

Overcoming the Agenda of Discord: U.S.-Russian Relations in a Time of Transition

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Because America and Russia are experiencing presidential transitions in 2008 the need to repair their mutual relations is both topical and urgent. It is urgent because critical issues of arms control, nuclear proliferation, regional and energy security in Eurasia, and democracy to varying but never insignificant degree hinge on the nature and outcomes of that currently troubled relationship. Increasingly both sides feel they have good reason to resent, if not fear, the other. Whereas Russian policymakers postulate ubiquitous internal and external threats to their form of rule and Russia's interests which they attribute mainly to American machinations and policies, U.S. policymakers feel much less concern about Russia and see few serious Russian threats to America except in some restricted areas such as arms control, energy policy, and support for Iran. Thus Russia perceives America as its main enemy and believes, quite erroneously, that America perceives Russia as an enemy and shapes its policies accordingly. This presupposition of an enemy, as well as Moscow's aggressive domestic and foreign behavior, stems largely from the nature of Russia's political system, political culture, and self-presentation at home and abroad.

Accordingly both sides must confront and hopefully overcome a comprehensive and large agenda of discord between East and West, and in particular between Moscow and Washington. This agenda comprises the following issues

- Diverging approaches toward the nuclear program in North Korea and Iran overshadow the shared goal of preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Especially in the Middle East, Moscow pursues a unilateral path whose sole purpose appears to be enhancing its regional stance as a great power against American power and policy in the Middle East.

- Specifically Russia seeks a role as an independent privileged interlocutor with Iran. Russia claims that its interests demand preserving strong ties to Iran, not just for reasons of trade, energy, and intercontinental routes to the Indian Ocean, but also because Iran is a power that must be engaged as a prospective pole in world politics. Therefore Moscow also seeks to form a gas cartel with Iran and other producers.

- Indeed Russia's attitude to Iran and North Korea often gives the impression that Russia would not mind greatly if they did actually achieve usable nuclear weapons, regarding this as a greater threat and loss to the United States than to Russia and the effort to stop them as another reason for including Russia in the ranks of great powers if not superpowers. Russia evaluates proliferation issues not according to whether the regime is democratic or not as in America, but on the basis of whether a country's nuclearization would seriously threaten Russia and its interests. Thus Chief of Staff, General Yuri N. Baluyevsky stated that, while Russia never denied a global threat of nonproliferation of missiles and nonproliferation, "we insist that this trend is not something catastrophic, which would require a global missile defense system deployed near Russian borders." Consequently Moscow charges that deployment of U.S. missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic threatens its vital interests since it refuses to concede that Iran's nuclear and missile programs constitute a threat to it even as it is forced to do so indirectly.

- Moscow sees America, NATO, and to a lesser degree, the EU as encroaching in the CIS which it considers to be its region, promoting regime change, encircling Russia, and threatening not just to install pro-Western democracies, but also to undermine thereby the Russian state or threaten it with superior military force as in Kosovo in 1999.

- The CIS, once a region of potential mutual cooperation, is now the setting for dangerous competition over political influence and natural resources where Moscow seeks monopoly and the preservation of the authoritarian status quo despite its manifest contribution to future instability. Hence Moscow is once again, as it was in the nineteenth century, the Gendarme of Eurasia.

- Russia has repeatedly demonstrated for several years that it will use energy supplies to coerce CIS governments to accept inferior prices for their energy goods, or to surrender economic and political assets, including ultimately their sovereignty, to Moscow. The evidence is overwhelming that energy cutoffs have been and are regularly used throughout the CIS as an instrument of coercive political pressure. Thus America sees Russia as bullying its much weaker neighbors and correctly sees Russian use of energy as equating to a protection racket.

- Beyond that, Russia uses its control over gas to gain leverage over politicians and economic institutions throughout Eastern Europe to corrupt them and political processes, subvert governments, facilitate intelligence penetration of those regimes, and attempt to convert them into Russian clients within the EU and NATO and have Europe subsidize Russia's own wasteful energy economy. As Western scholars, diplomats, and intelligence agencies well know Russia's political, business, intelligence, and organized crime agencies act as an integrated and mutually reinforcing system abroad to achieve those ends. Russia's Ambassador to the EU, Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov once declared that, "Bulgaria is in a good position to become our special partner, a kind of Trojan horse in the EU." And many analysts and diplomats concur that today Germany plays such a role in the EU and NATO. It also is quite probable that Prime

Minister Berlusconi's new Italian government will act in similar fashion. Indeed, one European intelligence officer told me that, "ENI (Italy's state-owned energy corporation) is a Russian company." Neither are these the only regimes that act in such fashion.

- These scholars, diplomats, and analysts also concur in noting that Russia behaves like or is a "mafia state" whose tactics are corruption, predation, and intimidation. The government, Russian business, organized crime, and the intelligence agencies work together in concerted fashion and Russian business can be used at any time as an intelligence gathering organization for purposes of gaining information that can be used to compromise businesses, politicians, or whole governments. Many Russian policies, particularly state takeovers at home and threats against governments in the CIS, resemble Mafia protection rackets. Danish General Michael Clemmesen, the Commandant of the Baltic Defense College, wrote in his blog analyzing the cyber-attacks in Estonia of April-May, 2007 that,

The attitude of Russia to the world and especially to its neighbors is presently close to that of the great power attitudes of that earlier [pre -World War I-author] period. It is built on a demand for '*respect*' for the country because of its size. It is rooted in the geostrategic and geopolitical attitudes tainted with Social Darwinism that dominated the conservative elites of all *other* major European states of the period. ---The respect demanded from the small- and thus contemptible and ridiculous --states on the borders is similar in type to that demanded by a mafia '*capo*'. Presently the focus is in Georgia and Estonia. (Italics in original),

Similarly Robert Dalsjo of the Swedish Defense Research Agency (FOI) concurs in every detail, noting that Russia's concept of power is that it can kick around smaller states to intimidate them much like gangsters in American movies. And in domestic politics, Andrei Illarionov, like many others, highlights the resemblance of the ruling elite to the Mafia but claims that it is even less stable than is the Mafia.

