Russia is prepared to act unilaterally to stop what it views as U.S. unilateralism in the former Soviet region. And some in Moscow are tempted to provoke a much greater confrontation with Western states. The attitude of ignorance and self-righteousness toward Russia tells us volumes about the United States’ lack of preparation for the twenty-first century’s central challenges that include political instability, weapons proliferation, and energy insecurity.

Despite the dislike of Russia by a considerable number of American elites, this attitude is far from universally shared. Many Americans understand that Russia has gone a long way from communism and that the overwhelming support for Putin’s policies at home cannot be adequately explained by high oil prices and the Kremlin’s manipulation of the public—despite the frequent assertions of Russophobic observers. Balanced analysts are also aware that many Russian problems are typical difficulties that nations encounter with state-building, and should not be presented as indicative of Russia’s “inherent drive” to autocracy or empire. As the United States and Russia move further to the twenty-first century, it will be increasingly important to redefine the relationship between the two nations in a mutually enriching way.

Political and cultural phobias are, of course, not limited to those of an anti-Russian nature. For instance, Russia has its share of America-phobia—a phenomenon that I have partly researched in my book *Whose World Order* (Notre Dame, 2004) and in several articles. Anti-American attitudes are strongly present in Russian media and cultural products, as a response to the U.S. policies of nuclear, energy, and military supremacy in the world. Extreme hegemonic policies tend to provoke an extreme response, and Russian nationalist movements and often commentators react harshly to what they view as unilateral encroachment on Russia’s political system and foreign policy interests. Russia’s reactions to these policies by the United States are highly negative and frequently inadequate, but hardly more extreme than the American hegemonic and imperial discourse.
My research and lines of argument are supported by scholars, political observers, and the general public. Never before in my academic career have I had so many encouraging reactions such as those I received in response to several short articles I published in Russian- and English-language media. Although none of those who supported my work are responsible for any possible errors this book contains, I am fortunate to have their support and am indebted to it. In part, this support became possible thanks to those who chose to publish and publicize my first attempts to write about Russophobia. I am grateful to Alexei Bogaturov at *International Trends* (Mezhdunarodnyye protsessyy) and Michael Bohm at *Moscow Times* for publishing my articles, and to Yuri Slezkine at the Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, for inviting me to speak in Spring 2008 at the conference “Russian Emigration in Historical Perspective.” My thanks also go to the San Francisco State University where I have the privilege to teach and enjoy the support of my colleagues and students. Special thanks to the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Dean Joel Kassiola at San Francisco State University for providing financial support for indexing the book. My family in Moscow and San Francisco has been a constant source of inspiration, and my wife, Julia, read and commented on some portions of the book. Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist read and improved the whole manuscript. In addition, I would like to thank the staff of Palgrave Macmillan, Erin Ivy, Asa Johnson, Farideh Koohi-Kamali, and Toby Wahl, and that of Macmillan Publishing Solutions for providing support and editorial assistance.

Through personal conversations and the reading of various portions of my book, other friends and colleagues contributed their support, valuable comments, and ideas for improvement. Among them, I should like to mention (in alphabetic order) Vladimir Belyaev, Juliana Budjevac, Alfred Evans, Ludmila Foster, David Foglesong, Vladimir Frolov, Nickolas Gvosdev, Gordon Hahn, Larry Helm, Dale Herspring, Fiona Hill, James Jatras, David Johnson, Andrew Kuchins, Peter Lavelle, Anatol Lieven, Ronald Linden, Edward Lozansky, Branko Milanovic, James Millar, Nayil Mukharyamov, Peter Reddaway, Georgi Sheremetyeyff, Nicholay Sluchevsky, Vlad Sobel, Valeri Solovei, Eduard Solovyev, Ronald Suny, Sharon Tennison, Veljko Vujacic, Nayil Yangirov, Vladimir Yaroslavlev, Andrei Zabegalin, and Igor Zevelev. Although they are not liable for the book’s deficiencies, their comments and reactions caused me to rethink some of my ideas and the ways of defending them. I dedicate this book to my parents and grandparents who taught me so much about life and the meaning of patriotism.

On a personal note, I would like to add that writing this kind of a policy-involved book has been emotionally draining. As a Russian I sometimes
feel offended by comments about my country made by politicians, pundits, and observers. Yet, I am also a scholar and wanted to write a scholarly book, and not to personally attack those whose comments I find offensive and Russophobic. The Russophobia I discuss is more complicated than merely a cultural animosity toward Russians as a people or me personally. Rather it is a fear of Russia’s political influence that finds its expression in grossly distorted forms of critiquing the country.
The U.S.-Russia Policy after 9/11

At virtually any point between 1947 and 1991, if any serious thinker had proposed that we could form a strategic relationship with Russia but should refuse to do so, he or she would have been considered misguided at best and slightly deranged at worst. Yet that has happened today. The mystery is this: What forces are at work to demonize Russia, to isolate and alienate it from the West and to treat it as an enemy?

(Gary Hart, The National Interest [March–April 2007])

1. The U.S.-Russia Policy Alternatives after 9/11

Historically, there have been at least three ways of organizing relations with Russia: mutually beneficial partnership, limited engagement, and containment. The notion of partnership includes a full-fledged engagement based on mutually shared interests. After the end of the Cold War, elements of the U.S.-Russia partnership became stronger although the two sides’ divergent expectations soon strained their relationship. While Russia expected extensive assistance in reforming its economy, the West was primarily interested in reducing nuclear threats coming from the region. Russia’s sharp economic decline also produced perceptions in the United States that, as a weak state, Russia would be less insistent on its own national interests and agree to follow Washington’s foreign policy agenda. Moscow, however, soon demanded to be treated as an equal. A new opportunity to devise a mutually acceptable partnership presented itself following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, when the two nations seemed prepared to cooperate in counterterrorism, nuclear nonproliferation, energy development, and strengthening international political institutions. With the Cold War behind them and with the convergence of important interests, the two sides had an opportunity to develop their relationship into a strategic partnership and a military alliance.
Western leaders have generally followed a more limited approach or a limited engagement since the fall of the Berlin Wall. They extended to Russia some symbolic forms of recognition, such as membership in G-7, while abstaining from more serious commitments to transform the postcommunist economic and political institutions. A limited engagement involves cooperation on some issues and follows some preestablished behavioral constraints. Such engagement does not aim to deepen the existing level of relationships, and it does not extend to other important issue areas. It may also coexist with elements of competition and rivalry. Contemporary U.S.-Russia relations are of this nature. The two nations continue to cooperate in sharing intelligence, and some sources indicate that this cooperation is getting stronger. The two nations have also reached some understanding on how to discourage North Korea and Iran from building a nuclear bomb. Beyond that, the United States and Russia are allies or rivals depending on the issues at stake. They are not enemies, but this strange mixture of cooperation and rivalry serves as yet another indicator of the lack of clarity in U.S. relations with Russia.

One can also envision the new containment approach to Russia—the approach that would scale down the already existing relationships between the two countries, block the development of new forms of cooperation, or even challenge the very legitimacy of Russia’s state and its political system. Although this approach has never materialized in U.S. policies, it has found its advocates within the American political class. Calls to revoke Russia’s membership in G-8, sever its ties with other Western institutions, ban private investments, and recognize the independence of secessionist territories (Chechnya) have been heard from various members of the U.S. establishment and would amount to a policy of containing Russia or returning to where the two nations were during the Cold War.

2. From Partnership to Limited Engagement

9/11 and the United States’ attempted partnership with Russia

The 9/11 tragedy took place on American soil but was seen as an equally tragic and dangerous development by Russia as well. By that time, Russia had already experienced multiple terrorist attacks, and many Russians felt instinctively sympathetic with the United States and extended their support to the people and government of the country. President Vladimir Putin was among the first to call President George W. Bush to express his support and pledge important resources to help America in its fight against terror. Against the reservations of the political class and a number of social strata, Putin offered America broad support for operations in Afghanistan that included
intelligence sharing, opening Russian airspace to relief missions, taking part in search-and-rescue operations, rallying Central Asian countries to the American cause, and arming anti-Taliban forces inside Afghanistan.

As the horrific attacks were beginning to create a new social and political atmosphere in international relations, an important opportunity for establishing a partnership between the United States and Russia emerged. That opportunity was not unlike the one presented by the threat of Nazi Germany, when the world order was confronted with the danger of destruction and oppression from Hitler’s expansionist regime. Driven by a sense of threat, the new U.S.-Russia cooperation could have gradually evolved beyond fighting terrorism toward addressing other vital international relations issues such as poverty, energy security, political instability, and weapons proliferation. If the former Cold War rivals were to finally leave old hostilities behind them, the economic and political benefits of their cooperation would greatly exceed its costs.

Initial developments following the terrorist attacks on the United States were encouraging. Bush responded to Putin’s offer of support by indicating a change in the U.S. perception of Russia. Previously, the Bush administration had not foreseen any breakthroughs in relations with Russia. It had made public the arrest of FBI agent Robert Hanssen, who had spied for the Russians, and it had subsequently expelled 50 Russian diplomats. It had threatened to end any economic aid except for nonproliferation projects and—through Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld—had accused Russia of proliferating nuclear materials and weapons technologies. As late as February 2001, Bush’s national security advisor Condoleezza Rice had insisted that Russia was a threat to America and its European allies. Now America was increasingly prepared to see Russia as an equal and potentially strategic partner in the global war on terror, rather than as a threat or a dependent subject. The already-established personal chemistry between the two countries’ leaders after their first meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in the summer of 2001 was about to be strengthened by redefined national interests. Convinced that “old suspicions are giving way to new understanding and respect,” President Bush now saw the two countries as “allies in the war on terror” moving “to a new level of partnership.”

This newly emerging perception had begun to shape Washington’s attitudes toward several issues of prime significance to Russia—Chechnya, the nature of the Russia’s political system, military, and energy security. The White House showed a greater sensitivity to Russia’s arguments that their fight in Chechnya was a part of a global war on terror. Although many in Washington’s policy circles continued to refer to Chechen terrorists as “rebels,” demanding that Russia “negotiate” a peace with them, Bush took a different approach. For instance, when Chechen guerrillas threatened
to blow up a Moscow theater and took 700 hostages in October 2002, Bush expressed strong support for Putin and the Kremlin’s decision to storm the theater to resolve the crisis. While the U.S. media was overwhelmingly focused on Russia’s negative role in the hostage crisis, Bush insisted that “the people who caused this tragedy to take place are terrorists who took hostages and endangered the lives of others.” He reiterated his conviction in further statements that “terrorists must be opposed wherever they spread chaos and destruction, including Chechnya.” Overall, Washington toned down its rhetoric about Russia’s escalating tensions and violating human rights in the region and was more willing to accept the Kremlin’s attempts to stabilize the area.

It was also around this time that Bush expressed his confidence in Russia’s commitment to principles of democratic governance. Despite the chorus of critiques from Western human rights agencies and experts, Bush called for patience and expressed his respect for Russia’s political path. During his meeting with Putin at Camp David in September 2003, he went as far as to endorse “President Putin’s vision for Russia: a country at peace within its borders, with its neighbors, and with the world, a country in which democracy and freedom and rule of law thrive.”

U.S.-Russia relations also improved in the area of military security. Putin’s efforts to focus the security agenda on issues of counterterrorism resonated with the White House. In addition to supporting the U.S. anti-Taliban operation in Afghanistan, Putin sought to develop a new framework of strategic interaction with the United States. He saw the decision by Bush to abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty (ABM) as potentially threatening, but, at the time of relative weakness and the emerging trust between the two countries, Putin decided to swallow hard in the interests of pursuing other Russian objectives. Despite formidable domestic resistance, he made little of his opposition to the U.S. decision that had prohibited building nuclear-missile defense systems (MDS) unilaterally, and he accepted Bush’s conclusion that “the ABM treaty hinders our government’s ability to develop ways to protect our people from future terrorist or rogue state missile attacks.” Although Putin viewed the decision as a “mistake,” his reaction was mute and non-threatening, despite some expectations of a confrontational response.

At one point the Russian leader even expressed an interest in joining NATO, and some NATO leaders indicated their support of Russia’s membership in the alliance. In late 2001, NATO secretary general Lord Robertson, supported by President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair, was advocating the idea of giving Russia a status equal to the alliance’s 19 permanent members, including veto power over certain decisions. In the assessment of The New York Times, the plan promised a “fundamental shift in behavior for the 52-year-old organization, which was founded after
World War II specifically to contain the military power of the Soviet Union” and Russia’s “full partnership with Western democracies.” An important step in that direction was the establishment at the May 28, 2002, NATO summit in Rome of a new NATO-Russia Council for consulting on principles and actions against common threats. The U.S.-Russian joint declaration at the summit became the highest point in their fast-developing relations. It stated the two nations’ “belief that new global challenges and threats require a qualitatively new foundation for our relationship” and that “we are achieving a new strategic relationship. The era, in which the United States and Russia saw each other as an enemy or strategic threat 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.”

Finally, ambitious plans emerged in the area of U.S.-Russia energy cooperation. A determined Putin pressed forward by stressing the positive potential of these new U.S.-Russia relations. In particular, beginning with his interview in the Wall Street Journal in February 2002, he emphasized Russia as a reliable alternative to traditional Middle Eastern sources of oil and natural gas. Russia was the world’s single largest non-OPEC oil exporter, with 10 percent of known oil reserves and 9 percent of world output. Yet it only accounted for 1 percent of American imports in 2001. Putin projected for Russia to increase production of crude oil at a rate of 9 percent a year, much of it intended for export, with a considerable portion for the United States. Subsequent events demonstrated the existence of reinforcing interests in this aspect of U.S.-Russia relations on both sides. In May of the same year, the U.S. and Russian presidents signed a joint declaration on energy cooperation at their summit in Moscow. Then followed the Houston Energy Summit in October, at which Russian officials said that they could export as much as a million barrels a day to the United States within five years. The Economist summed up all these efforts at the time, “America’s relations with Russia are now better than at any time since the end of the Second World War and are improving.”

**Partnership unraveled**

The U.S.-Russia partnership was not to last and soon the initially encouraging developments turned into a renewed competition over a whole series of issues. The United States did not resort to policies of containment and did not push for severing Russia’s relations with G-8, NATO, or foreign investors. Some elements of cooperation survived and extended to sharing counterterrorist intelligence information, coordinating policies against
nuclear proliferation, and developing some economic ties. Nevertheless, Washington backed away from its initial commitment to take relationships with Moscow to the new level of cooperation. As the immediate sense of the post-9/11 threat had subsided, the United States returned to expecting Russia to follow U.S. foreign policy agenda.

In the Caucasus, Washington’s willingness not to oppose Russia’s Chechnya policy—partly because of the Kremlin’s cooperation with the war in Afghanistan and partly because of established al-Qaida ties in the region—soon yielded to renewed suspicions of the Kremlin’s intentions. From a state determined to secure its borders and territorial integrity, Russia was being increasingly perceived as revisionist and expansionist. Already in late 2002, some clear signs appeared that the White House was not prepared to tolerate Russia taking any initiative in the Caucasus and would only work with Moscow if it followed Washington’s agenda. It was one thing for the White House to announce its determination to hunt terrorists wherever they were, yet it was an entirely different matter to allow the Kremlin to do the same. When Russia accused neighboring Georgia of providing safe haven for terrorists on its territory and warned of taking action, the United States sided with Georgia. And when an unknown airplane attacked a remote Georgian region that bordered Chechnya, thereby violating Georgian sovereignty and escalating tensions in the region, the White House spokesman Ari Fleischer publicly accused Russia of lying when it claimed that it did not bomb Georgia. “The alliance with Russia seems to be at breaking point,” commented a Russian observer.

The relationship visibly deteriorated after 2003. The United States insisted on Russia providing a “political solution” to the Chechnya problem, by which Washington meant holding talks with those whom the Kremlin considered terrorists. The United States also downplayed links between Chechen terrorists and al-Qaida, which made it possible to grant political asylum and media exposure to those closely affiliated with Chechen terrorists. In the wake of the Beslan school siege tragedy, the change in attitude prompted President Putin to draw a parallel between Chechen terrorist attacks on Russia and al-Qaida’s 9/11 attacks: “Why don’t you meet Osama bin Laden, invite him to Brussels or to the White House and engage in talks, ask him what he wants and give it to him so he leaves you in peace?” And inadvertently, through its intervention in Iraq and its global strategy of regime change, the United States contributed to Russia’s already strained relations with Muslims. Intervention in Iraq made efforts to engage moderate Muslims across the world even more difficult, and that translated into a greater support for Islamic radicals inside Russia.
Russia also got a taste of a different treatment from the United States regarding its political system. Rather than viewing the country as being in need of greater stabilization in response to a long economic depression and many security vulnerabilities, the White House focused on seeing Russia as insufficiently democratic. Following Putin’s proposals to increase state centralization after the devastating terrorist attack in Beslan, the United States’ officials became alarmed over Russia’s antidemocratic trends, warning that a divergence from democratic values could harm their relations with Russia. The United States itself made a number of state-consolidating steps in response to the terrorist threat, such as passing the Patriot Act, and the White House was widely accused of violating democracy and human rights in fighting the war on terror. Yet, the then secretary of state Colin Powell urged the Kremlin not to allow the fight against terrorism to “harm the democratic process,” and President Bush raised concerns about “decisions . . . in Russia that could undermine democracy.”

In line with its new regime change strategy, the United States pushed the entire former Soviet region toward transforming its political institutions. It provided funds for the opposition and supported revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. However, many in Russia did not see how supporting revolutions could help in fighting the war on terror, viewing the so-called colored revolutions as largely destabilizing in their effects. Rather than contributing to democracy building, the revolutions added to the Kremlin’s perception that Washington’s chief objective might have been to change the regime in Russia. That influential elites in the United States maintained contacts with some radical organizations in Russia, such as the National Bolshevik Party, while increasing pressures on the Kremlin to “democratize” and respect political freedoms, only served to strengthen this perception. For instance, in April 2007 the U.S. State Department issued a report highly critical of Russia’s political system, pledging various assistance to “democratic organizations” inside the country. In response, the Kremlin took a number of defensive steps. It trained its own youth organizations, restricted activities of Western NGOs and radical opposition inside the country, and warned the United States against interference with Russia’s domestic developments.

The relationships also suffered considerably in the area of military security. In addition to withdrawing from the ABM treaty, the United States took steps to advance its military infrastructure closer to Russia’s borders, giving rise to further suspicions in Moscow. Despite the established NATO-Russia Council, the two sides again treated each other as potential enemies rather than partners, and Washington did little to integrate Russia into
Western security institutions or address its concerns. Not only did the United States not stop at two waves of NATO expansion that had already taken place against opposition from Russia, but it was now working on extending membership in the alliance to former Soviet states such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Ukraine. Although Russian officials, such as Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, warned that the possible entry of Ukraine and Georgia to NATO would bring about a tremendous “geopolitical shift” requiring Moscow to “revise its policy,” Washington took the warnings lightly, tossing Russia, a potentially valuable partner, aside. In this context, Russia saw Washington’s plans to deploy elements of a missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic as a deviation from, rather than a contribution to, the war on terror. In response, President Putin went as far as to announce his decision to declare a moratorium on implementing the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, which would allow Russia to freely move its conventional forces within its territory in response to those steps taken by NATO that the Kremlin may see as potentially harmful.

Finally, there was little left of the two nations’ efforts to establish an energy partnership. Russia’s energy strategy—increasing state share in energy companies, building pipelines in all geographic directions, raising energy prices for its oil- and gas-dependent neighbors, moving to control transportation networks in the former USSR, and coordinating its activities with other energy producers—generated anxiety in the American political class. Its members, such as Senator John McCain and Vice President Dick Cheney, issued multiple statements that indicated their concerns with Russia’s new “imperialism” and energy “blackmail.” For instance, in November 2006, Senator Richard Lugar delivered a keynote speech during the NATO summit in Riga in which he went as far as to call for updating the alliance’s basic role to include protection of allied countries’ energy security from Russia’s actions. Washington no longer looked for ways to work with Russia as an energy partner and instead was routinely denouncing its leaders for “using energy as political leverage to influence its neighbors’ policies.” The United States had earlier built the alternative Baku-Ceyhan pipeline and was now working hard on persuading potential investors and Central Asian nations to build the trans-Caspian route under the Caspian Sea, circumventing Russia. In May 2007, Putin secured a commitment from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to increase exports of Central Asian energy via Russia’s pipelines, which only served to heighten U.S. concerns.

Table 1.1 summarizes principal differences between two stages in U.S.-Russia relations after 9/11.
3. Power and Culture as Explanations of the U.S. Policy Change

There are three important explanations of what changed with the U.S. Russia policy. The first explanation would point to the power structure of contemporary international relations and the U.S. role in it. The second would place the emphasis on American and Russian political culture and perception. The third would look for an answer in America’s domestic conditions.

**Power**

Scholars of American “unipolarity” and hegemony have long noted the overwhelming power that the United States has in the international system,\(^30\) and they have constructed an intellectual tradition within the nation that cherishes America’s dominance in the world above all other imperatives.\(^31\) In 2006, some White House officials went as far as to insist that the United States has indeed become a world empire with unparalleled power, exceeding even that of ancient Rome. For that reason, they no longer saw a need to adjust to the realities of the world. “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.”\(^32\) Many pundits with neoconservative convictions supported this

---

**Table 1.1** U.S.-Russia perception and policy after 9/11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical perception</td>
<td>A new state</td>
<td>Successor to the Soviet system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A strategic partner</td>
<td>A former colonizer and a defeated power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechnya/terrorism</td>
<td>Muted criticism</td>
<td>Renewed criticism for lack of “political solutions”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on counterterrorism efforts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political system</td>
<td>Muted criticism of domestic developments</td>
<td>Broad ranged criticism for “non-democratic practices”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military cooperation</td>
<td>Counterterrorism-based cooperation</td>
<td>New NATO expansion without considering Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposals to include Russia to NATO</td>
<td>MDS in close proximity to Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Cooperation</td>
<td>Growing cooperation in liquid gas</td>
<td>Growing energy competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
thinking. According to them, Russia was merely in no position to complain about the U.S. policies and demand for a greater role in the world. A proper assessment of international balance of power or unipolarity required that Moscow become dependent on Washington, and if it didn’t agree with this role, it had to be made to follow the U.S. lead.

The argument about the structure of the international system is compelling because the United States is by far the most powerful nation on earth and therefore is in a position to shape the policies of other nations. However, calling it unipolarity may be quite a stretch given the growing material power of states such as China, India, and Russia. In addition, even if it exists, unipolarity is merely an objective condition of material power, and that power by itself does not dictate imperial or hegemonic policies. To dictate so, is unwise and unnecessarily expensive, because it tends to alienate allies and because its objectives may often be reached through diplomacy. When hard power is used softly, unipolarity may produce multilateral rather than unilateral policies and cooperation that would entice allies rather than coerce and alienate them. International peace and stability could then result from America exercising soft power and relying on the image of a benevolent stabilizer and honest power broker in world affairs. In this case, regional great powers are given important stakes in the international system and not brushed aside by an insensitive hegemon.

Russia, as well as China and India, is in a position to assume important responsibilities for maintaining peace and stability in Eurasia. The U.S. status as a hegemon does not need to translate into policies that dictate terms to the Russian leadership. The immediate post-9/11 partnership would then have a strong chance to survive and develop. On the other hand, trying to achieve and maintain world leadership without having Russia on one’s side is futile and is not likely to last. What seems to be missing in the case of the power explanation of the U.S. failure to seize the opportunity of cooperation with Russia is the analysis of political and cultural attitudes held by American officials and political class.

**Russian culture and politics**

Before we get to American attitudes, it is important to address yet another explanation of the U.S. changed approach to Russia. The explanation is related to the unipolarity argument, but it goes beyond blaming Moscow for not understanding the realities of American power in the world. It advocates viewing Russia as an expansionist state, and not a normal one or one that abides by acceptable rules of international behavior. Conservative
representations of the Russia-threat argument tend to focus on the nation's political culture, while more liberal interpretations place responsibility for Russia's “anti-Western” policies on the Kremlin's leadership. Both perspectives are skeptical that Moscow would enter cooperative arrangements with Western nations voluntarily. As a revisionist state, Russia is instead expected to use available opportunities to upset American plans to remain the dominant world power. Russia therefore represents a threat to American interests and must be either contained or fundamentally transformed. To dictate terms to Russia is not only possible but indeed necessary, as it is the only language Russia can understand. If this reasoning is correct, the post-9/11 partnership was doomed from the beginning, and the American policy makers would be wise to abandon any search for common solutions and stay firm in resisting Russia’s power aspirations.

This argument is inaccurate in its portrayal of Russia, and it is unrealistic in its recommendations to contain or punish Moscow. Rather than presenting Russia as an expansionist state, it is important to point out that historically, at least since Peter the Great, Russia’s behavior was formed by interactions with Europe and, after World War II, the West in general. Western civilization played an especially prominent role in creating for Russia the system of meanings with which to defend its international choices. Russia therefore has always been responsive to the behavior of Western nations and—with progressive leaders in the Kremlin—prepared to mend fences and pursue cooperation, rather than confrontation. The above analysis indicates that following 9/11, Putin went sufficiently far to establish a working partnership with the United States. His initial assessment of strategic threats had little to do with the anti-Americanism for which Putin is frequently blamed. Russia’s president emphasized threats coming from economic backwardness and terrorism, and like many Western leaders, he saw terrorism as a threat to the very system of modern international relations. The correction of Russia’s course toward a greater assertiveness and criticisms of the U.S. role in the world took place after the so-called colored revolutions and a new wave of NATO expansion. The new language of the Kremlin began to form in 2004–2005 and found its full expression in Putin’s speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy in January 2007. The Kremlin was now highly critical of the United States, but the development was to a great extent a product of America’s own policies that ignored Russia’s concerns and security interests. The U.S. style of fighting the war on terror and its efforts to undermine Russia’s geopolitical position in Eurasia compelled the Kremlin to reevaluate its initially pro-American policy.

Blaming Russia alone for the breakup of the post-9/11 coalition is insufficient at best and misleading at worst and recommendations to contain or
punish Moscow are counterproductive. Such policies are not likely to discipline a Russia that continues to be in a position not to yield to external pressures. Against expectations, such pressures are likely to strengthen Russian nationalists and push Russia further away from the Western nations. NATO expansion, as well as military interventions in Kosovo and Iraq, has already done its share of damage in this respect. Hard-line nationalists in Russia will only be grateful to hawkish pundits and politicians for assisting them in constructing an image of America as a threat.

**American culture**

America’s cultural and religious tradition is indeed responsible for shaping the contemporary U.S. foreign policy. In the West, scholars have studied the long-term impact of America’s distinctive nationalist values and its “civilizing mission” on its international behavior. In Russia, the argument too has been popular and has found its advocates in both the scholarly and political community.

This perspective is powerful and serves as an important addition to the above described power approach. The cultural perspective points to historical roots of political ideas and decisions, and it helps to make sense of continuities in American foreign policy. Yet it too has its limitations in understanding contemporary policy. In at least some of its versions, the perspective has a tendency to view national culture and systems of perception as being a constant rather than a variable and ever-evolving product of interacting ideas and practices. In reality an idea—though a cultural product—never represents culture adequately or loyally; instead, it represents one aspect of a culture while denying and reshaping others. Local cultures are not homogeneous, absolute fixed entities; people within them may react differently to similar ideas across time.

American culture too has developed not one but many ways of making sense of the world, and scholars have identified several influential schools in the country’s international thinking. Different schools among the American elite react to the world differently, and their reactions evolved over time as their cultural identity changed. As the United States was gearing up to respond to 9/11, this competition within American culture was also vital in determining the country’s direction. For instance, if Al Gore had defeated George W. Bush in 2000, the United States post-9/11 policy would undoubtedly have been very different. It would have probably not included the decision to intervene in Iraq militarily or deploy elements of a MDS in East European countries. Those two differences alone would have produced a different Russia policy.
4. Incorporating Domestic Politics and Special Interests and the Anti-Russian Lobby

A compelling explanation of the U.S. Russia policy shift must incorporate domestic politics of the U.S. foreign policy formation. One aspect of it includes special interests, lobbies, and ethnic groups that have traditionally played an important role in the nation’s policy formation, and it would be equally significant to investigate the structure and potential of an anti-Russian lobby.

Policy vacuum

Lobbies do not operate freely and gain leverage when top officials are divided over important issues. And when a strong leadership able to overcome these divisions is not in place, lobbies may come especially close to influencing key decisions. The U.S. Russia policy is a case of a divide among top officials and a weak presidential leadership. The split goes all the way to the White House and is responsible for the absence of a coherent policy toward the country. Those concentrated around Vice President Dick Cheney believed that Russia’s assertiveness had to be reversed since it challenged the very foundations of the American mission in the world: the development of power preponderance and promotion of Western-style institutions. On the other side of the divide were President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who believed that they were making incremental progress by cooperating with Russia on a host of issues and that it was best not to make too much of the Kremlin’s increasingly noisy demands to give Russia greater stakes in the international system. As Rice stated on one occasion, “The United States and Russia are working constructively today on many issues of mutual interest . . . and we are determined to remember this, even when we hear unwise and irresponsible rhetoric from Russia.” Preoccupied with instability in the postwar Iraq, U.S. policy makers find little time to concentrate on strengthening relations with Russia. It is this policy vacuum that may get filled by anti-Russian lobbies with a hard-line agenda, especially given that a pro-Russian lobby in America is next to nonexistent.

The anti-Russian lobby

The anti-Russian lobby (hereafter Lobby) in American politics emerged in the early twentieth century and got consolidated during the Cold War. It represented a loose coalition of several influential groups, but the most
important group included military hawks or advocates of American hegemony, who fought the Cold War not to contain the Soviet enemy but to destroy it by all means available. At least some of them were fully aware that their real target was Russia, not the communist regime (which they regarded, at least in principle, as progressive). A number of military hawks in fact advocated a nuclear strike against the Soviet Union during the 1970s. An important part of this group also formed the core of the Committee on the Present Danger and “Team B” that had produced a highly inflated assessment of the Soviet threat. The second group was liberal hawks or organizations that had been created after World War II with an agenda of protecting freedom and human rights in the world. Over time, however, the initial agenda of such agencies as Freedom House and Human Rights Watch had been successfully transformed into a tool for fighting the Soviets. The third group consisted of Eastern European nationalists, or those who had fled from the Soviet system and the Warsaw Pact and now dreamed of destroying the Soviet Union as the ultimate way to gain independence for their people.

What brought these diverse groups together was the missionary belief in the supremacy of American power and ideas and a hatred toward the Soviet system that at the time was justifiably perceived as the most important obstacle to the establishment of a U.S.-centered international system. Many members of the Lobby never believed in a peaceful transformation of the Soviet system, and, after that transformation finally took place, they never trusted the intentions of the new Russia and its leaders. The Cold War struggle instilled in them hatred not just for the Soviet empire but for any political system that the Russians might create, so long as such a system presented a challenge to America’s world leadership and hegemony. Although post-Soviet Russia in the 1990s represented a sorry state of affairs—an impoverished population, an economy in shambles, and leaders desperate for Western advice and assistance—the Lobby was worried about Russia’s revival. Russophobia became the unifying subject of its concern, as well as a successful strategy for rallying supporters, mobilizing the media, and promoting an anti-Russian policy agenda.

Russophobia and its myths

Russophobia in this case is understood to be a fear of Russia’s political system that is viewed as incompatible with the interests and values of the West in general and the United States in particular. This fear finds its expression in various forms of critiquing Russia that are unbalanced and distorted. Three core myths of Russophobia concern nationality, the political system,
and foreign policy (see table 1.2 for a summary). First, the Russophobes have always seen Russia as an empire that oppresses nationalities. Second, they invariably present Russia as an autocratic power that despises citizens’ rights and instead concentrates economic and military resources in the hands of the state. Whether it was the tsarist, Soviet, or post-Soviet era, nuances did not matter as much as the power principle. Third, under all circumstances the Russophobes are suspicious of Russia’s international policies, particularly any attempts to rebuild relationships with Western nations. Whatever independent actions are pursued by Russia, they are sure to be perceived by the Lobby as reflecting the nation’s culturally expansionist instincts, not a legitimate protection of national interests. Politically therefore, Russia was, is, and—if the West does nothing about it—will remain an autocratic and anti-Western empire. Confronting it is an imperative and not a luxury.

Some examples of Russophobic statements might include claims that Russia is more dangerous to the West than al-Qaeda. For instance, in his interview to Italia’s Corriere della Sera, the prominent American historian of Polish origins Richard Pipes claimed that for Europe, Russia could be even more dangerous than the threat of Islam and more hazardous than bin Laden. Although the post-Soviet Russia renounced its communist ideology, it is striving to revive its great power status by new means and therefore remains just as dangerous, according to Dr. Pipes, who wrote a number of important books promoting the above-described anti-Western perspective of Russia. In the 1970s, Pipes was also a fierce critic of détente and later a leader of “Team B” where he provided an alternative assessment of the Soviet threat. Many members of Eastern European elites recently liberated from the Soviet empire often held a similar view. For instance, the former Estonian ambassador to Russia Mart Helme referred to it as a “growing monster that the world has not yet seen before.” He claimed that after the 2008 presidential elections, Russia would turn into “the most dangerous terrorist regime in the world and an exporter of terrorism next to which Hamas and al-Qaeda would pale.”

With such an essentialist and unbalanced outlook, it should come as no surprise that the Russophobes have been frequently wrong, not just about assessments of the Soviet threat and the nature of the Soviet disintegration, but also about Russia’s post-Soviet developments. For instance, some

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Nation-breaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political system</td>
<td>Autocracy with no checks and balanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign policy</td>
<td>Anti-Western expansionist power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of them confidently predicted a dictatorial coup against Putin within the year 2005, while others forecasted a new wave of military and political destabilization in the Caucasus to be followed by Russia’s military invasion of Georgia during the same year. The anti-Putin coup never took place. As to the Caucasus, it was actually Georgia that on August 8, 2008, attacked the South Ossetian capital Tskhinvali in attempting to restore control over the breakaway republic. Russia’s intervention stopped Georgia’s offensive that killed ten Russian peacekeepers and inflicted heavy civilian casualties on South Ossetia. The sense of paranoia about Russia in some American circles is reminiscent of America-phobia in Russian nationalist circles that tended to view American and Western civilization as inherently corrupt, immoral, and driven to the world’s domination. In Russia’s phobias of the West, the old cultural fears articulated by Slavophiles, Nikolai Danilevski, and Eurasianists are reinforced by America’s bullying behavior.

The identified phobias, whether American or Russian, do not operate on facts. Rather, they operate on facts that are carefully preselected and not fully representative of the whole picture. Politics and culture continue to drive the construction of such “facts,” with media and intellectuals often serving to publicize and reinforce negative perceptions. As Anatol Lieven wrote about Russophobia,

Selected or invented historical “facts” about the “enemy” nation, its culture, and its racial nature are taken out of context and slotted into prearranged intellectual structures to arraign the unchanging wickedness of the other side. Meanwhile, any counterarguments, or memories of the crimes of one’s own are suppressed. This is no more legitimate when directed by Russophobes against Russia than when it is directed by Serb, Greek, or Armenian chauvinists against Turkey, Arabs against Jews, or Jews against Arabs.

Nationalist phobias in both Russia and the West need each other. By developing essentialist arguments, such as those cited above, and recommending culturally insensitive unilateral policies to their governments, Russophobes perpetuate each other as well as the familiar world of threats and power politics. In the meantime, the world remains divided and prone to violence.

**Persistence of Russophobia and American interests**

Ethnocentrism and ethnophobia, which are poor guides to understanding other nations, persist partly because they are driven by powerful emotions.
Yet another important reason for the survival of Russophobia has to do with strategic calculations of well-positioned elites that exploit Russophobic rhetoric for political purposes. In many ways, the roots of American Russophobia are in politics, not in culture. Historically and culturally, the United States and Russia have a lot in common and have often supported each other. They viewed each other in a mostly favorable manner during the American Revolution and throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and they were essential allies during the two world wars. During the Cold War, history sharply separated them, and it was during that time that powerful elites with mutually exclusive visions were formed on both sides of the Atlantic. In the United States (as in Russia), a considerable part of these elites survived the Cold War and continue to be in need of a Russia-threat image to pursue their objective of promoting America to the position of world hegemon. Advocates of hegemony and liberal hawks, as well as Eastern European nationalists, have differing yet compatible stakes, which include showing Russia its place as a country that is now at a loss for its identity after the Soviet breakup and largely dependent on the United States for economic survival. After the end of the Cold War, the American elites have grown accustomed to not meeting with strong resistance to NATO expansion in the eastern direction, striving to access Russia’s energy reserves and nuclear sites and attempting to downsize the state’s role in the nation’s political system. To prominent groups within the Lobby, keeping Russia weak remains essential for continuing to extract from it important concessions concerning energy resources, geostrategic location, and political domination in the region.

These are not the concerns of the American public, and various polls demonstrate that Americans do not share this belief in their nation’s world supremacy. Nor do Americans at large agree with the Lobby’s assessments of Russia as a threat to U.S. values and interests. A BBC World Service poll revealed, for example, that 45 percent of Americans have a mainly positive attitude regarding Russia’s influence in the world, compared with 36 percent who have a mainly negative attitude.59

The Lobby’s influence on the U.S. Russia policy

Despite the absence of public support for their hegemonic and anti-Russian agenda, the Lobby has managed to achieve some impressive results in influencing the foreign policy-making process in the United States. Although Russophobia is not in American national interests, the Lobby has taken advantage of the described policy vacuum, feeding the media the image of Russia as a country with a well-consolidated and increasingly dangerous regime. A testament to it, for example, are thousands of articles
in the mainstream American press implicating the Kremlin and Putin personally in the murder of opposition journalists and defected spies relative to only a handful of pieces in less prominent outlets questioning such interpretation. The Lobby has also achieved a greater level of ideological cohesion among diverse groups by pushing a tough stand against Russia in joint conferences and public letters. Organizations such as Project for a New American Century, Committee for Peace in the Caucasus, Freedom House, and Center for Security Policy advocate different aspects of U.S. hegemony, yet Russia is invariably presented by them as a leading threat. Finally, the Lobby has succeeded in persuading leading members of the American political class to advocate the Russia-threat approach. Some influential members of Congress and policy makers in the White House have been sympathetic to the Lobby’s agenda and are prone to use of the Russophobic rhetoric. Although the U.S. Russia policy did not embrace the containment-style of the Cold War, the Lobby has used the policy disarray to present Russia as a nonreliable partner, thereby contributing to the shift away from the post-9/11 partnership.

Dangers of Russophobia and a future U.S. Russia policy

The dangers of Russophobia for U.S. foreign policy should be obvious to those concerned about protecting American interests and world peace. First, by vilifying Russia, the Lobby neglects the principal compatibility of American and Russian concerns that include the fight against terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and narcotics, energy security, and the preservation of political stability in the most volatile regions of the world. Second, by defending the interests of narrowly based political elites, the Lobby advances objectives that are of questionable value to the American state. For instance, it successfully recruits the Eastern European elites to promote the agenda of American domination, yet these elites may not be loyal allies, and their support for U.S. policies in Europe and the Middle East may result from calculations of financial rewards for “loyalty” and the Russia-threat image. Third, through its actions, the Lobby contributes to the image of the United States as the country still fighting the Cold War, generating a virulent anti-Americanism at all levels in Russian society and strengthening the chances of hard-line nationalists to control the policy agenda. Fourth, by rejecting the idea of cooperating with Russia and promoting an exclusively power-based vision of the world, the Lobby defies diplomacy and a multilateral search for solutions in the Eurasian region. Fifth, the Lobby promotes policies
that are expensive and divert important resources from solving the above-
identified issues of world security.

To avoid the danger of isolating Russia and return to the promising path of U.S.-Russia partnership, it would be essential to recover from the powerful superiority attitude in Washington policy circles and design a coherent policy based on a mutually shared understanding of national interests. Viewing the world as a community in which there is only one superpower-leader and where others are merely followers of its agenda is unrealistic and will only produce greater resentment toward Washington. Drawing on experience of the past 20 years, the concluding chapter formulates three guiding principles—engagement, reciprocity, and patience—for improving relations with Russia. In the longer run the leaders of the two countries—to quote George Kennan—may learn to defend their interests as real statesmen should, that is, without “assuming that these can be fur-
thered only at the expense of others.”

5. The Book’s Method, Sources, and Organization

This book seeks to develop and support the argument of the negative role played by Russophobia in U.S. foreign policy and to formulate a different approach to Russia in the post–Cold War world. I do not attribute to the Lobby the role of the single explanatory factor and identify several impor-
tant forces responsible for the decline in U.S.-Russia relations. Rather than building a causal explanation, I have attempted a work of interpretation, seeking to understand the process through which the anti-Russian groups operate and influence policy-making. In exploring the role of the Lobby, I have identified its three main groups and studied their assumptions and activities, such as mobilizing support of high profile politicians, training anti-Kremlin forces, and launching publicity and media campaigns. In each substantive chapter, I analyze the groups’ distinct contribution and strate-
gies of coordinating their efforts and influencing the U.S. government. For the purpose of identifying existing policy alternatives and presenting a comprehensive picture of U.S. international thinking, I also contrast the Russophobic approach with those of balanced American analysts.

In studying the role of the anti-Russian groups, I relied on diverse sources. In gaining perspective on these groups’ influence and objectives, I interviewed representatives of the American and Russian policy commu-
nity. In attempting to understand the Lobby’s historical roots, I studied the work of historians and foreign policy experts specializing in U.S.-Russia relations. And in documenting the current ideological arguments and activities by Russophobes, I extensively researched their public statements in congressional testimonies, media, and think tanks.
This book is organized into eight chapters. Chapter 2 develops a framework for understanding the anti-Russian lobby. It discusses the Lobby's political objectives, organizations, and key activities, and conditions that enable it to influence the policy-making process. It also traces the historical emergence and evolution of Russophobia in American politics. The five consecutive chapters discuss the role played by the Lobby in substantive policy issues.

Chapter 3 documents efforts by anti-Russian groups to manipulate the historical record to promote the image of Russia as a defeated and potentially revisionist power that seeks to challenge America's primacy. I specifically discuss how the Lobby presents Russia's role in the Cold War and occupation of Eastern European nations. Chapters 4 to 7 discuss the issues of terrorism in the Caucasus, Russia's political system, strategic capabilities, and energy resources, respectively. Each chapter documents roles played by anti-Russian media, organizations, and policy entrepreneurs in undermining the promising post-9/11 partnership with Russia. Throughout the book I argue that the Lobby seeks to undermine the state unity of Russia, shape its political system, weaken its strategic capabilities, and control its energy resources. To achieve these objectives, members of the Lobby have privately and publicly promoted the independence of Chechnya, provided training and funding for opposition to the Kremlin, supported an expansion of Western military infrastructure to Russia's borders, and strongly opposed the Kremlin's domestic and international energy policies.

The concluding chapter makes a case for a different approach to Russia, one that has an opportunity to result in a strong U.S.-Russia partnership. It tentatively identifies social and political groups that may gradually unravel the power of Russophobia in American politics and advocates a vision of American interests that proceeds from viewing Russia as a recovering normal power with important stakes in international peace, stability, and cooperation with Western countries.
The Anti-Russian Lobby

When the facile optimism was disappointed, Western euphoria faded, and Russophobia returned... The new Russophobia was expressed not by the governments, but in the statements of out-of-office politicians, the publications of academic experts, the sensational writings of journalists, and the products of the entertainment industry.

*(Rodric Braithwaite, Across the Moscow River, 2002)*

Russophobia is not a myth, not an invention of the Red-Browns, but a real phenomenon of political thought in the main political think tanks in the West... *[T]he Yeltsin-Kozyrev’s pro-U.S. “giveaway game” was approved across the ocean. There is reason to say that the period in question left the West with the illusion that Russia’s role was to serve Washington’s interests and that it would remain such in the future.*

*(Sergei Mikoyan, International Affairs [October 2006]*)

This chapter formulates a theory of Russophobia and the anti-Russian lobby’s influence on the U.S. Russia policy. I discuss the Lobby’s objectives, its tactics to achieve them, the history of its formation and rise to prominence, and the conditions that preserved its influence in the aftermath of 9/11. I argue that Russophobia has been important to American hegemonic elites in pressuring Russia for economic and political concessions in the post–Cold War era.

1. Goals and Means

*Objectives*

The central objective of the Lobby has been to preserve and strengthen America’s power in the post–Cold War world through imperial or hegemonic policies. The Lobby has viewed Russia with its formidable nuclear
power, energy reserves, and important geostrategic location as a major obstacle in achieving this objective. Even during the 1990s, when Russia looked more like a failing state than one capable of projecting power, some members of the American political class were worried about the future revival of the Eurasian giant as a revisionist power. In their perception, it was essential to keep Russia in a state of military and economic weakness—not so much out of emotional hatred for the Russian people and their culture, but to preserve American security and promote its values across the world. To many within the Lobby, Russophobia became a useful device for exerting pressures on Russia and controlling its policies. Although to some the idea of undermining and, possibly, dismembering Russia was personal, to others it was a necessity of power dictated by the realities of international politics. According to this dominant vision, there was simply no place in this “New American Century” for power competitors, and America was destined eventually to assume control over potentially threatening military capabilities and energy reserves of others. As the two founders of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), William Kristol and Robert Kagan, asserted when referring to the large military forces of Russia and China, “American statesmen today ought to recognize that their charge is not to await the arrival of the next great threat, but rather to shape the international environment to prevent such a threat from arising in the first place.” Russia was either to agree to assist the United States in preserving its world-power status or be forced to agree. It had to either follow the U.S. interpretation of world affairs and develop a political and economic system sufficiently open to American influences or live as a pariah state, smeared by accusations of pernicious behavior, and in constant fear for its survival in the America-centered world. As far as the U.S. hegemonic elites were concerned, no other choice was available.

This hegemonic mood was largely consistent with mainstream ideas within the American establishment immediately following the end of the Cold War. For example, 1989 saw the unification of Germany and the further meltdown of the Soviet Union, which some characterized as “the best period of U.S. foreign policy ever.” President Jimmy Carter’s former national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski envisioned the upcoming victory of the West by celebrating the Soviet Union’s “grand failure.” In his view, the Soviet “totalitarian” state was incapable of reform. Communism’s decline was therefore irreversible and inevitable. It would have made the system’s “practice and its dogma largely irrelevant to the human conditions,” and communism would be remembered as the twentieth century’s “political and intellectual aberration.” Other commentators argued the case for a global spread of Western values. In 1990 Francis Fukuyama first formulated his triumphalist “end of history” thesis, arguing a global ascendancy of the Western-style market democracy.
Marc Plattner declared the emergence of a “world with one dominant principle of legitimacy, democracy.” When the Soviet system had indeed disintegrated, the leading establishment journal *Foreign Affairs* pronounced that “the Soviet system collapsed because of what it was, or more exactly, because of what it was not. The West ‘won’ because of what the democracies were—because they were free, prosperous and successful, because they did justice, or convincingly tried to do so.”

Still others, such as Charles Krauthammer, went as far as to proclaim the arrival of the United States’ “unipolar moment,” a period in which only one superpower, the United States, would stand above the rest of the world in its military, economic, and ideological capacity.

In this context of U.S. triumphalism, at least some Russophobes expected Russia to follow the American agenda. Still, they were worried that Russia may still have surprises to offer and would recover as an enemy. Soon after the Soviet disintegration, Russia indeed surprised many, although not quite in the sense of presenting a power challenge to the United States. Rather, the surprise was the unexpectedly high degree of corruption, social and economic decay, and the rapid disappointment of pro-Western reforms inside Russia. By late 1992, the domestic economic situation was much worsened, as the failure of Western-style shock therapy reform put most of the population on the verge of poverty. Russia was preoccupied not with the projection of power but with survival, as poverty, crime, and corruption degraded it from the status of the industrialized country it once was. In the meantime, the economy was largely controlled by and divided among former high-ranking party and state officials and their associates. The so-called oligarchs, or a group of extremely wealthy individuals, played the role of the new post-Soviet nomenklatura; they influenced many key decisions of the state and successfully blocked the development of small- and medium-sized business in the country. Under these conditions, the Russophobes warned that the conditions in Russia may soon be ripe for the rise of an anti-Western nationalist regime and that Russia was not fit for any partnership with the United States.

**Ideology and activities**

The mid-1990s saw the emergence of post-Soviet Russophobia. The Lobby’s ideology was not principally new, as it still contained the three central myths of Sovietophobia left over from the Cold War era: Russia is inherently imperialist, autocratic, and anti-Western. This ideology now had to be modified to the new conditions and promoted politically, which required a tightening of the Lobby’s unity, winning new allies within the establishment, and gaining public support.

Regular events to publicize
manifestations of Russia’s “new imperialism” were to strengthen the Lobby by rallying its supporters, energizing its ideological base, and provoking a hawkish reaction from the Kremlin. For example, on April 14, 2006, The Jamestown Foundation, the right wing organization held the conference “Sadullaev’s Caucasian Front: Prospects for the Next Nalchik.” Among featured speakers was Mairbek Vatchagaev, the former spokesman for Aslan Maskadov and a supporter of the then leader of Chechen terrorists Abdul Sadullaev. Vatchagaev publicized Sadullaev’s achievements and potential to undermine Russia while presenting him as a supporter of the Western values of democracy and freedom. The conference generated protests in Russia, and on April 18, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the U.S. ambassador in Moscow, William Burns, with a note of protest in connection with the publicity that had been given to terrorists in the United States.

