THE Journal OF INTERNATIONAL Security Affairs

Number 20, Spring/Summer 2011

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From the Publisher

For Americans, the recent turmoil in the Middle East has raised a multitude of questions about our foreign policy—challenging questions that go to the very soul of our national character.

One concerns the objectives of our foreign policy. Are we just another country seeking our own benefit and advantage, or do we have a more idealistic mission to export freedom, equality, justice and democracy to the world? I suspect most Americans believe it to be the latter. We are therefore justifiably horrified when we are inconveniently reminded that some of our client states are, in effect, dictatorships. And, when pressed, we quickly seek the moral high ground by disassociating ourselves from them. Our abrupt abandonment of Egypt's long-serving strongman, Hosni Mubarak, is only the most recent example of this trend.

The word "revolution" brings to the American mind a vision of hungry, downtrodden people rising up against some brutal force in pursuit of "liberty, fraternity and equality." It's worth remembering, however, that those three words were authored by the same people who subsequently brought France the "reign of terror."

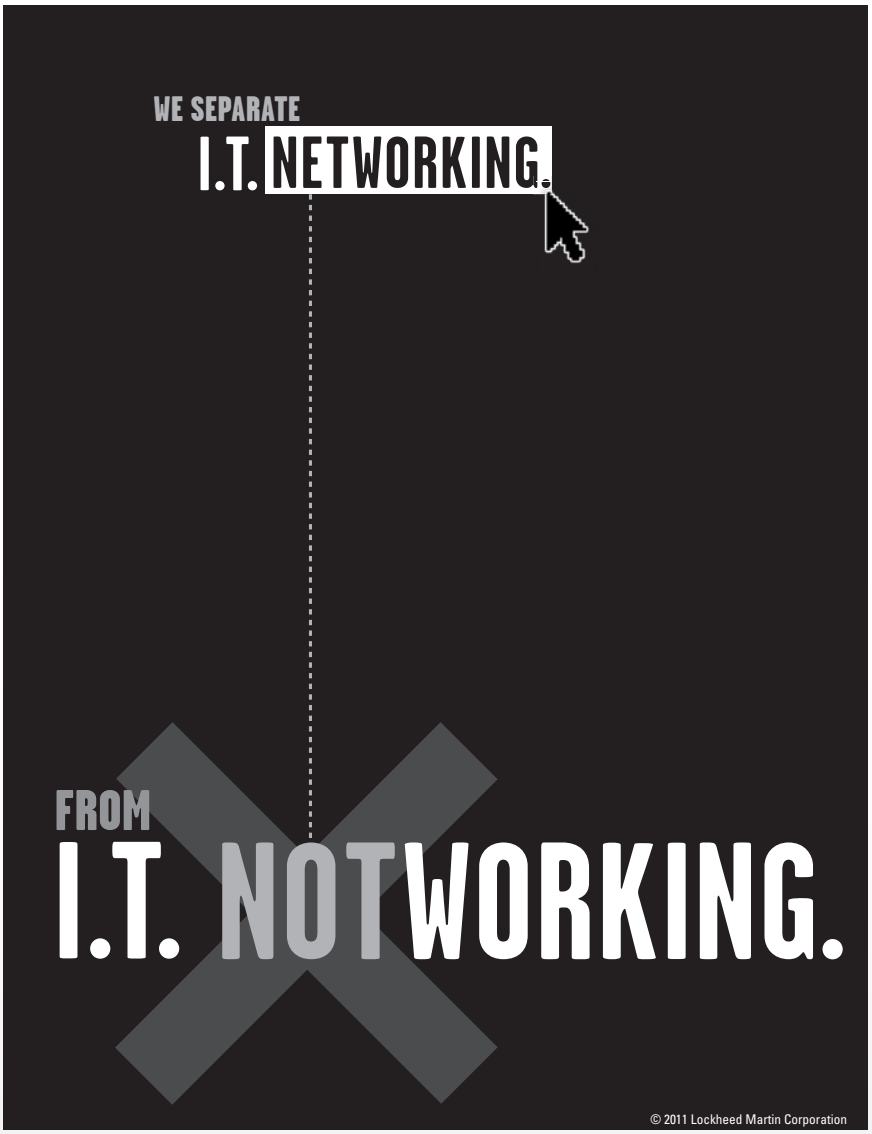
Vladimir Ilych Lenin, too, couched the Russian revolution in terms of a dramatic change that would equalize wealth between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" was the revolutionary slogan. And the Russian variation of "fraternity" was the term "comrade." Later, George Orwell put it in perspective in *Animal Farm* when he wrote: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

These were followed by such revolutionary leaders as Franco, Castro, and the Ayatollah Khomeini, all of whom captured America's imagination—and its sympathy. And let's not forget that Gaddafi came to power because he unseated King Idris, and Nasser liberated Egypt from King Farouk.

All these revolutions have two things in common: empty promises and sloganeering. They are not revolutions for the people, although they are certainly by the people. There is usually some organization behind these revolutions pulling the strings and taking advantage of the hopes and fears of the disenfranchised.

So what makes us so sure this time that the rioting in Bahrain's Pearl Square or Cairo's Tahrir Square is in fact the true voice of the people and not that of the Muslim Brotherhood, Iran, the military or the socialists? Maybe they are not, but we should approach them with some skepticism and require more than a bit of validation. After all, history has taught us many lessons about "popular" revolutions. Most we have lived to regret.

Tom Neumann
Publisher



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Editor's Note

"Russia," British Prime Minister Winston Churchill famously remarked in the opening days of the Second World War, "is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." More than seven decades later, Russia continues to bedevil Western policymakers. Can it be classified as an ally of the United States and Europe, or as their mortal enemy? Is it largely pragmatic in its foreign policy practices, or driven by the ideological urge to recreate lost empire? Clear answers to these questions are hard to come by. Even the nature of Russia's leadership—shared by its hard line premier, Vladimir Putin, and his more moderate protégé, Dmitry Medvedev—defies easy classification.

In this edition of *The Journal*, we take a look at the enduring puzzle that is today's Russia. David Satter of the Hudson Institute starts us off with a damning review of the deepening repression and anti-democratic drift that have come to characterize the rule of the Putin-Medvedev "tandem." Former KGB officer Oleg Kalugin then outlines the conflicting ideological pulls that exist within Russian politics. Subsequently, Svante Cornell of Johns Hopkins University takes a look at Russian policies in the "post-Soviet space," and explains how (and why) Moscow continues to covet the region. Brigadier General Kevin Ryan of Harvard's Belfer Center proposes two concrete areas—missile defense and countering catastrophic terrorism—where Washington and Moscow can substantively cooperate. The Hudson Institute's Richard Weitz takes a contrasting view, outlining the enduring impediments to missile defense cooperation between Russia and Europe. From there, yours truly chronicles the increasing threat to Russian stability posed today by the growing power and prevalence of radical Islam. Gal Luft of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security details the drivers—and the manifestations—of Russia's global energy strategy. Missouri State University's Andrei Shoumikhin then examines the strategic importance of Russia's arms trade with the world. We conclude the section with a contribution from Giorgi Baramidze, Georgia's Vice Prime Minister, who provides a firsthand look at the causes and consequences of Russian aggression toward his country.

Russia, however, isn't our only concern. We also take a look at emerging challenges to American primacy in a quartet of hard-hitting articles. George Washington University's Amitai Etzioni underscores the downside of the current revolutions taking place in the Middle East: the rise of Iran as a regional hegemon. Heritage Foundation scholars Jim Talent and Mackenzie Eaglen detail the deleterious effects that declining defense spending will have on U.S. interests and our ability to project power globally in the years ahead. Former California legislator (and Reagan-era Pentagon official) Chuck DeVore maps the contours of China's rise—and what it is likely to mean for Washington. And retired Major General Sid Shachnow chronicles how changing legal norms in the "War on Terror" are increasingly affecting America's warfighters.

Our "Perspective" interviewee for this issue is Ambassador Ryan Crocker, the former U.S. envoy to Iraq (among other posts), with whom we explore

the changes taking place in the Middle East—and how the U.S. can best navigate them.

This time out, we also have "Dispatches" from Estonia, Singapore, and Uzbekistan, and book reviews dealing with Mideast strategy, Russia's predilection for unconventional weapons, novel thinking on nuclear strategy, and the primacy of the Indian Ocean.

In other words, we've put together another issue chock full of fresh insights on foreign policy and national security. And we're confident that, once you've perused these pages, you'll be richer for it.

Ilan Berman
Editor

State of Fear

David Satter

As Russians look to the future, three recent events have shaken the complacency of those hoping for a democratic evolution in the country. The first was the New Year's Eve jailing of opposition leader Boris Nemtsov for his participation in an anti-Kremlin rally. The second was the guilty verdict in the trial of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former head of the Yukos oil company on fresh (and clearly fabricated) corruption charges. The third was the devastating terrorist attack at Domodedovo Airport that left 35 dead and 41 seriously injured.

Russians are good at reading tea leaves, and it is widely assumed that these events, coming as they did nearly simultaneously, have deep significance for the future. The jailing of Nemtsov and the repeat conviction of Khodorkovsky are signs that the regime is unrelenting in its determination to suppress real political competition. The attack at Domodedovo raises the possibility that the unending crisis in the North Caucasus will wreak havoc in the rest of Russia as well.

One-party state

It is not by accident that Russia today appears to rely only on force to resolve its social, economic and national problems. The country lacks democratic mechanisms while a handful of corrupt leaders monopolize power and wealth.

The parliament is dominated by the pro-Putin United Russia party, which consists largely of government officials and lacks any ideology aside from support for

David Satter is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and a fellow of the Foreign Policy Institute of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). His latest book on Russia and the communist past is due out this Fall from Yale University Press.

the regime. The highest government officials sit on the boards of Russia's largest state-run companies. Dmitry Medvedev, before becoming president, was deputy prime minister and the chairman of state natural gas monopoly Gazprom. Igor Sechin, a deputy prime minister, is the current head of Rosneft, the state-run oil company.

Even though present-day Russia is much freer than the Soviet Union, it appears determined, like its predecessor, to provoke eventual chaos through its refusal to reform.

The national television stations, the main source of news for 90 percent of the population, are censored and controlled by the regime. With a few notable exceptions (such as *Novaya Gazeta* and *Ekho Moskvy*), other media outlets avoid any serious criticism of the Kremlin. The courts likewise are fully controlled through local court chairmen who carry out political orders. As a result, the average Russian has no faith in either the police or the courts. No less than Alexander Konovalov, the minister of justice, summed up the situation by saying, "There was never any respect for law in Russian life and there is none today."[1]

It was against this backdrop that recent events in Russia have led to feelings of hopelessness. Even though present-day Russia is much freer than the Soviet Union, it appears determined, like its predecessor, to provoke eventual chaos through its refusal to reform.

In this context, the jailing of Mr. Nemtsov holds considerable symbolic significance. Demonstrations are one of the few remaining avenues for expressing opposition. For nearly two years, supporters of the right to free assembly have tried to gather in Triumfalnaya Square in central Moscow on the 31st of each month with 31 days. The 31st was chosen because of its symbolism; article 31 of the Russian Constitution guarantees the right of free assembly. Permission was repeatedly denied on a variety of pretexts. Protestors, however, gathered anyway and these unauthorized demonstrations were regularly broken up, sometimes violently.

On October 31, 2010, the demonstrators, for the first time, were allowed to protest without harassment. This may have been because the new mayor of Moscow, Sergei Sobyanin, had taken office only a week before. However, at the next demonstration, on December 31, 2010, 70 persons were detained and Mr. Nemtsov and other opposition activists were arrested and sentenced to jail terms. Mr. Nemtsov was charged with aggressive behavior toward the police, although video footage showed him obeying police orders without resistance.

In the end, Mr. Nemtsov was held for 15 days. He spent two days in a windowless cell without a bed or toilet. But his treatment was mainly significant for the fact that he is a former deputy prime minister and Russia's most credible opposition politician. His arrest is a sign that the Kremlin is not prepared to tolerate peaceful dissent, no matter who is involved or what is written in the constitution.

A rigged system

The matter is not trivial, for there may be ample reasons for peaceful protest in the near future. Russia will have new parliamentary elections in December, to be followed by presidential elections in

early 2012, and it is expected on the basis of past experience that there will be massive falsification.

In past elections under Putin, the financial resources of Russian business and the administrative resources of the state bureaucracy were all deployed on behalf of Kremlin-supported candidates. During the December 2007 parliamentary elections, for example, voters were often promised bonuses by their bosses for voting for United Russia, and threatened with penalties for not doing so.

In addition, electoral results were falsified. In Chechnya, where the pro-Kremlin leader Ramzan Kadyrov rules with the help of a reign of terror, United Russia reportedly racked up 99.4 percent support from eligible voters.[2] The other ten parties in contention split 0.1 percent of the vote, and only 0.5 percent of eligible voters did not participate. In other economically-depressed areas, including Ingushetia, Karachevo-Cherkessia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the results were also 99 percent in favor of United Russia.[3] In a letter to Putin, Sergei Kovalyev, Yeltsin's former commissioner on human rights, protested the rigged result. "I would not claim," he wrote, "that United Russia would not have won first place in these elections. This is a separate problem. But now, gentlemen… elections, the chief criterion of democracy, no longer exist."[4]

These results were far from an anomaly. In the April 2008 presidential elections, up to a third of the votes for Dmitry Medvedev to be Russia's next president were apparently rigged, inflating Medvedev's margin of victory and creating the impression that he enjoyed massive support as Putin's chosen successor.[5]

The high cost of defiance

Besides the arrest of Mr. Nemtsov, another source of deep concern for liberal-minded Russians was the verdict in the case of Mikhail Khodorkovsky. His sentence of 13.5 years for fraud means that he will not be a free man until 2017, if then.

The Domodedovo attack has raised fears that ordinary Russian citizens will now be caught in the middle as the Kremlin employs indiscriminate force in the North Caucasus—thereby guaranteeing that terror escalates and the insurgency spreads.

The charges against Mr. Khodorkovsky and his onetime business partner, Platon Lebedev, were absurd on their face. The two were charged with stealing 200 million tons of oil from Yukos subsidiaries, more than the total yearly output of many oil-producing countries. Indeed, Viktor Khristenko, the Russian trade minister, said at Khodorkovsky's trial that the theft of oil is a serious problem, but that he knew "nothing about theft on the scale of millions of tons."[6]

In 2003, the year of his arrest, Mr. Khodorkovsky was defying the rules as handed down by then-President Putin. These called for oligarchs to limit their role in politics to support for the Putin regime. Khodorkovsky, however, was the principal backer of the "Yabloko" party, the only truly independent liberal opposition party. He also backed the Union of Right Forces (SPS) and, out of faith in the need for pluralism, the communists. Following Mr. Khodorkovsky's arrest, the Kremlin made it clear that all financing of opposition parties

henceforth needed to be approved by the presidential administration. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, SPS and "Yabloko" were both starved of money for salaries, facilities and advertising. As a result, neither gathered enough votes to enter the Russian parliament.

The fate of Mr. Khodorkovsky was echoed by those of others who paid for their defiance of the Putin regime with their lives. A particularly harrowing case was that of Sergei Magnitsky, a Russian lawyer for London-based hedge fund Hermitage Capital, who died in the Matrosskaya Tishina prison on November 16, 2009, after being denied urgent medical care for pancreatitis.

A regime which does not want to share power and relies on falsification and the use of force faces a population that is disillusioned with what looks like a permanent leadership and a president for life and a terrorist threat within the country that has become more lethal by the day.

In 2007, Mr. Magnitsky uncovered a $230 million tax fraud by high-ranking officials of the Russian interior ministry. He was then arrested on charges of tax avoidance by the same persons whose theft he had uncovered. While in prison, he was held in squalid conditions in an attempt to pressure him to retract his testimony. He developed gallstones and pancreatitis, and when he continued to refuse to renounce his testimony was denied urgently-needed medical care. In the end, he was left without treatment to die in an isolation ward.

There are strong parallels between the fate of Mr. Magnitsky and that of Yuri Shchekochikhin, a State Duma deputy and investigative journalist, who died June 2, 2003, after investigating a case of massive corruption involving high-ranking members of the security services. Shchekochikhin had been investigating the Tri Kita ("Three Whales") furniture chain, which allegedly imported furniture without paying millions of dollars in customs duties. One of the directors of the chain was Yevgeny Zaostrovtsev, a former general in the Russian foreign intelligence service. His son, Yuri, was a first deputy director of the FSB in charge of economic crimes. Shchekochikhin became ill and died after his skin erupted in a series of blisters and began to peel off. An autopsy concluded that Shchekochikhin died of an extremely rare allergic reaction to medication. No traces of medication, however, were found in his system. Shchekochikhin's colleagues at *Novaya Gazeta* are convinced that he was poisoned. His case is from time to time ritually reopened, but largely for political reasons—as a way of settling scores within the force ministries.

Others who dared to expose the crimes of high-ranking officials met similar fates. On July 15, 2009, Natalya Estemirova—at the time virtually the sole source of information on torture, abductions and murders carried out in Chechnya by the security forces of Ramzan Kadyrov—was abducted and murdered in Grozny. Anna Politkovskaya, Russia's best-known investigative journalist, was murdered in October 2004. In all, since 2000 there have been at least 16 journalists murdered in Russia. Not a single one of their killers has been arrested, and in the majority of cases the mastermind of the murder has been neither identified nor sought.

Caucasus blowback

The arrest of Mr. Nemtsov and the verdict against Mr. Khodorkovsky were followed by an event that, for Russians, was far more frightening: the terrorist attack on Moscow's Domodedovo Airport. Domodedovo is Russia's principal airport and the attack, coming only nine months after the suicide bombing of the Moscow metro, reminded Russians of their physical vulnerability. It also raised fears that ordinary Russian citizens will now be caught in the middle as the Kremlin employs indiscriminate force in the North Caucasus—thereby guaranteeing that terror escalates and the insurgency spreads.

Islamic fanaticism is a worldwide threat, but it is not the same everywhere. In the North Caucasus, the confrontation with Russia began as a separatist struggle on the part of the republic of Chechnya. It was only after many years of war and Russia's mass killing of civilians that the conditions were created for the Islamist threat to emerge in its present form in the North Caucasus. (In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that although there have been terrorist incidents in the Muslim parts of Russia that did not experience war, such as Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, the threat is far less serious.)

The first invasion of Chechnya took place in 1994. Then-President Boris Yeltsin refused to negotiate with Chechen separatists, although their maximum demands at the time amounted to being granted a form of autonomy. The second invasion came in 1999 after apartment buildings were blown up in Russia. The crime was blamed on the Chechens, but convincing circumstantial evidence suggests the buildings were bombed by the Russian FSB as part of an operation to bring Putin to power.[7]

The elected president of Chechnya, Aslan Maskhadov, ruled during the period between the two wars. An opponent of terrorism, he proclaimed a unilateral cease-fire in March 2005 in an effort to induce Moscow to agree to talks. The Russians, however, refused and, just weeks later, Maskhadov was killed.

Mr. Maskhadov was succeeded by Doku Umarov, one of his top commanders. Like Maskhadov, Umarov said that he opposed terrorism and condemned the Beslan school hostage taking in September 2004. In the meantime, however, Moscow installed Ramzan Kadyrov as president of Chechnya, and he consolidated his grip on power with the help of a reign of terror.

By 2007, the insurgency in Chechnya had been largely suppressed. At that time, Mr. Umarov, under pressure from Islamic radicals who were growing in strength, abandoned the drive for Chechen independence and called for an Islamic state in the North Caucasus. Russia reacted by installing corrupt local leaders (like Murat Zyazikov in Ingushetia and Mukhi Aliev in Dagestan) whose murderous tactics only served to fuel the insurgency.

In 2000, Russia was 82nd in the global ratings of Transparency International. By 2009, it had fallen to 146th place on a level with Ecuador, Cameroon, and Sierra Leone.

Ostensibly in response to Russian atrocities, Mr. Umarov turned to terror. In a video address, he warned that "blood will not only flow in our cities and villages" but also in the streets of Russia.[8] He took credit for

the bombing of the "Nevsky Express" (Moscow to St. Petersburg express train) in November 2009, in which 27 were killed, and for the March 2010 attack by two female suicide bombers on Moscow metro stations that killed 38. He said that the attacks on the Moscow metro were revenge for the killing by security forces of 18 villagers near the Chechen-Ingush border. There were reports that all of them were innocent civilians.

Crises to come

As thoughtful Russians look ahead, they are experiencing a real sense of foreboding. A regime which does not want to share power and relies on falsification and the use of force faces a population that is disillusioned with what looks like a permanent leadership and a president for life and a terrorist threat within the country that has become more lethal by the day.

Russian leaders have described their system as "managed democracy," or "sovereign democracy," but it is really the façade of democracy behind which is a singular determination by a kleptocratic oligarchy to preserve its hold on power.

The extremely high level of corruption in Russia is destroying the country's future. In 2000, Russia was 82nd in the global ratings of Transparency International. By 2009, it had fallen to 146th place on a level with Ecuador, Cameroon, and Sierra Leone.[9] Today, the corruption market in Russia is valued by the Indem think tank at more than $300 billion annually, or about a quarter of the national product.[10]

At the same time, economic growth has been accompanied by gross differences in wealth. The income of the top 10 percent of the population in Russia is 16.9 times higher than that of the lowest 10 percent.[11] This is a result not in modern countries, only in those of the Third World. Russia, meanwhile, boasts 62 billionaires, including a collection of Putin's personal friends who, as Boris Nemtsov and Vladimir Milov outline in their pamphlet, *Putin: The Results of Ten Years*, were "nobodies" before his ascent to power.[12]

The global economic crisis was extremely damaging for Russia, causing the national product to plummet by 7.8 percent. By way of comparison, this was a greater decline than Russia experienced during the 1998 default and far exceeded the fall in income of the leading Western countries. Other former Soviet republics, meanwhile, experienced economic growth. The effect on the psychology of Russians was significant because the years of relative prosperity under Putin followed decades of deprivation under first the communists and then Yeltsin. The evaporation of economic gains for a people that long awaited them is a source of instability and could have explosive consequences.

Russia's social and economic problems may also be greatly exacerbated by the spillover effects of the growing civil war in the North Caucasus. In 2000, Putin promised to "destroy the terrorists in their outhouses." After the attacks on the Moscow metro, he said that he would reach the terrorists "in their sewers." Despite these and other blood-curdling threats, the danger from terrorism in Russia has only grown, from 130 terrorist acts in 2000 to more than 750 today.

At the same time, the regime shows no sign of being ready to surrender power. There has been no formal announcement of whether Mr. Medvedev will seek the presidency for another term or whether Mr. Putin will run for that office. However, it is taken for granted that one or the other of that diarchy will run for and capture the presidency with or without the support of the population.

Russian leaders have described their system as "managed democracy," or "sovereign democracy," but it is really the façade of democracy behind which is a singular determination by a kleptocratic oligarchy to preserve its hold on power. No one can be sure what will be required for the present regime to maintain itself, but there is every reason to fear that the bleak situation of human rights in Russia will get even worse, threatening not only the freedoms of Russians but world stability as well.

1. polit.ru, June 15, 2008.
2. "Chechnya Votes 99.4pc for Putin," Reuters, January 1, 2009, http://www.stuff.co.nz/world/160873.
3. Sophia Kishkovsky, "Putin's Party Wins in Regional Elections Across Russia," *New York Times*, October 12, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/13/world/europe/13russia.html.
4. Sergei Kovalyev, "Otkr'itoe Pis'mo," February 26, 2008, http://www.kasparov.ru/material.php?id=47C3D48OC3926.
5. Sergei Shpilkin, a physicist and computer programmer, said that 14.8 million of the 52.5 million votes cast for Medvedev could not be explained to be anything other than the result of falsification. He said that Medvedev's support followed the normal pattern until it reached 60 percent and then showed a series of sharp spikes. The map of districts where this occurred matched that of districts where results for Medvedev ended in zero or five. The total number of such districts could not have been explained on the basis of a normal numerical distribution. Shpilkin also calculated that only 56 per cent of Russians had voted, instead of the 69.7 percent that was claimed by the Central Election Commission (CEC). See Tony Halpin, "Dmitri Medvedev Votes Were Rigged, Says Computer Boffin," *Times of London*, April 18, 2008.
6. See David Satter, "Khodorkovsky's Fate," *National Review Online*, December 30, 2010, http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/256106/khodorkovsky-s-fate-david-satter.
7. See David Satter, *Darkness at Dawn: The Rise of the Russian Criminal State* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).
8. Tim Lister, "Moscow Attack Renews Spotlight on 'Emir of the Caucasus,'" CNN, January 26, 2011, http://articles.cnn.com/2011-01-26/world/russia.umarov_1_chechnya-russian-special-forces-doku-umarov?_s=PM:WORLD.
9. Christopher Hope, "Transparency International's 2009 Corruption Index: the Full Ranking of 180 Countries," *Telegraph* (London), November 17, 2009, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/mps-expenses/6589735/Transparency-Internationals-2009-corruption-index-the-full-ranking-of-180-countries.html.
10. Lara Marlowe, "Leaked US Cables Claim Corruption Rampant in Russia," *Irish Times*, December 3, 2010, http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2010/1203/1224284681166.html.
11. Vladimir Milov and Boris Nemtsov, "Putin: What Ten Years of Putin Have Brought," n.d., 18, http://www.putin-itogi.ru/putin-what-10-years-of-putin-have-brought/.
12. Ibid., 3-4.

Russia's Future Imperfect

Oleg Kalugin

Whither Russia? It isn't back to the USSR, that much is clear. Neither, however, is Russia headed toward genuine democracy. The spirit of the millions of its citizens tortured or killed for the sake of Paradise on Earth is still very much alive, and it holds Russia in its thrall.

Some political figures prefer to ignore it. For them, the collapse of the Soviet regime was the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th Century."

Indeed, when Joseph Stalin, the ruthless Soviet dictator, passed away, millions of people around the world cried. Their shock was only amplified three years later, when Stalin's successor as General Secretary, Nikita Khrushchev, laid bare the criminal nature of his country's system. That was the beginning of the end of the grand illusion that one can build universal happiness on the corpses of millions.

The dramatic events that followed—popular uprisings in East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia—left no illusions about the nature of socialism, Soviet style. Under Leonid Brezhnev, shortages of food and basic commodities called into question the very idea of Russia's special role in the world community. The stagnation of Brezhnev was followed by Mikhail Gorbachev's quest for socialism with a "human face."

The Gorbachev era marked a sort of "spring" in the political and economic life of the country—albeit one that did not last long. In August of 1991, the

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old guard—the Communist Party bureaucracy, the military establishment and, of course, the KGB, the mainstay of the system ever since it appeared on Russian territory—tried to stop the progress of Soviet disintegration. They failed, but the USSR would never be the same. That became dramatically clear when Boris Yeltsin declared that the Russian Federation had become an independent entity. Ever since, Russia has gone its own way, with problems—old and new—mounting with every passing year.

Before its collapse, the Soviet system was essentially built on three pillars: the Communist Party, the KGB, and the military-industrial complex. Today's Russia is ruled by a new triumvirate: the new generation of the KGB, the Russian Orthodox Church, and big business.

Realities of the new Russia

Before its collapse, the Soviet system was essentially built on three pillars: the Communist Party, the KGB, and the military-industrial complex. Today's Russia is ruled by a new triumvirate: the new generation of the KGB, the Russian Orthodox Church, and big business. In this equation, however, the KGB is the senior partner; the church, including the current patriarchate of Moscow (like all previous ones), is controlled by the KGB, while Russian big business is penetrated and manipulated by it.

But this control has not brought safety. In the year 2000, then-President Vladimir Putin promised to restore order, security and stability to Russia. In 2008, the conflict in Chechnya was officially declared to be over. Ramzan Kadyrov, the Kremlin-designated dictator in that war-torn republic, was rewarded for his loyalty with billions of rubles in economic aid and the title of "Hero of Russia" was bestowed on him. But the separatist movement there has not been quashed. Sporadic outbursts of violence and assassinations continue. Moreover, the conflict increasingly has spilled over into the neighboring territories of Dagestan and Ingushetia. There have even been reports of growing separatist sentiment in the Muslim communities in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, hundreds of miles east of Moscow.

A myriad of other problems persist. With the Russian Far East under-populated and traditionally neglected, the prospects of growing Chinese influence have increased dramatically. So, too, have frictions in the "post-Soviet space." Until the collapse of the USSR, Russians had no special problems with Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In fact, some individuals from these Soviet republics occupied top positions in the Kremlin ruling circles; Joseph Stalin, Lavrenti Beria, Anastas Mikoyan and Geidar Aliyev left an indelible imprint on the history of the USSR. The situation in that region changed dramatically when Russia and Georgia clashed militarily over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and the end of that conflict is not yet in sight.

Russia likewise remains unwilling to talk to Japan about the long-running territorial dispute with Japan over several islands in the Pacific Ocean. That impasse has kept Russia and Japan from signing a formal peace treaty ending their World

War II hostilities. In his recent statement, the Japanese prime minister demanded a fair return of the islands and called the recent visit there by President Medvedev "an unforgivable outrage." Since Medvedev and his team are often pictured as "pro-Western liberals," they are eagerly looking for opportunities to present a hard line. In the Kurils, they have found one.

On the positive side of the ledger, high energy prices have helped a lot, but paradoxically they have also delayed the modernization of the country both economically and politically. Ever since the KGB junta (which makes up as much as 70 percent of the top Kremlin administration, according to well-informed sources) took over the country, reforms have stalled and repression has deepened. In turn, the lack of transparency, accountability, and selective application of justice now visible in Russia has made it a less-than-attractive partner for foreign nations.

This does not mean that Russia is without its allies, however. Mexico, Brazil and the United Arab Emirates all trust Russia as a business partner. Russian business inspires trust around the world: 38 percent on average. In the United States, UK, and Sweden, confidence toward Russia is much lower: 12-15 percent.

Even Russia's relations with the United States, China, and Europe have improved of late. Medvedev's meetings with world leaders have helped create a better understanding of mutual problems. (Russian commercial deals with Iran, which are potentially uncomfortable for the United States, have been handled discreetly.)

On the whole, Russian society is fragmented, with the elites contemptuous of the masses and vice versa. The growing xenophobia, numerous problems with migrant workers, and general economic slowdown have created tensions across the country.

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Forks in the road

But twenty years of national degradation, wryly termed "liberal empire" by some and pessimistically dubbed "mafia state" by others, may be coming to an end in the next decade, thanks to the "modernization" program announced by President Medvedev. This latest political slogan is championed, in word and in deed, by both Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin. "The Russian transition is underway," blares the Russian media. "The tandem is determined to transform Russia into the greatest power on Earth."

Medvedev stresses the need to "optimize" the Russian political system. This has included the reelection of the government and bureaucracy, restructuring of the armed forces, substantial cuts in law enforcement agencies, and keeping censorship within limits. Under President Medvedev, the Russian security and intelligence services have been redirected. No more world revolutions, territorial expansion, or subversion. The post-Soviet space has become their main concern: to keep Ukraine

out of the Western orbit, to prevent Georgia from joining NATO, and to facilitate Russian engagements abroad, particularly in economic and trade areas, to work with Russian émigré communities through "friendship clubs" or the Russian orthodox Church priests. In short, to promote the image of "New Russia" and obtain information helpful to modernization.

On the surface, this activism looks promising. Yet many view the "tandem" as little more than fiction. After all, according to recently published reports, people loyal to Putin occupy 73 of the 75 key positions in the Russian state.

According to these estimates, Putin inevitably will again run for president in 2012. And when he does, his choice as the prime minister will not be Medvedev but Sergei Sobyanin, his old friend and the newly-appointed mayor of Moscow.