Apart from gaining a free hand at home and abroad, the long-term objective of Russian investment abroad which works in this integrated fashion is therefore to corrupt and subvert Western political, financial, and economic institutions so that they cannot stop Russia from essentially revising the European and Post-Soviet settlement of 1989-91.

- Russia's overriding objectives are to frustrate the consolidation of European security organizations and European integration on a democratic basis, ensure Russian exclusive hegemony in the CIS, and create pressure for essentially revising the European settlements of 1989 -91 that ended the Cold War. As Tesmur Basilia, Special Assistant to former Georgian President Edvard Shevarnadze for economic issues, wrote, in many CIS countries, e.g. Georgia and Ukraine, "the acute issue of choosing between alignment with Russia and the West is associated with the choice between two models of social development." Indeed, even some Russian analysts acknowledge the accuracy of this insight. Thus Dmitry Furman writes that, "The Russia-West struggle in the CIS is a struggle between two irreconcilable systems." Furman also observed that "Managed democracies are actually a soft variant of the Soviet system."

- In Moldova and the Caucasus Moscow has obstructed every effort to overcome the frozen conflicts with the partial exception of the Armeno-Azerbaijani conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh) in order to punish Moldova and Georgia for resisting Russian hegemony in the CIS. Beyond freezing these conflicts it has subjected these states to economic warfare, regular military threats, and the possibility of lasting territorial amputation, allegedly in retaliation for Western actions like the recognition of Kosovo.

Moscow manipulates these frozen conflicts and potential ethnic animosities in these states against the time when it may need to exploit those factors.

- Indeed Moscow regards the sovereignty of the former Soviet republics as dubious and susceptible to diminution under Russian pressure. Its spokesmen regularly claim that a truly independent, i.e. not just formally but actually sovereign, Ukraine cannot stand. President Putin told the NATO-Russia Council that Ukraine is not even a state, that its territory was given to it by Russia, and if it decides to join NATO, Moscow will see to it that it no longer remains a state. Likewise Russia evidently is preparing the ground for amputating Georgia's sovereignty by recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia, presumably in retaliation for the West's recognition of Kosovo's independence.

Russia engages in economic warfare and what one Ukrainian official called "punishments" against Kiev. He even called it a Cold War. Neither is this confined to Ukraine. Estonian assertions of independence, whether or not they are well calculated, led to an information attack against the entire country in 2007 that almost certainly originated in Russia and was accompanied by violent demonstrations against the government organized by Russian officials. Many such campaigns have been marked by open threats of missile attacks, hostile relations, and the development of what might essentially be called adversarial relations were they to join NATO.

- Russia repeatedly makes conventional and nuclear military threats against NATO allies and members of the CIS who might incline to the West and is rebuilding its armed forces, with varying degrees of success, primarily to rebuff what it considers to be an American-organized military threat that is drawing ever closer to its borders.

•Meanwhile reciprocal ideological hostility in America and Russia is rising, an outcome apparently confirmed by public opinion polls in Russia. This outcome is also traceable to systematic propaganda by state-owned or controlled media in Russia which is increasingly becoming the only form of mass media and which has always been regarded as political weapons and spoils of political combat among elites.

Democracy Issues

Russia's foreign policy, as its executors, admit, stems from or continues its domestic policy and aims to advance its domestic agenda of staying in power and ruling autocratically. That policy lies at the heart of Western unhappiness about Russia because Russia's defaults from democracy drive its neo-imperial, unilateralist foreign policies based on this presupposition of enemies. In many ways Russia's domestic political structure resembles the Tsarist or Muscovite paradigm as more and more foreign and domestic analysts of Russia acknowledge. Indeed, as we have noted above, many foreign analysts and even diplomats characterize Russia as a Mafia state.

Such governance clearly precludes any concept of democracy. Russia's presidential transition was not an election because there was no choice. Nikolai Petrov of the Carnegie Endowment called it a "regency." Other analysts label this succession, like Putin's of Boris Yeltsin, as signifying an "adoption" process where the outgoing leader adopts his protégé as successor. Both terms again suggest the pre-modern condition and immature development of the Russian state and that Putin, like the Tsars, regards it as his personal property.

In this paradigm Russia is a service state where property and power is a function of the service performed by the Tsar's servitors, including the armed forces that are

effectively still enserfed, bound to service of the state. Meanwhile the Tsar, in turn, owns the state as his personal property that he owns without contest or any accountability to law or any institution save his conscience. Indeed, we see under Putin not just the return but even the glorification of many phenomena associated with either Tsarist or Soviet practices: personality cults, the ruling elite's criminal-like nature, the growth of the state's repressive capability to the point where Russia again has a Gulag with political prisoners, repressiveness and insecurity of property and the reintroduction of the service state based on the concept of a "boyar"-like retinue around an all-powerful ruler. Soviet features like confining dissidents to psychiatric institutions, the aforementioned Gulag, plus the creation of organizations whose roots lie in Soviet times, e.g. youth organizations like Nashi, also reveal the lingering heritage of the past. Similarly, Vitaly Shlykov, a prominent military consultant and advisor to the regime, concludes that what has saved the army is the return to Soviet military standards, not just in terms of technical issues like requisite training time for pilots, but including more sinister phenomena like the return of political education teams to replace the Soviet Main Political Administration (Glavpur) and, of course, Dedovshchina (hazing). Indeed, Shlykov admits that the soldiers and officers' dependence upon the state to provide housing in the absence of a viable housing program or market constitutes a kind of serfdom. Other examples abound.