Inside the country, the Lobby also acted through specialized print media, blogs, and websites by highlighting individual events, publishing open letters, preparing specialized reports, and depicting the daily activities of Russia as being a threat to America’s interests. Organizations, such as Freedom House, The Jamestown Foundation, and Stratfor, emphasized Russia’s sliding democratic standards and questioned its geopolitical activities. Websites and blogs, such as Window on Eurasia, Publius Pundit, and La Russophobe with its motto “Russia is the best country in the world . . . except for all the others,” provided a distorted coverage of critical events and policies. For instance, soon after Mikhail Khodorkovski, the head of the largest private oil company Yukos was arrested on charges of multiple fraud and tax evasion, numerous websites with titles such as “Russia on Trial” and “The Kremlin’s Mafia” appeared to promote the image of Khodorkovski as a courageous opposition leader acting to challenge the Kremlin’s anti-Western policies.

Organizing a series of open letters that presented Russia as returning to its “traditional” system of an anti-Western autocratic empire was another area of the Lobby’s activities. A good example is the Open Letter to the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and NATO that appeared in the Western media space on September 30, 2004, that was signed by 115 prominent politicians and intellectuals in the United States and Europe. Leading newspapers of all NATO and EU countries published the letter, either as paid publicity or in free space, and some observers referred to it as “the most significant media operation in the global political scene in 2004.” The letter was organized by the right wing group the PNAC and written immediately following Russia’s Beslan tragedy when, after the downing of two civilian airliners, terrorists took more than a thousand people hostage in a local school in North Ossetia. It was signed
by both prominent democrats and conservatives. The authors of the letter gave a brief rhetorical due to the tragedy, expressing their sympathy with the Russian people in their struggle against terrorism, but in the remaining part of the letter, they engaged in accusing the Kremlin of undercutting democratic institutions, destroying checks and balances in the federal system, threatening neighbors, and employing a rhetoric of militarism and empire. They concluded by making a call to stand up to Russia’s emerging “dictatorship,” to not be restrained in criticizing “President Putin’s steps in the wrong direction,” and to “put ourselves unambiguously on the side of democratic forces in Russia.”

The Lobby also strove to gain policy access by preparing think-tank memos, cultivating ties with Congress and giving Congressional testimonies, and providing private advice to members of the executive and legislative branch. Testimonies by individuals affiliated with prominent conservative and liberal think tanks, such as the Hoover Institution, The Heritage Foundation, and The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, often served to strengthen the image of Russia as becoming increasingly authoritarian and open for collaboration with dangerous regimes to undermine the international positions of the United States. Partly in response to the Lobby’s activities, opponents of engagement with Russia in U.S. policy circles have become considerably stronger since the “who lost Russia?” debate initiated by critics of Clinton’s foreign policy record in 2000. Examples include frequent statements by Senators John McCain and Joseph R. Biden, both of whom also signed the above-cited Open Letter, and the publication of policy reports, such as Russia’s Wrong Direction, that challenged Russia’s reliability as an energy supplier and committed partner in the “war on terror.”

Outside the United States, the Lobby sought to engage anti-Russian elites in Eastern Europe and the anti-Kremlin opposition in Russia. The Lobby’s ties with Eastern European nationalists stretch to the Cold War. Some influential members of the American political class are also from the region and do not separate American interests from those of supporting the extrication of Eastern Europe from the Kremlin’s influence. In Russia, the Lobby wanted to see a politically decentralized system working through a group of Russia’s radical Westernizers, who were supportive of the U.S. and highly critical of President Putin’s policies. When Putin insisted that, while cooperating with the United States, Russia had to remain a great power with its own distinctive interests, Russian Westernizers disagreed sharply. Similarly to many American observers, they saw only two fundamental paths: a pro-Western one or a great power nationalistic one. According to their analysis, the Kremlin also abandoned domestic modernization in favor of reviving an empire and a petrostate.
Although the Westernizers’ domestic support was small, the Lobby sought to increase their visibility in Russia by funding their political activities. By providing them with a considerable media space, the American critics of Russia tried to exaggerate the role of the Westernizers’ opposition to the Kremlin, thereby advancing their own Russophobic agenda.

Specialized NGOs and policy entrepreneurs

The belief within the American establishment that Russia is “off track” and must be stopped before it is too late has become stronger over time, partly as a result of concerted activities by various specialized NGOs. Organizations whose agenda includes challenging Russia are, among others, the American Committee for Peace in the Caucasus (ACPC), Freedom House, The Jamestown Foundation, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the Soros Foundation. For instance, the ACPC has been especially active in challenging Russia’s policies in Chechnya. Until 2006, it described itself as “the only private, nongovernmental organization in North America exclusively dedicated to promoting the peaceful resolution of the Russo-Chechen war.”26 Founded in 1999 by Freedom House to organize public education programs, develop policy recommendations, and collaborate with activists, journalists, and scholars, the organization has received funds from the National Endowment for Democracy and other U.S. democratization initiatives, and its board of directors include many high-profile neoconservatives, as well as representatives of other political tendencies. Although the ACPC’s official policy line has not included a formal independence for Chechnya, at least some of its members have gone on record supporting Chechen independence.27 The ACPC’s website also contains materials that strongly encourage thinking along the lines of “recognizing the Chechen pleas to America” and laying on Russia the exclusive responsibility for what the website describes as “genocidal atrocities in break-away Chechnya.”28

Organizations such as Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies were active in the area of shaping Russia’s political system. In addition to focusing on Russia’s responsibility for human rights violations in Chechnya, they have promoted the image of Russia as a rising neo-Soviet dictatorship with no space left for opposition. Freedom House’s impact has been especially notable because, as an organization known worldwide with an established system of ranking freedom in the world, it has demoted Russia in its ratings from “partly free” to “non-free” by the year 2005.29 With the exception of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, all of these organizations were created during the Cold War
and served as an important tool for challenging Soviet influence in the world, and all have provided funds to train the opposition to incumbent regimes in Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, and other nations in the former Soviet region.

Several organizations have been active in promoting the expansion of American military infrastructure closer to Russia’s borders. Not inherently anti-Russian, they joined the chorus of Russia critics as soon as the Kremlin began to show signs of independence. For example, the PNAC was created in 1997 as an umbrella organization that aimed to “shape a new century favorable to American principles and interests” by increasing defense spending and challenging U.S.-hostile regimes in the world.\(^{30}\) In its founding statement, PNAC members—known conservatives and neo-conservatives, such as Eliott Abrams, Richard Cheney, Eliot A. Cohen, Paula Dobriansky, Steve Forbes, Francis Fukuyama, Frank Gaffney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz—praised what they saw as the essential elements of the Reagan administration’s success: “a military that is strong and ready to meet both present and future challenges; a foreign policy that boldly and purposefully promotes American principles abroad; and national leadership that accepts the United States’ global responsibilities.”\(^{31}\) Although Iraq was the first on the group’s list of enemies and Russia was not initially viewed as a “hostile regime,” the PNAC members increasingly adopted the anti-Russian rhetoric in promoting their objectives. In 2004, they organized the above-cited *Open Letter,* expressing alarm that “the instruments of state power appear to be being rebuilt and the dominance of the security services to grow.”\(^{32}\)

What the two PNAC directors, William Kristol and Robert Kagan, had written in *Foreign Affairs* in 1996 about China—the need to “devise overall strategy for containing, influencing, and ultimately seeking to change the regime in Beijing”\(^{33}\)—was now applicable to Russia simply by virtue of its growing strength and the potential challenge it posed to U.S. hegemony. From then on, the activities of PNAC members, as well as other organizations sharing the “Peace through Strength” philosophy,\(^{34}\) such as the Center for Security Policy and the United States Committee on NATO, would include confronting what was viewed as a growing Russia threat. In practice this would mean admitting Russia’s neighboring states to NATO and deploying elements of the United States MDS on their territories over opposition from the Kremlin.

The Lobby has also been active in challenging Russia’s control over its energy reserves. From the arrest of the Yukos head Mikhail Khodorkovski until more recent developments in the Caspian Sea region, the PNAC members, prominent energy companies, and other organizations fought to preserve and gain greater access to Russian and
Russia-controlled sources of hydrocarbons. To these groups, energy represented a critical dimension of American power and had to be viewed in conjunction with overall geopolitical concerns. Supportive of American efforts to control energy pipelines in Eurasia, they viewed Russia’s greater reliance on energy in its economic policy as a principal threat to the United States.

Policy influence

The Lobby achieved a considerable level of policy influence, in part due to its activities and in part due to the correspondence of its beliefs with those of policy makers. For example, the belief that Russia’s energy influence had to be curtailed resonated with some views within the official power circles. For example, in 1997 Sheila Heslan of the National Security Council staff told a Senate investigating committee that American efforts to promote new pipelines in Eurasia were part of a larger campaign “to break Russia’s monopoly of control over transportation of oil from the region.”35 “This is about America’s energy security . . . [and] preventing strategic inroads by those who don’t share our values,” the energy secretary Bill Richardson affirmed in 1998.36 Most importantly, some of the U.S. officials that shared the Lobby’s outlook, such as Vice President Richard Cheney, suggested that controlling Russia’s energy reserves may ultimately be no less significant that controlling resources in the Middle East.37

The Lobby was able, on occasions, to enlist prominent politicians and policy makers in support of its cause. Examples include multiple statements against Russia from Republican and Democratic politicians, as well as the active role played by Vice President Dick Cheney. Cheney was actively engaged in accusing Russia of backpedaling on democracy and using its oil and gas as “tools of intimidation or blackmail” against neighbors,38 but he also played an important role as a backstage actor by maintaining contacts with the Kremlin’s critics inside Russia.

Government connections were also critical to the Lobby for acquiring additional funds. Although many think tanks depend on private support, they continue to rely on support by Western governments. For instance, Human Rights Watch claims that it “accepts no government funds, directly or indirectly,” yet some of its member groups, such as Oxfam, have been funded by the British government, the EU, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).39 Freedom House’s dependence on state assistance is even greater. According to its 2006 annual report, it received more than $20 million in federal grants in fiscal 2006, while its entire operating budget was about $26 million.40 Still other organizations,
such as the National Endowment for Democracy are funded almost entirely by the U.S. government.41

Overall the Lobby, while representing a broad group with often diverse political agendas, has operated from a cohesive ideological outlook and with an impressive organizational strength. The Lobby’s most important entrepreneurs have included people such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Holbrook, Bruce Jackson, Richard Perle, and James Woolsey. Most of them were of conservative and neoconservative convictions and have been active members of the American political class in the last two or three decades. What allowed them to divert U.S.-Russia relations away from the post-9/11 cooperation was the fact that they were seasoned observers with solid experience in fighting political battles and getting things done in Washington.42 Their cohesiveness was another critical factor.43 Acting in concert, they have successfully promoted the image of Russia as a revisionist anti-Western power within the American media and policy circles. Their overall influences have been significant: although Russia and the United States have not moved toward a Cold War–like rivalry, their relationship is at the lowest point since the end of the Cold War and in no way can be described as a strategic partnership.

2. Emergence and Development

American Russophobia is a political rather than a cultural phenomenon, and with a sufficient political will, it can still be reversed to the benefit of both nations. Although intellectual preconditions for forming anti-Russian stereotypes had existed in the United States, they did not lead to Russophobia and did not form the nation’s foreign policy. More than anything else, the Russophobic mythology is rooted in the Cold War era, and it is this era’s residual elites that continue to exploit the outdated enemy image for their political objectives.

Before the Cold War

Preconditions for forming anti-Russian stereotypes had existed in the American foreign policy discourse. As with all other growing and relatively isolated powers, the United States has operated from a deeply ethnocentric view of the world. Its “Manifest Destiny” myth played a role similar to those of “the Middle Kingdom” in China and “the Third Rome” in Russia. Americans were keen on viewing the world through their own lenses and assigning to it their own cultural stereotypes. Before they shifted to
Continental realism or the power politics school, writes Walter Russel Mead, they had developed their own traditions of thinking about international politics. Of these traditions or schools of foreign policy—Alexander Hamilton’s promotion of American enterprise abroad; Woodrow Wilson’s commitment to spreading the U.S. values; Thomas Jefferson’s belief in the preservation of American democracy in a dangerous world; and Andrew Jackson’s pride in honor, independence, and military power—three are of particular relevance to us. These three, Hamiltonianism, Wilsonianism, and Jacksonianism, represent different forms of American internationalism, and they have endured in the country’s foreign policy.

Together, the three traditions had the potential to shape the world in the image of the United States, and, were Russia to stand in the way, the Russophobic stereotypes could have developed in the manner of other cultural stereotypes that America developed about China, Japan, Germany, and Muslim nations at later stages. Yet until the twentieth century, American ethnocentrism did not progress into Russophobia in guiding U.S. international behavior. Russians supported the American revolutions and established good relations with the founding fathers, whereas U.S. officials were generally preoccupied with their own affairs and had few suspicions about the Russian empire. Unlike Europeans for whom Russophobia was an important part of foreign policy discourse, at least since the early eighteenth century, Americans did not develop strong negative perceptions of Russia until almost two centuries later.

In the early twentieth century the situation began to change. Theodore Roosevelt initially took the Japanese side in the Russo-Japanese war and said he would not mind “going to extremes” with the Russians. His actual foreign policy was far more restrained, and, fearful of Japan’s rise, he later expressed the desire to have a strong enough Russia to preserve a power balance in northern Asia. As documented by historian David Foglesong, immigrant groups (especially Jews) began anti-Russian lobbying in the United States to “liberate” Russia from autocracy and anti-Semitism. In 1911 the American government abrogated the commercial treaty with Russia. In response to the Bolshevik revolution, the United States refused to recognize the Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1933, and anti-Russian feelings were promoted by groups such as the American Relief Administration and several religious organizations. Still, Russophobia rarely had a chance to principally influence the U.S. foreign policy because Russia did not act as a threatening power. Such behavior accompanied by both powers’ predominantly regional commitments and policy beliefs, as well as a large geographic distance, served as a critical check against the development of mutual hostilities.
Things changed when both Russia and the United States assumed larger international responsibilities and demanded a greater recognition of their role in shaping the international system. Preserving working relations might have been possible, but it would have required extraordinary leadership on both sides that was capable of identifying similar interests and jointly working to meet them, rather than acting on suspicions and prejudices.

After World War II, both powers emerged with a greater confidence in their ability to change the world in a way so that Europe would no longer present a threat to their interests. The Soviet leaders felt that they were entitled to a bigger role on the European continent because the Soviet Union single-handedly won the most important battles against the Nazis, including the battles for Moscow, Kursk, and Stalingrad, and unquestionably contributed a much greater share of resources to the overall victory in the war. To Josef Stalin, this meant demonstration of his nation’s social advantages, “Our victory means . . . that our Soviet social system has won, that the Soviet social system has successfully withstood the trial in the flames of war and proved its perfect viability.” The Kremlin therefore insisted on its right to shape history. “There have been cases in history where the fruits of victory escaped the victors. It is up to us so to conduct matters and so to work as to secure these fruits,” asserted Georgy Malenkov, another Soviet leader. In the United States, the commitment to internationalism or a greater role in shaping the world affairs predated the war victory and the Pearl Harbor attack by Japan. The elites had already changed their views in response to the Nazi invasions of France and the Soviet Union, and in January 1941, only 39 percent of the public felt that U.S. intervention in World War I was a mistake (relative to 68 percent in October 1939).

Soon after the war, the previously identified schools that were promoting American values and military power abroad began to converge in the face of the growing prospect of Soviet expansionism. Isolationism was no longer an option, as everything became increasingly subject to fighting the Soviets across the globe. Freedom House, initially created by Franklin D. Roosevelt to prepare American public opinion for war and defend independence of a free France, was turned into a propaganda machine against the Soviets. HRW, organized in the 1970s to monitor human rights violations, became predominantly an agency to monitor such violations in the Soviet Union and pressure its leadership for political concessions. Freedom House’s slogan, “United States: country of freedom,” served to remove all doubts about the nation’s justified missionary objective and to
liberate America in choosing its means for undermining the Soviet “evil empire.” As room for dialogue shrank, the hawks emerged as especially visible in influencing foreign policy thought.

Military hawks, such as Paul Nitze, Richard Perle, Richard Pipes, and Eugene V. Rostow, described the United States as being in “mortal danger” from the Soviet Union, and they engaged in establishing organizations to promote the idea of a military victory and a crusade against communism in all parts of the globe. In 1950, they found the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD) that subsequently resulted in NSC-68, a top secret National Security Council document written by Paul Nitze that promoted an extensive military buildup for the purpose of rolling back communist influence and attaining U.S. military supremacy in the world. After a three-month scare campaign over the NBC networks, President Harry Truman chose to adopt the document’s recommendations to escalate the military budget by more than threefold.\(^5\) Insisting on U.S. nuclear inferiority, the hawks also opposed all types of arms control. After the Soviet Union developed the atomic bomb, they advocated the development of a first-strike capability that would preemptively destroy the entire Soviet nuclear arsenal.\(^5\)

In various ways, the CPD and groups with similar objectives influenced the U.S. interventions in Vietnam and elsewhere, and in the post-Vietnam era they worked hard to reverse America’s new anti-interventionist sentiments and were behind subverting détente with the Soviet Union.\(^5\) In 1976, they formed the core of Team B to offer an independent evaluation of Soviet capabilities and intentions and to insist on yet another rise in military expenditures. Under President Ronald Reagan, they labored to promote the MDS which eventually became Reagan’s own policy. Finally, they worked to block the arms control agreement with Gorbachev, rejecting the possibility of negotiating with the Soviets and advocating instead the peace through strength philosophy. The influence of these groups is hard to exaggerate. They included prominent members of both parties and various human rights and security organizations. In the estimation of an independent think tank, 33 members of the CPD eventually received appointments in Reagan’s first administration, more than 20 of them in national security posts.\(^5\)

Sovietophobia became critical in preserving the CPD and similar groups’ cohesiveness and development. The success of these groups in shaping American foreign policy could only be explained by the Cold War polarization, with hawks increasingly taking over on both sides of the Atlantic. As anticommunism was inspiring U.S. international thinking, hard-core anti-Americanism was progressively influential in Soviet policy circles. Although many within the political leadership were committed to the doctrine of deterrence or correlation of forces, the military strategists
were increasingly planning to fight and win a nuclear war. In addition, the Soviet regime, while becoming more moderate and open since Stalin’s death, did not cease to be repressive. One extreme fed into another. As the Soviets grew more anti-American, anti-Soviet propaganda became more widespread in the United States as well. Aided by numerous reports from Soviet and East European defectors, hawkish U.S. groups and publications launched a campaign to validate their fears of the Soviet system.

**After the Cold War**

During Perestroika and the post-Soviet rapprochement with the West, it seemed that Sovietophobia and Russophobia had suffered irreparable damage and had become a thing of the past. In 1995, a prominent observer of the American political scene wrote that neoconservatism and its thinkers, such as Joshua Muravchik, Ben Wattenberg, and Frank Gaffney—a group that was critical to the functioning of the anti-Soviet lobby—became political anachronisms of the 1990s in the same way that Noam Chomsky and Richard Barnet were anachronisms a decade before. Under the era of the American liberal triumph, organizations such as the CPD and the Committee for the Free World could no longer make a case for the Soviet global threat or violation of rights of Jews and other nationalities to immigrate. They became obsolete and later disbanded.

Yet neoconservatives and other former anti-Soviet hawks merely regrouped and launched a new campaign against Russia and other potential challengers of the U.S. global hegemony. Although some organizations advocating American hegemony have disbanded, others, such as the Center for Security Policy led by former Defense Department aide to Richard Perle, Frank Gaffney, have persevered. The center could not make a strong case for a hard line against Russia and greater U.S. defense spending, but it justified its existence by mobilizing bipartisan support for the George H. W. Bush administration’s war plans in the Persian Gulf, urging President Bill Clinton to attack Iraq and promoting missile defense and space weapons. The center missed the emergence of the terrorist threat to U.S. security, yet it consistently advocated new measures against purported threats from Russia, Cuba, China, North Korea, and Iraq. In June 2004, the center played a leading role in resurrecting the seemingly obsolete CPD and prided “itself on being loosely modeled” on an earlier version of the committee. The new CPD likened the war on terror to the Cold War, again advocating the expansion of American values abroad and standing up to the new worldwide “evil” of a “a totalitarian religious empire in the Middle East.” Nominally nonpartisan, the CPD included
several liberal hawks, including Stephen Solarz, Dave McCurdy, and Joe Lieberman.59

The U.S. war in Iraq and Russia’s refusal to support it further exacer-
bated Russophobic feelings within the political establishment. The
Kremlin believed that terrorism, as a stateless phenomenon, could only be
defeated through a coordination of state efforts, and not through taking
on relatively established states, such as Iraq. Along with conservatives,
some American liberals expressed their disappointment with the lack of
Russian support and growing solitude in the “war on terror.”60 To many
hawks, post-9/11 Islamophobia did not replace Russophobia. They still
viewed Russia as a threat for not supporting the American way of fighting
terrorism and for resisting American global hegemony. Frank Gaffney,
James Woolsey, and the like put Putin’s Russia on the same footing with
what they viewed as “Islamofascism.”61

3. Structure

The Lobby included three prominent groups: military hawks, liberal
hawks, and supporters of Eastern European nationalism. Each of them
promoted their own agendas and each had their own vision of Russian and
American objectives (please see table 2.1 for their summary).

Military hawks

Military hawks viewed their objective as the United States achieving the
status of the world’s hegemony or imperial center. According to them,
America’s safety could only be guaranteed by controlling the world’s most
important military capabilities and energy reserves and successfully pro-
jecting American values across the globe. Ever since the United States took
on larger international responsibilities in the 1940s, this philosophy has
been expressed in various statements across the political spectrum. For

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1 The Lobby’s objectives for the U.S. and Russia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military hawks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal hawks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nationalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
example, the Center for Security Policy’s belief “that America’s national power must be preserved and properly used for it holds a unique global role in maintaining peace and stability” has its origins in activities of the CPD and Team B, as well as of the Coalition for a Democratic Majority. While the former groups were made almost exclusively by conservative republicans, such as William Van Cleave, Paul Nitze, and Richard Pipes, the latter group was formed in 1972 by the Democratic senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson with hard-line, anti-Soviet convictions and included prominent members of the Democratic Party establishment.

The belief in U.S. hegemony left little or no room for accommodating interests of Russia or other nations, and criticisms of Russia and the Kremlin often revealed fears of a revival of a geopolitical competitor. It is this fear, rather than concerns about democracy or human rights, that helps to explain attacks on the Kremlin’s increased role in the energy sector, calls for international interference in Chechnya, and expansion of Western military infrastructure to Russia’s borders. Media outlets and think tanks, such as the Wall Street Journal, The Jamestown Foundation’s Eurasia Daily Monitor, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, The Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institution and The Hudson Institute, could be counted on for critical lines on Russia’s “imperial ambitions,” “energy blackmail,” and “savage brutality” in Chechnya.

**Liberal hawks**

Liberal hawks viewed U.S. objectives in the context of the global promotion of American-style democracy. In practice, however, they often supported militaristic foreign policy agenda. Many of them endorsed the expansion of NATO and a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia, and at least some liberal hawks were behind the American invasion of Iraq. On Russia, they frequently sided with military hawks and even published in conservative outlets. Newspapers such as The New York Times and The Washington Post while differing from the Wall Street Journal on a number of domestic issues, often struck a similar tone on Russia. Think tanks, such as The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace have often been just as hawkish as conservative organizations. Liberal hawks also signed open letters against the Kremlin that were organized by conservatives. For instance, Madeleine K. Albright, Joseph R. Biden, Ivo Daalder, Larry Diamond, Richard C. Holbrooke, Michael McFaul, Sarah E. Mendelson, and Stephen Sestanovich signed the above-discussed Open Letter that was organized by the PNAC and that was also signed by prominent advocate of American military hegemony Max Boot, Bruce Jackson, Robert Kagan,
William Kristol, John McCain, Joshua Muravchik, and James Woolsey. Liberal views on Russia’s role in Chechnya and the so-called colored revolutions in the former Soviet region were similarly hawkish. Not only did they find the Kremlin’s policies unacceptable but they contributed greatly to the revolutions working through organizations such as Freedom House, the National Endowment for Democracy, the National Democratic Institute, and the Soros Foundation.

*East European nationalists*

Another influential group within the anti-Russian lobby included supporters of Eastern European nationalism and separation from Russia. Viewing Russia as an imperial state, this group was pessimistic about the prospects of Russia becoming a democracy and tended to side with military hawks in promoting the American hegemonic agenda. American advocates of East European nationalism have viewed the preservation of NATO and the United States’ military presence in Europe as important guarantees against restoration of a neo-Soviet empire. They worked in concert with ruling elites of Eastern Europe to oppose Russia’s state consolidation and energy independence. A number of prominent activists within the Lobby are of Eastern European origin—Baltic (Paul Goble), Czech (Madeline Albright), Hungarian (Tom Lantos and George Soros), Polish (Zbigniew Brzezinski and Richard Pipes), Western Ukrainian (Paula Dobriansky), and Yugoslavian (Stephen Sestanovich). Although many roots of Russophobia are from the Cold War era, some go back for centuries. Polish Russophobia, for example, is especially strong and emotional because at least since the sixteenth century, Poles fought for their independence and the expansion of their land at the expense of Russia. Russians have consistently defeated Poles, which only strengthened their determination to weaken the Eastern power.

During the Cold War, East European nationalists and Soviet defectors played an important role in undermining the USSR. Supported by military hawks, they worked to add credibility to the anticommunist propaganda. For example, The Jamestown Foundation was originally founded by William Geimer, a leading cold warrior close to the Reagan administration, to support Soviet dissidents and defectors. William J. Casey, the CIA director, was also closely involved, and the foundation’s member board included, among others, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Dick Cheney, Maria Carlucci, and James Woolsey. The organization continues to play an important role in disseminating Russophobia. Another important example is the Captive Nations Committee. During the 1950s, an émigré of
West Ukrainian origins Lev E. Dobriansky (father of Paula Dobriansky) wrote the document that subsequently was adopted by President Dwight Eisenhower as “Public Law 86–90 Captive Nations Week Resolution.” The resolution asserted that the majority of Eastern European and other nations were enslaved by Russia, not just by the Soviet system. It introduced the term “Russian communism,” thereby equating “Soviet” with “Russian” and leaving for the Russians no opportunity to ever be liberated from the Soviet system. Russia itself was never recognized as a captive nation, yet it was held responsible for holding others in captivity. In 1978, two years before he became president, Ronald Reagan used the resolution by devoting one of his radio commentaries during Captive Nations week reminding his listeners that the Soviet Union still held “millions of people in bondage” and asking, “Are we really serious about human rights?” Even after the Soviet system’s disintegration, the resolution was not changed, and the Captive Nations Week commemorations were still held every July—an event that Russians consider living proof of American Russophobia.

Consensus and hierarchy within the Lobby

The three distinct groups mentioned above converged around the idea of turning Russia into a decentralized political system with diminished military capabilities that would accept American influences and foreign policy. Individual group members were motivated by complex emotions of fear and superiority, and their success in combining their efforts can be partly attributed to a social-networking principle that the social anthropologist Janine Wedel described as “flex groups.” Flex groups have emerged in response to a gradual reduction of the authority of elected officials in the United States relative to that of private organizations over the last several decades. Relying on various kinds of lobbying, think tanks, media, and advocacy, members of these organizations maneuvered between state and private roles, interacting in multiple ways to relax the existing government’s rules of accountability. In Wedel’s description, flex players operate as self-sustaining teams with their own agenda, while continually furthering the shared agenda of the overall group. “Individually or as a group, they operate on both sides of the door at the same time; in some cases, they may even dissolve the door.” The flex principle is also instrumental in bringing together seemingly diverse political groups.

Within flex groups, however, there are players that are more or less powerful in advancing the shared objectives. Military hawks are unquestionably the strongest in the case of the anti-Russian lobby. In part, this strength
resulted from President George W. Bush’s sympathy with their agenda on issues such as the Second Iraq war. They also had successfully operated as a self-sustaining group since the early Cold War, reaching the highest degree of influence under President Ronald Reagan. Liberal hawks played an important yet secondary role, as their democracy rhetoric has often been exploited by military hawks, while Russia’s political system has hardly converged with that of the United States. Supporters of Eastern European nationalism also played a secondary role, functioning as loyal supporters of American hegemonic objectives.

4. Conditions

Although historically the United States has expressed no animosity toward Russia and its people, American post–Cold War elites have armed themselves with Russophobic rhetoric for advancing their agenda. Their relative success has become possible due to several interrelated conditions operating on the international, domestic, and policy level. Table 2.2 summarizes these conditions.

**Structural factors**

The Russophobia is partly the product of a global power struggle, and not merely a culturally embedded emotion or distaste for Russia’s political system. Democracy or not, Russia is sure to provoke some highly negative reactions simply because its potential revival will be viewed as dangerous

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.2 Conditions enabling American Russophobia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structural factors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Hegemonic political culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Russia’s economic recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Relative decline of U.S. power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional context</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Uninformed public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Manipulative media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Weak Russian lobby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy factors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Weak presidential leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Divide of policy community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
by some circles within the American establishment. Many military hawks are really advocates of American hegemony, but they sound like Russophobes in their public criticisms of Russia because they view it as an obstacle to achieving their foreign policy objectives. In today’s context of Russia’s growing potential to influence developments in Eurasia, it is becoming far more difficult for outsiders to control the region’s energy and geostrategic sites.

The hegemonic political culture of America described by historians and political scientists,74 accompanied by the relative decline of U.S. power and Russia’s economic recovery, became the enabling structural conditions of Russophobia. A prominent historian described this phenomenon in the British case when he wrote that “the Russophobes recognized and to some extent capitalized on the natural competition between Great Britain and Russia which their mutual preeminence seemed to decree.”75 Although the United States is still the most prominent global power, during the last five years its political and economic position in Eurasia has declined considerably, while China and Russia emerged as two very important players. In the meantime, American hegemonic elites have grown accustomed to not meeting with strong resistance to NATO expansion after the end of the Cold War, and they have expected largely free access to Russia’s energy reserves and nuclear sites. Keeping Russia weak is essential for extracting from Moscow important concessions concerning energy resources, geostrategic location, and political domination in Eurasia. It is not the first time, and certainly not the last, that a highly distorted critique of the Kremlin dominates the Western media during Russia’s economic and military recovery. As this recovery continues and for as long as there is hope for Washington to unilaterally assert favorable geostrategic and energy conditions in Eurasia, the Russophobic rhetoric is likely to persist in the American media.

Uninformed public

Structural factors, as important as they are, take effect in a domestic context that can either strengthen or moderate their influence. Domestically, the relative success of Russophobia has become possible due to three interrelated conditions: a largely uninformed public, manipulative elites, and the absence of a Russian lobby within the United States. The first issue is that Americans are poorly informed about Russian realities, and their views remain heavily dependent on how U.S.-Russia relations are presented by the media and politicians. A 2003 poll showed, for example, that one-third of Americans never heard of Vladimir Putin and had no
opinion of him.\textsuperscript{76} By the time of the poll, Putin had served as president of Russia for three years. In 2002, this figure was as high as 44 percent.\textsuperscript{77} Another poll has indicated that the majority of Americans continue to rely on Cold War stereotypes in thinking about the post-Soviet Russia, and that they associate Russians with communism, the KGB, cold weather, and organized crime (in this order). Nevertheless, Americans are not eager to allocate financial resources for studying Russia and the Russian language. According to a Modern Language Association survey, since 1990 the number of college students studying Russian has dropped nearly 50 percent, undoing many years of building the field of Russian studies.\textsuperscript{78}

Americans also do not have a stable opinion about Russia, and the general public views fluctuate based on how Washington presents Russia and its leaders. Table 2.3 identifies several stages of development of American perception of Russia. Until 1994 the majority of Americans saw Russia as a strategic partner, viewing it with a considerable sympathy. Such perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Poll</th>
<th>Favorable opinion of Russia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 28–Mar 2, 1989</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17–20, 1990</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 10–13, 1990</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 10–11, 1990</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 30–Feb 2, 1991</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 14–17, 1991</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 8–11, 1991</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 23–25, 1991</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 21–24, 1991</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 6–9, 1992</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 26–28, 1994</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 21–24, 1995</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 8–10, 1996</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 21–23, 1997</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 8–9, 1999</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 13–14, 1999</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7–9, 1999</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 4–7, 1999</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 17–19, 2000</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 13–15, 2000</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 1–4, 2001</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 4–6, 2002</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 3–6, 2003</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 14–15, 2003</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 9–12, 2004</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 7–10, 2005</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
was very much in touch with that of American elites, who saw Russia and its president Boris Yeltsin as moving toward democracy and the establishment of close cooperation with the United States. Together with Bill Clinton, the general public felt an affinity with “friend Boris” and believed in the rapid success of Russian reforms. The post-1994 period, however, is considerably more pessimistic, with many Americans demonstrating a more restrained attitude toward Russia, which, again, is consistent with a more cautious view of the American political class. The unexpected defeat of the pro-Yeltsin party in December 1993 and privatization of the Russian economy revealed corruption and the inability of “friend Boris” to maintain his grip over his country’s transition to a new system. In 1996–1997, the attitude toward Russia temporarily swung back to “favorable” reaching 56 percent in November 1997—most likely in response to new hopes after the defeat of the Communist Party during presidential elections in the summer of 1996. Yet, by 1999 a new pessimism had settled in, and only around 40 percent of Americans viewed Russia’s developments as favorable (see Fig. 2.1). This can be partly attributed to the lack of positive changes inside Russia and its subsequent financial default—which many saw as proof of failure of Russia’s liberal economic reform—and partly to a growing desire by the new foreign minister Yevgeni Primakov to demonstrate Russia’s independence in foreign affairs with, for example, its policies toward Iraq and Yugoslavia.

After 1999 and until the second half of 2001, American public opinion of Russia hits its lowest mark, increasingly viewing Russia as a threat rather
than a potential partner. Such perception is fully consistent with that of the Washington establishment, for it is during this time that U.S.-Russia relations sharply deteriorated due to NATO’s military intervention in Yugoslavia. The situation changed radically toward the end of 2001, in response to 9/11, and the American political class demonstrated understanding of the need to engage Russia in a strategic partnership in order to successfully fight the war on terror. Around 60 percent of the American public, again, viewed Russia favorably. In 2002, 55 percent of Americans thought that in the next decade Russia would play an important role in world affairs. During the same year, only 31 percent viewed Russia’s policies as threatening relative to 52 percent in 2000. Moreover, the overwhelming majority (68 percent) thought that NATO should include Russia as its full-fledged member—clearly in response to President Bush’s strategic partnership rhetoric and supportive media.

Alas, after 2003 the percentage of those supportive of rapprochement with Russia declined—probably as a result of growing concerns by the media and politicians about the Kremlin’s efforts to consolidate economic and political power, as well as Russia’s lack of support for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The positive change during 2004–2005 may be interpreted as the public’s agreement with President Bush who continued to advocate strategic partnership with Russia, even as the media viewed such partnership with a growing skepticism. Since 2006, however, the number of those viewing Russia favorably showed another sharp drop to the level of 34 percent as the U.S. media greatly increased its attacks on Putin’s “authoritarianism” and “aggressive” foreign policy.

**Manipulative media**

America’s highly partisan and controlled media makes it possible to manipulate the public by employing the rhetoric of Russophobia. In addition to lack of knowledge about Russia, the above-described shifts in America’s public perceptions are indicative of media manipulations. One indicator of media control is the role played by Rupert Murdoch, the editor of 175 media holdings all of which supported President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair’s pro-war campaign, reflecting Murdoch’s own views that are closely associated with U.S. neoconservatives. As the British newspaper the *Guardian* opined,

> After an exhaustive survey of the highest-selling and most influential papers across the world owned by Murdoch’s News Corporation, it is clear that all are singing from the same hymn sheet. Some are bellicose baritone soloists who relish the fight. Some prefer a less strident, if more subtle, role in the
chorus. But none, whether fortissimo or pianissimo, has dared to croon the anti-war tune. Their master’s voice has never been questioned.84

Under such conditions of America’s elitist and manipulative democracy, it is hard to obtain an objective understanding of Russian realities. Rather than being a “rational choice by well-informed citizens”—such was Joseph Shumpeter’s definition of democracy— one must increasingly speak of a choice by politically minded elites shaping views of a poorly informed public. This is especially applicable to the American knowledge about the world in general and Russia in particular. When politicians, such as Senator John McCain, want to explain to Americans about the “authoritarian” and “imperialist” nature of the Kremlin, they have easy access to CNN or any other media, while alternative views on Russia are barely available.

The phenomenon also has its roots in the Cold War. Russophobic stereotypes have a good chance to stick because the old Cold War views have not entirely disappeared from the public mind and have not been replaced by an informed understanding of new realities. As one journalist wrote in 2001, “I must admit that I too suffer from Russophobia. Born in 1972, I grew up with the USSR as the enemy. We were taught to both fear and hate the Soviet Union, which unfortunately became essentially synonymous with the Russian people. After having this attitude for nearly two decades, it was—and still is—extremely difficult to counter all that enmity produced by the Cold War. The Cold War was THE geopolitical issue of the latter half of the 20th century. Not surprisingly, it left its mark on me and those of my generation who grew up in its shadow. I am trying to overcome my Russophobia, but it’s not a simple thing to do.”85

Weak Russian lobby

Finally, Russophobia would have not been so successful if it were not for the weakness of the Russian lobby in American politics. Other ethnic lobbies—Jews, Chinese, Latinos, Eastern Europeans, and Arabs—are influential or at least notable, but Russians are conspicuously absent from American politics. This makes Russia extremely vulnerable to criticisms from those who are eager to reconstruct and exploit an enemy image. In attempting to satisfy their interests (gaining public support, consolidating corporate vision, demonstrating qualities of a tough leader, etc.), such politicians can say about Russia practically anything they wish without fear of being confronted in a serious rebuttal. The matter goes deeper, as even outside the political establishment, Russophobia often meets no resistance. It is possible, for example, to buy
a space in a national newspaper and express offensive remarks about Russians. As reported by the Congress of Russian Americans (CRA)—the only organization representing Russians in the United States—several years ago a Latvian immigrant doctor Aivars Sluitsis did just this. He spent his time explaining to Americans on pages of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* why Russians have invading other nations in their genes, why they can only understand the language of force, and why he personally wouldn’t treat any Russian patient if he or she were to drop by his office. This was going on for quite some time until the CRA members began lobbying these newspapers and, in a rare case of success, persuaded the editors to remove the ethnic slur. It is equally possible, and with a more powerful effect, to make movies about the murder of former KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko in which the blame will be laid on the Kremlin, even if the investigation is not completed and facts about the Kremlin's involvement are practically nonexistent.

Despite the fact that there are over a million Russians in the United States, they have failed to organize to promote a more objective coverage of Russia in the American media. Traditionally state-oriented, many Russians lack purpose and have difficulties imagining themselves outside their motherland. In immigration, some of them try to assimilate, but the majority, especially first generation Russians, tends to create relatively closed communities that are far more interested in what is going on in Russia than in the United States. Russia’s extremely traumatic history serves to further reinforce the sense of isolation from the motherland. The twentieth century split between those who supported the Soviet system (Reds) and those who fled from it (Whites) continues to operate as the main fault line in the community of Russian immigrants. Finally, ethnic Russians experience serious financial problems in getting organized. Unlike Jews or members of some other ethnic communities, who were granted state support for their immigration to the United States on the basis of their potential opposition to the Soviet system, Russians do not have an equivalent of the Jackson-Vanik amendment working in their favor. Most Russians are not eligible for state support and struggle after immigrating to America.

The CRA remains the only organization that attempts to advocate the interests of ethnic Russians in the United States, but it is small and has limited funds and unpaid activists, which cannot be compared, for instance, with the Jewish lobby office in Washington that has 450 full-time employees. In addition, the CRA has traditionally shied away from involvement in politics and mainly concentrates on cultural activities, educational program, and other forms of assisting Russians in the United States and Russia.
Policy factors

The impact of structural and institutional factors is further reinforced by policy factors, such as the divide within the policy community and the lack of presidential leadership. Not infrequently, politicians tend to defend their personal and corporate interests, and lobbying makes a difference in the absence of firm policy commitments.

Experts recognize that the community of Russia watchers is split and that the split, which goes all the way to the White House, has been responsible for the absence of a coherent policy toward the country. During the period of 2003–2008, Vice President Richard Dick Cheney formed a cohesive and bipartisan group of Russia critics, who pushed for a more confrontational approach with the Kremlin. The brain behind the invasion of Iraq, Cheney could not tolerate opposition to what he saw as a critical step in establishing worldwide U.S. hegemony. He was also harboring the idea of controlling Russia’s energy reserves. Since November 2004, when the administration launched a review of its policy on Russia, Cheney became a critically important voice in whom the Lobby found its advocate. Secretaries of State Condoleezza Rice and, until November 2004, Colin Powell opposed the vice president’s approach, arguing for a softer and more accommodating style in relations with Moscow.

President Bush generally sided with Rice and Powell, but he proved unable to form a consistent Russia policy. Because of America’s involvement in the Middle East, Bush failed to provide the leadership committed to devising mutually acceptable rules in relations with Russia that could have prevented the deterioration in their relationship. Since the end of 2003, he also became doubtful about the direction of Russia’s domestic transformation. As a result, the promising post-9/11 cooperation never materialized.
This page intentionally left blank
The “New Cold War” and the American Sense of History

It’s time we start thinking of Vladimir Putin’s Russia as an enemy of the United States.


If today’s reality of Russian politics continues . . . then there is the real risk that Russia’s leadership will be seen, externally and internally, as illegitimate.

(John Edwards and Jack Kemp, “We Need to Be Tough with Russia,” International Herald Tribune, July 12, 2006)

On Iran, Kosovo, U.S. missile defense, Iraq, the Caucasus and Caspian basin, Ukraine—the list goes on—Russia puts itself in conflict with the U.S. and its allies . . . here are worse models than the united Western stand that won the Cold War the first time around.


In order to derail the U.S.-Russia partnership, the Lobby has sought to revive the image of Russias as an enemy of the United States. The Russophobic groups have exploited important differences between the two countries’ historical self-perceptions, presenting those differences as incompatible.

1. Contested History

Two versions of history

The story of the Cold War as told from the U.S. perspective is about American ideas of Western-style democracy as rescued from the Soviet...
threat of totalitarian communism. Although scholars and politicians disagreed over the methods of responding to the Soviet threat, they rarely questioned their underlying assumptions about history and freedom.\(^1\) It therefore should not come as a surprise that many in the United States have interpreted the end of the Cold War as a victory of the Western freedom narrative. Celebrating the Soviet Union’s “grand failure”—as Zbigniew Brzezinski put it\(^2\)—the American discourse assumed that from now on there would be little resistance to freedom’s worldwide progression. When Francis Fukuyama offered his bold summary of these optimistic feelings and asserted in a famous passage that “what we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War . . . but the end of history as such,”\(^3\) he meant to convey the disappearance of an alternative to the familiar idea of freedom, or “the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”\(^4\)

In Russia, however, the Cold War story has been mainly about sovereignty and independence, rather than Western-style liberalism. To many Russians it is a story of freedom from colonization by the West and of preserving important attributes of sovereign statehood. In a world where neo-colonialism and cultural imperialism are potent forces, the idea of freedom as independence continues to have strong international appeal and remains a powerful alternative to the notion of liberal democracy. Russians formulated the narrative of independence centuries ago, as they successfully withstood external invasions from Napoleon to Hitler. The defeat of the Nazi regime was important to the Soviets because it legitimized their claims to continue with the tradition of freedom as independence. The West’s unwillingness to recognize the importance of this legitimizing myth in the role of communist ideology has served as a key reason for the Cold War.\(^5\) Like their Western counterparts, the Soviets were debating over methods but not the larger assumptions that defined their struggle.

This helps to understand why Russians could never agree with the Western interpretation of the end of the Cold War. What they find missing from the U.S. narrative is the tribute to Russia’s ability to defend its freedom from expansionist ambitions of larger powers. The Cold War too is viewed by many Russians as a necessarily defensive response to the West’s policies, and it is important that even while occupying Eastern Europe, the Soviets never celebrated the occupation, emphasizing instead the war victory.\(^6\) The Russians officially admitted “moral responsibility” and apologized for the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.\(^7\) They may be prepared to fully recognize the postwar occupation of Eastern Europe, but only in the context of the two sides’ responsibility for the Cold War. Russians also find it offensive that Western VE Day celebrations ignore the
crucial contribution of Soviet troops, even though none of the Allies, as one historian put it, “paid dearer than the Soviet Union for the victory. Forty Private Ivans fell in battle to every Private Ryan.”8 Victory over Nazi Germany constitutes, as another Russian wrote, “the only undisputable foundation of the national myth.”9

**Toward an agreeable history**

If the two sides are to build foundations for a future partnership, the two historical narratives must be bridged. First, it is important to recognize the difficulty of negotiating a common meaning of freedom and accept that the idea of freedom may vary greatly across nations. The urge for freedom may be universal, but its social content is a specific product of national histories and local circumstances. For instance, the American vision of democracy initially downplayed the role of elections and emphasized selection by merit or meritocracy. Under the influence of the Great Depression, the notion of democracy incorporated a strong egalitarian and poverty-fighting component, and it was not until the Cold War— and not without its influence—that democracy has become associated with elections and pluralistic institutions.10

Second, it is essential to acknowledge the two nations’ mutual responsibility for the misunderstanding that has resulted in the Cold War. A historically sensitive account will recognize that both sides were thinking in terms of expanding a territorial space to protect their visions of security. While the Soviets wanted to create a buffer zone to prevent a future attack from Germany, the Americans believed in reconstructing the European continent in accordance with their ideas of security and democracy. A mutual mistrust of the two countries’ leaders exacerbated the situation, making it ever more difficult to prevent a full-fledged political confrontation. Western leaders had reason to be suspicious of Stalin, who, in his turn, was driven by the perception of the West’s greed and by betrayals from the dubious Treaty of Versailles to the appeasement of Hitler in Munich. Arrangements for the post–World War II world made by Britain, the USSR, and the United States proved insufficient to address these deep-seated suspicions. In addition, most Eastern European states created as a result of the Versailles Treaty were neither free nor democratic and collaborated with Nazi Germany in its racist and expansionist policies. The European post–World War I security system was not working properly, and it was only a matter of time before it would have to be transformed.

Third, if an agreeable historical account is to emerge, it would have to accept that the end of the Cold War was a product of mutually beneficial
Without the series of negotiations and the committed leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush, the Cold War would not have ended when it did. The fact that Gorbachev lost control of reforms at home ought to be treated as separate from his foreign policy accomplishments and not as something that validates the American hegemonic narrative. According to this narrative, a generous United States spared Russia “the humiliation of a total defeat and graciously allowed Moscow to continue to play the role of a major power even as its economy contracted and its military deteriorated.” In reality nobody won the Cold War, as a result of military or political pressures. If anything, both the Americans and the Russians lost it, because in process of their confrontation, they developed what Gary Hart called “the one-dimensional Cold War understanding of security—military protection from and deterrence of . . . missile attack” as opposed to a more complex definition of insecurity in a complex world. Preoccupation with a war also strengthened militaristic attitudes in society and undermined domestic foundations for peaceful democratic development. It is going to take a new generation of committed leaders to negotiate a better ending to the Cold War and learn how to defend their national interests in a mutually productive way.

2. The End to the First and the Second Cold War

“We won the Cold War”: Russia as a defeated power

As Gorbachev’s hopes to put the world on path to denuclearization and strengthen the United Nations failed to materialize, the American hegemonic discourse gained momentum. The fact that the Warsaw Pact disappeared, while NATO persisted, allowed many to claim victory in the Cold War. Post-Soviet Russia emerged as the sick man of Eurasia with severe domestic problems, which served to reinforce the triumphalism of American elites. It was in this context that George H. W. Bush proclaimed in his 1992 State of the Union message that the United States had “won” the Cold War, which only legitimized to the highest level the already powerful policy discourse. Yet what to Bush was more of a political speech in the preelection season was a policy blueprint to Bill Clinton. It was the Clinton administration that really entrenched the rhetoric of victorious thinking by drawing the analogy between Russia and the defeat of Germany and Japan in World War II. “We were the victor nation, they were the defeated nation, and therefore they should be supplicant and subordinate to the United States,” wrote Stephen Cohen who believes that such
thinking “was a terrible mistake.” He goes on to say, “That’s not what hap-
pened, without Gorbachev the Cold War would not have ended, so Russia
deserves as much credit as the United States.”

Although the Russian contribution to the Cold War end was crucial,
the treatment the new Russia’s government received was that of a defeated
power, and was without Marshall Plan-like assistance. Russian leaders
expected a considerable package of financial assistance from Western
powers particularly because both President Boris Yeltsin and his foreign
minister Andrei Kozyrev committed themselves to transforming Russia
into a Western power. Russia was expected to follow American recom-
mendations regarding its political and economic transformation and for-
\external policy, but all programs of Western assistance served mostly to
courage the destruction of the previous economic system. Rather than
developing social safety nets and rule of law in the process of fundamen-
tal structural transformation, the United States preferred to build rela-
tionships with the narrow and corrupt ruling elite. The fact that the
West-sponsored reform strategy did not help to facilitate the transforma-
tion was reflected, among other things, in the figures of the overall capi-
tal flight during 1992–99, which exceeded the amount of financial
assistance. According to Russia’s official statistics, the overall capital flight
during that period was $182 billion, whereas the amount of foreign assis-
tance constituted $174 billion. The so-called reformers in Russia were
well aware of the state of affairs and yet were unable to say no to Western
“assistance.”

Alongside its limited economic support, the Clinton administration
was simultaneously pursuing policies of containing Russia in a security
context. First, there was the expansion of NATO, which even the liberal-
minded Kozyrev saw as a “continuation, though by inertia, of a policy
aimed at containment of Russia.” Many in Russia perceived the decision
largely as an attempt to fill the existing security vacuum by taking advan-
tage of Russia’s weakness. The United States, as the most powerful mem-
ber of NATO, bears prime responsibility for the inadequate policies toward
Russia, although European leaders also contributed to Russia’s security
isolation. Concerned with the country’s lack of democracy and its conduct
of the Chechen war, they impeded Russia’s movement toward integration
into Western European institutions. As a result, the Russian-sought
“Common Strategy of the EU on Russia”—an elaborate document that
formulated principles of relations with Russia and made its integration
dependent on progress in building democratic and market institutions—
was only adopted in June 1999.