But can Medvedev be expected to leave the scene quietly? Russia's current president is popular, and highly valued by the Russian Orthodox Church. He has close personal ties with the patriarch of Russia, and has been of great political benefit to the Church. Medvedev, then, can count on powerful allies if he chooses to stay and fight.

Whatever the outcome of the forthcoming elections, Russia is most unlikely to reverse the process of change, though no one knows where this change will lead. But one thing is certain: Western ambivalence will not help the prospects of democracy in Russia.

No Reset in the Post-Soviet Space

Svante E. Cornell

In August 2008, Russian imperialism was on brazen display to the world. As Russian tanks rolled into neighboring Georgia, the Kremlin manifested the extent of its ambitions to reassert dominion over its neighborhood.

Subsequent research has left no doubt that Russia had planned its invasion long in advance, and that any political miscalculations made by the Georgian leadership were merely a pretext for the resulting conflict, rather than its cause.[1] Indeed, soon after the end of hostilities, Russia not only recognized the secessionist Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, although both were controlled to a large degree by Russian special services. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev also announced an overtly imperialist doctrine, declaring that "Russia, like other countries in the world, has regions where it has privileged interests," and that these include Russia's "border region, but not only."[2] Shortly thereafter, Medvedev pushed forward with his plan launched earlier that year for a new European security architecture—one that would weaken NATO's position as the cornerstone of European security. Russia was clearly on the move.

The Russian invasion of Georgia was understood in its immediate aftermath as a watershed event. By directly and unilaterally attacking another sovereign state, Russia had broken the most basic principles of the post-Cold War order in Europe. The implications of the attack for European security moved to the very top of the

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international agenda. Yet very soon, international events relegated the issue to the backburner; only weeks later, in late September, the U.S. financial system stood on the verge of collapse, leading to the global financial crisis that still plagues the Euro-Atlantic area. As world leaders struggled to save the world economy, the crisis in Georgia appeared less important.

Moreover, a consensus of sorts also emerged abroad that the crisis had changed Russia itself. Indeed, Medvedev's proposals and the war in Georgia all occurred at a time when Russia, buoyed by record oil prices, was flush with money and self-confidence. But even before the financial crisis hit, Russia saw a massive outflow of capital as a result of the war.[3] The Kremlin initially appeared to believe its large cash reserves would insulate it from the global economic downturn. Yet it soon emerged that Russia was among the economies worst hit by the crisis, forced to use close to $200 billion, a third of its currency reserves, to prop up its economy. Russia's GDP likewise contracted by nine percent in 2009.

Ever since, Russian policies toward the West have appeared to take on a new and more conciliatory tone. Russia moved to resolve a decades-old dispute with Norway on maritime boundaries, to patch up its long-standing differences with Poland, and in 2010 worked with NATO toward a compromise on the issue of missile defense. In 2011, Russia did not prevent the West's military intervention in Libya. Likewise, Moscow has appeared to reciprocate the Obama administration's "reset" diplomacy, cooperating with the U.S. on Iran sanctions and logistics to Afghanistan. Simply put, Russia—a problem on the West's agenda in 2008—no longer seems to be one.

Does this mean that Moscow's goals have changed, and that Russia no longer views the world in zero-sum terms? Has Russia abandoned its ambition to establish a sphere of influence in the former Soviet Union, including in areas that matter significantly to U.S. national security interests? A closer analysis of Russian policies suggests that the answer is not that simple.

With Georgia, war by other means

Although the urgency of 2008 has abated, the ongoing situation concerning Georgia and its secessionist regions—Abkhazia and South Ossetia—remains the main area of discord between Russia and the West. In fact, little has changed in Moscow's policies toward Georgia. Indeed, the war of August 2008 should not be seen as an isolated event, but as the most violent and acute phase of a Russian-Georgian conflict that dates back to the late Soviet period.

This was hardly the first time Russia had used force against Georgia; long before the 2008 war, Georgia stood out as the post-Soviet country where Russia had most aggressively asserted itself. In the early 1990s, its military had taken an active role in the secessionist wars. In the mid-1990s, considerable evidence suggests elements in Moscow were involved in an attempt to assassinate then-Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze.[4] And at several occasions before current President Mikheil Saakashvili's rise to power, Moscow bombed Georgian territory—making it the only country where Russia had used outright military power.[5] This historical context is important, because it indicates that—while the war between Russia and Georgia may be over—the

conflict between Moscow and Tbilisi continues at other levels.

Nor has the threat of a new Russian invasion abated. In the early summer of 2009, a considerable number of analysts deemed a renewed Russian military attack on Georgia—one designed to finish the job of ousting the Saakashvili regime—to be likely.[6] While it is nearly impossible to know if such a war was indeed being planned, the diplomatic and military preparations were certainly observable.[7] If a war was indeed planned, the warnings delivered by the Obama administration during the President's July 2009 visit to Moscow appear to have averted it.[8]

In any case, Russia continues to violate the 2008 cease-fire agreement negotiated by the European Union. It continues to overtly demand regime change in Georgia, and its activities to undermine the democratically-elected Georgian government have not ceased. Russia likewise has rapidly expanded its military presence in the territories that it effectively occupies. On the basis of agreements with the *de facto* governments in Sukhumi and Tskhinvali, Moscow has built permanent military bases in both territories.[9] Moreover, these include sophisticated hardware, some of which appears directed at threatening the Georgian capital.

In late 2010 and early 2011, it was reported that Russia had deployed *Smerch* (Tornado) multiple-launch rocket systems and *Tochka-U* (SS-21 Scarab B) short-range tactical ballistic missile systems in South Ossetia, less than 60 miles from Tbilisi.[10] In addition to the military buildup, Russia's wholesale economic embargo on Georgia is still in place, and Moscow continues to fund the most radical elements of the Georgian opposition.

Russian policies in the "post-Soviet space" continue to be in open conflict with fundamental American interests in the region, whether it be in terms of governance, security, or energy.

Diplomatically, Moscow has engaged in two key efforts toward Georgia. First, while building up its own military capabilities on Georgian territory, it has successfully forced the equivalent of an international arms embargo on the country. The method has been, on the one hand, to intimidate arms suppliers such as Israel, with the threat of arming Syria if Jerusalem stopped selling weapons to Georgia; and on the other, to falsely accuse the U.S. and other Western states of supplying large quantities of weapons to Georgia, thus obtaining assurances that such deliveries have not been made—and an implicit acceptance that they should not in the future. As analyst Vladimir Socor has observed, "The claim about those arms deliveries is intended for a U.S. and NATO audience. The Russian government must know that this audience knows that their claim is false. The purpose of such statements is simply to draw, or reinforce, Moscow's red lines regarding Western policies."[11] This effectively serves to sustain Georgia's acute vulnerability, leaving Tbilisi defenseless to a renewed Russian invasion at some point in the future, and enabling Moscow to intimidate the present and future governments there.

Secondly, Moscow is seeking to distort the reality in the conflict zones. Before the 2008 war, Moscow interfered increasingly directly in the affairs of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, for example through the

illegal distribution of Russian passports there, economic investments, and through the direct seconding of serving Russian state employees to the unrecognized governments of the two entities. A the same time, it sought to portray itself as an honest broker, mediator and peacekeeper in the conflict—and obtained Western confirmation of such status, as well as regular praise in UN resolutions.

Taking a page out of that playbook, Moscow now argues that it is not a party to the conflict—that the conflicts are between Georgia on the one hand and the "independent states" of South Ossetia and Abkhazia on the other.[12] This ploy became most obvious in December 2010, after Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili made a unilateral pledge in the European Parliament not to use force to recover the secessionist territories. But Moscow refused to follow suit and make a pledge not to use force against Georgia, arguing again that it is not a party to the conflict.[13]

This diplomatic initiative has not met with success, and indeed, Georgia has remained the main thorn in Russia's relationship with the West and in its international image. Contrary to the case before August 2008, the world now views Russia as a party to the conflict.

Coveting Kyiv

The Russian leadership has continuously made it clear that it does not consider Ukraine an independent state. Addressing President Bush at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Vladimir Putin said as much: "Do you understand, George, that Ukraine is not even a state?" adding that most of Ukraine's territory was "given to it" by Russia, and that Ukraine would break apart if it joined NATO.[14] A year later, Putin cited the reference by Anton Denikin, commander of the anti-Bolshevik White armies, to "Big Russia and Little Russia," the latter being Ukraine, emphasizing that "no one should be allowed to interfere in relations between us; they have always been the business of Russia itself."[15]

It should therefore come as no surprise that the Russian government has paid extensive attention in the past two years to Ukraine. Unlike in Georgia, Moscow did not need to topple the administration of Orange Revolution leader Viktor Yushchenko by force; the internal rivalries between Yushchenko and his erstwhile ally, Yulia Timoshenko, and their continuous mismanagement of Ukraine's economy allowed Moscow simply to wait them out. When the presidential election of February 7, 2010, returned to power Viktor Yanukovich, the Moscow-supported loser of the 2005 election that precipitated the Orange Revolution, the Russian leadership lost no time. Since then, Ukraine has moved closer domestically to the Russian authoritarian model; in foreign policy, it has returned largely to the Russian camp; and the Yanukovich regime has also begun to suppress the evolution of Ukraine's distinct national identity.

Already in mid-April—just over two months after the election—Presidents Medvedev and Yanukovich signed an agreement to prolong Russia's basing rights at the Sevastopol naval base on the Black Sea for a quarter-century beyond its slated expiration in 2017, with a possibility of another five-year extension. Russia in return agreed to provide a 30 percent discount on Russian gas supplies to Ukraine over a certain price. This deal was pushed through the Ukrainian parliament without debate, in spite of its being in clear violation of

the Ukrainian constitution (which prohibits foreign military bases beyond 2017). Furthermore, Russia in early 2011 announced a large-scale modernization program to develop the Sevastopol base and add significant military capabilities there.[16]

The growing Russian influence on Ukrainian foreign and security policy has been increasingly visible throughout 2010, including through Moscow's influence on Ukraine's Security Service, the SBU, and Yanukovich's personal entourage—*manifested through personnel policies, as well as the growing alignment of Ukrainian positions with Moscow's*.[17] Thus, as Chatham House's James Sherr puts it, "Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, without international opprobrium or loss of life, have secured greater geopolitical dividends than were realized as a result of victory in the Georgian war."[18]

In parallel, Moscow has formed the model for, and eagerly supported, the gradual dismantling of democracy in Ukraine, which has proceeded rapidly in Yanukovich's first year in office. Shortly after coming to power, Yanukovich's government began to shrink the relatively free media climate in Ukraine. Two critical television stations saw their frequencies revoked, beatings and harassment of journalists have returned, and the country's journalists in near unison complain of direct pressure from the ruling authorities not to criticize the government.[19] State security pressure on university campuses has also been ramped up, while the government has selectively targeted high-level figures of the former regime with criminal proceedings over corruption allegations, and engaged in administrative and legal tactics to undermine its opposition.[20]

Finally, the Yanukovich government has reversed its predecessor's attempts to build a Ukrainian national identity separate from the Russian one, especially in the controversial debates over Ukrainian history. The most acrimonious issue is the *Holodomor*, the Soviet-imposed famine of 1932-33 that led to the death of up to four million Ukrainians from starvation. Ukrainian nationalists argue that the *Holodomor* constituted an act of genocide by Stalin against the Ukrainian people. Making the issue central to the historical memory of the nation, they also reject Russia's official interpretation (which contradicts the thrust of independent historians) that this tragedy did not target the Ukrainian people specifically, but affected Russians and others alike.

Yanukovich, hailing from the Russian-speaking eastern areas of Ukraine that retain strong elements of Soviet identity, has vehemently rejected the definition of the *Holodomor* as genocide, thereby also effectively abandoning a distinctly Ukrainian historical narrative—and instead adopting the Russian one.[21] This has been coupled with a further dismantling of the nation-building policies of the Yushchenko administration, especially those emphasizing the revival of the Ukrainian language, amounting to what Alexander Motyl of Rutgers University terms an "assault on Ukrainian identity."[22]

Controlled instability in the South Caucasus

During 2009 and 2010, the unresolved conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has been slowly escalating, with the war of words between the two countries mounting and skirmishes along the cease-fire line increasing.[23] Unfortunately, this evo-

lution is partly a result of Western neglect of the conflict, and of the now collapsed U.S.-sponsored Turkish-Armenian reconciliation process. Moscow's policies have been twofold: asserting its role as the primary mediator between the parties, and stepping up its provision of military hardware to both of them.

Soon after the war in Georgia, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev took a leading role in the negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This served two purposes: first, to improve Russia's tarnished international reputation; and second, to reinforce Russia's role as the predominant force in the South Caucasus. While both the Azerbaijani and Armenian presidents played along, not least in a high-profile summit in Moscow in November 2008, the negotiations went nowhere because of the volatile post-war regional atmosphere. In spite of this fact, Medvedev in October 2010 continued to voice optimism that a deal would be reached by that December. Needless to say, there was no progress in that direction.[24]

Armenia has been Moscow's main outpost in the Caucasus for the entire post-Soviet period. Following the successful extension of Russia's basing rights at Sevastopol, Moscow applied the same blueprint in Armenia. August 2010 saw the amendment of the 1995 Russian-Armenian bilateral defense treaty, extending the lease of Russia's military base at Gyumri until 2044. At the same time, the wording of the agreement itself was altered; whereas the original treaty included a commitment by Russia to come to Armenia's defense if the country was attacked "by a state outside the CIS"(a reference at the time mainly referring to Turkey), the amended treaty language included no such clause. Instead, Yerevan received stronger commitments from Moscow for defense against a possible Azerbaijani attack to reclaim its lost territories. To make good on these commitments, Russia also transferred large amounts of armaments to Armenia.[25]

But Moscow is playing both sides of the fence. While its main focus has continued to be Armenia, Russia appears to have sold S-300 advanced anti-aircraft missile systems to Azerbaijan as well, and to have provided Baku with considerable numbers of tanks and other armaments.[26]

Thus, Moscow's policy in the Armenian-Azerbaijani dispute seems to be to seek a negotiated solution on its own terms, one that would certainly involve Russian troops on Azerbaijani territory in some form of peacekeeping function. Barring that, it strives to sustain a controlled level of instability in the South Caucasus, one that ensures Armenia's continued dependence on Moscow while attaching costs to Azerbaijan's independent policies.

The morass that is Moldova

Moldova, with its unresolved conflict in Transdniester, has long been Europe's poorest, and perhaps most forgotten, country. Ever since a short conflict in 1992, Russian military forces have been deployed in the eastern Transdniester region, where a secessionist pro-Russian, neo-communist regime remains in control. Moldova emerges in the headlines mainly because Russia's military presence there—against the will of the Moldovan government and in contravention of its constitution—has been one of the chief stumbling blocks for the entry into force of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe.

This issue gained salience following the German government's initiative in 2010 to explore closer security cooperation between Europe and Russia. At a summit in Meseberg, near Berlin, in June 2010, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Russian President Medvedev signed a memorandum to "explore the establishment of an EU-Russia Political and Security Committee," which would be a considerable step toward changing the architecture of European security.[27] Indeed, the move had taken place without consultations with Washington, and the intended body would surpass the institutional forms of coordination between the EU and NATO, or between the EU and the United States.

However, there was a small catch: Merkel explicitly raised resolution of the conflict in Transdniester as a test case of EU-Russia security cooperation, and the memorandum promised joint efforts in that direction.[28] Berlin kept up the pressure: Soon after the Meseberg summit, Guido Westerwelle became the first German Foreign Minister to visit Moldova.[29] Berlin then raised the issue with French and Polish leaders in the consultations known as the Weimar triangle, and Merkel further coordinated with Romanian leaders during a state visit in October 2010. Yet as of March 2011, Moscow had only reciprocated verbally after several months of silence; it has yet to indicate that it is prepared to work toward a solution.

In spite of the great benefits and prestige a developed security relationship with the EU would offer Moscow, the initiative has yet to bear fruit. Observers with first-hand information about the negotiations suggest that Russian negotiators have yielded nothing of substance. Indeed, Moscow continues to back the Smirnov regime in Transdniester, while demanding a resolution and a "reliably guaranteed" special status for Transdniester as well as Moldova's "constitutional neutrality" before any military withdrawal.

The reason for Moscow's lack of movement is likely that Berlin made it clear that any solution to the conflict would involve the withdrawal of Russian military forces from Moldova, and an autonomy solution for Transdniester within Moldovan sovereignty.

Leveraging Kyrgyzstan

While much is made of the fact that Moscow has cooperated with Washington on logistics to Afghanistan, it is often forgotten that Moscow simultaneously worked hard to undermine the U.S. base at Manas in Kyrgyzstan.

It was on February 3, 2010, in Moscow, that then-Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev announced his decision to close the U.S. air base at Manas. Bakiyev had just come out of a meeting with Russian President Medvedev, in which he had been promised an assistance package of over $2 billion.[30] While both leaders denied any connection between the two events, such a connection was obvious for all to see—and Bakiyev likely made the announcement at the time and place he did in order to reinforce the point that it was not his decision. Indeed, four months later, the decision was reversed following intense U.S.-Kyrgyz negotiations and a hefty increase in the rent paid to Kyrgyzstan.[31] This aroused Moscow's fury: Russia cut aid to Kyrgyzstan, suspended investment projects, and abrogated the country's preferential customs status.[32] Simultaneously, almost immediately after Bishkek announced the renewed deal

with Washington, Moscow bullied the Bakiyev regime into accepting Russia's long-standing aim to deploy a military base in southern Kyrgyzstan, near the city of Osh—against strong Uzbek opposition.[33]

By late March 2010, the Russian state-controlled media—the prime source of information for most Kyrgyz—had launched a fierce campaign of black propaganda against the Bakiyev regime, accusing the president's family of a variety of acts of corruption and crime.[34] While Moscow's economic pressure, which Bakiyev passed on in the form of price hikes to the population, contributed to boosting anti-government sentiment in the country, the Russian media attack also served as a green light, indeed an encouragement, to the fractured Kyrgyz opposition to seek Bakiyev's ouster. Only days later, a popular upheaval unseated him.

In June 2010, mounting interethnic tensions between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in southern Kyrgyzstan erupted into the region's worst ethnic clashes in 20 years, with the Uzbeks bearing the brunt of the violence. The leadership of Uzbekistan overtly accused Moscow of instigating the violence, although evidence to that effect remains to be produced. But Moscow did take the opportunity to push for the deployment of Russian "peacekeepers" in the country—clearly a first step toward a permanent military base. That move was stifled partly due to the skepticism among the Russian military leadership of the logistics of such an operation, but mainly because of vocal opposition not from the West but from Uzbekistan and China.[35]

As of early 2011, the Manas base is still in place, in spite of a Russian-inspired *coup d'état* in Kyrgyzstan. While this may at first sight seem incongruous with the picture of Russian actions presented here, it points to Moscow's long-term objective: not necessarily to force America out of the base, but to ensure that Washington negotiates with Moscow, not Bishkek, to maintain its presence in Central Asia—and thus to be forced to reciprocate in areas of greater importance to the Kremlin. Indeed, Moscow's attempts to replace the Kyrgyz government as the provider of fuel to the U.S. military are an example of this ambition.[36]

Russian policies... and results

The discussion above reinforces the analysis of numerous scholars that Russia has interpreted the "reset" policy as a one-way street.[37] Indeed, Russian policies continue to be in open conflict with fundamental American interests in the region, whether it be in terms of governance, security, or energy. In fact, these three categories are deeply intertwined; from Moscow's zero-sum perspective, European influence in the field of governance, energy and security in the region all contribute to denying Russia's domination over the region, something that it in turn perceives as a threat to its own security.

The driving force behind Russia's antagonistic policies is as much based on ideology as it is *realpolitik*. This aspect is central, but often overlooked. In fact, it is no mere coincidence that Russian foreign policy has become progressively more antagonistic as its domestic trajectory has become its increasingly authoritarian. The consolidation in the Kremlin of an authoritarian regime asserting control over Russia's economic wealth has led Russian policies to increasingly oppose

Western support for democratization, either in Russia itself or in its neighborhood. Russian leaders openly argue that Western-style democracy is unsuitable for Russia or other former Soviet states, and that its own authoritarian system—described under the euphemisms "sovereign democracy" and "vertical of power"—is the most appropriate model for political development.[38]

Thus, Moscow on the one hand sees the emergence of pro-Western and democratic governments in its neighborhood as a danger to its regional influence. Indeed, democracy is incompatible with a "sphere of influence"—which presupposes that a country's leaders are accountable to Moscow, and not to their own people. On the other hand, Moscow also views with alarm the contagion of democratic and reformist sentiment across the post-Soviet space, because it fears that the trend could spread to Russia and endanger the ruling elite's own position in power.

Against this background, Russian efforts to undermine democratizing and pro-Western countries in the region through subversion and manipulation of unresolved conflicts, to bolster authoritarianism, and to continue to dominate energy transport routes should all be seen as interrelated, and closely linked to the emphasis placed by Russia on preventing the emergence of democratic and sovereign states willing to integrate with the rest of Europe on its borders.

Russia makes use of a range of mechanisms inherited from the Soviet Union to reward positive behavior or punish undesirable actions on the part of neighboring states. However, it makes much more use of sticks than carrots. While rewards include privileged export deals or subsidized energy prices, punishments are legion. They include economic sanctions and embargos, manipulation of the price and supply of energy, intervention in domestic politics and unresolved conflicts, subversive activities, military provocations, and ultimately, as in Georgia, the use of full-scale military force.

The consolidation in the Kremlin of an authoritarian regime asserting control over Russia's economic wealth has led Russian policies to increasingly oppose Western support for democratization, either in Russia itself or in its neighborhood.

Moscow's agenda has thus been both unchanged and ambitious. But it has not been successful. Ukraine represents the main area of success for Russian policy—and the most important one. The question, however, is whether Moscow's geopolitical gains in Ukraine are sustainable. Indeed, former President Yushchenko followed a foreign policy that was often blamed for being out of synch with the wishes of the majority of Ukraine in its zeal to join NATO and distance itself from Russia. But that pales in comparison to the divisiveness of President Yanukovich's policies, which have also been coupled with a growing element of repression never present under his predecessor.

In other areas, Moscow has been much less successful. The government of Mikheil Saakashvili in Georgia survives, having weathered serious internal storms while maintaining substantial public legitimacy and continuing its reform agenda, though perhaps at a slower pace than before. Moscow's war against Geor-

gia caused enormous damage to that country, but also made inconceivable the arrival to power of a pro-Russian politician of the Yanukovich mold. Indeed, if not before, 2008 was the year when Russia lost Georgia.

Similarly, Russia's renewal of its basing agreement with Armenia, and attached arms supplies, led to the abrupt end of any Russian-Azerbaijani honeymoon, preventing Moscow from capitalizing on Baku's frustration with the West. While the Azerbaijani government is cautious in its relations with Moscow and cooperates in areas of its own interests—such as gas sales and arms procurement—nothing has changed in Azerbaijan's independent foreign policy. Even in Armenia, Moscow's position is based on Armenia's dependency, a fact not lost on Armenia's leaders. In Moldova, Russian encroachments failed to measure up to the gravitational pull of the European Union. In November 2010, the fractured coalition government, aptly named the "Alliance for European Integration," won renewed confidence in an election, and was reconstituted, dashing Moscow's hopes of returning the Communist party to power.[39]

Meanwhile, Russia's relationship with close ally Belarus has deteriorated in the past two years, given the Lukashenko government's growing resentment at Russian pressure and growing disagreements over the pricing of oil shipments for Belarus' refineries. In a similar vein, Uzbekistan has increasingly distanced itself from Moscow following the short-lived warming of relations following the closure of the U.S. base at Kharshi-Khanabad in 2005.[40] While courting Western powers again, Tashkent, joining Minsk, in summer 2009 refused to accept the establishment of Rapid Reaction Forces under the auspices of the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization.[41] Ties with Moscow reached the freezing point with Russia's meddling in Kyrgyzstan's affairs in 2010 and the unrest in southern Kyrgyzstan. Finally, relations between Russia and Turkmenistan have also deteriorated, following a May 2010 explosion on a gas pipeline linking Turkmenistan to Russia, which appeared to be a result of Russia shutting valves to the pipeline. This followed efforts by Turkmenistan's president, Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov, to further diversify Turkmenistan's gas export routes, and his refusal to commit to building additional gas pipelines to Russia.[42] Berdimukhamedov blamed Russia for the blast, and has redoubled efforts to reduce the country's dependence on Russian transport routes.

In sum, Moscow's aggressive tactics have largely failed to bear fruit—but have contributed to deepening the instability of the entire post-Soviet sphere, and to complicating efforts at conflict resolution and development in that region.

America's (lack of) response

What has been the U.S. response to these Russian policies? Simply put, it has been underwhelming. With a policy focused almost exclusively on the "reset" with Russia, Washington has avoided policies that would annoy Moscow. On the positive side, the Obama administration did realize the danger of renewed war in Georgia, and passed the right messages to Moscow in the summer of 2009. Moreover, visiting Georgia in June 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clin-

ton directly referred to Russia's troop presence in Georgia as "occupation."

But that is where the positive steps end. This declaratory policy on Georgia has not been followed up by action to reverse the situation on the ground, or to reduce Russian pressure on the country. Washington has seemed to agree to disagree with Moscow on Georgia, but not to devise policies to help Georgia regain its territorial integrity, attach costs to Russia for its occupation, or to provide security for Georgia. In this context, perhaps the most disturbing policy is U.S. policy concerning arms sales to Georgia. While Russia is arming itself to the teeth in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the United States has refused to sell Georgia even defensive weapons.

U.S. weapons sales to Georgia have surpassed $10 million since 2003; in 2009, they dropped to zero.[43] In effect, the State Department simply refuses to either approve or deny requests for permits for arms sales to Georgia, thereby effectively upholding Russia's preferred policy on Georgia—a de facto arms embargo.[44]

Washington likewise failed to react to Moscow's assertive military moves, especially the extensions of the Russian bases in Armenia and Ukraine, in spite of their negative effect on regional security. Similarly, there was no American reaction to the French government's sale of Mistral warships to Russia—former National Security Advisor James Jones even stated that the issue was not "of particular concern to us."[45] Washington's lack of engagement on Moldova persisted, and in Kyrgyzstan it remained mum about Russia's efforts at destabilization.

Finally, Washington's perhaps most unfortunate move was its neglect of both Azerbaijan and the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. If the war in Georgia showed anything, it was that there are no "frozen conflicts." Having failed to prevent war in Georgia, avoiding escalation between Armenia and Azerbaijan would have seemed logical. Instead, Washington decided to de-link the Armenian-Azerbaijan process from the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation process, and to push the Karabakh conflict even deeper into the "freezer." The message to Baku was that if it wanted international attention to the conflict, its only option was to escalate.

In short, the Obama administration has abdicated the bipartisan tradition, launched by the Clinton White House and dating back almost two decades, of viewing the South Caucasus and Central Asia as regions in their own right, and as subjects of international affairs where the United States has significant interests. Instead, it has appeared to fold the component countries of the region into other portfolios—and subjugate them to its desire for a new tenor in relations with Russia. The results so far suggest that another policy revision is sorely needed.

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Preventing the Unthinkable

Kevin Ryan

The one game-changing threat that exists in the world is a nuclear attack. Only a nuclear explosion has the capacity to kill millions in seconds and unhinge our geopolitical framework. During the Cold War, the threat of a nuclear attack came mainly from the U.S.-Russian nuclear arsenals: thousands of nuclear weapons poised to assure that an attack by one side would be met with devastating retaliation by the other. Today, however, the United States and Russia have been forced to adapt to a new nuclear threat—that of dedicated terrorists with money and technological access who seek to obtain and use a nuclear device.

Preventing a nuclear attack has been a point of common interest for the United States and Russia since 1949, when the Soviet Union joined the nuclear club and exploded its first nuclear bomb on the Kazakhstan steppe. In the past, the two countries have overcome serious differences through treaties and agreements that ultimately reduced nuclear arsenals and tensions, lessening the possibility of a nuclear war and gradually building trust along the way. The threat of a nuclear attack, which long served as a tool of intimidation, is now poised to become a point of cooperation, if the two countries can agree on a way to go forward.

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The two best opportunities for the United States and Russia to cooperate against the threat of nuclear attack are in creating missile defense and preventing nuclear terrorism. Although they appear to be about two different problems, these initiatives are actually about the same thing: preventing a nuclear attack. And if the United States and Russia can cooperate in these efforts, then the result will be a safer world.

Creating missile defense

Today, to prevent a nuclear missile attack, the United States and Russia are pursuing two fundamentally opposing strategies: one through the development of a missile defense system, and one through the development of the capability to defeat it. U.S. plans for missile defense, if taken to their logical conclusion of a robust global system, would be a direct threat to Russia's means of preventing a nuclear missile attack—that is, the threat of massive nuclear retaliation. Russia's development of missile defense countermeasures and new nuclear weapons, in turn, represents a threat to American missile defense efforts. The United States and Russia are aiming for the same goal—freedom from a nuclear missile attack—but our strategies are no longer the same, the way they were before we scrapped the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002. To understand how we should proceed in preventing a nuclear missile attack, and why we should cooperate with Russia in missile defense, we should understand first what the two countries' positions are regarding missile defense, and we should appreciate the fact that both positions proceed from the same goal.

To begin with, let's be frank about the subject of U.S.-Russian missile defense cooperation. The United States does not need Russia to create or deploy missile defense; it has already developed most of the technology necessary to do so. The United States, however, does need Russia in order to prevent a missile attack. That is because, for the foreseeable future (the next 30 years at least), Russia will retain the capacity to attack the American homeland with nuclear missiles despite our missile defense deployments. Even in our most optimistic projections, we will not be able to stop a Russian missile attack purely with long range interceptors. Indeed, creating missile defense is only a part of the answer to preventing a missile attack. America should not get so attached to missile defense that it loses sight of the big picture—a world in which we are no longer threatened by nuclear missiles.

Today, Russia may not have the capacity to build a missile defense system on the scale of ours, but its leaders definitely have the capacity to build offensive weapons to defeat and overwhelm it if they so choose. Russian leaders have made clear that continued development and deployment of a missile defense system that can intercept Russian Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) could scuttle the recently ratified START treaty. Such development, moreover, could preclude any discussions on mutual reductions in tactical nuclear weapons, and even begin an escalation in the reliance on nuclear weapons that reverses the gains of the past 40 years of arms control.[1] Yet America's commitment to missile defense is long-standing, made clear over three decades and by five successive presidents. We must find a way to create a defensive system that does not by its very existence make it harder to achieve our goal of freedom from a nuclear missile attack.

U.S. government officials frequently point out that the U.S. goal today is a "limited missile defense system" and that the U.S. side has proven to the Russian side, through arguments based on physics and confidential data, that this limited system is not able to threaten the capacity of the Russian nuclear deterrent force. This may be true today, but it was not the purpose of the system as originally envisioned by President Reagan in 1983. And although our country's leaders today try to make clear our system at present is a limited one, there is no guarantee, no treaty that binds the United States to this objective. These realities are worrisome to Russian observers.

If we hope to avoid a potentially even greater threat from Russia's nuclear force, we must reconcile two seemingly irreconcilable positions. The first is that the United States is dedicated to deploying a missile defense system that ultimately will be able to intercept ICBMs. The second is that Russia sees the U.S. system as a direct threat to the strategic balance and Russian security.

That is why President Obama's decision to reschedule the deployment of missile defenses in Europe—deferring work on long-range interceptors until the end of this decade—is so important. It guarantees that existing counter-ICBM capabilities will remain limited for the next decade (stuck at about twenty silo-based interceptors in the United States) while we focus instead on interceptors against intermediate- and short-range missiles of the kind that Iran might achieve in the next ten years. It gives us the breathing space to find a way to pursue American missile defense goals without driving Russia to thwart those objectives.