Obviously in such a state there are no secure property, human, or civil rights. Law is what the rulers want it to be and there is no accountability of officials to or before the law. The ongoing crackdown on the media, and continuing political murders of critical journalists and others are examples of the state's intolerance for dissent as are the attempts to manipulate and eviscerate elections and to use anti-American propaganda as a

mobilizing device for ensuring the populace's subordination to the government.

Therefore Russia charges that America wants to turn the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) into an anti-Russian organization and that individual governments are also using NGOs for such purposes despite their so-called formal independence. Allegedly revolutions in CIS countries are incited from abroad and their elections often are masquerades whereby the West intervenes in their internal affairs.

Obviously this view projects Russia's own politics and policies of interference in these elections (e.g. the \$300 million it spent and the efforts of Putin's "spin doctors" in Ukraine in 2004) onto Western governments and wholly dismisses the sovereign internal mainsprings of political action in those countries, another manifestation of the imperial mentality that grips Russian political thinking and action. Likewise, we should not be surprised that Deputy Prime Minister and former Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov wrote in 2006 that, that Moscow regarded the main threat to its security as an attempt to change the constitutional order of any of the CIS states, not just Russia. Nor should we forget that despite Medvedev's homilies about overcoming Russia's "legal nihilism" he fully participated in all of the anti-democratic processes to date and benefited from them.

What Is To Be Done

Nevertheless Russia must be engaged, not ignored. Russia remains important for its nuclear capabilities, its posture regarding terrorism and Nonproliferation, its role in determining regional security environments in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Yet at the same time it rejects American values and challenges American interests. Therefore the pursuit of U.S. interests must occur in an environment inhospitable to our values even as we should also pursue a candid discussion of those values. Consequently we must

navigate between the unrestrained pursuit of common interests (if they exist) regarding proliferation and arms control at the expense of our democratic values and a strategy that stresses ideological and value conflicts with Moscow that will invariably generate pressures to again contain Russia within its boundaries. That strategy of neo-containment may feel good but will neither advance our national interests nor persuade Russia and others of the rightness of our values. Certainly it will not help us advance either arms control or human rights or gain allied support. Neither will it let us address effectively other key areas of concern, e.g. Russia's energy policy, Russia's predatory foreign policies, and the corresponding lack of a U.S. energy strategy.

Thus, for example, we must also reckon with Moscow's demands for a new economic order given its transformation and the continuing high prices for oil and gas. Yet even if we need Russian support on many key questions, Russia needs our support even more for its own benefits and we should never lose sight of our leverage or power to affect its policies. Therefore an essential requirement in getting Russia right is a balance between what both sides need from the other and can reasonably expect of the other side.

Consequently it is futile to lecture Russia without credible counteractions to offensive Russian policies or actions that advance American interests. For U.S. policy to defend U.S. interests and values effectively it must be credible, not merely rhetorical. Even if America must deal with Russia as it is and expect to pay the price of its discontent with our policies, an intelligent policy cannot let Moscow's objections deter American actions that advance the national interest. U.S. policy requires a deeper assessment of Russian realities and trends than the habitual American tendency (that long preceded this Administration) to believe that personal relationships with Russia's leader

are either substitutes for or the purpose of U.S. Russia policy. This means, among other things, fully taking into account the nature of the Mafia-like threat Russia poses and orchestrating a coordinated inter-agency approach to Russia that involves not just traditional security instruments but also financial and banking monitoring and intelligence coordination, not unlike the way we track terrorists. Acknowledging Russian realities does not mean giving Moscow a veto on our policies or overlooking Russia's structurally determined and intrinsically self-seeking nature. Too many real Russian misdeeds deserve consistent international censure. Instead, acknowledging Russian realities means that our calculations of interest and of the costs we can pay to reach them must be better than has hitherto been the case, for on too many issues, particularly those connected with Moscow's regression from democratization and its predatory economic tactics abroad, we have given Russia a pass.

Thus a sound American policy must exploit the fact Moscow needs American support far more than Washington needs its support to make Moscow acknowledge other realities besides its own self-interest. Second, to the degree that other states' interests limit U.S. power, so must Russian power be limited accordingly. U.S. policy cannot let Russia act as it pleases in world affairs or be allowed to make trouble just to enhance its status or importance. Giving Russia a free hand, either actively or tacitly, especially in the CIS, only incites more domestic autocratic behavior and belligerence abroad. And it could lead to future conflict if Moscow tries to act on its disdain for those states' sovereignty.