By late 1993, the pro-Western coalition in Russia was on the verge of
disintegration. The Russian leaders kept insisting that the United States’
best choice remained strategic partnership with Russia because of “a historic opportunity to facilitate the formation of a democratic, open Russian state and the transformation of an unstable, post-confrontational world into a stable and democratic one.” Yet Kozyrev, writing in the New York Times, soon had to warn of “the chauvinistic new banners that flap in the Washington wind.” “In these confused days,” he lamented, “we are neither understood nor adequately supported by our natural friends and allies in the West. . . . It appears that some Western politicians, in Washington and elsewhere, envision Russia not as an equal partner but as a junior partner. In this view a ‘good Russian’ is always a follower, never a leader.”

The Lobby’s phobias of Russia’s revival

Some of the people Kozyrev had in mind aimed at keeping Russia confused, humiliated, and unable to revive any components of its former great power identity and material strength. Many in the West continued to mistrust the former “red menace” viewing it as threatening and barbaric. In the first half of the 1990s, the Lobby challenged Western programs of engaging Russia and assisting it—as limited as that assistance was—with various aspects of its transformation. Zbigniew Brzezinski, the former national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter, was among the first to question the wisdom of pursuing what he called a policy of idealistic optimism on the grounds of Russia’s corruption and still potent imperialist instincts. As NATO was expanding toward the East, it was Russia that was accused of “imperialist intentions” in the former Soviet region. Brzezinski then proceeded to argue for the U.S. control over the entire Eurasian continent because it has most of the world’s resources and because “all the historical pretenders to global power originated in Eurasia.” This had to be accomplished by strengthening the independence of non-Russian states, fostering ties with China, and working to decentralize the Russian state. Preempting possible objections from supporters of partnership with Russia, the analyst made it clear that “if a choice must be made between a larger Europe-Atlantic system and a better relationship with Russia, the former must rank higher.”

Brzezinski also played a key role in convincing President Clinton of the need to push forward with NATO expansion against opposition from Russia, as well as many in the American establishment. In alliance with the national security advisor Tony Lake, he worked to satisfy the strong preferences of Eastern European governments and build a network of support for the expansion. Conservative columnists, such as the New York Times’ William
Safire, assisted Brzezinski by trumpeting the rationale of NATO enlargement. Safire pursued the “window of opportunity” argument to override existing opposition. “We must extend the alliance membership for Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Baltic States and ultimately Ukraine,” he argued, because “Russia is authoritarian at heart and expansionist by habit.”26 We must do it now, “while Russia is weak and preoccupied with its own revival, and not later, when such a move would be an insufferable provocation to a superpower.”27

Elaborating on the “authoritarian at heart and expansionist by habit” point, Richard Pipes provided the perspective of an academic and historian. Writing in *Foreign Affairs*, he reminded its readers about Russia’s “heavy burden of history” and failure to make “a clean break with its Soviet past.”28 Pipes insisted that the problem extended even beyond the Soviet era, as Russians “have to overcome not only the communist legacy but also that of the czars and their partner, the Orthodox Church, which for centuries collaborated in instilling in their subjects disrespect for law, submission to strong and willful authority, and hostility to the West.”29 He then reiterated Brzezinski’s points about Russia’s tendency to use its resources and military in the imperialist fashion and concluded by cautioning against viewing the country as a potential ally. Russia may still return as an enemy, the historian wrote, “if those who guide its destiny, exploiting the political inexperience and deep-seated prejudices of its people, once again aspire to a glory to which they are not yet entitled.”30

The anti-Russian rhetoric continued and was heightened further as Vladimir Putin was elected the country’s president. Republican members of the Lobby chose to exploit the opportunity presented by the 2000 presidential campaign to denounce the Clinton administration’s foreign policy record and attack Russia as “the world’s most virulent kleptocracy.”31 In a broader debate on whether Russia had been lost, others laid the blame entirely on the Russian national character. For example, Matthew Brzezinski, the nephew of the former national security advisor argued that “no one lost Russia but the Russians themselves,” with their slavish “Slavic soul” and their scheming thuggery.32

President George W. Bush, however, saw things differently. Soon after 9/11, he and his advisors characterized Russia as “a nation in hopeful transition” and “an important partner in the war on terror.”33 Most importantly, in May 2002, the United States and Russia signed a joint declaration stating “a qualitatively new foundation” in their relationship, and an end to
the era in which the two countries “saw each other as an enemy or strategic threat.” “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.” The thinking underlying the declaration amounted to the second abolishment of the Cold War. Even if the new thinking was brought to existence by a mutual threat, rather than jointly developed values, it signaled the end of the principle of subordination and recognized the equality of Russia. The new vision found its support in American society with 60 percent of Americans viewing Russia favorably and 55 percent thinking that Russia would play an important role in the world in the next decade. The level of support demonstrated by the public considerably limited the Lobby’s ability to act and promote anti-Russian stereotypes. In response to the widely recognized threat of Islamic extremism, the Lobby could not be as active and effective until around the first half of 2003. This changed when Russia refused to go along with the United States on Iraq.

3. The Cold War Narrative Returns

Two events in 2003—Russia’s refusal to go along with the United States on Iraq and the arrest of the oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovski—created an important test for the Bush administration. It was tempting to treat Russia’s lack of support for dismantling Saddam’s regime in the manner of the previous administration—as a deviation from Washington-framed terms of partnership with Moscow. It was equally challenging not to view Khodorkovski’s imprisonment as a direct challenge to American energy interests. Because the proclaimed U.S.-Russia partnership had not yet matured, the Lobby successfully exploited the gap, accusing Russia of anti-Western intentions.

The divided policy community

President Bush and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice did not see Russia’s actions as incompatible with the new framework of the relationship. The spirit of understanding that was required for the bridging of the two sides’ positions on issues such as Iraq was reflected in Rice’s statement that the United States should “punish France, ignore Germany and forgive Russia.” Bush and Rice also abstained from passing judgment on Khodorkovski’s arrest. Although Rice initially had favored a narrow concept of U.S. interests, after 9/11 she saw no alternative to working with Russia on addressing the growing threats of terrorism. Not averse to a tough defense of U.S. interests, she believed that those interests must not
be pursued at the expense of losing Russia as an important partner. President Bush also indicated that he did not expect Russia to look like the United States. Even subsequent profound disagreement with Moscow over Ukraine, Georgia, the Caspian basin, Iran, Kosovo, and missile defense did not convince Bush and Rice to view U.S.-Russia relations as a new Cold War. In Bush's words, “Russia is a complex relationship, but it’s an important relationship to maintain.” Rice too described the U.S.-Russia relations as “not one that is anything like implacable hostility,” and she refused to “throw around terms like ‘new Cold War.’”

Vice President Dick Cheney, however, viewed Russia’s policies and its disagreements with the White House as threatening U.S. interests. Within the White House, it was Cheney who initiated the accusations of Russia as reviving its authoritarian system and using its energy as a weapon of intimidation and imperialism. An experienced Cold warrior, he was comfortable thinking about Russia as a potential threat and advocating what in practice would have amounted to a new strategy of isolating Russia. That kind of confrontational approach had already taken the United States to Iraq, and it was now being tried on Russia. Indeed, many ardent supporters of the war in Iraq, such as Senator Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.), Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), and the deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz, were also known to be tough on Russia. After the Kremlin’s attempts to influence the results of Ukrainian elections, the idea of confronting Russia by championing democratic values in the region became popular with both neoconservative and neoliberal thinkers and materialized in various publications and policy actions.

Those members of the Washington establishment who sought to exploit Cold War symbolism for achieving political objectives, such as gaining a greater visibility or justifying pursued policies, also assisted the return of the Cold War attitude. For example, Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) introduced legislation in Congress to establish the Cold War Medal Act to honor those military veterans who served during the Cold War. Her speech in the Senate was replete with phrases like “our victory in the Cold War” and ability to “defeat the threat from the Iron Curtain.” Another example was a decision to erect the Victims of Communism Memorial, the “Goddess of Democracy” in Washington, D.C., and President Bush’s choice to speak at the dedication ceremony for the memorial on June 12, 2007. Bush used the occasion to remind the audience that “freedom is precious and cannot be taken for granted; that evil is real and must be confronted.” Taking a page from the Cold War, he spoke of “the victims of imperial Communism, an ideology that took the lives of an estimated 100 million innocent men, women and children,” yet he failed to even mention victims of imperial wars conducted on behalf of the “free world.”
The Lobby took the revived Cold War narrative to a new level by engaging in activities that seasoned observers, such as Stephen Cohen, Anatol Lieven, and Graham Allison, described “as a concerted effort to alienate Russia from the West” and displaying an attitude that was “more anti-Russian than was our policy toward Soviet communist Russia.” The view of the Putin-led Russia as a defeated yet defensive and nonrepentant nation was gaining momentum. The talk of a new Cold War was increasingly popular, and the Bush-Rice vision was pushed to the sidelines. Importantly, in January 2007 Thomas Graham, Bush’s chief Russia advisor and advocate of partnership with Moscow, resigned.

The Lobby’s success was partly the result of its ability to utilize the principle of flex groups operating as self-sustaining teams with their own agenda, while converging on some key ideas. One such idea was to view Vladimir Putin as an enemy of the United States. Different groups within the Lobby wanted different things from Russia: military hawks wanted to strengthen U.S. control over Russia’s energy reserves and military infrastructure; liberal hawks were nostalgic about Yeltsin’s era of a relatively decentralized political system; and supporters of Eastern European nationalism hoped to pressure Russia for financial compensations. Yet, in their criticisms of Putin, all the groups exploited the Cold War rhetoric of castigating Russia’s state centralization, increased control over energy reserves, and a more assertive foreign policy. Coming from different directions, they focused their attention on Putin with a tone occasionally bordering on hysteria.

Military hawks, predictably, concentrated on Putin’s foreign policy. In his testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in February 2005, Bruce P. Jackson, one of the most active Russophobes, described the impact of Russia’s policy in the former Soviet region as “a long-term threat to the interests of Europe and the United States in stabilizing and democratizing this region.” Referring to the colored revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine and providing little factual support for his assertions, he presented a long list of Russia’s wrongdoings, which included contesting the growth of democratic governments along its borders; blocking the resolution of conflicts; maintaining its military forces; obstructing the development of effective multilateral institutions; engaging in paramilitary and criminal activities beyond its borders, “such as politically and criminally motivated bombings and murders (as in the recent car bombing in Gori, Georgia, and the repeated attempts on Victor Yushchenko’s life)”; and manipulating energy prices. Jackson refrained from discussing Russia’s own interests in the region, but he argued that
Putin is “motivated more by an angry romanticism, than by a rational calculation of national interest” and that “we are not dealing with a benevolent autocracy; we are now dealing with a violent and vulgar ‘thuggery.’”

In November 2006 a member of the Wall Street Journal’s editorial board cited Russia’s arms sales cooperation with Venezuela and opposition to U.S. efforts to put sanctions on Iran and North Korea for their nuclear programs as evidence that Russia’s foreign policy had become “openly, and often gratuitously, hostile to the U.S.” and that “it’s time we start thinking of Vladimir Putin’s Russia as an enemy of the United States.” In a different editorial, the same newspaper charged that it is Putin who “with his actions at home and abroad, has done more than anyone” to make forebodings of a return to the Cold War days come true. Laying the blame squarely on Putin, the newspaper then recommended that the West “wake up to this rising threat” as “here are worse models than the united Western stand that won the Cold War the first time around.”

Liberal hawks worked to condemn Russia’s record on democracy and human rights. Steven Sestanovich, the former advisor to President Clinton, argued that despite Russia’s occasional accusation of U.S. double standards in the war on terror, Putin was a beneficiary, not a victim, of these standards because Washington was not tough enough on him for violations of human rights in Chechnya and interference in the sovereign affairs of the former Soviet states. Along with other liberal-minded pundits, he believed that the causes of Russia’s growing difference with the United States in world affairs had to do with Russia’s lack of democracy. “A less open Russia . . . increases the potential damage to the United States and its allies from new global threats,” wrote the Washington Post. The assumption that democracies pursue similar foreign policies is common among liberal thinkers even though Western nations profoundly disagree on issues such as the war in Iraq, Middle Eastern conflict, or the role of multilateralism and international institutions. Rather than adopting a broader state-building perspective, liberal hawks expected Russia to quickly become a Western-style democracy and follow the U.S. international agenda. They were assisted by Russia’s radical Westernizers. For instance, at the 2006 annual Harvard Symposium on Russia, Andrei Illarionov, a former advisor to Putin, presented his country as a dangerous regime that seeks to centralize power and challenge the West. Nikolai Zlobin at the Center for Defense Information lamented the lack of clarity in U.S.-Russia relations, which in his view resulted from the fact that, despite being a defeated power, Russia was never properly disarmed after the end of the Cold War.

In addition, supporters of Eastern European nationalism drew the attention of the public and policy circles to Russia’s problems with ethnic
nationalism. Accusing Putin of sponsoring and exploiting ethnic phobias, they ignored the complex roots of ethnic violence and identity formation in Russia. Some of these roots are similar to those of Western European countries, having to do with mass immigration from Muslim republics, while others result from poverty and the ideological vacuum left by the end of communism. The Russia critics also failed to analyze issues of ethnic discrimination against Russians in Eastern European states, such as Latvia and Estonia.

Their differences notwithstanding, all groups presented Putin as intentionally provoking a new Cold War, and they converged on the need to develop a tough response. Such response in part appealed to reason, as it would seem logical to stand up to a Cold warrior. Yet it was also designed to provoke an emotional reaction by Russia, driven by anger and frustration. This appears to be the primary reason for the Lobby’s consistent use of offensive rhetoric, comparing Russia’s president to a fascist, a medieval czar, Stalin, Hitler, Milosevic, Mussolini, Pinochet, or Franco, and accusing him of murdering his political opponents. Intentionally provocative comments, such as “assassinated democracy,” “violent thuggery,” and “predatory policies,” sought to encourage a disproportionate response from Russia, which would then be used as a validation of the Lobby’s accusations and so possibly lead to the necessity of a tough response from the White House.

That response, according to the Lobby, had to include expelling Russia from Western institutions and isolating it morally, politically, and economically. For example, following Russia’s opposition to the invasion of Iraq and the 2003 Khodorkovski arrest, U.S. Defense Department advisor Richard Perle called to expel Russia from the G-8, arguing that “not one of the G8 countries would allow itself to behave in such a way with one of its leading businessmen.” Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) also urged President Bush to suspend Russia from the G-8 until “the Russian government ends its assault on democracy and political freedom”—a call that was supported by members of the Lobby and their sympathizers. Other lawmakers opposed Russia’s entrance into the World Trade Organization and insisted on keeping the Jackson-Vanik amendment to the Trade Act of 1974 even though they graduated other countries, such as Ukraine, from the amendment. Cochairs of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) independent task force on U.S. policy toward Russia and former vice presidential candidates John Edwards and Jack Kemp warned of Russia’s possible political and moral isolation: “If today’s reality of Russian politics continues . . . then there is the real risk that Russia’s leadership will be seen, externally and internally, as illegitimate.” Still others urged the United States to more actively
incorporate states such as Ukraine and Georgia into the Western orbit, as well as discourage Western companies and financial markets from investing in Russia.  

Although Russia is far from perfect, there are many unstable regimes and human rights offenders in the world that are not singled out by American pundits. For example, the Lobby’s members are yet to become as critical of the many human rights violations in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Israel. They barely notice cases of assassinated and imprisoned opposition leaders in Georgia and Kazakhstan, yet when a high-profile murder takes place in Russia, they give it priority and immediately, without any evidence, link it to the Kremlin. In a similar fashion, they accuse Russia’s leadership of inflaming ethnic violence while not noticing the revival of anti-Semitism and the oppression of ethnic groups in Europe or other parts of the world. Critics of the Kremlin insist on blocking investment flows to Russia, yet they don’t have a problem with doing business with China, a far less open society. In foreign policy, as Stephen Cohen noted, when Washington meddles in the politics of Georgia and Ukraine, it is “promoting democracy”; when the Kremlin does so, it is “neo-imperialism.” When NATO expands to Russia’s front and back doorsteps, it is “fighting terrorism” and “protecting new states”; when Moscow protests, it is engaging in “cold war thinking.” Yet another perceptive observer called such policy “promoting hostility rather than promoting democracy.”

This lack of perspective indicates that many in the United States believe that Russia simply does not deserve equal treatment. As Gary Hart put it, commenting on CFR Russia’s Wrong Direction report, its executive summary might as well have read: “The poor state of the U.S.-Russia relationship is entirely the fault of the Russians, who refuse to conduct their domestic affairs as we insist they should. We should hold the Russians to a uniquely high standard, though we refuse to say why.” The reason why Russia is singled out suggests itself: led by President Putin the country is attempting to conduct an independent foreign policy while continuing to differ from the United States internally. The hegemonic thinking that was behind the American invasion of Iraq revealed itself in Russia policy as well. Indeed, there are signs that the Lobby wanted to blame Russia for Iraq too.

4. The Baltics as a New Cold War Front

The Lobby took advantage of Russia’s tense relations with the Baltic states and worked to persuade the White House to take a hard line on the Kremlin. Taking a page from the Cold War, the Lobby reconstructed the familiar narrative of the small nations’ heroic resistance to the Soviet
occupation, ignoring the issue’s historical context by turning Russia into a guilty party unable or unwilling to recognize responsibility for “past crimes.” Although it has not fully achieved its objectives, the Lobby inflicted considerable damage on Russia’s reputation and the future of U.S.-Russia relations.

The U.S. support for the Baltics

The U.S. support for the Baltic states’ vision of Russia’s role during the Cold War was apparent when the Kremlin invited 50 foreign leaders to come to Moscow on May 9, 2005, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of victory over Fascism. Two Baltic states, Lithuania and Estonia, refused, viewing the end of the war as the beginning of their occupation by the Soviets. Separating victory over Fascism and the occupation by the Soviets did not turn out to be possible for the small Eastern European nations. Their leaders insisted on their version of history, presenting Russia as unable to relinquish its “imperial ambitions.” The United States exerted additional pressures on Russia, and President Bush, while traveling to the region, strongly condemned the Soviet annexation and occupation of the Baltic republics as a result of World War II. When the Kremlin begged to differ, Daniel Fried, assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, expressed America’s frustration with Russia by telling reporters that the only “true narrative” of World War II is “ours” and what the Russians “don’t like to remember is what they were doing from 1939 to 1941.”

In late April–early May 2007 the leaders of Estonia removed from the center of its capital, Tallinn, a World War II monument—a bronze statue of a Soviet soldier—and the remains of the fallen Soviet servicemen that had been buried underneath it. Estonian leaders undoubtedly wanted to demonstrate their opposition to the Russian version of history. But the larger objective was not to affirm their sovereignty, but to draw a new Cold War line in Europe by creating a new enemy image of the East. The words by the Estonian prime minister Andrus Ansip about Russian “drunkards and looters” buried inside the tomb, as well as the timing of the affair—immediately before Russia’s celebration of V-Day—demonstrated that the calculus was to have an effect of maximum humiliation. The decision led to a firestorm of street protests in Tallinn by the Russian-speaking youth, resulting in the death of one Russian protester and the arrests of about 1,200 people, with the Estonian police demonstrating unusual brutality.

By damaging Russia’s sense of pride and national memory, Tallinn was hoping to provoke Moscow’s disproportionate response, which in turn was meant to persuade European nations, such as Germany and France, that Russia was not a reliable partner. The Bronze Soldier was conveniently
removed only a couple of weeks before the scheduled Russia-EU summit in Samara. Isolating Russia, Estonia felt, was a good strategy for sabotaging Russia’s rapprochement with Europe, blocking the construction of a Russia-Germany pipeline bypassing Estonia, and diverting the world’s attention from Estonia’s discriminatory treatment of ethnic Russians. The strategy of making Russia into a scapegoat has been tried by Georgia, Poland, and other countries, and not without some short-term successes.

Russia’s sense of proportion was indeed not always well measured. In addition to protesting the Estonian decision, warning of serious negative effects, and threatening sanctions, Russia’s youth activists arranged a siege of the Estonian embassy in Moscow, preventing the Estonian ambassador from leaving the embassy, intimidating the staff, and drawing criticism from NATO and EU officials. But Russia also appealed to the EU to dissuade Tallinn from taking provocative actions, only to find the European leaders in full agreement with Estonia. Just like the leaders of the Baltic states, EU leaders too betrayed what a Russian historian called “a presumption of Russia’s guilt” that “was symbolized by the image of the Soviet soldier not as liberator but aggressor, who does not deserve to have monuments in the European Union.”

The United States also sided unequivocally with Estonia. Not only did the White House ignore all Russian pleas to stop politicizing the issue, but it pointedly invited the Estonian president Toomas Ilves to meet with President George W. Bush in Washington thereby issuing a “blank check for Tallinn.” Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called Ilves to express her support and condemn the siege of the Estonian embassy in Moscow. On May 2, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution condemning protests in Estonia and calling removal of the Bronze Soldier its internal matter. In the same spirit, Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns noted that free Estonia’s sovereignty was again under attack and that the U.S. government respected Estonia’s right to make its decisions independently. Rather than trying to mediate the conflict, Washington opted to support one side and condemn the other, ignoring the historical complexities as well as the mistreatment of ethnic Russians in Baltic states.

**The Lobby’s determination to isolate Russia**

The Lobby played an important role in shaping the U.S. decision to support Baltic states and pushing the White House to adopt anti-Russian policies. The Lobby’s thinking about Russia and the Baltics betrayed the Cold War ideology on a micro scale. According to this ideology, the Soviet Union was no different from or worse than Nazi Germany; the Soviets
never liberated the Baltics but only imposed their own occupation; and by occupying the small nations, Russia deprived them of their historical belongingness in the free world. Writing in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, the former prime minister of Estonia Mart Laar insisted, for example, that “there is no difference between the denial of the Holocaust and the denial of the crimes of Soviet communism” and that in 1944 the Red Army liberated Tallinn not from German forces, “who were nearly gone,” but “from a legitimate Estonian government.” Similarly, the president of Estonia Hendrik Ilves argued, “There is no difference between the Nazis and the Communists. Both fought fiercely and repressed Estonians. The truth is that the Red Army and the NKVD ‘liberated’ Estonia in the same way as the Wehrmacht and Gestapo before them.” Since the Cold War, an influential stream of academic scholarship in the United States has generally proceeded from these assumptions hardly ever asking inconvenient questions about Baltic states.

Some of these questions might have included the following. If the Soviet Union was no different from or worse than Nazi Germany, does it mean that the Baltics would have been better off under the Nazi regime? Does this also mean that France, Britain, and the United States were on the wrong side of history as allies of the USSR in World War II? If the Soviet soldiers never liberated the Baltics and German forces were “nearly gone,” who were the 13 soldiers buried inside the tomb under the Bronze Soldier and what should be made of the statistics of some thousands of Soviet servicemen who reportedly died during the Baltic offensive? Finally, if the Baltics were deprived of their belongingness within the free world, shouldn’t we ask what that world was like at the time? Should we pay attention, for instance, to the fact that the Baltic states were pro-German authoritarian governments and that other “free nations,” such as Great Britain, did not object to reincorporation of the Baltic states into the Russian area of domination under the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact? Should it also be recalled that some other European states, such as Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, openly supported Hitler or were initially satisfied with his territorial revisions, like Poland that got a piece of Czechoslovakia after the Munich Agreement? These questions are rarely asked because they challenge the credibility of the basic Russophobic narrative.

This one-sided thinking was revealed in media attacks on Russia before and during the Bronze Soldier crisis. These attacks reflected the belief that the Baltic integration into the West would be greatly accelerated by the development of the Russia-threat image. The Jamestown Foundation’s *Eurasia Daily Monitor* argued that, “historically, Euro-Atlantic integration has developed faster when the West had both the center of gravity and a significant ‘other’ to balance.” In media, conferences, and testimonies,
politicians and experts advanced three lines in defending the interests of the Baltic elites. First, they attacked Russia for not confronting the question of responsibility for its “past crimes,” which for the Baltics translated into financial compensations and territorial concessions. “There is a serious danger in the unwillingness to see one’s history critically,” wrote another critic of Russia while supporting Estonia and Lithuania’s decision not to attend Moscow VE Day ceremonies. Referring to Stalinism, he lamented that “the disastrous social practices that were not properly analyzed and condemned may well reproduce themselves.”83 “By defending this Soviet symbol and the whole legacy associated with it, the Kremlin rejects coming to terms with Russia’s recent history of communist crimes against its own and neighbouring nations,” echoed another Eurasia Daily Monitor article reacting to the Bronze Soldier crisis.84 “The trouble is,” continued the Washington Post “that Russia has never acknowledged this history, and under Putin it grows less and less willing to do so.”85

What kind of coming to terms with communist crimes does the Lobby advocate? It is hardly a moral condemnation from the Russian leadership that it seeks. After all, Russia has strongly condemned Stalinism under Mikhail Gorbachev, and in 1989 the Congress of People’s Deputies accepted the findings of the state special commission regarding the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. The Soviet parliament then condemned and denounced the existence of the secret protocols to which the Baltic states trace their occupation. What the Lobby has in mind is a full-fledged recognition of Russia as a defeated power, similar to that experienced by Germany after being defeated in World War II, with a Nuremberg-like trial of Russia for its “crimes” and with imposed financial compensations and territorial concessions to follow. “Revision of the outcome of World War II and preparations for new Nuremberg Trials against the Russians have been under way for 30 years,” as an observer wrote,86 but during the first decade of the twenty-first century the Baltic elites have become open and specific about the sums of money they expect in return for their “occupation”— ranging from $24 to $100 billion.87 Even though many Eastern Europeans and Baltic states collaborated with Hitler, it is Russia that is supposed to be tried for its historical role. Even though European great powers accepted the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the United States contributed to solidifying the postwar international order in Yalta, Russia alone was held responsible. Even to the Russia-unfriendly Economist, it seemed clear that the occupation claim, if upheld, served to “justify Estonian and Latvian policies on citizenship” and “open the way for financial compensation and territorial claims against Russia.”88

Second, the Lobby sought to present the Baltics as leaders of democratic development in the region relative to Russia’s declining freedoms
and barbaric behavior. Freedom House has consistently rated Estonia and Latvia as “free,” giving them—on par with the United States and other advanced democracies—the highest possible evaluations for their proportional representation and civil liberties. For instance, some human rights organizations expressed concerns about the treatment of ethnic Russians, many of whom are denied voting rights and remain under the highly dubious status of Estonia and Latvia’s “stateless” or “non-citizens.” Yet when Rene van der Linden, the chairman of the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), called on Baltic governments to pay attention to the situation of the Russian-speaking minority, the Eurasia Daily Monitor immediately denounced him as falling “into line with Moscow’s anti-Estonia propaganda,” demonstrating his “failure as head of a democracy-promoting organization to address Russia’s rejection of Vergangenheitsbewaeltigung [coming to terms with the totalitarian past].” The latter reference is to Estonia’s parliamentary support that was, of course, obtained partly due to isolation of the large Russian minority. Another issue was the historical treatment of Jews. The New York Times reported that Lithuania’s Museums of Genocide Victims applied the term “genocide” only to “what Russians did to Balts, not to what Nazis and their local collaborators did to Jews” and that it all but ignored “the Baltic people’s role in the Holocaust.” In addition, some prominent Baltic officials, such as Estonia’s defense minister, supported former Nazi’s SS veterans as freedom fighters and encouraged the revival of pro-Hitler’s sentiments.

Third, the Lobby firmly supported the geopolitical interests of the Baltic states, including opposition to the Russia-Germany planned North European Gas Pipeline under the Baltic sea, which was to bypass Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. The Russophobes wrote about the new Russia-Germany energy cooperation as encouraging Russia’s expansionism and threatening the unity of Europe. Alternately, they advocated an overland pipeline as more commercially viable, defending the interests of transit countries, such as Poland and the Baltic states, and serving those Eastern Europeans who referred to the planned pipeline as “the Schroeder-Putin Pact,” an analogy to the Hitler-Stalin Pact on the eve of World War II. The Lobby further supported Baltic leaders’ calls for the EU to “demonstrate maximum strength” for a “straightforward response to Russia’s systematic attacks.” Paul Goble, the former State Department official, advised in his blog that Estonian leaders have considerable “room to maneuver” in the wake of the Bronze Soldier crisis, given policy divisions within the Russian establishment. Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) went even further by calling to extend NATO’s Article 5 defense commitment to issues of energy security against threatening energy manipulations.
by Russia. Lugar’s speech was then cited approvingly by acting State Department officials.

However, it would be presumptuous to view values and interests of the Baltic and the Eastern European states as fully compatible with those of the United States. The U.S. interests hardly include becoming an advocate of the Baltic geopolitical interests at the expense of America’s own relations with Russia. Rather than interfering in political or energy disputes on the side of the Baltics, it would be prudent to encourage reconciliation between Russia and the East European states and stand ready to mediate conflicts between them. America’s interests and values neither warrant providing an unqualified support for restrictive regimes with a questionable record of minority treatment nor are they compatible with attempts to revise assessment of World War II, shining a more sympathetic light on the role of those who fought on the side of Hitler.

5. Conclusion

The Lobby’s record in reviving the traditional Cold War thinking about Russia was a mixed one. It failed to isolate Russia politically and economically. Russia retained its membership in the G-8. American investments in the Russian economy continue to grow at a high pace. The White House preferred to work with the Kremlin and expressed a cautious support for Putin’s successor Dmitri Medvedev. It also never went as far as to raise the issue of financial compensations to the Baltics for their “occupation.”

Still the damage inflicted on U.S.-Russia relations and the prospects for their partnership was considerable. The Washington mainstream again viewed Russia more as a potential threat than as a partner—this time because the Kremlin has failed to abide by American expectations. Even though Russia’s state was still in the process of being consolidated and its trajectory was not yet determined, the Lobby presented the country as a well-established autocratic system with anti-Western intentions. The media bought into the anti-Russian propaganda too eagerly. On November 30, 2007, CNN even broadcast a documentary on “Czar Putin,” presenting as common knowledge that Vladimir Putin “had started a new Cold War.” The White House increasingly adopted democracy promotion rhetoric in its statements on Russia and sided with the Baltic states in their conflict with Moscow.

The U.S. policy and democracy promotion rhetoric provoked a sharp emotional reaction from Russia. In January 2006, Putin responded to accusations of those experts “who do not understand what is happening in our country” by saying, “To hell with you.” In his address to the State Duma in May, he spoke of “Comrade Wolf” who “knows whom to eat” and
doesn’t listen to anyone else, a clear reference to the U.S. attempts to put pressure on Russia. In July he objected to the American democracy promotion rhetoric that resembled to him the way colonialists had talked a hundred years earlier about how the white man needed to “civilize ‘primitive peoples.’” In January 2007, Putin delivered his strongest critique of American “unipolarity” at the Munich Conference on Security Policy. In his address on the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany on May 9, 2007—following Russia-Estonia spar over the Bronze Soldier—Putin denounced “disrespect for human life, claims to global exclusiveness and dictate, just as it was in the time of the Third Reich.” The comparison of the United States with Nazi Germany was immediately followed by angry American reactions with the New York Times referring to Putin’s remark as his “latest rude outburst” and the Washington Post calling it one of his “recent provocations.”

More importantly, a strong conviction in Moscow developed that the United States was indeed preparing to isolate Russia economically, politically, and morally. Even mainstream politicians and analysts were now concluding that there was little in America’s political class that suggested a constructive attitude toward Russia in the future. For example, Sergei Rogov, the director of the Institute of the U.S.A. and Canada, spoke of the formation of a very negative consensus about Russia that united left-wing liberals and right-wing conservatives in the United States. In his assessment, the Cold War thinking that Russia must be contained and isolated has returned and “it is a very dangerous situation.” President Putin’s criticism of the U.S.-led “unipolarity,” beginning with his speech at the Munich Conference, as well as his threats to withdraw from already signed international treaties, such as the Intermediate Nuclear Missile Treaty, were meant to convey Russia’s frustration with its inability to develop more equitable relations with the United States. Rather than sending the message of a threat, the Kremlin was desperate to be heard that it was Russia, not America, that had to swallow the war in the Balkans, two rounds of NATO expansion, the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM treaty, the U.S. military presence in Central Asia, the invasion of Iraq, and, now, plans to deploy elements of nuclear missile defense in Eastern Europe. For the third time in the last 15 years, Russia felt betrayed by the West—first, due to it not keeping the promise given to Gorbachev not to expand NATO, second, because of being denied a greater integration into Western institutions under Yeltsin, and third, because of the breakup of the post-9/11 coalition.

Despite Russia’s occasional paranoia, the United States and the Lobby bear a significant degree of responsibility for the crisis in the two countries’ relations. As one observer wrote, although Washington does not want
a second Cold War, “it also does not want the reversal of the U.S. geopolitical gains that it made in the decade or so after the end of the Cold War.” Another expert asked, “What possible explanation is there for the fact that today—at a moment when both the U.S. and Russia face the common enemy of Islamist terrorism—hard-liners within the Bush administration, and especially in the office of Vice President Dick Cheney, are arguing for a new tough line against Moscow along the lines of a scaled-down Cold War?” Yet another analyst wrote “at the Cold War’s end, the United States was given one of the great opportunities of history: to embrace Russia, the largest nation on earth, as partner, friend, ally. Our mutual interests meshed almost perfectly. There was no ideological, territorial, historic or economic quarrel between us, once communist ideology was interred. We blew it. We moved NATO onto Russia’s front porch, ignored her valid interests and concerns, and, with our ‘indispensable-nation’ arrogance, treated her as a defeated power, as France treated Weimar Germany after Versailles.”
This page intentionally left blank
The Chechnya “Oppressor” and U.S. Objectives in the Caucasus

[Russians] fight brutally because that is part of the Russian military ethos, a tradition of total war fought with every means and without moral restraints.

(Los Angeles Times, Editorial, 1999)

The Chechen issue is delaying the post-imperial transformation of Russia. It is not only delaying it, it is helping to reverse it. And this is why one should care.

(Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Catastrophe in Chechnya: Escaping the Quagmire,” 2004)

In Chechnya, our basic morality is at stake. . . . [T]he Russian government is suppressing the liberties gained when the Soviet empire collapsed? The Chechen war both masks and motivates the reestablishment of a central power in Russia.

(André Glucksmann et al., “End the Silence Over Chechnya,” 2006)

1. Decolonization or State-Building?

The decolonization narrative

One way to make sense of Russia’s problems in the Caucasus is to view them as a continuation of the imperial disintegration set in motion by Mikhail Gorbachev’s reforms. Western advocates of this perspective often believe that not only the Soviet Union but Russia too is responsible for
oppressing non-Russian nationalities and religions, including Islam. Russia is perceived as not principally different from the British, French, or Portuguese colonial empires, and Chechnya as indicative of a larger trend toward the breakup of the Russian empire. This narrative is popular in Western media and academia, partly because it brings to mind the heroic Chechen resistance to Russia in the nineteenth century. To many left-leaning observers, even violence is justified when it is directed against Anglo-Saxon and European oppressors, and when it aims to advance the self-determination denied to their colonial subjects. To Americans, this argument carries additional weight, in part because the United States was not directly involved in the West’s colonial practices.

A recent example of the decolonization narrative is the book by Tony Wood, the deputy editor of the *New Left Review*, in which he makes a case for Chechnya’s independence. Wood documents the history of Chechen resistance beginning with the nineteenth century and argues that, as with the case of Algeria under the French, ethnic Russians held prominent jobs and controlled key political positions in the northern Caucasus. He further asserts that, although Chechens had not developed their own institutions of elites under Soviet rule, the situation there in the 1990s was hardly more corrupt or chaotic than in other parts of the former USSR, and therefore the threat of Islamic terrorism in the northern Caucasus is an overstatement. What Chechens lacked from Russia was humane treatment, a willingness to negotiate an international recognition of their independence claims, rather than a war waged against them. Wood maintains that if the West had provided such recognition early enough, the disastrous military intervention by Moscow, as well as attempts to isolate Chechnya economically, might have been prevented.

The conservative version of the decolonization argument is similar, but it places a greater emphasis on the Russian people and their “oppressive and imperialist” political culture, viewing colonial institutions as a direct extension of this imperial mindset. For instance, Richard Pipes, who also compared Chechnya to Algeria, insisted on independence as the only way to prevent Russia’s further territorial disintegration. Zbigniew Brzezinski was even more blunt in holding “the Russians” responsible for depriving Chechens of their own political institutions, as well as assuming that Russian attitudes and behavior since Stalin’s deportation of Chechens and other nationalities had not changed. In Anatol Lieven’s words, “The condemnation of Stalinism by Nikita Khrushchev, the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev, the peaceful Soviet withdrawal from Poland, the Russian recognition of the independence of the other Soviet republics—all this is ignored.” What Western geopoliticians seem to be especially concerned about is a possible revival of a Russian statehood, which they view as equivalent to an empire.
Upon a closer scrutiny, the decolonization argument is difficult to sustain. The zero-sum approach—either empire or full independence—fails to recognize the most important challenge faced by the modern state, which is how to accommodate minorities and guarantee their rights without undermining the political viability and territorial integrity of the state itself. As scholars have argued, international law recognizes the right to secession, but it also abhors the unilateral redrawing of borders. Self-determination is not viable if it comes at the cost of political instability, state disintegration, and violation of human rights, which are all too evident in Chechnya. Even more problematic is the assumption that Russians and Chechens are culturally incompatible or, as one scholar puts it, “it is hard to think of a more likely pair of candidates for historical enmity than the Russian government and the Chechens.”

The Imperatives of state-building and Russia as a weak state

A more productive way to understand Russia is to see it as a nation that has relinquished the Soviet state model and is now struggling to establish new political and economic foundations of statehood. The post-Soviet Russia is a new state because it acts under new international conditions that no longer accept traditional patterns of imperial domination. However, Russia’s long history as an empire and its complex relations with non-Russian nationalities make creating a new power-sharing mechanism in the region a challenge.

Russia’s historical relations with Chechnya include a long nineteenth-century war to subjugate Chechnya’s warriors to the tsar’s imperial rule, as well as Stalin’s mass deportation of Chechens to Central Asia in 1944. Still, it is misleading to present these relations exclusively as a historical confrontation. For instance, despite the Stalinist perception, most Chechens did not collaborate with Hitler during World War II, and in fact fought bravely on the Soviet side. The tsar of Russia trusted Chechens enough to hire them as his bodyguards, and Chechens served in some of the most selective Soviet battalions. Many Chechen intellectuals also shared Mikhail Gorbachev’s vision of democratic reform and the peaceful coexistence of diverse nationalities within the framework of a single Soviet state. The overall story of the two peoples’ relationship is far too complex to be described as a “conflict of civilizations” or, to quote former Chechen president Aslan Maskhadov, a “war [that] has been continuing for more than 400 years.”

During the Perestroika years—as viewed by some Chechens themselves—the democratic idea was hijacked by criminal elites and ethnonationalists who saw a secessionist opportunity in the decline of the Soviet state, and who prevailed in imposing their own political agenda.
The ethnonationalist leader Dzhokhar Dudaev, himself a former Soviet general, was able to unseat the more union-minded Doku Zavgaev, because separatism was gaining strength in the entire region and because Gorbachev was too late in offering a strong, unifying alternative. When Dudaev unilaterally proclaimed Chechnya’s independence in 1991, the new Russia’s leader, Boris Yeltsin, ignored it, partly because he too came to power on a secessionist platform. While working to undermine the foundations of the Soviet state and remove Mikhail Gorbachev from power, he went too far and could no longer control the process. A revolutionary who contributed to the Soviet breakup, he was in no position to initiate processes of reconciliation and reconstruction. Instead of attempting to rebuild the unity of the state, he plotted behind Gorbachev’s back to dissolve it, and went on to promise to give Russia’s republics as much sovereignty as they “could swallow.” The political seeds of Chechnya’s secessionism were planted at this time.

Russia’s Chechnya problem was then a problem of rebuilding a state under growing ethnonationalist pressures—and by a regime that was itself of separatist origin and came to power by toppling the central authority. By the time Yeltsin had decided to intervene in Chechnya in early 1994, it was already too late. Dudaev was no longer in full control of the republic and had to share power with organized crime. Political instability followed. The society fragmented and could no longer function as a whole. And Russia’s army—a state institution that was highly demoralized and humiliated during the protracted campaign to discredit the Soviet system—could not come near to restoring order and exacerbated the situation by engaging in criminal activities, brutalities, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. Much has been written about human rights violations committed by the Russian army, as well as by the Chechen side of the conflict. As General Lebed, a veteran of Afghanistan and someone who helped to broker the 1997 peace agreement, once noted, “I have had occasion to see a lot of combat, and I affirm this fact: there are enough of scoundrels on both sides.”

All of this made it extremely difficult to restore order and the state’s ability to govern in the republic. The peace agreement did not last, and violence returned with renewed force. During the two-and-a-half years of peace that followed the Khasavyurt Agreement of 1996, Chechnya’s official authorities could not stabilize the area, and the republic was increasingly turning into a Taliban-like state that was combining radical Islamization, ties to the al-Qaeda, public executions, slavery, and banditism. Even after the end of the Second Chechnya War in 2004, Russia continued to suffer from multiple terrorist attacks, and some analysts projected a further increase of violence in the region. The dismal situation prompted one of
them to observe that the conflict is “not so much about who will govern Chechnya. It is about whether Chechnya will be governed at all.”

American interest in a stable Russia

Russia’s vulnerability to further destabilization illustrates the importance of American support for preserving state governance and territorial integrity in the region. The reality is that Chechnya-grown terrorism has established links with international terrorism and has the potential to spread outside the northern Caucasus. In the absence of proper vigilance and cooperation among states, terrorism may even obtain a nuclear dimension. Osama bin Laden’s belief in the acquisition of nuclear weapons as the “duty of Muslims to prepare as much force as possible to terrorize the enemies of God” serves as a chilling reminder that it is in the United States’ vital interests to keep weapons of mass destruction out of the hands of terrorists and to prevent radical Islamization and an outbreak of another major conflict in the region. It is therefore imperative that the United States and Russia develop and maintain strong cooperation on both the strategic and operational levels of dealing with the threat of terrorism.

In developing a joint understanding of the nations’ interests, it is important to avoid two types of flawed reasoning. First, it is essential not to be guided by Islamophobia, but to view Islam as an ally, not an enemy, in a war on terrorism. The Western notion of imposed secular democracy is not going to assist stabilization in the Middle East or the Northern Caucasus. Rather, it will further alienate many moderate Muslims who reject the message of violence coming from Bin Laden and the like. If a more democratic system is to emerge in Chechnya, it may not be the familiar model of separating the Church from the state. The Caucasus, with its high mixture of ethnic and clan loyalties, remains one of the world’s most difficult regions to understand, and Western politicians are hardly in a position to decide what is good for the region. The best the West can do is support a locally acceptable solution to the conflict, grounded in general principles of territorial integrity and the accommodation of minorities.

Second, it is crucial to be firm with radical Islamists who are thriving on the world’s political divisions and military confrontations, and who rely on violence as the dominant method of achieving their objectives. The United States has a history of incorporating violent Islamists into its geopolitical schemes, and training those who under different circumstances would turn against their master. During the Cold War, it supported the Mujahideens against the Soviets in Afghanistan by providing weapons, ammunition, and training for people like Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. In the post–Cold War environment, in attempting to undermine
Serbia, U.S. officials extended similar support to Muslim separatists in Kosovo, helping their leader Hasim Taci to gain power and ignoring evidence of his Kosovo Liberation Army’s ties with radical Islamists and organized crime. There have also appeared some reports of the White House’s support for radical Kurdish separatists with the purpose of destabilizing Iran. Using the Chechen terrorists in a similar fashion may have disastrous consequences for the United States’ vital interests in the region.

2. The Second Chechen War

Instability and terrorism in the northern Caucasus

Although the Khasavyurt peace of 1996 stipulated that Russia withdraw from Chechnya and the republic’s status would not be defined for five years, the arrangement only lasted until 1999. The peace did not last because neither country could live up to its side of the bargain. Russia, which pledged funds “for restoring the Chechen Republic’s socioeconomic complex,” could not really deliver them due to widespread corruption and embezzlement by federal and regional officials. Chechnya and its authorities showed little ability to restore order in the republic. In attempting to consolidate his power, the newly elected president Aslan Maskhadov disbanded the parliament and even welcomed shariah courts, but failed to make prominent warlords, such as Shamil Basaev, submit to the presidential authority. Nor did Maskhadov show any ability to control the proliferation of criminal networks, kidnapping, and slavery. Among the victims of kidnapping were two senior Russian envoys—who were supposedly under the Chechen president’s personal protection—as well as Russian journalists and human rights activists who often sympathized with the suffering of the Chechens. In response to these developments, all major international relief and human rights organizations fled the North Caucasus.

As a result, Chechnya continued its descent into lawlessness, and was increasingly becoming a training ground for criminals and terrorists, including those of international origin. In 1998, a number of prominent Saudi- and Jordan-born terrorists and al-Qaeda operatives, such as Ibn ul-Khattab and Abu al-Walid, made their way to Chechnya to organize terrorist infrastructures with Basaev. There was now a direct link between the international jihad and Chechen terrorism, and different sources estimated 400 to 6,000 foreign fighters in the republic. With no progress in restoring the economy and controlling unemployment, which was estimated to be up to 60 percent, terrorists had little difficulty recruiting young males from the local population. All the signs were there that Chechnya as a viable entity with Maskhadov in charge, no longer existed.
In August 1999, when Chechen terrorists led by Basaev and the Arab fighter Khattab had occupied parts of the neighboring republic of Dagestan—a prelude to future incursions into Russia in Moscow and Beslan—the Kremlin resumed military operations in the region. Also in August, immediately following the Dagestan incursion, two bombs exploded in Moscow residential buildings, killing hundreds of civilians. The sheer magnitude of the violence was unprecedented. Russians united behind Putin, who was running for president on the platform of “eradicating extremism” in Chechnya and reestablishing a “strong state” throughout the entire Russian territory. Initially, the popularity of the then prime minister Putin was at only 2 percent approval, but in two months it jumped to 26 percent; as the war in Chechnya progressed, it reached the unprecedented 58 percent mark in January 2000.33 With Khasavyurt a thing of the past, and with renewed support for the army, Russia claimed a military victory in May 2000, again placing Chechnya under Moscow’s authority.

The U.S. policy: Urging negotiations with Maskhadov

From the beginning of Russia’s military operation, the United States opposed the intervention, insisting that the Kremlin negotiate with Maskhadov, whom Washington perceived as a moderate and legitimate leader. In December 1999, the Clinton administration offered the harshest criticism to date of Russia. Concluding his trip to Moscow, the deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott accused Russia of “indiscriminate killing” in Chechnya, saying that Russia was violating “international norms” by treating civilians as “terrorists.”34 At about the same time, Washington also tried to pressure Russia to end its military campaign in Chechnya by using economic sanctions. In particular, the White House asked the Export-Import Bank of the United States to delay $500 million in aid to a Russian oil company. The official reason for the delay was a protest over continued resistance to economic reforms, yet as a senior administration advisor acknowledged, “Without Chechnya, I suspect this would have gone already.”35 Despite protests from Russia, U.S. officials also maintained contacts with Maskhadov’s government, and repeatedly met with Ilyas Akhmadov, Maskhadov’s foreign minister. In January 2000, the State Department granted Akhmadov a visa and received him, even though the meeting took place during the war. The members of Maskhadov’s government did not hide that he came to Washington to ask the Clinton administration to pressure Moscow to open negotiations for ending the war.36
The United States therefore failed to recognize that Maskhadov was no partner for the Kremlin. Russia viewed him as neither moderate nor legitimate, and with good reason. First, even though Maskhadov had been elected president on a platform of peace and political reconciliation with Russia, following his election he continued to insist on Chechnya’s independence. Basaev’s 1999 incursion into the neighboring republic Dagestan also showed the real price of the Khasavyurt peace. By maintaining contacts with Maskhadov and his secession-seeking officials, the United States extended at least a symbolic legitimization of their cause, even if it officially supported peace and Russia’s territorial integrity.

No less importantly, the new president demonstrated his inability to deliver peace, as Chechnya was turning into a failed state with various warlords financing themselves through robbery, kidnapping, drug trafficking, and even slavery. Chechnya was beginning to resemble Afghanistan under the Taliban; it may not be accidental that the former Chechen leaders were the only ones to recognize the Taliban regime. Maskhadov refused to condemn Basaev’s incursion into Dagestan and was increasingly accountable to warlords, rather than to his own people. As an astute commentator wrote in late 2000, “forces based in Chechnya had carried out attacks on Russia that would have provoked most other states in the world—including the United States—to respond forcefully. How would France have reacted if the French withdrawal from Algeria had been immediately followed by Algerian raids into France?” Two years later, the same commentator, while insisting the renewed Russian intervention was a mistake, acknowledged that “if Russia had not reoccupied Chechnya, then the U.S. government and media after September 11, 2001, would undoubtedly have identified that territory as a prime refuge for Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants if they were forced out of Afghanistan.”

Why the United States’ view has changed from the Clinton’s administration’s initial support for Russia is a complex question. Part of the answer has to do with human rights violations and the high cost of human life that was a result of the military conflict. When Bill Clinton endorsed Boris Yeltsin’s first intervention in Chechnya in 1994 by comparing it to the United States’ determination to “save the union” during the Civil War, the American president clearly had no idea how much violence would be involved. Yet the other part of the answer might involve the fear that the United States was increasingly losing control in the region, where it had already developed a strong presence by building a strategic energy pipeline from the Caspian Sea, and by strengthening military cooperation with the states of the Caucasus. The perception was growing that Washington was beginning to lose Russia after its engagement in disastrous economic reforms in the 1990’s and a strong demonstration of force in Yugoslavia in
the spring of 1999. As two analysts wrote in the mainstream journal *Foreign Affairs*, the U.S. had to encourage a “settlement in which the West plays a major role.”