Moreover, the offer from NATO and the United States at the November 2010 Summit in Lisbon to cooperate with Russia on this new European missile defense plan gives the United States a way to work openly together, increase the transparency of the technology and its true capabilities, and decrease uncertainty in Moscow about the nature and aim of the system. It allows us to deploy the system in a way that achieves our goal of preventing a limited nuclear missile attack by Iran while precluding an arms race with Russia that could derail the whole effort.

The U.S. and Russia are aiming for the same goal—freedom from a nuclear missile attack—but our strategies are no longer the same, the way they were before we scrapped the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty in 2002.

The mechanics of cooperation on that system, however, remain to be worked out. For example, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh-Rasmussen proposed the defensive system be a "security roof" that includes all of NATO and Russia, from Vancouver to Vladivostok. But he has also cautioned that any system NATO and Russia create would not be "joint" or "unified." Rasmussen explained that the alliance's concept is two separate systems (NATO and Russian) linked together.[2] The Secretary General's plan for two separate systems is realistic for the missile defense capabilities as they exist today, but it is not a good enough vision for where we should be headed.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, for his part, has made clear the Russian expectations for missile

defense cooperation. According to him, what is needed is a "full-fledged joint mechanism of cooperation"—a single shield, encompassing Russia and the 28 NATO allies. Medvedev proposed what he called a "sector approach" to the defense, in which Russia and NATO would be responsible for shooting down any missiles that flew over their territory, whether headed for Russia or NATO.[3] It might seem reasonable as a plan, except that Russia has not fielded missile defenses with the capability to shoot down intermediate range missiles as they pass over Russian territory headed to western countries. Medvedev's plan is a better vision for where we should be headed, but it is not a realistic plan for right now.

If Russia and the U.S./NATO can cooperate successfully on missile defense in Europe, we will have a safer, more stable region and world. If we cannot, danger and instability will follow.

As for the United States, we have had a somewhat conflicted approach to cooperation in the missile defense arena. The Department of Defense's Missile Defense Agency (MDA) website states that the United States seeks to leverage the industrial base of foreign partners: sharing information with allies and partners and promoting interoperability between systems. With Russia specifically the MDA says it seeks transparency and strategic cooperation: "We also welcome Russian cooperation to bring its missile defense capabilities into a broader defense of our common strategic interests."[4] Indeed, every administration since 1980 has declared its willingness to work with Russia on missile defense, and President Reagan even offered to share the technology with Russia.

But the United States has sent other signals too. The United States has not, for example, adequately updated its export controls from the Cold War to permit full technology cooperation with some longtime partners, let alone Russia. Previous U.S. administrations established internal secret policies that specifically blocked missile defense technology from being shared with Russia.[5] President Obama has rejected in writing the idea of a joint system with Russia in Europe.[6] To be sure, America should not "give away the farm" in its cooperation with Russia, but we must align and clarify our position if it is to stand up under scrutiny.

These are the starting positions on European missile defense. The technological realities of today preclude a truly joint system, but even separate systems can be combined at some level to provide a better overall defense. How can we have a joint effort but separate systems? The parties have agreed to analyze the possibilities between November's Lisbon Summit and the next NATO defense ministerial meeting in June 2011. What we need to do is "jointly develop separate systems" in the near term, while working toward a fully unified system in the long term. What follows are some recommendations that could allow the United States to deploy a system now that protects against a limited nuclear missile attack from Iran while reducing Russian concerns about defensive missile deployments.

First, we need a joint assessment of the threat. Russia, NATO and the United States need to share intelligence and warning indicators about ballistic missile developments in Iran and elsewhere. (NATO and

Russia agreed to conduct a joint ballistic missile threat assessment and develop a joint analysis of the future framework for missile defense cooperation, all of which should be discussed at the June defense ministers meeting.) We may not come to full agreement about the threat, but the process of identifying and confirming the facts on which we do agree is a vital first step in a process that needs to be a regular sharing of threat assessments and information.

Second, we need a missile defense architecture that recognizes the capabilities of the two sides (NATO/U.S. and Russia) today but sets us on a path to better integration tomorrow. Creating this architecture is complicated by the confusion over terminology and capabilities of current missile defenses. To understand what this near term architecture might look like, consider the following description.

In Phase I of the European deployment (through 2015), missile defenses would consist of the terminal phase interceptors and mid-course phase interceptors that are fielded today. Terminal phase interceptors—U.S. Patriots, THAADs and Russian S-300/400s—which engage offensive ballistic missiles as they are in their final stage of flight, must be located at or near the defended assets.[7] Terminal phase interceptors can protect only the site at which they are located, and are not capable of protecting those that are more than a few miles away. For a large city, a military planner might assign a battery or battalion of such systems as a protective force. Mid-course missile defenses intercept ballistic missiles in the middle of their flight path and do not need to be located immediately near the defended asset. The U.S. mid-course missile defense system is currently the Aegis ship-based SM-3 missile. Russia has no mid-course missile defense system, so it is not able to intercept ballistic missiles headed across its territory toward third countries.

A NATO-Russia European missile defense system in Phase I would consist of Russian S-300/400 systems at Russian and possibly Ukrainian sites, and U.S./NATO Patriots and THAAD systems at NATO sites. Each of these site defenses operates its own radars and does not require integration with adjacent units to operate. Their performance can be improved, however, if they share early warning data and information about missile attacks. The level of interoperability, or "jointness," required between U.S. and Russian terminal phase systems would be small. Likewise, because the U.S. SM-3 is the only mid-course missile defense system, there is no demand for integration at that level between U.S. and Russian systems.

The reality today is that our two systems cannot be easily combined. But we can begin developing ways to link the systems, starting with early warning data and progressing to targeting and intercept data. NATO should begin working with Russia to include its systems into the ALTBM, the Active Layered Theater Ballistic Missile command and control system. This will ensure that as the two systems mature they will be ready to operate together.

NATO, Russia and the United States should share early warning, acquisition, tracking and targeting data. The Joint Data Exchange Center (JDEC), which the U.S. and Russia started in the 1990s but did not complete, is a good basis on which to build. We must be willing to plan together, train together, and

operate together. By jointly developing our two separate systems into a unified one, we create transparency, ease suspicions, and move toward Secretary General Rasmussen's vision of a "missile defense shield from Vancouver to Vladivostok."[8]

Although the top levels of government in both countries have made clear their concern over nuclear terrorism, their respective bureaucracies have been slower to cooperate across international boundaries. In some cases, the bureaucracies simply don't share their leaders' assessments. In most, however, cooperation is stymied by human factors.

Third, besides a common understanding of the threat and agreement on architecture, a sure way to garner Russian support of U.S./NATO plans is to involve Russian industry in the research and development of missile defense technology. The U.S. must change its policies on export controls and sharing technology, which currently hinder such cooperation, and seek ways for Russian industry to be involved in substantive development and manufacturing. We can do this by loosening the restrictions on U.S. industries working with Russian industries.

According to a 2009 study headed by former National Security Advisor General Brent Scowcroft,[9] the current system of export controls developed during the Cold War to prevent the transfer of technology to our enemies now harms U.S. national security. It restricts the flow of information, technology, and scientists, negatively impacting U.S. competitiveness and security. NATO, for its part, can increase the access of the Russian defense industry to compete in NATO tenders for equipment and arms sales. France's announced sale of Mistral warships to Russia, which transfers some technology but is a good business deal for France, demonstrates that there is benefit to be had in defense cooperation with Russia. As for Russia, it must open its defense industry to this cooperation as well and sign an umbrella agreement about cooperation in technology—an agreement which they have thus far declined to sign.

Fourth, U.S. and Russian arms control experts need to start openly discussing the balance between offensive and defensive strategic weapons (that is, ICBMs and missile defense interceptors). Up to now, the United States has been adamant that there will be no deals trading missile defense deployments for offensive weapons reductions. Nevertheless, both sides understand that there always has been and always will be a relationship between offensive and defensive forces, both nuclear and conventional, when they calculate the strategic balance that for six decades has prevented nuclear war.

For many good reasons the United States has already limited its deployment of missile defense in Europe without asking for a quid pro quo from Russia. That may have been a missed opportunity. Going forward, we should be open to limitations on our long-range interceptors in exchange for agreements on Russian strategic and tactical nuclear weapons. Russia, for its part, should recognize openly the reality that U.S. missile defense capabilities will not threaten its deterrent for the foreseeable future.

Fifth, besides missile defenses and arms reduction treaties, we can also reduce the possibility of a nuclear missile attack by pursuing a more global goal: eliminating or restricting ballistic missiles altogether, starting with missiles of intermediate range and below. Intermediate range and medium range missiles present the risk of sudden and unexpected attack. When coupled with nuclear warheads, these missiles threaten the destruction of whole cities with only minutes' warning. In that respect, they can be considered more destabilizing than tactical nukes, which have smaller yields and are more appropriate for use against armed formations than civilian targets. The Russians are also thinking along these lines, and Prime Minister Putin called for such a ban in 2007, when he was President.[10] We can start by looking to the U.S.-Russian INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) Treaty of 1987 and the MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime). The MTCR, which is a voluntary association of countries for non-proliferation of unmanned delivery systems for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), could act as a baseline for a new, binding regime. The INF Treaty, which successfully eliminated all U.S. and Russian intermediate range missiles, could provide the inspection protocols necessary to carry out the agreement.

In the end, if Russia and the U.S./NATO can cooperate successfully on missile defense in Europe, we will have a safer, more stable region and world. If we cannot, danger and instability will follow. We had a preview in the 1980s of what such a world might look like. Twenty-five years ago, Russia and the United States had hundreds of intermediate range nuclear missiles deployed in Europe. In 1986, the Reykjavik Summit, intended to resolve that crisis, collapsed over disagreements on missile defense. One year later, however, the United States and Russia signed an historic treaty eliminating all intermediate range nuclear missiles. Today, we can take another historic cooperative step, as we did in 1987, or we can return to the dangerous days of 1986.

Preventing nuclear terrorism

A second opportunity for the United States and Russia to cooperate in preventing a nuclear attack also exists. It lies in a synergistic approach to countering nuclear terrorism.

How real is the threat? During a Harvard conference in April 2010, twenty-five U.S. and Russian general officers were asked whether nuclear war between the United States and Russia or an incident of nuclear terrorism was a greater threat.[11] The group unanimously answered that nuclear terrorism posed the greater threat. They went on to agree that the best way to address the threat from nuclear terrorism was through the combined efforts of both countries.

Their views echoed a consensus on the part of the national leadership in both Russia and the United States. According to President Obama, nuclear terrorism is the greatest threat to the American homeland.[12] Russian President Dmitry Medvedev also has identified nuclear terrorism as one of the main threats facing his country.[13]

Yet cooperation in this arena still remains problematic. In the fall of 2009, the Belfer Center at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, with the support of Senator Sam Nunn's Nuclear Threat Initiative, created the U.S.-Russian Initiative to Prevent Nuclear Terrorism, a

non-governmental effort to support U.S.-Russian government cooperation in preventing nuclear terrorism. As part of this effort, retired CIA officer Rolf Mowatt-Larssen and I traveled first to Moscow to find out what was being done about the threat of nuclear terrorism. We then traveled to Washington to do the same. What we found was that although the top levels of government in both countries have made clear their concern over nuclear terrorism, their respective bureaucracies have been slower to cooperate across international boundaries. In some cases, the bureaucracies simply don't share their leaders' assessments. In most, however, cooperation is stymied by human factors: Cold War attitudes toward cooperation or simply a lack of ideas.

Twenty five years after the Reykjavik summit, a lack of trust is still the underlying issue in U.S.-Russian relations.

The good news is that for both the United States and Russian bureaucracies, preventing nuclear terrorism is a relatively new task, and the two sides can approach cooperation with comparatively clean slates. Simply put, there are few bad histories or conflicts in policy to overcome. Also, for the most part, nuclear terrorism is a threat that emanates from third parties, not from each other. (Although we must admit here that as the owners of over 90 percent of the world's nuclear material, our countries can be the unwanted and even illegal sources of fissionable materials and nuclear know-how.) Both countries have robust nuclear security programs—the result of decades of creating, testing and storing nuclear materials for weapons and energy plants. Both countries' intelligence and security apparatuses recognize that there is a threat that terrorist groups could obtain or make a nuclear device, and both agree that terrorist organizations are trying to do just that. The guidance from the top levels of U.S. and Russian governments is in synch and the countries seem on the same track as far as the nuclear terrorism threat goes. In that sense cooperation in this arena is much further along than cooperation on missile defense.

But nothing is easy when it comes to nuclear materials and weapons. The secrecy and sensitivity that surround all things nuclear quickly complicate cooperation in this area. There are very few people in government who understand all of the aspects of the nuclear terrorism issue: technical, threat, security, military and political. Few who work on one dimension (i.e., the threat) get to see how a nuclear weapon is made or works, and vice versa. Political actors, meanwhile, either don't have access to any of that information or don't understand it. And the technical people, who are vital to understanding how terrorists could make a nuclear explosion, are cloistered away by security and counterintelligence agencies to protect the knowledge they possess.

Recognizing how hard it can be to gather these kinds of experts within our own government, much less across national boundaries, our initiative at the Belfer Center nevertheless attempted to do just that in October 2010. We brought together five retired general officers from each country, the United States and Russia, whose experience spanned military, police, nuclear, intelligence and political arenas. They were

former four- and three-star generals who served in the FSB, CIA, GRU (military intelligence), DIA, and interior forces. The meeting, held in Istanbul, spanned two days and centered on how our two governments could cooperate in preventing nuclear terrorism. The overall findings of the group echoed the statements of their presidents about the seriousness of the threat and the need to address it on a number of fronts, and yielded a series of recommendations:

- Russia and the United States should conduct a meaningful joint assessment of the threat from nuclear terrorism. According to former CIA officer Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, this has not been done to date. As a means of "kick starting" that process, the group endorsed an unclassified joint threat assessment being drafted by the Belfer Center and the Russian Academy of Science's USA-Canada Institute. That unclassified assessment will be the basis for more dialogue on cooperation and will provide a model for similar cooperation at the governmental level.

- Both governments should continue to raise awareness of nuclear terrorism and to share best practices in preventing the threat. No other governments have the experience and know-how with nuclear materials that Russia and the United States have gained over many years. We must invigorate exchanges between our nuclear scientists to improve understanding of the nature of the threat and how to deal with it. The recent decision by the United States and Russia to create a nuclear counterterrorism center in Abramovo, Russia, for training scientists and nuclear technicians is a good first step. If the United States and Russia can be seen working together on this problem, the rest of world will be more likely to follow our lead.

- Improved information sharing, planning, and operational cooperation between our two governments is needed when it comes to addressing terrorism. As one Russian officer told me in a separate meeting, "The reason we are having such trouble is that the terrorists are cooperating better with their former enemies than we are with ours." Both governments should expand collaboration between the militaries on efforts like interdiction planning and between emergency ministries on planning for, and managing the consequences of, a terrorist nuclear attack. We must share forensic data on nuclear materials so we can be prepared to trace any terrorist nuclear device that we encounter. Mechanisms already exist for executing this cooperation. They include the U.S.-Russia military-to-military cooperation plan and the bilateral commission counterterrorism group.

- A more sustained dialogue between Russian and U.S. intelligence agencies is also necessary: cooperation that should be sustained irrespective of the daily ups and downs of political relations. This recommendation is particularly important, given the controlling role that secrecy and security play in questions of nuclear issues. Its message was driven home by the experience of two of our gen-

erals—former heads of the Russian GRU and U.S. DIA—who had been counterparts for a number of years while on active duty but had never been permitted to meet until after retirement.

Trusting one another

In 1986, the Reykjavik summit between the United States and Russia, intended to reduce the threat from nuclear attack, fell apart from a lack of trust. Twenty-five years later, a lack of trust is still the underlying issue in U.S.-Russian relations.

The United States and Russia can really only gain trust in one another through an accumulation of successful cooperation. In the years since the end of the Cold War, some of that foundation has been successfully laid. We have successfully continued reductions in nuclear arms and we have joined forces in combating nuclear terrorism. The U.S.-Russia relationship today is far better than the one of 1986. There remain many things that separate us but there are a growing number that bind us together. Of the latter, a constant for sixty years has been the shared goal of preventing a nuclear attack.

In 1987, a year after our failure in Reykjavik, the United States and Russia stunned the world with an agreement that eliminated an entire class of ballistic missiles and, possibly more than any other treaty, helped to build trust between the United States and Russia. Such a breakthrough should be our goal again today.

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Dialogue of the Deaf

Richard Weitz

Many observers hope that the November 20, 2010 NATO-Russia Council summit in Lisbon marked a new era in NATO-Russian cooperation. The Alliance's new Strategic Concept, adopted at that meeting, states that "NATO poses no threat to Russia… We want to see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia… The security of NATO and Russia is intertwined."[1]

This may indeed be the case with Afghanistan, where NATO and Russia have several important shared interests against the mutual threat of Islamist extremism, but it is unlikely to prove true in the case of a key issue now on the table between Moscow and the Atlantic Alliance: ballistic missile defense (BMD). Divergent threat perceptions compound the technical and political problems of trying to establish joint—or even cooperative—NATO-Russian missile defense systems. Recurring obstacles likewise persist; Russians remain concerned about their limited influence on the Alliance's missile defense plans, and still fear that NATO BMD efforts could end up weakening Russia's nuclear deterrent.

What NATO wants

NATO officials have said they want to try to cooperate with Russia on missile defense because, in principle, they see several advantages in securing Moscow's support for NATO's BMD efforts.

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First, such collaboration would make NATO missile defense efforts more transparent to Russian policymakers and help overcome their concerns that NATO BMD systems could be used against them. Since 2006, senior Russian government officials, military officers, and policy analysts have presented a range of complaints regarding the planned deployment of U.S. missile defenses in the countries of the former Soviet bloc. For example, they have argued that a purpose of NATO's BMD deployments near Russia is to intercept strategic missiles launched from Russia.[2] Moreover, Russian officials have professed the fear that the United States could rapidly deploy additional BMD systems in a missile defense breakout that would prove difficult for Russian offensive forces to match.[3] Furthermore, some Russian analysts claimed that the United States could rapidly replace the defensive interceptors with offensive ballistic missiles that could attack nearby targets in Russia with minimal warning time for the defenders.[4] Russian representatives, in turn, have indicated they would take vigorous measures to counter these threats—including by enhancing the ability of Russian missiles to overcome NATO defenses.

From Russia's point of view, the most desired outcome is if NATO and the United States would not pursue any missile defenses at all.

Another consideration driving NATO policymakers to seek cooperation with Moscow on BMD is that reducing Russian opposition to NATO's missile defense plans would facilitate Alliance management. Ivo Daalder, the U.S. Ambassador to NATO, has explained that one reason the United States was so eager to secure Russian participation in its missile defense initiatives was that, before the summit, several Allies were reluctant to support a NATO missile defense effort unless Russian opposition was neutralized: "Some wanted to have missile defenses now; others wanted to have it only if the Russians were okay; some wanted to make the reset with Russia more important than the deployment of missile defenses."[5] In other words, although Russian threats had not deterred NATO from working with the United States on missile defense outright, they had certainly made it harder for American diplomats to win support from Alliance members for their endeavor.

Third, NATO officials believe that missile defense collaboration with Russia could help them counter an Iranian threat. Soon after taking office, President Obama sent a letter to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that underscored the connection between U.S. missile defense efforts and the Iranian threat: it noted that progress in limiting Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile development efforts would reduce the need for U.S. and NATO missile defenses.[6] The following month, Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) characterized such collaboration as a possible "game changer" in constraining Iranian missile programs.[7]

In response, the Russian government has made several conciliatory moves. It has canceled the planned sale of units of the advanced S-300 air defense system to Iran, which could have provoked a preemptive Israeli military attack, and has supported the imposition of new UN sanctions against Tehran. Nonetheless, Iran, like North Korea, has persistently developed its nuclear weapons poten-

tial regardless of the position of Russia or other foreign countries. In light of Iran's persistent nuclear effort, the thinking today goes, Moscow might enhance NATO's missile defenses by allowing the Alliance to take advantage of certain Russian BMD assets, including Russian military technologies and Russian-controlled radars near Iran.

What Russia wants

From Russia's point of view, however, the most desired outcome is if NATO and the United States would not pursue any missile defenses at all. Despite having initiated significant BMD research during the Cold War and, until recently, having the world's only operational territorial missile defense system around Moscow, Soviet and Russian policymakers have always feared that America could pull off a technological coup, developing missile defenses so effective that they would compromise the effectiveness of the Soviet/Russian nuclear deterrent.

Unable to avert U.S. and NATO missile defense research and development, the Kremlin has been trying to prevent these R&D efforts from leading to the fielding of actual BMD systems—or at least keeping their numbers and effectiveness as limited as possible. Soviet and subsequently Russian leaders have sought to prohibit or at least limit U.S. missile defense programs for decades, beginning with the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Defense (ABM) Treaty, continuing against Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, and persisting through the post-Cold War period. Even after the Lisbon summit, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said that Russian officials were still trying to persuade NATO to scale back its BMD plans because they consider the anticipated speed, number, and widespread deployment of NATO interceptor missiles disproportionate to the modest level of threat presented by Iran or other states.[8] Russia's more colorful Ambassador to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, explained that, in Moscow's view, NATO's BMD plans were "like killing a fly on the head of your comrade with a sledgehammer."[9]

Russian leaders have sought to constrain U.S. missile defense programs by linking them to bilateral negotiations to limit each side's strategic offensive nuclear forces. As long ago as the early 1980s, after President Reagan re-launched U.S. missile defense programs, Soviet negotiators tried to contain them by proposing various arms control deals, including an offer by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev at the October 1986 Reykjavik summit to eliminate first all ballistic missiles and then all nuclear weapons.[10]

Fast forward two-and-a-half decades and little has changed; during the post-START negotiations with the Obama administration, Russian officials have argued that they cannot accept major reductions in their strategic offensive missiles as long as U.S. and NATO BMD remain unconstrained because they claim these BMD systems could theoretically affect a strategic nuclear exchange between Russia and the United States.

Although not spelled out, Russian strategists presumably have in mind a scenario in which NATO conducts a surprise first strike attack against Russian nuclear forces and then uses BMD systems to negate Russia's weakened response.[11] Russians have also offered to assist U.S. nonproliferation efforts against Iran and other countries if

the United States restricts its missile defense activities.[12]

Sticking points

Russian policymakers likewise have periodically proposed that Russia, the United States, and other NATO countries cooperate in establishing a collective European missile defense initiative. Such a construct would rely on shared threat assessments; only if the member states agreed that a genuine threat was emerging would the participating governments establish effective defenses to counter it. These defenses could combine the BMD assets of the participating countries and be run and controlled collectively. Russian officials see such a construct as valuable because it would put their country "on an equal footing as a participant" in Alliance defense.[13]

From NATO's perspective, however, the problem with this approach—waiting until Moscow and the Alliance concur that a missile threat exists and then agreeing that missile defenses are a desirable means to counter the challenge—is that Russia would have *de facto* veto power over NATO BMD deployments. Indeed, Russia and the West have over the past decade acutely differed regarding their assessment of the emerging missile threat from Iran. For example, a memorandum of a 2009 meeting between Russian and American missile experts released by Wikileaks shows major differences in Russian and U.S. perceptions regarding Iran's potential and ambitions. The Russian representatives discounted their American counterparts' fears that Iran, thanks partly to North Korean assistance, was making great progress in extending the range of its solid-fuel missiles.[14] The divergence is instructive; in the absence of a perceived shared threat, Russia would not approve of the United States and NATO deploying missile defenses near its border.

More recently, Russian leaders have professed a willingness to cooperate closely with NATO on defending their populations and territories against missile threats. Russians insist that they be treated as full and equal partner in any joint program. Shortly before the Lisbon summit, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told the press that "we will be ready to participate in creating such a joint system, starting with a joint analysis of what could be done, and, of course, based on the equal construction of a system which would be aimed at neutralizing the common challenges for all of us."[15]

At the summit, President Medvedev proposed that NATO and Russia establish a "sectoral" missile defense architecture in which the two parties would each build and operate BMD systems for their own territories.[16] Although the NATO and Russia defense establishments could exchange data and monitoring teams,[17] each party would operate its BMD systems independently of the other. Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov argued that such a joint approach would pool their efforts and reduce the parties' financial and military costs—as well as "relieve our certain concerns of against who[m] it is really aimed at."[18] Ambassador Rogozin, in turn, explained how such a sectoral system would work in the event of a threatening missile launch: "If there is a missile flying over our territory that is heading toward the U.S., we will shoot it down. If there is a missile coming toward Russia over the U.S. zone of responsibility, then the Americans will shoot it down. But in either case, Russia retains

control over its own missile-defense system, and NATO over its own."[19] Needless to say, such independent NATO and Russian missile defense systems would overcome some of the technical problems of attempting to integrate the two systems in a single architecture, but would require an unprecedented (and implausible) level of trust to work effectively.

In addition, Russians advocate this sectoral proposal because they can more credibly object to NATO's seeking a capacity to detect and intercept ballistic missiles over Russian territory. Since Russian officials say they will protect this sector from third-party missiles for NATO, they can more effectively argue that the Alliance has no plausible reason to have a capacity to track and engage missiles over Russian territory unless they seek a means to attack Russia's own nuclear missiles. Rogozin has explained that any Russia-NATO joint missile defense system "should be oriented exclusively at the (areas) outside the Euro-Atlantic space, the concentration of ABM facilities should correspond to the real challenges and risks and only in the areas which are recognized by experts as missile hazardous. If missile defense elements appear near the northwest border of the Russian Federation under the pretext of setting up a global ABM system, we will consider this a threat to our security with all the ensuing military and technical consequences."[20] Unfortunately, NATO experts believe that Iranian or North Korean ballistic missiles aimed at NATO Europe could—and probably would—traverse some Russian territory en route to their European target, so Alliance defenses need the capacity to monitor and intercept missiles in the atmosphere above Russian territory.[21]

In essence, Russia is arguing that NATO should abstain from developing any capacity to engage ballistic missiles over Russian territory, easing Moscow's concerns about the survivability of its nuclear deterrent. In exchange, Russia would commit to shoot down any potentially hostile ballistic missile, even if it were only passing over Russia on its way to NATO members' territory and cities.

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The vulnerability that would result is obviously unacceptable to NATO governments responsible for protecting their populations. They might plausibly doubt that a Russian government would act as required to protect them, especially since the remnants of any successful missile interception, which could include a nuclear warhead, would then fall on Russian territory. They could even more plausibly doubt that Russia has the capabilities to fulfill a mutual missile defense commitment even if Moscow intended and sought to do so. The Russian military has never demonstrated an ability to intercept ballistic missiles in outer space above its territory. In addition, the Russian armed services have only recently begun to deploy the advanced S-400 air defense system, which has limited BMD capabilities. Most Russian air defense units still possess the S-300, which lacks such capabilities, while the more sophisticated S-500, designed to have comprehensive missile interception capabilities, is

still under development.[22] In contrast, since Russian policymakers do not believe Iran would ever launch a nuclear missile at their country, they have no problem assigning NATO the role of guardian of Russia's survival. Yet, Russian policymakers insist, if any NATO missile defense architecture could cover Russian territory then Russian policymakers must participate in the decision to use the system over Russia, which raises all the problems discussed above.

From NATO's perspective, the problem with waiting until Moscow and the Alliance concur that a missile threat exists and then agreeing that missile defenses are a desirable means to counter the challenge is that Russia would have de facto veto power over NATO BMD deployments.

In addition to offering various enticements to shape NATO's missile defense decisions, Soviet and Russian leaders have threatened to respond in menacing ways should the Alliance nonetheless deploy BMDs that Russians conclude could threaten their own missile forces. The most recent threat campaign, as often in the past, was directed against NATO's European members, many of whom do not want to antagonize Moscow for various security, economic, and other reasons. Russians have clearly hoped that these threat campaigns would intimidate the allies from fielding BMD systems. Another Russian aspiration might have been to split NATO by inducing its members to engage in intra-alliance squabbles over whether to persist with missile defense, even in the face of vigorous Russian opposition.

More recently, Russian officials have warned that NATO's refusal to give Moscow equal status in any pan-European missile defense system could lead to a new arms race, since Russia would have to enhance, qualitatively and quantitatively, its own offensive strategic forces in response in order to guarantee the ability of its nuclear deterrent to overcome NATO defenses even after suffering a potential NATO first strike. Only two weeks after the Lisbon summit, Medvedev said in his early December State of the Nation address, "I would like to openly say that the choice for us in the coming decade is as follows: We will either come to terms on missile defense and form a full-fledged joint mechanism of cooperation or we will plunge into a new arms race and have to think of deploying new strike means. It's obvious that this scenario will be very hard."[23]

Possible Russian countermeasures could include increasing the number and effectiveness of Russia's offensive nuclear forces as well as targeting nearby U.S. BMD systems with Russian offensive weapons systems. A recurring Russian threat is to deploy Russian short-range *Iskander* missiles in Russia's Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad and other parts of Russia to target U.S. BMD facilities in eastern Europe. If Russia is barred from building the missile defense shield, Serdyukov said after the Lisbon meetings, Russia will have to take "military and other measures" and "will have to develop a system, which will penetrate through the European missile defense and preserve the Russian nuclear potential."

In addition to meeting their stated strategic concerns, Russian leaders seek to affirm their view that Russia, as one of the world's leading powers, should be consulted, and

have the right of veto, over all major European security questions. The underlying principle behind the European Security Treaty that Medvedev has been promoting for the past two years is the indivisibility of continental security and Russia's equal role in European security decisions. Russian leaders especially seek to affirm that any major NATO security action near their country requires Moscow's permission. For geopolitical, historical, and other reasons, Russian policymakers tend to consider the former Soviet bloc nations as falling within a special zone of concern for Moscow. Russian leaders react extremely negatively when NATO offers membership to these countries or seeks to deploy military forces, including BMD systems, in them. Russian officials do not believe NATO assurances that the Alliance's enlargement actually enhances Moscow's security by creating a belt of prosperous liberal democracies around Russia and by addressing the common menaces of WMD proliferation and Islamist terrorism. Russian policymakers still often interpret the same threats differently and therefore favor diverging solutions.

The choice

Russian officials are trying to present NATO with a stark choice. Echoing the "with us or against us" rhetoric that Russian policymakers regularly criticized the Bush administration for using, Ambassador Rogozin told a Moscow press conference following the Lisbon summit, "Missile defense in Europe can only be created with Russia, or directed against Russia. There is no third option."[25] Rogozin is clearly wrong: for the past decade, the United States and NATO have been seeking to construct a European missile defense system sufficient only to counter an Iranian threat while not seeking the capacity to neutralize Russia's deterrent.

Still, Russia and NATO could face a real choice in about a decade. Even Russian analysts admit that NATO's BMD plans and capabilities, especially under the Obama administration's redesigned "Phased Adaptive Approach," will not present a threat to Russia's strategic nuclear missiles for the next few years. If the administration's Phase Four plans to deploy the SM-3 Block IIB to counter medium-, intermediate-, and intercontinental-range missiles are implemented around 2020 as planned, however, then even U.S. officials acknowledge that NATO will obtain the theoretical capacity to intercept a few Russian missiles—though certainly not Russia's entire nuclear arsenal.[26]

Aware of this possibility, U.S. Senators recently pressed the Obama administration to commit to deploying all four phases of its European BMD strategy during the recent ratification debate regarding the New START agreement. President Obama responded by writing a letter in which he insisted that New START "places no limitations on the development or deployment of our missile defense programs" and that he "will take every action available to me to support the deployment of all four phases" of a missile defense system in Europe.[27]

Following this assurance, on December 22, 2010, the U.S. Senate ratified the New START treaty, which establishes new lower limits on the number of offensive strategic nuclear forces that the United States and Russia can possess and reestablishes mutual means of verification. Although the treaty's preamble, like previous Russian-American arms control agreements, notes that an inherent relationship exists between strategic offensive and strategic

defensive forces, this text is not legally binding and the treaty itself only constrains Russian and U.S. long-range offensive nuclear forces.