Therefore the strategy outlined below aims at integrating Russia over time into the Eurasian constitutional and political order based on treaties that it has signed and which

govern both domestic and foreign policy practices. Our strategy must aim at integrating Russia into a world order that it has voluntarily accepted, gradually limiting its opportunities for securing a free hand abroad by presenting it with no better option than to do so. To the extent that we succeed in doing so, Russian governments will also be unable to act with a totally free hand at home. Rather, they will be bound by the treaties and conventions that they have signed and by the West's superior power and resolve to enforce them. Over time, only that kind of policy will effectively counter the deeply rooted authoritarian and impulses in Russian politics and culture. This is a patient, long-term policy, not one that seeks immediate gratification or is motivated by evangelical and theological beliefs about the superiority of democracy. It also requires governing and restraining U.S. policies by the same constitutional order whose validity we seek to uphold and extend.

To achieve those goals, however, we must first dispel several myths and obstacles that obstruct coherent U.S. and Western policymaking. The first obstacle is the widely accepted myth that the West or we have little or no leverage upon Russian policy and therefore must adjust to it or tolerate it silently. The ideas that Europe is hopelessly corrupted or that Russia has a natural sphere of influence, which we must respect, have many adherents in Europe. But it has not by any means triumphed and could not stand against a united European-American stance. Thus again the U.S. must lead the way with its allies in demonstrating both that we have leverage and will use it. This idea that we lack such leverage is a highly self-serving tactic when stated by Russians who love to pretend that the U.S. or the West cannot sway their policies, that foreign motives towards Russia are invariably hostile and self-serving, or evoke the Cold War. In the West this

precept amounts to a paralyzing fear that inhibits all effective action. It represents self-denying ordinance and a bizarre failure of political intelligence that paralyzes efforts to advance Western political objectives when it has the stronger hand in every dimension of international power. Clearly the strongest power in the world and the strongest alliance in the world do not lack the resources with which to influence Russian policy and Russia has frequently adjusted to meet firm American policies. Just as George Kennan's containment strategy sought to compel an eventual "mellowing" of Soviet domestic and foreign behavior by applying political and other external pressures abroad, today the judicious application of the total weight of the instruments of power available to the West in world politics would surely frustrate or at least blunt the imperial drive and the restoration of autocracy that underlies so much of today's Russian foreign policy and force domestic changes as a result. As Heinrich Vogel writes,

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

Arguing that we have no leverage also reduces the Western pursuit of a viable Russian policy to incoherence. Moreover, obtaining such a condition of Western paralysis or admission of defeat is actually the goal of Moscow's bad behavior in the hope that foreigners will assume nothing can be done. Therefore Russian media are all too happy to report frequently that the West "accepts" the nature of Russia's "special democracy".

Then we must overcome the second obstacle to a sound Russia policy. Namely we must devise and implement a coherent strategy within our own government, and then together with our allies in order to use that leverage to optimal effect in regard to key

issues: Iran, the Middle East, the Western presence in the CIS, the sanctity of treaties signed by Russia, energy, economic and intelligence subversion of foreign states and governments, arms control, and Korea among others. Doing so requires first that we overcome the fact that on numerous key issues, including apparently policies toward Russia, and in regard to at least some of these aforementioned issues, our policy process has been and is still broken. Furthermore on many political issues, the approach to Russia itself, Iran, Central Asia, and energy among others either we ourselves are divided or Europe is incapable of forging a coherent policy.

Third, current U.S. policy toward Russia suffers from several shortcomings that obstruct realization either of strategic or democratic aims. The first of these problems is the false dichotomy that exists among many commentators and in many previous administrations that to achieve strategic goals, e.g. Iranian or North Korean nonproliferation, we must soft pedal or even sacrifice democracy promotion, or vice versa. It is very clear that the current Administration has opted for a relationship with Moscow that emphasizes strategic goals over democratization despite its ringing invocation of universal democratic values. The results do not justify the neglect of Russian democratic issues or the effort invested in achieving coordination with Russia at those issues' expense. In fact Michael McFaul's assessment of U.S. democracy promotion policy towards Russia even calls it "anemic." Therefore one essential change to U.S. policy must be the comprehensive rebuilding of our public diplomacy capability. First of all, to defend U.S. interests and values abroad we cannot be silent in the face of the systematic mendacity and vituperation of the Russian media, e.g. Putin's charging the U.S. with being like Nazi Germany, or that we are fomenting revolutions abroad, charges

to which we were silent. As Pope John Paul II said, “in a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation.” Therefore under no conditions can we simply ignore this propaganda. Rather, the institutions that conduct this public diplomacy must have a simple mission, i.e. to expose the lie and tell the truth even if it reflects badly on America. As we know doing so is much better and cheaper than covering it up. It was the voice of truth that helped undermine Communist rule in Europe and organizations like Radio Free Europe, Voice of America, etc. must again expose the lie today and must be funded more vigorously even as the other capabilities hitherto associated with USIA (The United States Information Agency) and contemporary public diplomacy are simultaneously recapitalized as well. Similarly we must bring our financial and economic regulatory apparatus into Russian policy, monitor, track, and publicize Russian criminal and other illicit interventions in to foreign economic and political institutions just as we do with our allies in regard to terrorism.

But aligned to that false dichotomy between promoting security objectives and democracy are procedural errors that impede realizing both strategic and democratic goals. As Dov Lynch of the European Union’s Institute for Security Studies observes, Russia matters for the US less for itself and more in terms of how it can affect US interests in other policy areas. Lynch’s assessment subsumes within it the excessive emphasis on a personal relationship with Putin. Consequently there is little governmental implementation of agreements or progress on issues while the relationship stays focused on personalities rather than programs. This fact, unfortunately extends a well-established tradition, but also makes it harder for the Russian government to reform itself or ensure policy coordination and fulfillment when it does concur with the United States.