**The Lobby: Presenting Russia as barbarian and anti-Western**

The Lobby’s overall objective was to present Russia’s intervention in Chechnya as fundamentally incompatible with Western interests and human rights’ standards, therefore deserving not only apprehension but punishment. The Lobby’s groups pursued different but compatible goals. Liberal critics of Russia led the way by documenting war atrocities and insisting on qualifying Russia’s role in the war as “genocide.” Military hawks then used this documentation and the charges against Russia to push for the independence of Chechnya and tougher policies toward Moscow.

Although there were widespread atrocities against civilians in Chechnya, Liberal hawks overwhelmingly concentrated on those conducted by the Russian side during the war and ignored those by Chechen militants. The media exposed Russia’s cruelty by providing highly negative coverage of Russian soldiers and generals. It published multiple stories profiling those who, like General Vladimir Shamanov and Colonel Yuri Budanov, were accused of war crimes by human rights organizations. It portrayed Russia’s urban fighting and the storming of Chechnya’s capital, Grozny, as a uniquely inhuman act, “the Hiroshima of the Caucasus”—neglecting to mention that the Russians left a corridor for civilians to leave the city, and writing as if it were possible to win a war without entering cities. It also failed to mention that the United States itself was involved in the massive bombardment of Yugoslavian cities just a few months prior. In general, the media presented Russians, in the words of a *Los Angeles Times* editorial, as able only to “fight brutally because that is part of the Russian military ethos, a tradition of total war fought with every means and without moral restraints.” Western journalists also saw the Russians as unable to view Chechens as anything other than “bandits” and “terrorists.” In contrast, their coverage of Chechen militants and their “moderate” leader Maskhadov was largely sympathetic and favorable. The Media also defended those in Russia who, like the Media-Most owner Vladimir A. Gusinsky and the Radio Liberty reporter Andrei Babitsky, offered an extremely critical coverage of the Russian army, refusing to comply with the state demand to respect the army at war.

Such anti-Russian coverage was greatly influenced by reports from Western human rights organizations, such as HRW and Amnesty
International. HRW, for example, published at least six reports following the war, covering events from March 2000 to May 2001. These reports documented killing, arson, rape, and looting by Russian forces, as well as the disappearance and torture of those individuals in the custody of Russian forces. The reports held the Russian government responsible for the failure to investigate a mass grave site and other war crimes, and they called for suing Russia in the European Court of Human Rights and for applying tougher pressure on the Russian government by Western states. However, none of these reports attempted to provide a more balanced account by documenting the Chechen militants’ style of warfare, or acknowledging those suffering from the activities of terrorists in the republic. The brutalities perpetrated by Chechen terrorists were numerous, and their disregard for human life was evident—from raiding hospitals and taking hostages to organizing a slave industry and foreign invasions—yet they were all but ignored by Western human rights organizations. As the North Caucasus expert Robert Bruce Ware wrote, “The rights organizations performed a great service when they chronicled the abuses committed by the Russian military, but they did a great disservice when they failed to place these within the context of the abuses that had long been committed by the other side.”

Radical Russian Westernizers went a step further in their accusations of Russia’s war crimes. Journalists, associated with the Vladimir A. Gusinsky-owned Media-Most NTV channel, and liberal activists, such as Yelena Bonner and Sergei Kovalev, made claims of the Russian army’s “genocidal” activities in Chechnya. For example, Kovalev insisted that it was not only the Russian army that “[was] quite prepared for genocide” but “Russian society as a whole [was] prepared to carry out genocide.” As a solution to the conflict, members of the group proposed to grant independence to Chechnya, or to some of its territory. They too ignored the presence of the international terrorists in the region and the fact that Chechnya had ceased to be a viable state entity.

Such a distorted approach greatly assisted military hawks in making their case for a tougher U.S. policy toward Moscow. All they had to do was to present Russia’s “genocidal” behavior as incompatible with its leadership’s claims to the status of a great power worthy of American recognition. Some hawks, such as Robert Kaplan of Atlantic Monthly, were still fearful of Russia’s revival, portraying the Chechnya intervention as a reflection of Moscow’s drive to restore imperial rule in the Caucasus and wishing for Russia’s military defeat. When in 1999 Russia begun a counteroffensive after a military incursion into its territory by the Basaev-led group, the former U.S. national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski too warned against the Kremlin’s success. At a conference titled “Geopolitics of Energy into the 21st Century” organized by the CSIS, he argued that, if the
offensive in Chechnya succeeds, “the neocolonial thinkers” in Moscow would be encouraged to try to destabilize Georgia, and that would threaten the East-West energy corridor from the Caspian Sea to Turkey.51 Both Kaplan and Brzezinski viewed Chechnya as merely a useful device to promote America’s world power, and said nothing about the fact that international Islamic radicals in fact attacked Russia in Dagestan, and that the Dagestani people were fully behind the Russian government’s actions.52 Other hawkish observers were convinced that Russia was “finished.”53 Repeating Kovalev and Bonner’s characterizations of Russia, they insisted that the country was nothing but a weak state and “simply cannot ‘make it,’ with Western help or without it.”54 Both groups were celebrating Russia’s weakness and were eager to take advantage of it. While some, such as Brzezinski, spoke against a “one-sided courtship” of Russia and called for a “dignified restraint,”55 others, such as William Safire, sided with Chechen militants, supporting their calls to expel Russia from the G-8.56

All groups within the Lobby also supported the 1999 conspiracy theory that served to portray Russia as being ruled by barbarians, claiming that the Kremlin was responsible for the Moscow apartment bombings. Liberal hawks again led the way by spreading suspicions that the war was planned in advance and that some Kremlin-connected agents might have staged the bombings and even the Dagestan invasion in order to bring Putin to power.57 The book FSB vzryvayet Rossiyi (The FSB Blows Up Russia), coauthored by the KGB-defector Alexander Litvinenko, was originally published in Russia, but the theory soon was promoted in the West.58 Even though evidence for the theory was weak, hawks in the media publicized it, giving an air of legitimacy to its main assertions. For instance, Safire quoted in his influential New York Times column Akhmadov, a member of Maskhadov’s government, who said that Putin and his entourage “will have to boost the anti-Chechen feeling” and “may stage another apartment-house bombing.”59 The cited “evidence” for the theory included the approaching presidential elections and a Federal Security Bureau training exercise outside Moscow that involved explosives.

Overall, despite Russia’s less-than-holy behavior during the war, the Lobby’s attempts to hold it as solely responsible are far from convincing. The notion of responsibility has to include the Russian government, but it must begin with Basaev and about 2,000 Chechen-based and international terrorists who invaded Dagestan. It must also include those international observers who provided one-sided coverage of the war and those who cynically manipulated the conflict’s coverage to promote their power ambitions. Both groups ignored the legitimacy of the Russian cause, downplaying the historical origins of the war.
3. Russia in the Antiterrorist Coalition

The United States’ hesitant partnership with Russia

The United States’ increasingly tough attitude toward the Russian government changed following 9/11. The horrific acts created a principally different social and political atmosphere inside the country. President George W. Bush proclaimed terrorism to be “pure evil” directed at freedom-loving people throughout the world and argued for the necessity to launch a strategy of preemption. Several leading intellectuals called for the capture or the killing of Osama bin Laden and linked the violent attacks to Islam and the Middle Eastern region. With a new sense of vulnerability, the new president in the White House demonstrated much greater sensitivity to Russia’s problem with Chechen terrorism. The White House was now viewing Moscow as a key ally in a global war on terror, acknowledging the Kremlin’s vital role in providing peace and order in the Northern Caucasus. This attitude lasted throughout much of 2002. When Chechen terrorists seized a Moscow movie theater in October 2002, threatening to blow it up along with themselves and 700 hostages, Bush abstained from criticizing the Kremlin for its decision to storm the theater. Instead, he reiterated his conviction that “the people who caused this tragedy to take place are terrorists who took hostages and endangered the lives of others.”

Washington, however, was not uniform in its opinions, and had more than one Russia policy. Although President Bush was supportive of Putin’s efforts in Chechnya, other agencies and policy makers seem to have continued with business as usual, referring to the terrorists as “Chechen rebels” and demanding that Russia “negotiate” a peace with them. Despite evidence of terrorist camps in the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia, the State Department urged Russia to refrain from taking action, insisting on “a political settlement” reached through discussions with “moderate Chechens,” such as Aslan Maskhadov. As late as May 2002—long after the Basaev-Khattab invasion of Dagestan—State Department officials saw no evidence of ties between the Chechens and al-Qaeda. This attitude made it possible to later grant political asylum and media exposure to those closely affiliated with Chechen terrorists. In May 2004, political asylum was granted to Ilyas Akhmadov, the foreign minister of the separatist Chechen government that was viewed by the Russian government as responsible for terrorist violence. Akhmadov was then given the prestigious Reagan-Fascell Fellowship under the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in Washington and engaged in promoting in the American public space the demand that the Kremlin begin a “constructive dialogue” with Maskhadov and his government. Russia was also outraged...
that on August 1, 2005, U.S. ABC TV aired an interview with the head of Chechen terrorist network Shamil Basaev.67

By the second half of 2002, signs had appeared that Washington was trying to kill two birds with one stone. While attempting to enlist Russia as its key antiterrorist ally, the United States was also working to weaken the position of Russia in the region. In April 2002, Washington deployed military advisors to Georgia, officially to train and equip forces to eradicate terrorism in the lawless Pankisi Gorge. Yet, as revealed by a Georgian Defense Ministry official, the U.S. military intended to “train our rapid reaction force, which is guarding strategic sites in Georgia—particularly oil pipelines.”68 Determined to secure its access to Caspian oil and strengthen its geostrategic presence in the Caucasus, the United States did not want the Kremlin to take any initiative in the war on terror and over time grew suspicious of Moscow’s intentions. For example, the United States publicly accused Russia of lying; when Russia denied, it bombed a remote Georgian region on the border with Chechnya in August 2002.69

Working with Moscow was therefore possible only if the latter followed Washington’s agenda in the region and did not try to replicate the United States’ strategy of preempting possible terrorist attacks by every means available. Killing two birds with one stone was hardly possible after all, since the birds were flying in opposite directions.

The Lobby’s depiction of Russia as unfit for partnership with America

As the Washington establishment was demonstrating a lack of a unified Russia policy, the Lobby sought to exploit the opportunity and push for a tougher approach to Moscow. With the White House’s decision to launch a military intervention in Iraq in the spring 2003, the United States further deviated from its original objective to fight terrorism, creating instead the worldwide impression of pursuing geopolitical and geostrategic objectives. Russia too had a principally different perception of what the war on terrorism involved, and it voiced its opposition to the U.S. war in Iraq. Not convinced by arguments about the existence of a nuclear program in Iraq and links between Saddam Hussein’s regime and the al Qaeda terrorist network—both being the key arguments of the Bush administration—Russia’s political class believed that terrorism, as a stateless phenomenon, was a challenge to the very system of states, including Iraq.

The Kremlin’s opposition to the war gave the Lobby an important opportunity to present Russia as unreliable and interested exclusively in satisfying state power objectives, whether in Iraq, Chechnya, or elsewhere. The war was a gift to the Lobby, who had advocated for tougher actions in Iraq since the Persian Gulf War. Military hawks had been eager to establish
an American stronghold in the heart of the Middle East, and liberal hawks justified the intervention on the grounds of Iraq’s noncompliance with the U.N. nuclear inspections and massive human rights violations. The war allowed the Lobby to claim, using the logic of hindsight, that being unreliable on Iraq, Russia was at least equally unreliable in Chechnya. The thousands of civilian casualties and the abuses of power in the Abu Ghraib prison were not yet known, and the Lobby was triumphant about the U.S. success in Iraq. In the view of Mark Brzezinski (son of Zbigniew Brzezinski), the United States was doing in Iraq what Russia failed to achieve in Chechnya: “coalition forces in Iraq have gone out of their way to minimize the loss of civilian life. In Iraq there has not been the kind of reports of mass looting, rape and other human rights violations perpetrated by Russian soldiers and documented by Human Rights Watch. Nor has there been a systematic attempt to intimidate the civilian population in Iraq, as Russian forces have managed to do through their zachistki, or cleansing operations. In addition, the US and coalition forces are doing their best to bring water, food, health care and shelter to a civilian population in need.”

Others military hawks questioned Russia’s ability to serve as a U.S. ally by emphasizing Moscow’s military and intelligence collaboration with Baghdad or even asserting Russia’s connection to global Islamic terrorism. The American Enterprise Institute (AEI), for instance, demonstrated an interest to explore ties between Russia and the “evil” states by holding on February 20, 2003, a conference titled “Dangerous Liaisons: Russia and the Axis of Evil.” Michael Ledeen of the AEI, in statements reminiscent of Cold War thinking, proposed to view global terrorism as a result of a Kremlin conspiracy to destabilize the United States. Along these lines, Stratfor director George Friedman argued against U.S.-Russia cooperation in Afghanistan, insisting that it would pave the way for Russia’s future anti-Western resurgence.

The Lobby also put forward the so-called Liechtenstein Plan of solving the Russia-Chechnya conflict. Sensing that Russia’s successful military campaign provided Moscow with a chance to reconstruct Chechnya politically along Kremlin-favored lines, the Lobby was determined to preserve the United States’ influence in the region by pushing through its own solution. The central role here was played by the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya (ACPC), an organization founded in 1999. The ACPC was known for laying on Russia the exclusive responsibility for what the website describes as “genocidal atrocities in break-away Chechnya” and advocating, through the writings of its prominent members, such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Richard Pipes, a formal independence or international supervision for Chechnya. The organization has received funds
from the NED and other U.S. democratization initiatives, and its board of directors includes many high-profile neoconservatives, as well as representatives of other political tendencies.

In June 2002 the three cochairmen of the ACPC, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Alexander M. Haig Jr., and Max Kampelman published an article titled “The Way to Chechen Peace.” Referring to the Russian military campaign as “the carnage” that “devastated Chechen society to the point that fears are justified as to its continued existence,” the article’s authors proposed a solution involving a referendum and the presence of Russian troops on Chechnya’s southern frontier. The plan did not propose full independence for Chechnya, but it included “Maskhadov’s endorsement” and a “direct international presence on the ground”—elements that had long been rejected by the Kremlin as unacceptable. The ACPC then organized a three-day-long meeting in August held under conditions of secrecy in the Duchy of Liechtenstein between several Russian politicians and representatives of Maskhadov’s government. Although the Russian government did not authorize any talks with those whom it no longer viewed as a legitimate negotiating party, a Liechtenstein Plan emerged in order to influence the Kremlin to grant Chechnya a “special status with international guarantees,” and a freedom “to conduct both its own international and foreign policy” within Russian administrative borders. Russia’s vision for solving the conflict was, again, ignored.

4. Beslan and Chechenization

The U.S. Chechnya policy after the Iraq invasion

The invasion of Iraq revealed the commitment of the United States to building Western-style democracies and U.S.-friendly political regimes across the world. In the Caucasus, after a short-lived and hesitant effort to work with Russia, the official policy line again became that of insisting on a “political dialogue” with the “Chechen rebels.” Washington, again, was downplaying links between Chechen terrorists and al-Qaeda and had no objections against political asylum and media exposure for those closely affiliated with Chechen terrorists. In May 2004, asylum was granted to the foreign minister of Maskhadov’s government, Ilyas Akhmadov, who then engaged in promoting the idea of negotiations with Maskhadov. On August 1, 2005, U.S. ABC TV aired an interview with the head of Chechen terrorist network Shamil Basaev, who by then was known to have organized the taking of children hostage in a local school in Beslan. Russia’s
Foreign Ministry’s reaction was outrage over what it saw as “a clear case of helping to propagandize terrorism.” Despite the offensive nature of the network’s decision to broadcast the interview, the official Washington reaction was sharply different from that of Russia. The State Department responded that, while the U.S. government condemned actions by Basaev, it believed in “freedom of expression” and was against censoring or punishing the media. The equivalent of these actions might have been Russia sheltering those whom the United States views as terrorists and giving air to people such as Bin Laden and Abu al-Zarqawi less than a year after 9/11.

Therefore, the United States’ position was—in many of its aspects—the opposite of the Russian government’s, which, following the military victory, introduced the policy of Chechenization. The policy aimed at reintegrating Chechnya into the political structures of the Russian Federation by empowering local leaders of the Kremlin’s choosing and pushing aside the already marginalized Chechen fighters.

When Russia endured its worst terrorist attack on civilians in Beslan, the United States’ reaction was far from adequate. In September 2004, after downsing two civilian airliners, Basaev-led terrorists took more than a thousand people hostage in a local school in North Ossetia. In the process of releasing the hostages, hundreds of women and children died. A major blow to Putin’s promises to “eradicate terrorism,” Beslan was also a desperate attempt by terrorists to unravel the Kremlin’s promising efforts to empower local Chechens. The White House and State Department expressed their sympathy with the Russian people, but then they again demonstrated “concern” over “decisions that are being made in Russia,” and insisted on a “political solution” as the “only way to end the bloodshed.” The U.S. authorities refused to see that there was hardly any alternative to Chechenization and that, as a “political solution,” Chechenization was not principally different from the pacification efforts pursued by Washington in Iraq. In addition, the “we sympathize, but” reaction immediately following the horrific act of violence was morally deplorable. It provoked a harsh, but understandable reaction from President Putin: “Why don’t you meet Osama bin Laden, invite him to Brussels or to the White House and engage in talks, ask him what he wants and give it to him so he leaves you in peace? . . . You find it possible to set some limits in your dealings with these bastards, so why should we talk to people who are child killers?”

What the United States didn’t seem to like was not so much that Russia was not engaged in finding a political solution in Chechnya, but that the Kremlin-favored solution was not leaving much room for American influence. While inadvertently contributing, through its intervention in Iraq and global strategy of regime change, to Russia’s already strained relations
with Muslims, the U.S. government was far from being supportive of Moscow’s efforts to rebuild its relations with the Islamic Northern Caucasus. In fact, U.S. policy looked as if it bore an element of sabotage for the Russian government’s efforts in the region. Along with urging Moscow to negotiate with “moderates” in Chechnya, Washington continued its efforts to install America-friendly regimes across the former Soviet Union, most prominently in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. When Russian security services eliminated terrorist leaders and their sympathizers, such as Shamil Basaev, Ruslan Gelayev, Aslan Maskhadov, and Abdul-Khalim Sadulayev, the United States had no positive comments and indicated no change in its policy. When the Kremlin organized new presidential and then parliamentary elections in Chechnya, the reaction from Washington was lukewarm at best. As late as 2007, the U.S. Department of State did not indicate any progress in Chechnya’s political reconstruction, emphasizing instead “the gravest violations of human rights [that] continued to take place in Chechnya and elsewhere in the North Caucasus.” And when Russia, fearful of any potentially destabilizing international influences on secessionist movements in the Caucasus, pleaded not to push for Kosovo independence, the United States responded, in the words of Daniel Fried, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs, “There is no situation anywhere in the world that bears a resemblance to Kosovo.”

Russia: From Beslan to Chechenization

Partly in response to the United States’ less-than-constructive policy, Russia’s officials occasionally overreacted, revealing their deep sense of insecurity about Chechnya and the policies of Western nations. An obvious expression of it was President Putin’s statement after Beslan, in which he attributed partial responsibility for the terrorist attack to foreign forces. In a thinly veiled reference to the West, the Russian president said, “Some want to tear off a big chunk of our country and others are helping them. They are helping them in the belief that Russia, as one of the greatest nuclear powers of the world, still poses a threat to them and, therefore, this threat has to be eliminated. Terrorism is their only tool.” The main source of insecurity was, of course, domestic, as Beslan exposed weaknesses of the Russian state and the rule of law. These weaknesses were all too evident in the corruption of local officials that made it possible for terrorists to safely pass several security check points, inadequate special services, and delays to the proper investigation of the terrorist act. The solution therefore was not in negotiating with Basaev, but rather in strengthening state governance and increasing the Chechen people’s involvement in ruling their republic.
Gradually, the Kremlin gained composure and proposed a series of steps that included a far-reaching reform of the political system. At the heart of the proposed reform was the idea of a further centralization of decision making. Local governors were no longer to be elected; instead, they were to be nominated by the president and confirmed by local legislative bodies. In addition, although suspicions toward the international role persisted, Russia made efforts to reengage the West. After the September hostage taking in North Ossetia that resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths, Russia asked for a special session of the U.N. Security Council. The Kremlin also provided an opening for a more positive Western role in the region by informing the German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of its desire for active international involvement in the economic development of the North Caucasus region. Finally, Russia stepped up its counterterrorist activities and promised to continue with its Chechenization policy by holding new parliamentary elections in Chechnya and gradually expanding political rights within the republic.

Winning “hearts and minds” through new political settlements and the effective allocation of resources was the only feasible solution, and progress gradually appeared. The Kremlin put in place a new government, albeit one that was, similarly to the new Iraqi government, weak and vulnerable to terrorist attacks. In attempting to strengthen the new political framework in the republic, new parliamentary elections in Chechnya took place in November 2005, with the overall voter turnout claiming 60 percent, far exceeding the minimum 25 percent mark mandated by law. After eliminating the most notorious terrorists, the Kremlin also offered Chechen fighters several amnesties and incentives to lay down their arms, and thousands of them did so. In addition, Moscow allocated more than $2 billion in extra federal assistance to the region. Rebuilding the local economy was the key issue, as unemployment, particularly among young Chechen males, remained high. Gradually, Chechnya emerged into a different place, with refugees returning, terrorists leaving the republic, and the rest of the Northern Caucasus taking interest in its reconstruction. The Kremlin’s measures brought results partly because the level of support for cooperation with Russia in the Caucasus, with all the brutalities of the wars, was considerable. The results sharply contrasted with those in Iraq, and a group of Russian analysts even speculated that Chechnya might serve as a model for Iraq.

The Lobby’s new efforts to discredit Russia

The Lobby’s response to Chechnya’s new developments was shaped by the three core myths it held about Russia. In this mythology, as a fundamentally anti-Western, imperial, and autocratic nation, Russia had to sabotage
U.S. policies in the Northern Caucasus, oppress non-Russian nationalities, including Chechens, and relentlessly centralize its power. The West, in its turn, had to remain the West by standing strong and opposing Russia's self-assertion. The Lobby sensed that the United States was eager to obtain a greater role in reconstructing Chechnya and the Caucasus, and it was hoping to push Washington to take a harder line toward Moscow. However, because of America's failures in Iraq and Russia's economic recovery, the context of U.S.-Russia relations was no longer as favorable for pressuring Moscow. The Lobby had to be especially vigorous and innovative if it wanted to convince Washington that Russia was not a nation to be reasoned with.

The first line of attack on Russia aimed at discrediting its ambition to serve as the United States' ally in the war on terror. The military hawks led the way. The same people who convinced President Bush to invade Iraq in order to eliminate opposition to the U.S. global hegemony were now working to undermine Russia's still solid relationship with America. With a new strength, they charged that Moscow was sabotaging Washington's international policies, thereby becoming an enemy, not a partner, in the war on terror. Publications affiliated with organizations such as the Jamestown Foundation engaged in presenting Russia as even more dangerous than radical Islam. For example, Terrorism Monitor endorsed the charge that Moscow has a "direct link to Bin Laden's number two man, the Egyptian terrorist Ayman Zawahiri" and that instead of fighting terrorism, the Kremlin cynically manipulates it to satisfy its other interests. Just as the Russian hawks thought that the CIA had created and continues to exploit Bin Laden, American hawks believed in the ability of the Kremlin to control al-Qaeda. Others castigated Russia for its unwillingness to recognize as terrorists the same organizations, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, that had long been viewed as such by the United States. Without addressing reasons for these organizations' popularity, to the point of Hamas winning the Palestinian elections, and by dismissing Moscow's reasons to choose a strategy of engagement with them, these writers simply assumed that being an ally of the United States meant nothing less than following its international agenda.

With application to the Caucasus, the Lobby believed that Russia was doing everything in its power to restore the old imperial control in the region. Whatever actions were pursued by the Kremlin—reluctance to dismantle its military bases in Georgia, the exercise of force in Chechnya, or promises to preventively use military force outside its own territory to respond to terrorist threats—was construed by the Lobby as imperialism incompatible with Western objectives and Russia's own international treaty obligations. Whatever instability persisted in the region was linked
to the Kremlin’s failures or deliberate manipulations. For instance, some analysts speculated that Moscow’s talk of using preventive force was nothing but a pretext for invading Georgia. Others propose that Russia is satisfied with the status quo but will continue to seek instability and war in the region. As far as Chechnya was concerned, the American hawks implied that, just as Russia was involved in destabilizing activities in the larger region, Washington too had to contain the Kremlin by manipulating the Chechnya conflict. As Jim Hoagland of the Washington Post wrote, removing the conflict from the “East-West chessboard [the reference to Zbigniew Brzezinski’s book] of big-power politics seems to be intensifying, rather than moderating, Putin’s aggressive determination.”

In the meantime, representatives of Chechen militants were playing their own power game, arguing it was not too late for the West to take advantage of Chechnya’s weakening of Russia in the process, because the alternative was, in Akhmed Zakayev’s words, Russia with “its strategic goal of undermining the ‘unipolar’ world order and keeping oil prices high.”

The second criticism directed at Russia involved spreading old charges and adding new ones of the country’s “barbaric” behavior toward Chechens. Here military hawks worked in concert with liberal hawks and the Eastern European nationalistic lobby. In addition to the already described charges of the Kremlin’s involvement in the 1999 residential building explosions, at the time disseminated in the West by Zakayev, the exiled tycoon Boris Berezovski, the ex-FSB agent Anatoli Litvinenko, and the journalist Anna Politkovskaya, among others, the Lobby introduced a new eye-popping charge: the Kremlin is behind the poisoning of Chechen children. In late 2005, several children and adults in the Shelkovskoy district of Northern Chechnya were admitted to hospitals with convulsions and headaches, and they were temporarily diagnosed as being poisoned by an unknown toxin. As the number of cases multiplied, the Jamestown Foundation’s publication reported the story from the position of those in Chechnya who believed in the involvement of the Russian security services. Although the Chechen government ordered an investigation, the Jamestown experts had already proclaimed the “truth”: “The question is what the officials are hiding and the answer is the deliberate poisoning of the Chechen young women by security officials. The reason is also clear, but at the same time it is too shocking to believe—the genocide of the Chechen nation.” The old genocide charge was therefore resurfaced, albeit in a new form.

The Lobby also continued an aggressive circulation of the old charges of genocide and barbarism against the Chechen population. For example, writing about the hostage crisis in Beslan, David Satter of the Hoover Institution and the Hudson Institute opined that the Russian authorities “wrote off” the lives of the children in the school and even “may have
deliberately allowed the terrorists to take over the school in order to have an excuse to destroy them.” Having introduced this speculation about the Russian government’s tactics, he then explained the barbaric decision by Russia’s political culture and “classic military doctrine for destroying reinforced objects without the slightest regard for innocent life.” The way out of the crisis, Satter believed, was to accept the conditions set by the terrorist leader Shamil Basaev, that “were not unreasonable,” even though they included formal independence for Chechnya and were dictated by threatening children’s lives. As Satter was accusing the Russian government of creating and manipulating the Beslan crisis, the ACPC released a study of Chechnya’s suicide bombers, which again blamed Russia for its unwillingness to “negotiate with moderate members of the resistance.”

Featuring in epigraph the quote from Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Can we expect people who are denied hope to act in moderation?” the study offered no moral condemnation of suicide bombers, explaining it in terms of an “asymmetrical struggle with the Russians.” In the meantime, HRW continued to focus on documenting human rights abuses by the Russian side, failing to systematically investigate abuses by the Chechen side or offer anything more than a rhetorical condemnation of it. Finally, in March 2006 a group of public figures published an open letter in the European and American media space that claimed that the “fire” in the Caucasus was spreading, not going out. Signed by former president of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel, former president of Ireland and the UN Human Rights commissioner Mary Robinson, and the founder of the Open Society Institute George Soros, among others, the letter compared the attack on Grozny with Hitler’s 1944 punishment of Warsaw, deplored Russia’s “colonial and exterminating ventures” and called for some tough actions against the Russian government.

The Lobby launched a concerted attack on the Kremlin’s policy of Chechenization, discrediting it as an exacerbation, rather than solution, to the crisis. Such emphasis was very much in line with interpretations by the marginalized Chechen terrorists such as Akhmed Zakayev, who described Chechenization as Russia’s only way of “avoiding genuine peace talks.” As the mainstream press, such as the Financial Times and the New York Times, began to report progress in Chechnya, the Lobby sought to put a Russia-negative spin on it. Some of the Lobby members emphatically denied there was progress, insisting that “at the base is the total hostility towards this phenomenon [Chechenization] in Chechen society.” Others charged that Chechenization was in fact opening a way to the republic’s independence. Still others acknowledged progress and the lack of terrorist acts in Chechnya, but attributed it to the Chechen terrorists’ change in strategy rather than Moscow’s policies.
To influence U.S. policy makers, the Lobby was especially aggressive in attacking Russia when it was at its most vulnerable—immediately following a major terrorist crisis, such as Beslan, or preceding scheduled U.S.-Russia summits that had the potential to pressure the Kremlin. Perhaps the worst wave of accusations against Russia and its authorities took place immediately following Beslan, which could not fail to affect the official U.S. stance. Suddenly the American media was full of articles pressuring the Kremlin to negotiate with “moderates” or to “give Chechens a land of their own” and supporting a harder American policy toward Russia. On September 30, 2004, the Open Letter to the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and NATO, organized by the PNAC group and signed by 115 prominent politicians and intellectuals in the United States and Europe, appeared in the Western media space. The authors of the letter accused the Kremlin of using Beslan “to further undermine democracy in Russia . . . and push through measures that will take Russia a step closer to authoritarian regime.” As Maskhadov approved killing the Moscow-appointed head of the republic (“[he] got what he deserved”), Akhmed Kadyrov, and threatened his successor and those voting for him, the Lobby promoted him as a legitimate representative of the Chechens and, later, looked for his replacement among other terrorist leaders. Reinforced by reactions from radical Russian Westernizers and, again, in line with Chechen terrorist expectations, the Lobby used the Beslan crisis to lash out at Putin as a rising autocrat unable to negotiate and eager to deprive the country of existing checks and balances. In the mainstream media, few observers were able to voice their objections to this interpretation of events.

Similar waves of media attacks on the Kremlin took place before the G-8 summit in St. Petersburg in June 2006 and during Russia’s parliamentary elections in December 2007. In both cases the Russian government was vulnerable to international criticism because it was hopeful for continued cooperation with the United States, and in both cases the Lobby actively sought to harden the White House position. In addition to media campaigns, the U.S. Congress held hearings on Russia with prominent politicians, such as Tom Lantos, John McCain, and Ileana Rose-Lehtinen, castigating President Putin for authoritarianism, corruption, “mysterious explosions of houses in Moscow,” and the “invasion of Chechnya.” In addition, the one-sided view of the Chechnya theme was constantly present in multiple open letters, statements, and policy documents prepared by liberal and conservative think tanks to influence the Bush administration. Overall, a highly distorted image of Russia’s policy toward Chechnya emerged that dictated the United States’ hard-line as a logical response.
5. Conclusion

Despite all the effort, the Lobby failed to persuade U.S. officials to pursue a more hawkish Russia policy in the northern Caucasus. The conspiracy stories about Russia’s behavior during the 1999 apartment bombings, the Beslan crisis, or the poisoning of Chechen children did not attract sufficient attention from the public or policy makers and did not change their mind about relations with the Kremlin. The United States gave no support to the idea of Chechnya’s independence, and over time it even came to recognize some progress in the republic’s reconstruction. In response, the Chechen terrorists and their Western supporters could not hide their disappointment. Akhmed Zakayev, the London-based representative of the Chechen militants, accused the United States and European governments of double standards in seeking independence for Kosovo while ignoring Chechnya and its right to self-determination. Doku Umarov, the president of the self-declared Republic of Ichkeria, went much further. In the video showing him against a backdrop of a black flag with white Arabic inscriptions, Umarov declared himself “emir of the North Caucasus” and announced that he was extending his battle against Russia to include a broader “holy war” against the United States, Britain, and Israel.

However, the Lobby had its successes in influencing the official perception of Russia’s Chechnya policies—and to the extent that it did, it has contributed to derailing the U.S.-Russia post-9/11 cooperation. The Lobby succeeded in articulating a highly distorted image of Russia in the American media: as a power that is relentlessly autocratic, has no regard for civilian lives, and is only interested in restoring its domination in the Caucasus. “Nuances”—such as Russia’s security interests and essentially defensive behavior in the region—got lost in this picture, and the United States’ official position clearly reflected anti-Russian biases. This relative success became possible because the White House—by the way it defined America’s interests in the world—was already predisposed to mistrusting Russia’s intentions, and because the Lobby demonstrated important tactical skills in promoting its vision. Those skills included the ability to reach out to important members of the political establishment, orchestrate public campaigns against Russia when it was especially vulnerable, and present Chechnya as a part of a broader package of foreign policy concerns as if it were on par with issues of the Iranian nuclear program, energy security, and the political independence of the former Soviet states. The Lobby’s success was also possible because of the absence of a strong opposition to the highly distorted presentation of Russia. Some commentators opposed the chorus of anti-Russian voices and articulated an important alternative strategy on Chechnya, but they were not nearly as organized
and were unable to form the public or policy perception. In fact, the power of the Lobby even enabled it to silence some of its critics.\textsuperscript{125}

The Lobby also succeeded in further alienating Russia from the United States—as a result, some of its prophecies about the Caucasus had become closer to being self-fulfilling. Russians were now more determined to defend their interests in the region as they saw fit, without assistance from or consultation with the United States. Many commentators with government ties expressed the conviction that the single objective of the United States in the Caucasus was to push Russia out of the region and that the Kremlin had to act alone by confronting U.S. policies vis-à-vis Chechnya, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, through, for example, recognizing separatist territories in the former Soviet states and strengthening its military presence there.\textsuperscript{126} Russia was prepared to go it alone because, as one observer made clear, security interests in the Caucasus was the last thing the Kremlin was prepared to give up.\textsuperscript{127}
“Authoritarianism at Heart” and Washington’s Democracy Promotion

Looking back, we may also one day see 2004 as the year when a new iron curtain descended across Europe, dividing the continent not through the center of Germany but along the eastern Polish border.


I do not think that it is accurate to say that democracy is in retreat in Russia. Democracy has been assassinated in Russia.

(Bruce P. Jackson, “Democracy in Russia,” The Weekly Standard, February 18, 2005)

[Putin] has used the Kremlin’s full powers to quash all serious political opposition, recreating a virtual one-party state . . . How like the credo Mr. Putin learned in his old K.G.B. days.


1. Which Democracy?

_The top-down and bottom-up views of democracy_

Democracy is a system of popular rule that includes elections or a rational choice of well-informed citizens (Shumpeter),¹ a free opposition, and the rule of law. The last is critical for preventing manipulations of society by the state and the state by society. Without opposition and the rule of law,
a democracy, in Thomas Jefferson’s memorable formulation, “is nothing less but mob rule where 51% may take away the rights of the other 49%.”

Rather than being an established state of affairs, democracy is best viewed as constantly in danger of being manipulated by corrupt officials and interest groups. Instead of focusing on broad assertions regarding democracy’s so-called Western origin and nature, it is important to understand the local, cultural, historical, and political conditions of democracy’s emergence and consolidation. Variations in these conditions lead to a diversity of democratic systems within and outside the non-Western world. Even within individual countries, Western meanings of democracy may change over time. The point about diversity often escapes the attention of those who advocate universal principles of democracy. The advocates of this perspective tend to view the Soviet decline as nothing but validation of the global triumph of the American idea of freedom. Much of the subsequent analysis of the Russian post-communist “democracy” followed the path of comparing it to the model of Western societies, rather than to Russia’s own history. In the meantime, although Russia moved away from Communist Party rule, it also developed a strong presidential system with few effective checks and balances. Utilizing this system, Vladimir Putin was able to tighten his grip over the legislature, party-building, the surrounding regions, and the media. The model of a state-dominant political system is different from that of Western pluralistic democracy, yet it is widely supported by the Russian public and therefore cannot be called undemocratic. Rather, Russia is an emerging democracy that is yet to mature.

Russia’s conditions: A democracy and a weak state

Russia’s conditions have hardly been favorable to democratic consolidation. As a new state emerging out of the Soviet empire, Russia’s most important task has been to provide its citizens with order, basic social services, and protection against external threats. State-building is a complex process that includes, but is not limited to, the development of pluralistic political institutions and free media. Historically, state-building is known to be a long and painful process. In Europe, it has gone hand in hand with protracted wars and has required negotiating complex deals among kings, merchants, and feudal lords. Arguably, Russia and the other post-Soviet nations face the even more daunting task of creating the prerequisites of a viable state, such as territorial unity and security, while transforming the economy and political system. These nations confront the challenge of a “triple transition”: from an empire to a nation, from a command economy to a market-based one, and from a communist system to a democratic one.
Although Russia’s experience of combining democratization with other state-building challenges has been a mixed one, its overall trajectory is rather positive. Russia has come a long way from communism while preserving some important attributes of state governance. Lacking a strong middle class and political order—conditions that are critical for a functioning democracy—the country has created a necessary macroeconomic environment and abstained from attempts to restore its empire. Partly because of the adoption of radical economic reforms, Russia had almost become a failed state, but it subsequently revived its economy and a good measure of political viability. Although many observers have criticized what they saw as nondemocratic practices in application to Russia and other countries in the former Soviet region, it is important to recognize that Russia’s power transitions were orderly and resulted from popular elections. Despite some widely held expectations of Putin staying for the third term, presidential power was successfully transferred in March 2008. Even though some candidates were disqualified from participating in the elections, the results of the vote reflected broad social expectations and generally corresponded with public hopes. In a country with still weak political institutions and the lack of an elite consensus on some important issues, the elections did not cause a social disruption, confirming the state’s ability to develop a functioning governing mechanism. It is important to recognize the legitimacy of Russia’s right to determine the shape of its transformation. Engagement with Russia is likely to prevent anti-Western forces from coming to power in the country. Alternatively, a policy of pressuring or punishing Russia may strengthen hard-line nationalists inside the country, pushing it farther away from cooperation with the United States and other Western nations.

The Lobby agenda: Opposing Russia’s state consolidation

The overall objective of the Lobby was to present Russia’s state centralization as incompatible with democracy and indicative of the country’s “natural” drive to autocratic rule. A strong centralized state is a functional necessity for Russia: the world’s longest geographic borders, which have created vulnerability to external pressures from the Mongols to Napoleon and Hitler, demand that Russians value their state and its capabilities as a great power. A strong state is not necessarily antidemocratic, and may be fully compatible with people’s needs and expectations. The Lobby’s efforts to impose American-style checks and balances on Russia reflected a deep fear of an unknown state system at best and a conscious strategy to undermine it at worst. Democracy and human rights in the latter case are no more than a rhetorical tool to exert pressure on a noncompliant state.
Much of what Russia critics view as violations of democracy may in fact be legitimate ways to restore governance. For example, Michael McFaul characterized Russia’s transformation as antidemocratic by equating “autocracy” with “centralization,” and presenting state ability to control important media, influence parliament, and appoint local governors as evidence of the country’s flight from freedom. McFaul’s view conflates democracy and governance and lacks a historical perspective. State control of the media in Russia came to replace its control by oligarchs who used the media for promoting their own political agendas. Although a state monopoly may be no better than a monopoly of oligarchs, in principle it may assist in ending the fragmentation of political space and creating conditions for restoring a national discourse. State influence on the legislative branch is mainly a reflection of Putin’s popularity that has translated into a large number of votes and seats in the parliament. Finally, while the state’s ability to influence government appointments may not be the best way to address Russia’s territorial dilemmas, it is hardly undemocratic. For example, a number of European nations, such as France, remain democracies even though they do not practice the American-style of decentralized government.

Liberal and conservative members of the Lobby conflated democracy with a weak state to encourage Russia’s compliance with their vision and foreign policy preferences. As far as supporters of Eastern European nationalism are concerned, they viewed Russia as a member of an alien and hostile civilization and its weakness as critical for their own integration within U. S.-led Western civilization. Over time the Lobby has built a network of organizations to pressure Russia and condemn its state-building efforts as undemocratic. For example, the role of Freedom House, as a world-renowned organization ranking the degree of freedom in the world, was to present Russia as descending to a “nonfree” country by the year 2005. Freedom House has placed the country at the bottom of its list, next to the Philippines, Rwanda, and Tajikistan and below Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya. In alternative surveys, such as the Polity IV and the MGIMO (Moscow State Institute of International Relations) index, Russia is ranked somewhere between the developed European countries and obvious autocracies, nearer its fellow BRIC countries, below India and Brazil but above China. Other organizations, such as the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, International Republican Institute, HRW, and NED, also actively promoted the image of Russia as a rising dictatorship with no space for opposition. In addition to presenting an ideological justification for pressuring Russia’s foreign policy, a number of these organizations provided funds to train opposition to incumbent regimes in Russia and other former Soviet nations.
For ideological and political reasons the Lobby’s efforts found support in some circles in Russia. A small but influential group of radical Russian Westernizers has historically viewed the West as the only democratic and viable civilization, insisting on Russia falling in line with Western democracy standards. For instance, Russia’s first foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev, argued that the Soviet Union was not merely a “normal” or “underdeveloped,” but a “wrongfully developed,” country. Unlike other groups within the Lobby, radical Russian Westernizers sought to challenge the Kremlin inside Russia. In its turn, the Lobby provided them with political and financial support, presenting organizations, such as the Other Russia and the National Bolshevik Party, as true defenders of their country’s freedom. In this respect, the Lobby’s strategy did not principally depart from that of the White House. Thus the U.S. State Department reports did not hold Russia’s political system in high regard, associating democracy solely with various NGOs inside Russia. However, unlike the Lobby, the U.S. government never meant for such assistance to become a vehicle for overthrowing the Kremlin.

2. “Freedom’s Power to Change the World”: The Colored Revolutions

Washington’s support for the colored revolutions

Although many in Russia saw the American invasion of Iraq as driven by an appetite for Middle Eastern oil, Washington also had the objective of democratizing the region by establishing at its heart new pro-Western regimes. It soon became apparent that the strategy of changing regimes and expanding liberty was not limited to the Middle East. President Bush’s inaugural address in January 2005 made the spread of freedom and democracy the center of America’s political strategy in the “war on terror,” and his State of the Union speech in February continued the theme: “The attack on freedom in our world has reaffirmed our confidence in freedom’s power to change the world.” The so-called Rose Revolution in Georgia in November 2003 replaced the old regime by popular protest over a rigged parliamentary election and emboldened Washington to apply this strategy in the former Soviet region as well. While the military option was excluded, the emphasis was still on providing the opposition with relevant training and financial resources for challenging the old regimes in power.

The Orange Revolution in Ukraine was another case of the United States and Europe extending their support to those Ukrainians who sought to challenge the incumbent regime and the Kremlin’s favored candidate, Victor Yanukovich. The November 2004 renunciation of the rigged results of the Ukrainian presidential elections took place under pressure from both
Ukrainian domestic opposition and the West. Europe and the United States did not limit themselves to political statements about the “unacceptability” of the election’s results—a step in itself unprecedented in the light of their previously much calmer reaction to considerably less fair elections in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Through the activities of various NGOs, Western governments also provided considerable financial assistance to Yushchenko’s campaign. The United States also provided support for opposition in Kyrgyzstan that in March 2005 challenged the regime of Askar Akayev over issues of process and the results of parliamentary elections. Unlike Georgia and Ukraine, however, the new “revolution” was no longer “velvet.” Although the regime refused to apply force, the protests were far from orderly and were accompanied by violence and looting.

**Russia and the former Soviet region**

In post-Soviet Eurasia, the Kremlin’s foreign policy translated into efforts to establish greater security on Russia’s periphery and to maximize economic opportunities. For example, Russia’s political interests in the Caucasus require an environment free of instability and the threats of terrorism, and its economic interests include the need to protect energy pipelines, particularly the trans-Caspian, which stretches through Dagestan to Novorossiysk. Moscow also has cultural interests in maintaining ties with ethnic Russians and all those who continue to gravitate toward Russia.

These interests explain Russia’s initially soft reaction to Georgia’s Rose Revolution and the Kremlin’s desire to assist Tbilisi with the transition of power and the resolution of territorial disputes. Moscow abstained from formally recognizing Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s bids for reunification with Russia, and it did not hamper the new Georgian leadership in ending separatism in Adjaria. In return, Russia expected its interests in the Caucasus to be honored and not to be rushed into dismantling the two Russian military bases on Georgian soil or see Georgia seek membership to NATO. It was only later, when Putin had seen what he perceived as a lack of reciprocity on the Georgian side, that he changed tactics and adopted a more hard-line response. After Tbilisi had attempted to subjugate the separatist South Ossetia by force and additionally pressured Russia to withdraw, Putin retaliated. He stopped short of formally recognizing the separatist South Ossetia and Abkhazia, but extended other forms of support to them and kept a visa regime on the border with Georgia.

In Ukraine as well, Russia seeks to preserve its economic interests and political influence not imperial control. Russia does not expect Ukrainian foreign policy to be anti-Western, but it strongly opposes Kiev’s drive to become a NATO member. During the Orange Revolution, Putin supported
a candidate whom he perceived as more open to cooperation with Russia, and he challenged Western leaders not to “meddle” in Ukrainian elections. Acting in concert, the United States and Europe did just the reverse, developing their ties with the Orange coalition and demanding that Russia stop interfering in Ukraine’s matters. Yet the preservation of stability in Ukraine is no less important to Russia than to the Western nations, partly because most of Russia’s energy pipelines to Europe go through Ukrainian territory. Russia also wants to preserve stability in Central Asia—the area that is arguably the most vulnerable to the threats of radical Islam, the spread of weapons, and narcotics trafficking.

The colored revolutions were strongly supported by the Western nations, but from Russia’s standpoint, the revolutions had a destabilizing effect. Georgia under President Mikheil Saakashvili has had problems solving vital social and political issues, and in dealing with separatist regions, Tbilisi increasingly relied on force, while pressuring Russia out of the region. Although the economy was growing, living standards did not show considerable improvement. The Orange coalition in Ukraine, for its part, failed to address the root causes of the revolution. Those causes—poor living conditions and unpopular leadership—remained in place, and the country remained unstable. The West’s hopes that the regime change would bring greater stability and prosperity did not materialize, as Ukrainian elites struggled to come to terms with the nation’s cultural and economic interdependence with Russia. Weak central leadership and the absence of a genuinely coalition government representative of both Eastern and Western regions may continue to pull Ukraine in different directions. Georgia and Ukraine have also expressed their desire to join NATO, which adds to Russia’s sense of strategic insecurity. Policy makers, such as the foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, insisted that the possible entry of Ukraine and Georgia to NATO would bring about a tremendous “geopolitical shift” and require that Russia “revise its policy.”

In Kyrgyzstan, in yet another case of a colored revolution, the situation was arguably the worst, partly because of the country’s location. Sandwiched between the Ferhana Valley and China’s Xinjiang province, Kyrgyz territory was commonly used as a transit route by drug traffickers, Islamic militants, and Uighur separatists. Kyrgyzstan’s change of power in March 2005 was accompanied by violence and looting, and the new regime had difficulties in preventing criminal groups from shaping the political system. The new governmental coalition was highly unstable and was increasingly challenged by a powerful opposition. Despite Russian and Chinese help, economic growth was virtually nonexistent, and the Kyrgyz economy was nowhere near recovery. The Kremlin emphasized the importance of preserving order in Kyrgyzstan as well as in neighboring
Uzbekistan, after the latter’s crackdown on the Islamic organization Hizbu-Tahrir’s protesters in Andijan. In addition to its neighboring states, Russia faced prospects of destabilization on its own territory, specifically in the North Caucasus. Although the situation in the Chechen Republic had become more stable, North Ossetia, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Dagestan were experiencing a growing number of terrorist attacks.

In response to the colored revolutions and their support by Washington, the Kremlin took a number of defensive steps. It did not sever its ties with the Western nations, but it strengthened relationships with the existing leadership in Belarus, Armenia, and the Central Asian countries, despite growing criticism by the United States and the EU. The Kremlin also trained its own youth organizations to protect what it saw as Russia’s indigenous democracy, restricted activities of Western NGOs and radical opposition inside the country, and warned the United States against interference with Russia’s domestic developments.

The Lobby: Confronting Russia as an “Authoritarian Bully”

The Lobby saw in the colored revolutions an opportunity to weaken Russia and its influence in the region relative to the West. Some, like Michael McFaul, framed the West’s assertiveness in terms of democracy promotion, arguing that “the real struggle in Ukraine is not about geopolitical orientation; it is about democracy,” and insisting that to think otherwise was an “absurdity.” Others, however, didn’t think that it was an absurdity to view the revolutions as a way to challenge Moscow’s geopolitical position in the world. To Charles Krauthammer and others of neoconservative convictions, the 2004 U.S.-Russia conflict over election outcomes in Ukraine was “about Russia first, democracy only second . . . The West wants to finish the job begun with the fall of the Berlin Wall and continue Europe’s march to the east.” Both liberal and hegemonic members of the Lobby were in agreement that a tougher policy line toward Moscow was in order, and their views were generously publicized in the American media. Their recommended strategy was to facilitate the inclusion of Ukraine and Georgia into NATO and the West-led system of energy security—at the expense of Russia’s interests and influence.

