

Final Statement of Professor Stephen Blank

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Mr. Chairman, Senators, Congressmen, it is a distinct honor and privilege to appear again before this committee that works to uphold the fundamental principles of Western civilization, not just the United States. That said, my remarks do not reflect the opinion or policy of any U.S. governmental institution including the Department of Defense and the Army. We meet today to grapple with problems of advancing the national interests relative to a state and society that resists these principles yet whose cooperation and even partnership is sometimes necessary to secure for ourselves, our allies, and its peoples the blessings of a lasting peace.

Relations with Russia represent a perennial problem for the United States. Even as the U.S. seeks to engage Russia to advance its security interests it does so knowing that it is interacting with a government that steadfastly opposes American interests and values. Any U.S. Administration seeking to advance those interests also simultaneously faces the problem of reconciling that activity with the difficulty of adhering to its own fundamental principles and of engaging Moscow in a candid discussion of them. For in the present political climate, with good reason, America cannot conceive of a true partnership with Russia absent a rapprochement on values and principles. Otherwise, the relationship will inevitably end in mutual recriminations and disappointment, not to say frustration. This conundrum has affected the Bush Administration's relationship with Vladimir Putin's Russia and will affect the next Administration's relationship with Dmitry Medvedev's Russia's.

There is no easy solution to the problem. But it is essential that we understand that, as many American and European scholars, diplomats, and even intelligence analysts understand we are dealing with a mafia-like regime whose tactics are predatory and rely

on corruption and intimidation to secure its objectives. Those goals are a free hand for Russia to do as it pleases throughout Eurasia and the concurrent corruption or even subversion of Western public institutions to deter the West from interfering with this grand design. The present crisis in Russo-Georgian relations reveals once again that Russia has no respect for the sovereignty, independence, and integrity of its neighbors. Furthermore Russia believes that it is or should be free to disregard its own international agreements if it wants to do so just as it has established a domestic autocracy that answers to nobody and does as it pleases within Russia.

This challenge requires of us the most intimate and systematic coordination of U.S. government agencies and coordinated action with our European allies against this fundamentally long-term and even insidious threat. But even as we pursue engagement and even accord with Russia on key interests of national security, the nature of its regime and the challenge it poses cannot ever be forgotten. Nor can we let the necessary pursuit of such agreements deflect us from confronting Russia's unprecedented challenge to our interests, allies, and our shared values and institutions. Often pursuing our overriding national interests will take precedence over the pursuit of a dialogue on values, leaving administration's open to the charge of hypocrisy. But those interests also include encouraging the greater democratization, transparency, legal accountability, etc. of European and Russian political and economic institutions and they must be pursued with equal vigor in Russia and among its neighbors. So to the extent we succeed in such initiatives in place like Ukraine, Georgia, and Russia we advance both interests and values at the same time. Bearing in mind that the only answer to the conundrums outlined here is a long-term strategy that combines patience with vigilance, candor with

engagement, and realism about what can be expected at any given time, in my written statement I have striven to outline a long-term strategy for relating to the Medvedev government that pursues both American and allegedly common Russo-American interests while simultaneously upholding our democratic principles and values abroad.

The objective of this strategy is to overcome what I call the agenda of discord, an agenda that comprises not only human rights and arms control issues, but that also seeks to engage Moscow on a wide variety of issues where it has interests and a voice: energy and regional security in Europe and Asia. A strategy that negates the importance of the energy and regional security issues, the latter of which also includes proliferation, implies that Moscow has no legitimate interests and remains stuck in the agenda of the past generation. Unfortunately there is a tendency to overlook the fact that global energy problems cannot be successfully addressed without taking Russia into account. Neither can we ignore the impact of Russia investing abroad into foreign businesses, all too often in order to subvert and corrupt them on Moscow's behalf. It can do so because energy is the main lever by which the Putin regime and the forthcoming Medvedev regime have pursued and will pursue their goals of undermining the Post-Cold War settlement in Eurasia. Yet we can safely say that we have no energy or investment policy for Russia or at least none that has ever been publicly articulated and implemented by the current Administration.

Neither have we taken Russia's ability to influence European governments by these means sufficiently into account in timely fashion. It took an enormous exertion of last-minute presidential power to secure the gains in regional security consummated at the last NATO summit in Bucharest in April 2008. But our day-to-day foreign policy

should be more active and engaged with our allies, local governments and Russia on these issues without waiting for the last minute and committing the president so publicly. Our Russian and European policies must be both multi-dimensional and closely integrated. They cannot run on separate tracks. They must be multi-dimensional to confront the new dimensions of Russia's challenges, which in their method and scope require a coordinated effort of all the institutions responsible for international security, and not just diplomats, armed forces, and intelligence agencies to overcome them.

Ultimately President Bush succeeded handsomely at Bucharest. But it must be recognized that Moscow remains unreconciled to the post Cold War status quo and will seek every opportunity to revise it. Understanding that requires that we have a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond haranguing Moscow on human rights and pursuing arms control and nonproliferation agreements that we want toward broader understanding of where and how Moscow stands and plays in contemporary world affairs. For such a strategy to succeed, it must express the policy of a unified Administration and a unified transatlantic alliance while also being comprehensive in scope and oriented to enduring long-term gains. That strategy also must fully engage our ability to speak for our values abroad, or in other words a rejuvenated public diplomacy that has sadly atrophied since President Reagan's time. As Pope John Paul II said, "In a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation." If our policy towards Moscow does not meet these criteria it will inevitably fall short, whether we are discussing human rights, arms control, energy, regional security in Europe or Asia. Thus our strategy must transcend the facile notion that a good relationship with the Russian president is the objective or sufficient. While such a relationship is decidedly beneficial; we relate to the

Russian government and must engage that entire government in the pursuit of common interests where feasible. And where it is not feasible both governments should be engaged in an ongoing and unceasing dialogue. It is on this basis that I have offered such a strategy to you in my written testimony and I welcome your questions.