Fourth, there is no coherent energy policy designed to reduce our or our allies' dependence upon Russian supplies and potential blackmail. As Putin has proceeded to lock up Eurasian energy reserves and access, the EU has been divided, timorous, and incoherent and Washington has often been too late in replying or in fashioning attractive counter options for Europe and Central Asia. Certainly Moscow will not accept the EU's energy charter anytime soon. Since energy is Moscow's main foreign policy weapon, this absence of a strategy and a policy puts us and our allies at a grievous political disadvantage and makes it more difficult to help CIS members that Russia is threatening with unrelieved economic warfare and even Cold War.

This point is particularly urgent when we realize that due to the collapse of the Orange Revolution. Ukraine's energy situation makes it perpetually vulnerable. Belarus too succumbed in early 2007 to Russian pressure and is now frantically seeking to diversify its sources. Other CIS states escaped this threat only because Iran or Azerbaijan provided them with energy. Energy security is not just a question of supplying Europe or Asia, or, from Russia's standpoint, of ensuring its ability to meet foreign and domestic demand at a fair market price. Rather it entails the basic security and opportunity for progress of the former Soviet states from Ukraine to Central Asia. While it is in their and Russia's interests that their energy relationships be marketized rather than subsidized, Moscow's policies stress political over economic goals and still charges differential prices to its customers in line with its political prerogatives. Therefore policies like promoting the Nabucco or Trans-Caspian pipelines must be advanced vigorously by both Washington and Brussels.

But beyond this Washington must take the lead in encouraging the EU and NATO to offer a genuine membership perspective, conditional on the fulfillment of the requirements for membership in both NATO and the EU, to Ukraine and to other states that want such memberships. Experience proves that this lure of membership, coupled with NATO and EU supervision and assistance has galvanized them to meet the necessary conditions and thus strengthen themselves against Russian economic-political threats and attempts at military intimidation. The experience of the last fifteen years also shows that this is the only way to galvanize such reforms in these states. Surrogates for membership or hiding behind the argument that these countries are Russia's sphere of influence merely perpetuates the uncertainty that opens the door for Russia's revisionist and Mafia-like ploys.

Fifth, on Iran, it is unclear how far our European allies and we will go to stop Iranian proliferation. Our stated modus operandi is diplomacy and numerous commentators and the former Foreign Minister of Great Britain Jack Straw have said that European participation in a war with Iran over its nuclear threat is "inconceivable." But without that threat it is quite possible Iran will not stop enrichment or its overall nuclear program. As its recent announcements tripling the number of its centrifuges indicate, Iran believes that it cannot be stopped. Russia has firmly and consistently opposed any effort to impose sanctions on Russia's arms trade with Iran. Neither will it impose sanctions on Iran that seriously injure Iran's interests even as it supports Iranian membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and advocates a global gas cartel with Iran. Given all of these considerations there is no reason to stop work on missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic, quite the contrary. Indeed, given Iran's

threats to Israel and other neighbors and record as leading state sponsor of international terrorism, other states may find it necessary even before we do, to preempt Iran if it is not stopped. As long as Moscow wants to have Iran as its main regional partner and will not deter a threat that also includes it, it will have to bear its share of the blame for the consequences of either Iranian nuclearization or its preemption by others.

Therefore overcoming our own divisions and finding common ground with Europe as President Bush did in the NATO Bucharest summit in April 2008 is essential if we are to conceive and execute a coherent Russian policy. That policy must utilize all the instruments of power that we possess: diplomatic, informational, military, and economic and must be conceived of strategically. And it must target Russia's mutually reinforcing domestic and foreign policy behaviors. Even if there is a unified American position, if it is not coordinated with and implemented by our European allies and Japan in the Far East, it will not fully register in Moscow whatever subject it addresses from this agenda. This means occasionally Washington must defer to its partners' collective wisdom and even to Chinese and Russian arguments. But it also means that the U.S. must stimulate NATO and the EU to improve their ability to forge coherent policies towards Russia regarding Ukraine, Moldova, the Caucasus, energy issues, Central Asia, and democratization.

Strengthening Nonproliferation

Nonproliferation in Iran and North Korea exemplify our dilemma. We cannot achieve support without shelving the idea of regime change. By decoupling this demand from demands for Nonproliferation we actually gain more flexibility to send a robust message to proliferators by eliminating their justification for nuclearization. If we can

change these regimes' international behavior, by political means preferably but by force only if absolutely necessary, then their current policies will gradually be rendered increasingly dysfunctional, forcing change upon them from within, not from outside. To the extent that they cannot mobilize domestic or foreign support against the Bush Administration they will be compelled by force of circumstances and superior Western power to adjust their behavior over time.

Once they cannot justify threat based programs in the absence of a threat these states must deal much more urgently with domestic economic and political questions for which they have no answer and for which their structures are woefully inadequate if not illegitimate. And since contemporary scholarly research suggests that proliferation policies are the product of various coalitions of domestic interest groups in these states, a policy that transforms the playing field on which these coalitions maneuver has a much greater chance of success than does unilateral rhetoric, which cannot be implemented except at ruinous cost. That process, as was the case with Moscow in 1986-91, will generate a process of change that will be all the more powerful for being domestically generated rather than externally coerced.