Ideological arguments
The Lobby has exploited the colored revolutions to validate the old fears of Russia as an autocratic power who is prepared to do everything to prevent democratization at home and abroad. A typical and familiar charge
was that Russia never recovered from its imperial syndrome and was now resorting to blocking energy supplies, inflaming instability, and assassinating foreign leaders through secret services to get its way. Notable theorists of Russophobia, such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, argued back in the 1990s that Russia’s imperialism had special roots in Ukraine and that the West had to break the Russia connection with its Slavic neighbor. They immediately saw in the Orange Revolution validation of their old fears about Russia. Brzezinski warned about the danger of Soviet restoration, calling Putin a new Mussolini with nostalgia for reviving an empire. Professor Roman Szporluk, the dean of Ukrainian studies, presented the nation’s choice in stark terms, “Toward Europe or back to Russia.” Adrian Karatnycky of Freedom House spoke of a favorable “seismic shift westwards in the geo-politics of the region.” The media became flooded with charges of Russia’s “new imperialism” and even that of a “new iron curtain” descending across Europe and dividing the continent because of Russia’s behavior. And Russia experts revived the theoretical linkage between authoritarianism at home and aggressive foreign policy.

More specifically, the Lobby accused the Kremlin of exploiting Ukraine, Georgia, and other nations’ dependence on Russia’s energy supplies. Prominent members of the American political establishment, such as Vice President Dick Cheney and Senator Richard Lugar, insisted that Russia was increasingly using “energy weapons” against its neighbors in the former Soviet region who favored political democratization. This too became a standard line in the media presentation of Russia’s energy strategy. The charge was supported by prominent leaders in Ukraine, Georgia, and other Eastern European countries, as well as by their supporters in the United States. For instance, a leader of the Orange coalition and the new prime minister Yulia Timoshenko, speaking to a European audience, characterized Russia’s Gazprom actions as driven by “energy terrorism,” not considerations of the market, in its relations with the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) nations. Russia’s radical Westernizers assisted in publicizing this view. Andrei Illarionov, a former economic advisor to the Kremlin, repeated the accusation about energy weapons, arguing that “the move toward a policy of imperialism . . . has a clear and high price that will eventually be paid by the citizens of a nation that embarks on the imperialist path.”

In addition to the energy weapons argument, the Lobby sought to implicate the Kremlin in conspiring to use force in Ukraine and plotting assassination of the Orange coalition leader Victor Yushchenko. The American billionaire George Soros, who actively supported the colored revolutions, publicly charged that Putin advised the Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma to crack down on peaceful protesters against the rigged
According to Soros, Putin gave the same advice to use force to the Uzbekistan president Islam Karimov in May 2005, when thousands of demonstrators challenged the state decision to imprison several prominent businessmen in Andijan. In the meantime, the Jamestown Foundation insisted that the Kremlin was behind two attempts on Yushchenko’s life, one through poisoning and the second with a bomb. Citing a telephone conversation with alleged officers of the Russia security services the author of the publication confidently concluded that “it would be naive to believe that Russian President Vladimir Putin was unaware of the plot.” Others blamed the poisoning of Yushchenko on his domestic opponents but also held Putin responsible for supporting them.

Such actions on the part of the Kremlin required an urgent and tough response from the United States. Writing in the neoconservative Weekly Standard, Michael McFaul maintained, for example, that “after Putin’s intervention, a President Yushchenko would have every right to adopt anti-Russian policies.” Others went further and recommended thinking about Russia as a militaristic anti-Western dictatorship, implying the need for U.S. intervention. The Wall Street Journal editorialist Holman Jenkins Jr. equated Putin with Saddam Hussein. Similarly, Bruce P. Jackson of the Project on Transitional Democracies insisted on treating Russia as the West treated Serbia:

Inevitably, Europe and the United States will be forced to do the same things they did in the Balkans—with great reluctance—at the end of the 1990s. First, they will have to agree to pool their resources and work together. Then, they will have to tell the bullying power to pack up and go home. And, finally, they will have to pile into the region with all manner of civic and economic projects aimed at strengthening the Caucasus democracies and building closer relations with Europe. Sooner will be far less costly than later.

Members of the Lobby also unanimously favored admitting “democratizing” non-Russian states, such as Georgia and Ukraine, into NATO and adopting a more sticks and fewer carrots approach toward Russia.

The Lobby was not interested in considering what Russia had to say in defense of its interests. It dismissed the facts of Ukraine and others’ heavy indebtedness to Russia. It drew no conclusions from Ukraine’s excessive energy consumption and the existence of elaborate schemes of reexporting Russia’s gas and energy—the old and well-tested way of making corrupt oligarchs in Ukraine. It barely commented on Russia’s decisions to increase energy prices even for its political allies that had no intentions of “democratizing,” most prominently Armenia and Belarus. If anything, some members of the Lobby preferred to express their support for
Belarus—normally referred to as the last European dictatorship—in its energy dispute with Russia, thereby revealing a failure of the reasoning that connected Russia’s energy objectives to the suppression of democracy abroad. The Lobby also failed to provide conclusive evidence of the Kremlin’s plot to instigate mass violence in “democratizing nations” and murder leaders of the colored revolutions.

**Activities**

To challenge Russia and promote the colored revolutions, the Lobby pursued three lines of activities: it worked with influential members of the U.S. political class to promote the Russia-threat arguments; it contributed to training and financing revolutionary opposition; and it mobilized the media to publicize its cause.

The Lobby successfully enlisted the support of influential politicians, such as Senator John McCain (R-Az), Senator Richard Lugar (R-Ind), Congressman Christopher Cox (R-Ca), Congressman Tom Lantos (D-Ca), and Vice President Dick Cheney, even before the Orange revolution took place in the fall 2004. Already in February, a wide, bipartisan group of senior U.S. officials and former U.S. officials had visited Ukraine to discuss its situation and emphasize the importance of free elections. The group included Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios, President George Bush, Secretaries Madeleine Albright and Henry Kissinger, Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Richard Holbrooke, Thomas Pickering, General (r.) Wesley Clark, Senator John McCain, and Senator Richard Lugar. By that time, the United States had grown disappointed with the leadership of Leonid Kravchuk and was hoping for change in Ukraine. Sensing that the nation was politically divided, the group’s members understood the importance of influencing future elections by signaling their support for opposition.

Although the American visitors spoke of supporting elections, not individual candidates, the Ukrainian political class understood the U.S. preferences well. Many group members had already established their relationships with opposition leaders. For instance, the McCain-led International Republican Institute (IRI) invited Victor Yushchenko for a visit in February 2003. For a former prime minister from a distant country, Yushchenko was received on a very high level. He did not only meet Senator McCain but also had private meetings with Vice President Cheney, Deputy Secretary of State Armitage, and former national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. A similar tour was organized for Mikheil Saakashvili in February 2002, six months before the Rose Revolution in Georgia. Emboldened by the success of the Rose Revolution and convinced that
with appropriate Western support Yushchenko would win the Ukrainian elections, the American political class was determined to send a strong message of noninterference to the incumbent regime. Already in the spring of 2004, former Secretary of State Albright, now chairman of the NDI, which was sending election observers to Ukraine, threatened Ukrainian officials with the denial of visas and access to their offshore bank accounts if they failed to hold free and fair elections. In October of the same year, the threat was repeated by the IRI chairman McCain, and the State Department subsequently publicized the denial of a U.S. visa to Ukrainian oligarch Hrihorii Surkis, a close ally of the head of Leonid Kravchuk’s administration, Viktor Medvedchuk.48

Some, such as McCain and Lugar, became so close to Saakashvili and Yushchenko that they invariably supported them in their disputes with Russia after the revolutions. In the absence of conclusive evidence, they often blamed Russia for provocations and tensions between Georgia and its separatist territories, and they emerged as especially prominent advocates of Georgia and Ukraine’s membership in NATO. For instance, before the NATO summit in Bucharest took place, Senator Lugar had lobbied against inviting President Putin to attend the summit, arguing that his presence would “intimidate [the two nations] further” in the context of their membership application. McCain too accused Russia of provocations against its neighbors and championed the idea of opening NATO “to all democracies committed to the defense of freedom . . . from the Baltic to the Black Sea.”49 In early 2005, Senators John McCain and Hilary Clinton even nominated Saakashvili and Yushchenko for the Nobel Peace Prize for “leading freedom movements in their respective countries” and winning “popular support for the universal values of democracy, individual liberty, and civil rights.”50 Emboldened, Georgia’s Saakashvili became extremely anti-Russian in his actions to the point that some observers asked: “Why do we allow and sometimes even encourage Georgia to continue provoking Moscow at our expense?”51 Others within the Lobby cultivated their relationship with Yulia Timoshenko.52

The Lobby was also heavily involved in training and financing the revolutionary opposition. Perhaps the most prominent institution and network for doing so was the NED, which had its roots in the Cold War. Founded by Ronald Reagan in 1982, the NED was a government-funded nonprofit organization created to counter similar Soviet organizations that worked to spread communism.53 After receiving funds, the NED was to distribute them to other American democracy-promotion organizations, such as its international wings IRI and NDI, Freedom House, and election-monitoring groups. NED also had connections with hegemonic organizations, such as the PNAC.54 NED successfully united hegemonic, liberal, and Eastern European members of the Lobby, and it could hardly
hides its anti-Russian sympathies. In 1991 Senator Allen Weinstein, who was involved with establishing NED, said, “A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA.” Another very important role in the revolutions was played by George Soros and his Soros Foundation. Particularly because of his Eastern European roots, Soros had a strong mistrust of Putin’s Russia. The powerful billionaire described himself as a “stateless statesman” and held power on the international scene that no other private individual could claim to have.

The mechanisms of the Lobby’s intervention in the colored revolutions included the training and establishing of networks for the opposition, especially the youth, to challenge official election results, and coordinating local and international/Western protest. While having the distinct objective of isolating Russia, the Lobby presented its activities as consistent with the U.S. government objectives. While arguing in favor of support for elections and the democratic process, the Lobby was clearly biased in favor of pro-Western candidates such as Saakashvili and Yushchenko. The United States’ embassies played a prominent role in coordinating opposition activities and even providing space for publishing opposition newspapers. For instance, the U.S. State Department has operated its own independent printing house in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, since 2002, printing at least 60 different titles, including many associated with the opposition. Richard Miles, the U.S. ambassador to Belgrade during the successful Serbian revolution, was later transferred to Georgia, where Eduard Shevardnadze was toppled. West-funded international and NGOs, such as Freedom House, trained opposition groups, teaching them “how to identify the key weaknesses in society and what people’s most pressing problems were.” Everything with an antiregime potential was passed for civil society and funded. In Kyrgyzstan practically all such democracy promotion organizations—at least 170 of them—were created and financed by U.S. NGOs or USAID. At least $2 million were invested prior to the Kyrgyz elections—a major difference in a country where the average salary was $30 a month. Russian oligarchs in exile, such as Boris Berezovski, also reportedly funded the colored revolutions.

The Lobby would have not been as successful without favorable media coverage of its activities. As one observer wrote, although the degree of American involvement was more sophisticated and comprehensive than anything emanating from Moscow, it “had minimal coverage in the largely partisan picture the Western media have painted.” Instead, the American media including many reputable opinion-makers concentrated on displaying a high level of hostility toward Russia. It featured hundreds of anti-Russian articles and editorials before the colored revolutions, thereby helping to set the stage for a political confrontation. One such article authored by Senator McCain approvingly quoted Brzezinski’s imperative
to break Russia’s Ukraine connection and insisted on “tying” Ukraine “to the West.” The Lobby also provided unwavering support for the revolutionaries against Russia. With the exception of a brief incident during which the “democratic” president of Georgia Saakashvili used force against his political opponents, the media presented him and his nation as a “beacon of democracy” in the authoritarian Russia-dominant region. It generously publicized views of Timoshenko, Saakashvili, Yushchenko, and their advocates without giving publication space to their opponents. It overwhelmingly supported the colored revolutionaries’ drive to join NATO and circumvent Russia’s energy pipelines, claiming that doing otherwise would amount to appeasing the Kremlin.

American media, especially during political crises such as the Orange Revolution, invariably presented Russia’s role as extremely negative and meriting only a hard-line response. Commentaries on Russia during the Orange Revolution running along the lines of Putin “disgraced himself” or “is left with egg on his face” or “will look like a bully no matter who the winner is” were quite typical. In the wake of U.S.-Russia summits, the media was filled with Russia-critical images and commentaries pressuring the White House to adopt a tough policy toward the Kremlin. Some of the most extreme anti-Russian public statements appeared precisely during the times when the two presidents were getting ready to discuss ways to improve relations. An example is the February 2005 Bratislava summit following the Orange Revolution, which the Lobby sought to turn into a democracy promotion summit. Hawkish statements from George Soros, Senator McCain, and others calling to expel Russia from the G-8 first appeared during that time. Even internal developments in non-Russian states were presented as a zero-sum game between Russia and the West. For example, if Victor Yushchenko decided to dissolve the parliament, it was to be viewed as the only way “to save Ukraine from Russia,” despite a strong opposition to the dissolution among Ukrainians. Almost any actions by Georgia and Ukraine were presented as justifiable in the light of the Russia “threat,” yet any attempts by Russia to defend its interests were viewed as driven by imperialist instincts or paranoia toward the West.

3. The Threat of a Strong Russia

Russia’s fragile political system and the democracy vision

Russia’s above described political weakness has complicated its democratic development. In addition to democracy, the nation’s main challenges still include basic survival and the security of existing political borders. A key remaining issue is also the continuous crisis of state legitimacy after the
Soviet disintegration. Rather than viewing the Kremlin’s reactions to the colored revolutions as indicative of imperialism, a productive way to view Russia is as a nation that is struggling to establish new foundations for its statehood. Post-Soviet Russia has abstained from attempts to restore its empire and has revived its economy and a good measure of political viability by concentrating on building a “normal great power”73—not by means of imperial grandeur, but through reformed macroeconomic conditions, favorable world energy prices, and a stable political environment for economic growth and rising living standards.

Still, Russia’s political class remains divided, and domestic influences continue to be important—excessively so—in forming state policy. The country’s leadership has succeeded in pragmatically integrating the previously excluded security elites in the ruling class. Although some have suggested that security elites became prominent and indeed dominant in influencing political circles and the policy-making process,74 in reality the state did not become a hostage to those influences. Putin’s designation of the liberally minded Dmitri Medvedev is an important testament to this. Nevertheless, it will take time for the state to overcome the legitimacy crisis and reach consensus among powerful competing groups within the political class. The Kremlin has yet to work out an ideological formula among elites to purge the most odiously corrupt and extremist representatives of the political class. The emergence of a formally dualistic power structure after the 2008 presidential elections, with Dmitri Medvedev as president and Putin as prime minister, may become an important step in the direction of forming an ideological consensus within the elite circles.

The fragility of Russia’s political system helps us to understand the Kremlin’s nervous reaction to Western democratization pressures and the colored revolutions. Vulnerable and insecure, Russia has sought to do everything in its power to stabilize its political environment and minimize outside interferences. President Putin insisted on Russia’s right to “decide for itself the pace, terms and conditions of moving towards democracy,” and he warned against attempts to destabilize the political system by “any unlawful methods of struggle.”75 The motive of noninterference in Russia’s domestic developments from outside only became stronger over time, and in his addresses to the Federation Council in May 2006 and April 2007, Putin put an even greater emphasis on the values of sovereignty and strong national defense.76 The Kremlin’s supporters and theorists sympathetic to the official agenda have developed concepts of “sovereign democracy” and “sovereign economy,”77 insisting on the need for Russia to protect its path of development and natural resources. Vladislav Surkov, the Kremlin’s leading ideologist, justified the concept of sovereign democracy by the
need to defend an internally determined path to political development and protect the values of economic prosperity, individual freedom and social justice from potential threats, which he defined as “international terrorism, military conflict, lack of economic competitiveness, and soft takeovers by ‘orange technologies’ in a time of decreased national immunity to foreign influence.” The Kremlin has also trained its own youth organizations and restricted activities of Western NGOs and radical opposition inside the country. Russia’s elections too demonstrated the ample fear of outside interference, and the willingness of politicians to resort to an anti-Western rhetoric.79

Although some disagreed with the vision of sovereign democracy and argued that it only intended to protect the interests of state bureaucracy,80 the public did not see it that way. Russia’s leaders felt, not without justification, that the larger society was supportive of the official course. Polls consistently demonstrated that Russians valued political order and stability and expressed strong condemnations of revolutionary prospects in the country. One poll revealed, for instance, that Russians are most positive about such word-symbols as “order” (58 percent), “justice” (49 percent), and “stability” (38 percent). In the same poll, the word “revolution” was among the least popular ones with 22 percent viewing it in a negative light.81 Related to that was Russians’ strong—around 80 percent—support for President Putin and his policies.82

**U.S. policy**

The U.S. policy does not faithfully reflect the democracy promotion rhetoric. There are many nations with a questionable democratic record, such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Pakistan, with whom the U.S. has sought to develop relations without imposing democratization as a prerequisite. Rather, the policy is to work with those supportive of Washington’s international agenda and to pressure those that are not, regardless of their democracy record.83 As Russia began to demonstrate a greater independence in foreign policy, it too became an object of American pressure. The United States also became concerned with the Kremlin’s attempts to centralize the state, which it saw as a deviation from Russia’s original commitments to democracy.

The new Washington policy therefore combined two elements. On the one hand, the U.S. was increasingly pressuring Russia over democracy at home by maintaining contacts with pro-Western opposition, providing funding for various NGOs, and publicly stating its displeasure with the Kremlin’s centralization. From the initial endorsement of Russia’s political path during 2001–2003, the White House moved to criticizing what it saw
as nondemocratic developments in Russia. State Department officials maintained contacts with opposition to the Kremlin, providing it with assistance and publicity, while pressuring the Kremlin not to restrict the activities of foreign NGOs and issuing highly critical reports on Russia’s political system. For instance, State Department officials attended the Other Russia conference in July 2006 that at the time served as a platform for uniting radical opposition to Putin’s policies. The conference’s organizers sought to divert the attention from the Kremlin-hosted G-8 meeting in St. Petersburg and called to boycott the meeting. On the other hand, the White House continued to emphasize cooperation with the Kremlin on various issues, such as counterterrorism and nonproliferation. Washington also recognized the legitimacy of Russia’s parliamentary and presidential elections despite growing criticism of the elections by the American media.

The Lobby and Russia as a “Neo-Stalinist Autocracy”

The Lobby’s agenda differed from that of the White House. While working to expand contacts with pro-Western opposition to the Kremlin, the Lobby sought to bring that opposition to power, rather than merely weaken the Kremlin’s centralization drive or develop leverage in relations with Russia. American critics of Russia simply did not believe that relations with a newly emerging “Stalinist state” were worth having. Similarly to the neoconservatives, who viewed Western-style democratization as a key prerequisite for peace in the Middle East, the Lobby believed that there could not be a robust relationship with Putin-led Russia and that the United States had to prepare to confront the Kremlin as it did during the Cold War.

Ideological arguments

Ideologically, the Lobby’s most important contribution was to present Russia under Vladimir Putin as a nation guided by a well-developed political doctrine of a neo-Soviet and anti-Western nature. While Russia was searching for ways to consolidate its statehood and depart from the disarray of the 1990s, a number of American observers insisted that Russians were longing for a Stalinist restoration and developing an essentially Stalinist outlook, which would lead to the further cultivation of an external enemy’s image and another cycle of state-organized violence. The Lobby presented the new political doctrine as based on historical revisionism, authoritarianism, and xenophobia. The historical revisionism was found in the public reassessments of Stalin’s role in Soviet history and evidence of
the Soviet leader’s remaining popularity in the public mind. Some textbooks, for example, sought to present Stalin—the dictator associated with an anti-Western isolationism and a terror against millions of innocent people—as largely successful in solving important tasks of state-building, such as industrialization and the victory over the Nazi’s regime. American critics of Russia also pointed to evidence of Stalin’s popularity by finding that almost half of all Russians believed that Stalin had played a positive role in history and that more than 25 percent were prepared to definitely or probably vote for him were he alive and running for president.

The Lobby also found the Kremlin’s new ideology to be authoritarian and disrespectful of citizens’ rights. Frequently, American critics of Russia presented the Kremlin’s doctrine of sovereign democracy—largely a reaction to the West-supported colored revolutions—as an elaborate and conscientious effort to develop an anti-Western ideology and justify repressions at home. They asserted that Russia’s political system was fundamentally corrupt and unable to deliver any positive outcomes for its citizens. For example, Anders Aslund of the Peterson Institute for International Economics accused President Putin of stealing from the state $35 to $40 billion and insisted that “a system so corrupt cannot be very stable.” Writing in his blog, the former State Department official Paul Goble endorsed the view that efforts by president-elect Dmitri Medvedev to fight corruption would lead nowhere because in Russia “the word ‘corruption’ is a synonym of the word ‘Putin,’” and therefore any struggle against corruption must be a struggle against Putin and his entourage. Others argued that the system became oppressive with regard to freedoms of media, political, and legal associations. Russia’s political system was also proclaimed meaningless or devoid of any substance vis-à-vis electing governing leaders. In the expression of Ann Applebaum of the Washington Post, elections in Russia became nothing but “rituals” to give ruling elites “a semblance of legitimacy.” The system, in other words, had turned Soviet-like.

Many within the Lobby sought to amplify the theme of repressions by the “neo-Soviet” political regime. Fascination with Soviet KGB agents seizing power and turning the state into their own domain was strongly present in Western cultural products during the Cold War, and it continued to influence the writers of books about Russia, such as *Kremlin Rising* by Peter Baker and Susan Glasser. Members of conservative think tanks in Washington wrote about the return of Soviet dissidents and the employment of punitive psychiatry against them. The Lobby argued that it was the hawkish former KGB officials, not economic modernizers or advocates of normal relations with the United States, that were running the Kremlin. The shocking cases of the poisoning a former secret agent
Alexander Litvinenko and the killing of journalist Anna Politkovskaya were explained as linked to the Kremlin. In short, as Vaclav Havel put it, “Russia is ruled by KGB spies and mobsters,” and it has become a combination of “the worse from both communism and capitalism.”

The new ideology contained the important element of xenophobia, especially with regard to the West, but also to ethnic minorities inside Russia. The Lobby viewed the new Russia as principally anti-American in its ideological outlook, arguing that without the belief that foreign enemies mean to do the nation harm, the regime would be highly unstable. Such America-phobia was therefore presented as a fundamental necessity for Russia’s political system rather than a part of the worldwide reaction to the U.S. hegemonic foreign policy and its unwillingness to consider the interests of others. Critics of Russia also charged that for the same motivations for the regime’s consolidation the Kremlin was increasingly relying on domestic ethnophobia directed against non-Russian nationalities.

Russian experts testified that attitudes towards ethnonationalism had remained stable for the last ten years, with supporters making up 12–17 percent of the population and with more than 70 percent of the population against it. They also argued that the nationalism employed by the Kremlin had nothing to do with ethnic hatred and is instead constructive and linked to progressive modernization. Nevertheless, the Lobby believed that Russia was becoming ethnonationalist and “post-Weimar” in its orientation, drifting to fascism in the manner of Serbia under Slobodan Milosevic.

It was this neo-Stalinist ideology that the Lobby saw as guiding the Kremlin in its oppressive policies at home and abroad. The old Cold War principle of castigating Russia—by referring to its essentially totalitarian ideology—was therefore revived. Increasingly Russia, along with China, was presented as possessing a West-rejecting ideological system that aimed to build a “league of dictators” as opposed to emerging a “league of democracies.” With the new ideological opposition formulated, everything began to fall into place. Suddenly, the Lobby was able to lump together and “explain” from one ideological formula such diverse phenomena as Russia’s new efforts to understand its role in history, decisions regarding foreign and homegrown NGOs, criticisms of American foreign policy and examples of ethnic violence. Everything that deviated from the West’s mainstream version of history was now to be viewed as purposefully anti-Western. Decisions to limit activities of foreign-funded NGOs, including those with interests in politically weakening the system, were to be viewed as xenophobic. Criticisms of U.S. policies in the world were presented as of a diversionary nature, seeking to deflect the attention from Russia’s own faults. And ethnic violence was nothing but a result of the Kremlin’s desire...
to strengthen phobias of ethnic Russians toward the internal Other. In the eyes of the Lobby, introduction of the sovereign democracy idea in 2005—especially Putin’s Munich speech in 2007—meant that Russia had again become a powerful enemy to contain, not engage, as had been done during the Cold War.

Activities in support of “True Democrats” in Russia
The Lobby’s activities to undermine the Kremlin can be summarized along the lines of promoting members of the radical opposition to Putin—providing them with moral support, policy connections, training, funding, and media coverage. A colored revolution, if it was to happen in Russia in the manner of those in Georgia and Ukraine, could not be engineered without identifying and supporting pro-American politicians.

Moral support included multiple statements by prominent U.S. politicians condemning Russia’s political system and praising its pro-Western critics. Especially important in this respect was the CFR report “Russia’s Wrong Direction,” that developed the idea of “de-democratization” or “rolling back democracy” by the Kremlin. The report argued that practices of keeping opposition candidates off ballots, restricting their access to media, and threatening their potential donors were the norm of Russian politics. The CFR task force leaders John Edwards and Jack Kemp insisted that “no one we talked to” in Moscow “argued that Russia was a democracy,” and they further threatened that the Kremlin may be viewed as “illegitimate” by the United States. Two months after releasing the report, Vice President Dick Cheney too denounced Russia’s rollback on democracy. Similarly, in responding to Russia’s presidential elections, Senator John McCain, advocating for a tougher U.S. policy toward the Kremlin, charged that “the people of Russia are going back to the days . . . where they don’t have the right of free elections or even a free society.”

Political opposition to the Kremlin was also promoted through congressional testimonies by Russia experts and events organized by Washington think tanks. Already in early 2005, the head of the Project on Transitional Democracies, Bruce P. Jackson, argued it was no longer “accurate to say that democracy is in retreat in Russia,” charging instead that “democracy has been assassinated in Russia.” With time, more witnesses accused the Kremlin of oppressions of human rights and political assassinations, arguing that “we are dealing with a mafia-like regime whose tactics are predatory and rely on corruption and intimidation to secure its objectives.” American think tanks became a place that welcomed “members of the Russian opposition” by hosting friendly discussions with them and publishing the work of their sympathizers. Such discussions took
place at AEI, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Heritage Foundation, and other organizations. For example, in the spring of 2008, AEI featured a panel discussion with Boris Nemtsov and Vladimir Ryzhkov, as well as representatives of Mikhail Kasyanov and Vladimir Bukovsky. Putin’s critics explained why they were not yet effective in resisting the Kremlin and made their case for firmer pressures on Russia from the United States.113

Russian oppositionists also forged individual relationships with members of the American political class. Thus former world chess master and a leader of the Other Russia coalition, Garry Kasparov, developed special ties with American conservative circles associated with the Wall Street Journal and the Center for Security Policy (CSP). These ties stretched to Gorbachev’s era, when Kasparov received the 1991 Keeper of the Flame award from CSP for anticomunist resistance and the propagation of democracy. The award is given to “individuals for devoting their public careers to the defense of the United States and American values around the world,” and its recipients included Ronald Reagan (1995), Newt Gingrich (1996), Donald Rumsfeld (1998), and Paul Wolfowitz (2002).114 Kasparov later became a board member of the CSP National Security Advisory Council and maintained ties with other conservative organizations.115 As a contributing editor to the Wall Street Journal, he regularly denounced Putin’s “empire” and “tyranny” and supported right-wing policies in the paper’s attacks on the Kremlin.116 In particular, he endorsed Senator McCain’s contention that the thought of McCain in the White House strikes fear into authoritarian leaders everywhere.117 Other Russian oppositionists developed ties within the U.S. establishment. Importantly, just as he had established contacts with Mikheil Saakashvili and Victor Yushchenko before they were elected presidents of their respective countries, Vice President Cheney established ties with the harshest critics of Putin, such as Vladimir Ryzhkov.118

The confluence between the Kremlin’s radical critics and their American patrons worked the other way as well, as a number of the Lobby’s policy proposals on handling Putin’s “autocracy” came from Russian Westernizers. Calls by American politicians to punish the Kremlin by expelling it from Western organizations and denying it other forms of international recognition were similar to those made by radical critics in Russia who had urged the West to boycott the G-8 summit in St. Petersburg, deny the Kremlin’s officials entry visas, and block access to their foreign bank accounts.119

In searching for training and funding, the Lobby took advantage of the considerable support provided by the U.S. government to NGOs. As reported by the U.S. Department of State, the United States-funded NGOs
provided support to election watchdog organizations and trained political parties, media representatives, and civil society organizations. Yet American critics of the Kremlin insisted on greater financial assistance, complaining about the administration’s “devastating cutbacks” in programs to assist civil society groups in Russia. As chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA) said: “At a time when supporters of democratic reform, the rule of law, and human rights are being assassinated or carted off to the gulags of Siberia, we should not be starving these groups of vital support.” While working to organize a colored revolution in Russia, Putin’s critics also relied on the financial assistance of oligarchs in exile.

A critically important role in promoting “true democrats” in Russia belonged to the media. Generously covering anti-Kremlin protests and the activities of anti-Kremlin politicians, the media helped to portray them as popular even though their ratings inside Russia amounted to a politically insignificant 1–2 percent. During Russia's presidential elections, the media sought to pressure the U.S. government to become more critical of the Kremlin and more supportive of the pro-Western opposition. Tellingly, American newspapers and websites responded to the elections of Dmitri Medvedev with headlines such as “A Potemkin Election” (The Washington Post), “Kicking Democracy’s Corpse in Russia” (New York Times), “Management Reshuffle for 'Russia Inc.'” (Heritage Foundation), “Eternal Putin” (New Republic), and “Putin’s Mini-Me” (New York Times), implying complete dependence of the new president on the old one. At least in some cases media reports were dependent on tips provided by Russian critics of Putin. For example, in March 2008 the Eurasia Daily Monitor reported that while in Moscow, the U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates acted on advice from the Russian Foreign Ministry in meeting members of opposition and excluding the most outspoken critics of the Kremlin, such as the former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov and the former chess champion Garry Kasparov. The story quoted Kasparov.ru as a source of information, but it was later denied by the press attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

No less importantly, the media devoted considerable space to publicizing the views of anti-Kremlin politicians and civil society members, both relatively visible and obscure.

4. Conclusion

The Lobby and U.S. officials worked in concert, taking advantage of each other’s resources and challenging the Kremlin to make greater space for pro-Western opposition. The two sides had their political and ideological
differences, and the Lobby did not persuade the U.S. to take a hard-line on Russia based on its “rollback of democracy.” Leading members of the administration, such as President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, took a longer view, expecting Russia to eventually develop more democratic political institutions. The White House also demonstrated its willingness to develop ties with strategically important and energy producing nations in the Caucasus and Central Asia by overlooking their questionable democratic record. Still, in a number of areas the two sides overcame their differences and successfully coordinated their efforts by constituting what one observer called “a bizarre combination of the White House, the CIA, USAID, George Soros, and an array of U.S. and international NGOs, “to encourage regime change by non-military means.”

In the meantime, the Kremlin had grown to see little difference between the Lobby and the official position of the United States and that Washington was indeed fermenting a revolution in Russia. The democracy promotion fervor was now confronted with the local rejection of the American-style of political freedom. As seemingly paranoid as the Kremlin might have been, after observing the West-inspired revolutions in Serbia in 2000, Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004, and Kyrgyzstan in 2005, it definitely had reason to be. As another Russia watcher said, “The Kremlin’s puzzling behavior may be grounded more in rational self-interest than in totalitarian neurosis . . . The revolutions seemed to follow a script written in the West . . . As Goldfinger said in Ian Fleming’s 1959 novel of that name, ‘Once is an accident. Twice is coincidence. Three times is an enemy action.’”

Today many Russians associate democracy with corruption and the weakness of their state institutions. President Putin expressed this feeling by telling a group of journalists, “If by democracy, one means the dissolution of the state, then we do not need such democracy.” To the extent that such perception was the result of American actions, this could hardly be counted as success.
This page intentionally left blank
Russia’s “imperial impulse remains strong and even appears to be strengthening.”

(Zbigniew Brzezinski, Foreign Affairs, March–April 1994)

NATO must not lose its original purpose: to contain the Russian bear.


Rather than tolerate Russia’s nuclear blackmail or cyber attacks, Western nations should make clear that the solidarity of NATO from the Baltic to the Black Sea is indivisible.

(Senator John McCain, Remarks to The Los Angeles World Affairs Council, March 26, 2008)

1. Deterrence, Expansionism, and Cooperation in the U.S. Russia Security Policy

From Cold War deterrence to expansionism in relations with Russia

After the end of the Cold War, the United States and Russia had an opportunity to move from policies of deterrence to cooperation in security relations. No longer enemies, they could have established a new framework of strategic interaction by developing a mutually shared threat assessment and creating joint security institutions and defense systems. Russia was wide open to this possibility. The era of Mikhail Gorbachev’s foreign policy revolution was followed by the equally pro-Western leadership of Boris Yeltsin that shared the West’s arms control agenda. Yeltsin announced Russia’s desire to join all the European security institutions, including
NATO. He also slashed strategic nuclear arsenals by half and agreed to eliminate all land-based ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) armed with multiple warheads, while the United States retained such warheads in submarines. For the first time in the history of the nuclear arms race, Russia abandoned the heart of its strategic arsenals, while the United States preserved its own. According to the new leadership in the Kremlin, strategic parity with the United States was “ominous” and did not make any sense now that “the fundamental change in the political and economic relations between the United States of America and Russia” had taken place.¹

Developing cooperation with Russia in the post-9/11 period was equally important. Putin planned to move in this direction by supporting the U.S. anti-Taliban operation in Afghanistan and making little of his opposition to the White House’s decision to withdraw from the ABM treaty. Putin at one point also showed his interest in joining NATO and demonstrated his commitment to working with the alliance members to address the newly emerged threats of terrorism.

However, the path of cooperation was not taken, mainly because the United States did not view Russia as an equally important partner. Rather, it saw Russia as a permanently weak nation that had no choice but to accept the U.S. security agenda in world politics. In the eyes of American policy makers, Russia was radically demoted from a threatening party to be reckoned with to one that was nonthreatening and unworthy of attention. The notion of cooperation that the United States had in mind left little, if any, room for Russia and its security interests. NATO was to be expanded to the East, and Russia was to accept it. The United States was to move its security infrastructure closer to the former Soviet borders, and the Kremlin’s concerns were dismissed as indicative of the “old thinking.” Expansion of American military power across the globe was now the U.S.-dominant version of cooperation. Such an approach was shortsighted.

The U.S. interest in cooperation with Russia

Cooperating with Russia on equal terms was vital because the Kremlin had begun to move toward a similar assessment of security threats and because it still had formidable military capabilities. Russia was still the only country in the world with sufficient capability to destroy the United States, and the two nations had to work together patiently to reduce their nuclear arsenals. The world too expected the former Cold War rivals to offer an example of significant military reductions, if not total disarmament, as a way to establish genuinely robust foundations of international security. The absence of such cooperation on the United States’ part was likely to be
perceived by Russia as an attempt to gain a unilateral advantage in advancing American security interests.

Many in the United States advocated steps toward nuclear reductions and cooperation with Russia on defense and security issues. Former officials that held prominent appointment in Democratic and Republican administrations defended the idea of nuclear disarmament. Reacting to the U.S. Defense Department’s readiness to use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear states, more than 470 physicists, including seven Nobel laureates, signed a petition to contest the proposal. The group advocated development of a comprehensive plan, which would include steps in the direction of disarmament by all involved parties. Members of the arms control community also urged the Bush administration to drastically reduce its nuclear arsenal and strengthen the international nonproliferation regime, rather than engage in building a new generation of weapons or expanding the list of nuclear powers. In addition, George P. Shultz, William J. Perry, Henry A. Kissinger, and other prominent members of the American political class endorsed the goal of a nuclear free world and outlined a number of important steps for cooperation with Russia.

Influential observers and politicians also identified other important areas for U.S.-Russia security cooperation. They pointed out the need to jointly address issues such as terrorism, instability in Afghanistan and Central Asia, the rise of China, and the proliferation of conventional weapons in Eurasia and the Middle East. They further cautioned against the enlargement of NATO at the expense of Russia’s security interests and advocated new political and military arrangements with Russia as a member.

**Emergence of U.S.-Russia security cooperation after 9/11**

Immediately following 9/11, Russia and the United States moved toward developing security cooperation. In Russia’s perception, new strategic threats had little to do with state-organized geopolitics but rather stemmed from terrorist activities. The Kremlin no longer viewed NATO as fundamentally threatening, and Russia’s officials indicated the need to address the issue of terrorism by transforming the alliance into a global organization with Russia as a member. With support given to the U.S. anti-Taliban operation in Afghanistan, the debate in Russia’s foreign policy circles shifted from discussing an appropriate response to NATO’s expansion to questioning the very role of the alliance in the new world. Russia also sought to develop a new framework of strategic interaction with the United States hoping the latter would abandon its plans to build nuclear MDS unilaterally.
The United States showed some understanding of the need to develop security cooperation with Russia. Although President Bush declined to seek a common approach with the Kremlin on nuclear arms control, he wanted to bring Russia closer to NATO. In concert with NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson and Prime Minister Tony Blair, Bush even supported the idea of including Russia as an equal participant with veto power over certain important decisions. Although the idea of fully incorporating Russia within the NATO framework had not found sufficient support, in May 2002 a new NATO-Russia Council was established to coordinate discussion and actions against common threats.

The Lobby agenda

The Lobby sought to obstruct the emerging U.S.-Russia cooperation by misrepresenting Russia’s intentions and downgrading its military capabilities to resist American power. One group included traditional NATO advocates who defended the idea of strengthening the alliance as separate from Russia. Members of the U.S. establishments, such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger, insisted on preserving the alliance’s Euro-Atlantic nature that was defined narrowly to exclude Russia. American supporters of Eastern European nationalism added support to the argument for isolating Russia by insisting on its cultural propensity for imperialism. Their views resonated well with beliefs by conservatives, like The Washington Post columnist George Will and the former assistant secretary of defense Peter Rodman, that expansionism was “in the Russian DNA” and “the only potential great power security problem in Central Europe is the lengthening shadow of Russian strength.” Finally, the liberal perspective of NATO as a community of democracies also contributed to isolating Russia with its supposedly “autocratic” institutions. On nuclear security, members of the traditionalist group advocated a policy of deterrence in relations with Russia. Convinced that Russia was not ready to be a strategic partner of the United States, they favored the gradual nuclear reductions known to be a trademark of the former U.S.-Soviet relations.

The other group was made up of revisionists or those who no longer felt bound by the obligations of NATO membership and viewed the alliance mainly as a tool for promoting U.S. global hegemony. Revisionists displayed neoconservative and hegemonic convictions commonly expressed by such organizations as the PNAC and promoted by Charles Krauthammer and other believers in the U.S. “unipolar moment” and unapologetic “demonstrations of will.” It soon became apparent that Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and other prominent members of the Bush administration shared these beliefs. As
compared with traditionalists, revisionists were critical of not just Russia, but of all those who potentially opposed America’s world hegemony. Whether inside or outside NATO, critics of U.S. unilateralism were to be dismissed as old-fashioned at best and hostile at worst. Revisionists viewed NATO and Europe as valuable only to the extent that they were prepared to support the U.S. agenda. For example, when France and Germany moved to oppose the war in Iraq, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld introduced the notion of the “new Europe” to identify supposedly genuine allies or those willing to embrace American foreign policy even if for their own pragmatic reasons. To this group, expanding NATO was also a way to limit the influence of the “old” Europe within the alliance.

Revisionists were not satisfied with the policy of deterrence and instead advocated nuclear supremacy. Unlike traditionalists, they did not feel bound by the Nuclear NonProliferation Treaty (NPT) that obligated the official nuclear powers to engage in nuclear arms reduction. For example, a PNAC review of U.S. defense policy published in 2000 argued that reducing U.S. nuclear force was likely to be dangerous, and it favored expanding its role beyond strategic deterrence. Revisionists at PNAC and other military hawk organizations, such as the CSP and the CPD, openly advanced objectives of abdicating the ABM treaty, achieving global first-strike ability, and controlling space and cyberspace. These activities were a direct continuation of the Cold War policies of rolling back communism and establishing U.S. military supremacy in the world by opposing all types of arms control. No longer constrained by the Soviet Union, the hawks were finally in a position to achieve what they dreamed of all along.

Both traditionalists and revisionists viewed Russia as a potential security threat, not a partner. However, it was mainly the second group that was able to greatly influence Bush’s security policies, partly because their views resonated with those of the deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz, the Pentagon adviser Richard Perle, and, more importantly, with those of top decision makers, such as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Vice President Dick Cheney, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. Their high profile made the work of consolidating anti-Russian groups and promoting their views in the media easily accomplishable.

2. Preparing for a New Round of NATO Expansion

U.S. support

Ever since the decision to expand NATO was made, American officials sought to convince the Kremlin of their nonthreatening intentions, but in practice did little to address Russia’s concerns. Russia could not understand the rationale
of expanding the alliance in the post–Cold War security environment, and the rise of terrorism after 9/11 was seen in Moscow as yet another indicator that NATO was becoming increasingly obsolete as a security institution. In the meantime, the alliance kept marching to the East, incorporating more and more states in the eastern and central part of Europe. Despite the new spirit of partnership with Russia, the United States supported extending NATO membership to Romania, Bulgaria, and the three Baltic states, former members of the Soviet bloc. In March 2002 the deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage endorsed the idea during the alliance’s summit in Bucharest. After completing the process in 2004, the United States was equally enthusiastic about incorporating into the military alliance former Soviet states such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Ukraine. During the Bucharest summit in April 2008, Condoleezza Rice and George Bush, supported by Poland and the Czech Republic, argued for a Membership Action Plan (MAP) for Georgia and Ukraine against opposition from France and Germany.18

In addition to refusing to stop at two waves of NATO expansion, the United States took steps that Moscow viewed as indicating a drive to hegemony, rather than a willingness to develop a security partnership. Among those steps was the Bush administration’s decision to adopt the military doctrine of preemption and preventative war in September 2002, discounting most nonproliferation treaties in favor of a doctrine of “counter-proliferation,” a reference to everything from missile defense to forcibly dismantling weapons or their components.19 In November 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell, a leading voice of moderation in the Bush administration, resigned, ending years of battles with Cheney and Rumsfeld, advocates for a more hegemonic foreign policy. In 2007, the United States initiated opening new military bases in Bulgaria and Romania while refusing to ratify the treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), which Russia considered important for limiting the movement of troops in Europe and the former Soviet region.20 Washington also announced plans to develop a MDS in Poland and the Czech Republic. Furthermore, despite invitations from the Kremlin, the United States showed little interest in developing ties between NATO and the Collective Security Treaty, the Russia-initiated organization, to provide greater security in Central Asia. Finally, the United States and other Western nations recognized the independence of Kosovo, ignoring multiple warnings from the Kremlin.

Russia and NATO expansion

Russia could hardly take seriously America’s declared intentions to develop a security partnership. Many in Moscow interpreted the West’s decision to
expand its military alliance without planning to include Russia as a threat.\textsuperscript{21}

In the aftermath of the NATO summit in April 2008, President Putin stated, “We view the appearance of a powerful military bloc on our borders . . . as a direct threat to the security of our country. The claim that this process is not directed against Russia will not suffice. National security is not based on promises.”\textsuperscript{22} The public too reacted overwhelmingly negatively to the alliance’s expansion. In a poll in March 2008, 74 percent of Russians said that Ukraine’s possible accession to NATO posed a threat to the national security of the Russian Federation and 77 percent expressed a similar attitude toward Georgia’s possible membership in the organization.\textsuperscript{23}

Although such perception was partly based on NATO’s role during the Cold War, it also resulted from Russia’s frustrating interactions with the alliance in the post–Cold War era. Several important efforts to improve Russia-NATO relationships resulted in establishing the Permanent Joint Council in May 1997 and a new NATO-Russia Council in May 2002. Each time, however, these efforts revealed their weakness and unraveled. Just as the Permanent Joint Council was severely undermined by the 1999 Western intervention in Yugoslavia, the new NATO-Russia Council was hardly adequate for developing a joint assessment of security threats. Moscow insisted that NATO’s continuous expansion was unacceptable and would further isolate Russia from the West, yet the U.S.-led Western nations again shrugged off Russia’s perception as paranoia.

In response, the Kremlin initiated several new policies. In early 2007, President Putin delivered a tough speech in Munich, in which he warned that Russia intended to pursue a more assertive course in relations with the United States. Then, while continuing to withdraw its troops from Georgia, Russia announced a moratorium on the CFE treaty that the Western nations had refused to ratify for eight years. Having left the door open for a return to the treaty, Russia nevertheless indicated that its level of frustration was running high. The Kremlin also appointed as Russia’s new ambassador to NATO Dmitry Rogozin, a hard-line nationalist and critic of attempts to develop relations with the West. In addition, Russia was determined to show that it no longer believed in the language of negotiations with the West over NATO’s expansion and was prepared to prevent incorporation of states like Georgia and Ukraine into the alliance by all means available. After Kosovo recognition and the NATO summit in Bucharest, Russia strengthened its ties with Georgia’s separatist territories, and in May 2008 it even indicated its readiness to go to war if Tbilisi provokes it.\textsuperscript{24} Russia also sent signals that it was prepared to work to develop separatist attitudes in Ukraine.\textsuperscript{25}

Russia’s new assertiveness did not imply a full-fledged confrontation with NATO and the United States. Rather, it was yet another desperate
attempt to draw the West’s attention to its interests and to encourage development of a multilateral mechanism of security decision making. While initiating the CFE moratorium, Russia never abdicated it, as the United States did with the ABM treaty. Russia also indicated that it was prepared to assist former Soviet states in consolidating their territorial unity if they were willing to remain neutral and abstain from NATO membership. In particular, the Kremlin pursued new efforts to negotiate a common state in Moldova.\(^{26}\) By initiating new meetings between Kishinev and Tiraspol, Russia was signaling to others, like Georgia, that it was prepared to offer positive incentives to dissuade them from joining the military alliance.

\[\text{The Lobby builds up the image of the Russia-threat}\]

**Ideological arguments**

Unlike the Bush administration, the Lobby did not pretend it considered Russia a partner in security relationships. While assisting the administration with promoting the inclusion of Eastern European and former Soviet states to NATO, both traditionalists and revisionists saw their mission as popularizing the idea of the Russia-threat. Traditionalists, like the former national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, continued to frame their arguments in terms of supporting “geopolitical pluralism” in the former Soviet region and depriving Russia of its traditional “imperial instincts.”\(^{27}\) To them, enlargement of NATO was crucial for securing control over the Eurasian region with its vast resources and potentially powerful geopolitical challenges to American domination.\(^{28}\) In the 1990s, the *New York Times* columnist William Safire argued that the alliance had to be expanded while Russia was still weak. “If we wait until the bear regains both strength and appetite, the most vulnerable nations will never be protected.”\(^{29}\) Ten years later Safire was comparing the growing Russia with Hitler’s Germany and reminding the West that “as its role becomes global, NATO must not lose its original purpose: to contain the Russian bear.”\(^{30}\)

The rationale for expanding the alliance provided by revisionists was different, yet largely anti-Russian. Writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, Donald Rumsfeld argued for expanding NATO’s mission by inviting and training new members, such as Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Georgia, and Ukraine, in order to meet the alliance commitments in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Yet, the former secretary of defense also insisted on the need to deter a threatening Russia that “recently suggested it might turn its nuclear arsenal on Ukraine or incite civil disorder in Georgia if either takes steps to join NATO.”\(^{31}\) Postponement of MAPs for the new alliance aspirants, he continued, would amount to appeasement, serving
as a “green light to Russia to continue the tired rhetoric of the Cold War.”32 The deterrence and appeasement arguments were, of course, well-tested rhetorical tools that Rumsfeld and others had successfully applied before for rallying American support against the Soviet Union, as well as Yugoslavia and Iraq. NATO was viewed as a way to expand the United States’ power and to deter those, like Russia, who opposed it.

The power-based arguments were substantiated by culturally essentialist ones that presented Russia as incompatible with the civilization of European and Western origins. The Jamestown’s Eurasia Daily Monitor was covering the issue of NATO expansion from the perspective of buttressing the traditional Euro-Atlantic unity against Russia.33 To the Wall Street Journal, what binds NATO “isn’t treaty obligations as much as a common civilization,” united by the threat of Russia. “And though Mr. Bush insisted that ‘Russia is not our enemy,’ for most members of NATO, the Putin regime’s aggressiveness has strengthened the case for the alliance’s continued eastward expansion.”34 The argument found support among the existing and potential members of the alliance in Eastern Europe. Vaclav Havel, a former president of the Czech Republic and tireless critic of Russia announced that the EU and NATO should have an identical frontier in the east that “starts with the border between Russia and the Baltic states and follows the Russo-Belarusian and Russo-Ukrainian border down to the Black Sea,” which “is absolutely obvious from the map, and it has more or less a historical and cultural basis, too.”35 In Georgia and Ukraine, members of the political class also tended to view their pro-NATO choice in terms of their “democratic” opposition to the “anti-Western” civilizational values of Russia.36

Finally, liberal members of the Lobby, while not necessarily sharing beliefs in the geopolitical and cultural preponderance of the United States and other Western nations, provided their own rationale for expanding NATO. To them, the expansion was mainly about democracy and Western-style political freedoms. As the Washington Post wrote, “since NATO was created to defend the West against the Soviet Union, its greatest accomplishment may have been its role in consolidating democracy in Romania and nine other former East Bloc states.”37 Because of this and because of “Moscow’s ambition to destroy those countries’ [Ukraine and Georgia’s] freedom and independence,” the United States should continue to press with the alliance’s expansion without fear of offending Russia.38

Activities
The American anti-Russian groups worked directly with potential new NATO members in Eastern Europe and sought to mobilize support for the alliance’s expansion at home. From the Lobby’s perspective, it was a two-way
street: the United States was providing Eastern European governments with security guarantees against Russia in exchange for obtaining their full political support of America’s foreign policy. Not infrequently, people who promoted NATO expansion were the same individuals who advocated expansion of U.S. military hegemony across the world.