The underlying principle behind the European Security Treaty that Medvedev has been promoting for the past two years is the indivisibility of continental security and Russia's equal role in European security decisions. Russian leaders especially seek to affirm that any major NATO security action near their country requires Moscow's permission.

If by 2020 sanctions or other preventive measures are unable to prevent Iran from developing nuclear-armed ballistic missiles capable of hitting targets in Europe, and NATO BMD technologies look capable of dealing with such a threat, then NATO governments will have a choice. They can decide the Iranian threat is sufficient to warrant enhancing NATO's missile defenses despite the risk of alienating Moscow, or they can rely primarily on traditional preemption and deterrence strategies that would aim either to destroy the Iranian missiles before they could be used or to rely on the threat of retaliation to avert an Iranian first strike.

If NATO leaders decide to bolster their defenses as a complement to their deterrent and preemption capabilities even without Moscow's approval, then future Russian governments will need to decide whether the NATO response is sufficient to warrant a compensatory buildup of Russia's offensive nuclear forces. In turn, NATO will need to decide whether and how to match the buildup. It is likely that, since NATO will have to continue to live with a Russian nuclear threat in any case—Moscow will retain sufficient nuclear capacity to destroy NATO Europe under any plausible scenario—then future NATO governments will pursue whatever missile options they believe will best enhance their security.

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The Caliphate Comes Home

Ilan Berman

The suicide bombing which killed thirty-five travelers and injured over a hundred more at Moscow's bustling Domodedovo Airport in late January did more than temporarily bring air traffic in Russia to a standstill. The attack, the second major terror incident to hit the Russian capital in less than a year, laid bare the dirty little secret the Kremlin has worked diligently to hide from the world.

Nearly two decades into Russia's own version of the "war on terror," it is no longer possible to ignore the fact that the country is in the throes of a rising Islamist insurgency—or that the Russian government, which once promised a swift, decisive victory over "Wahhabism," increasingly seems to have little idea what to do about it.

Chaos in the Caucasus

It was not always this way. Two decades ago, the threat posed by Islamic radicalism was still distant and ephemeral for most Russians. True, the collapse of the USSR had unleashed a wave of ethnic separatism on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Over the span of thirteen months, fifteen new countries, six of them majority-Muslim, emerged from the wreckage of the "evil empire." As a result, the aggregate number of Muslims within Russia proper actually decreased.[1] And, after more than seven decades of officially-atheist Soviet rule, those Muslims that remained within the Russian Federation lacked a clear religious direction or sense of spiritual identity.

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But if the growth of Islamic radicalism wasn't an immediate concern, a further fragmentation of the Russian state was. The corrosive example of independence on the part of the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia ignited dreams of the same in many corners of the Russian Federation. This was particularly true in Russia's Caucasus republics—the majority-Muslim regions which abutted the newly-independent nations of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. These stirrings were given concrete voice by the November 1991 declaration of independence by Chechnya's nationalist leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev.

Today, despite regular public pronouncements to the contrary from officials in Moscow, the Caucasus remains a political quagmire for the Kremlin—and a locus of resilient Islamic radicalism.

Notably, Dudayev did not initially embrace Islam as the foundation for an independent Chechnya.[2] Slowly but surely, however, the Chechen self-determination struggle metamorphosed into an Islamist *jihad*. This was due in large part to the influx of "Afghan alumni"—foreign (mostly Arab) *mujahideen* who previously had fought the Soviets in Afghanistan—into the breakaway republic in the early 1990s.[3] These forces helped bolster the ranks of the Chechen resistance against Russian forces, which had been dispatched to pacify the republic in 1994. But they also served to progressively alter its character. Experts estimate that, by the following year, some 300 "Afghan" Arabs were active in Chechnya and engaged in hostilities there.[4] So were an array of other Islamist forces, from Saudi charities to al-Qaeda, all of whom had an interest in promoting a religious alternative to the Russian state.[5] By the time of the signing of the Khasavyurt agreement formally ending the first Chechen war in August 1996, Chechen politics had become both thoroughly Islamized and internationalized—laying the groundwork for future conflict.

Instability followed. Subsequent years saw the deterioration of the republic into rampant criminality and lawlessness. They also saw the rise of local warlords, such as Shamil Basayev, who strengthened the Chechen Islamist movement's ties to international terror and engaged in increasingly brazen acts of domestic terrorism against Russian interests.[6] And as the situation in Chechnya deteriorated, the domestic conditions in neighboring Russian republics followed suit.[7]

Two events propelled Russia back into open conflict with its unruly hinterlands. The first was the August 1999 invasion of Dagestan by an Islamist militia led by Basayev and Jordanian-born rebel commander Omar Ibn ul-Khattab. The second was the September 1999 bombing of four apartment blocks in the Russian cities of Moscow, Buynansk and Volgodonsk, allegedly by Chechen rebels. (Notably, considerable controversy surrounds the terrorist attacks, with some claiming that the blasts were orchestrated by Russia's domestic intelligence service, the FSB, to provide a pretext for renewed war in the Caucasus.)[8]

By then, however, the nature of the conflict had changed fundamentally. Whereas the first Chechen war, at least in its opening stages, was still mostly a struggle for self-determination, the war's second

iteration had an overtly Islamist, missionary character. Instead of being localized to Chechnya, it also increasingly implicated the republic's Caucasian neighbors (most directly Dagestan and Ingushetia). And while the first Chechen war took on the form of a fast-moving asymmetric conflict, the second assumed the character of a war of attrition. A grinding, bloody campaign inevitably followed.

In this effort, the Kremlin was not without its victories. In April of 2002, Russia's security services successfully assassinated Khattab, the Jordanian-born *jihadist* rumored to be Bin Laden's man in the Caucasus.[9] Four years later, in July 2006, warlord Shamil Basayev, the mastermind behind the 1999 Dagestan raid, was similarly eliminated.[10]

On the surface, these successes appeared to shift the momentum of the conflict in Moscow's favor, and the Kremlin was quick to declare victory. In April of 2009, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, in a Russian throwback to President Bush's ill-fated May 2003 "mission accomplished" speech aboard the *USS Abraham Lincoln*, proudly declared victory in Russia's counterterrorism campaign.[11]

That sense of triumph, however, turned out to be anything but lasting. By the summer of 2009, extreme violence returned to the region. Over the span of three months (June through August), 436 people were killed in Chechnya alone, more than triple the number of casualties during the same time period a year earlier. And the number of terrorist attacks in the republic, which stood at 265 for the summer of 2008, nearly doubled, jumping to 452.[12]

So the situation remains. Today, despite regular public pronouncements to the contrary from officials in Moscow, what fleeting stability could be found in the aftermath of the Russian military's onslaught has long since dissipated. The Caucasus remains a political quagmire for the Kremlin—and a locus of resilient Islamic radicalism. Indeed, in recent months, Chechnya's Islamic militants have staged a savage comeback. Back in August 2010, guerrilla commandos carried out a brazen raid on the native village of regional president Ramzan Kadyrov, the Moscow-approved strongman who rules the republic with an iron grip.[13] Just two months later, three Chechen commandos launched a suicide raid on the regional parliament, killing six people and wounding 17.[14]

Even in Russia's Volga region, where the tolerant Tatar strain of Islam has historically coexisted peacefully with both federal authorities and the Orthodox Church, there are now telltale signs of extremist activity—and of a growing challenge to the established status quo.

As violence has surged, Russian optimism has withered. A July 2010 exposé by Germany's influential *Der Spiegel* magazine found that some high-ranking Russian officials have become convinced that it will take years to defeat extremist groups in the restive region—if such a feat can be accomplished at all.[15] Indeed, although Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has vowed that the area will be safe for the nearby 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, local security has deteriorated to an unprecedented degree. Armored vehicles and helicopters are now *de rigeur* for all visiting Kremlin officials, and traffic

policemen in the republic require the protection of Interior Ministry units. "It will take years to change the situation here," one Russian general told the German newsweekly. "For every dead terrorist, two new ones rise up to take his place."

For years, Russia's leaders have banked on a hard-power campaign against Islamic radicalism in their hinterlands, hoping that overwhelming force would pacify the country's restive republics. In doing so, they also have gambled that their policies, however bloody, would remain popular so long as ordinary Russians believed the Islamist threat to be both marginal and distant.

The reason for Islamism's resilience—indeed, its growing appeal—has a great deal to do with a hardening of local attitudes. Take, for example, the poll conducted in early 2011 among Dagestani youth by the regional journal *Nations of Dagestan*, which produced a worrying picture of public sentiment regarding the ongoing conflict in the restive Russian republic, and the role religion should play in society there. Thirty percent of the study's participants, who included members of Dagestan's universities and police schools, said they would choose to live under a Muslim-run religious regime. Similarly, more than a third of those polled indicated they would not turn in a friend or family member responsible for terrorism to authorities.[16] These findings track closely with those of human rights groups and NGOs active in the Caucasus, which have documented an upsurge in support for Islamic extremism and adherence to radical religious ideas there.[17]

In other words, despite official claims that the region has been pacified, the North Caucasus is more and more a place where the Kremlin's authority is ignored or challenged, and where religious identity trumps nationalist sentiment.

A spreading contagion

Nor is the problem localized to the Caucasus. Even in Russia's Volga region, where the tolerant Tatar strain of Islam has historically coexisted peacefully with both federal authorities and the Orthodox Church, there are now telltale signs of extremist activity—and of a growing challenge to the established status quo. In late November, a bloody skirmish between Islamic militants and local law enforcement in the Nurlatsky district of the republic of Tatarstan left three dead and local calm shattered. In its aftermath, regional officials were quick to paint the episode as an anomaly.[18]

For local experts, however, the writing is increasingly on the wall. The incident, wrote Yana Amelina of Kazan State University, one of the republic's leading observers of Islamist activity, was a telling reflection of "the growing influence of Wahhabis in the region."[19] Indeed, Amelina points out, Doku Umarov, the leader of the Caucasus Emirate, Chechnya's main Islamist grouping, has talked publicly about the eventual expansion of *jihadist* activity along the Volga, and the subject of radical Islam's growth in Russia's heartland has become a topic of discussion among Islamists now active in Russia. As a result, she warns, the recent clashes in Tatarstan "should serve as a warning bell." It is clear,

she writes, that this incident "will not be the last."

Even neighboring Bashkortostan, whose capital city, Ufa, serves as the spiritual seat of Muslims in Russia, has not proven immune. The past year-and-a-half has seen a marked growth in grassroots Islamist militancy in the region, and widespread banditry by these elements.[20] This instability contributed in part to the ouster of the region's long-serving president, Murtaza Rakhimov, last summer, and his subsequent replacement with a new, Kremlin-selected strongman, Rustem Khamitov. A new offensive against Islamic militants and ethnic separatists alike has followed, unearthing some troubling linkages with the Caucasus in the process. (Most recently, in February, Bashkir security forces arrested four suspected Islamists from the western town of Oktyabarsky. At least one of the suspects is believed to be the leader of the "Oktyabarsky Jamaat," a local affiliate of Umarov's Caucasus Emirate.)[21]

The rising appeal of Islamism in Russia's heartland is in part a function of the flagging ideological allure of traditional, Tatar Islam. To be sure, this moderate, assimilationist interpretation of the religion still has its proponents,[22] and it remains the brand of Islam officially endorsed and embraced by the Russian state. But as conversations with regional religious experts quickly make painfully clear, the movement as a whole today lacks a compelling overarching narrative that appeals to the region's Muslim youth.

Islamists, by contrast, do—a fact evidenced by the growth of "Wahhabi" grassroots activism in the form of social organizations, spiritual retreats and informal youth gatherings.[23] But the growing currency of extremist religious ideas isn't just confined to social life; they are increasingly evident among the regional spiritual leadership as well. This was hammered home by the resignation of Tatarstan's chief mufti, Gusman Iskhakov, in early January.

Officially, Iskhakov's departure was chalked up to "health reasons," but regional religious officials say that the real cause was his failure to comply with the traditional, moderate Tatar brand of Islam—and his affinity for a more extreme variant of it.[24] Moreover, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Regional officials have cautioned that Iskhakov's replacement will face a growing challenge: the need to replace a number of local imams espousing to an extreme Salafi interpretation of Islam who assumed their posts on the former mufti's watch.

Perhaps the clearest sign of this shifting momentum can be found on Gazovaya Ulitsa, a busy thoroughfare in Tatarstan's capital city of Kazan. There, the Russian Islamic University—the region's premier religious university, dedicated to promulgating moderate Tatar Islam—sits opposite an imposing mosque, the largest Wahhabi place of worship in the republic. The juxtaposition serves as a telling reminder to all who visit that the established religious order in the region is being challenged, and that, while Tatar Islam is increasingly seen as stagnant, its radical counterpart is on the march.

Hard power, not smart power

More than anything else, this proliferation of Islamic radicalism in Russia underscores the bankruptcy of the Kremlin's approach to counterterrorism. For years, Russia's leaders have banked on a hard-power

campaign against Islamic radicalism in their hinterlands, hoping that overwhelming force would pacify the country's restive republics. In doing so, they also have gambled that their policies, however bloody, would remain popular so long as ordinary Russians believed the Islamist threat to be both marginal and distant. Yet a steady stream of terrorist incidents in recent years—most prominent among them the 2002 hostage taking at Moscow's Nord-Ost theater, the 2004 Beslan school massacre, and the 2009 bombing of the Moscow metro—have put the lie to that claim. The January 24th attack at Domodedovo was but the latest in this bloody chain of events.

Russia's success or failure vis-à-vis radical Islam is likely to serve as a barometer for the character of the state writ large. By extension, it will dictate what kind of Kremlin Washington will be forced to deal with in the years ahead.

Why have Russian efforts to combat Islamic radicalism so far failed? Much of the problem lies in the way Moscow conceptualizes its struggle with Islamic forces. Indeed, while some in Russia recognize the need for an "intellectual war" against Islamic extremism,[25] the Kremlin's approach to the issue remains overwhelmingly kinetic in nature. The Russian military's engagement in the Caucasus over the past two decades can best be described as a scorched earth policy that has left more than a hundred thousand dead. (In 2005, an unofficial Chechen estimate placed the death toll from the two Chechen wars at 160,000.[26] Official tallies offered by Moscow, however, are more modest.) Over time, these security operations—and a corresponding lack of serious, sustained investment in grassroots prosperity and civil society in the Caucasus—have led to widespread disaffection with Moscow. The feeling, moreover, is increasingly mutual; as the Carnegie Moscow Center's Alexei Malashenko has put it, most Russians have come to see the Caucasus as their "internal abroad"—an area qualitatively different from the rest of Russia, which must be pacified rather than engaged.[27]

Runaway regional corruption plays a large role in this disaffection. Over time, the Russian government has come to rely on a succession of Kremlin-approved strongmen to maintain local order in its majority-Muslim republics—and to preserve their allegiance to Moscow. It has also subsidized the lion's share of their expenses; estimates suggest the Kremlin currently provides between sixty and eighty percent of the operating budgets of regional republics such as Chechnya.[28] But accountability and transparency have lagged far behind. Not surprisingly, corruption and graft have proliferated, and the Caucasus has gained global notoriety for its criminality and lawlessness.

While hard numbers are difficult to come by, President Medvedev himself has identified regional corruption as so pervasive and destabilizing as to be "a major threat for national security."[29] In response, Russian officials have proposed an array of remedial measures intended to make regional governments more transparent and accountable.[30] But these steps remain mostly notional; substantive changes to entrenched cronyism, experts say, are exceedingly hard to find.

What is clear, however, is that this status quo is unsustainable. One reason is demographics. Russia's population is declining precipitously. Even under optimistic predictions, it is estimated that the country's overall population will constrict by more than 20 million people over the next four decades, potentially bottoming out at just 116 million by 2050.[31] Pessimistic forecasts peg that figure much lower: at 100 million souls by the middle of this century. But this decline isn't uniform. Negative demographic trends have hit Russia's Slavs the hardest. Russia's Muslim population, by comparison, is thriving. According to official estimates, Russia's Muslims, who currently account for some fifteen to twenty percent of the country, will swell to a third or more in twenty years. By the middle of the century, officials in Moscow predict, they will make up the majority of all Russians.[32]

Time, in other words, is not working in Moscow's favor. Russia's already-unpopular counterterrorism strategies are likely to become all the more so in the years ahead, as the community most directly affected by them becomes increasingly large and vocal. At the same time, Russia's swelling Muslim cohort represents an inviting audience for Islamist groups and foreign radicals—particularly given the Kremlin's systematic failure to meaningfully engage its Muslim minority on a societal and economic level.

All of which should matter a great deal to the United States. Russia's inability to contain the radical Islamist forces now active within its borders could lead to an acceleration of its drift away from democratic values—and toward totalitarianism. As scholars Charles King and Rajan Menon pointed out in *Foreign Affairs* not long ago, a further deterioration of Russia's internal security situation "may invoke public safety to justify the further restriction of civil liberties and concentration of power inside the Kremlin."[33] Russia's success or failure vis-à-vis radical Islam, in other words, is likely to serve as a barometer for the character of the state writ large. By extension, it will dictate what kind of Kremlin Washington will be forced to deal with in the years ahead.

The United States has a vested interest in helping the Russian government plot a constructive course that engages—rather than alienates—its Muslim population, even as it reduces the appeal of Islamist ideologies within the Russian Federation.

Needed: a reset on radical Islam

For the United States, Russia's Islamist crisis represents a distinct opportunity. Since taking office, the Obama administration has made a "reset" of relations with the Kremlin a central part of its foreign policy. But the hook upon which it has chosen to hang this new relationship—strategic arms control—does not address what is the most pressing concern for the Russian leadership. These days, officials in Moscow are preoccupied above all else with stabilizing their turbulent periphery, and preventing the incursion of radical Islamic forces into the Russian heartland.

Counterterrorism, moreover, represents one of the very few areas where Moscow and Washington see eye to eye. Although there is considerable evidence that significant

differences remain in Russian and American attitudes toward arms reductions, nuclear modernization and missile defense—the three topics that cumulatively make up the crux of the current bilateral dialogue between the two countries—commonality on the threat posed by Islamic extremism is a good deal easier to find. While some divergences exist (most notably in the case of Iran, which the United States sees as a global threat and Russia continues to support as a strategic partner), the overall characterization of Islamism as a national security challenge in Washington and Moscow is strikingly similar.

This synergy has already provided a limited basis for cooperation. Fears of the potential destabilizing regional effects of a Taliban resurgence have led the Russian government to adopt a supportive attitude toward Coalition operations in Afghanistan, for example. But a broader, sustained dialogue regarding the threats posed by radical Islam—and how Washington can help Moscow better address its Islamist challenge through economic, social and political initiatives—is still mostly notional.

It shouldn't be. How Russia responds to the growing challenge to its security and stability posed by radical Islam today will determine a great many things, from the character of the Russian government itself to whether the country's swelling Muslim minority emerges as a threat to it—and to the region. The United States has a vested interest in influencing these decisions, and in helping the Russian government plot a constructive course that engages—rather than alienates—its Muslim population, even as it reduces the appeal of Islamist ideologies within the Russian Federation.

In other words, if America wants a real reset in relations with Russia, one that truly brings Moscow and Washington closer together, it would do well to focus on the shared struggle against radical Islam. There it is likely to find far more fertile soil for lasting cooperation with the Kremlin than that which is currently being tilled by the White House.

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By any yardstick, Russia is an energy superpower. The country has the world's largest conventional reserves of natural gas (23.7 percent of the world's total) and the seventh-largest proven oil reserves. It also has gigantic coal reserves, second only to those of the United States. Large unexplored areas in Eastern Siberia and the Arctic would no doubt add a great deal of hydrocarbons to Russia's reserve base. Russia's production level is in accordance with its reserves; in 2009, Russia accounted for 17 percent of the world's gas production and 13 percent of its oil output, surpassing even Saudi Arabia.[1] With a declining population and sluggish economic growth, oil and gas revenues are an important part of Russia's economy.

But for the Kremlin, energy is far more than simply a source of income. In fact, hydrocarbon revenues make up only 17 percent of Russia's GDP, and that figure is projected to fall to 13 percent by 2020.[2] Rather, for Russia, energy is first and foremost an instrument of foreign policy. In recent years, Russia has showed no compunction about using its energy resources as a tool of coercion and intimidation against its central and east European neighbors, including Belarus, Poland, the Czech Republic, Georgia and, most notably, Ukraine. Russia has done its utmost to maintain its dominance over Europe's energy markets, controlling existing energy corridors and downstream facilities while disrupting European efforts to construct alternative supply routes through divide-and-conquer tactics.

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Russia's energy shenanigans have become a source of anxiety in Europe, and in their effort to weaken Moscow's grip some European countries have tried to convince successive U.S. administrations that Europe's strategic dependence on Russia threatens U.S. vital interests. In response, they argue, the United States should throw its weight behind pipeline projects aimed at circumventing Russia's territory. Over time, these efforts have created a near-consensus in Washington that America has a vested interest in Europe's energy security, and that Europe and the United States should work together to mitigate the adverse effects of Europe's energy dependency on Russia. Some experts have proposed that the United States work with European governments to apply anti-monopoly legislation to Russian government-owned companies if Moscow continues to deny upstream access to Western companies.[3] Others have gone even further, calling on NATO to invoke its mutual defense clause against Russia in the event of an energy supply cutoff.[4]

Russia's energy shenanigans have become a source of anxiety in Europe, and in their effort to weaken Moscow's grip some European countries have tried to convince successive U.S. administrations that Europe's strategic dependence on Russia threatens U.S. vital interests.

Yet, while Russia is certainly a challenge for Europe's energy security, Moscow's energy strategy is not necessarily entirely detrimental to U.S. vital interests. Europe's dependence on Russian gas is largely self-inflicted, and can therefore resolve itself through different choices in the EU's energy policy. The strong Trans-Atlantic relations between Europe and the United States should not dictate blind American support for the EU's energy security interests. Neither should they mask the benefits and opportunities that some of the components of Russia's strategy hold for Washington.

The method to Moscow's madness

Contrary to popular belief, Russia is much more of an oil exporter than a gas exporter. In 2009, Russia produced 10 million barrels per day (mbd) of oil, while consuming only 2.7mbd. This means that 73 percent of its crude production was exported or processed into petroleum products, half of which were sent abroad.[5] By contrast, when it comes to gas, most of Russia's production remains at home. In 2009, Russia consumed 390 billion cubic meters (bcm) of the 475 bcm it produced, leaving only 12 percent of total production for exports.[6] To free more natural gas for exports, Russia aspires to buy gas from its neighbors and has implemented since 2006 a new energy strategy to augment domestic power generation with coal.[7]

Despite all that, Russia's geopolitical power is derived much more from exporting gas than oil. The reason so much attention is paid to gas is that it is far less fungible a commodity than oil. Oil can be exported via tankers all over the world and suppliers can be shifted at will, so that no one supplier can hold too much power over any given consumer. The gas trade, on the other hand, is tied to long-term contracts and expensive pipeline infrastructure or the availability of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals. Once a consumer enters

a long-term contract with a supplier and billions of dollars are invested in infrastructure, the relations become almost unbreakable. And while oil prices are determined in the global market, gas prices are decided in direct negotiations between producers and consumers, allowing exporters to strong-arm their clients.

Another reason why, in Europe, gas is perceived as more of a problem than oil is that gas contributes to Europe's electricity supply, while oil doesn't. Only two percent of OECD-Europe's electricity is generated from oil. Western Europe's aversion to nuclear power on the one hand—France and Sweden being notable exceptions—and its reluctance to expand coal-fired generation due to concerns about global warming on the other have caused the EU to increase the share of natural gas for power generation in its fuel mix significantly: from nine percent in 1990 to roughly 20 percent today. (A few exceptions, like Belarus and Moldova, are 100 percent dependent.) Due to Europe's insufficient domestic gas supply, today about half of EU gas is imported either by pipelines or as LNG. This figure is projected to grow to more than 70 percent by 2030.[8]

Of all the countries that supply gas to the EU, Russia stands the tallest, supplying roughly one-third of EU imports. Some EU members, like Finland and Estonia, are 100 percent reliant on Russia for their gas imports, while others—like Germany, Poland and Italy—are dependent on Russia for between a third and full half of their imports.

In turn, Europe's dependence on Russian gas is the strongest geopolitical card the Kremlin owns. Gas exports allow Russia to retain some of the prestige and sway it has lost since the demise of the Soviet Union. It is a card that Moscow cannot be expected to relinquish easily. Indeed, Russia is doing all it can to strengthen its stranglehold over Europe's energy market.

At the core of Russia's energy strategy is the effort to lock in supply by controlling the transnational pipeline infrastructure. Throughout the 1990s, Moscow opposed the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline which today allows Caspian oil to flow to the southeastern Mediterranean coast of Turkey, as well the Odessa-Brody oil pipeline designed to bypass Russia, connecting the Black Sea to European consumers. Russia is also opposed to (and works to undermine) the Nabucco project, which aims to bring Caspian gas to the heart of Europe from Turkey via Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. It also opposes other proposals for a "southern corridor," as well as the idea of the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline that would run under the Caspian Sea from Turkmenistan's Caspian coast to the Sangachal Terminal in Azerbaijan, where it would connect with the existing pipeline to Erzurum in Turkey (which in turn could be connected to Nabucco).

Instead, Russia works to promote projects that aim to maintain its hegemony over gas supply to Europe. Among them are the Nord Stream Pipeline which is planned to supply Germany by crossing the Baltic Sea, bypassing Ukraine, Belarus and Poland and the already-operational Blue Stream Pipeline stretching from Russia's North Caucasus coast to Turkey. But Russia's flagship project, and Nabucco's main rival, is the planned South Stream Pipeline running from Russian territory across the Black Sea to Bulgaria, bypassing both Ukraine and Turkey, and from there to northern Italy.

Russia also recognizes the importance of the former Soviet Cen-

tral Asian republics as key energy exporters, and works to ensure that Central Asian producers—especially Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—do not develop independent energy relations with the European market. To limit Eurasia's direct exposure to Europe, to attain a stronger position in price negotiations with the West and to retain more of its own gas for future generations, Russia seeks to acquire a significant portion of Central Asia's exported gas. Hence, Moscow supports the idea of connecting the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea, either by expanding the existing Volga-Don Canal or through a project called the Eurasia Canal, a canal four times longer than the Suez Canal that would traverse the Russian regions of Dagestan, Kalmykia, Stavropol and Rostov. The latter project could have far-reaching geopolitical ramifications. It would allow landlocked countries in the Caspian region, like Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, to become maritime powers while ensuring that Russia is the prime conduit for their energy exports. It would also contribute to the economic development of Russia's southern regions and the Caucasus. Perhaps most important, it would open the door for expanded transit of cargo from China into the Black Sea and from there to Europe.

Which brings us to China. Russia has long been concerned with security of demand emanating from Europe. Moscow is aware of Europe's attempts to not only reduce its dependence on Russia's hydrocarbons specifically but also dependence on fossil fuels in general, due to global warming considerations. Even within the gas sector, Russian gas faces new challenges not only from LNG and gas piped from North Africa (and potentially from Nigeria, if the Nigeria-Algeria Trans-Saharan Pipeline is constructed) but also from recently-developed technologies to extract unconventional gas from shale, a resource with which Europe is well-endowed. If shale truly becomes the game changer many believe it to be, this would have long-term implications for European gas markets and energy security. The emergence of this new resource would allow transition toward new pricing structures and could create disincentives for investment in the infrastructure projects that Russia is promoting.

The Chinese market, on the other hand, promises impressive growth and multiple new opportunities. China is already the world's largest auto market and its oil imports are projected to double by 2030. Only eight percent of China's electricity is generated from natural gas, compared to eighty percent from coal. China has recently become a net coal importer and has recognized the health and environmental costs of high levels of coal consumption. Its energy strategy prescribes a gradual shift to nuclear power, renewables and natural gas. All this ensures stronger energy relations with its giant northern neighbor. Hence, in 2014, Russia and China are slated to complete the 3,000-mile East Siberian-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline, which could transport Russian crude from Siberia not only to Daqing, a major oil production base in northeastern China, but also to other Asian destinations—and potentially to the U.S. market as well. Moscow and Beijing are also in discussions about plans to supply Russian gas to China. In total, according to Russia's energy strategy, by 2030 Asian markets, led by China, are expected to boost their share of Russian gas exports to twenty percent from practically zero in 2008.[9]

The U.S. response

Since the 1990s, Washington's position toward the Russian-European energy dilemma has been highly sympathetic to the Europeans, particularly as it pertains to its new Central and East European allies. Considering the fact that the European Commission and many Western European governments have shied away from ruffling Russia's feathers by being overly supportive of the energy concerns of Central and East European states, one could argue that the United States has been more European than the Europeans in its response to Russia's aforementioned energy strategy. The United States was a staunch supporter of the BTC pipeline from the time it was first proposed by Turkey in 1992 until its completion in 2005. This position was based on the assumption that U.S. interests would be well-served if the Central Asian states achieved a greater degree of economic and political independence from post-Communist Russia. A similar rationale has spurred the United States to support two projects currently being erected to bypass Russia, the Odessa-Brody oil pipeline and the Nabucco gas pipeline.

Even if there was a unified European position on these projects, it does not mean there is a complete overlap between European and U.S. interests. Nor does it dictate that Washington is compelled to side with Europe in curbing Russian control over Europe's energy market. U.S. interests are wider and more global than those of Europe, and one should consider how taking Europe's side—and no doubt upsetting Moscow in the process—would impact America's overall economic and geopolitical interests.

The devil we know

Washington should ponder the following question: if Europe were to reduce its dependence on Russia, who would fill the gap? When it comes to gas, Central Asian and North African exporters could certainly play a growing role in displacing Russia's energy, but only one country has the magnitude of gas reserves that can be piped to Europe and fill Russia's shoes. That country is Iran, home to the world's second-largest reserves of natural gas. Iran's geographical location allows it to connect to almost any pipeline project originating in Central Asia, Turkey or the Persian Gulf. Internationally isolated, Iran has a strategic interest in making Europe dependent on its gas. Such dependency would provide diplomatic immunity for the clerical regime in Tehran.

Iran is already promoting the Persian Pipeline project to bring gas from its South Pars field to the heart of Europe through Turkey and onward to Greece and Italy. If constructed, this pipeline is expected to deliver 20.4 bcm per year. Obviously, the United States would oppose such a project, which would give Iran access to the European market. And under the current international sanctions regime, it is highly unlikely that the Islamic Republic could secure the funds to build it. A more realistic outlet for Iran's gas, therefore, is Nabucco. U.S. support for the project comes with the caveat that no Iranian gas should supply the pipeline. But in reality, once Nabucco is constructed, it will be only a matter of time before Iranian gas becomes a sought-after commodity.

Another issue regarding Nabucco that Washington should consider is the role of Turkmenistan. European proponents of the project have courted Turkmenistan, Central Asia's biggest reserve holder, as a potential supplier

for the pipeline. This has provoked feverish Russian diplomacy to keep Moscow's grip over Turkmen gas intact. But despite Russia's opposition, in November 2010 Turkmenistan offered to deliver 40 bcm of gas annually to Europe through Nabucco, putting wind into the sails of the project. Turkmenistan has also endorsed the Trans-Caspian Pipeline, which would connect its gas to Nabucco.

If Europe were to reduce its dependence on Russia, who would fill the gap? When it comes to gas, Central Asian and North African exporters could certainly play a growing role in displacing Russia's energy, but only one country has the magnitude of gas reserves that can be piped to Europe and fill Russia's shoes: Iran.