Therefore to effectuate change within Russia and other challenging states we must change the external environment within which they operate by engaging them politically. This also means holding Russia to account for treaties and conventions that it has violated. Careful examination will show that there is no other realistic alternative. Today Russia works with China to coordinate their proposals in the Korean nuclear negotiations and numerous communiqués cite an “identity” of views on this topic. Removing many of the reasons for their shared positions regarding North Korea or Iran helps erode their

unified position in these and other issues. As experts have argued that a working Russo-Chinese alliance is the greatest security threat we could face, a negotiating strategy designed to uncouple these two potential rivals against us makes perfect sense.

Furthermore the historical record strongly suggests that a precondition for effective non-proliferation is mutual cooperation between Moscow and Washington as happened in 1986-96 and which has since evaporated due to Russian domestic regression to autocratic rule, American unilateralism, and the perception thereof abroad. Once proliferation is uncoupled from regime change it become much easier to fashion both a strong negotiating coalition against proliferation and to do so strictly on the grounds of international security and treaties that must be observed. This lets us and the other treaty signatories create a different security environment around proliferators, complete with binding accords, supervision and inspections that safeguard their internal security.

Arms Control

The foundation stones of European and Eurasian security are the series of treaties beginning with the Helsinki treaty of 1975, its extension at Moscow in 1991, the 1987 Washington Treaty on Intermediate Nuclear forces in Europe (INF), the 1990 Paris Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), extended in 1999, the Paris and Rome treaties between NATO and Russia in 1997 and 2002 and the START and SORT treaties from 1991-2002. However, some, if not all, of these treaties are apparently at risk. And that risk has grown with Putin's announcement that Russia is suspending its participation in the CFE treaty. But that suspension paradoxically reveals that Moscow does not fear a NATO invasion for otherwise the treaty would provide excellent security for Moscow.

The INF treaty too is at risk. In 2005 Sergei Ivanov, told Defense Secretary Rumsfeld that Russia was thinking of withdrawing from the INF treaty.

However, that an outcome reignites an arms race in Europe that Russia cannot afford and which is in nobody's interest. Ironically Russia actually depends for its security on the restraints imposed by those treaties upon NATO's members including Washington. Moreover, it depends on them for subsidies through the Nunn-Lugar Act to gain control over its nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons arsenals. Without that funding it is quite likely that the recent visible regeneration of the Russian armed forces would have been greatly impeded as Russia would have to allocate funds to maintain or destroy decaying nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. Russia also needs Western, and especially American help against terrorism emanating from Afghanistan or Iranian and North Korean nuclearization and is still interested as recent agreements show, in curtailing those states or terrorists' access to these materials. Furthermore, it is no less at risk from Iranian missiles than anyone else (except possibly Israel). Thus it needs cooperation with the West on proliferation concerns. Therefore these efforts to withdraw from the relevant treaties are quite misguided given Russia's real interests.

Therefore an appropriate American response should maintain the validity of both the CFE and INF treaties, insist upon fulfillment of the former, and state U.S. willingness to reaffirm or extend the latter which is supposed to expire in 2007. Nobody benefits from a new arms race in Europe, which should be a model of security practices, not a case of a model gone bad. And Russia's announced desire to renegotiate the START I Treaty that is to expire in 2009 should similarly provide an new opportunity for further reducing the likelihood and perceived value of nuclear weapons use or threats to use them

among the two leading nuclear states. Doing so would also reverse the trend toward greater reliance on nuclear weapons as warfighting instruments and also possibly reduce the attractiveness of such weapons to would-be proliferators.

To say this, however, is not to abandon the need to put pressure on Russia to fulfill the arms control and regional security treaties it has signed. Indeed, such a strategy is all the more necessary for our policy toward Russia because just as we now seek to achieve our immediate defense and security goals by invoking the rhetoric of democratization vis-a-vis Iran and North Korea so must we do so with regard to Russia where there is a legal justification, based on solemn international treaties, for doing so. Whatever our private beliefs might be about the justification for such pressure; in practice it is only sustainable on the grounds that Russia has signed treaties that explicitly invoke these values and processes and thus represent the current world order's constitutional foundation.

Democratization

Putin and his clique regularly charge that demands for democratization are purely politically motivated and neo-colonialist in their rhetoric and an attack on Russia's system of governance, indeed an attempt to change it. Actually they are partly right. Such attacks do attack Russian governance because that governance is increasingly at variance with solemn international accords that Russia freely signed and to which it must be held. Just as we resent attacks on our conduct at Guantanamo or at Abu Ghraib but still must redress those situations through legal and democratic pressure and processes, so too is Russia subject to the same international constraints and standards that it freely accepted. However, Moscow clearly would prefer a relationship with the United States

of no discussions of democracy but that concentrates on concrete bilateral interests. Simultaneously, the demand for an end to these attacks and this kind of defense by Putin et al reflects both Moscow's demand for a free hand and its endless status insecurity.

Indeed, the demand for ending such attacks plus the assertion that America seeks to undermine other CIS governments as well as Russia became a staple of Russian foreign policy argumentation even before Ukraine's Orange Revolution in late 2004. But Russia cannot be exempted from today's common practice that subjects all governments' internal policies to constant foreign scrutiny. Russia, based on its record, certainly cannot be allowed an exclusive sphere of interest around its peripheries based on "security zones" when it is a prime fomenter of regional instability. Indeed, such policies only ensure the ultimate crash of the present Russian and CIS status quo.

Therefore that pressure for democratization must not only continue, it should grow. American leaders should regularly invoke that cause precisely because Russia and other Eurasian governments have signed all these treaties, going back to the Helsinki treaty of 1975. The cornerstone of our demand for this kind of policy is the basic building block of world order, namely that treaties must be obeyed. And the conditions that necessitated those treaties are still present as Russian and Belarusian policy illustrate. That argument should be the cornerstone of our demands to treaty signatories coupled with meaningful sanctions, not just economic, for failure to uphold these treaties.