A case in point is the U.S. intervention in Iraq. Members of the hegemonic lobby, such as Bruce Jackson, successfully lobbied Eastern European countries to support U.S. policy in Iraq. A former military intelligence officer, who worked under Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, and Dick Cheney in the Reagan and Bush senior administrations, Jackson was also a vice president for the world’s biggest weapons-making company, Lockheed Martin. Under the Bush junior administration, he emerged as president of both the Project on Transitional Democracies and the U.S. Committee on NATO. Especially active in promoting NATO expansion before the Iraq invasion, Jackson was now mobilizing the so-called Vilnius Ten countries to rebuke France’s position in February 2003. He helped to draft a declaration on their behalf, which stated that “the newest members of the European community agree that we must confront the tyranny of Saddam Hussein and that the United Nations must now act.” He then convinced governing elites of the Vilnius Ten countries to sign the declaration—often against support from their own societies—linking it to winning the U.S. Senate’s approval of their membership into NATO. Soon after the Iraq War, Jackson returned, arguing the virtues of admitting Georgia and Ukraine to the alliance, supported in this by the governments of Poland and the Czech Republic.

Jackson and others were then able to enlist the support of high-profile politicians in the United States and successfully lobbied for testimonies in the House of Representatives that made their case for ignoring Russia’s concerns about NATO enlargement. For example, all witnesses in the hearing “NATO Enlargement and the Bucharest Summit” organized by the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe on March 4, 2008 supported continued expansion of the alliance and endorsed MAPs for Ukraine and Georgia. Dismissing Russia’s objections, the witness Janusz Bugajski of the Center for Strategic and International Studies testified that “NATO enlargement throughout the Balkans and toward the Black Sea region would help restrain Russia’s expansive aspirations and negative influences in the region and provide a greater sense of security to staunch U.S. allies and new Atlanticist states.” A prominent voice of support was also the influential Republican senator Richard Lugar, who initiated a bill in the U.S. Senate in favor of Georgia and Ukraine joining NATO, arguing that it “will enable Europe, the USA, and NATO to expand the zone of freedom and security.” The bill provided $10 million in assistance in the
fiscal year 2008 for Georgia’s membership preparations. On March 6 of that year, a similar bill was passed by the House of Representatives.46

While working with real and prospective NATO members, members of the Lobby also worked to isolate Russia from influencing the alliance’s decision making. For example, Senator Lugar strongly supported MAPs for Georgia and Ukraine and met the Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko before the NATO summit in Bucharest.47 However, Lugar publicly questioned the idea of inviting Russia’s president Putin to the summit arguing that it would intimidate Georgia and Ukraine.48 Russia’s own attempts to defend its interests were commonly presented as “senseless” and “irrational” or indicative of imperialism and intimidation tactics.49 The Lobby further linked complaints by Eastern European governments about Russia to their membership in NATO, arguing that issues, such as energy security, had to become a part of the alliance’s agenda.50 Apparently some also believed that cyber attacks on the Baltic states were Russian “tests” of “the West’s preparedness for cyber-warfare in general and of NATO’s commitment to its newest, weakest members in particular.”51 At least some lobbyists of the Eastern European nationalists were paid by Eastern European governments.52

3. Challenging Russia’s Nuclear Security

The U.S. policy of nuclear primacy

Soon after coming to power the Bush administration demonstrated its belief in achieving nuclear primacy by going beyond strategic nuclear deterrence. Its withdrawal from the ABM treaty in December 2001 was the first in a series of steps that confirmed the administration’s willingness to act on the advice of the PNAC. In December 2002, the United States introduced a new National Security Strategy that called for reliance on overwhelming military superiority to discourage arms races around the world: “Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States.”53 The NPT that had been a key foundation of peace since 1968 was now viewed as an arrangement that had outlived its usefulness. The assistant secretary of state for Nonproliferation John S. Wolf told the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in March that while the NPT “remains the cornerstone” of the U.S. nonproliferation policy, international agreements alone “are simply not enough” to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction.54 In the January 24, 2006, Financial Times, Victoria Nuland, the U.S. ambassador to NATO and former adviser to Vice
President Dick Cheney declared that the U.S. wanted a “globally deployable military force” that would operate everywhere—from Africa to the Middle East and beyond.  

The new approach also revealed itself in the administration’s unwillingness to engage in nuclear arms control or sign treaties with a mechanism of enforcement and verification. For example, the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT), signed in Moscow in June 2002, required that the United States and Russia reduce the amount of “operationally deployed” nuclear warheads from 6,000 to no more than 1,700 to 2,200 by December 31, 2012. However, the treaty had no timetable for the reductions and no enforcement mechanism, which analysts saw as a way to stockpile nondeployed warheads. The absence of verification provisions contributed to the lack of arms control efforts after 2002. Only in 2006 did Washington respond to Moscow’s invitation to negotiate a new agreement to replace the START 1 Treaty (Strategic Arms Reduction)—an agreement that was effective but expiring in December 2009. In 2006, the United States also announced a preliminary agreement with the Czech Republic and Poland to deploy elements of the U.S. MDS—silo-based interceptor missiles and radar stations—on their territory. Washington argued that the MDS was intended to protect Western nations against attacks from “rogue states” such as Iran, and was not a threat to Russia with its vast weapons arsenal.

Eager to achieve worldwide nuclear supremacy, the United States dismissed the concerns of its own generals, and it again dismissed Russia’s security concerns as unwarranted. In the mind of George W. Bush and other U.S. officials, the MDS idea was global, and not explicitly anti-Russian. However Russia, with its nuclear arsenal and ability to destroy the United States had to become a center of attention. By that time, the United States had already deployed elements of the antimissile system in the Pacific, the Hawaiian Islands, Alaska, California, Japan, and South Korea. Europe was next in line. The American global hegemony included strengthening control over the “old Europe” and eventually gaining a greater control over Russia’s nuclear infrastructure.

Russia’s response

Russia’s initial response to the U.S. nuclear primacy drive was muted and nonthreatening. Despite Bush’s decision to withdraw from the ABM treaty, Putin was hopeful that the two nations’ ability to focus on issues of counterrorism would develop their mutual trust and perhaps render the nuclear primacy drive unnecessary. To him, the threat of a possible attack was possible, but had to be addressed by joint efforts, and not unilaterally. Putin’s additional
agenda was to pursue aggressive arms control steps to reduce the heavy economic burden of maintaining one of the two largest nuclear arsenals in the world. With others in the foreign policy establishment, he believed in the political power of nuclear weapons, but advocated a relatively small arsenal. Opposition to this view in the military and political establishment was formidable—partly a result of NATO’s war in Yugoslavia, which led to the new draft military doctrine. The doctrine emphasized that the threat of direct aggression against Russia could only be “deterred by conducting active foreign policy and maintaining high readiness of conventional and nuclear forces.” The Russia Security Council further proposed extending and updating strategic and tactical nuclear weapons, among other measures. Putin finally convinced the Russian Duma to ratify the START 2, which had been signed in January 1993 and promised to reduce the amount of nuclear missiles to the new 3,000–3,500 threshold.

The situation begun to change in 2002–2003 when the Russian security perception shifted to viewing the United States’ nuclear policy as directed against Russia. Increasingly, the Kremlin saw Washington’s plans to deploy MDS elements closer to Russia’s borders as a direct security threat and a deviation from the war on terror. Although in 2001–2002 the Kremlin was considering drastic cuts in the Russian nuclear arsenal, by late 2003 it had returned to placing its traditional emphasis on preserving nuclear parity with the United States. Russia’s president and defense minister frequently referred to the MDS proposal as a seriously destabilizing factor with far reaching consequences for regional and global security. In February 2007, Putin issued a tough criticism of the United States in his Munich speech. And in October 2007, he went as far to draw a parallel between the deployment of Soviet missiles in Cuba that led to the U.S.-Soviet crisis in 1962 and the U.S. MDS plans in Eastern Europe.

Acting on this threat assessment, Russia pursued a policy response that included the preservation of existing nuclear treaties, the development of systems capable of breaching MDSs, and plans to retarget missiles to new American installations in Europe. First, the Kremlin emphasized the need to preserve the already reached nuclear agreements, such as START 2 and SORT. Although some within the military establishment threatened to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty (INF), which bans the deployment of medium-range missiles, the Kremlin did not endorse these threats. Well aware of Russia’s inability to match the American strategic arsenal, Russia also developed new weapons capable of an asymmetrical response. In 2006, Putin said that Russia had tested new missiles that were “hypersonic and capable of changing their flight path” and therefore penetrating any MDS. The Kremlin also announced plans to reequip its new single-warhead intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)
Topol-M (SS-27) with multiple warheads. Finally, the Kremlin said it would have to retarget its missiles at Poland and the Czech Republic as places for the new MDS infrastructure.

While making these preparations, Russia did not give up its effort to engage the United States. In June 2007, Putin surprised the United States by proposing to share the early warning radar in Gabala, Azerbaijan. He said the radar system Russia was using would cover not only a part but the whole of Europe and will therefore “make it unnecessary for us to place our offensive complexes along the border with Europe.” The White House later dismissed the proposal as insufficient for addressing its security concerns with Iran and other countries. In March 2008, Bush and Putin met for the last time in Sochi but again failed to resolve their differences over U.S. plan to deploy MDS elements in Eastern Europe.

The Lobby discredits Russia’s response and security initiatives

Ideology
The Lobby’s ideology regarding Russia’s nuclear posture was similar to that of NATO expansion. According to this ideology, the United States and other Western nations had no other choice but to expand MDS. If necessary, the United States would do it unilaterally and soon while Russia was still weak and unable to offer an adequate counterresponse. There was no other choice available because Russia was still a strategic threat and continued to view the United States as a threat.

As with William Safire’s “window of opportunity” argument—expand NATO now before Russia is strong enough to stop it—the Lobby insisted on MDS installations in Eastern Europe as a way to prevent the Kremlin’s future imperial resurgence. In the 1990s, some American analysts began to argue that Russia’s military was so severely weakened by the Soviet breakup that it would be unable to recover for a long time. Calling for a new “realism about Russia,” the retired general William Odom wrote in a much discussed article that the country “is not capable of major military operations,” will not return to great power status “over the next several decades,” and in fact is turning into what a journalist labeled “Zaire with permafrost.” The general also cautioned against exaggerating the West’s ability to stimulate Russia’s nuclear reductions, and he encouraged the United States to treat Russia’s strategic arsenal as no longer important. He referred to Russia’s nuclear weapons as a “wasting asset” rather than an indicator of strength because it would not help the Russian military to launch a major operation in Europe or Asia or defend the country against
a Chinese invasion. Odom’s argument resonated with those who had already discarded Russia’s strategic arsenals and the Kremlin’s potential to challenge the United States’ power in the world.70

The other critical premise of the Lobby’s arguments was that Russia was and is to remain a strategic threat to the United States. Both conservative and liberal observers shared this premise, arguing that Russia was a threat due to the Soviet mentality that they saw as having taken over the Kremlin and because of its new aggressively anti-Western foreign policy. For example, conservatives organized and funded a debate hosted at the Asia Society and Museum on Park Avenue, New York, on the subject of Russia becoming America’s enemy. Edward Lucas, author of the book The New Cold War: The Future of Russia and the Threat to the West moderated the event, and Bret Stephens of the Wall Street Journal, Claudia Rossett of the Defense of Democracies, and J. Michael Waller of the Institute for World Politics argued the pro-side.71 Having asserted that Soviet tendencies and institutions never died off, they spoke of the “KGB-ization” of the state with its technique of espionage, the ideological resistance to admit crimes of Stalinism, the Kremlin’s “pipeline warfare” against neighbors and an act of “nuclear homicide, if not nuclear terrorism”—reference to the murder of Alexander Litvinenko under investigation by Britain.72 In a typical editorial titled “Soviet Man,” the Wall Street Journal insisted that it was Putin who was driven by the old perception of threat, not the United States, in opposing an MDS being based in Eastern Europe. “Against all evidence to the contrary, Mr. Putin continues to insist that the proposed missile-defense system is directed against his own country. He knows that’s not true, but it’s a line that plays well in parts of Europe, especially France and Germany.”73

Liberals echoed these sentiments. For example, Michael McFaul of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Stanford University expressed his worries about Russia’s growing military assertiveness, what he saw as attempts to intimidate neighbors, and a lack of willingness to join the West. Arguing from the reverse democratic peace theory, he presented Russia as an emerging autocracy with a “natural” tendency to engage in aggressive policies abroad. “They’ve moved increasingly in an autocratic direction at home and therefore, I don’t think it’s just an accident that they’re using their power in a more coercive way vis-à-vis countries particularly like Georgia . . . but other places as well—Ukraine, Belarus.”74 McFaul further argued that, were Russia to be a democracy, it would be cooperating with the United States about MDS in Poland and the Czech Republic. As an autocracy, Russia views America as a threat and is engaged in a unilateralist response to the U.S. military initiatives. “In other words, they’re not looking to cooperate with us in terms of security. They’re seeking to balance against us.”75
By asserting Russia’s nuclear weakness and continuous threatening nature, the Lobby was not interested in having a serious discussion on the extent that the Kremlin’s hard-line statements and policies resulted from the United States’ own approach and perception of Russia. In the meantime, several military analysts raised a number of important issues with the U.S. approach. Some argued that the proposal to establish MDS sites in Eastern Europe deserved attention, but that the military benefits were “not worth the worsening of relations with Russia” that the Bush administration had already engendered.76 Others recognized that although the United States regularly asserts that Russia is not a potential enemy, a core principle of security policy remains “that reliable protection must be based on capacity rather than declared intent.”77 Nor was the Lobby inclined to entertain findings of experts, such as the MIT professor Ted Postol and the Stanford professor James Goodby, that MDS was not technically feasible.78

Activities

As with NATO expansion, those advocating nuclear superiority and an MDS against Russia’s objections sought to enlist the support of the U.S. political class for their cause, worked closely with governments in Eastern Europe, and promoted their message in the media. Acting on the identified premises of Russia’s weakness, politicians in the United States, such as the U.S. representative Tom Lantos (D-CA) sought to insult the Kremlin and downplay its military capabilities. Lantos referred to Putin’s intention to target European MDS installations as “incredibly stupid.” The U.S. representative said Russia’s president suffered from a Popeye complex, arguing that President Putin’s verbal “muscle flexing” resulted from massive oil and gas revenues and was similar to the muscle flexing of the spinach-eating cartoon character.79 Presidential candidate Senator John McCain (R-AZ) in his remarks to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council proceeded from assumptions about the Kremlin’s threatening intentions and spoke of “Russia’s nuclear blackmail”80—apparently referring to the nation’s unwillingness to acquiesce to the U.S. MDS plans. McCain’s disdain for Russia’s view was clearly revealed during a Grand Old Party debate on MDS when he said “I don’t care what [President Vladimir Putin’s] objections are to it.”81 In his article published in the Financial Times, McCain appealed to the European audience, seeking to rally it behind the United States on an anti-Russian platform. Repeating the nuclear blackmail thesis, the republican senator charged that Putin’s “blend of cynicism and Napoleonic delusion presents a dangerous challenge to the Euro-Atlantic community,” and he insisted on confronting Russia’s “profoundly authoritarian regime, dominated by an intelligence service hostile to western liberal values.”82
The Lobby was also actively pursuing Eastern European governments working in concert with U.S. officials who were trying—as they did while assembling the anti-Iraq coalition—to allure the “new Europe” by promises of material rewards. For example, the United States pledged a financial contribution to the Polish defence system. The Lobby found in Polish and Czech elites strong allies that were equally Russophobic and could not hide their animosity toward Russia. Going against the White House’s assurances about the MDS’ anti-Iranian character, the Czech foreign minister Karel Schwarzenberg publicly speculated on the question of against whom the U.S. radar would be targeted if Iran does not develop nuclear weapons. Answering this hypothetical question, Schwarzenberg replied that there were “more than enough” such states between the Bering Strait and the Mediterranean. Polish officials and MDS enthusiasts, such as Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski were even more specific and indicated that the system was not about Iran. In discussing the issue with President Bush, who argued that the MDS would be directed against Iran, Sikorski insisted, “We feel no threat from Iran.” Hoping for a greater assistance from the United States and a bigger defense budget, Sikorski was also disappointed that the Kremlin was not forthcoming with more substantive threats in response to the MDS developments.

Responding to the “threat” from the Kremlin, Polish and Czech elites reached out to their American patrons who sought to publicize the Eastern European perspectives in various forums and conferences organized by Washington think tanks, such as the AEI and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Ties that bound American think tanks and East European nationalists have been developing since the Cold War era. For example, before entering Polish politics as a senator and then as a foreign minister, Radek Sikorski had studied issues related to NATO and missile defense at AEI and had been the executive director of the New Atlantic Initiative at the institution. After leaving the think tanks, he continued to speak at its events. At CSIS, in addition to activities associated with Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Eastern European views were publicized through the New European Democracy Project run by Janusz Bugajski, an émigré from the region and the author of a highly critical book on Russia’s European policy.

Finally, in attempting to reach a broader public audience with the same anti-Russian message, the American MDS advocates sought to mobilize the media. One of the most successful efforts was the article by Kier Lieber and Daryl Press titled “The Rise of U.S. Nuclear Primacy” that argued for the irrelevance of nuclear deterrence against a severely undermined adversary. Focusing on the nuclear capabilities of Russia, the article was
defending the points that had been made earlier by General Odom. The authors revealed that the United States’ nuclear modernization was aimed at Russia and China, not rogue states or terrorists, and they assessed that Russia now had 39 percent fewer long-ranged bombers, 58 percent fewer ICBMs, and 80 percent fewer nuclear submarines.91 Russia’s vulnerability would only increase over time, and its fraying radar and satellite systems “would give Russian leaders at most a few minutes of warning before American weapons destroyed Russia’s retaliatory forces.”92 Published in the influential Foreign Affairs affiliated with the CFR, the article appeared at about the same time CFR released Russia’s Wrong Direction—a highly critical bipartisan report on Russia’s domestic and foreign policies93—and Vice President Cheney traveled to Vilnius to denounce Russian “energy blackmail” and rollback of democracy.94 In Russia, many saw the article’s publication as a political act and a conscientious effort to undermine the Kremlin’s nuclear policies and attempts to cooperate with the West. The former Russian prime minister Yegor Gaidar warned that the article could prompt a revival of Cold War–style military blocs: “If someone had wanted to provoke Russia and China into close cooperation over missile and nuclear technologies, it would be difficult to find a more skilful and elegant way of doing so.”95 While agreeing with some points in the article, Russia’s experts insisted, however, that the country retained its ability to destroy the United States in retaliation for an attack.96

In addition to the article by Lieber and Press, there were many other efforts to reveal Russia’s military weaknesses and present the Kremlin’s statements and initiatives as nothing more than a cover-up for its inability to sustain pressures coming from the United States. Defense analysts at Jamestown’s Eurasia Daily Monitor presented Russia’s position and its efforts to develop new strategic weapons as little more than “strategic bluff” and “irresponsible provocation.”97 They sought to implicate Russia’s new assertiveness as empty, serving no other purposes but to promote the hawkish Sergei Ivanov as President Putin’s successor.98 Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) wrote of the Kremlin’s decision to resume military parades—which many Russians viewed as evidence of state revival—as nothing but saber rattling and “a deliberate throwback to the country’s Communist past.”99 Although a number of analysts welcomed Russia’s security initiatives, such as the proposal to jointly exploit the Gabala radar station,100 members of the Lobby rushed to implicate them as practically inadequate and said that they could only make U.S.-Russia confrontation worse.101 To these and many other media writers, Russia remained a strategic threat that was seeking to compensate for domestic weakness by resorting to a tough militaristic rhetoric.
4. Conclusion

The Lobby was generally successful in achieving its objectives with regard to the expansion of NATO and MDS infrastructure in Europe against Russia’s objections. Although the U.S. policies were not justified in anti-Russian terms, as many within the Lobby would have wished, such policies were satisfactory to American critics of Russia. Although the actions of the U.S. government did not amount to isolating Russia from Europe and the West, in practice such actions greatly contributed to the Kremlin seeking an adequate military response.

While continuing its dialogue with the United States, the Kremlin engaged in military build up and the development of strategic relations with non-Western nations. Importantly, while Washington designed an MDS to counter the Russian SS-25, and any similar or less sophisticated threats, the Kremlin ordered and successfully tested the SS-27 Topol-M. The new missile makes boost-phase interception impossible unless one is located in close proximity to the launcher, which further questions the MDS’s idea technological and financial feasibility.102 In addition to building new weapons, Russia strengthened its efforts to develop military relations with China. Russia’s new president Dmitri Medvedev chose to go on to his first overseas trips to China and Kazakhstan—yet another indicator of the Kremlin’s strategic priorities. While in Beijing, Medvedev signed a joint statement with the Chinese president Hu Jintao, condemning the United States’ MDS plans and expressing frustration with the failure to develop a “global missile defense system.”103 For the first time since the end of the Cold War, the two nations spoke of readiness to jointly oppose an external enemy,104 thereby indicating the possible establishment of a military alliance.

Despite the Lobby’s efforts, many have understood the reciprocal nature of the Kremlin’s response and were left unconvinced by arguments about Russia’s inherently imperialist and anti-Western nature, as well as Washington’s statements that the expansion of NATO and MDS was not against Russia. To Michael Gorbachev and many other observers, these policies were about Russia and were responsible for the betrayal of trust in U.S.-Russia relations that had the potential to lead to a new Cold War.105
Russia’s Energy “Imperialism” and U.S. Interests

The use of energy as an overt weapon is not a theoretical threat of the future: It is happening now.

*(Senator Richard Lugar, 2006)*

Mr. Putin continues to seek the reconstitution of the Russian Empire, and I worry about that a great deal.

*(Senator John McCain, 2006)*

Russia has the pursuit of great power influence in its DNA, and that will not diminish simply because new oil arrives on the market.

*(Steve Levine, 2008)*

1. Energy Partnership versus Energy Hegemony

*Two ways of building energy relations with Russia*

Theoretically, there could be two opposing ways to organize relations with energy-rich Russia, ranging from a mutually beneficial partnership to the hegemonic control of Russia’s resources. Partnership might include mutually acceptable decisions on the terms of America’s investments in Russia’s energy fields, a joint exploitation of oil and gas pipelines going through the territories of third parties, and attempts to institutionalize relationships between the parties. Analysts have proposed, for example, that Russia and the Western nations build an energy consortium and that Russia be brought into the International Energy Agency (IEA).¹
Hegemony-based relationships would assume America’s efforts to impose its conditions of developing Russia’s resources unilaterally, either by dictating terms to the Russian government or by ignoring the state’s ability to form an energy policy and dealing directly with the Russian private sector. Such a relationship would be uneven and would include direct ownership or controlling the stakes by American companies in Russia’s energy fields and energy infrastructure. Rather than seeking to build mutually beneficial consortiums and moving toward institutionalization, the United States would be driven by considerations of relative energy gains, encouraging the development of alternative pipelines that would circumvent Russia and discouraging others from cooperating with Russia in building additional transportation routes.

The U.S. interest in Partnership

There is hardly an alternative to developing partnership-like relations with Russia. Russia represents a critically important market for the United States, which consumes over 20 percent of the world’s energy and has a shortage of its own energy supplies. As the U.S. ambassador William Burns puts it, “In the case of Russia, the United States and energy, the power of the argument for partnership between us is obvious. Russia is the world’s largest producer of hydrocarbons; the United States is the world’s largest consumer.” Political instability in the Middle East—the traditional U.S. source of oil—reinforces the importance of Russia’s supplies. Opportunities arising from cooperating with Russia are both political and economic. Politically, an energy partnership will contribute to the development of U.S.-Russia cooperation in solving other vital issues, such as terrorism, weapons proliferation, and narcotics trafficking. Among other things, the diversification of energy supplies away from the Middle Eastern countries will help to bring down oil prices and undermine funding for prominent terrorist organizations. The United States will also benefit greatly from investing in the energy-rich and booming economy of Russia. For Russia, partnership with the United States promises new technologies, greater integration into the world economy, and the strengthening of political ties between the two countries.

However, Russia can only be a stable and long-term energy supplier if it is treated as an equal partner with important interests of its own. A recovering great power with the largest world energy supplies, Russia can either be a valuable partner or a major spoiler of Western policies in Eurasia and outside. Today’s Russia is Western enough to try to break into international markets, maintaining constant contacts with Western security institutions, and initiating projects of mutual interest. But
expectations of Russia’s continuous weakness—even when it was indeed weak in the 1990s—as well as hopes that Russia would settle for the role of junior partner, have always been shortsighted. For everyone who has studied the history of Russia’s relations with the West, it is clear that the country has never been the West’s to lose or gain. Historically, it has established itself as a power in its own right with its own legitimate interests to defend. Now, after the disastrous years of state collapse, Russia is merely returning to the great power it has been for the last three centuries. As Andrew Kuchins wrote, “Russia is back in the game [and] . . . it is possible that 2005 may be viewed retrospectively as a historical turning point in Eurasia—the end of Russia’s decline. This recovery might be based on the shaky foundation of high oil prices, but it’s real nonetheless.”

This means that denying Russia its energy interests and the right to set an independent energy policy at home and in Eurasia is sure to come with large political and economic costs. Treating Russia as a potential threat may bring to power in Moscow those who are not interested in strengthening relations with the United States. Politically, it may generate a prolonged cycle of hostilities shaped by the United States’ and Russia’s clashing perceptions of each other’s energy intentions—the situation that some experts describe as the energy security dilemma and others as the militarization of the global struggle over energy supplies. Economically, it may lead to the prevention of prominent American companies from developing important energy fields and energy relations abroad. As two foreign policy experts write, “American diplomacy can mitigate Russian policy-makers’ threat perceptions,” and this “would require the United States to reach a set of strategic understandings with Moscow encouraging a mutual respect for each side’s critical interests.”

2. Russia as an Alternative Middle East

The tragedy of 9/11 presented the United States and Russia with an opportunity to improve their relations in a number of important areas, including energy. For Russia, the opportunity was to overcome its sense of insecurity and begin relations with America anew. For the United States, it became possible to move away from its unilateral and militaristic policies that had their roots in the Cold War era. As early as 1980, Washington declared its readiness to employ “any means necessary, including military force” to prevent other powers from blocking oil supplies from the Persian Gulf. Military bases and the Central Command were created to guard the oil flow. The same logic dominated the U.S. policy making after the Cold War when the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline was built to carry energy supplies from the Caspian Sea. It was accompanied by a militarization of ties with governments
Russia recognized the opportunity to develop relations with the United States. Beginning with his interview in the *Wall Street Journal* in February 2002, President Putin positioned Russia as a reliable alternative to traditional Middle Eastern sources of energy. Russia only accounted for 1 percent of American imports, and Putin projected a considerable increase in Russia’s energy production, with a major rise in exports to the United States. By that time, the Kremlin had also refused to comply with the OPEC cartel demand that Russia, which is not a member of the organization, limit its rising oil exports. Russia’s lower price target—at the time approximately $18–$22 per barrel, in comparison to OPEC’s official price target of $22–$28—helped to keep oil prices lower. Russia’s traditional opposition to the BTC route subsided, as Russia’s energy companies began to consider investing in the project.

The U.S. government too demonstrated an interest in developing a major energy partnership with Russia to reinforce the strengthening of the two nations’ ties. In response to Russia’s OPEC-independent production posture, the commerce secretary Donald L. Evans noted that Russian resources “can add to the energy security and energy stability in the world.”10 the secretary of energy Spencer Abraham was also supportive of rebuilding relations with Russia, viewing them in terms of a greater diversification of supplies away from the Middle East: “Greater energy security through a more diverse supply of oil for global markets—these are key elements of President Bush’s National Energy Policy.”11 Abraham’s visit to Moscow in November 2001 reportedly ended the years of U.S.-Russia rivalry over Caspian Sea oil. Rather than trying to isolate Russia, Russian companies were invited to participate in the BTC pipeline. At about the same time, the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) was established, with memberships of Chevron-Texaco, Arco, Mobil, Shell, and the governments of Russia and Kazakhstan, to carry oil from Kazakhstan’s Tenghiz oil field (the world’s sixth largest) to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiisk.12

In May 2002, the U.S. and Russian presidents signed a joint declaration on energy cooperation with the intention, in President Bush’s words, to build a “major new energy partnership” that would unite Russia and America as close partners.13 The key challenge was to improve transportation to carry the energy to world markets—the United States pledged to invest more in

---

The emerging U.S.-Russia energy partnership

of the Caucasus and Central Asia and fierce competition with Russia for resources in the region.6 In the late 1990s, Washington was also encouraging negotiations with the Taliban government to build a pipeline through Afghanistan, linking the natural gas-rich Turkmenistan to Pakistan and bypassing Russia.7
Russian ports and oil and gas facilities, strengthen Russia’s exporting potential, and smoothen the export flow. The United States’ officials began to encourage American companies, such as Exxon, to develop Siberian oil, promising billions of dollars in revenue over the next three decades. On Russia’s side, Yukos, then its second largest oil company, had started shipping oil to the United States, and the first direct shipment had arrived to Texas in July 2002. The Houston Energy Summit in October reinforced the growing energy cooperation plans, and Russian officials pledged to export as much as one million barrels a day to the United States within five years. The United States’ overall daily need for energy is about 20 million barrels. About a hundred industry leaders from the two countries met to negotiate various measures to facilitate their cooperation. Although Russia cannot fully replace the Middle East as an energy supplier, a number of experts have predicted the rise in significance of Russia’s energy supply to the United States and the further development of the U.S.-Russia relationship. For instance, the Petroleum Finance Company, the influential consulting firm, reportedly saw Moscow on its way to becoming “the next Houston—the global capital of energy.”

However, in early 2003, U.S.-Russia energy relations took a different direction. The U.S. investment flow to Russia’s energy sector stopped, which some attributed to the absence of “a good legal and business climate,” particularly in the area of taxation related to the production-sharing agreement (PSA). More importantly, the sufficient political capital from Washington to alleviate potential business risks was no longer in place, and the PSA story was only one aspect of the emerging political vacuum. Other clear signs emerged that powerful groups within the American establishment resisted the idea of an equal partnership with Russia, favoring instead U.S. energy hegemony in the region.

The Lobby’s agenda

The Lobby did not see equal partnership with Russia as advantageous to American interests, viewing Russia’s growing energy power as a threat rather than an opportunity for cooperation. The strongest opposition to such cooperation came from right-wing groups that included old-style conservatives such as Dick Cheney and James Woolsey, neoconservatives associated with the PNAC, and Eastern European nationalists such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Paula Dobriansky. Although the groups disagreed on some issues, they were united by the Cold War experience of fighting the Soviets, and shared the fundamental objective of forcing Russia to comply with U.S. hegemonic energy policies in Eurasia. Some leftist observers assisted them in undermining the U.S.-Russia partnership by castigating the revival of Russia’s independent energy policy as an
expression of “energo-fascism”—a terminology that resonated with right-winger groups.22

The first prominent hegemonic group was associated with President Jimmy Carter’s former national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski. A long-term member of the American establishment, Brzezinski is known for his geopolitical designs to project America’s power in the world,23 as well as his involvement with various energy companies. A Democrat with critically important policy-making experience, Brzezinski was uniquely positioned to participate in formulating the strategic direction of U.S. foreign policy and to serve as a liaison between hawkish Republicans and Democrats, as well as between the policy world and the private sector. In the second half of the 1990s, Brzezinski began working as a paid consultant for Amoco—the largest U.S. investor in the Caspian Sea littoral state, Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan sought to attract large American companies to its oil wealth, and Amoco was instrumental in establishing the energy consortium Azerbaijan International Operating Co. (AIOC), with more than a 50 percent share given to U.S. companies.24 By working closely with Clinton administration officials, especially the National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, Brzezinski lobbied for pipeline routes that bypass the territory of Russia. While some argued against U.S. engagement with corrupt, autocratic regimes in the Caucasus, Brzezinski and others viewed instability in the region as an opportunity to be exploited while Russia was weak. For instance, in 1999 Brzezinski cautioned against Russia’s success in achieving control over Chechnya, which he saw in terms of Russia’s subsequent ability to undermine Western energy pipelines coming from the Caspian Sea.25

The conviction that Russia must be bypassed and isolated was strongly related to Brzezinski’s overall philosophy, which conceptualized Moscow as a future revisionist power to be contained, and not as a potential partner in concert with large states in Eurasia. This philosophy was clearly expressed in his writings and policy activities that included efforts to award independence to Chechnya; expand NATO to Russia’s borders; create anti-Russian geopolitical groupings, such as GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) in the former Soviet region; and block Russia’s attempts to build alternative pipelines to Europe. No less importantly, many of Brzezinski’s activities—such as chairing and coordinating work of the ACPC—can be explained by his determination to control energy sources in Eurasia, which he saw as “the chief geopolitical prize” for America.26 As Russia was a key obstacle to it, he sought to isolate it by supporting Islamic radicals in Afghanistan during the Cold War and advocating a softer U.S. line toward Iran, which lay to the south of Brzezinski’s favored energy corridor from the Caspian Sea.27 Supported by some officials in the Clinton administration, he was able to successfully promote much of his zero-sum vision.
The second hegemonic group was associated with the former CIA director James Woolsey and the former Reagan administration official and president of the neoconservative CSP Frank Gaffney. Tied to the defense industry, the group advocated a much more isolationist approach to energy security than that of Brzezinski. In particular, in an unlikely alliance with military contractors, right-wing organizations such as CPD, and greens, the group created the Set America Free Coalition, championing calls for energy conservation and cutting dependence on foreign oil. Against experts’ critical assessment of such an autarchic understanding of energy security, Gaffney and Woolsey advocated relying on alternative fuels (ethanol and methanol) and electricity as a transportation fuel (hybrid vehicles) as the energy security solution. Unlike greens, however, they wanted to exploit greater energy independence for the pursuit of more hegemonic and unilateral policies in the world. Like Brzezinski, they saw the “fascistic” Kremlin’s energy policy as a threat, but in contrast to him, they cherished no hopes of ever improving ties with Iran, advocating an overthrow of the regime there instead.

The third group emerged out of the establishment of the neoconservative PNAC. Like Brzezinski’s group, PNAC defended an expansionist policy in Eurasia. Indeed, there are many striking parallels between the reasoning of Brzezinski’s *Grand Chessboard* (1997) and that of PNAC’s *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* (2000). However, PNAC went much further than Brzezinski in advocating worldwide military interventionism, including that in Iraq and Iran. In Robert Kagan’s articulation of the organization’s vision of energy security, he stated, “When we have economic problems, it’s been caused by disruptions in our oil supply. If we have a force in Iraq, there will be no disruption in oil supplies.” The group was not as united on the Russia question. A number of neocons saw Russia’s role in Eurasia similarly to the author of *Grand Chessboard*—as the main geopolitical competitor—and were mistrustful of the Kremlin’s intentions to the point of being sympathetic with Islamic radicals in Chechnya. As David Frum and Richard Perle wrote, “Russia has played a double game from the very beginning of the war on terror.” Others, such as William Kristol, were more supportive of possible cooperation with Russia against terrorism.

For several reasons these groups were able to affect and, in some ways, determine the United States’ energy policy. Most importantly, President Bush failed to provide the strong leadership required to prevent groups as diverse as former Clintonites, Cold War hawks, and Eastern European lobbies to converge on the anti-Russian perspective and influence the White House. Distracted by the Iraq war and reacting to Putin’s domestic centralization of power, Bush found it difficult to stay committed to his initial idea of a strategic partnership with Russia.
In addition to this, Vice President Dick Cheney’s role in formulating Russia policy increased. Unlike Bush, Cheney was never a strong advocate of energy partnership with Moscow. His commitment to hegemonic policies stretches back to the 1990s, when he showed his support for the PNAC’s views by signing the organization’s founding statement that promised a Reaganite policy of military strength and a challenge to “regimes hostile to our interests and values.” In 1999—long before the U.S. intervention in Iraq and the sharp rise in oil prices—Cheney indicated that controlling Russia’s reserves may ultimately be no less important than controlling those of the Middle East, and that the way to achieve this would be by securing access to global energy from the four oil giants, Chevron-Texaco, ExxonMobil, BP, and Royal Dutch Shell. This hegemonic approach was conveyed in Cheney’s National Energy Policy that was released on May 17, 2001, and defined access to oil as a key component of national security and recommended increasing its availability. The approach resonated with many in the private sector and policy circles. Major U.S. companies had already invested heavily in the oil fields of the Caucasus and Central Asia; in policy circles many prominent officials—Richard Armitage, Dov Evans, Donald Rumsfeld, and Condoleezza Rice, among others (not counting Bush himself)—had strong ties to the energy industry and were accustomed to a Russia that would offer no serious competition to American expansion in the region. Indeed, as head of the Washington-based Center for Public Integrity Chuck Lewis put it, “There’s never been an administration in power in this country that has been so close to a single industry—in this instance, the oil-and-gas industry.”

3. Oligarchs, Yukos, and the Struggle for Russia’s Energy Assets

Russia’s state assertion in the energy sector

Russia views energy as a tool for achieving its larger foreign policy objectives. The most important of these objectives were outlined in Putin’s early programmatic speech “Russia at the turn of millenniums,” as economic modernization, political stability, and the enhancement of security. The key threat for Putin came not from the United States but from falling behind in economic development. He was eager to emphasize the economic nature of the contemporary world and the need for Russia to be successful in the geoeconomic rather than military struggle, for “the norm of the international community and the modern world is a tough competition— for markets, investments, political, and economic influence.”

The role of the energy sector is to work with the state to promote these objectives. As explained by Putin, relying on market forces is essential, but
insufficient: “Even in developed countries, market mechanisms do not provide solutions to strategic tasks of resource use, protecting nature, and sustainable economic security.” The state therefore has to shape policy outcomes by actively seeking to control social resources, coordinating the activities of key social players, and assisting the country in finding its niche in the global economy. To achieve these tasks, the state had to be sufficiently concentrated and relatively autonomous of interest-group pressures.

In Russia, in response to the economic reforms of the 1990s, the most prominent interest group was a handful of extremely wealthy individuals—oligarchs—that emerged to control much of the economy and influence key decisions of the state. Despite their prior inexperience in the Soviet oil industry, several of them acquired their fortune in energy companies due to access to financial capital from private banks, special connections to the Russian government, special privileges granted to them by Boris Yeltsin’s state (tax breaks, etc.), and rigged privatization schemes. The new economic actors, such as Mikhail Khodorkovski of Yukos and Boris Berezovski and Roman Abramovich of Sibneft, were not self-made individuals like the American robber barons; they became the owners of the Russian oil giants mainly because of state patronage. Putin made known his lack of respect for the ways in which the oligarchs had emerged and enriched themselves, although he also expressed his readiness to honor the privatization and market reforms that had already taken place. In one of his private meetings with businessmen, Putin summed up his philosophy by telling businessmen that “they could keep what they had already stolen, but now they had to play clean, pay taxes, make investments and stay out of politics.” In his view, while remaining accountable to Russian citizens through the popular vote, oligarchs and other interest groups had to have a subordinate place in the power structure.

It is in this context that the so-called Yukos affair must be assessed. The Kremlin was ruthless to those oligarchs whom it perceived as violating the “new deal”—that is, not staying out of politics and not cooperating with the state in the implementation of its economic vision. Boris Berezovski and Vladimir Gusinski, who launched an anti-Putin propaganda campaign using their media empires and their own TV channels, were charged with not paying their financial debts to the state and fled the country to avoid prosecution. Mikhail Khodorkovski too was given time to leave the country, but chose not to, and on October 25, 2003, was arrested on charges of multiple fraud and tax evasion. Khodorkovski got involved in anti-Putin politics by generously supporting both liberal and nationalist opposition to Putin’s rule. Indeed, he hinted that he was about to enter politics himself. Oligarchs were, again, uniting their efforts to restore
their power and run Russia both directly and through their representatives in parliament and the executive branch.

Another danger to the state came from the oligarchs’ business decisions, including selling considerable parts of their assets to purchase property abroad, thereby increasing the capital flight from the country. Some became frightened—like Gusinsky, who prepared to leave the country by selling a large portion of his stock in Russia’s natural resources to buy a British soccer team.47 Khodorkovski was not planning to emigrate, but he wanted to acquire greater security from possible state prosecution by selling a large portion of his oil empire to foreigners. In particular, he began negotiating with ExxonMobil and Chevron-Texaco about selling them a major share of Yukos, which would result in their ownership of 25 percent and 40 percent of shares, respectively. With majority stakes of the company held by U.S. oil giants, the contract would have prevented possible Kremlin’s interference in Yukos.48 Khodorkovski understood that “the most profitable business in Russia is politics and that’s the way it will always be.”49 He was also about to merge with Sibneft to make Yukos become the second largest energy holder in the world after ExxonMobil, and the fourth largest company in terms of production.50

Despite their selective nature and questionable legality, the Kremlin’s actions against oligarchs were strongly supported by the general public that overwhelmingly felt robbed by Yeltsin’s reforms. As Stephen Cohen wrote, responding to the Western lack of sensitivity to the issue of social devastation, “That ongoing human tragedy is what is mainly missing from the U.S. media story, where poverty and the plight of most Russians are hardly ever mentioned. Even if some accounts of Russia’s crisis are overstated, the only solution is a new economic course that uses the oligarchs’ enormous profits from the country’s natural resources to rescue and develop the rest of the nation.”51 In a country where notions of law and justice were severely undermined, there was hardly a legal solution to the problem of excessive wealth concentration and the restoration of a balance between state authority and big business.52 Although it remains to be seen whether Putin’s actions are going to move Russia closer to liberal, rather than state-dominant, capitalism, the option of alternative oligarchic/neocolonial capitalism was firmly rejected by the Russians, and the Kremlin acted consistently with public expectations.

**U.S. attempts to control Russia’s energy**

Given the Russian state’s perception of oligarchs and energy issues, the United States should have reacted cautiously to Khodorkovski’s arrest and not view it as an obstacle to continuous efforts to develop cooperation.
The official reaction, however, was hardly a cautious one. The State Department called the arrest politically motivated. The State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said that the Kremlin had to act to dispel concerns of the United States: “There’s always the issue [in] a case like this as to whether it’s a single event or whether it has some sweeping implication for the rule of law in Russia.” Russia’s Foreign Ministry referred to the statement as hypocritical, tactless, and disrespectful toward Russia, pointing to Enron and WorldCom as prominent cases of law violation in the United States. The White House too demonstrated a lack of confidence in Russia, referring to what it saw as worrisome signs about the direction in which the Kremlin was taking the country.

Rather than concentrating on international issues that might have united the two countries, the United States chose to make progress in bilateral cooperation dependent upon Russia’s domestic situation. Washington saw the issue in terms of the compatibility of the two countries’ political and economic systems, and it expected Russia to build a similar kind of liberal capitalism with the strong and independent energy sector the United States had. The expectation was that Russia would open wide its economy for American investments, and investors would have to deal primarily with the Russian private sector. There were at least two problems with this expectation. First, Russia’s economy was that of an energy producer, not consumer, and it is common for energy producing countries to have the state playing a significant role in coordinating oil and gas industry development. Suffice it to recall examples of Norway and the Middle Eastern countries to invalidate expectations of energy business independence from the state. Second, the United States itself often gets involved and acts protectively to prevent other nations’ possible purchase of important American companies. A significant example of this is the U.S. Congress’ resistance to the Chinese company CNOOC’s (China National Offshore Oil Corporation) potential acquisition of Unocal in 2005. When America insists that others be open to internationalization while not doing so itself, persuading other countries then becomes difficult.

Yukos is a good example of how the United States’ expectation of Russia’s internationalization hid an effort to achieve a unilateral advantage in exploiting Russia’s energy. Rather than allowing the two nations’ private sectors to develop their relationships without state interference, Vice President Cheney sought to influence them in such a way as to gain political leverage. In July 2003 he met with Khodorkovski, the then head of the largest oil company. The meeting and its contents were not publicized, but Yukos’ negotiations with ExxonMobil and Chevron-Texaco about selling them a 65 percent share of the $8 billion company—some say at a considerably undervalued price— took place following the meeting. If in
encouraging the deal the state was seeking to exercise the hegemonic approach to energy, then the Yukos affair obtains an entirely different dimension, and “politically motivated” takes on an entirely different meaning than the one intended by the State Department.

The Lobby: Defending oligarchs and discrediting Putin

The interests of hegemony-favoring circles within the United States and those of Khodorkovski coincided with each other. Both opposed Russia’s strategy of state concentration and therefore sought to combine their efforts.

Khodorkovski had started to court friends in Washington long before he met Cheney. As soon as George W. Bush moved to the White House in early 2001, the oligarch sought a meeting with the new national security advisor, Condoleezza Rice. Because of “allegations of past business improprieties,” he could not get an appointment for the meeting but persisted in his efforts, and in 2002 he met a number of distinguished members of America’s political establishment—from the energy secretary Spencer Abraham to the former president George H. W. Bush. Khodorkovski established a close business relationship with the Carlyle Group, an investment bank that advised Bush senior. In his efforts to further solidify relations with the Bush family, the oligarch also donated money to Laura Bush’s charity. But he didn’t lose sight of broader political connections in Washington. He met former Democratic senator Bill Bradley (New Jersey), who was an advisor to the Open Russia Foundation, a Britain-based philanthropy bankrolled by Khodorkovski. In addition to starting his own think tank in Russia, Khodorkovski made generous contributions to the Library of Congress ($1 million), as well as various think tanks of both liberal and conservative orientations across Washington, such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace ($500,000) and the AEI.

Although many of the above-cited individuals and organizations denied any relationship between these financial contributions and their criticisms of Khodorkovski’s arrest, the Lobby’s reaction to the arrest can hardly be understood without analyzing their impact. With the support of Khodorkovski and other oligarchs’ money, the Lobby sought to frame the event in terms of Russia’s cracking down on an essentially transparent and efficient private sector and returning to the history-old pattern of anti-Western power concentration. Those who became especially visible in attacking the Kremlin on the one hand and whitewashing Khodorkovski and oligarchs in Russia on the other, came from both the (neo)conservative and the liberal establishment.
The same month Khodorkovski was arrested, an influential PNAC member and Pentagon advisor Richard Perle gave an interview to the *Washington Post*, in which he insisted that the United States take a tougher line on Putin by banning Russia from receiving reconstruction contracts in Iraq and expelling it from the G-8. Perle said the G-8 should not be allowed “to behave in such a way with one of its leading businessmen.”60 A few days later, Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) delivered a statement on the Senate floor warning of “a creeping coup against the forces of democracy and market capitalism” and asserting that “it’s time to face unpleasant facts about Russia.”61 Rather than trying to understand Russia’s realities of wealth concentration and resulting state weakness, the issue was framed exclusively in terms of market efficiency and political freedom. Following Perle and McCain, many others on Capitol Hill, including Senators Joseph I. Lieberman (D-Conn.), Joseph R. Biden Jr. (Del.), and Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.), were soon calling the administration to get tough with Russia. To pressurize the government, hearings on Russian democracy took place featuring Yukos representatives, and Senator Lugar complained about the lack of financial support for human rights and democratic groups in the former Soviet Union.62 At that point, few were willing to remember what a couple years ago were known to be Khodorkovski’s “business improprieties”; instead, the oligarch was honorably referred to as a “leading businessman.” The Lobby fully embraced the side of Khodorkovski who characterized his company as the most honest, transparent, and efficient.63

Formidable support for the oligarch also came from the media and think tanks, including the ones he had financially supported. In addition to multiple TV shows and ads in major national news outlets promoting the oligarchs and condemning Putin’s “autocracy,” the Western papers published thousands of largely Khodorkovski-sympathetic commentaries amounting to what some called “the media’s new Cold War” on Russia.64 References to Yukos, such as those characterizing it as the syndication of the gulag and as a triumph of corrupt, cynical, brutal, and incompetent rulers, demonstrated an extreme degree of hostility toward the Kremlin.65 Members of the think-tank community repeated and developed the already quoted arguments about the anticapitalist and antidemocratic nature of the Kremlin’s new energy policy. Leon Aron of the AEI condemned what he saw as a largely inefficient move away from liberal reform in energy markets toward recentralization and renationalization, comparing the state’s actions toward oligarchs with the slaying of its largest golden goose.66 Brzezinski, a member of the CSIS, deplored what he saw as an emerging fascist regime imposing stifling political centralization.67

Especially prominent in whitewashing Khodorkovski was the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Its experts—both America- and
Russia-based—were extremely critical of the Kremlin, claiming an air of legitimacy by working closely with Russian commentators. Anders Aslund presented Yukos as one of the best-managed private enterprises and oligarchs as the engines of Russia’s development, calling the sanctity of oligarchs’ property rights a factor in the foundations for strong economic growth. Michael McFaul described the Yukos affair as part of Putin’s systematic ploy to destroy the foundations of Russia’s fragile democracy, and called for the White House to increase its distance from the Kremlin. Liliya Shevtsova argued that it was Yukos’ transparency and legality that doomed the company to be something that was impossible for the Kremlin to tolerate.

A number of other Russian commentators and politicians, such as Andrei Illarionov, Garry Kasparov, and others, attacked the Kremlin at home and in the Western media space. These commentaries allowed the American critics of Putin to claim legitimacy for their own attacks. For instance, answering media questions about being tough on Russia during his presentation at a conference in Vilnius, Vice President Cheney responded by saying,

> The intriguing thing about that conference was I didn’t give the toughest speech on the Russians. The toughest speech on the Russians was given by a man named Illarionov, a Russian himself, who issued a blistering indictment about what’s been happening to democracy and democratic processes in Russia. The remarkable thing is he used to be President Putin’s economic advisor. He’s a very prominent man who runs an economics institute in Moscow.

Comments by Illarionov and others were therefore presented by the Lobby in a self-serving way—exclusively to undermine the legitimacy of the Kremlin’s policies. The overwhelming majority of American commentators failed to mention, let alone analyze, the above-discussed points about the vulnerability of Russia to outside pressure, or the need to restore the balance between state authority and big business.