On its face, therefore, it seems that Ashgabat's announcement puts to rest concerns among Nabucco skeptics that there would not be sufficient gas to fill the pipeline. But while American cheerleaders of Nabucco applauded Ashgabat's move, directing Turkmenistan's gas to Europe does not necessarily serve U.S. interests. Washington would be better served if that gas was instead directed south to the 1,000-mile Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI), which would extend from the Dauletabad gas field in Turkmenistan along the highway through Herat, Helmand and Kandahar in Afghanistan, to Quetta and Multan in Pakistan, and on to the Indian border town of Fazlika. If built, TAPI would contribute to the economies of all four countries, and particularly to the Afghan economy, which the United States is desperately trying to boost. TAPI's most important attribute is that it would essentially block Iran's effort to connect its gas fields to the Indian market.

For the same reason, Iran wishes to supply Europe it also eyes the vast Indian market and hopes to make hundreds of millions of energy-poor Indians dependent on its gas. For years, Iran has been pushing for a pipeline that would connect Iran, Pakistan and India (the IPI Pipeline), and in March 2010 Iran and Pakistan signed a historic deal to begin construction of the route. Both Pakistan and Iran, each for its own reasons, would like the pipeline to extend to India. For now, however, India is unwilling to extend the pipeline into its territory. But with 400 million Indians currently lacking access to basic electricity, and an economy growing at ten percent per year, the temptation of joining the project is likely to be too difficult to resist indefinitely.

During the years of the Bush administration, the United States brought heavy pressure on New Delhi and Islamabad to spurn the IPI pipeline project. But by supporting Nabucco and by giving a nod to Turkmenistan to divert its gas to Europe, the United States not only compromises its relations with Russia but also facilitates the creation of not one but two new economic lifelines for Iran: one to Europe and the other to South Asia. This is inconsistent with Washington's declared foreign policy of improving relations with Moscow while isolating Tehran. Alternatively, by joining forces with Russia, which has expressed its interest in financing TAPI,[10] the United States can help shape the geopolitics of energy in South Asia is a way that helps economic development of its allies in the region while undermining Iran.

Feeding our habit

Additionally, before doing Europe's bidding by embarking on policies that undermine Russia's interests, Washington should consider what Russia could mean for its own energy security. If one looks at the geopolitics of energy, there are reasons to believe that the United States is likely to be more reliant on Russian hydrocarbons, particularly oil, than it is today. Other than Canada, America's top oil suppliers are all facing great uncertainties. Oil production in Mexico, America's second-largest supplier, is in steep decline and within a few years the country could cease exporting oil. The third, Nigeria, is struggling with division, political violence, and an inhospitable investment climate, and its production is in decline. Down the list, Saudi Arabia, with its ailing monarchs and a rising Iranian rival, is facing political uncertainty; Venezuela's oil industry is bruised from abuse and mishandling by its president, Hugo Chávez, and the country's production is likewise in decline. Compared to all of those suppliers, Russia seems like a paragon of stability.

Despite the fact that the United States and Russia are respectively the world's number one oil importer and exporter, for most of the years since the Second World War geography has set them apart when it comes to energy trade. This is now changing rapidly. Until 1994, U.S. crude imports from Russia stood at zero. Today, Russia is already America's 6th-largest supplier of crude and petroleum products, shipping to the United States, depending on the month, between 500,000 and 800,000 barrels per day. As the world's politics change, so does its geography. The opening of the northern sea route will allow for growing imports of Russian oil across the Arctic Ocean to Alaska and on to the contiguous 48 states. If the United States is to tighten its energy relations with Russia, Washington should consider carefully to what end and to what degree it is willing to upset Russia's energy interests in Europe at a time when its own reliance on Russian energy is growing.

Scramble for the Arctic

In pondering its approach toward Russia, Washington should also keep its eyes on the 21st century's big prize: the energy potential of the Arctic. According to U.S. government figures, the Arctic holds as much as 90bn barrels of undiscovered oil, and has as much undiscovered gas as all the reserves known to exist in Russia.[11] The Arctic, however, should be viewed not only as an energy-rich region but also as a new conduit for U.S.-Russia trade relations. The melting ice permits navigation several months a year not only along the Northern Sea Route but also along the northern coasts of North America (the Northwest Passage).

Russia fully recognizes the strategic importance of the region. Several milestone events demonstrate that, for Moscow, the scramble for the Arctic has already begun. In 2007, in a symbolic move, a Russian submarine planted a flag on the Arctic seabed more than two-and-a-half miles beneath the North Pole. In May 2008, Russia announced plans to build eight floating nuclear power stations to supply energy for Arctic oil and gas operations. Then, in September 2010, the first commercial supertanker sailed from Murmansk in Russia to Ningbo in China through the forbidding waters of Russia's Arctic passage. The new navigation route would cut by half the traditional route, which passes through the Suez Canal.

The future of the Arctic is uncertain. This is mostly because the Arctic powers—Canada, the United States, Russia and the Nordic countries of Norway and Denmark—have not finalized their strategic concepts regarding the region. The UN Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS), to which all countries involved but the United States are parties, determines that countries can lay claim to their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 200 miles from their continental shelves. But Russia's continental shelf is still not delineated, as it is not yet clear how far its landmass reaches. As the Arctic region becomes less forbidding, several countries have made moves to claim or reinforce pre-existing claims to the waters or seabed of the Arctic, and the United States and the Nordic countries will likely soon find themselves in an increasingly assertive race against Russia to exploit the Arctic's energy bonanza.

Despite the significant geopolitical and geo-economic interests the United States has in the Arctic, Washington has treated the region with insufficient resources and even less policy attention. Russia, meanwhile, is pursuing a path of aggressiveness and unilateralism. The number of icebreakers essential for safe navigation in the Arctic is one measure of American neglect of the region. The United States has only two, compared to Russia's fleet of twenty-nine, seven of which are nuclear. Neglecting the Arctic could be a costly mistake. The time to address the issue is now, when the global energy markets are well supplied, rather than later, when the cost of energy is higher and resources are scarcer.

Rethinking the equation

None of the above means that the United States cannot be helpful in strengthening Europe's energy security in ways that do not openly challenge Russia's interests or that empower America's enemies. For example: the United States could help Europe alleviate the need for Russian gas imports through LNG exports to European terminals and by cooperating with European governments in the commercialization of shale gas recovery technologies. Shale gas is already transforming the energy scene in North America; with some regulatory changes and investments it can do the same in Europe.

The United States should also realize that Europe's predicament is to a large extent self-inflicted, stemming from Europe's fixation with climate change coupled with its traditional anti-nuclear posture. Europe has today 163 nuclear power plants in operation. But many of those are aging, and new plants are not on the horizon. Of the 86 nuclear reactors that will be put into operation worldwide by 2017, only eight will be in Europe (Ukraine, Bulgaria, France, Finland and Slovakia).[12] Countries like Germany, Belgium, Poland, Austria, Italy and Hungary, all under the Russian boot, have neglected their nuclear sector. The UK, for example, has 19 reactors generating about 18 percent of its electricity, and all but one of these will be retired by 2023. Yet nuclear power has proven itself as a clean and safe source of electricity. If the environmentally conscientious EU wishes to be less dependent on imported Russian gas, nuclear power is the only realistic recourse. As the world's largest producer of nuclear power, accounting for more than 30 percent of worldwide nuclear generation of electricity, the United States can collaborate with Europe in the development of new nuclear fuel cycles and in other policies that

pave the way for significant growth in nuclear capacity on the Continent.

For the United States, Russia's energy strategy is a mixed bag. On the one hand, it is characterized by heavy-handedness, coercion, unilateralism and anti-competitive behavior, all of which are abhorred by the United States and should not be condoned by any administration. On the other hand, some elements of Russia's conduct, unsavory as they may be, actually serve U.S. interests. In more than one way, Russia's energy strategy keeps Iran from extending its tentacles into major energy markets—and hence helps contain Iran's role as a growing power. Russia's growing role in Asia's energy markets also serves U.S. interests insofar as it helps reduce China's dependence on the increasingly-unstable Middle East, thereby reducing the risk of future U.S.-China conflict over access to the Persian Gulf. Russia is also the most important non-OPEC oil exporter, and as such it could serve as a counterweight to the oil cartel which the United States aims to weaken.

Unfortunately, current U.S. policy toward Russia fails to recognize all of those potential benefits. Instead, the United States adheres to Cold War – era policies aimed at undercutting and alienating Russia rather than focusing on areas where the two powers can collaborate. The United States must be realistic about its ability to influence energy policies in Europe, Russia, and Central Asia. As Ambassador Keith Smith observed: "The speed and agility on the part of Russia's planners make it difficult or even impossible for the U.S. to mobilize sufficient European opposition to Moscow's maneuvers, particularly when faced with EU lethargy."[13]

Under such conditions, for the United States to erode its relations with Russia would be anything but smart. For decades, America has fought Europe's wars; the battle for Europe's energy security should not be one of them.

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Guns and Butter

Andrei Shoumikhin

Arms trade is an area of crucial strategic importance to the Russian state. Already the world's second-largest global exporter of weapons,[1] Russia uses revenues generated by its arms sales to maintain and modernize its military-industrial complex (MIC), conduct accelerated modernization of the armed forces, and even help revitalize the national economy. But arms trade is a potent foreign policy tool for the Kremlin as well. The structure and destinations of Russian exports serve as an indicator of Moscow's geopolitical preferences—and its ambitions.

Russian arms sales, however, are also a double-edged sword. The steady growth of this trade masks serious problems that may affect the functioning of the Russian economy in the future. Specifically, Russia appears to be exhausting its stocks of Soviet-developed and Soviet-made weapon systems and technologies—equipment that, until recently, represented the bulk of its arms exports. Transitioning from this legacy technology to new and innovative research and design, and erecting the production base to do so, will be a huge challenge for the Russian military industry in the years ahead. Moreover, Russia in this regard faces powerful competition not only from traditional arms-exporting countries but also from new competitors (e.g., China) which offer comparable systems to international buyers at bargain basement prices. Many traditional recipients of

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Soviet/Russian weapons, meanwhile, are less than reliable, having over time become the subjects of international sanctions and export limitations.

There is still another significant aspect of the problem: the internal structure of the Russian arms trade system. Over the past two decades, as Russia has transitioned to an oligarchy, its weapons sector has as well. Currently, the Russian arms trade is made up of an intricate pyramid of bureaucracies, companies, enterprises, design bureaus, and so forth, all of which are rigidly controlled by the Kremlin. Like other state-run and state-dominated monopolies, it serves the goal of preserving and strengthening Moscow's ruling political elite.

A post-Cold War slump

During the Cold War, observers have noted, "The arms exports of the Soviet Union were motivated overwhelmingly by foreign policy and security considerations, often to the detriment of economic benefit."[2] By contrast, the post-Soviet governments of Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev, driven by new market-oriented philosophies, tried to look at economic and financial advantages more keenly. However, it would be erroneous to assume that political and even ideological motivations have receded completely into the background. Especially under the rule of Putin and Medvedev, Russia has been keenly aware of the geopolitical context of its weapons trade. The goal of reasserting the Russian Federation as a global power requires increasing Russian clout in various regions, most immediately those close to Russia's borders but also those where other global powers invest most of their economic, financial, political and military capital: Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America.

However, rebuilding arms exports as an effective economic and foreign policy tool has been a difficult undertaking. With the collapse of the Soviet system of client-patron relations, Moscow lost many of the traditional markets for its weapons (namely, among Eastern European countries seeking membership in the European Community and NATO). The worldwide demand for weapons also declined with the collapse of the USSR and the (temporary) abatement of regional conflicts that followed. At the same time, Moscow discovered,

> States that were high on the list of Soviet clients were either included in the category of radical regimes or have no resources for the purchase of weapons. Relations with them are affected by international limitations – embargoes and sanctions. Because of UN embargos on military-technical assistance to such former major Soviet clients in the Middle East as Libya and Iraq, they appear to be lost for Russian military exports for the foreseeable future…[3]

In effect, many of Russia's arms ventures met with opposition from the West. Russia was criticized for supplying 12 MiG-29s to Sudan, where the government was believed to use the jets against its own people in the Darfur region. Russia prompted Western concerns with its plans to sell *Iskander* mobile missiles and *Igla* portable missiles to Syria, given that they could be used for attacks on Israel.[4] And Russian companies became the targets of U.S. sanctions for their military cooperation with Iran.[5] Moscow, in turn, interpreted these developments as unfair competition or the application of "double standards" by the West.[6]

Another serious problem faced by Moscow was the rapid deterioration of the MIC during the anarchic and turbulent 1990s.[7] By the end of that decade, some 70 percent of the Russian Federation's military budget was being spent "merely to maintain troops and bureaucrats, leaving precious little to maintaining and upgrading equipment."[8] Revenues from arms exports were also shrinking rapidly, contributing to the closing of design bureaus and production facilities, and the termination of R&D on advanced weapon systems.[9] Things were made even worse by mismanagement and the outright criminal cannibalization of MIC properties, both of which were taking place on a massive scale during Yeltsin's tenure. So too was the misappropriation of proceeds from the foreign sales of the remaining Soviet assets. Exactly how much Red Army property ended up in the world's "grey" and black markets, benefiting those who were supposed to be its custodians, will probably never be known authoritatively. But it is telling that Victor Bout, the Russian reported to be the world's largest arms dealer (now awaiting trial in New York on charges of international trafficking), rose to prominence during this murky period of Russian history.

Arming an adversary

It is only by a stroke of luck of historic proportions that the system of "wild" state capitalism that prevailed in Russia under Yeltsin, characterized by the fusion of corrupt state bureaucracies with the criminal underworld, did not result in massive WMD (weapons of mass destruction) proliferation around the world. Still, it is evident that other sophisticated weapon systems were flowing out of the country freely to benefit many of Russia's *nouveaux riches*, as well as foreign recipients of Russian arms exports.

One notable example relates to the transfer of the technology and licenses for the production of the advanced Russian Su-27 fighter to China under a 1995 contract worth an estimated $1.4 billion. Part of the funds from the deal were allegedly siphoned off by former Deputy Prime Ministers Oleg Soskovets and Anatolii Chubais, with Boris Yeltsin's approval, into foreign bank accounts, some of which were later tapped for Yeltsin's 1996 re-election campaign.[10]

Russian weapon transfers to China serve as a good illustration of the multiple strategic and tactical dilemmas facing the Kremlin in its arms trade policy. In the early 1990s, under Yeltsin, Moscow made several major steps toward Beijing in an attempt to paper over the painful legacy of the long-running Soviet-Chinese rift. Most notably, the two countries resolved their outstanding border and territorial problems, and subsequently moved to reestablish large-scale military-technical cooperation. The partnership was one of mutual convenience; for Russia, the PRC became a major source of badly needed foreign revenue. For China, meanwhile, Russian weapons and military technologies served as a springboard for its arms industry and weapons modernization. Beijing could thus effectively overcome the arms embargo imposed by Western powers in the wake of the events at the Tiananmen Square in 1989. By March 1991, Russia had already signed the above-mentioned agreement to sell twenty-four Su-27 fighter planes to China.[11]

Throughout the 1990s, despite assurances by the Russian Foreign

Ministry that military and technological cooperation with China was in keeping with the country's international obligations and security interests,[12] Russian arms producers and exporters sought "to sell virtually anything to anybody," especially China.[13] The *Treaty on Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China* codified by new Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart, Jiang Zemin, on July 16, 2001, helped expand bilateral military-technological ties significantly.

Combat aircraft have been the chief component of Russian deliveries. Besides at least six dozen transcontinental Su-27 fighters, China had purchased forty to sixty Su-30s—two-seat multirole fighters capable (with certain modifications) of carrying nuclear weapons. Other purchases include naval vessels: *Sovremennyi*-class destroyers equipped with supersonic missiles; *Kilo*-636 diesel-powered submarines; S-300 surface-to-air missile air defense complexes; T-72 tanks; *Smerch* multiple rocket launchers, technologies for advanced gas centrifuges used in uranium enrichment; and MIRVed missiles.

But the Chinese were not content simply with procuring the most advanced Russian weapon systems; they wanted to produce them at home. In 1995, China agreed to pay about $1.4 billion for the technology and licenses to manufacture the Su-27 at a factory in Shenyang province. At the time, it was reported that large numbers of Russian scientists and engineers with long-term contracts were working in Chinese design bureaus and defense plants. Chinese engineers were being trained at Russian facilities, and numerous joint production projects were under way.[14]

In April 2004, during a regular round of negotiations with the Russian Defense Minister in Beijing, the Chinese called for a "new approach" in bilateral military-technical cooperation—one that would eliminate any barriers for the supply of the most advanced Russian technologies to PRC, and which would "assure access of Chinese specialists to the super-secret know-how of the Russian MIC."[15] This position reflected China's growing ambitions to build up the strongest army in the world. In part, it could also be explained by the Chinese failure to successfully clone the most advanced Russian weapon systems, such as the S-300 air defense complex.

Eventually, the Russian expert and policymaking communities began to develop second thoughts about military and technology transfers to China. By the middle of the last decade, a strong consensus began to emerge that "the Chinese conventional potential exceeds that of the RF and in case of a conventional military conflict with China, Russia is bound to lose."[16] It was also increasingly recognized that those transfers were helping turn Beijing into Moscow's fierce competitor in arms markets that were traditionally havens for Russian exports. The expert recommendations to the Kremlin were clear: refrain from selling the most advanced military technologies to Beijing for fear of reducing the attractiveness of Russian weapons abroad, and to prevent arming a potential adversary.[17]

Threading the needle with Tehran

The case of Russia's arms trade with Iran helps illustrate another type of limitation for Moscow: an adverse international context. Russia and Iran

are close neighbors, and as such both countries are naturally interested in cooperative ties on a range of issues. Moreover, the potential for economic cooperation in various areas, particularly energy and weapon transfers, is considerable. Iran is also important for Russian security interests: Tehran can easily be a partner or opponent in regional conflicts involving the Russian Federation directly and indirectly (in the Levant, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Caucasus or Central Asia), and in situations of internal ethnic strife, such as Chechnya.

However, particularly after Moscow secured the contract to complete the construction of a nuclear power plant at Bushehr,[18] the "Iranian factor" became a potent irritant in Russia's relations with the United States and other Western countries. Throughout construction at Bushehr, Moscow had to face accusations of indirectly helping Tehran to acquire nuclear capability. Completing the project[19] was seen in Moscow as a guarantee of other Iranian orders, both military and civilian, and as proof of Russian reliability for other Third World clients. Iranians periodically approached Moscow with requests for the resumption of military-technical cooperation. The Iranians were especially interested in Russian air defense systems, armor and combat aircraft.[20]

Finally, in late 2007, Russia and Iran concluded a contract on the supply of five battalions of one of the most effective Russian air defense systems, the S-300PMU-1, at a cost of some $800 million. However, in September 2010, Moscow was forced to renege on the contract in order to abide by the fourth round of UN Security Council sanctions levied against Iran over its nuclear program (UN Security Council Resolution 1929 of June 9, 2010). Shortly thereafter, Russia was supposed to return $166.8 million to Iran for non-delivery of the systems. Penalties for breaking the contract could end up being severe. However, while announcing the continuation of talks over compensation payments for the cancellation of the contract, Anatoly Isaykin, the head of Russia's state arms manufacturer, Rosoboronexport, made clear that Moscow didn't see sanctions against Iran as the end of the story: "If we receive orders [from Iran] for arms that are not included in the list of sanctions, we will hold discussions on the matter."[21]

Hostile takeover

The way Rosoboronexport and other entities belonging to Russia's arms sector are structured, and make their decisions, should be of special interest. During the 1990s, competition over relatively stable sources of foreign currency revenues between different high-ranking politicians and the power groups they represented was cutthroat. As in other areas of state regulation, corruption was pervasive. The Kremlin tried to deal with these problems via its preferred bureaucratic method—the reshuffling of personnel and administrative reorganizations.

In 1994, while still under the presidency of Boris Yeltsin, the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations was replaced by the new arms export agency, Rosvooruzhenie (State Company for the Export and Import of Armaments and Military Equipment), ostensibly to streamline export policy and prevent misappropriation of sales revenues. Just three years later, in August 1997, Rosvooruzhenie was placed under the supervision of a commission chaired by the Prime Minister. The agency

was charged with foreign sales of arms and military equipment, while two more new agencies—Rossiiskie Tekhnologii (Russian Technologies) and Promeksport (Industrial Export)—were set up to sell, respectively, licenses and used arms and spare parts. Reportedly, MIC enterprises complained bitterly about the new "division of labor" that prevented all but a few them to negotiate their own contracts and reduced their hard currency earnings by allowing the intermediary state agency to take a sizable commission.[22] By the end of his administration, Boris Yeltsin was forced to put the entire system of arms exports solidly under presidential control.[23]

Yeltsin's successor, Vladimir Putin, strengthened central control over the Russian arms trade. On November 4, 2000, Rosvooruzheniye was transformed by presidential decree into Rosoboronexport, becoming "the sole state intermediary agency for Russia's military exports."[24] New oversight bodies were introduced, eventually leading to the emergence of a mammoth federal bureaucracy: the Federal'naya sluzba po voenno-yekhnicheskomu sotrudnichestvu, or FSVTS (Federal Service on Military-Technical Cooperation with Foreign States).[25] In the years since, that agency has acquired total control and supervision over all aspects of Russian military relations, including arms trade with foreign states and their respective organizations. FSVTS is a state-run monopoly similar to other state monopolies operated by the Kremlin, chief among them Gazprom, the largest government-run extractor of natural gas in the world. For all practical purposes, it appears that actual producers of weapons have benefited only marginally from transformations in the arms trade sector. However, a major consequence of these transformations was the emergence of a closeted elite of apparatchiks with their vested clannish interests and privileges.

FSVTS is formally subordinated to the Russian Defense Ministry, but it operates under the direct orders of the President. Members of its top executive body—the Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation—include key officials of the Russian political and military establishment, among them the President and Prime Minister, the heads of the Federal Security Service and the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Secretary of the National Security Council, the Ministers of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Industry and Trade, and other top government officials.[26]

It is unclear to what extent the military-technical cooperation bureaucracy in Russia is affected by corruption, a perennial Russian ill.[27] However, in any case, as a government bureaucracy heavily dependent on the will and whim of a handful of top leaders and administrators, it may be prone to adopting arbitrary decisions outside effective controls by other branches of power, the media and the public at large.

Power corrupts

At least for now, the combination of "moderate" president Dmitry Medvedev and hard-line Prime Minister Vladimir Putin have made Russian arms export policy reasonably accommodating to Western concerns and pressures. For example, Moscow continues to comply with international sanctions against Iran and North Korea on nuclear weapons matters. Moreover, it now talks about building up cooperative ties with NATO and other Western countries, including in developing joint ballistic missile

defense systems, combating terrorism and drug trafficking, and so forth. In an unprecedented move, the Russian military establishment has even demonstrated a readiness to purchase Western weapons for its own armed forces (e.g., the French amphibious ships Mistral and Israeli unmanned reconnaissance vehicles).[28]

However, it is unclear whether these tendencies would continue under potential future shifts, such as Vladimir Putin's reelection as Russian President. The concentration of extreme power in one set of hands in Russia, and the absence of appropriate checks and balances in the system of governance, has always been a recipe for unpleasant surprises. It is also unclear how Moscow would react to major changes in regional situations, such as the massive unrest and political transformations now taking place in the Middle East. If old regimes in these and other regions succumb to a wave of radicalism, regional instability will increase, and so will, predictably, demands for new weapons. Russia naturally will be tempted to take advantage of these political shifts at least to augment its arms trade.

At the same time, to be able to compete in global markets under any kind of scenario, Russia will need to continue rebuilding its MIC. Developing and producing advanced weapon systems is a guarantee of the modernization of the Russian armed forces and continued high demand for Russian weapons abroad. Russian thinking is clear on this account: "No matter how peace loving we are, we need to be ready to defend our country. This means paying attention to our Armed Forces and their needs, developing modern arms, giving our servicemen decent wages and living conditions, and building a compact and effective, strong and well-trained army manned by professional officers and soldiers."[29]

So the Russian Federation can be expected to remain a leading arms exporter in the world in the foreseeable future, because its economy and its politics demand it. But specific aspects of Russia's weapons and technology trade will remain in flux. So too will Russia's partners and clients, and the way Moscow interacts in the military-technical sphere with other states.

1. Russian arms exports increased more than 140 percent in the period from 2001 to 2009, when they hit $7.4 billion. Revenues for 2010 were projected at $10 billion. See Mikhail Beznosov, "Russia Set to Export $9-$10 Billion Arms Annually – Regulator," *RIA-Novosti* (Moscow), February 15, 2010, http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100215/157887254.html.
2. Robert H. Donaldson, "Domestic Influences on Russian Arms Sales Policy," Paper presented to the 43rd Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 24, 2002, http://isanet.ccit.arizona.edu/noarchive/donaldson.html.
3. Alexander Kislov and Alexander Frolov, *Russia and the International Market of Weapons: Ideology and Practice* (Moscow: Alfa-Bravo, 2008), 287-289.
4. Natalya Hmelik, "Russian Arms Trade: A New Threat," *Global Politician*, December 12, 2005, http://globalpolitician.com/21470-russia-military.
5. For example, on August 4, 2006, the U.S. State Department announced sanctions against Rosoboronexport (and the Russian aircraft manufacturer Sukhoi) for alleged violations of the *Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000*, thereby barring U.S. companies from dealing with those Russian entities for two years. Russian officials denounced the action as retaliation for their Venezuelan arms sales. In December 2006, over Russian protests, the sanctions against Rosoboronexport were reconfirmed for two more

years (although sanctions against Sukhoi were lifted). See "Rosoboronexport (ROE)," globalsecurity.org, n.d., http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/rosoboronexport.htm.

6. "Rosoboronexport Views U.S. Sanctions As 'Unfair Competition,'" Interfax-AVN (Moscow), October 24, 2008, http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewiStockNews/articleid/2737670.
7. According to Russian government figures, between 1991 and 1995, 2.5 million of the defense sector's 6.1 million employees departed. Despite this exodus, in 1996, only 10 percent of the industry's capability was being utilized. A large part of the orders that were placed by the Russian military went unpaid; at the beginning of 1998, the government owed 18.5 trillion rubles to defense enterprises. See Alexander Sergounin and Sergey Subbotin, *Russian Arms Transfers to East Asia in the 1990s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15-16.
8. Michael Wines, "Putin Cuts Forces by 600,000, Promising Military Overhaul," *New York Times*, November 10, 2000, http://www.nucnews.net/nucnews/2000nn/0011nn/001110nn.htm#08.
9. Russian arms sales to the Third World dropped dramatically in the wake of the Soviet collapse, from $28.2 billion in 1986 to $5.9 billion in 1991 and $1.3 billion in 1992. See Eric Schmitt, "Arms Sales to the Third World, Especially by Russia, Drop," *New York Times*, July 19, 1993.
10. See Stephen Blank, *The Dynamics of Russian Weapons Sales to China* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, March 1997).
11. See Andrei Shoumikhin, "Sino-Russian Relations," National Institute for Public Policy Working Paper, December 2004, http://nipp.org/Publication/Downloads/Publication%20Archive%20PDF/December%202004%20webpage.pdf.
12. G. Krasin, "Russia Needs Strong China," *Rossiya* (Moscow) no.3, March 1997, 14.
13. Pavel Felgenhauer, "Arms for China and Russia's National Security," in *Russia and the World Arms Trade* (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, 1996), 135.
14. Sergounin and Subbotin, *Russian Arms Transfers to East Asia in the 1990s*, 92.
15. Ibid.
16. Aleksei Khazbiev, "VTS Problems between Russia and China," *Ekspert* (Moscow), May 24, 2004.
17. See Alexander Khramchikhin, "Moscow Is Offered a Very Unpleasant Choice," *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obozrenie* (Moscow), October 10, 2010, http://nvo.ng.ru/concepts/2010-09-10/1_choice.html.
18. Germany, the original contractor of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, opted out after the regime change in Tehran in 1979.
19. The Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency announced that the first reactor at the Bushehr NPP was to be loaded on August 21, 2010. "Bushehr," *Global Security*, n.d., http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/bushehr.htm/.
20. Ivan Safronov, "Prospects for the Sale of Russian Weapons to Iran," *Kommersant* (Moscow), November 12, 2003.
21. "Russia Ready to Discuss Arms Sales with Iran – Arms Exporter," *RIA-Novosti* (Moscow), November 3, 2010, http://en.rian.ru/mlitary_news/20101028/161115898.html.
22. See Sergounin and Subbotin, *Russian Arms Transfers to East Asia in the 1990s*, Chapter 3.
23. See "On the Military-Technical Cooperation of the Russian Federation with Foreign States," Federal Law No 114-FZ of July 19, 1998, http://www.fsvts.gov.ru/materials/492A334D72F0E528C325745C00335DEF.html.
24. "Rosoboronexport," Wikipedia.org, n.d., http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rosoboronexport.
25. Online at http://www.fsvts.gov.ru/materials/55DCB9061695F057C325745C003587DC.html.
26. Online at http://state.kremlin.ru/commission/1/statute.
27. According to the independent organization Transparency International, Russia fell from 79th place to 147th on the group's Corruption Perception Index during Mr. Putin's presidency. See Transparency International, *2008 Corruption Perceptions Index*, n.d., http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2008/cpi2008/cpi_2008_table. In the years of Mr. Medvedev's presidency, Russia has fallen further still, down to the 154th place. See "Russian President Dmitry Medvedev – Political Competition Is Essential," *Vedomosti* (Moscow), January 26, 2011, http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article/253776/politicheskaya_konkurenciya_neobhodima_dmitrij_medvedev#ixzz1CAPNLNgb.
28. "Russia, Israel Embark on Unprecedented Defense Cooperation Agreement," *Defense Update*, September 6, 2010, http://defense-update.com/wp/20100906_israel-russia.html.
29. "Interview with Dmitry Medvedev," *Izvestiya* (Moscow), May 7, 2010, http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/295.

Tbilisi in the Crosshairs

Giorgi Baramidze

As Georgia's Vice Prime Minister and State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, I wish that I could dwell upon Georgia, and not Russia. If that were realistic, what would follow would be an account of the remarkable progress that my country has made toward regaining its historic place in Europe. And I would mention Russia only in passing, saying that we are moving forward with—as the Georgian people ardently desire—our largest neighbor as a partner. Regrettably, because of Russia's deleterious policies and actions, particularly over the last decade, reality demands that I explore Russia's conduct toward Georgia, and the reasons behind it.

Before turning to that, I want to underscore that Georgia has chosen its own destiny without regard to the pressure on us from outside. That pressure, including the occupation of our territories, is, of course, tremendous. Notwithstanding, we have moved, we are moving and we shall move forward. We would like to do that as an Eastern European country and neighbor of a Russia that has also freely chosen its own destiny, so long as that destiny includes acting within the concert of nations, respecting international law and upholding human rights.

Until such time as Russia can choose such a course, we believe that Georgia's choice, Georgia's effort, in some ways, sets an example for other countries now free of the Soviet yoke, including Russia. Georgia is succeeding, and if Georgia, which bore the full brunt of Soviet occupation, can succeed, then there is hope for every nation of the post-Soviet space and beyond. Perhaps that is one thing that irks some in Moscow.

The Honorable Giorgi Baramidze is Vice Prime Minister of Georgia and State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration.

We never flinched at the necessary democratic, anti-corruption, economic, social and judicial reforms. The November 2003 Rose Revolution kicked off the groundbreaking reforms that are now improving the lives of Georgian citizens from every walk of life. This is not only my assertion, but also the conclusion of prestigious international organizations.

The story of Russia's geopolitical itch to control Georgia can be traced back centuries.