Of course, there are also equally good security or strategic reasons for upholding democratization at every turn even as we seek avenues for negotiation. It is not just because we believe, with considerable justification, that states who reach democracy are ultimately stronger, even if they have to cross through dangerous waters to get there, it

also is the fact that Russia shows no sign of wanting responsibility for its actions and their consequences, e.g. in the frozen conflicts in Moldova, Georgia, or in Ukraine, let alone its support for the repressive regimes of Central Asia or its arms sales abroad. To the extent that violence, crime, and authoritarian rule flourishes in these states they are all at risk of upheaval, even sudden upheaval as we have seen in Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and in the repeated manifestations of internal violence that shook Uzbekistan in 2004-05 and could easily do so again. Such violence and instability could easily spread to Russia as the example of Chechnya and the North Caucasus suggests.

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

The logic is the same as George Kennan's even if containment is not called for here. By upholding international law and the democratic choice of those states' peoples, not our own unilateral power, and by working intensively with those states who want the benefits of association with the West, we can create examples of progress that will resonate in Russia and elsewhere while checking the spread of deformations of governance that only add to Russia's and our own insecurity. NATO was and is correct in observing that its and the EU's expansions enlarge the domain of security in Europe

and Eurasia to the benefit of Russia if not that of its elite which, like any other Mafia-type organization, can only survive by imperialism and predation.

Ultimately the tenacious, insistent, and unceasing proclamation of deviations by Russia from its own promised course of action are legally and strategically strongly founded and mutually reinforcing. A strategy that engages both Russia on its vital issues and agenda, and the CIS **on an equal basis with Russia** while unceasingly proclaiming that democratic values enshrined in treaties must be upheld benefits everyone, including Russia's people, except Russia's rulers. What must be understood as a guiding strategic principle here is that Russian autocracy and its corollary, Russian imperialism are the gravest security threat facing Eurasia (including Europe and Russia itself) and are ultimately incompatible with any progress of the Russian people, or Eurasia to security, liberty, and prosperity.

Precisely because such a state constitutes a standing invitation to uncontrolled military adventurism -- of which there has been much in Russia's brief history and not least due to the absence of democratic control over the power ministries -- it has to be checked. There is no contradiction between engaging Russia on the great issues of proliferation and arms control, and cooperating with it against the common enemy of terrorism, while simultaneously insisting that it adhere to European norms that it has accepted in order to integrate it with its European neighbors. While this is certainly difficult in practice, it is hardly less difficult than the policy we now are conducting which has left us attacked by unending crises with few governments willing to help us.

In fact, a policy based on treaties and laws rather than upon unilateral assertions of power is actually more effective than that alternative even if it means narrowing the scope of our freedom of action for unilateral ventures. As Robert Wright contends,

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

Indeed, democratization is essential, first of all in regard to Russia's power agencies. The armed forces still regard NATO and the U.S. as their main enemies and their exercises confirm it, even to the point of often involving missile and nuclear strikes or large-scale conventional exercises against alleged terrorists. Second, despite efforts to restructure at least some of the armed forces to fight primarily against terrorist attacks -- the current main threat to Russian security -- using the military in a counter-terrorist or counter-intelligence mode can have the most serious negative domestic outcomes as we have seen in Chechnya. The lack of democratic control over the armed forces has been a constant and lethal aspect of Russian policy toward Chechnya and has resulted in frightful violations of human rights. In turn, that policy has generated a running series of low-intensity conflicts across the North Caucasus for which Moscow has no solution. Moreover, these forces could also easily be used against domestic democratic reform.

Third, the tendency to adventurism that led Moscow into its so called peacemaking operations in the Caucasus and Moldova have now embroiled it in situations where the threat of war, particularly with Georgia, is constant and where both side seem to be engaged in mutual provocations. So dangerous a policy inevitably has unforeseen consequences. The recent signs of military adventurism, buzzing Scotland,

flights to Guam, buzzing U.S. ships in the Pacific, and resuming long-range air patrols, submarine races to plant the flag of sovereignty in the Arctic, only serve the armed forces' myopic interest of "walking tall." These PR stunts do nothing to enhance Russian security.

While democracy is not a panacea, a democratically controlled military would have behaved differently as would its masters also have done. Arguably what Russia's military arguably most fears about NATO expansion is that it generates an external pressure that is supported by domestic reformers to democratize Russian national security policy and subject it to civilian and democratic accountability under law, something that is anathema to that military-political elite. Ultimately there are compelling geostrategic reasons why the vigorous ongoing insistence on reforms as signed in international treaties is an essential and indispensable part of any sound Western policy toward Russia.

Energy Policy

Every day Americans feel the lack of a sound energy policy. At the same time energy, in Putin's words, "is the heart of our economy." Thus Russia's energy assets are the equivalent of a political Viagra letting it pretend to be a great power and allowing the state and its servitors to amass fabulous wealth. Nonetheless due to the organization of the rent-seeking elite dealing with a rent-granting state Russian economy, by 2010, according to Russian analysts, Russia will be suffering from an energy shortage, in oil, gas, or electricity, if not all of these.