### 4. The Scramble for the Caspian Sea Reserves

*Energy in Russia’s foreign policy*

With the overall objectives of economic recovery and political independence, Russia has developed a strategy for exploiting the country’s abundance in natural resources. In the world of growing energy prices, the emphasis shifted from providing macroeconomic discipline and tough fiscal policies
to having the desire to capitalize on Russia’s reserves of natural gas and oil. The Kremlin’s leading ideologist Vladislav Surkov justified the reliance on “energy power”: “If you have strong legs you should compete in the long jump and not play chess.” The new Foreign Ministry report titled “A Review of the Russian Federation’s Foreign Policy,” commissioned by the Kremlin and released on March 27, 2007, embraced the notion of multipolarity based on “a more equitable distribution of resources for influence and economic growth,” thereby laying the ground for a more self-confident and assertive Russia.

Russia’s energy strategy has included several important elements. Among them are increasing the state’s share in energy companies, such as Gazprom and Rosneft, often at the expense of Western capital; building pipelines in all geographic directions; seeking to negotiate long-term contracts with energy consumers and obtain access to their markets and distribution networks; raising energy prices for its oil-and gas-dependent neighbors; moving to control transportation networks in the former USSR; and coordinating its activities with other energy producers. Acting on these policy guidelines, the state renegotiated production-sharing agreements with Western companies in the most lucrative oil fields in Siberia and the Far East. Foreign energy giants, such as Royal Dutch Shell and BP, now had to play by different rules as introduced by the more assertive Russian state. In addition to the energy industry and military-industrial complex, the Kremlin announced plans to create “national champions,” or state-supported companies in the banking, aerospace, automobile, and heavy machinery sectors. In the Caspian Sea, Russia sought to remain an important oil producer and preserve its status as a major transit country through which to carry energy from the Caucasus and Central Asia to Europe.

Although it has generated anxiety in the United States and a number of energy-consuming countries in Europe, the strategy reflects—more than anything else—Moscow’s legitimate desire to capitalize on its energy reserves and improve its chances to serve as a reliable oil and gas supplier of primarily Western countries. Against the advice of some energy analysts and geopolitical thinkers, the Kremlin did not think it would be better off by sharply redirecting its oil and gas supplies toward Eurasian countries, such as China and India. The Kremlin has argued that increasing state shares and creating large national companies was necessary to position them for successful international competition. Russian officials continued to insist on expediting the country’s entrance to the WTO. They further recognized the vital need for foreign investments and technology—particularly that coming from Western nations—for continuing high economic growth. They argued that attempts to control transportation networks and gain a
greater presence in European markets could be beneficial to the Western countries, in ensuring the reliability of supplies and promoting greater integration with the West. Finally, raising energy prices was necessary for commercial reasons, as a preparation for future membership to the WTO and as a practice fully consistent with market economy rules. Judging by statements from its key officials, Russia continues to welcome energy cooperation with the United States and other Western nations. As Russia’s ambassador to the United States Yuri Ushakov wrote, although American investments in Russia increase every year and Russian oil supplies to America reach an unprecedented level every year, “in real terms, our energy cooperation is way below potential.”

The U.S. policies

The United States’ traditional approach to solving its energy problems was hardly conducive to the development of an energy partnership with Russia. Ever since the crisis in the 1970s when the OPEC countries imposed an oil embargo and raised prices, the American policy makers have pursued hegemonic policies in trying to control energy supplies. With the Soviet disintegration and Russia’s sharply diminished ability to dominate in the region, Washington moved to develop a unilateral advantage in exploiting the Caspian Sea reserves. During the period 2000–2005, major U.S. oil companies such as ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Halliburton invested almost $30 billion in the area. The United States developed special ties with Azerbaijan, the richest state in the Caucasus and—with the involvement of major Western oil companies—Washington built the BTC pipeline to bypass Russia in carrying oil to the Mediterranean coast. The pipeline, which was 1,090 miles (1,750km) long, was completed in 2005 and is able to carry one million barrels per day. Extremely expensive, the BTC was thought to be of strategic significance precisely because it was the only route circumventing energy-rich Iran and Russia.

The United States’ current policies reflect the same fear of Russia, rather than the opportunities presented by its energy potential and economic recovery. The failure to assert control over Yukos only served to strengthen Washington’s determination to unilaterally exploit energy reserves around Russia, particularly in the Caspian region. In addition to Russia and Iran, the region includes Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan. By some estimates, the region holds possible reserves of up to 233 billion barrels of oil, in comparison to Saudi Arabia’s 261 billion and the United States’ 23 billion. The main preoccupation of the OPEC-traumatized Washington remains to be how to diversify supplies and achieve energy independence—a futile
enterprise given America’s considerable dependence on others in its energy needs. In practice, U.S. energy policies are frequently pursued at the expense of Russia’s principal interests, thereby provoking equally assertive efforts by the Kremlin to establish energy dominance in the Caspian region. Rather than trying to cooperate with Russia in exploiting its pipelines, as with the above-discussed CPC, or in jointly building new transportation routes, Washington has engaged in a zero-sum competition, effectively undermining the existing potential for partnership Moscow.

Steps taken by American policy makers after 2002 serve to illustrate this dangerous dynamic of bilateral relationships. They have sought to undermine Russia’s energy posture in at least four ways. First, the United States has taken the side of Ukraine and other nations in their energy disputes with Russia, characterizing those disputes as “energy blackmail” on the part of the Kremlin and refusing to recognize the legitimacy of Russia’s determination to stop subsidizing its neighbors. For instance, in May 2006, Vice President Cheney harshly criticized the Kremlin for using its energy resources as “tools of intimidation or blackmail” and throwing its weight around “either by supply manipulation or attempts to monopolize transportation.”83 In June 2007, while testifying before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried too denounced Russia for “using energy as political leverage to influence its neighbours’ policies.”84 Both Cheney and Fried chose to ignore that Russia was heavily subsidizing Ukraine and other nations and sought to correct a seriously distorted price structure.85

Second, Washington sought to cultivate special relationships with energy producers in the Caspian region—Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan—trying to convince them not to rely on Russian pipelines, and instead transport their oil through BTC and other alternative pipelines under construction. Not only did Cheney refuse to see the legitimacy of Russia’s policies during his trip to the region, but after making his harsh statements about Russia monopolizing energy routes, he traveled to Kazakhstan to push for the construction of a major new gas pipeline from the country that would bypass Russia. Washington promised Kazakhstan and other states in the Caspian region an opportunity to sell their energy at a considerably higher price than the one offered by Russia. Attracted to the opportunity, the three states showed interest, and Moscow had to considerably raise its offer.

Third, the United States worked hard to obtain the necessary political support in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Europe to build more Russia-bypassing pipelines from the Caspian region. Of them, the two most important are the trans-Caspian route, projected to connect Turkmenistan to Azerbaijan or Georgia under the Caspian Sea, and the so-called
Nabucco pipeline that would run through Austria, Hungary, and Romania, connecting—through the Black Sea—to the BTC and other alternative transportation routes. In March 2007, speaking at congressional hearings, Fried said: “As these gas projects develop, they will become a ‘southern corridor’ of infrastructure, offering a fair and transparent competition to Gazprom’s large scale network, which is being expanded in Northern Europe. The southern corridor will be able to change Eurasia’s strategic map.” While luring some countries to do business with the West, Washington discouraged others from cooperating with Russia. For instance, visiting Greece in April 2006, the secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and other U.S. officials warned Greece and Turkey against allowing Russia to obtain a monopoly over Europe’s supply of natural gas. The U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state Matthew Bryza and the assistant secretary of state Daniel Fried worked to discourage Hungary from cooperating with Russia by giving several interviews in the Western media and publishing in leading Hungarian newspapers. Washington’s strategy prompted Moscow to build alternative pipelines of its own. In May 2007, Putin secured a commitment from Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to increase exports of Central Asian energy via Russia’s pipelines. In addition, Moscow obtained the support of Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Serbia, and Austria to build the so-called South Stream pipeline, effectively undermining the American plans.

Finally, Washington tried to sabotage Russia’s plans to purchase shares in European companies and distribution networks and thereby become more integrated with Europe. Especially active here was Bryza. In November 2006, he threatened the Germans over the prospect of the construction of the North European Pipeline with Russia, prompting the response from the Russian Foreign Ministry that “what really stands behind the United States’ opposition to the pipeline is not its concern about the energy security of Europe, but the belief by certain American officials that good gas pipelines are only those bypassing Russia.” In February 2008, Bryza attacked Russia’s Gazprom, accusing it of overpricing its products and threatening the “economic security of our most important allies.” He said that the United States expected Gazprom to invest the lion’s share of its profits into producing and transporting more gas instead of buying up strategic energy infrastructure in Europe. Bryza therefore sought to discourage Russia’s international economic integration and restrict its role to that of a resource appendage. The strategy backfired: instead of compelling Moscow to fall in line with Washington’s expectations, the United States provoked Russia to search for ways to coordinate its policies with other energy producing countries. Rather than achieving diverse energy supplies, the United States pushed
Russia toward creating an energy alliance (cartel) united by a perceived American threat.91

The Lobby: Politicizing energy disagreements and pushing for a tougher U.S. policy

The Lobby’s perception of Russia’s intentions in the energy sphere was well captured by the Economist’s (December 16, 2006) cover page image that presented President Putin as a gangster with a gasoline pump. The image reflects a view of Russia as a new major threat, and it implies the need to take strong actions against it.

The U.S. Congress played an important role in politicizing energy relations with Russia. For instance, a number of Senate and House of Representatives hearings on intelligence and foreign relations contributed to the perceiving of U.S.-Russia energy ties in political terms, that is, as potentially damaging to the overall bilateral relationship. In February 2006, the U.S. national intelligence director John Negroponte told the Senate Intelligence Committee that although Russia would probably continue to “work with the United States on shared interests, such as counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and counter-proliferation,” Putin’s drive to centralize power and assert control over strategic sectors of the economy could make Russia a more difficult interlocutor for the United States.92

Two years later, the new head of intelligence J. Michael McConnell expressed similar concerns about “aggressive Russian efforts to control, restrict or block the transit of hydrocarbons from the Caspian to the West.”93

While it may be common for the intelligence community to view energy as a part of threat assessment, it is less common for politicians and diplomats whose responsibility it is to go beyond threat assessments and seek to improve relations among nations. However, many in the U.S. Congress sought to build on assessments of the Russian energy policy’s threatening potential. For example, Senator Richard Lugar ranked Russia among the “hostile regimes” along with Iran and Venezuela. Viewing energy as “the albatross of U.S. national security,”94 he went as far as to propose for energy security to be integrated in the NATO treaty. In November 2006, speaking at the organization’s summit in Riga, he called for updating the alliance’s basic role to include the protection of allied countries’ energy security from Russia’s actions.95 On January 3, 2007, Lugar also introduced the Energy Diplomacy and Security Act of 2007 in the U.S. Senate that sought to broaden the White House’s ability to influence other nations, particularly those, like Russia, that “have received dramatically increased revenues due
to high global prices, enhancing” their ability “to act in a manner threaten-
ing to global stability.”

As usual, the media was critical in circulating the highly politicized vision of the energy relationships and presenting them as the root of a new Cold War between the United States and Russia. Rather than trying to engage in investigative reporting and reach a balanced perspective, mainstream media merely hyped the government-articulated concerns. Its editorials widely compared Russia with a mafia-like state that seeks to blackmail others. The Boston Globe, in an editorial titled “Vladimir Soprano” wrote about “the plutocratic KGB veterans” abusing foreign investors, such as Royal Dutch Shell, and the Kremlin’s “blatant drive for monopoly control of Russia’s energy resources,” as if Russia’s resources belong to the whole world. Continuing with the mafia analogy, the Wall Street Journal wrote of Shell getting “poloniumed,” implying that the Kremlin was behind the death of the Russian defector Vladimir Litvinenko in London, who was poisoned by polonium-210, and that economic relations must be viewed through the lens of a political confrontation with a mafia state. The editorial ended with a “rhetorical” plea to “please remind us, what’s the country doing in the G-8 club of the world’s leading industrialized democracies?” Addressing the same question of Russia’s relations with foreign investors, the Jamestown’s Eurasia Daily Monitor dramatically wrote of the “Black Tuesday” of December 12, 2006, when a number of Russian officials sought to publicly explain their changing policies.

The Kremlin, some have suggested, did not care about commercial benefits or maintaining good relationships with Western nations; on the contrary, it was rather comfortable with being an enemy, not an ally. Others wrote that it is therefore necessary to treat energy as a foreign and security policy issue, one that may have to be dealt with at the NATO level. Russians with extensive ties to the West have greatly contributed—sometimes unwittingly—to the image of their country as a political bully. Despite Putin’s efforts to integrate with Western nations economically and in terms of addressing common security threats, and broad popular support for those efforts at home, Russian Westernizers provided additional ammunition for the Lobby by charging the Kremlin with becoming increasingly anti-Western. Accustomed to viewing reality in terms of dichotomies, they followed the line of some Western analysts, insisting that if Russia is not a Western-style democracy, then it must be an empire, or if it is a great power, then it must be an anti-Western one.

For instance, Liliya Shevtsova of the Carnegie Moscow Center expressed the view that the Kremlin had become obsessed with insecurity and control over economic assets and that the situation was growing increasingly unpredictable. Rather than building a pluralistic political system and
improving relations with the West, she argued, “the Kremlin’s policies have in fact become a tool for the elite, composed of representatives of energy companies and force structures, to pursue its own interests and this in turn has led to a worsening in Russia’s relations with the West and with the new independent states, including its closest allies.”

Energy-dependent nations, such as Ukraine, Moldova, and even the loyal ally Belarus, were now eager to escape Russia’s embrace and look for alternative international ties. Members of the European Union too showed their reluctance to develop economic relations with Moscow.

Not only Shevtsova but other pro-Western analysts and politicians, such as Garry Kasparov, Mikhail Kasyanov, Vladimir Ryzhkov, and Grigori Yavlinski, agreed that the Kremlin abandoned domestic modernization in favor of becoming a petrostate that “transforms market relations into affairs of state, and economic resources into political tools.” According to Kasparov, Putin’s regime only favors super-wealthy Russians and has no support outside of censorship and the economic wealth created by petrorubles.

Andrei Piontkovsky, a visiting Russian scholar at the Hudson Institute wrote, “Don’t pretend that he is your ally . . . Putin is playing on the other side.” Another Russian Westernizer insisted that during the period of high-energy prices, Russia’s only allies were oil and gas—a paraphrase of the nineteenth century tsar Alexander III’s famous expression that Russia’s only allies were the army and the navy. Still another Russian working in the West argued that the Kremlin was not reliable because it was deliberately refraining from pumping more oil to keep prices high.

Independent experts estimated, however, that Russia had increased its production by 40 percent, surpassing that of Saudi Arabia and coming close to exhausting its production capacity without major additional investments.

For all these reasons, Russian Westernizers believed, a sharp decline in oil prices would do Russia good, as it would push it toward modernization and democratization. At home their opinion mattered little, and their election platform “A Russia without Putin!” did not resonate with the country’s growing middle class, but rather alienated it further. In foreign policy, Russians showed their strong support for advancing their national interests in the world. One poll indicated that most of them approved of Putin’s approach to energy matters. About 61 percent viewed Putin’s course to be “well-considered and well-balanced,” and only about 40 percent felt that another Cold War with the West was possible, while 48 percent did not think so.

In addition to the media playing up energy fears of Russia with the assistance of Putin-opposing Russians themselves, mainstream think tanks in the United States provided an essentially one-sided assessment of the
Kremlin’s energy policies. The expert community widely shared the opinion that Russia was moving in the wrong direction and was exploiting its energy power for the purpose of political confrontation with the West. The “energy threat” of Russia united American liberals and conservatives in their determination to prevent the Kremlin from using “bullying” tactics. The same think tanks (and often the same people) that had defended Khodorkovski were now attacking the Russian state for its energy policies in the Caspian region. As with the media, their approach was often merely an extension and justification of tough statements coming from the White House, rather than an independent analysis. For instance, the Russia-critical expert community was energized by Vice President Cheney’s attacks on Putin’s policies. “We finally said something pretty straightforward at a pretty high level,” said Danielle Pletka of the AEI. Zeyno Baran at the Hudson Institute took part in the vice president’s trip and expressed support for his efforts to confront Russia’s energy policy, “You can say all you want about how we will not take part in these great games, but Russia and China are taking part in them and there is a risk that the United States is losing out.” Experts with the CFR and other organizations too felt encouraged by Cheney’s stance on Russia. One-sided criticism of Russia’s Caspian policies also became standard fare at other think tanks such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the CSP, the CSIS, the CPD, the Heritage Foundation, and the Project on Transitional Democracies.

Why is Russia so “aggressive” and “anti-Western”? Many within the Lobby agree that being aggressive and anti-Western is simply in Russia’s nature. As one Western commentator wrote, Russia will be relentless in exercising its energy power because it “has the pursuit of great power influence in its DNA.” Such is also the view of radical Russian Westernizers who, like Boris Berezovski, tend to blame the state and “the slave mentality of the Russian nation” for their failures to introduce political change.

Therefore, there is little the United States can do to cooperate with such a nation; the only choice it has left is to unite with other Western nations and develop a strategy of containing the aggressor. Hard-line Western observers, such as the former Economist correspondent Edward Lucas and Khodorkovski’s lawyer Robert Amsterdam, and hawkish anti-Putinists in Russia, believe that the country must be economically isolated and expelled from all Western institutions. Yet even they sense that the strategy of isolating Russia may not work. “Our biggest weakness is money,” lamented Lucas.

During the old Cold War, doing business with the Soviet Union was a rare and highly suspicious activity. Now bankers, lawyers, consultants and spin-doctors
As during the Cold War, the Russophobic mind is far more comfortable with opposing Russia than trying to integrate it into the Western world.

5. Conclusion

The Lobby did not succeed in politicizing the energy issue to the extent of isolating Russia from the United States or Europe. Attempts to convince President Bush to boycott the 2006 energy summit in St. Petersburg brought no visible results. Even less successful were efforts to expel Russia from the G-8 or organize energy relationships with Moscow within the framework of the NATO treaty. With Russia’s economy currently booming, opportunities for energy cooperation and American investments are ample.

However, when the United States and Russia engaged in a zero-sum competition over resources in Russia and the Caspian region, many opportunities were lost. Since the promising start to establish an energy partnership following 9/11, not much is left of the spirit of cooperation. The CPC’s principles were not extended to other projects. There were small efforts to jointly exploit existing reserves and transportation routes or to institutionalize U.S.-Russia energy relations. The Lobby played an important role in reversing the original course and returning to pre-9/11 policies of energy hegemony. Much of it can be attributed to the weak leadership exercised by Bush and the strong involvement by Vice President Cheney, who had always shared the vision of American global energy domination and proved to be sympathetic to a considerable portion of the Lobby’s anti-Russian agenda.

Some losses from the continuing competition over resources included billions of dollars spent by Western companies on building the BTC pipeline that had been initially evaluated as economically nonviable. As the United States continues to work to persuade European countries to invest additional billions into the Nabucco pipeline, it is important to fully recognize that such investments too may turn out to be a waste of money and time. Nabucco’s participants do not have energy reserves of their own, and the whole project depends on the willingness of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to transport the bulk of their resources through the new route. It is unlikely that the two may be persuaded to do so, given their traditionally strong ties
with Russia, as well as the Kremlin’s activist policies of making the Central Asian states’ cooperation with Russia attractive. Similarly, the only thing that is known about the trans-Caspian pipeline is that, if built, it will be extremely costly. In the meantime, as the United States and Russia continue their scramble for Caspian resources, both Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are building pipelines to China and may at some point consider cooperation with the Asian giant more advantageous to their interests.

The United States also lost important contracts, as the alienated Kremlin sought to send a message of dissatisfaction with American efforts to undercut Russia’s energy influence in the region. The most notable of such contracts was the $12 billion Shtokman natural gas field in the Barents Sea, in which Chevron and ConocoPhillips had been originally competing to win stakes alongside French and Norwegian companies. Another large deal was a $3 billion airliner purchase by Aeroflot, where Boeing was competing against Europe’s Airbus. In both cases the American companies lost to the European ones, and the Kremlin made it clear that it was the result of the growing U.S. political rhetoric against President Putin. The decision was announced less than a month after the hawkish anti-Russian speech by Cheney in Lithuania. In the Russian press, the speech was routinely compared with Winston Churchill’s 1946 speech in Fulton, in which he said Europe was divided by an “Iron Curtain.” The former Soviet president Mikhail S. Gorbachev, who played a key role in ending the Cold War, called Cheney’s speech “a provocation and interference in Russia’s internal affairs.”

The United States’ course of diversifying energy supplies—the justification for the hard-line policies of controlling energy in Russia and the Caspian region—was therefore producing the opposite effect. Rather than winning access to diverse energy sources in Eurasia and the Middle East, this course was pushing the two regions toward establishing an energy cartel or an alignment against the United States. If this was to happen, the price of oil would likely be 50 percent higher than it is now. In addition, there was a greater chance of Russia getting closer to China, and some observers noted “not merely the formation of a new oil-and-gas cartel with Russia at its center, but rather the formation of something that includes both producers and the key consumer states of the East in an ever more cohesive de facto confederation.” As Russia was growing resentful of America’s energy policies, it was becoming increasingly open to the arguments of those who advocated a sharp redirection of foreign ties away from the West and toward Asia. To many Russians, the U.S. energy policy—along with NATO expansion and the MDS—became powerful evidence that America’s objective was nothing but the establishment of a global hegemony.
Toward an Alternative Russia Approach

Does the United States have sufficient confidence in its own strength and optimism about its future to engage in a constructive dialogue with Russia, or do the doubts growing from a less than successful foreign policy and injured pride lead it to see Russia as a source of its problems rather than as a potential partner?

(Thomas Graham, Russia in Global Affairs, July–September 2007)

1. Toward a Better Understanding of Russia

Summary of the argument

This book has sought to document the role of the Lobby in American foreign policy. Influential groups favoring the U.S. military hegemony, the triumph of American-style democracy, and Eastern European nationalism have taken advantage of the policy vacuum in Washington after 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq to promote a tough stand against Russia. Having mobilized the media and various policy channels, the Lobby has presented Russia as a country with a well-consolidated and increasingly dangerous regime, and it has succeeded in persuading leading members of the American political class to advocate the Russia-threat approach. Some influential politicians and policy makers in the White House have been sympathetic to the Lobby’s agenda and prone to the use of Russophobic rhetoric. Although the U.S. Russia policy did not embrace Cold War-style containment, the Lobby has contributed to the shift away from the post-9/11 partnership.

The Appendix at the end of this book provides a more detailed list of the Lobby’s activities in five important areas of Russia’s post-Soviet development: historical self-perception, state-building, the political system, military security, and energy resources. The American critics of Russia
sought to present it as a revisionist power that had been defeated in the Cold War, but remained obsessed with reviving imperial autocratic institutions and confronting the interests of Western nations in the world. Yet another illustration of such perception of Russia came after the August crisis in the Caucasus. Although this book was written before the crisis, my argument helps to understand why many U.S. observers sought to highlight the negative role of Russia and downplay Georgia’s responsibility for the crisis.\(^1\) Even though it was Georgia that attacked South Ossetia on August 8, 2008,\(^2\) the first instincts of a number of prominent media and politicians in the United States were to blame Russia.\(^3\)

To the extent that the Lobby affected official U.S. policy, it has done America a great disservice. At a time of important changes in relations with Russia, it has pushed America toward an arrogant self-perception of being the world’s moral standard. That the United States was presented as the victor in the Cold War not only grossly distorted complex relationships between the two countries but also further strengthened attitudes of confrontation in both societies. In assessing Russia’s political changes, the Lobby aimed to impose the narrative of neo-imperialism and the dismantling of democracy by the Kremlin. Yet the United States’ interests are best served by the preservation of state governance and political stability in Russia, especially in complex and violence-prone regions such as the Northern Caucasus. Rather than accusing Russia of causing problems, it is essential to find ways to work with the Kremlin in stabilizing the strategically important region. It is equally counterproductive to lecture the Kremlin on the virtues of democracy or attempt to shape the country’s trajectory by supporting pro-American politicians in the country. Such policies will only strengthen the already existing resentment toward the United States. Finally, instead of single-mindedly expanding American and Western military infrastructure toward the Russian borders or trying to derail the Kremlin’s energy policies, the United States would do well to develop a mutually acceptable assessment of military and energy risks with Russia.

**Three debates**

In assessing Russia’s progress after the Cold War, it is important to be guided by a historically sensitive perspective. Proceeding from the two-hundred-year-old vision of Russia by the Marquis de Custine as the “essentially aggressive” nation that “expiates beforehand, by a debasing submission, the design of exercising a tyranny over other nations”\(^4\) or engaging in reconstruction of the Kremlin’s motives without sufficient evidence at hand is not likely to facilitate a better understanding of the country or produce sound policy recommendations. An evenhanded account must register both failures and successes of Russia’s difficult transformation.
Such perspective may assist us in making sense of three important debates on Russia in the post–Cold War era. The first debate concerns the question of responsibility for the end of the Cold War. One approach treats Russia as an expansionist anti-Western power that was defeated by the “free world” and must be prevented from exercising its “imperialist instincts.” As a number of scholars have demonstrated, this approach is inaccurate—Russia’s role in ending the Cold War was as critical as that of the United States. The origins of Russia’s attempts to engage the West dated back to the late 1950s and 1960s—long before the material decline of the Soviet power—and it is impossible to comprehend the end of the Cold War without giving due to Mikhail Gorbachev’s leadership. Rather than either being a winner, both countries have lost the war and would greatly benefit by leaving the Cold War mentality behind them and devising a mutually agreeable historical interpretation of the past.

The second debate evaluates Russia’s post-Soviet economic and political reforms. In order to understand those reforms, comparisons to Western countries are not sufficient—Russia must also be placed within its own historical context. The story of the transition scholarship is instructive, and it is ironic that some of those who in the 1990s saw Russia as a success of democracy building have begun to analyze it as a dictatorship. Although the new dominant approach seems to view Russia as a nation that has failed to pass the test of Westernization, reality may prove the supporters of this view wrong yet again. In order to avoid the inadequacies of the transition literature, it is necessary to reexamine scholarly assumptions and analytical tools, and not merely reverse a political perspective from optimism to pessimism about Russia.

Finally, an important debate is whether or not Russia’s assertive foreign policy reflects anti-Western expansionist culture and is a prelude to an imperial restoration. Some have confidently endorsed this view and recommended standing up to the Kremlin. However, such a view avoids discussing America’s own responsibility for the currently strained relations with Russia. By failing to analyze the aspect of interaction in West-Russia relations and its historical foundations, scholars of Russia’s “imperialism” tend to produce one-sided assessments of the country’s foreign policy.

2. Policy of Equal Partnership

*Principles*

Guided by the above-formulated criteria of historically sensitive, cross-national, and factual scholarship, the United States may arrive at a policy perspective that serves its interests better than the one associated with the Lobby.
The main idea behind it is to pragmatically identify and establish areas of common interest before the two nations can move in the direction of common values. As it was defined in the process of negotiations the U.S.-Russia partnership is likely to be viewed by the two sides as equally advantageous. Such a partnership may emerge only if, under the changing structural conditions of rising non-Western powers, the United States demonstrates a new type of leadership by offering Russia new terms of engagement and abandoning the old unilateral policies accompanied by noisy political rhetoric.

First, equal partnership would proceed from accepting that Russia is and will remain different from the United States. Although after the fall of the Berlin Wall, many have hoped for Russia to quickly leave its past behind and to emerge as a market democracy with special relationships to Western nations, the reality has proved different, and Russia’s modernization so far has not been synonymous with Westernization. However, there is no reason to equate a Russia that differs from the United States in its institutions with it being a principal threat to American interests: even the most culturally and politically diverse parts of the globe can agree on a definition of the most dangerous threats to their existence and on the most important unifying principles of responding to those threats. Engaging Russia is critical for making progress in arms control, counterterrorism, and establishing regional security arrangements in Eurasia. It is equally critical for developing cooperation in economic and energy matters. In the words of the U.S. Commission on National Security/21st Century’s recommendation to the new Bush administration, we should “assist the integration of key major powers, especially China, Russia, and India, into the mainstream of the emerging international system.”10 As yet another influential report says, “We must work with the European Union and Russia to mediate among the regional powers and prevent spillovers that threaten U.S. interests and stability of the international order.”11

Second, engagement will only be effective when conducted on a reciprocal or mutually acceptable basis. Hegemonic engagement on American terms will come at the price of Russia’s own interests and perceptions, and it reflects the insecurity of the United States itself. As Thomas Graham wrote, “it is not Russia’s strength that generates and feeds the fear of it, it is weakness of the West and its lack of confidence.”12 Rather than trying to dictate policies, the United States should acknowledge a strong and confident Russia that acts as a responsible protector of its interests in the world. Openly engaging in direct negotiations of mutually acceptable forms of cooperation may become a reliable way for the former Cold War enemies to develop the required trust. Not to be confused with “appeasement,” such an approach of attempting to understand each other’s interests should find significant support within both societies.
Over the last ten years the United States has often displayed conspicuous hegemonic attitude. Not listening to what Russians themselves, across the political spectrum, identified as their national interests and acting against such identification was, unfortunately, all too common. Russia’s insistence on the need to provide security and stability in the former Soviet Union was often labeled as “neo-imperial” temptations. Russia’s opposition to NATO expansion was frequently dismissed as pure paranoia. In economic reform, many in Russia preferred a gradual pace and a strong role reserved for the state. Yet U.S. officials forcefully communicated to their Russian counterparts that they believed in fast solutions and decentralization. Washington also embarked on the project of changing regimes and expanding liberty in the world, which in the Eurasian context often means greater destabilization of an already highly volatile region. These are hardly the best terms for engagement with Russia. If American officials want to participate in changes in Russia and Eurasia, they should be prepared to compromise on their policy vision.

Third, in addition to engagement and reciprocity in relations with Russia, the West ought to be patient and not expect miracles. Unreasonable expectations about Russia have not been uncommon in the past and should not be a guide in the future. A genuinely successful engagement is difficult to design and maintain. Given the history of West-Russia hostilities and their divergent current interests, there will always be differences in their approaches to solving existing problems. Nevertheless, equal partnership or engagement on mutually acceptable terms is worth a serious effort, considering that the alternative is a resentful Russia. Faced with powerful pressures from outside, Russia may not always be able to defend its vision of national interest, but it will be likely to wriggle out of its obligations if it has been coerced into them.

American “constituencies”

Although this book has documented the power of the Russophobic lobby in America, I have also argued that many in the United States do not share the anti-Russian perspective. Overall, there are several important “constituencies” interested in developing stronger ties with Russia based on equality and mutual respect, and not on the unilateral projection of power and principles. On the societal level, they include members of the business community. Western companies would like to expand their presence in the Russian market, and since 2007 the country has emerged as attractive destination for direct foreign investments. Investors want to see Russia joining the WTO and expanding ties with Western organizations, and not operating under old
and new restrictions on economic activities. Other “constituencies” may include those who appreciate Russia’s contribution to a world culture and want to expand ties with the country in religious, academic, and cultural areas. In attempting to deepen their understanding of the country, they are less likely to be driven by prejudices and stereotypes.

In political and media circles, there are many who understand the importance of patiently building relations with Russia, not trying to dictate to it the terms of cooperation. In politics there are moderate Democrats and Republicans who are eager to develop ties with the country based on joint interests, such as counterterrorism, nuclear nonproliferation, and energy security. Many members of the intelligence community also prioritize issues of security and regional stability above democracy promotion. There are also some in the Western media who take seriously the responsibility of presenting Russia’s interests based on facts, not assumptions.

Uniting these diverse constituencies in their efforts to strengthen U.S.-Russia ties is extremely difficult. Russia needs to do its part by investing time and resources into creating a lobby in the United States. Contrary to what one may hear about the dangers of a Russian lobby, its emergence would undoubtedly contribute to overcoming the pervasive influence of anti-Russian stereotypes in American politics. The key task should be to correct the highly distorted image of Russia in political and media circles by organizing conferences and forums, establishing joint programs and information centers, and lobbying U.S. politicians. Only then is there a chance that Russia’s economic and political interests may be taken into account.

Bias for hope

Many in the United States and Russia are skeptical of an improvement in the two countries’ relations in the near future. In support of their skepticism, they cite political and cultural differences between the two nations that may be exacerbated by inadequate presidential leadership. After years of decline and humiliation, Russia has acquired new wealth and influence in world affairs, and it has emerged as an assertive player in defending its interests. The United States, however, continues to view itself as the world’s leader. Healing its imperial and Russophobic complexes is going to take time, probably a long time if the country’s leadership will continue to disregard new international realities and insist on remaining the governing center of the world. In this case, meaningful cooperation with Russia would be delayed.
Still, as this book has argued, the United States and Russia’s interests are compatible. Although in the short run chances for U.S.-Russia partnership are slim, in the longer run the leaders of the two countries may learn to cooperate in a more mature way. If the Kremlin continues to be focused on patiently developing relations with the United States, the latter may be compelled to reevaluate its attitude and policy toward Russia. Responding to the pressures of external threats and domestic constituencies, the two nations may yet arrive at the strategic partnership they tried to establish immediately following 9/11.
This page intentionally left blank
## Appendix

### The Lobby’s Russia Ideology and Examples of Its Activities, 2003–2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historical identity</strong></td>
<td>Defeated nation</td>
<td>Publicizing Russia’s “imperial instincts”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revisionist state</td>
<td>Reviving the Cold War attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reviving the Cold War symbolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting Baltics’ anti-Russian campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State identity</strong></td>
<td>Colonial state</td>
<td>Promoting the Russia-barbarian image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Denying Chechnya links with international terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pressuring the</td>
<td>The Liechtenstein</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kremlin to “negotiate” with</td>
<td>Plan (2002)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maskhadov and</td>
<td>Open letter to the Heads of State (2004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“internationalize”</td>
<td>resolution of the conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposing Russia’s</td>
<td>Open letter “End the Silence over Chechnya” (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chechenization policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Political system</strong></th>
<th><strong>Neo-Stalinist autocracy</strong></th>
<th><strong>Funding and training colored revolutions</strong></th>
<th>NED role in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting and publicizing the anti-Kremlin opposition</td>
<td>Ties with the Other Russia</td>
<td>Articles by Kasparov and others in U.S. media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing Russia-critical reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Security</strong></th>
<th><strong>Neo-imperialism</strong></th>
<th><strong>Lobbying for Congressional support of NATO expansion: testimonies and resolutions</strong></th>
<th>A U.S. Congress bill in favor of Georgia and Ukraine in NATO (2008)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting views of East European governments</td>
<td>Senator Lugar’s opposition to inviting President Putin to NATO summit in Bucharest (2008)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposing nuclear cooperation with Russia and other states</td>
<td>PNAC defense policy report (2000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideology</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Launching media campaigns to publicize Russia's military weakness</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs article on U.S. nuclear primacy (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Energy**  
Energy blackmail  
Opposing the Kremlin’s role in energy sector  
Opposing Russia's energy deals and prices in Eurasia  
Promoting alternative energy ties  
Public defense of Yukos and Khorodkovski by Richard Perle and others (2003–04)  
Senator Lugar's “energy NATO” idea (2006)  
Media focus on Nabucco and trans-Caspian pipelines
Chapter 1


2. For some analyses of U.S.-Russia relations after the Cold War, see Stephen Cohen, Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Postcommunist Russia (New York, 2000); James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy toward Russia after the Cold War (Washington, D.C., 2003); Andrei P. Tsygankov, Whose World Order: Russia’s Perception of American Ideas after the Cold War (Notre Dame, IN, 2004); and Viktoria Krasheninnikova, Amerika-Rossiya: kholodnaya voina kul’tur (Moscow, 2007).


4. For details, see my “The World After September 11 and Great Power Pragmatism,” in Russia’s Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity (Lanham, MD, 2006).

5. It was after the summit that Bush made his famous remarks on Putin: “I was able to get a sense of his soul” (As cited in: Dale R. Herspring and Peter Rutland, “Putin and Russian Foreign Policy,” in Putin’s Russia, ed. D. D. Herspring [Lanham, MD, 2006], p. 237).

7. For example, the State Department said there was no evidence of ties between Chechens and Al-Qaida. It urged Russia to refrain from taking actions to eradicate terrorism in the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia, and it insisted on “a political settlement” reached through discussions with “moderate Chechens,” such as Aslan Maskhadov (Steven Pifer, “U.S. Policy on Chechnya,” Statement Before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Washington, D.C., May 9, 2002, http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/rm/2002/10034.htm [accessed March 5, 2005]).


9. Remarks by the President and Russian President Putin.


11. Remarks by the President and Russian President Putin.


17. This is the heart of George Bush’s strategy.

The war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action... Our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives.


20. In May 2004, political asylum was granted to Ilyas Akhmadov, the foreign minister of the separatist Chechen government, which was viewed by the Russian government as responsible for terrorist violence.


24. For details and background, see, for example, Mark MacKinnon, The New Cold War: Revolutions, Rigged Elections and Pipeline Politics in the Former Soviet Union (New York, 2007).


27. As one observer wrote, in addition to resources and experience, “Moscow has helped to track down global jihadists, prevent the proliferation of weapons and materials of mass destruction and reconstruct Afghanistan. As a true ally, Russia could contribute much more to the Western alliance than the small new NATO members” (Gordon M. Hahn, “The West Lost Russia,” The Moscow Times, August 29, 2007).


29. See, for example, the remarks by the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs Daniel Fried before the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee “Russia and U.S.-Russia Relations,” June 21, 2007.


34. For example, the leading advocate of U.S. unipolarity Charles Krauthammer insisted, during the 2004 U.S.-Russia conflict over election outcomes in Ukraine, that “this is about Russia first, democracy only second. This Ukrainian episode is a brief, almost nostalgic throwback to the Cold War. . . . The West wants to finish the job begun with the fall of the Berlin Wall and continue Europe’s march to the east.” (Charles Krauthammer, “Why Only in Ukraine?,” Washington Post, December 3, 2004).


36. See, for example, Richard Pipes, “Is Russia Still an Enemy?,” Foreign Affairs (September–October 1997) and William E. Odom, “Realism about Russia,” National Interest (Fall 2001). For a more recent account of Russia’s foreign policy as driven by its traditional Soviet mentality, see Ariel Cohen, “Domestic Factors Driving Russia’s Foreign Policy,” Heritage Foundation Policy Brief (November 2007).


38. As Winston Churchill put it in his famous “Iron Curtain” speech, “there is nothing they [Russians] admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness” (Richard Sakwa, The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union (London, 1998), p. 295).

42. See, for example, Aleksandr Panarin, *Iskusheniye globalizmom* (Moscow, 2000); Krasheninnikova, *Amerika-Rossiya*.
43. See, for example, Mead, *Special Providence*.
47. The Chapter 2 elaborates on this point.
48. Email correspondence with James George Jatras, a policy analyst at the U.S. Senate, April 3, 2008.
50. The Chapter 2 elaborates on this point.
52. See especially his *Russia Under the Old Regime* (New York, 1974); *Russian Revolution* (New York, 1991); *Communism: A History* (New York, 2003); and *Russian Conservatism and Its Critics* (New Haven, CT, 2007).


63. See, for example, the bipartisan Council of Foreign Relations report *Russia’s Wrong Direction* as well as multiple statements by Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) on Russia’s new “imperialism.”

---

Chapter 2


5. This was Robert Cooper’s characterization (as cited in Nicholas Wroe, “History’s Pallbearer,” Guardian, May 10, 2002).


7. Ibid., p. 1. At about the same time, another influential article appeared the January 1990 issue of Daedalus. Similar to Brzezinski’s book, the anonymous author “Z” questioned the success of Gorbachev’s Perestroika by emphasizing the Soviet system’s principal inability to achieve the structural reform (“To the Stalin Mausoleum,” Daedalus [January 1990]). Widely discussed in both the West and the USSR, the article was later attributed to Martin Malia, a history professor at the University of California at Berkeley.


12. See, for example, Richard Pipes, “Is Russia Still an Enemy?,” Foreign Affairs 76, no. 5 (1997).


15. As Tony Smith notes, in order to successfully function, interest groups must maintain unity within themselves, build alliances with other social forces toward common political goals, and influence policy-making process (Tony Smith, Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy [Cambridge, 2000], p. 94).


19. The sites only existed during the trial on Khodorkovsky and were taken down after he had been convicted.


21. “Project for the New American Century,” Right Web Profile (Silver City, NM, 2007). This document can also be found on http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/1535.


26. “American Committee for Peace in Chechnya,” Right Web Profile, IRC Right Web (Silver City, NM, 2005). This document can also be found on
That self-description has disappeared in 2007 and was replaced with dedication to “disseminating knowledge about the peoples, cultures and regions of the North Caucasus, including Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan, North Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachayevo-Cherkessia and Adygeya” (American Committee for Peace in the Caucasus [ACPC], http://www.peaceinthecaucasus.org/about.html)—apparently, as a tacit recognition of relative stabilization of the situation in Chechnya.


31. Ibid.

32. An Open Letter to the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and NATO.


36. Ibid.

37. Already in 1999, Cheney spoke of insufficiency of the Middle Eastern reserves, and in 2003 he met with the then head of Russia’s largest oil company
Mikhail Khodorkovski. The meeting and its contents were not publicized, but following the meeting, Khodorkovski began negotiations with ExxonMobil and Chevron-Texaco about selling them a major share of Yukos (F. William Engdahl, “The Emerging Russian Giant,” Asia Times Online, October 24, 25, 2006).


40. “Freedom House,” Right Web Profile (Silver City, NM, 2007). This is also found on http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/1476 (accessed November 3, 2007).

41. “National Endowment for Democracy,” Right Web Profile (Silver City, NM, 2007). This is also found on http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/1513 (accessed November 5, 2007).

42. The literature on lobbies and interest groups policy influences suggests that they may succeed in hijacking public agenda and state policy if they are well organized (Mancur Olson, The Rise and Decline of Nations (New Haven, CT, 1982); Jack Snyder, The Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition (Ithaca, NY, 1991). As Jack Snyder writes, narrow groups can achieve it under a cartelized political system by (1) joining in logrolled coalitions and trading favors so that each group gets what it wants most, and (2) harnessing state propaganda resources (The Myths of Empire, p. 17). The fact that interests groups are small but concentrated may therefore become an asset in influencing policy process. For an argument about lobbies’ ability to hijack national interest, see Stephen M. Walt, “Foreign Policy in the National Interest,” in Taming American Power: The Global Response to U.S. Primacy (New York, 2006); and John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy (New York, 2007).

43. For instance, in 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell described ties between Vice President Cheney and his allies—his chief aide, I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby; Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz; and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas J. Feith—as something that “amounted to a separate government” (William Hamilton, “Bush Began to Plan War Three Months After 9/11,” Washington Post, April 17, 2004).

44. Walter Russell Mead, Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World (London, 2002).

45. John Howard Gleason, The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain: A Study of the Interaction of Policy and Opinion (Cambridge, 1950); Martin Malia, Russia under Western Eyes: From the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum (Cambridge, 1999); Anatoli Utkin, Vyzov Zapada i otvet Rossiyi (Moscow, 2002). For an argument tracing the roots of Russophobia to earlier times, see Marshall Poe, People Born to Slavery: Russia in Early Modern European Ethnography, 1476–1748 (Ithaca, NY, 2001).

50. Ibid.
52. “Committee on the Present Danger,” *Right Web Profiles* (Silver City, NM, 2006). This is also found on http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/3301.
58. “Center for Security Policy,” *Right Web Profile* (Silver City, NM, 2007). This is also found on http://rightweb.irc-online.org/profile/1456 (accessed December 12, 2007)
65. *An Open Letter to the Heads of State and Government Of the European Union and NATO*.
68. The resolution reads as follows:

[S]ince 1918 the imperialistic and aggressive policies of Russian communism have resulted in the creation of a vast empire which poses a dire threat to the security of the United States and of all the free people of the world; ... the imperialistic policies of Communist Russia have led, through direct and indirect aggression, to the subjugation of the national independence of Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Estonia, White Russia, Rumania, East Germany, Bulgaria, mainland China, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, North Korea, Albania, Idel-Ural, Tibet, Cossackia, Turkestan, North Viet-Nam, and others.


69. Lee Edwards, “Captive Nations Week,” Heritage Foundation (July 20, 2005), http://www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed072005a.cfm (accessed October 1, 2007). It was also under Reagan that Dobriansky, a professor of Economics at Georgetown University, was bestowed the honoree title of the U.S. ambassador.

70. Lozanski in Peter Lavelle, “Deconstructing ‘Russophobia’ and ‘Russocentric.’” In 1999, a Captive Nations Committee member praised President Clinton and other officials for contributing proclamations and encouragement to the commemoration of remembering “the over 140 million people who died at the hands of the Communist Party International in an orgy of mass murder, plunder, rape, starvation, expulsion, and genocide, remembering the nations still under the Communist yoke” and reminding that the freedom fight was to continue (Horst A. Uhlich, “Captive Nations Committee Continues Fight for Freedom of All Nations,” Ukrainian Weekly, August 29, 1999, no. 35, vol. 67, http://www.ukrweekly.com/Archive/1999/359924.shtml [accessed March 22, 2004]).


72. Ibid.

73. Mann, Rise of the Vulcans.


78. Jacoby, “Now That We’re Comrades.”
83. “Rupert Murdoch,” Right Web Profile (Silver City, NM, 2007). This is also found on http://rightweb.irc-online.org (accessed November 15, 2007).
84. Ibid.
87. In the book Death of a Dissident, Litvinenko’s widow and his close friend Alex Goldfarb accuse President Vladimir Putin of giving a direct order to kill Alexander Litvinenko, as well as of being involved in the 1999 apartment bombings, the Dubrovka theater siege, and the murder of Anna Politkovskaya. The book is being released in English and in French in London and Paris bookstores, and Colombia Pictures has acquired the rights to turn the book into a movie (David Nowak, “New Litvinenko Book Accuses FSB,” Moscow Times, June 4, 2007).
88. Scholars also point to different class roots of the first White wave of immigration to America. Mostly descendants of Russian nobility, White Russians had difficulties accepting the “vulgar” America and highly egalitarian standards. See, Eduard Lozanski, Etnosy i lobbizm v SShA (Moscow, 2004), pp. 234–235.
89. The Jackson-Vanik amendment denied most-favored-nation status to those countries that restricted emigration rights. Some nations, such as China and Vietnam, were able to obtain a yearly waiver to the provisions of Jackson-Vanik, but not the Soviet Union, the initial target of the amendment. In 1975 more than 500,000 refugees, many of whom were Jews, evangelical Christians, and Catholics from the USSR have immigrated to the United States, and about one million Soviet Jews immigrated to Israel. Despite the fall of the Soviet Union, the amendment is still in place and applies to Russia (“Jackson-Vanik amendment,” Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jackson-Vanik_amendment [accessed December 26, 2007]).
91. Chapter 7 elaborates on this point.
Chapter 3


4. Ibid.


6. Ibid.


14. As Hart writes, “When we resort to manipulation, deceit, or intrigue in our dealing with other nations, which we did repeatedly in the Cold War, we become some other kind of nation than we claim to be” (*The Fourth Power*, p. 91).


24. Ibid.


27. Ibid.


29. Ibid., 70.

30. Ibid., 78.


44. Books and multiple articles have appeared arguing that Russia was the main or a contributing factor to a new Cold War. For books, see Janusz Bugajski, Cold Peace: Russia’s New Imperialism (New York, 2004); Mark MacKinnon, The New Cold War: Revolutions, Rigged Elections and Pipeline Politics in the Former Soviet Union (Toronto, 2007); and Edward Lucas, The New Cold War: The Future of Russia and the Threat to the West (London, 2008). For examples of media articles, see Michael Weiss, “The Cool Peace? Resolved: Russia is Becoming Our Enemy Again,” Weekly Standard, November 7, 2007.
46. Ibid.
54. For references, see endnote 60 in Chapter 1.
55. All the three terms are used by Jackson, “Democracy in Russia” but are not infrequent in writings of others.
NOTES

61. Boot, “Don’t Play Dead for Putin.”
64. Hart, “Don’t Lose Russia.”
65. In March 2006, the Pentagon published a study asserting that Russian intelligence officials had informed Saddam Hussein about U.S. troop movements during the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (“Pentagon Study Says Russia Passed Intelligence to Saddam Hussein,” *RFE/RL Newsline*, March 27, 2006). The study’s results remained unconfirmed and were denied by Russia, yet the Lobby immediately used the charge in its accusations (See, for example, Goldgeier and McFaul, “Russia’s No Democracy”). Chapter 4 elaborates on the accusation.
66. President Putin called the term “occupation” inappropriate, explaining that the Baltic states first gained their independence as a result of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk concluded by Russia and Germany in February 1918, but later in 1939, “Germany agreed that this part of Europe should return to the influence of the Soviet Union.” Putin acknowledged that the Baltic countries were “pawns in big world politics,” but he argued that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was already condemned in 1989 by “the highest representative body of the Soviet Union.” (“Putin Calls for End to Speculation about Soviet Occupation of Baltics,” *RFE/RL Newsline*, May 6, 2005).
69. In fact there is some evidence of the government’s initial desire to destroy rather than merely remove the monument (Mikhail Zygar’, “8 maya protiv devyatogo,” *Kommersant*, May 8, 2007).
71. Indeed, the nationalist government in Poland issued a decision to remove all Soviet era monuments as signs of the Soviet occupation of Poland, replacing some with a statue to U.S. President Ronald Reagan (“Poland Should Also Remove Soviet Monuments,” *RIA Novosti*, April 28, 2007; “Soviet Monument to Make Way for Reagan,” *Breitbart*, February 9, 2007).