Transparency International's 2010 *Global Corruption Barometer*, for instance, found that seventy-eight percent of Georgians believe that corruption has decreased over the last three years. The World Bank's *Doing Business* report for 2011 named Georgia as the world's number one reformer from 2005 to 2010 and ranked Georgia twelfth in the world for "ease of doing business." In addition, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development named Georgia as the least corrupt country in Europe. The 2011 Index of Economic Freedom published by the *Wall Street Journal* and the Heritage Foundation ranks Georgia twenty-ninth out of 179 countries surveyed, ahead of half the countries in the European Union.

Of course, there is plenty of room for improvement—we know this—and many Georgians express their dissatisfaction, as they are free to do. We have demonstrations, even large ones. That said, I must point out that the overwhelming majority of citizens expresses satisfaction with the progress that we are making. Most Georgians have understood that political change must be brought about in the ballot box and not in the street.

We are part of Europe—culturally, historically and politically through common values, principles and objectives. Our goal is to join the Euro-Atlantic institutions, particularly the EU and NATO. This objective sets up a clear, visible target and eventual membership will form an important guarantee of continued democratic, political and economic development.

So why are the democratic reform efforts of a country of four-and-a-half million people, including its decision to join NATO, such a problem for Moscow? The problem did not begin with the 2008 war or even with the NATO Bucharest Summit—and it is closely tied to the nature of the current Russian regime.

Russia's response

The story of Russia's geopolitical itch to control Georgia can be traced back centuries. For example, to 1801, when it annexed the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti to the Russian Empire. Or to February 15-25, 1921, when the Russian Red Army invaded Georgia on a pretext. Or to April 9, 1989, when Soviet soldiers hacked to death twenty people demonstrating in support of Georgian independence.

More recently, Russia's assault can be seen in the period immediately following the Rose Revolution. Mikheil Saakashvili was inaugurated as President on January 25, 2004, and his first foreign policy move was to extend his hand to Russian President Vladimir Putin. He was criticized at home for doing so, and western capitals, particularly Washington, were puzzled. Putin, too, expressed his goodwill—if only he could appoint the senior security officials in the new Georgian government. In particular, Putin wanted to retain Valery Khaburzania—openly known to be the

FSB *rezident* in Tbilisi—as Minister of State Security (a position, incidentally, that has since been abolished).

In short, Putin was all for good relations, so long as President Saakashvili and the new faces in Tbilisi accepted that Georgia was, in reality, an appendage of the Russian Empire. Naturally, Saakashvili refused. Instead, he appointed a truly Georgian government and set about the daunting tasks of reclaiming Georgia's independence, building a strong democracy and promoting economic development. This happened when the idea of Georgia in NATO still evoked polite chuckles, and before more problems in South Ossetia emerged.

Moscow, however, could not abide Georgia making a different choice, and a Russian campaign to cow Tbilisi ensued. We were accused of harboring terrorists, although one of President Saakashvili's first moves was to review border security and turn over to Russian authorities known terrorists wanted in Russia. In response, we received border incursions, airspace violations, sabotage, closed border crossings, energy cutoffs and economic and trade embargoes. Meanwhile, Moscow decided to use the greatest leverage it had—the proxies on the ground in the Georgian territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Passports were provided, and nationality granted, in order to set up a pretext of needing to defend Russian citizens later. The proxy regimes also received major transfers of weapons.

When none of this succeeded in derailing Georgia from its chosen course, Moscow became ever more bellicose. On February 10, 2007, at the Munich Security Conference, Putin railed against the West and American-dominated unipolarity in particular.

Rhetoric was followed by action. In March 2007, Russian helicopters conducted a midnight raid against Georgian government buildings, including a school, in Upper Abkhazia, sometimes called the Kodori Gorge. In July 2007, Russia decreed that it would suspend its participation in the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty by year's end, a move that would enable it to move military forces around the North Caucasus and the Krasnoyarskiy Kray without foreign observation. A month later, a Russian fighter-bomber launched an anti-radar missile that landed in a field near the Village of Tsitelubani, not far from Tbilisi. The apparent target was a Georgian radar installation. The pattern of escalation was unmistakable.

The Russian attack of August 2008, when it finally came, had been prepared well in advance. That February, Putin was emphatic that there would be a Russian response to Western support for Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. And in April, just after the NATO Bucharest Summit, Russia's foreign minister said that his government "will do everything" to prevent Georgia from joining NATO.

In May, Russia deployed heavily armed so-called peacekeeping troops in Abkhazia, and then sent others on what it said was a humanitarian mission to repair the rail line between Sukhumi and Ochamchire. That rail line would figure prominently in the eventual attack on Georgia. Meanwhile, improvements were made to the Bombora Airfield near Gudauta, which Russia claimed to have abandoned in accordance with its 1999 Istanbul commitments.

In June and July, two exercises simulated aspects of a war against Georgia and moved troops into place

for the invasion. On July 8, coinciding with a visit by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Russian military aircraft violated Georgian airspace. Unlike earlier incidents, this time the Russian government not only admitted the incursion, but also flaunted it. Its purpose, said the Russian Foreign Ministry, was "to cool hot heads in Tbilisi." Clearly, the die had been cast. Cyber attacks on Georgian government sites and critical infrastructure similarly began in July and continued throughout the conflict.

I shall not here offer a blow-by-blow account of the war. Suffice it to say that when Russia attacked Georgia, it came with pre-positioned supplies, prepared logistics chains, two land fronts, a reserve force, a well-executed air target set, a major embarkation and debarkation of naval infantry and a naval blockade. Despite all the ink that has been spilled speculating on this matter, the August 2008 war was not an accidental flare-up; it was a Russian plan.

It is, moreover, still ongoing, albeit in another form. Two-and-a-half years after the conflict, Russia remains in violation of the August 12, 2008, Cease-fire Agreement negotiated by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in the name of the European Union. It has vetoed the continuation of the OSCE Monitoring Mission in South Ossetia and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia in Abkhazia. Consequently, the only international eyes on the ground are those of the European Union Monitoring Mission—and they are not permitted to enter the Russian-occupied Georgian territories. To explain all this, Moscow invokes "changed circumstances;" that is, its illegal recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent countries.

Some 11,000 Russian troops and border guards now occupy the Georgian territories, building fortifications and deploying more weapons—tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, multiple launch rocket systems, surface-to-surface missiles, surface-to-air missiles, and MiG-29 Fulcrum fighter aircraft.

Of particular interest, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced last August the deployment of the S-300 air defense system in Abkhazia. Given that the Georgian Air Force, with a handful of helicopters and Su-25 Frogfoot ground attack aircraft, cannot pose any threat, one can only conclude that the S-300s are there to control the air corridor from the Black Sea into Georgia in case of further Russian aggression.

And, recently, there have been reports that offensive weapons like the BM-30 *Smerch* multiple launch rocket systems and *Tochka* surface-to-surface missiles—known in the West as SS-21 *Scarab*—have been deployed in South Ossetia. Needless to say, these military deployments go far beyond anything that could be needed for legitimate defense.

But the real human tragedy is ethnic cleansing. Today, there are literally no ethnic Georgians left in South Ossetia. And the Georgian population still living in Abkhazia, mostly in the Gali region, which abuts territory controlled by the Georgian government, is under increasing pressure designed to induce it to leave. Our best estimate is that 26,000 people were forced to flee their homes as a result of the August 2008 war. They join the roughly half-million who were chased away during the conflicts of the early 1990s. These people watched loved ones killed, beaten or raped, their property stolen or destroyed, only because of their ethnicity.

Of course, our goal is complete restoration of our territorial integrity and the dignified return of all people who were chased from their homes. Meanwhile, we ask the international community to use the terms "occupation" and "ethnic cleansing." This is not a rhetorical point, but a concrete legal matter. International recognition of these facts gives the world community the legal right to oblige Russia to take responsibility for the human rights of those people still living in these occupied Georgian territories and the dignified return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

Using the term "occupation" will underline that the *status quo* cannot be sustained forever and will highlight to the Kremlin that the situation in Georgia is unacceptable and will be continually scrutinized by the international community. Using this language will also help push the Russians back to the negotiating table.

Divergent paths

Why is all of this happening? The explanation is, of course, complex, but here is a simplified answer.

To say that Georgia and contemporary Russia have chosen different courses is an understatement. Georgia—although its evolution is still far from complete—has chosen the path of democracy, free enterprise and rule of law. Our political system is a cacophony of voices—some quite critical of our government—along with foreign advisors, investors and observers from scores of countries and international organizations. Once a country goes down such a path, the aspirations of its leadership must be toward internal democracy and external cooperation. This is what we mean when we say that Georgian reforms are now irreversible.

On the other hand, Russia is an oligarchy in which political power and wealth form a symbiotic (but pernicious) relationship. A free market of ideas or economy would destroy this nexus of power; therefore, it must base itself on internal repression and external aggression. Quite simply, Russia's political establishment has not built a modern, democratic nation-state because it cannot. Ironically, some in the Russian opposition cite Georgian reforms as examples of the course that their country should adopt.

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Yet without a rational 21st Century direction, Russia falls back on dreams of past empire and imagined enemies. The "near abroad," the "privileged sphere of influence," and "spiritual space" are all reifications of the Russian Empire. Western penetration and influence in their various permutations, meanwhile, have become compelling (if imagined) enemies. Under this worldview, there cannot be true sovereign states on Russia's periphery. Georgia, then, is viewed as an acute threat because it offers both ideological and concrete alternatives to a new Russian Empire.

Ideologically, Georgia is setting a democratic example to other countries in the region—and to the people of Russia itself. Concretely, Georgia is opening up the South Caucasus East-West Corridor to that free

market of ideas and economy. Objectively speaking, that would be good for the middle of the Eurasian continent, which, by the way, includes vast swaths of Russia. But, though new ideas and real economic opportunities would benefit the vast majority of people, they would threaten the Russian political establishment.

In sum, Moscow perceives Georgian success—not Georgia *per se*—as a threat that must be undermined. And it fears NATO and the European Union—again, not *per se*—but as forces that can inhibit Moscow's ability to interfere in its former holdings.

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Squaring the circle

This leads, finally, to the matter of what to do. Nobody has a greater stake than Georgia in seeing Russia turn into a country that truly operates within the concert of nations, respects international law and upholds human rights. As President Saakashvili recently said, "We all want—I personally want—Russia as a partner, not an enemy." Consequently, we support the efforts of American leaders to strengthen relationships with Russia.

For our part, we have never ceased to speak of reconciliation. And, despite current problems, we have extended our hand to our Russian friends. For example, we unilaterally introduced a simplified visa regime for Russian citizens who live in the regions along the Georgian-Russian border.

On tougher issues, such as Russia's bid to join the World Trade Organization, we also think there is room for common ground. In the long run, Russia's accession to the WTO would be in Georgia's interest too, so we are prepared to discuss it. And we look forward to Russia playing a major role in settling the conflicts in our region.

In this vein, we believe that Georgia joining NATO will foster peaceful resolution of the conflicts over the Georgian territories of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and the Akhalgori District. Although our accession will no doubt evoke some sound and fury from certain quarters, when the din subsides everyone will realize that a non-threatening Georgia has joined a non-threatening NATO. At that moment, our occupied territories will lose their value to Russia. At the same time, we will attract the population now residing in them with our democratic and economic development, just as happened in Germany with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

In short, we are open for discussion in all matters, great and small. However, we will not be cowed into compromising our territorial integrity, internationally recognized borders and sovereignty.

In the final analysis, it would be so much better if Russia and Georgia could cooperate on true common interests such as the economy, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, organized crime, trafficking and the protection of the environment and cultural heritage.

As President Saakashvili told the 2011 Munich Security Conference, "Peace is the only solution, and a comprehensive political dialogue is the only way to achieve it."

Shifting Sands

Amitai Etzioni

Years will have passed before we know the kinds of regimes that emerged from the uprisings that swept through the Middle East at the beginning of 2011. Observers are quick to project on them their fondest dreams (the rise of the elusive Arab democracy) or their worst fears (a region ripe for *jihadist* takeover).

One can, however, make four predictions with a considerable level of confidence. First, America's influence and leverage in large parts of the Middle East will be lower than before the uprising tidal wave (extending a trend, as we shall see, that started before 2011). Second, the influence and leverage of Iran over large parts of the Middle East will rise (similarly expanding a trend that began before 2011). In some cases, this influence has been concrete—such as the six-fold increase in Iranian trade with Turkey that took place between 2002 and 2007.[1] In others, such gains are less "real" but still significant, such as Iran's appeal among Shi'a in the Middle East.

Third, regional elites and the broader public believe that the United States is abandoning the region—and them—and are reacting to this perception in surprisingly different ways. Finally, it follows that America's future role in the Middle East will be determined to a large extent by the way it deals with Iran. If Iran's hegemonic and militaristic ambitions can be thwarted, the United States's allies and friends will be reassured significantly, and Washington will need to worry much less about the particular political direction taken by various regional regimes. On the other hand, if Iran is not defanged, it seems set

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Allies at risk

It is already clear that the greatest effect of the convulsions that spread through the Middle East, beginning with the removal of the Tunisian autocrat Ben Ali early in 2011, has been a reduction in America's leverage—and a concomitant increase in Iran's potential influence there. To point to both developments is not to argue that the United States should oppose the transformation of these regimes (or that it could stop it, if it so desired), but to point out the consequences for the balance of power in the region and to the challenges they pose to the United States and its remaining allies.

The decline of U.S. leverage is obvious. Regimes that were solid U.S. allies, most notably Egypt, but also Jordan, Bahrain, and Yemen, either have been toppled or are being severely challenged. Ultimately, they may turn into stable democracies that find their way to becoming part of the free world. However, one cannot help but note that so far no Arab country has made such a transition. And while such transformations invariably take time—it took years or longer before the military regimes of South Korea, Turkey, Indonesia, and Chile turned into stable democracies—a range of unfavorable conditions, from high levels of unemployment to low levels of education and often weak civic bodies, make the prospect for substantive change in the Middle East daunting.

Indeed, a review of recent regional changes hammers home the point that American strategic interests are suffering significant setbacks, while those of Iran are (or could be) advanced in unprecedented fashion.

Egypt

Though some in the United States view the convulsions in Egypt as a step toward Western-style democracy, Iran casts the unrest as an uprising inspired by its own 1979 Islamist revolution. Iran's Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has said that the "awakening of the Islamic Egyptian people is an Islamic liberation movement." The Egyptian political force that has the greatest pro-Iranian potential is the Muslim Brotherhood. Much has been made of the fact that the Brotherhood has greatly moderated its positions over the last decades and is now interested in political participation. Perhaps it has. But, in the same way the Brotherhood changed its stripes before, it can certainly do so again—especially once it no longer needs to fear brutal oppression by the Egyptian regime. Moreover, greater attention should be granted to the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood is internally divided over how extreme its brand of political Islam ought to be. For example, during the 2011 uprising, Mohamed Badi, the Brotherhood's Supreme Guide, "pledged the Brotherhood would 'continue to raise the banner

of jihad' against the Jews, which he called the group's 'first and foremost enemies.'"[2] Other Brotherhood figures have made similar points. Ragib Hilal Hamida, an Egyptian MP and Muslim Brotherhood member, has stated, "Terrorism is not a curse when given its true meaning. [When interpreted accurately] it means opposing occupation as it exists in Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq. From my point of view, bin Laden, al-Zawahiri and al-Zarqawi are not terrorists in the sense accepted by some. I support all their activities since they are a thorn in the side of the Americans and the Zionists."[3]

These statements drive home a vital point: While many have pointed out that the current revolutions taking place in the Middle East are being led by secular, pro-democratic youth groups, one should note that often, after revolutions, more extreme groups overrun the moderate ones, and extremists become even more radical. Examples of this trend include the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks of revolutionary Russia; the Nazis and Social Democrats of Weimar Republic in Germany; and the Revolutionary Guard of Iran, who led the 1979 revolution from the outset but later overwhelmed the reformers and became even more strident. True, such an outcome is not predetermined. Yet no one should ignore the potential for greater radicalism as a result of Mideast upheavals.

Iran, meanwhile, is busy exploiting Egypt's turmoil. In the wake of the Mubarak regime's collapse, it sent two warships through the Suez Canal—the first time it had done so since the 1979 revolution.[4] The Egyptian government acquiesced to this passage. The exchange was not lost on regional observers. "Egypt is signaling that it is no longer committed to its strategic alliance with Israel against Iran, and that Cairo is now willing to do business with Tehran," one analyst noted in London's *Telegraph* newspaper.[5] Cairo's unfolding dalliance with—or, at a minimum, its greater tolerance of—the Islamic Republic suggests that the current transformations open doors for Iran, even among traditional allies of the United States.

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Bahrain and Saudi Arabia

The unrest now taking place in Bahrain has shaken the leaders of Saudi Arabia to their core, and for good reason. Bahrain is a majority Shi'ite country ruled by a Sunni minority—one which is close to the Saudi leadership. If Bahrain's government were to fall, and a Shi'ite government rise to power instead, it would be—in the eyes of the Saudis—a major victory for their regional nemesis, Shi'ite Iran.[6] (The Saudi rulers also fear an uprising from their own Shi'ite population, which, although a minority within the country, is located mostly on the border with Bahrain.[7]) A political sea change in Bahrain also could pose a major challenge to America's strategic interests there, particularly as it seeks to keep an eye on the expanding naval power of Iran. The headquarters of the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet are based in Bahrain, just across the Persian Gulf from Iran—one factor which has made Bahrain, in the words of a former U.S. Navy Rear Admiral, "the enduring logis-

tical support for the United States Navy operating in the Persian Gulf for 50 years."[8] Moreover, the Fifth Fleet protects the supply of oil which moves through the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz—which totals thirty-three percent of all seaborne traded oil and seventeen percent of oil traded worldwide.[9] The Strait of Hormuz is, in the words of the U.S. Department of Energy, "the world's most important oil chokepoint."[10]

Early on, during the Egyptian uprising, the Saudi monarchy warned the Obama administration not to pressure President Hosni Mubarak to step down. The Saudi rulers saw an obvious parallel between their status (and that of the royal family that rules Bahrain) and Mubarak's. They had all served the United States well and were in turn supported by it. When the Obama administration proceeded nevertheless to urge a transition in Egypt, Saudi fears and concerns were stoked.

In short, two more nations, key to U.S. interests in the region, now face uncertainty. One has been challenged, and the other rests uneasily, fearing it is next in line and consumed by doubts about the extent it can rely on the U.S. as its main ally.

Jordan

Jordan, which until recently was viewed as a reliable and significant U.S. ally in the region, is also facing challenges to its regime. Here too, a minority group is governing a majority. The majority of Jordanians are of Palestinian descent, while the country is governed by a Hashemite minority. The Jordanian legislature, cabinet, and judiciary are merely "democratic facades… subject to control by the Hashemite minority rulers who were placed in charge of the majority Palestinian population by a colonial decision."[11] True, the king is well-respected and so far it looks as if various reforms that are being enacted might satisfy the protestors. However, once such a process starts—especially in the face of high unemployment, a growing educated class, and the availability of modern communication tools—it tends to feed on itself.

In the absence of a strong American presence in the region, Jordan is likely to follow its inclination to accommodate and compromise with the powers that be, even if those powers turn out to be Iran, rather than to push back against them. Thus, when Saddam was riding high, Jordan refrained from condemning Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. It briefly joined Egypt and Syria in attacking Israel in 1967, but when Israel gained the upper hand, Jordan was quick to cut back its involvement—and before too long, it accepted UN Security Council Resolution 242, worked out in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, which represented a de facto transition to peace.[12] In short, Jordan is another U.S. ally that is being undermined and is fearful of being abandoned by the United States.

American primacy in retreat

So far, the review has encompassed countries that are holding the line, nervously, although nobody knows what tomorrow's headlines will bring. The United States is doing much less well in the rest of the region.

Iraq

Iraq so far has faced no major new challenges as a result of the 2011 regional uprisings, but it continues to experience ethnic and confessional violent conflicts of its

own, especially between a Shi'a-dominated government (which benefits from the fact that Shi'a make up 65 percent of the population) and a small but vocal Sunni minority. Additional conflicts take place among other groups including Kurds, Arabs and Turkmen. At the same time, it is undergoing a drawdown in American presence and a corresponding increase in Iranian influence.

Pursuant to the Obama administration's commitment, U.S. troops are rapidly leaving Iraq, while those that remain are positioned outside the main population centers and play only a very limited role in securing domestic order and in defending Iraq's borders. The fact that General Ray Odierno, the commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, suggested not long ago that UN peacekeeping might be needed to prevent civil war in Iraq if tensions do not ease is emblematic of America's rapidly diminishing role.[13]

Indeed, Iraq's Prime Minister, Nouri al-Maliki, has already indicated that the Status of Forces Agreement, under which U.S. forces are to remain in the country until the end of 2011, will not be extended once it expires.[14] But significant challenges remain. The Iraqi government is still often unable to provide even such elementary services as electricity for more than a few hours a day.[15] The political system is deadlocked, and violent ethnic strife continues, albeit at a much lower level than in 2005-2006. In short, one may well add Iraq to the list of failing states which the United States is leaving to largely fend for themselves.

Iraq once served as a major counterweight to Iran, which it fought to a stalemate after a grinding eight-year conflict. Today, however, Iraq plays no such role. On the contrary, the influence of Iran over Iraq's Shi'a majority government is significant, although not without ambiguities and difficulties of its own. Iran has provided funding, training and sanctuary to Shi'ite militias.[16] Particularly revealing is the return to Iraq in early 2011 of radical Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr from Iran, where he had been living for almost four years in self-imposed exile.[17] Eight months of deadlock following Iraq's 2010 parliamentary elections ended only after Sadr threw his political faction's support behind the unity government of Prime Minister Maliki—in a deal facilitated by Iran in what amounts to a key political victory.[18] Any way one scores it, Iraq is a place where U.S. influence is diminishing while Iranian influence is rising.

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Syria

Syria's reaction to the Middle Eastern uprisings has been to offer some very limited reforms. President Bashar al-Assad has promised to initiate municipal elections, grant more power to nongovernmental organizations, and create a new media law (though no action has been taken yet).[19] He also announced a 17 percent pay raise for the two million Syrians who work for the government.[20] No one can foresee at this stage whether these moves will shore up the regime, whet the appetite of the

weakened and oppressed opposition, or lead in some other direction. However, one observation can be made with great assurance: Syria, a nation that the United States once hoped to peel away from Iran and bring into the Western fold, is not moving away from Tehran; to the contrary, it is moving much closer.

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Under the Bush administration, and especially since the advent of the Obama administration, Washington has actively attempted to court Syria. The United States has done so through a number of steps, including high-ranking diplomatic contacts and the reestablishment of a U.S. embassy in Damascus after years without steady representation. The United States has even been willing to discuss the lifting of sanctions against Syria and pressuring Israel to give up the Golan Heights.[21] Syria not only rebuffed these overtures—but moved in the opposite direction, closer to Iran. With great fanfare, it hosted Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in early 2010 in a visit that underscored the strength of the Iranian-Syrian alliance.[22]

Iran has backed its diplomatic support for Syria with concrete action. It has transferred advanced radar to Syria as a means of deterring Israeli military action,[23] and most recently sent two warships to Syria for joint military exercises.[24] Syria likewise serves as a main pipeline through which Iran ships missiles and other arms to Hezbollah in Lebanon, despite UN and other demands to desist.

Lebanon

Like Iraq, Lebanon needs no input from other countries to add to its own convulsions. It was long considered one of the most democratic and pro-Western nations in the region. However, in recent years the role of Hezbollah has gradually increased, first as an opposition to the regime and then—as of 2009—as a major coalition partner whose power is growing. The group recently forced the government to suppress the investigation of the killing of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri; forced out of office the pro-Western Prime Minister Saad Hariri; and appointed a Prime Minister (Najib Mikati) favored by itself—and by Syria and Iran. A Hariri ally's statement that these developments show that "Hezbollah was trying to 'rule Lebanon' and annex it for Iran"[25] is obviously overblown, but does reflect the way the Lebanese view the shifting political sands.

Hezbollah often acts as an Iranian proxy, one that Tehran finances, inspires, and arms, and one to which it has transferred numerous advanced missiles and other military equipment.[26] Hezbollah, in turn, often follows instructions from Iran about when to employ its arms against Israeli, American, and other targets.

So while Lebanon is often viewed by the American media as a country friendly to the West, in actuality it was and increasingly is more of a client state. Once it was largely controlled by Syria; now it increasingly falls under Iran's sway.

Turkey

Turkey was considered solidly in the Western camp: a secularized state, a staunch member of NATO, a nation keen to join the EU, and one with considerable commercial and

even military ties to Israel. However, since the election of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002, Turkey has become more Islamist, moved away from the West, and moved closer to Iran. In the first five years of AKP rule, trade between Turkey and Iran increased six-fold, as Turkey became Iran's most important regional trading partner.[27] Turkey is also replacing Dubai as Iran's financial conduit, allowing Turkish banks to help Iran circumvent UN sanctions and additional ones imposed by the United States and EU.[28]

This increased economic cooperation has translated into better political ties, too. After Iran's highly controversial 2009 elections, President Abdullah Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan were among the first international leaders to congratulate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on his victory. Turkey's Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, later argued that the election results were an internal Iranian matter and described the elections as "dynamic and well-attended."[29]

In June 2010, just before the United States finally succeeded in convincing Russia and even China to support the imposition of additional sanctions against Iran, Turkey (working with Brazil) came up with a deal it had negotiated with Iran regarding the treatment of uranium. Many observers view it as merely a stalling tactic intended to derail the sanction vote. And when the vote did take place, Turkey voted against sanctions. Turkish leaders have criticized the West's "double standard" of allowing Israel to possess nuclear weapons while working to prevent Iran from doing the same.[30]

True, sometimes Turkey sees itself as competing with Iran over who will be a major Middle Eastern power. However this is a limited rivalry between two nations that have become much closer to one another as Turkey has moved away from the West.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan's course is particularly difficult to chart. However, the United States has announced that as of July 2011, it will start scaling down its forces there and will have withdrawn by 2014, depending on conditions on the ground. America, moreover, is not alone; Switzerland has already removed its troops from the country, while the Dutch and Canadians will be gone by the end of 2011. The British have announced they will have all their troops out by 2015. This is not surprising to Afghan elites, who sense that the United States, having already abandoned them once (after they drove out the USSR), may well do so again.[31] They are mindful of the growing opposition to the war in the United States, as well as budgetary difficulties associated with the war effort. All of which makes cozying up to Iran an attractive course. Thus, after President Obama flew to Kabul to publically urge the Karzai government to curb corruption, President Karzai signaled his displeasure by warmly hosting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.[32] Karzai has also admitted to receiving bags of cash from Iran in return for "good relations," among other things.[33]

According to a 2009 State Department report on international terrorism, "Iran's Qods Force provided training to the Taliban in Afghanistan on small unit tactics, small arms, explosives, and indirect fire weapons. Since at least 2006, Iran has arranged arms shipments to select Taliban members, including small arms and associated ammunition, rocket propelled grenades, mortar rounds, 107mm rockets, and plastic explosives."[34]

If the U.S. withdraws from Afghanistan and leaves behind a failing state, many in the region will see this is as proof positive that the U.S. cannot be trusted as an ally.

In March 2011, the British Foreign Ministry announced that it had discovered a shipment of Iranian weapons en route to the Taliban, containing 48 long-range rockets.[35] WikiLeaks cables similarly reveal concerns over Iran's attempts to exert influence on the Afghan parliament. One cable reports that "Iranian government officials routinely encourage Parliament to support anti-Coalition policies and to raise anti-American talking points during debates. Pro-Western MPs say colleagues with close Iranian contacts accept money or political support to promote Iran's political agenda."[36] According to another, "Iranian meddling [in Afghanistan] is getting increasingly lethal."[37]

True, many other powers are seeking to influence the future of Afghanistan, including its various ethnic groups, Pakistan, and India. For instance, Pakistan's government has used America's eagerness to pull out of Afghanistan as justification to maintain ties with militant groups for future operations in Afghanistan.[38] Afghanistan therefore may be an unlikely candidate to fall under Iran's sway. However, it is also a nation in which the U.S. commitment to the region is severely tested. If the United States withdraws and leaves behind a failing state, many in the region will see this is as proof positive that the United States cannot be trusted as an ally.

Israel

Today, many in Israel are worried by what they see as America's betrayal of a longtime ally, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and by the implications for their country's own relationship with Washington. "American response to uprising in Egypt shows Washington has no qualms about 'dropping' a longtime ally. Is Israel in danger of receiving similar treatment?" asks an article in the daily *Yediot Ahronot*, voicing a widely-held fear.[39]

For Israelis, there is ample reason for concern. Since 2008, both the Israeli government and a majority of its voters have grown suspicious of U.S. support. They have looked critically upon President Obama's viewpoints and acts, chief among them the White House's ill-fated demand for a total freeze on construction in the West Bank and in Jerusalem as a *precondition* for negotiations with the Palestinians—without seeking any such concessions from the Palestinians.

Although there is, of course, no danger that Israel will fall under Iran's hegemony, it seems self-evident that the ways it is treated by the United States in the near future will have a profound effect on the issue at hand. The reason is that Israel has been considered for several decades the

closest ally of the United States in the Middle East. Hence the way it is treated serves, in effect, as a sort of Rorschach test of the nature of U.S. commitments. The argument, raised by some American Middle East experts, that Israel has turned from an American asset to a liability is one signal of a possible change.[40] So is the call on the United States to "lean" more on Israel,[41] or impose the terms of a peace settlement upon it.[42] Much more telling will be the way the question of how to deal with Iran's nuclear program is resolved.

The coming test

That the United States is reducing its involvement in the Middle East—and that its influence is reduced by events beyond its control—cannot be contested, especially given the drawdown now under way in Iraq and the similar pullback expected in the near future from Afghanistan. Neither can it be contested that some nations have already moved closer to Iran (Syria, Turkey), that others have been pushed closer (Lebanon), and still others are undergoing regime changes that weaken their ties to the United States.

Where does the United States go from here? What are the options available to the United States if it is not about to abandon the Middle East and let it be subject to increasing Iranian influence and leverage? Some see hope that the various regimes, led by Egypt, will evolve into stable, pro-Western democracies. Yet this is a course that will take years at best. And the record of many other nations in which people power overthrew the prevailing order is far from reassuring. New military regimes, continued chaos, gridlock (*á la* Iraq), and Islamic governments are much more likely outcomes. The United States may continue to encourage, cajole, foster, and pressure various nations in the region to support its policies and to stave off Iran. However, as the preceding review suggests, in some nations such efforts are largely spurned; in others, those in power wonder if they can rely on the United States to stay the course; and others still are going to be much too consumed with their internal travails to pay much mind to U.S. wishes.

The key to the future of the Middle East in the near term, therefore, does not lie in dealing with the various nations that are subject to increased Iranian influence or might be subject to it—but with Iran itself. If Iran would cease to be a threat, if it would give up its militaristic nuclear plans and regional ambitions, the United States would have much less reason to be concerned with the regime reforms and transformations taking place throughout the region. In short, the United States can no longer hope to deal with Iran's regional ambitions by dealing with the various nations in the region individually. It must confront Iran itself.

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In the best of all worlds, a domestic uprising inside Iran would lead to a regime change, one that would focus on serving Iran's own people and which would cease to meddle in the affairs of other nations. Given the persistent way in which the Iranian regime has been able to suppress the opposition, however, this must be understood as what it is: a very unlikely development. Efforts

by the United States to engage Iran diplomatically have clearly failed. Sanctions, for their part, seem to have an effect, albeit one that, at best, will hobble Iran only slowly. Meanwhile, the region is in turmoil and Iran's nuclear program seems to be back on track.

For obvious reasons, the United States is reluctant to consider a military option. The U.S.'s allies and the UN are exceedingly unlikely to support a strike against Iran; the U.S. military is very leery about opening another military front; and the U.S. public favors scaling back, rather than increasing, U.S. commitments overseas. Yet the question remains: if the United States does not find a way to curb Iran's expansionist and militaristic ambitions, can it live up to its commitments to its allies in the region? Will they trust it to come to their aid? And what conclusions will other U.S. allies—and adversaries—throughout the world draw if the United States gradually abandons the Middle East?