Neither the effort to blackmail Ukraine, the Baltic States and Europe, nor Russia's need to dominate Central Asian and Caspian producers in order to retain its political-economic structure are in America's interest. Neither are such policies in the interests of

other key consumers like Europe and China, nor ultimately those of the Russian people who must bear the direct costs of an inefficient and autocratic Petro economy, that grows more slowly than most other post-Soviet states. Obviously we need a coherent and comprehensive domestic policy that reorients us to more efficient energy usage or to other sources as they become affordable. But we should not delude ourselves that cheap oil or gas can return any time soon. This is not only to our demand, which the greatest in the world, or to surging Asian demand, but also to the fact that approximately 80% if not more, of world oil supplies are state owned. These states are frequently all too prone to use oil as a state weapon and turn into an economy dependent on energy rents. Cartels, in this environment, are the rule, not the exception to it.

Accordingly Washington must fight fire with fire. Numerous Asian and American scholars have advocated an international energy association in the belief that such a system would not only give North Korea non-nuclear sources of energy but also assist other Northeast Asian and Pacific states to satisfy their needs as well. Arguably this organization could also help improve chances for security discussions and peace in Northeast Asia. Whether or not that is the case remains to be seen. But clearly China, Japan, South Korea, and India should be integrated into global energy organizations and that the possibilities for energy rivalry with China, which fill policymakers here and Beijing with anxiety be reduced. We should, therefore, facilitate the integration of India and China into the International Energy Agency. It clearly is in America's and its allies' geopolitical interests to integrate the largest Asian consumers and do everything possible to persuade them of the benefits to them of such integration and of reliance on the global

market compared to the wasteful and dangerous current practice of exclusive long-term supply deals.

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

Third, this organization would reduce the growing Sino-American tensions in the Gulf and Middle East, which could contribute to an overall deterioration of Sino-

American relations and unite those governments around a compelling common interest. Fourth, inasmuch as Russo-Chinese energy relations are tense and even rivalrous, with both sides seeking to exploit the other, this organizations would magnify those things that divide Russia and China while reducing those that divide China and America. And since a new Russo-Chinese alliance is probably the greatest security threat we could face, this kind of outcome would represent no small achievement.

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

Russian participation under market conditions in such an arrangement would force reforms in its energy industry, and thus government. Such reforms might then allow for foreign investment, particularly in Siberia and its infrastructure, which is essential for the historical task of reviving Siberia and Russia as a reliable Asian power. Russia would play a recognized role in a framework of security for Northeast Asia but it could not then blackmail its partners to the West and South because they will be able to

build more pipelines to global markets and not be compelled to rely only on Russian pipelines. Such changes in turn will hopefully generate other economic centers of excellence in Russia freeing it from its historic dependence upon a cash crop for export.

This strategy too depends upon transforming the external environment through creative U.S. statesmanship in order to effectuate change over time both in Russia and in the global order. If carried through successfully, this strategy has the potential, in ways that force deployed unilaterally does not have, to foster desirable changes over time in the world order on the basis of a shared consensus among America's partners operating under our leadership or together with us.

Conclusions

We urgently need to rethink many of our policies especially as they are interconnected. This consideration plus the fact that the problems Russia poses are essentially non-military and cannot be allowed to become military, demand a coordinated multi-dimensional global strategy using all the instruments of power. We cannot impose our favored form of regime upon Russia nor should we try, but we cannot passively let it flout international agreements and embark upon a course of autocracy, empire, and adventurism that has repeatedly proven to be ruinous for its people and neighbors.

Moreover, we cannot be either complacent or despairing. The oft-cited and even widely accepted ideas that we have little or no leverage or its analogue that we need Moscow more than it needs us are ridiculous. Unfortunately that notion is tied to a belief that complex political issues can be solved in the blink of an eye, not by what Henry Kissinger called the "patient accumulation of nuance." Therefore if we cannot fix the problem at once by Russia's capitulation to our pressure it is supposedly hopeless to try.

Yet clearly the agenda of issues with Russia goes far beyond strict bilateral U.S.-Russian relations in both geographical scope and complexity and requires precisely that combination of patience and superior insight.

Neither can we yield to the opposing complacency that other issues are too urgent or that we can wait for another time to tackle the Russian agenda, or that we can simply browbeat Russia because of our superior power and virtue. Conditions in Eurasia are already and rapidly becoming ever more crisis-prone. Russian analysts admit that Russia remains “a risk factor” in world politics, not a reliable or autonomous pole of world politics. The North Caucasus remains out of control with some 250,000 Russian security personnel from the armed forces, and Ministry of Interior, as well as the so called multiple militaries being stationed there. Russia’s relations with Georgia could very easily spill over into active violent conflict over Georgia’s breakaway province, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and its ties to Moldova are a permanent violation of the treaties it has signed with the West. All these and other challenges, if not crises, are critical points in the East-West relationship because ultimately “The main reason why the West cannot remain complacent about Russia’s actions is the fact that Russia’s ‘near abroad’ is, in many cases, also democratic Europe’s near abroad”.

Thus time will not wait upon us. Neither will other states wait passively for us or let us shirk our responsibility of developing a coherent policy, the means to carry it out, and harmonizing it with our allies. Russia, its interlocutors, or other states will not let us act merely in an ad hoc tactical fashion with no thought for long-term consequences or strategy. America, for better or worse, is in Colin Gray’s term “the sheriff” of world order. We, as Lincoln said, “hold the responsibility and bear the burden.” Therefore we

must exercise our responsibility for and to the world judiciously. We cannot let it evaporate due to inattention, fecklessness, or the lack of a strategic approach to our interests and those responsibilities.