77. Ilves also called Soviet troops a “gang of bandits” and the Soviet period in Estonia “the era of apartheid” (Yelena Shesternina, “Between Occupation and a Hard Place: WWII Anniversary Splits Russia and Estonia,” *RIA Novosti*, September 20, 2007).


95. For example, Prime Minister Andrus Ansip honoured the memory of participants in Estonia defence in 1944 that had participated in battles on the side of Hitler’s Reich (Itar-Tass, “Estonia PM Honors Defenders Of Republic From ‘Communist Occupation,’” May 8, 2007.


97. Ibid.

98. Polish President Alexander Kwasniewski described the planned pipeline as the Schroeder-Putin Pact. Adding to it, Vytautas Landsbergis, a member of European parliament, and ex-chairman of Lithuania’s parliament said, “With German support, Russia can rule over large territories and split them as it sees fit. Knowing what is on the minds of Russian policy planners, no one can doubt that the so-called economic union between Russia and Germany will be a political alliance” (Igor Tomberg, “Baltic Gas Pipeline: Moscow Turns the Table,” RIA Novosti, September 16, 2005).


103. Polls also show that in removing the Bronze Soldier, the government acted against public feelings. 44 percent or respondents oppose the government’s plan while 38 percent supported it (Angus Reid Global Monitor, “Estonians against Removal of Soviet-Era Statue,” March 15, 2007).

104. Evidence that such reassessment is under way are growing. For instance, Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip laid a wreath at a memorial to Estonian fascists on May 8, 2007 to exonerate them as national freedom fighters. In Romania and some other East European nations, some officials referred to decisions of their countries to enter the war on Hitler’s side as “justified.” In Hungary and Poland, politicians have advocated demolishing monuments to Soviet soldiers and replacing some of them with those dedicated to soldiers who fought on Hitler’s side. Ukrainian officials have called for the official recognition of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) known for its crimes against Soviet citizens during the war and condemned during the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials (BBC Monitoring, “Ukrainian President Demands Official Recognition for Anti-Soviet Rebels,” October 14, 2007).


**Chapter 4**

10. Charles King, “Crisis in the Caucasus: A New Look at Russia’s Chechen Impasse,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2003): 134. The cultural incompatibility argument was articulated by Samuel Huntington in his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, 1996). Huntington later wrote about Chechnya, “The age of multicivilizational empires is over, and Russia will be able to maintain its rule over Chechnya only at unsustainable costs. The next leader of Russia would do well to emulate Mustafa Kemal Ataturk’s realism about the lost Turkish empire and espouse a Russian-only Russia rather than pursue the obsolete dream of a


19. Hahn, *Russia’s Islamic Threat*.


21. Mark Kramer has reported, for example, the Chechen terrorist ties with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan that operates over the entire Central Asia and Afghanistan region (See his “Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency and Terrorism in the North Caucasus: The Military Dimension of the Russian-Chechen Conflict,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 2 [March 2005]: 262–263).


foreign policy priorities, see Amitai Etzioni, Security First: For a Muscular, Moral Foreign Policy (New Haven, CT, 2007).

24. Scholars have established that under some conditions democratization, including that in the Caucasus, may become a permissive condition allowing the rise of a previously dormant militant ethnic nationalism (Edward D. Mansfield and Jack L. Snyder, Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War [Cambridge, 2007]).


28. By official Russian estimates, more than 1,000 hostages were taken between 1997 and 1999 (Abdullaev, “Chechnya Ten Years Later,” p. 335) and kidnappers reportedly received up to $20 million in ransom money only in 1998 (Dmitri Trenin, The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border Between Geopolitics and Globalization [Washington, D.C., 2001], p. 198).


30. Ware, “A Case of Self-Emasculation.”


36. Jane Perlez, “Profile on Meeting With Chechen Foreign Minister,” New York Times, January 13, 2000. In March 2001 Ilyas Akhmadov was received by the assistant secretary of state John Beyrle to discuss the political and humanitarian situation in Chechnya. Akhmadov was later granted American residency.


48. Ware, “A Case of Self-Emasculation.” Ware documents how international human rights groups failed to investigate or publicize the two slave markets in Chechnya (one in Grozny and one in Urus Martan) that trafficked several hundred Russian citizens prior to the Russian invasion of Chechnya in 1999. He also finds the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Mary Robinson to be biased against Russia. For instance, in the autumn of 2000 Robinson traveled to Grozny and offered harsh criticism of Russian human rights violations. However, Robinson found no time to visit Dagestani refugees in the Russian Republic of Dagestan on the border with Chechnya despite the fact that Dagestan was twice invaded by Chechnya-based militants and 32,000 people were left homeless with no international relief or human rights assistance available to them.


50. The liberal activist Gavriyil Popov, for instance, proposed a “compromise” solution of dividing Chechnya and granting independence to the part beyond the Terek river (Gavriyil Popov, “Razdeleniye Chechnyi,” *NG-Stsenariyi*, January 17, 2001).


57. Kovalev, “Putin’s War”; Robyn Dixon, “Attack on Chechnya Reportedly Planned in March,” Los Angeles Times, January 28, 2000; Yevgenia Borisova, “No Proof Chechens Blew Up Buidlings,” Moscow Times, March 17, 2000. The theory was also supported by Chechen militants who claimed, in Maskhadov’s words, that Dagestan “was programmed by Moscow” as “an excuse for war” (Kommersant, February 8, 2000).

58. The book was also published in the West (Alexander Litvinenko and Yuri Felshtinsky, Blowing Up Russia: The Secret Plot to Bring Back KGB Terror [New York, 2007]). For greater details and differing interpretations of the 1999 events, see Matthew Evangelista, The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union? (Washington, D.C., 2002), pp. 80–85; and Robert Bruce Ware’s essay in Chechnya: from Past to Future.

59. Safire, “There’s a War On.” Interestingly enough, others on the Chechen side, including Basaev, implicated Dagestani terrorists (Lieven, “Through a Distorted Lens,” p. 325).

60. “The war on terror will not be won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. . . . [O]ur security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives.” George W. Bush, “Graduation Speech at West Point,” United States Military Academy West Point, New York, June 1, 2002, http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html (accessed May 4, 2006).

61. On September 20, 2001, William Kristol, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Richard Perle, Martin Peretz, Norman Podgoretz, Charles Krauthammer, and others signed an “Open Letter to the President.” The letter urged Bush to “capture or kill Osama bin Laden” and warned that failure to invade Iraq and topple Saddam Hussein would “constitute an early and perhaps decisive surrender in the war on international terrorism.” This should be done “even if evidence does not link Iraq directly to the attack” (as cited by Tariq Ali, The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crucades, Jihads, and Modernity, [London, 2002], p. 272).

62. See, for example, President Bush and Russian President Putin Discuss Progress, Press Conference with President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin,


65. Ibid.


79. Lepic, “Zbigniew Brzezinski.”

90. Open Media Research Institute, November 28, 2005.
92. According to a rare poll conducted in August 2003, 78 percent of residents of Chechnya supported membership in the Russian Federation, whereas only 19 percent were against it. Public Opinion of the Chechen Population on the Actual Issues of the Republic, Results of Seven Representative Surveys Conducted March—August 2003, http://www.validata.ru/e_e/chechnya/ (accessed December 2003).
95. See, for example, Leonid Ivashev, “Global’naya provokatsiya,” Nezavisimaya gazeta, October 10, 2001; Aleksandr Dugin, “Teraki 11 sentyabrya,” in Geopolitika terrora (Moscow, 2002).


102. Bennett, “Chechnya’s Theatre of War.” The Russian government charged Yusuf Krymshamkalov and Achimez Gochiyev with carrying out the terrorist attacks, and the two were convicted in 2004.


105. John Reuter, *Chechnya’s Suicide Bombers: Desperate, Devout or Deceived?* (Washington, D.C., 2004).


108. Bennett, “Chechnya’s Theatre of War.”


116. For instance, in a 13 May, 2005 press release (http://peaceinchechnya.org/mediacenter.htm), the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya has called on the slain Maskhadov’s designated successor Abdul-Khalim Sadullaev to continue Maskhadov’s “constructive” policy of seeking to end the war with Russia through peace talks (“Chechen Leader Rejects U.S. Appeal,” RFE/RL Newsline, May 16, 2005). In April 2006, Jamestown Foundation organized the conference “Sadullaev’s Caucasian Front: Prospects for the Next Nalchik,” in which some speakers presented Sadullaev as a supporter of Western values of democracy and freedom. However, the defender of
“democracy” pursued a radical Islamist agenda and proclaimed himself Emir of Dagestan and Caucasus Fronts under the ChRI’s command until he was killed by Russian special services (Gordon M. Hahn, “The New Caucasus Emirate? Islamic Terrorists in the North Caucasus Have a Global Reach,” Russia Profile, November 29, 2007).


125. Some balanced commentators, such as Anatol Lieven at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace or Gordon Hahn at Hoover Institution, were purged from their positions. Others were made to conform to the anti-Russian mainstream by signing public letters and policy documents, such as the CFR’s report Russia’s Wrong Direction.

Chapter 5


5. Public support for President Putin has been consistently high ranging from 70 percent to 80 percent. In addition, some polls show that almost half, 47 percent, of Russians think that the country needs a distinct kind of democracy that would correspond to Russia’s national traditions and specific qualities, and only 17 percent are against a democratic form of government (“Almost Half of Russians Think Country Needs ‘Distinct’ Kind of Democracy—Poll,” *Interfax*, December 18, 2007).

6. Scholars disagree as to whether pluralistic institutions are essential for state-building. Some argued that democratization might be accompanied by state weakness, thereby becoming a permissive condition for ethnic violence (Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* [Cambridge, 2007]). Other important state-building tasks include developing a national identity and an efficient economy. Promoting one task at the expense of another may negatively affect the whole enterprise. For example, some have argued against the universality of economic and political openness for advancing economic growth (Ian Bremmer, *The J Curve: A New Way to Understand Why Nations Rise and Fall* [New York, 2006]). Others emphasized the importance of political unity in economic transition (Timothy Frye, “The Perils of Polarization: Economic Performance in the Postcommunist World,” *World Politics* 54 [April, 2002]). Still others debated roles played by agency, process and sequence of actions versus structural conditions during a transition from authoritarian rule (Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* [Baltimore, 1996]).


13. For example, in its 2006 report Freedom House rated Russia as “Not Free” on the ground of suppressed civil liberties. For an argument that Russia has created autocracy, rather than democracy, see, for example, Michael McFaul and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, “The Myth of the Authoritarian Model,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 1, January–February 2008.


20. For details, see Andrei P. Tsygankov and Matthew Tarver-Wahlquist, “Duelling Honors: Realism, Constructivism and the Russia-Georgia Divide” (paper delivered at International Studies Association, San Francisco, March 27, 2008).


22. Interfax, “NATO Expansion A Huge Mistake—Lavrov,” December 12, 2006; Similar statements were made by president Putin during the NATO summit in Budapest in April 2008.


38. Ibid.

39. As cited in Cohen, “Media Cold War.”


Both carrots and sticks were employed. In the spring of 2007 the former Ukrainian prime minister Timoshenko had visited the United States. Timoshenko came with an anti-Russian agenda, promoting a new pipeline to circumvent Russia and the dissolution of the Russian Parliament, which would improve her political standing. At that point some within the Lobby became disillusioned with President Yushchenko. The undersecretary of state Paula Dobrianski—an old member of the Lobby—was involved in preparing the visit. Timoshenko met the U.S. vice president Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Senator Lugar, the former secretary of state Madeline Albright, and prominent media representatives (Halina Pavliva and Daryna Krasnolutska, “Timoshenko Expects Early Ukraine Elections, Return to Power, Bloomberg, March 5, 2007; Irina Kozhuhkhar, “Yedinyi oppozitsioner on SNG,” Nezavisimaya gazeta, March 2, 2007). There were signs of support. Immediately following Timoshenko’s visit to the United States in March, President Yushchenko dissolved the opposition-dominated Parliament in early April. Soon after, during the same year, Timoshenko’s article “Containing Russia” appeared in the leading policy magazine Foreign Affairs. At the same time, Timoshenko’s former boss and ally Pavel Lazarenko was in prison in the United States on charges of money laundering. In May 2007, despite Lazarenko’s statement about Timoshenko’s noninvolvement in criminal activities, the United States court declared her an accomplice and key figure in Lazarenko’s criminal machinations (Vladimir V. Sytin, “US Court Declares Timoshenko Accomplice in Lazarenko’s Criminal Machinations,” The Ukrainian Times, May 23, 2007).

60. Escobar, “The Tulip Revolution.” The overall degree of financial assistance to the revolutions is still disputed. Some estimates of U.S. election-related assistance to Ukraine totaled approximately $13.8 million (Teff’s testimony),
while others ranged up to $65 million (Matt Kelley, “U.S. Money Helped Opposition in Ukraine,” San Diego Union-Tribune, October 12, 2004, http://www.signonsandiego.com/uniontrib/20041211/news_1n11usaid.html (accessed October 6, 2007). In at least some cases, members of the Lobby developed their own financial interests. For instance, Bruce Jackson played a role in the Orange revolution in Ukraine, but a few years later received fees and donations from Ukrainian billionaire Rinat Akhmetov, the political patron of the Ukrainian prime minister Victor Yanukovich. A company controlled by Mr. Akhmetov donated $300,000 in 2005 to a human rights charity run by Jackson and his wife after Akhmetov’s visit to Washington that Jackson helped to organize (Glenn R. Simpson and Mary Jacoby, “How Lobbyists Help Ex-Soviets Woo Washington,” Wall Street Journal, April 17, 2007).

63. That included hostility toward balanced analysts of Russia who attempted to voice their criticism of the Lobby’s activities (For example, see Ann Applebaum, “Freedom Haters,” The Washington Post, December 1, 2004).


72. At the time 60 percent of Ukrainians opposed carrying out an early parliamentary election relative to only 28 percent supporting the idea (Angus Reid Global Monitor, “Ukrainians Disagree with Yushchenko on Election,” April 8, 2007).


74. Both Russian and Western analysts have speculated that the security class has become omnipresent in policy making. See, for example, O. Kryshtanovskaya and S. White, “Putin’s Militocracy,” Post-Soviet Affairs 19, 4, 2003; Daniel Treisman, “Putin’s Silovarchs,” Orbis, Winter 2007. For alternative perspectives on the objectives and the role of the security class, see Sharon Werning Rivera and David Werning Rivera, “The Russian Elite under Putin: Militocratic or Bourgeois? Post-Soviet Affairs 22, no. 2 (2006); and Bettina Renz, “Putin’s Militocracy? An Alternative Interpretation of Siloviki in Russian Politics,” Europe-Asia Studies 58, no. 6 (September 2006).


78. Vladislav Surkov, “Suverenitet.”


80. Russia’s radical Westernizers argued this case. See, for example, Vladimir Ryzhkov, “Sovereignty versus Democracy?,” Russia in Global Affairs, no. 4 (October– December 2005); Igor Klyamkin and Tatyana Kutkovets, Kremlevskaya shkola politologiyi (Moscow, 2006). In the Kremlin too not all shared the concept of “sovereign democracy.” For a different view, see Dmitri Medvedev, “Dlya protsvetaniya vsekh nado uchityvat’ interesy kazhdogo,” Ekspert, no. 28 (522), July 24, 2006, http://expert.ru (accessed August 24, 2006).

82. In the early 2007, the proportion of those respondents indifferent to politics was 54 percent. Ivan Gordeyev, “Rossiya bez rossiyskikh grazhdan,” Vremya Novostei, March 28, 2007.

83. The approach is different from those of nongovernmental democracy advocates, such as NED (National Endowment for Democracy) that supported the opposition in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. For the U.S. government, however, supporting democracy in Belarus was entirely different from Kazakhstan (MacKinnon, The New Cold War, p. 232).


85. According to the conference’s website, two State Department officials—the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried and the assistant secretary of state for Democracy and Human Rights Barry Lowenkron—attended the conference (“The Other Russia,” http://www.theotherrussia.ru/eng/list/ [accessed November 23, 2007]).


87. The Economist correspondent Edward Lucas introduces this classification in his book The New Cold War that is widely publicized in the United States and is treated as a serious treatise by influential organizations, such as the CFR (The New Cold War, p. 121).


92. Paul Goble, comment on “Russian Corruption Is ‘More than Corruption’—and so Too Is Medvedev’s Campaign Against It,” Window on Eurasia, comment


95. Baker and Glasser, Kremlin Rising. See, especially, chapter 13 “Back in the USSR.”


101. Dmitry Polikanov, “Nationalism in Moderation,” Russia Profile, August 1, 2007. See also presentation by Director of SOVA Center for Information and Analysis in Moscow Aleksandr Verkhovsky at Kennan Institute (“The Putin Government’s Responses to Increased Xenophobia,” January 7, 2008).


106. Ibid., p. 65.
108. Richard Cheney, Vice President’s Remarks at the 2006 Vilnius Conference, the White House, Office of the Vice President, May 4, 2006.
112. For example, Anders Aslund, Putin’s Decline and America’s Response (Washington, D.C., 2005).
115. Ibid.
117. Kasparov, “Election Season in Russia.”
119. Sidorov, “Rossiyskoi oppozitsiyi postavili v primer iranskuyu”; Kasparov, “Election Season in Russia.”


127. Fiona Hill, “Beyond the Colored Revolutions” (keynote speech given at Central Eurasia Studies Society Sixth Annual Conference, Boston University, September 30, 2005), p. 2.


Chapter 6


10. Opposition to the expansion was originally strong and included both republicans, such as Fred Ikle, Jack F. Matlock Jr., Paul H. Nitze, and Richard Pipes, and democrats, such as Sam Nunn, Marshall Shulman, and Morton H. Halperin. In 1997 critics of NATO expansion that included a group of 550 prominent foreign policy experts published a letter to the U.S. president arguing that “Russia does not now pose a threat to its western neighbors and the nations of Central and Eastern Europe are not in danger.” (“Opposition to NATO Expansion,” Arms Control Today, June–July 1997, http://www.armscontrol.org/act/1997_06-07/natolet.asp.).


12. Analysts Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier argued that “NATO must become larger and more global by admitting any democratic state that is willing and able to contribute to the fulfillment of the alliance’s new responsibilities” (Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier, “For Global Security, Expand the Alliance,” International Herald Tribune, October 12, 2006; and James Goldgeier, “U.S.-Russia Relations at Lowest Point since Cold War’s End,” Council on Foreign Relations, July 6, 2006, http://www.cfr.org/publication/11060/goldgeier.html). The idea of revitalizing the democratic community by creating a global “League of Democracies”—albeit not a global NATO—while excluding Russia has also been endorsed by the Republican senator John McCain (John

13. Lieven, America Right or Wrong, p. 165.

14. For various justifications of such policies by neoconservative pundits, see David Frum and Richard Perle, An End to Evil: How to Win a War on Terror (New York, 2003); and Robert Kagan, Of Paradise and Power: America Vs. Europe in the New World Order (New York, 2003). At the time, the attitude of American solitude to the “war on terror” was shared outside conservative and conservative circles (Thomas Friedman, “We Are All Alone,” New York Times, October 26, 2001).


17. On Bush first term security policy, see Ivo H Daalder and James M Lindsay, America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy (Washington, D.C., 2003).


25. For example, the Moscow mayor and leader of the pro-Kremlin Unified Russia party Yury Luzhkov claimed Sevastopol was legally a part of Russia, and he urged Moscow not to extend its treaty of friendship, cooperation, and partnership to Ukraine (Victor Yasmann, “Russia Prepares for Lengthy Battle over Ukraine,” RFE/RL, April 15, 2008).


32. Ibid.
35. “Former Czech President Calls on NATO, EU to Expand to Russia’s Western Borders,” RFE/RL Newsline, March 4, 2008.
38. Ibid.
44. Testimony by Janusz Bugajski, “NATO Enlargement and the Bucharest Summit.”
46. Ibid.
47. Dempsey, “U.S. Pushing to Bring Ukraine and Georgia into NATO.”


52. For example, Senator John McCain’s advisor Randy Scheunemann and his partner Mike Mitchell were paid more than $2 million by Georgia, Latvia, Romania, and Macedonia for advocating their membership in NATO (Mark Benjamin, “McCain: To Russia, without love,” *Salon*, June 9, 2008, www.salon.com).

53. As cited in Panofsky, “Nuclear Insecurity.”


57. On March 26, 2004 no less than 49 U.S. generals and admirals signed an Open Letter to the President arguing that it is “highly unlikely that any state would dare to attack the US or allow a terrorist to do so from its territory with a missile armed with a weapon of mass destruction, thereby risking annihilation from a devastating US retaliatory strike.” Instead, the letter advocated to concentrate on preventing terrorists from acquiring and employing weapons of mass destruction and recommended transferring “the associated funding to accelerated programs to secure the multitude of facilities containing nuclear weapons and materials, and to protect our ports and borders against terrorists who may attempt to smuggle weapons of mass destruction into the United States” (Endgahl, “V. Putin and the Geopolitics of the New Cold War”).


63. “Putin Compares Missile Defense to Cuban Missile Crisis,” *RFE/RL Newsline*, October 29, 2007. The United States dismissed the comparison as irrelevant, arguing that the U.S. MDS was introduced to defend Russia, not attack it (“US Sees No Parallel between Cuban Missile Crisis and NMD in Europe,” *Itar-Tass*, October 27, 2007).


72. Ibid.


75. Ibid.


77. John Steinbruner, “Foreword,” in Arbatov and Dvorkin’s, *Beyond Nuclear Deterrence*, p. viii. This has been the Russian argument as well (“Russia Says It Is Potential, Not Intentions, that Matters in Missile Defenses,” *Itar-Tass*, March 19, 2008).


85. Judy Dempsey, “Poland Signals Doubts about Planned U.S. Missile-Defense Bases on Its Territory,” New York Times, January 7, 2008. Polish Defense Minister Bogdan Klich was quoted as saying that Poles feel they have “a reduced level of security . . . provoked by tendencies in Russia over the past few years” and that it was due to the Russian behavior that Poland has offered to host ten U.S. interceptors as part of Washington’s planned MDS. Klich further noted that a U.S. military presence in Poland could also deter Russia from trying to use energy supplies as a political tool against his country (“Poland Says Russian ‘Tendencies’ Are Counterproductive,” RFE/RL Newsline, April 22, 2008).


88. One of them is the CSIS Initiative for a Renewed Transatlantic Partnership that was launched in 2003 to produce studies and policy recommendations from the perspective of “a newly enlarged Europe,” http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_progj/task,view/id,1090/.


91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

93. CFR, Russia’s Wrong Direction: What the United States Can and Should Do (New York, 2006). The report was released in March.


96. Ibid.


Chapter 7

9. Banerjee with Tavernise, “As the War Shifts Alliances, Oil Deal Follow.”

12. Ibid.


14. At the time, the U.S. companies, led by ExxonMobil, showed their interest in exploring oil and gas fields in Sakhalin Island and off the Arctic coast of eastern Siberia (Anna Raff, “US Will Fund Oil Study in Siberia,” The Moscow Times, August 2, 2002).

15. Sam Fletcher, “US-Russia Oil Supply Ties Deepen with Cargo to Texas,” Oil and Gas Journal 100, no. 31 (5 August 2002): 23.


18. Ibid.


20. Russia had passed the PSA framework legislation in the mid-1990s but failed to introduce amendments to other existing laws, particularly the tax codes that are needed to underpin the PSA regime (Bahgat, “The New Geopolitics of Oil.”).

21. Individual cross-memberships in organizations, such as ACPC, PNAC, CSP, and CPD demonstrates that members of these groups had much to agree on. Paula Dobriansky, Frank Gaffney, Paul Goble, Bruce Jackson, Max M Kampelman, William Kristol, Robert McFarlane, Joshua Muravchik, Richard Perle, James Woolsey, and others were active members of two or more than two of these organizations.


24. In addition to Amoco, McDermott, Unocal, Pennzoil, and Exxon became active participants in developing Azerbaijan’s major oil fields. Other shares were held by Azerbaijan state. On September 20, 1994, Aliyev and oil executives gathered in Baku for the ceremonial signing of what the Azerbaijani president called the “deal of the century” (Dan Morgan and David B. Ottaway, “Azerbaijan’s Riches Alter the Chessboard,” The Washington Post, October 4, 1998).

26. The notion of the geopolitical prize has been developed in his book *The Grand Chessboard*.


40. Marinucci, “Critics Knock Naming Oil Tanker Condoleezza.”
49. He stated so in an interview given to Nezavisimaya gazeta in 1997 (Quoted in Hudson, “Russia: Reforming the Reformers”).
50. Ibid.
52. Padma Desai, Conversations on Russia: Reform from Yeltsin to Putin (New York, 2006).
55. Some experts say that Yukos was preparing for a merger with ExxonMobil at a price of $22 billion— clearly less than the company actual value (Julietto Kieza, “Kholodnaya voina nachinayetsya,” Rossiya, February 15, 2007).
56. Engdahl, “The Emerging Russian Giant.”
58. Hudson, “Russia: Reforming the Reformers.”


67. Brzezinski, “Moscow’s Mussolini.”

68. Anders Aslund, “The Drama Is Putin’s, but so Are the Results,” Moscow Times, July 25, 2003. Aslund was especially outspoken in supporting Khodorkovski and, as some say, wanted his institution to take the oligarch’s money even after the latter’s arrest. Aslund soon had to leave Carnegie for another institution.


71. Illarionov resigned as Putin’s economic advisor in protest over the Kremlin’s policy toward Yukos and called President Bush to boycott the scheduled G-8 summit in St. Petersburg (“Bush Rejects Calls to Boycott St. Petersburg Summit,” RFE/RL Newsline, March 30, 2006).

75. As quoted in Pavel K. Baev, “Big Business Is Invited to the Kremlin for Fresh Instructions,” Russian and Eurasia Review (February 12, 2007).
102. For an early statement of this viewpoint, see Zbigniew Brzezinski, “The Premature Partnership,” Foreign Affairs, 73, 2, March/April 1994.
105. Daria Solovieva, “Kasparov’s Crusade: The Other Russia’s Presidential Candidate goes Abroad,” Russia Profile, October 17, 2007.


110. See, for instance, Boris Nemtsov’s statement at Ekho Moskvy radio (“Putin Destroyed Everything Yeltsin Created, Says Opposition Politician,” BBC Monitoring, April 27, 2007).


Chapter 8


3. Only some two months later more balanced accounts of the conflict found their way to the mainstream press. See, for example, Chivers and Barry, “Georgia Claims on Russia War Called Into Question”; Robert English, “Georgia: The Ignored History,” New York Review of Book 55, no. 17, November 6, 2008.

4. As quoted in Martin Malia, Russia under Western Eyes (Cambridge, MA, 1999), p. 99.


9. For a critique of these approaches, see Andrei P. Tsygankov, “Russia’s International Assertiveness,” Problems of Post-Communism 55, no. 1 (March–April, 2008).


Index

ABC, 80–1, 83
Abraham, Spencer, 140, 148
Abramovich, Roman, 145
Abu Ghraib, 82
Aeroflot, 160
Afghanistan, xiv, 2–4, 6, 59, 73, 76, 82, 118–9, 140
Airbus, 160
Akayev, Askar, 98
Akhmadov, Ilyas, 75, 79, 80, 83
Albania, 124
Albright, Madeleine K., 35–6, 103–4
Algeria, 70, 76
Allison, Graham, 56
al-Qaida, 6, 15, 72, 74, 80–1, 83, 87
American Committee for Peace in the Caucasus (ACPC), 26, 82–3, 89, 142
American Enterprise Institute (AEI), 82, 112–3, 133, 148–9, 158, 169
American Revolution, 17, 30
America-phobia, xiv, 16, 111
Amnesty International, 77–8
Amoco, 142
Amsterdam, Robert, 158
Ansip, Andrus, 60
anti-Americanism, 11, 18, 32–3, 111
Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty (ABM), 4, 7, 66, 118, 121, 124, 127–8
anti-Russian lobby, 13–4, 161–2
conditions, 38–45
discrediting Russia, 86–90
emergence and development, 29–34
goals and means, 21–9
ideology and activities, 23–6
influence on U.S. Russia policy, 17–9, 161–2
isolating Russia, 61–6, 105
objectives, 21–3
policy influence, 28–9
and Putin, 56–9
Russia as “unfit” for partnership, 81–3
and Russian revival, 52–3
and Second Chechen War, 77–9
structure of, 34–8
and U.S.-Russia cooperation, 120–1
anti-Russian stereotypes, 29–30, 43, 54, 166
anti-Semitism, 30, 59
Applebaum, Ann, 110
Arco, 140
Armenia, 100, 102
Armitage, Richard, 103, 122, 144
Aron, Leon, 149
Aslund, Anders, 110, 150
Atlantic Monthly, 78
Austria, 154
authoritarianism, 109–10
autocracy, xiv, 15, 23–4, 30, 57, 65, 86, 95–6, 100, 109–12, 120, 131, 140, 161–2, 170
Azerbaijan, 8, 92, 108, 122, 130, 142, 152–3
Azerbaijan International Operating Co. (AIOC), 142
Babitsky, Andrei, 77
Baku-Ceyhan pipeline (BTC), 8, 139–40, 152–4, 159
Baltic States, 53, 59–66, 122, 127
Baran, Zeyno, 158
barbarism, 79, 88–9, 169
Basaev, Shamil, 74–6, 78–81, 83–5, 89
BBC, 17
Belarus, 100, 102–3, 125, 131, 157
Cold War, 1, 2, 13–4, 17–8, 20, 22–3, 25–7, 29–34, 38, 40, 43, 47–67, 73, 82, 104, 109–12, 117–8, 121, 123, 125, 133–5, 141–2, 149, 156–64, 169
and the Baltic states, 60–2
history of, 47–50
narrative, 54–9, 111
“new,” 58–67, 149
second, 53–4
stereotypes, 40, 43
victor of, 50–2, 161–2
See also containment; post–Cold War; pre–Cold War
Cold War Medal Act, 55, 169
Collective Security Treaty, 122
colonialism, 70–1, 169
colored revolutions, 7, 11, 36, 56, 97–107, 110, 112, 114, 170
command economy, 94
Committee for the Free World, 33
Committee for Peace in the Caucasus, 18
Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), 14, 32–5, 121, 143, 158
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), 101
communism, xiv, 14, 15, 22, 32, 37, 40, 47–8, 55–6, 58, 62–3, 67, 94–5, 104, 121, 134
Congress of Russian Americans (CRA), 44
ConocoPhillips, 160
containment, 1, 2, 5, 11, 18, 51, 112, 161
Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, 8, 122–4
Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), 64
Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), xiii, 58–9, 112, 158
counterterrorism, 4–5, 9, 80–3, 86, 109, 128, 164, 166
Cox, Christopher, 103
Croatia, 124
Cuba, 33, 129
Czech Republic, 8, 36, 53, 89, 122, 125–6, 128, 130–1, 133
Czechoslovakia, 48, 62
Dagestan invasion, 75–6, 79–80
Danilevski, Nikolai, 16
decolonization narrative, 69–71
“de-democratization” of, xiii, 7, 24–5, 28, 93, 100–1, 112, 115, 134, 162
democracy, 4–5, 7, 23–4, 34–5, 41, 43, 47–9, 51, 55, 57–9, 63–4, 71, 73, 83, 90, 93–7, 100, 102–15, 131, 134, 142, 149–50, 156, 161–4, 166
American-style, 34–5, 43, 47–9, 57, 96, 161, 164
definition of, 93–4
Russian, 95–7, 100, 106–7, 112–15, 149, 156, 163
and U.S. policy, 108–9
Western-style, 48, 73, 83, 94, 97, 107, 109, 156
See also “de-democratization”; democratization; “league of democracies”; sovereign democracy; “true democrats”
Democratic Party, 28, 35, 119, 142, 166
democratization, 83, 97, 102–3, 107–9, 157
détente, 15, 32
Dobriansky, Lev E., 37
Dobriansky, Paula, 27, 37, 141
double standard, 59, 91
drug trafficking, 99, 138
Dudaev, Dzhokhar, 72

Eastern Europe, 15, 18, 20, 25, 33, 48, 52, 58, 60, 63, 65–6, 101, 104–5, 122, 125–7, 129–33
Eastern European nationalism, 14, 17, 25, 34, 36–7, 56–8, 88, 96, 104–5, 120, 127, 141, 161

East-West energy corridor, 79
Economist, 5, 63, 155, 158
Edwards, John, 58, 112
Eisenhower, Dwight D., 37
elections, 49, 79, 86–7, 90, 93, 95, 97–8, 100, 104–5, 108–9, 112, 114
“energo-fascism,” 141–2
“energy blackmail,” xiii, 8, 35, 134, 153, 171
Energy Diplomacy and Security Act, 155–6
energy partnership, 137–41, 144, 159
energy resources, 17, 20, 21–2, 25, 27–8, 39, 45, 55–6, 101, 107, 138, 144, 150–61
energy security, 3, 18, 28, 100, 127, 139, 143, 155, 166
“energy weapons,” 101, 137
g ener g ament, 1–2, 19, 112, 164–5
Enron, 147
equal partnership, 163–7
Estonia, 15, 58, 60–4
ethnocentrism, 16, 29–30
ethnonationalism, 71–2, 111–2
Eurasia, 10, 16, 18, 22, 28, 39, 50, 52, 98, 119, 124, 138–9, 143, 151, 154, 160, 164–5, 171
Eurasia Daily Monitor, 62–4, 114, 125, 134, 156
Europe, 11, 18, 30–1, 51, 58, 98–101, 117–8, 121, 128, 130–1, 135, 153–4, 159–60
European Union, 24, 28, 51, 61, 64, 100, 125, 157, 164
Evans, Donald L., 140
Evans, Dov, 144
expansionism, 6, 10–1, 31, 53, 64, 163
ExxonMobil, 141, 144, 146–7, 152
fascism, 60, 111
Federal Security Bureau, 79, 88
Financial Times, 89, 127, 132
Fleischer, Ari, 6
“flex groups,” 37, 56
Foglesong, David, 30
Foreign Affairs, xiii, 23, 27, 53, 77, 134, 171
foreign policy
Russia, 14–15, 56–7, 119, 150–1, 157, 163
United States, 1, 6, 12, 18–9, 22, 29–32, 39, 57, 81, 87, 108, 111, 126, 142
Foundation for the Defense of
Democracies, 96
France, 31, 54, 60, 62, 67, 70, 76, 96, 121–2, 126, 131, 160
Freedom House, 14, 18, 24, 26, 31, 36, 64, 96, 101, 104–5, 170
Fried, Daniel, 60, 85, 153–4
Friedman, George, 82
Frum, David, 143
FSB vzryvayet Rossiyi (The FSB Blows Up Russia), 79
Fukuyama, Francis, 22, 27, 48
Gabala radar, 134
Gaffney, Frank, 27, 33–4, 143
Gaidar, Yegor, 134
Gates, Robert, 114
Gazprom, 151, 154
G-8, xiii, 2, 5, 58, 65, 79, 90, 109, 113, 149, 156, 159
Geimer, William, 36
Gelayev, Ruslan, 85
genocide, 64, 77–8, 82, 88
Georgia, 6–8, 16, 27, 55–6, 59, 61, 78–81, 88, 92, 97–106, 112, 115, 122–7, 131, 142, 153, 162, 170
See also Pankisi Gorge; Rose Revolution
Germany, 22, 30, 49, 54, 60–3, 67, 86, 121–2, 124, 131, 154
Gingrich, Newt, 113
Goble, Paul, 36, 64, 110
Goodby, James, 132
Gorbachev, Mikhail, 32, 50–1, 63, 66, 69, 70–2, 113, 117, 135, 160, 163
Gore, Al, 12
Graham, Thomas, 56, 164
Great Britain, 28, 39, 42, 49, 62, 70, 91, 131, 148
Great Depression, 49
Greece, 154
Grozny battle (1999–2000), 77, 89
Gusinsky, Vladimir A., 77–8, 145–6
Haig, Alexander M., Jr., 83
Halliburton, 152
Hamas, 15, 87
Hamilton, Alexander, 30
Hansen, Robert, 3
hard power, 10
Hart, Gary, 50, 59
Harvard Symposium on Russia, 57
Havel, Vaclav, 89, 111, 125
Laar, Mart, 62
Lake, Tony, 52, 142
Lantos, Tom, 90, 103, 114, 132
Latvia, 58, 64
Lavrov, Sergei, 8, 99
“league of democracies,” 111
Ledeen, Michael, 82
Levine, Steve, 137
Lewis, Chuck, 144
liberal hawks, 34–5, 38, 56–7, 77, 82, 88
Lieber, Kier, xiii, 133–4
Lieberman, Joe, 33–4, 55, 58, 149
Lieberstein Plan, 82, 170
Lieven, Anatol, 16, 56, 70
Lithuania, 60, 63–4
Lithuania’s Museums of Genocide Victims, 64
Litvinenko, Alexandr, 44, 79, 88, 110–1, 131, 156
Lockheed Martin, 126
Los Angeles Times, 77
Lucas, Edward, 131, 158
Lugar, Richard, 8, 64–5, 101, 103–4, 126–7, 137, 149, 155, 170–1
Macedonia, 124
Malenkov, Georgy, 31
Manifest Destiny, 29
Maskhadov, Aslan, 24, 71, 74–7, 80, 83, 85, 90, 170
McCain, John, xiii, 8, 25, 43, 55, 58, 90, 103–6, 112–13, 117, 132, 137, 149
McConnell, J. Michael, 155
McFaul, Michael, 96, 100, 102, 131, 150
Mead, Walter Russel, 30
media manipulation, 17–8, 35, 42–3, 77–8, 90–1, 103, 105, 109, 114, 149, 154, 156, 161–2, 170–1
Media-Most, 77–8
Medvedchuk, Viktor, 104
Medvedev, Dmitri, 65, 107, 110, 114, 135
Membership Action Plan (MAP), 122, 124–5, 127
methodology, 19–20
Middle East, 18, 28, 33, 45, 57, 73, 80–2, 97, 109, 119, 128, 138–44, 147, 160
Miles, Richard, 105
military hawks, 32, 34, 36–9, 56, 77–8, 81–2, 87–8, 121
Milojevic, Slobodan, 111
missile defense systems (MDS), 4, 8, 12, 27, 32–3, 55, 66, 119, 122, 128–33, 135, 160
Mobil, 140
Moldova, 142, 157
Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, 62–3
Mongols, 95
Moscow apartment bombings, 79, 88, 90–1
Moscow theater hostage crisis, 80
Munich Conference on Security Policy, 11, 66
Muravchik, Joshua, 33
Murdoch, Rupert, 42–3
Muslims, 6, 30, 58, 73, 84–5
Nabucco pipeline, 154, 159, 171
National Bolshevik Party, 7, 97
National Democratic Institute (NDI), 36, 104
National Endowment for Democracy (NED), 26, 28–9, 36, 80, 83, 96, 104–5, 170
nationalism, xiv, 14–6, 18, 23, 25, 53, 95, 123
NATO, 4–5, 7–8, 11, 17, 24, 27, 35–6, 42, 50, 61, 67, 98–100, 102, 104, 106, 117–27, 129, 155–6, 159, 170
See also NATO expansion; NATO-Russia Council
NATO Article 5, 64
NATO-Russia Council, 5, 7–8, 120, 123
natural gas, 5, 8, 28, 132, 137, 141, 144, 147, 151, 153–4, 157, 160
Nazi Germany, 3, 31, 48–9, 61–2, 64, 66, 110
NBC, 32
Negroponte, John, 155
Nemtsov, Boris, 113
eoconservatism, 9–10, 26, 29, 33, 55, 83, 100, 109–10, 120, 141–3, 148–9
New Left Review, 70
NGOs, xiii, 7, 26–7, 97–8, 100, 105, 108–9, 111, 113–5
9/11, 1, 2, 6, 12, 42, 53–4, 76, 80, 84, 119, 122, 139, 161
See also post-9/11 partnership
Nitze, Paul, 32, 35
North European Pipeline, 154
North Korea, 2, 33, 57
Norway, 147
NSC-68, 32
nuclear nonproliferation, 1–6, 18, 50, 109, 118–9, 121, 127, 166
Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), 121, 127
nuclear power, 21–2, 32, 39, 85, 127–34
nuclear programs, 81, 91
nuclear weapons, 32–3, 66, 73, 129
Nuland, Victoria, 127–8
Nuremberg Trials, 63
Odom, William, 130–1, 133–4, 169
oil, xiv, 5, 8, 24, 28, 75, 81, 88, 97, 132, 137–60
oligarchs, 23, 96, 102, 104–5, 114, 145–50
OPEC, 152
Open Letter to the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and NATO, 24–5, 27, 35, 90, 170
Open Russia Foundation, 148
Open Society Institute, 89
Orange Revolution, 97–9, 101, 103, 106
Oxfam, 28
Pakistan, 59, 108, 140
Palestinian territories, 87
Pankisi Gorge, 80–1
Patriot Act, 7
Pearl Harbor, 31
Perestroika, 33, 71
Perle, Richard, 29, 32–3, 58, 120–1, 126, 143, 149, 171
Perry, William J., 119
Persian Gulf War, 81
Peterson Institute for International Economics, 110
Petroleum Finance Company, 141
Piontkovsky, Andrei, 157
“pipeline warfare,” 131
pipelines, 8, 28, 61, 76, 81, 98–9, 106, 131, 137, 139–40, 142, 152–4, 159–60
Pipes, Richard, 15, 32, 35, 53, 70, 82
Plattner, Marc, 23
Pletka, Danielle, 158
poisoning, 88, 91, 110–1
Poland, 8, 15, 36, 53, 61, 64, 122, 126, 128, 130–1, 133
political system, 3, 7, 9, 14–5, 20, 26, 38, 109–10, 161
Politkovskaya, Anna, 88, 111
Portugal, 70
post–Cold War, 21, 33–4, 38, 73–4, 122–3, 163
Postol, Ted, 132
Powell, Colin, 7, 45, 122
pre–Cold War, 29–30
Press, Daryl, xiii, 133–4
Primakov, Yevgeni, 41
Project for a New American Century (PNAC), 18, 22, 24, 27, 35, 90, 104, 121, 127, 141, 143–4, 149, 170
Project on Transitional Democracies, 102, 126, 158
and anti-Russian lobby, 56–8, 109–10
and Chechnya, 75, 80, 84–5
foreign policy, 56–8
and Georgia, 98
Munich speech, 112, 129
on NATO expansion, 123
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), 134
Reagan, Ronald, 27, 32, 36–8, 50, 104, 113, 126, 143–4
Republican Party, 28, 35, 53, 119, 142, 166
responsibility, 66–7, 79, 85, 163
revisionism, 6, 11, 20, 22, 29, 142, 162, 169
Rice, Condoleezza, 3, 13, 45, 54, 61, 114–5, 121–2, 144, 148, 154
Richardson, Bill, 28
Robertson, George, 4, 120
Robinson, Mary, 89
Rodman, Peter, 120
Rogov, Sergei, 66
Rogozin, Dmitry, 123
Romaṇia, 62, 122, 125, 154
Roosevelt, Franklin D., 31
Roosevelt, Theodore, 30
Rose Revolution, 97–8
Rose-Lehtinen, Ileana, 90
Rosneft, 151
Rossett, Claudia, 131
Rostow, Eugene V., 32
Royal Dutch Shell, 144, 151, 156
Rumsfeld, Donald, 3, 27, 103, 120–2, 124–5, 144
Russia
as “bully,” 100, 158
culture and politics, 10–2
dictatorship, 96, 163
economy, 39, 75, 87, 94–5, 145, 159
immigrants, 44
language, 40
middle class, 95, 157
military, 3, 7–9, 25, 161
and NATO expansion, 122–4
as “Neo-Stalinist” autocracy, 109–12
nuclear reductions, 118–20
nuclear security, 127–34
political borders, 106–7
Second Chechen War, 77–9
as threat, 106–15, 121, 155, 158, 164
“weakness” of, 81, 118, 124, 132, 134, 138–9, 171
See also autocracy; barbarism;
counterterrorism;
“de-democratization”; energy
resources; expansionism; foreign
policy; imperialism; nationalism;
political system; revisionism;
Russia-EU summit, Samara, 60–1
Russia-Germany pipeline, 61, 64
Russian Foreign Ministry, 24, 83–4, 114, 147, 154
Russia’s Wrong Direction, xiii, 25, 59, 134
Russo-Japanese war, 30
conditions of, 38–45
dangers of, 18–19
and media, 42–3
myths of, 14–15, 86–7
and policy, 45
stereotypes, 30, 43
and U.S. public, 39–42
Ryzhkov, Vladimir, 113, 157
Saakashvili, Mikheil, 99, 103, 105–6, 113
Sadullaev, Abdul, 24, 85
Safire, William, 52–3, 79, 124, 130
Satter, David, 88–9
Saudi Arabia, 74, 152, 157
Schroeder, Gerhard, 86
Second Chechen War, 72, 74–9
security policy, 117–22
Serbia, 74, 102, 105, 111, 115, 154
Sestanovich, Stephen, 35–6, 57
Shamanov, Vladimir, 77
Shell, 140
Shevardnadze, Eduard, 105
Shvetsova, Liliya, 150, 156–7
Shtokman natural gas field, 160
Shultz, George P., 119
Shumpeter, Joseph, 43
Sibneft, 145–6
Sikorski, Radek, 133
Slovakia, 62, 106
Slutsis, Aivars, 44
Soros, George, 36, 89, 101–2, 105–6, 115
Soros Foundation, 26, 36, 105
South Stream pipeline, 154
“sovereign democracy,” 107–8, 110, 112

expansionism, 31
and Nazi Germany, 61–2
and World War II, 48–9, 60–2
Sovietophobia, 32–3

St. Petersburg, Russia, xiii
Stalin, Joseph, 31, 33, 49, 70–1, 109–12
Stalinism, 63, 70, 109–12, 131, 170
START 1 Treaty (Strategic Arms Reduction), 128
START 2 Treaty, 129
state centralization, 95–7, 108–9, 115, 143–7, 151, 162
state-building, 70–1, 94–5, 106–7, 110, 161
Stephens, Bret, 131
Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT), 128–9
Stratfor, 24, 82
Surkis, Hrihoriy, 104
Surkov, Vladislav, 107, 151
Szporluk, Roman, 101

Taci, Hasim, 74
Talbott, Strobe, 75
Taliban, 3–4, 72, 76, 118–9, 140
Tallinn, Estonia, 60–2
Tbilisi, Georgia, 98–9, 123
Team B, 14–5, 32, 35
Tenghiz oil field, 140
*Terrorism Monitor, 87
think tanks, 25, 28, 32, 35, 37, 110, 112–3, 148–9, 158
Timoshenko, Yulia, 101, 104, 106
Trade Act of 1974, 58
traditionalists, 121, 124
trans-Caspian Pipeline, 8, 98, 160, 171
Treaty of Versailles, 49
“true democrats,” 112–4
Truman, Harry, 32
Turkey, 154

Turkmenistan, 8, 140, 152–4, 159–60
Tymoshenko, Yulia, 127

West, 36–7
Umarov, Doku, 91
unipolarity, 9–10, 23, 66, 88, 120
United Nations, 50, 86, 89, 126
United States
as “bully,” 16
democracy and policy, 108–9
and energy, 28, 54, 138–9, 141–3
internationalism, 30–1
military, 118, 121
nuclear primacy of, 127–34, 171
nuclear reductions, 118–20
policy toward Russia, 9–13
power, 9–10, 28, 39
public opinion, 39–42, 54
See also foreign policy; hegemony; media manipulation; unipolarity
United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 28, 105, 115
Unocal, 147
U.S. Congress, 18, 25, 55, 90, 155
U.S. Defense Department, 33, 58, 119
U.S. House of Representatives, 126–7, 155
U.S. Senate, 28, 61, 149, 155
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 56, 153
U.S. State Department, 7, 84–5, 97, 104–5, 108–10, 113–4, 147–8
Ushakov, Yuri, 152
U.S.-Russia partnership, 1–9, 19–20, 47, 54, 65, 81–3, 167
See also post-9/11 partnership
Uzbekistan, 8, 99–100, 102

Van Cleave, William, 35
Vatchagaev, Mairbek, 24
Venezuela, 57, 155
Victims of Communism Memorial, 55, 169
Vietnam war, 32
Vilnius Ten, 126

Walid, Abu al-, 74
Wall Street Journal, 5, 35, 47, 57, 62, 102, 113, 124–5, 131, 140, 156
Waller, Michael J., 131
war in Afghanistan, xiv, 2–4, 6, 72, 118–9
war on terror, 8, 11, 25, 33–4, 42, 53, 55, 87, 97, 129, 143
Ware, Robert Bruce, 78
Warsaw Pact, 50
Washington Post, 35, 44, 55, 63, 66, 88, 110, 114, 120, 125, 149
Wattenberg, Ben, 33
Wedel, Janine, 37
Weekly Standard, 102
Weinstein, Allen, 105
Western civilization, 11, 16, 21–4, 96–7
Westernizers, 25–6, 57, 78, 90, 97, 101, 113, 156–8
Wilson, Woodrow, 30–1
Wolf, John S., 127
Wolfowitz, Paul, 27, 55, 120–1, 126
Wood, Tony, 70
Woolsey, James, 29, 34–6, 141, 143
World Trade Organization, 58, 151–2, 165–6
World War I, 31
World War II, 4–5, 11, 14, 48–50, 60–5, 71
WorldCom, 147
xenophobia, 109, 111
Yalta, Ukraine, 63
Yanukovich, Victor, 97
Yavlinski, Grigori, 157
Yeltsin, Boris, 41, 51, 56, 66, 72, 76, 117, 145–6
Yugoslavia, 35–6, 42, 76–7, 123, 125, 129
Yukos, 24, 27, 141, 145, 148–50, 152, 171
Yushchenko, Victor, 56, 98, 101–6, 113
Zakayev, Akhmed, 88–9, 91
Zavgaev, Doku, 72
Zawahiri, Ayman al-, 73, 84, 87
Zlobin, Nikolai, 57