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The Dangers of Defunding Defense

Jim Talent & Mackenzie Eaglen

The storms of war have broken in Afghanistan and are gathering in the Pacific, South Asia, the Middle East, eastern Europe, and even in south and central America. Not since the end of World War II has America more urgently needed honest and clear thinking about its enduring national interests and a bipartisan commitment to building up the capabilities—civilian and military—necessary to protect them.

Yet Washington increasingly is looking inward. Faced with divisions at home and the challenge of a tightening fiscal climate, our policymakers spend enormous energy arguing about tactics without thinking about strategy. They react to events rather than planning for the future. Without a common purpose, they are less and less able to resist the demands of their most partisan supporters. And, driven by the desire to save money, they take steps which reduce military spending in the short term but vastly increase the danger and cost to America in the long term.

Death by a thousand cuts

Over the past two years, the U.S. government has been cutting plans and programs which are critical to recapitalizing the legacy fleets of all the military services. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has been warning that a resource-

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constrained environment requires that "hard choices" be made,[1] and on that basis has cancelled or sought to kill a number of defense programs, including the F-22 fifth-generation fighter, the C-17 cargo aircraft, the VH-71 helicopter, the Air Force's combat search and rescue helicopter, and the ground combat vehicle portion of the Army's Future Combat Systems.

Missile defenses have suffered as well. In September 2009, the Obama administration abruptly cancelled America's commitment to place land-based interceptors in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic. Further, the Pentagon reduced the overall budget for missile defense last year by $1.6 billion, or 16 percent from 2009 levels. Specifically, the Administration scaled back the number of ground-based midcourse interceptors in Alaska and California from the planned forty-four to thirty, terminated the multiple kill vehicle program for defeating countermeasures, deferred the purchase of a second Airbone Laser aircraft, abandoned the Kinetic Energy Interceptor program (designed for intercepting ballistic missiles in their boost phase), and purged funding for the space test bed for missile defense.

The size of the U.S. Navy has been cut by half since the 1980s, and today it is the smallest it has been since 1916—and still shrinking. Yet in a speech before the Navy League last May, Secretary Gates ridiculed the idea that the U.S. Navy is too weak.[2] The Pentagon's actions belie his words, however. On Gates' watch, the Navy has already ended purchases of the next-generation DDG-1000 destroyers, extended the production of the next aircraft carrier from four years to five, killed the MPF-A large-deck aviation ship and its mobile landing platform, and delayed indefinitely the next-generation cruiser.

Indeed, defense spending is falling by every metric: as a percentage of the federal budget, as a percentage of the overall economy (or Gross Domestic Product), and in real terms. Yet even with the dizzying pace of defense reductions of late, policymakers are increasing their demands for more defense cuts.

Defense budget cuts are already having dramatic negative consequences for the U.S. military today, and will compromise America's ability to fight and win both war and peace tomorrow. If America's elected officials do not reverse the rapid decline in long-standing core U.S. military capabilities, the United States will not only lose a core ingredient of the nation's superpower status; it will be unable to sustain the capabilities necessary to defend vital American interests in an increasingly dangerous and unsettled world.

Gathering threats

Yet an honest review of world events over the last year should lead no one to be sanguine about American security.

While the United States has made some tactical gains in the war against Islamist extremism, the current administration lacks a coherent strategy for defeating the threat altogether. Meanwhile the top priority of our terrorist adversaries is to develop weapons of mass destruction, and they are making progress; according to the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism, terrorists are likely to develop and deploy a weapon of mass destruction as early as 2013.[3]

One hundred thousand American troops are currently struggling to accomplish an ill-defined mission in

Afghanistan. Pakistani cooperation against the Taliban remains uncertain, and the Karzai government is an increasingly unreliable partner in the effort. Success is possible in Afghanistan—assuming success is defined as stabilizing the country and creating a government which can contribute materially to its own security. But even the Obama administration is tacitly admitting that this will take a number of years to achieve and will require a substantial number of American troops on the ground for a long time.

It is clear that the Chinese are deliberately developing the capability to exclude the United States from freedom of operation within the western Pacific Ocean. Their purpose is to keep the United States as far as possible from their economic center of gravity (which is along their coast), as well as to underscore their control over the South China Sea, East China Sea, and Yellow Sea.

Just prior to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' recent visit to China, its military leaders unveiled a new stealth fighter. The test flight of this advanced aircraft highlights what a leaked Defense Intelligence Agency report from a year ago found: the situation in the air over the Taiwan Strait is steadily shifting against Taiwan.[4] While the U.S. debates whether to sell F-16C/Ds to Taiwan, China's air force is rapidly modernizing. The Pentagon's latest report to Congress on Chinese military power notes, for example, that "China has the most active land-based ballistic and cruise-missile program in the world," may have already begun construction of an aircraft carrier, and is building new attack submarines equipped with advanced weapons.[5] (Of particular concern in this regard is China's development of an anti-ship ballistic missile with a maneuverable warhead and range of more than 1,500 kilometers.)

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In early 2009, there were expectations that the incoming Obama administration would achieve a breakthrough with North Korea in the Six-Party Talks. But Pyongyang quickly sent clear signals that it would not be any more accommodating under this presidency than it was under the last. Pyongyang was quick to prove it; over the following months, it threatened to weaponize all of its plutonium and build more nuclear weapons, abandoned all previous disarmament pledges, and vowed to "never return" to the already-moribund Six-Party talks. The DPRK also launched several missiles in violation of UN resolutions, conducted a nuclear test, abrogated the Korean War armistice and all bilateral agreements with South Korea, threatened war against the United States, South Korea, and Japan, threatened the safety of civilian airliners, and closed its border, holding hundreds of South Koreans hostage. Since then, it has engaged in even deadlier provocations, conducting two unprovoked acts of war against South Korea—the March 2010 sinking of the South Korean naval ship *Cheonan*, and the

November 2010 artillery rocketing of Yeonpyeong Island.

Iran continues to be the world's leading sponsor of terrorism. The Iranian regime is closely allied with Syria (another state sponsor of terrorism), regularly supplies terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah with rockets and other arms, foments instability throughout the Middle East, and is hated and distrusted by ITS neighbors. According to the latest round of documents released by WikiLeaks, the Iranians have already acquired advanced missiles from the North Koreans.[6] We can expect Tehran's aggressiveness to increase substantially once it acquires nuclear weapons.

Russia has been challenging the United States on numerous occasions. In fact, Moscow is taking advantage of Obama's "reset" policy to crack down on its domestic opposition, jailing (or extending the sentences of) Kremlin opponents like Boris Nemtsov and Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Internationally, meanwhile, Moscow is increasingly behaving badly. It is known to have provided ballistic missile technology and advanced weaponry to countries like Iran, Syria, and Venezuela. Russia's intelligence operations, including sleeper cells, against the United States are as robust as during the peak of the Cold War. Encroachments into the Arctic and an active military modernization program, including nuclear modernization, are likewise a concern as Russia strengthens its power projection capability.

A host of additional threats have the potential to grow more severe, including drug-related violence in northern Mexico; Venezuela's military buildup (being carried out with the support of Iran and Russia); piracy on the high seas; drug cartels and organized crime at our borders; and failing states such as Yemen and Somali. In short, no place in the world is getting safer for the United States. None of America's enduring national interests are more secure today than they were even a short time ago. Every category of significant risk is clearly growing. Our leaders in Washington should reexamine the nature of America's vital interests and assess how better to develop and sustain the capabilities necessary to protect those interests.

But they have not done so. American foreign policy has been drifting since the end of the Cold War. In the absence of strategic clarity, budget considerations have driven defense policy, rather than the other way around.

Reasonable people can certainly disagree about how to respond to the growing dangers. But one thing is certain: a budget-driven policy, occurring in a vacuum, with no consideration of history or understanding of strategic context, is likely to lead to disaster for the United States.

How did we get here?

The current situation is hardly unique in recent American history. In the late 1970s, President Jimmy Carter similarly slashed defense spending following a decade of war. In lieu of repairing the equipment on hand or buying more modern weapons systems, the Carter administration invested mostly in research and development. America's military ended up a "hollow force," without the capabilities necessary to protect America's interests and commitments abroad.

President Ronald Reagan assumed office in 1981, inheriting a struggling economy and a nation suffering from low morale. But Reagan

understood the basic equation of world leadership: force plus resolve equals power. And despite the large budget deficits of that era, he managed to secure two double-digit increases in the defense budget followed by additional increases for several years following.

Readiness, confidence, and training all improved within the U.S. military. The armed forces were able to buy a new generation of technologically-sophisticated equipment. Meanwhile, the aging leaders of the Soviet Union realized that they were in a competition which they could not win. Throughout the rest of the 1980s, growing American power increasingly forced the Soviets into a corner until they simply gave up. And the same military that Reagan built during the Cold War overwhelmingly defeated Saddam Hussein and made possible the peace and prosperity that America enjoyed throughout the 1990s.

Upon assuming office, however, President Bill Clinton cut the size of the force by a full one-third. He did so even though military operations around the world picked up nearly three-fold. Military modernization budgets also were cut substantially during the Clinton years, and procurement budgets were reduced much further than the cuts in force size and structure warranted. These reductions in the planned purchases of new equipment caused the age of the inventory to rise, maintenance costs to climb steadily, and readiness levels to drop accordingly.

The dramatically-reduced force of the 1990s was the one tasked to respond to major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan for the past decade. Under the Bush administration, the strategy-resource mismatch—the gap between dollars and missions—grew deeper. The cost of maintaining an ever-aging force structure ballooned while the Administration postponed investment in new systems that would have helped relieve the financial and practical burden of maintaining the inventory. The defense-industrial base hemorrhaged and lost critical skill sets essential to maintaining America's military superiority. And the cost of maintaining the all-volunteer force increased to compensate for the stress of asking a limited number of personnel to do so much for so long.

The military that has been responding with amazing resilience since 9/11 in two theaters is skeletal compared to the force that started the 1990s. Between the fall of the Berlin Wall and 9/11, the active duty Army was cut from eighteen divisions to ten. The Navy, which counted 568 ships in the late 1980s, struggles today to sustain a fleet of only 280. And the number of tactical air wings in the Air Force was reduced from thirty-seven at the time of Desert Storm to twenty by the mid-1990s.

The costs of underfunding hard power

America's leaders have never redefined the global role of the United States since the fall of the Berlin Wall. In the absence of strategic clarity, and given the pressure to reduce the deficit while protecting domestic programs, our leaders have repeatedly adopted unrealistically rosy assumptions about the existing threats to America's vital interests. (The last strategic plan issued by the Pentagon mentioned climate change more often than China, Russia, and Iran combined.)[7] But America does have vital interests, and threats to them do exist. Faced with that reality,

America's presidents have deployed a shrinking and aging force at a rate far higher than was ever necessary during the Cold War.

In short, America's leaders have consistently underfunded defense procurement for short-term political and budgetary reasons, knowing that what they are spending will not buy the programs they say they need—but knowing also that the effect will probably not be felt until their term is over. It is very tempting to rob the future to pay for the present, especially when the future will be someone else's responsibility.

As military capabilities atrophy, the United States will be unable to contain China, deter Russian ambitions, dissuade North Korea from aggression, and protect against the Iranian missile and potential nuclear threats.

The chickens are now coming home to roost as the military faces an unavoidable modernization crisis. The capabilities most in need of support over the next five years include the Navy's surface fleet, submarine fleet, aircraft carriers, and Littoral Combat Ships. The Air Force needs to fully replace its legacy fighter fleet with F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. Consideration will be required for additional upgraded F-15s as the Joint Strike Fighter continues to slip in production timelines, creating a bigger shortfall in the Air Force fighter inventory. The Air Force must also acquire additional precision strike capability, a next-generation bomber, additional lift and more cargo capacity. After skipping two generations of modernization, the U.S. Army needs a new generation of combat fighting vehicles. The military must also restore select missile defense cuts of recent years, bolster sea-based missile defense capabilities, and rapidly build space, satellite, and cyber warfare capabilities.

Given the sweeping defense cuts over the past two years, defense spending and priorities have become a zero-sum proposition. For example, unless funding is increased, it is inevitable that the Navy will be too small to fully support its growing ballistic missile defense missions. A shrinking carrier fleet (the Navy is supposed to have 11 carriers but will be down to nine eventually) will reduce America's ability to project power. The Army will find it more difficult to seize and hold territory against organized ground forces with yet another generation of Army modernization on the chopping block. The Air Force will lose the global air dominance that not only renders opposing air forces incapable of effective interference during conflict but also neutralizes enemy air defenses and ensures ground force safety in combat.

Thanks to air superiority, no soldier or U.S. Marine has come under attack from enemy air forces since the Korean War. That is changing. "Some foreign-built fighters can now match or best the F-15 in aerial combat," journalist Mark Bowden wrote in last March's issue of *The Atlantic*. "America is choosing to give up some of the edge we've long enjoyed, rather than pay the price to preserve it" by building enough F-22 fifth-generation fighters.[8]

Indeed, China and Russia are operating 12 fighter and bomber production lines today. The United States only has one. Russia is expanding its fighter forces and fields the Su-34 Fullback strike aircraft, which can carry supersonic anti-ship cruise

missiles and short-range air-to-air missiles. China has ordered an estimated 76 Su-30MKK Flanker-Gs and can produce an additional 250 under license. China can easily modernize 171 of its jets and build 105 new ones, which means it would have roughly 626 multirole fighters available for air superiority missions. That would place China in the same league as the United States, which has 522 F-15s (of various classes), 217 F-15Es, and 187 F-22s.

As military capabilities atrophy, the United States will be unable to contain China, deter Russian ambitions, dissuade North Korea from aggression, and protect against the Iranian missile and potential nuclear threats. Threats to the global system of trade (which rests on the foundation of the U.S.-led security structure) will increase, and other operations like counterterrorism, counter-piracy, humanitarian assistance, homeland defense, partner development and capacity building, will be compromised.

Many Americans look at the spending in Iraq and Afghanistan and find it hard to believe that the military needs more money. But practically speaking, there are two defense budgets. Funding for sustained combat operations is separate from the core budget for the military; war funding cannot be used to sustain ongoing procurement or modernization, or to support daily operations in the over 100 countries where American forces are relieving flood victims, rescuing stranded cruise ships, stopping piracy, or performing the myriad other functions required to protect the global interests of the United States.

Remedying the situation

It is not entirely true that no one in Washington has been examining America's enduring national interests, thinking strategically, and assessing the adequacy of defense planning based on that context. Last year, Congress created an Independent Panel of distinguished defense and foreign policy experts to do exactly that. The Commission was led jointly by President Clinton's Secretary of Defense, William J. Perry, and President George W. Bush's National Security Adviser, Stephen J. Hadley. The other 18 members were appointed from across the political spectrum. The Commission first reviewed the Pentagon's most current strategic planning document, issued in the spring of 2010. While complimenting the Department's efforts in Afghanistan, the group otherwise dismissed the Pentagon's plans as failing to come to grips with the needs of national security. The Commission then undertook its own review of the challenges facing the United States.

Acting unanimously, the Commission concluded that America's enduring national security interests include defending the American homeland, assuring access to the sea, air, space, and cyberspace, preserving a favorable balance of power across Eurasia that prevents authoritarian domination of that region, and providing for the global "common good" through actions such as humanitarian aid, development assistance, and disaster relief. From the very fact that these interests are vital, the panel noted that America must and would defend them against serious threats:

> There is a choice our planners do not have. As the last 20 years have shown, America does not have the option of abandoning a leadership role in support of its national interests. Those inter-

> ests are vital to the security of the United States. Failure to anticipate and manage the conflicts that threaten those interests—to thoughtfully exploit the options we have set forth above in support of a purposeful global strategy—will not make those conflicts go away or make America's interests any less important. It will simply lead to an increasingly unstable and unfriendly global climate and, eventually, to conflicts America cannot ignore, which we must prosecute with limited choices under unfavorable circumstances—and with stakes that are higher than anyone would like.[9]

The Commission emphasized the importance of preparing for the full spectrum of risk and of maintaining a sufficient margin of superiority so as to deter threats as well as decisively succeed in any missions that are necessary. Under the circumstances, the Commission concluded that America's armed forces are too small and are relying on an inventory of equipment that is old, unreliable, insufficient in number, and technologically out of date. According to the Commission, "[I]t is unlikely that the United States can make do with less than it needed in the early 1990s, when Americans assumed the world would be much more peaceful post Cold War."[10]

The Commission members agreed the Pentagon "should plan for a force structure that gives us a clear predominance of capability in any given situation."[11] For example, the Commission recommended that the Navy be expanded to the 346 ships that had been identified as the minimum necessary in the 1993 Bottom Up Review. The report also identified the urgent need to modernize the weapons and equipment inventory of all the services. According to the Commission, the men and women in the U.S. military are "operating at maximum operational tempo, wearing out people and equipment faster then expected," and "the growing stress on the force means that a train wreck is coming in the areas of personnel, acquisition, and force structure."[12]

Getting there from here

Over the last twenty years, there has been a slow but steady decline in American power relative to the risks confronting the United States. The irony of that decline is that it was completely unnecessary. To be sure, there is a price to strength, but there is also a price to weakness. The sums necessary to sustain American predominance were, and still are, small compared to the money which the government has readily spent on other programs and at the cost of reducing America's margin of safety. For example, had the Army been maintained at or near its size and strength after Operation Desert Storm and through 9/11, the Afghan mission could have been prosecuted more vigorously even when the Iraqi conflict was at its height. That would have reduced the time necessary for success in Afghanistan, and the cost of delay there has overwhelmed whatever savings resulted from reducing the size of the Army during the 1990s.

It is no longer possible to avoid the challenges confronting America's military. Other nations are beginning to understand and exploit the reality of American weakness. It is still possible to recover the situation, but not if America's leaders continue pretending that the current downward drift can continue without consequences that no one can ignore. Many leaders on both sides of the aisle are unhappy with American foreign policy. They think that the United States should

downsize its commitments and its global leadership role, and that America therefore does not need a large military establishment. It is indeed past time for a thorough debate about the role the United States should play in the modern world. Defense spending, however, should not be the back door through which those leaders try to change foreign policy.

Since the Berlin Wall fell, America has been governed by four Presidents whose views have spanned the entirety of the political spectrum. None of those Presidents has seriously considered abandoning America's traditional commitments or the role the United States has played since 1945 as the chief guarantor of a liberal international order. Rather, the consistent lesson of the last twenty years is that cutting the size or modernization budgets of the armed forces will not reduce the missions which America's military must perform. In other words, America's strategic habits show no sign of changing; the question is whether the United States will adequately support the capabilities, military and civilian, which are clearly necessary to protect America's vital interests as every president since Ronald Reagan has defined them.

If America continues to underfund the military, it will not mean a less ambitious foreign policy. It will mean hollow security and treaty commitments, greatly increased risk of conflict, and substantially greater casualties for the men and women who serve in the military. Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-CA) summed it up best at a speech at the Heritage Foundation last May: a defense budget in decline portends an America in decline.[13]

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Our China Challenge

Chuck DeVore

Most discussions of Sino-American relations focus on symptoms and symbols: China's role in the Six-Party Talks over North Korea's nuclear program; China's material assistance to the Iranian nuclear program; Chinese opposition to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan; U.S.-China military exchanges; Chinese cooperation on climate change; human rights in China; and economic issues such as currency valuations, trade and investment. When viewed in the context of these individual issues, the relative success or failure of President Barack Obama's policies show him to be muddling through about as well as his predecessors. But, however important these issues appear, they are simply a veneer obscuring a more fundamental matter: the relative power of the People's Republic of China as compared to that of the United States.[1] Seen through this more basic prism, the shifting balance of power between Washington and Beijing should take on greater urgency.

Cruise control

Sino-American relations in the modern era can be defined as having three basic periods: the early Cold War period from 1949 to 1972, when China was seen as a communist ally of the Soviet Union; the strategic counterweight

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period, from Nixon's opening to China in 1972 to the Cold War's end in 1991; and 1991 to the present, as China has modernized and U.S. policymakers have struggled to grasp the implications of a stronger China and its strategic intentions.

Since the end of the Cold War, the Sino-American relationship has been marked by confusion and inconsistency, at least on the U.S. side. Americans don't know whether to embrace China as a strategic partner, hold it at arm's length as an economic competitor, or view its rise with alarm as a new and more dangerous foe than was the Soviet Union.

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A strategic review of America's relationship with China has been needed since the Chinese Communist Party ordered the People's Liberation Army to clear the democracy protesters from Tiananmen Square in 1989, and the fall of the Berlin Wall shortly thereafter. For a few months in 1992, it appeared that this would happen, with presidential candidate Bill Clinton scoring President George H.W. Bush for being too friendly with "potentates and dictators" and suggesting that the United States should use trade sanctions against China to pressure them on human rights and democracy.[2] But within a year Clinton, now President, would be holding a summit with his Chinese counterpart and any talk of sanctions to induce reform was abandoned. By 1999, China was granted Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR), paving the way for its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO).

By the 2000 campaign, both Vice President Al Gore and Governor George W. Bush said they wanted engagement with China. When the Gore campaign asserted that Bush's thinking was aligned with conservatives who saw China as a future enemy, it provoked a response from Bush foreign policy advisor Condoleezza Rice that Mr. Bush was neither a cold warrior nor an isolationist.[3] But, when a U.S. Navy EP-3E signals intelligence aircraft was rammed in midair by a Chinese J-8 interceptor on April 1, 2001, the crew of 24 being held on Hainan Island for 11 days, it appeared that the new Bush administration would reevaluate relations with China, with the island democracy of Taiwan being the chief beneficiary. Some five weeks after 9/11, however, President Bush was in Shanghai saying, "President Jiang and the government stand side by side with the American people as we fight this evil force."[4] The remainder of President Bush's years in office marked a continuation of the status quo and a steady increase in U.S.-China trade.

By the 2008 campaign cycle, candidate Barack Obama was advising President Bush to consider boycotting the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics to pressure China to help stop the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, and improve human rights

in Tibet.[5] But the same day he did, Obama admitted, "It's very hard to tell your banker that he's wrong… if we are running huge deficits and big national debts and we're borrowing money constantly from China, that gives us less leverage. It gives us less leverage to talk about human rights."[6] In the three years since, TARP, the stimulus, ObamaCare and $2 trillion more in Federal debt, much of it purchased by the Chinese, have presumably reinforced President Obama's reticence to confront his "banker."

As of 2006, China spent 4.3 percent of its GDP on defense, with routine double-digit year-over-year increases in spending.[7] While fighting two wars, the United States spent roughly the same, four percent of its economy, on defense in 2005.[8] But China's defense spending is on a steeply upward trend, both in real terms and as a percentage of their GDP, while the United States is under tremendous fiscal pressure to pull back on all government spending, including spending on the military.

China, combining a strong economy, flush currency holdings and strategic investments with a growing and modernizing military, is increasingly flexing its muscles in the Pacific region, most notably against Japan over sovereignty of the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea. How and when China tips the correlation of forces enough in its favor to reorder the greater Pacific region remains in question.

Not the Soviets

China presents three significantly different strategic challenges to America than those that were posed by the former Soviet Union.

The first is China's burgeoning economy and its $2.85 *trillion* in foreign currency holdings,[9] abetted by its modern mercantilist policies. This is most unlike the perpetually-broke Soviet empire. This cash gives Beijing leverage in ways that the Soviet Politburo could only dream of. Chinese monetary inducements may become the future equivalent of gunboat diplomacy via the American carrier battle group.

The second divergence is the PRC's determination not to repeat the mistakes of the USSR. In spite of its military spending, the Soviet Union was never able to achieve a favorable enough correlation of forces to conquer Western Europe, or even to credibly threaten to do so. China's leaders understand that a strong economy leads to a strong military, not the reverse. As China's economy grows steadily, its military expenditures increase—how much is the question, as it is very difficult to determine China's exact military spending (by design, as the Chinese are very secretive and more successful than the Soviet Union was in hiding the true nature of their military buildup). Conversely, America's ballooning public debt and social welfare, pension, and health obligations will act to hobble U.S. military and basic research investments for the foreseeable future.[10]

China, combining a strong economy, flush currency holdings and strategic investments with a growing and modernizing military, is increasingly flexing its muscles in the Pacific.

What the Chinese spend their military *renminbi* on is just as important. China appears to be preparing for the next conflict, rather than attempting to match America aircraft

carrier-for-carrier. In this, the Chinese present their third challenge to America and throw the traditional calculation of a correlation of forces into disarray. China has the world's largest army, and it is modernizing it, placing special attention on a highly trained and well-equipped subset of the People's Liberation Army—a subset about as large as the entire United States Army active force. China is also modernizing its navy and air force. And China's space industry launched as many orbital missions as the U.S. did in 2010. But more troubling to American strategic planners are China's asymmetric dimensions of power. For instance, China's fascination with assaulting the Internet is intensely unsettling, with WikiLeaks reporting that Chinese officials ordered an attack on Google in December of 2009, coupled with a strike that rerouted much of the world's Internet traffic through China for 20 minutes in April 2010.[11] Rather than build a dozen aircraft carriers, China is deploying systems to destroy the $6 billion ships with suborbital, hypersonic ballistic missiles. And, China is extremely interested in directed energy and electromagnetic pulse (EMP) weapons designed to render America's massive investment in high-tech weaponry useless, turning it from an asset to a liability with one flick of a switch.

China's leaders understand that a strong economy leads to a strong military, not the reverse. As China's economy grows steadily, its military expenditures increase.

Whether or not the era of American supremacy is coming to a close or will continue is almost entirely dependent on the power equation between the United States and the People's Republic of China. That this power relationship should be approached through a thoughtful and purposeful strategic plan, rather than a series of transient policies, should be a given. So, what should American policymakers do to extend the American Century, assuming that that is possible or desirable?

The view from here

There are three general views of the rise of China, and what America should do about it.

One school of thought, representing a *realpolitik* viewpoint, was set out by Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, the international business editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, in a recent commentary.[12] In it, Evans-Pritchard raised the ghosts of Wilhelmine Germany's rapid rise in the late 1800s, and their overt challenge of British world leadership that led to the First World War. He then asks, "Is China now where Germany was in 1900?" citing the intemperate New Year's remarks of Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie that China's armed forces are "pushing forward preparations for military conflict in every strategic direction." Then Evans-Pritchard quotes an expert saying that Beijing is losing its grip on the colonels of the People's Liberation Army, a theme repeated with increasing frequency in articles about China.

Yet his prescription for these ills is more of the same: "The correct statecraft for the West is to treat Beijing politely but firmly as a member of the global club, gambling that the Confucian ethic will over time incline China to a quest for global as well as national concord." That major U.S. corporations, closely eyeing their quarterly profits, share this view is

one big reason why America's China policy has been immune from serious revision for 20 years.

At the other end of the spectrum is Irwin M. Stelzer, director of economic policy studies at the Hudson Institute. In his extensive January 17, 2011, China policy piece in the *Weekly Standard*, Stelzer asserts that China's trade policies are not just about economics. Rather, Chinese President Hu Jintao sees "Trade, overseas investment, currency manipulation—all, war by other means; all, about the place of nations in the world, a key part of the 'strategic direction' in which he is taking his country." The United States, meanwhile, blithely continues its "historic policies. Free trade. Reliance on the World Trade Organization to settle disputes. Occasional public complaints about China's persistent undervaluation of the *renminbi*, but refusal to declare the regime a currency manipulator. And conferences, conferences, conferences. All very 20th century."[13]

After this bleak assessment, backed up by a litany of depressing examples of China's rise, Stelzer sets out specific ideas by which to counter China, including: stop apologizing; increase work visa allocations for talented people; harmonize trade and tax policies to the national interest; update trade policy to eliminate China's currency manipulation advantage and propensity for intellectual property theft; expand technology transfer restrictions on China; prepare for the next war; "Do whatever is needed to maintain superiority in the Asia-Pacific region, as our allies and potential allies are urging us to do"; and, stop borrowing from China by getting "our economic house in order."[14]

A third view of the Sino-American relationship may be found with the American left and organized labor. The principled left, as well as many conservatives, tend to agree that China's human rights record leaves much to be desired. Tibet is a common concern on the left, mirrored by conservatives' support for a free Taiwan. As was the case during the Cold War, organized labor has been a consistent critic of workplace conditions in China and the inability of its workers to join unions. China's blatant currency manipulation has also been a target. However, the left and labor are skeptics of robust U.S. defense spending and the trimming of entitlements, leaving them only partial allies of Stelzer's plan to deal with the China threat. Whether there is enough common ground between labor, the anti-China left and national defense conservatives to forge an effective alliance, similar to the one represented by the Committee on the Present Danger in the 1970s and 1980s, remains to be seen.

Whether or not the era of American supremacy is coming to a close or will continue is almost entirely dependent on the power equation between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China.

Internal challenges

America remains focused on fighting bands of Islamist terrorists and their supporters in Afghanistan and Iraq, with a watchful eye on the volatile instability in the Arab world, unrest in Pakistan, threats from the Islamic Republic of Iran and its Hezbollah terror proxy in Lebanon, and any number of nation-states, such as North Korea and Syria, sitting on the hair trigger of chaos. Meanwhile, China quietly prepares. China's stra-

tegic planners would no doubt welcome American commitments to calm these regions at great cost in American blood, treasure, and focus. But before China can assume superpower status, supplanting or displacing America's historic role in the Pacific, then elsewhere, it has its own obstacles to overcome.

China's Communist Party, a political monopoly, appears unable to reform itself. Corruption is still the norm. Rule of law is spotty. Choosing an example from among the myriad that erode the "moral influence" that Sun Tzu thought so important[15] comes a report of the son of a police official whose drunken driving hit-and-run killed one college student while wounding another. As he was detained, he dared guards to charge him, shouting, "My dad is Li Gang!" This rant from a son of the nomenklatura has become a catch phrase for corruption-weary Chinese.[16]

Rather than assume that a powerful China would benignly take its station as the world's most powerful nation, American policymakers need to prepare for a world with a less-than-friendly China.

For all the supposed advantages of China's state capitalism, the Chinese themselves appear to understand its limitations. In an article remarkable for its self-criticism, a former senior official of China's central bank wrote that China's "Achilles' heel" was its inability to innovate caused by an "unholy alliance" between government and big business, lamenting that "meritocracy has been eroded by a political culture of sycophancy and cynicism." The former high-level banker also notes "that China has become one of the world's most polluted countries. Dust and smog choke its cities. All of the country's major rivers are contaminated," while "[r]elentless extraction is quickly depleting China's resource deposits." Then he explains what is likely the greatest concern of Chinese policymakers who represent a communist party that is supposedly on the side of the proletariat: "Income distribution has remained skewed in favor of the rich for too long, and the government has failed to provide decent public goods. With the contrast between the opulent lifestyles of the rich and the slow improvement of basic living conditions for the poor fomenting social tension, a serious backlash is brewing."[17]

Chinese leaders are said to understand that every great historical power also had a currency that was held in reserve. It may take decades for the *renminbi* to achieve that status, with a multi-polar international currency arrangement far more likely in the interim. The United States achieved economic parity with the British home islands in 1870, but it wasn't until the Federal Reserve was established in 1913, combined with WWI, that the U.S. dollar came into international use.[18] Seeing the *renminbi* become a reserve currency will take much more than economic growth; it is also influenced by law, institutions, alliances, and, most importantly, inertia.

The flip side of China's desire to see the *renminbi* become a reserve currency is the fact that China remains dependent on the dollar. China is very vulnerable to U.S. currency manipulation, with Dagong, China's sovereign debt-rating agency, warning that the Federal

Reserve's rapid printing of money under its "Quantitative Easing" policy may spark "a world credit war."[19] Printing dollars does two things to China: it devalues its $2.85 trillion of foreign currency holdings, most of it in dollars, and it makes the *renminbi* more valuable, undercutting China's exports. And, without an increase in internal consumption, a slowdown in exports has the potential to cause unrest among the hundreds of millions of Chinese workers who are one paycheck away from hunger in a nation with little in the way of a social safety net. Further, a *renminbi* reserve currency would act to increase its value, eroding one of China's key export advantages.

Hedging against China's rise

Beijing may indeed someday assume its role at the world's center, its "Middle Kingdom." Or, corruption-fueled ostentatious wealth may first wear down the patience of the Chinese people, plunging China into a convulsion of violence from its vast peasantry, as has happened dozens of times in its long past as rulers have exhausted their moral influence with the ruled.

Rather than assume that a powerful China would benignly take its station as the world's most powerful nation, American policymakers need to prepare for a world with a less-than-friendly China. Planners should assume that China's momentum may be unstoppable. Among other things, the United States should look to India as the new "China Card."[20] As part of this policy, U.S.-Indian trade and investment must increase exponentially and at the expense of the Chinese. Such a policy will serve two purposes: it builds up India as a strategic counterweight to China; and, it deals a hammer-blow to China's unbridled mercantilist policies. Economically, India is where China was about 10 years ago, with an economy and GDP per capita a little less than half of China's.[21] India's population is expected to surpass that of China in 14 years.[22] Meanwhile, India's vibrant parliamentary democracy, efforts at improving rule of law, and strides in developing its human capital make them a potentially powerful Asian rival to China—with democracy and human rights accruing an added soft power benefit to India in the region.

Unlike 1972's Sino-American marriage of convenience linking two unlikely partners wary of Soviet imperialism, the foundation of an Indo-American agreement, forged by a mutual concern over Chinese hegemony, would be strengthened by the shared values of free elections and a free press.

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Tangled Up in the War on Terror

Maj. Gen. Sid Shachnow, USA (ret.)

Following the attacks of September 11, President George W. Bush declared a new war, the "War on Terror." At the time, it was unclear what sort of war this would be. Was the President simply employing a rhetorical device to rally support? Or was he asking for a moral equivalent of war, such as the War on Poverty, the War on Crime, or the War on Drugs? Understanding that terror is a tactic begs the question: in a war on "terror," how does one identify the enemy? The United States can only defeat an enemy that can be named, described and understood. This lack of clarity would come to haunt U.S. forces charged with prosecuting the war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Soon after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the war—as fought in Afghanistan and, slightly later, in Iraq—morphed from conventional war to insurgency, civil war, ethnic strife, religious war, unconventional war and irregular war. At present, it is becoming a war on crime.

American forces, for the first time, were confronted with an entirely new set of Rules of Engagement (ROE) brought about by increased scrutiny from non-governmental organizations and some European governments concerned that the laws of war (and their concomitant emphasis on the protection of civilians) be ever more strictly applied—but only to American and Coalition forces. They did so even as the enemy employed tactics designed specifically to put those selfsame civilians in the line of fire.

For the Special Forces, SEALs, marines, soldiers and airmen tasked with confronting the terrorist insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, victory became

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an ephemeral notion, while the fear that prosecution awaited them for any exchange of fire that could be second-guessed by the aforementioned outside groups became all too real. The new ROE give the insurgents a perverse incentive to violate the laws of war, because in doing so they are more successful in combat against American and Coalition forces, which remain bound by those rules. Adding to the dilemma facing commanders and their troops is the specter of the so-called universal criminal courts which threaten to prosecute troops for war crimes they allege to have occurred on battlefields thousands of miles away from their national jurisdiction.

From the battlefield to the courtroom

Military units in Afghanistan and Iraq are incorporating law enforcement procedures into their combat operations. They are asked to collect biometric data and incriminating evidence, and are expected to preserve combat objectives as a crime scene. Troops trained to kick down doors and use lethal weapons now spend time bagging and tagging evidence, photographing raid scenes and grilling suspects. Military lawyers are assigned to the lowest levels of command. Their input in the planning, targeting and execution of military operations is now standard operating procedure.

Captured enemy personnel are no longer treated as prisoners of war. Effectively, they have become criminals potentially awaiting a trial, and are treated as such. To each, a defense lawyer is assigned, making interrogation almost impossible unless there is a plea agreement. Soldiers are charged with the collection of viable evidence proving the hostile intent of the captured enemy. Failure to do so, a common result on the battlefield, sometimes results in the release of captured enemy combatants. This process, so injurious to morale, is derogatorily referred to as a "catch and release" program.

The International Criminal Court and many European courts operate under an ill-defined legal concept called "universal jurisdiction," an international law principle that claims criminal jurisdiction over persons whose alleged crimes were committed outside the boundaries of the prosecuting state, regardless of nationality, country of residence, or any other relation with the prosecuting country. The risk is high that universal jurisdiction will be used in a politically-motivated manner to attempt to prosecute American military and government personnel. If such charges were brought, a dangerous legal precedent would be set. The NGOs leading these efforts, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, consider themselves protectors of global human rights. But a review of their court filings indicates a consistent pattern of ignoring or downplaying terrorist acts by recognized terror groups while loudly agitating for prosecution of U.S. and Israeli soldiers combating those very same terror groups.

There is strong evidence that these practitioners may be dupes as well as hypocritical. In a widely publicized case that captured the attention of American military commanders, a Hamas official boasted to *The Times of London* that his organization was behind a London court's issue of arrest warrants for several senior Israeli leaders intending to visit the UK.[1]

The tug-of-war over war

People throughout the world care about fundamental rules governing the conduct of war, even if they differ on the need to resort to violence in the first place. Nonetheless, there is profound disagreement over who has the authority to declare, interpret and enforce those rules, as well as who and what developments in the so called "art of war" will shape them now and into the future. The idea of "into the future" is particularly relevant, because laws have historically been developed looking back at past experience and often fail to anticipate technological development and changes in warfare. Therefore, the core question becomes, "Who owns the law of war?"

For the past 20 years, the center of gravity in establishing, interpreting and shaping the law of war has gradually shifted away from the military establishments of leading states and toward activists and publicly aggressive NGOs (such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Red Cross, etc.). More broadly, NGOs in recent years have been promoting an ever more utopian concept of the law of war, in keeping with their absolutist human rights ideology. In practice, this ideology is aimed at only at one side of any given conflict—the side that most assiduously tries to obey the law. At the same time, these same NGOs are indispensable in advancing the cause of humanitarianism in war. Yet the pendulum shift toward them has gone further than is useful. The ownership of the laws of war needs to give much greater weight to the state practices of leading countries. Democratic sovereigns that actually fight wars should be ascendant in shaping the law.

The laws of war attempt to mitigate the cruelties and misery produced by the scourge of armed conflict. Religious legal theorists first defined the notion of justice in war, and custom and international treaties continue to uphold that notion today.

Three important principles govern armed conflict. The law allows "proportional" and humane force to be used only when it is "militarily necessary," and it "distinguishes" between combatants and noncombatants to mitigate unnecessary harm. The law also guarantees the right to self-defense.

The new rules of engagement give the insurgents a perverse incentive to violate the laws of war, because in doing so they are more successful in combat against American and Coalition forces, which remain bound by those rules.

The problem with proportionality, especially when the enemy is a terrorist organization, is threefold. The theory is a) ambiguous, b) lacks useful precedents, and c) as a practical matter is nearly impossible to interpret and enforce.

There are those that take the position that a proportional response means the math must add up. Therefore, if one party to a conflict killed two or three the other party's response must not be greater, and those killed must not be civilians. Unfortunately, in the case that the original two or three killed were civilians generally escapes the notice of human rights organizations monitoring the conflict. In a similar sense, proportionality is expected of the type and frequency of the weapons used in the conflict.

Until recently, terrorist organizations were out-gunned by the conventional militaries that opposed them. Israel's experience in Operation Cast Lead against Hamas in Gaza inverted the equation; in that conflict, the terror grouped launched thousands of rockets and missiles into Israel explicitly targeting civilians before the IDF began earnest attempts to stop them.[2]

Rethinking the rules

The writing, then, is on the wall; the U.S. military should discard proportionality. Taking that position would not be a violation of existing law, as neither The Hague Convention[3] nor the 1949 Geneva Conventions[4] specifically refer to "proportionality." American military doctrine already proscribes use of force that is indiscriminate, wasteful, excessive or not necessary to achieving military objectives. And neither the United States nor Israel is a contracting party or signatory to the 1977 Geneva Protocols, which do use the term. American issues with the Geneva Protocols fall into three main categories:

1. They grant combatants rights, including treatment as POWs, on the basis of certain motives for fighting, referring specifically to those who fight against a "racist regime" or "alien occupation."

2. Certain provisions appear to restrict methods and means of warfare that are legitimate. For example, there are no exceptions for nuclear weapons, while at the same time they categorically prohibit reprisals against civilians, including use of nuclear weapons in reprisal for a nuclear attack, which is the very basis of nuclear deterrence.

3. The last concern is about rules that are aimed at accommodating guerrillas, non-state actors and irregular fighters. The Protocols grant legal combatant status to those fighters who conceal themselves and their weapons among civilians, as long as they reveal themselves to the adversary "preceding the launching of an attack"—which is to say, often shortly before attacking from among the civilians who will, inevitably, be caught in the resulting cross fire.

The purpose here is not to dissect the rules of war, but to argue that it is time to reexamine them and propose changes to make them relevant to new realities. Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz has done just that,[5] and his recommendations are summarized here:

1. Legally empower forces to attack terrorists who conceal themselves among civilians. Civilians who are killed while being used as human shields by terrorist must be deemed the victims and the responsibility of the terrorists who have chosen to hide among them and put them at risk.

2. A new category of prisoners should be recognized for captured terrorists and those who support them. They are not POWs. Nor are they ordinary criminals. These are individuals who operate outside the law of war. There is a need to designate a new status, that affords them certain rights but does not treat them like either POWs or criminals.

3. The law must come to realize that the traditional distinction

between combatants and noncombatants has been blurred. There is now a continuum, on one end are the innocent who do not support terrorists; in the middle are those who applaud and encourage terrorists but do not actively facilitate them; at the guilty end are those who help finance them, who make martyrs of suicide bombers, who help terrorists hide among them and who fail to report imminent attacks that they are aware of. The law should recognize this spectrum and hold those accountable for complicity.

4. The treaties against all forms of torture must recognize differences in degrees and reexamine the definition that defines torture as any act that inflicts severe pain or suffering, physical or mental. There needs to be recognition that in extreme circumstances and with legal supervision countries will resort to some forms of interrogation that are currently prohibited.

Returning to the Rules of Engagement (ROE), international law requires states to disseminate the law of war to their combatants, which is achieved in the United States through the issuance of ROE. The Joint Chiefs of Staff created uniform Standing ROE (SROE) that apply to all U.S. forces, but lower-level commanders may narrow and tailor the SROE to the individual circumstances of each military operation and mission. The ROE issued to the soldier, however, must comply both with the SROE and the United States' obligations under the law of war.

The Rules of Engagement link the law of war to the battlefield. They answer the soldier's timeless question, "When can I pull the trigger?" The ROE may restrict or permit the use of force "to the full extent allowable under international law." In some military engagements, ROE are more restrictive than the law requires in order to prevent the escalation of hostilities or serve some other strategic or political purpose. Such ROE are crafted to ensure that the military adheres to the Executive Branch's policy for the war.

Some would argue that although the law of war appropriately limits the use of force, the current Rules of Engagement are an unfaithful legal interpretation because they unnecessarily restrict troops in a manner not required by law. In order to help explain ROE to the troops, commanders or lawyers frequently issue ROE cards that use acronyms or mnemonics. For example, some soldiers are instructed to use force only after satisfying a seven-step process:

1. You must feel a direct threat to you or your team.

2. You must clearly see a threat.

3. That threat must be identified.

4. The team leader must concur that there is an identified threat.

5. The team leader must feel that the situation is one of life or death.

6. There must be minimal or no collateral risk.

7. Only then can the team leader clear the engagement.

This model ingrains orderly checklists in the soldier's mind in the hope that he will go through each step when presented with a potential threat.

It is not, however, effective in close-quarters combat, because the delay caused by the model is both impractical and dangerous in insurgent warfare, where mere seconds make the difference between life and death. Following a checklist increases a soldier's response time, consequently endangering his life. The use of mnemonic devices and acronyms, while purporting to make the ROE easy to remember, guarantee hesitation in the face of the threat. Furthermore, by delaying a soldier's reactions, ROE checklists inhibit a soldier's ability to defend himself. By requiring our troops to follow a checklist, there is a good probability we are diminishing their right to self-defense.

For the past 20 years, the center of gravity in establishing, interpreting and shaping the law of war has gradually shifted away from the military establishments of leading states and toward activists and publicly aggressive NGOs.

Ultimately, what has occurred is a problem of legal interpretation. As previously stated, the ROE provide incentive for an insurgent to violate the law of war, because in doing so he is more successful at defeating his enemies who are hampered by that same law. The insurgents have no regard for human life and as such their victims are considered expendable. Such unfairness only frustrates those soldiers who follow the ROE.

The current Rules of Engagement have a place in modern-day warfare. They can be used when nation-states engage in combat operations where troops prepare to take or defend an objective that is protected by another uniformed armed force. In those situations, the problem of distinguishing civilians from combatants and insurgents is eliminated, or at least lessened. The ROE should differ, however, when soldiers are engaged in police-type operations. These situations are intrinsically different from combat where the enemy's identity is obvious.

The laws of war never intended for war to be harmless; they only strive to mitigate unnecessary cruelty. The laws never diminished the right to self-defense. The current ROE, in interpreting the principles of the laws of war, overemphasize proportionality while largely ignoring and thereby inhibiting the soldier's right to self-defense.

Past and future

The heavy focus on the laws of war and the ROE has served to obscure a critical factor in the waging of war – the notion of victory.

Victory in war may or may not have anything to do with objective criteria such as casualties or territory taken or lost. What matters most is the ultimate perception of the situation, not the facts. Different people, depending on their perspective, can legitimately differ in their assessment. The assessment aspect complicates the issue since it introduces uncontrolled variables. One may legitimately ask whose assessment or opinion takes precedence. For Americans, in the final analysis, the opinion that matters the most is that of the American people.

The truth is that "victory" is an assessment, not a proven conclusion; the results are independent for each side and may differ. That is, the fact that one side won does not necessarily mean its opponent lost.

Figure 1

Defeat	Lose	Not Win	Tie	Not Lose	Win	Victory
----I	----------I	----------I	----------I	----------I	----------I	----------I-----

"Victory," in the final analysis, is a political condition. Victory at the highest levels is correspondingly defined in political terms. The implication is that tactical or operational victory without favorable political outcomes is sterile. In other words, victory is heavily dependent on perspective. In a military sense, this translates into being sensitive to the level of war. It is possible to have a smashing tactical victory that does not produce operational or strategic results. What counts in the end is the strategic outcome.

The American experience in the 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam is a case in point. During Tet, more than 85,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attacked; 45,250 were killed and U.S. and South Vietnamese troops did not lose any territory. But who achieved "victory"?

Finally, victory and defeat are polar opposites. There are points along this spectrum that delineate degrees of success or failure (*see Figure 1*).

There must be continued debate and discussion on the topic of victory. Failure to understand the issues will only end with the Twenty-First Century bemoaning the inability to turn spectacular tactical victories into decisive strategic results.

On the 21st century battlefield, "victory" has become near unachievable in the conventional sense. Indeed, the old notions of victory are no longer put forth as the ultimate goal, especially as the enemy is all too often a stateless insurgent fighting in civilian dress and exploiting our adherence to the law of war to gain a battlefield advantage and to draw us into situations where civilians are killed and wounded.

The American warriors of today must go into combat fearing more than the enemy. They must fear that, despite their best efforts to prevent civilian casualties by following a restrictive ROE that compels them to take risks which just a decade ago would have been described as foolhardy at best, there will be a laundry list of NGOs and Western governments willing to bring them up on charges if there is even a hint that excessive force was employed. The net effect of these dramatic changes to the employment of U.S. armed forces has yet to be assessed, but early indications are not encouraging.

1. James Hider, "Hamas Using English Law to Demand Arrest of Israeli Leaders for War Crimes," *Times of London*, December 21, 2009, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article6963473.ece.
2. In fact, the doctrine of "proportionality" requires that collateral damage, including civilian casualties, be proportionate to the military value of the target under attack. Professor Michael Newton of Vanderbilt University wrote, "So long as the attempt is to minimize civilian damage, then even a strike that causes large amounts of damage - but is directed at a target with very large military value - would be lawful." As cited in William Safire, "Proportionality," *New York Times*, August 13, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/13/magazine/13wwln_safire.html.
3. For full text of the Hague Convention, see http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/lawwar.asp.
4. For full text of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, see http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/CONVPRES?OpenView.
5. Alan M. Dershowitz, "Rules of War Enable Terror," *Baltimore Sun*, May 28, 2004, http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2004-05-28/news/0405280166_1_innocent-civilians-noncombatants-terrorism.

Israel is America's Enduring Partner

*In the Middle East, a volatile region so vital to U.S. interests, it would be foolish to disengage – or denigrate – an ally such as Israel.**

Lieutenant General Fred McCorkle, USMC (ret.)
Member of JINSA's Board of Advisors

*A strong, secure Israel is an asset upon which American military planners and political leaders can rely. Israel is a democracy – a rare and precious commodity in the region – and Israel shares our commitment to freedom, personal liberty and rule of law.**

General Lawrence Skantze, USAF (ret.)
Member of JINSA's Board of Advisors

* These quotes are part of a longer statement signed by these officers and 62 of their fellow retired American military leaders. To view that statement, which was reproduced in major newspapers, please go to: **www.jinsa.org.**

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PERSPECTIVE

Bridging the Divide
An Interview with Ambassador Ryan Crocker

[Editor's Note: As this issue goes to press, Ambassador Crocker is set to be nominated by the Obama administration to serve as the next U.S. envoy to Afghanistan.]

Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker currently serves as Dean and Executive Professor at the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. He retired from the Foreign Service in April 2009 after a career spanning 37 years during which he served as an Ambassador five times: Iraq (2007-2009), Pakistan (2004-2007), Syria (1998-2001), Kuwait (1994-1997), and Lebanon (1990-1993). Amb. Crocker was a member of the faculty at the National War College from 2003 to 2004. From May to August 2003, he was in Baghdad as the first Director of Governance for the Coalition Provisional Authority. Before that, from August 2001 to May 2003, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs.

On February 11, 2011, Ambassador Crocker spoke with *Journal* Deputy Editor James Colbert about the Middle East, Western-Arab relations, and the future of freedom in that troubled region.

Recent months have seen a wave of pro-democracy and anti-regime sentiment sweep across the Middle East and North Africa. What lessons do the revolutions now taking place in Tunisia and Egypt hold for the Obama administration?

Mubarak's resignation has moved Egypt into a new phase, and created what is clearly a challenging time for the region and for the Administration. Managing what comes next in Egypt is going to be even more difficult. The ability of Egyptians to produce an orderly process is going to need to be backed by the army. It must lead to not just free and fair elections but the serious building of institutions: a new parliament; a revitalized judiciary; the rule of law outside of the emergency military law that's governed the country for 30 years; and the organization of political parties, prepared to accept the rules of the democratic process. None of these are really in place, and all of them will be difficult to bring into being. In the meantime, you have waiting in the shadows some very, very bad actors who would love to see Egypt now move into a period of turbulence that would give them an opportunity to reestablish themselves. The Obama administration talked about "orderly transition" when Mubarak still retained the Egyptian presidency; that is exactly the rubric for this period, and its going to be hard to manage.

The Bush administration's "surge" of military forces into Iraq in 2007 has been widely credited for helping turn the tide against the insurgency there. General David PetraEus, the architect of that approach, is now attempting a similar strategy in Afghanistan. How do you assess its chances? Why did the Iraqi "surge" succeed?

The enormous advantage we have in the surge in Afghanistan is that the same man is running it who ran the Iraqi surge. No one is better equipped than David Petraeus to oversee this process; he's uniquely positioned to understand the very significant differences between Iraq and Afghanistan. The surge worked in Iraq for a variety of reasons. It wasn't just the additional troops. It was that the troops were given a different mission; their paramount duty was the protection of the civilian population. That is what we're trying to do in Afghanistan as well, and in more challenging circumstances, simply given the rural (rather than urban) nature of Afghanistan and Afghan society.

That leads us to a second key point: your enemy always has a vote. What we had in Iraq by the beginning of 2007 was an enemy in the form of al-Qaeda that had seriously alienated its host population, the Sunni community both in Baghdad and Anbar in the west. Al-Qaeda excesses—cutting off hands for minor infractions, summary executions—had made the majority of the Sunni population more than ready to stand up against it once they knew we had their backs. The Taliban in Afghanistan has been guilty of similar excesses, but not to the same degree. I don't think you see the same broad-based readiness yet on the part of the population to say we're with you and against the Taliban. In part, that is complicated by concerns in Afghanistan that they're just not sure how long we're going to be around. The July 2011 deadline the President announced in December 2009 caught the attention of both our friends and our adversaries. It encouraged the latter and brought fear to the former. We've since modified that, to 2014, but doubts linger.

The third point I'd make is that, for a political process to take hold, you have to change your enemies' calculations. It was hard to take Iraq apart with your bare hands, but if you bring a hammer down on it you open up fissures and cracks in

the insurgency and can then start exploiting them. None of that happened without a surge. I can't guarantee it will happen in Afghanistan with one, though. We will see.

Iraq today has emerged as a stable and increasingly prosperous country—a state of affairs that was unthinkable just a few short years ago. What are the secrets of Iraq's success, and what are the challenges to this positive trajectory in the years ahead?

Sometimes things have to get worse before they can get better. The bloody sectarian violence of 2006-2007 that the surge helped end, as horrific as it was, had a strong lasting impact on the Iraqis. They used the phrase "never again"; that's not who we are, they said, we don't do that to each other.

Historically, of course, they're right. Sectarian violence in Iraq is exceedingly rare, and—Saddam's rule aside—you have to go back to the beginning of the 18th century to find any significant sectarian violence. It isn't part of Iraqi culture. Iraqis were revolted by it, and that has seen them, and us, through a lot of trying times. The combination of our surge and presence and decisions by Iraqis themselves to find political ways forward after the violence were key to the progress we've seen. The commitment of Iraqis to a democratic process, their ability to conduct reasonably free and fair elections, their readiness to have the international community involved as both monitors and advisors for those elections, have produced both federal and provincial governments that are broadly seen as legitimate—however painful and long the process of forming them may have been. Coupled with the development of the Iraqi security forces, these are all key elements in the progress Iraq has sustained so far.

That, however, doesn't guarantee long term success. Al-Qaeda may have been beaten down, but they have not been knocked out, and if they can find space they will take it. Iraqis are sick and tired of their quality of life; more than seven years since the fall of Saddam, unemployment is still high, services are lacking, schools are in poor condition, water, sanitation and electricity are severely challenged, and increasingly Iraqis are demanding action and accountability. But I think Baghdad is getting the message.

In June 2009, President Obama famously delivered a speech in Cairo calling for a "new beginning" to relations between the United States and the Muslim world. How do you see the state of that effort, a year-and-a-half on?

While we're certainly moving into an era of new relations, I'm not sure what we've seen in Tunisia and Egypt is how the President intended for it to come about. Overall, it was a good speech, in that it demonstrated respect for Arabs and Arab culture. We Americans tend not to be very strong on history; Arabs, on the other hand, remember theirs in their own terms. What they remember is a lot of suffering under colonial administration—the British, the French, the Italians—over many decades. This has often inclined them to see us, with all of our power and presence, not as the beacon of democracy but as simply imperial colonialism in a new guise. So talking the talk is important. Yet in recent

months, as more and more time has elapsed, Arabs have taken to saying, "hey, nothing's changed." Same policies throughout the region, same actions. There's more continuity here than change. That is true, but it's not necessarily a bad thing. If we had a radical overhaul of foreign policy toward the Middle East every time we change administrations, we would be in even more trouble than in the past.

But the reality is that we are approaching a new beginning, one brought about not by the actions we're taking but by the actions Arabs are taking. We talked earlier about the challenge that Egypt without Mubarak now presents to the Administration. How they manage it is going to be very, very closely watched by the entire region and will have a significant impact on how the region views the United States and this administration going forward.

In their efforts at public outreach, American officials routinely talk of the need to "win hearts and minds" in the Muslim world. Few, however, seem to know what this truly means. How do you see America's standing in the Muslim world? How we can improve our image there? And what misconceptions still predominate in the way we interact with the Middle East?

It's a great question because, for all of the interaction we have had, Arabs and Americans really do not understand each other terribly well. A lot of Arab attitudes toward the U.S. come about out of exposure to our movies and TV programs. A lot is colored by accounts told and retold by those who do not wish us well. These are often inaccurate, but they are accepted as fact by people who do not have another frame of reference. Americans, meanwhile, tend to look at the region and see adversaries, if not outright enemies. How do you get beyond that?

The more interaction we can manage, the better. The more young Arab men and women who have opportunities for education in U.S. institutions the better. They get to know us, and when you encounter these people in their host countries later in life in positions of influence they remember with great fondness and affection their time in the States. They discover that we don't actually have shootouts on our streets; that we are a generous and hospitable people. In other words, that all of what they feared turned out to be very different in reality. They then go back and use their educations for the benefit of their own countries, and in the process tell friends and families, "Hey, it isn't what you think."

That's why the strategic framework agreement we negotiated with Iraq is so important. It literally is the framework for cooperation between our two countries across the board, with a heavy emphasis on educational exchanges. Very few Iraqis came to the States for education during the Ba'ath years. Those that did basically didn't return to Iraq. So, again, helping Iraqis understand us is a huge way of getting beyond the misconception stage, and the reverse is also true. I would like to see a much greater emphasis in our institutions of higher education on Middle Eastern studies, to include study abroad. We need to do a far better and broader job in this country of educating American young and old about the realities of the Middle East.

Dispatches

A Nordic Leader

Marko Mihkelson

TALLINN—For Estonians, the year 2011 began in a celebratory mood. Tallinn became the cultural capital of Europe and, more importantly, Estonia joined the Euro Zone. Later this year, Estonia will mark the 20th anniversary of regaining its independence from the Soviet occupation.

These victories are all the sweeter because the last couple of years have been truly difficult for Estonia. For years, the small emerging country enjoyed a consistent, and rapid, economic growth rate. Of late, however, it has struggled to weather the global financial crisis. It has not been an easy time for the country's center-right government, or for its people. But by holding the line on its conservative budget policies and by cutting public expenses, the government has managed to create solid ground for further growth. The British weekly *The Economist* praised all of this in the following words:

"Estonia was one of only two countries in the single currency area [the Euro Zone] that actually met its debt and deficit rules. The other is Luxembourg. But if you add another filter, the willingness to meet NATO's target for defense spending of two percent of GDP, Estonia (at 1.9 percent in 2011) beats Luxembourg (0.7 percent) easily. For a country that emerged battered and blinking from Soviet occupation not quite 20 years ago, being the only country to meet the main rules of the continent's main clubs is a triumph."

If we are not hit by the economic aftershocks from the ongoing Arab revolutions, Estonia's growth this year has been estimated at five percent of GDP. The need for an open economy and international competitiveness are priorities shared among all Estonian political parties.

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From this point on, Estonia has great examples to follow. Finland, Sweden and other Nordic countries have all regularly occupied top spots in different world rankings. The European Nordic area is well known for its innovative and wealthy societies, which could serve as examples for many others.

In 1939, Estonia and its northern neighbor Finland boasted similar living standards. But fifty years of Soviet occupation held us back from attaining these goals. The setback, however, was only temporary; immediately upon regaining independence in 1991, Estonia began to make its way back to the West. And after Russian troops left Estonia in 1994, we were able to look unequivocally toward the European Union and NATO.

It was a much easier fit than many observers had expected when Estonia joined both in 2004. This was mostly due to Estonia's strong performance in building an open market economy based on democratic values and principles, as well as its close proximity to the Nordic countries and their influence.

Today, having recently joined the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), Estonia has found itself in a completely new position: out in front of its Scandinavian mentors as the Nordic country most integrated with the West. Over the next decade, Estonia will seek to leverage this advantageous position on a number of fronts.

One is economic. With its versatile foreign relations toolbox, Estonia will seek to enhance foreign trade and competitiveness standards in the region and beyond. Dealing with challenges such as an aging and shrinking population, Estonia will work toward a more integrated Nordic area, which could become one of the triggers for new growth in Europe. Europe's welfare state model is today under growing pressure and needs to adjust to global changes.

Energy security is also an issue of serious concern. The January 2006 gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine shocked the European Union. And it happened again in 2009. Energy security was a serious topic well before these crises, but they only served to vault the dangers of reliance on too few energy sources and a lack of internal energy transportation connections to the top of the list of concerns for the Continent.

Last but not least, Estonia can lead the way in regional foreign affairs. Over the past two decades, we have enjoyed fruitful relations with all of our neighbors, save Russia. Strained relations with Moscow are connected to Russia's imperial past—and, since the early 1990s, its search for a new identity. It will just take time to overcome these barriers, but Estonia can be a positive actor in this regard as well.

India's Stake In Afghanistan

Shanthie Mariet D'Souza

SINGAPORE—Ten years back, India made a difficult choice in Afghanistan. Even as countries joined hands behind the U.S.-led military offensive against the Taliban, Delhi decided to concentrate its efforts on "development and reconstruction" activities in the war-ravaged country. A decade later, in the face of enormous difficulties and challenges, this "soft power" strategy has persisted. As the countdown to withdrawal from Afghanistan begins, the international community's decade-long involvement there has come under renewed scrutiny—and the prudence of India's method of engagement has become increasingly understood.

India's policy in Afghanistan is an extension of its ideational role, pursued for decades. Maintaining "peace and stability" in Afghanistan has been a principal foreign policy objective since the Cold War, which brought the great-power confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union to India's doorstep. As members of the Non-Aligned movement (NAM), both Afghanistan and India attempted to maintain neutrality amid the Cold War atmospherics. The signing of a "Friendship Treaty" in 1950 paved the way for development of friendly relations between India and the regime of Afghan king Zahir Shah, which persisted until the late 1970s. Despite the subsequent deterioration of the regional situation following the Soviet invasion, relations between India and Afghanistan—especially on trade, banking, commerce, agriculture, health, sports, education and cultural exchanges—by and large continued uninterrupted. Contacts were only disrupted when the Taliban swept onto the Afghan political scene in September 1996.

In post 9/11 Afghanistan, India's interests have centered on three broad objectives: security concerns, economic interests and regional aspirations. India has revived its historical, traditional, socio-cultural and civilizational linkages with the objective of a long-term stabilization of Afghanistan. As part of this effort, India has supported the nascent democratic regime, seeing in it the best hope for preventing the return of the Taliban. India is also looking beyond Afghanistan's borders, working to revive Afghanistan's role as a "land bridge" connecting South Asia with Central Asia and providing access to strategic energy resources. Along these lines, India has actively promoted greater trade and economic integration of Afghanistan with South Asia through the regional mechanism of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

With the establishment of an interim government in Afghanistan under President Hamid Karzai in 2001, India announced that it would provide $100 million in reconstruction aid to Afghanistan. Since then, India has followed a policy of high-level engagement—characterized by a range of political, humani-

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tarian, cultural, economic and infrastructure projects. India today ranks overall as Afghanistan's sixth-largest bilateral donor country, having invested heavily in a range of key sectors of the Afghan economy and pledged to do so to the tune of $1.3 billion more in the years ahead.

Yet Delhi's approach has not been without its critics. The "development only" paradigm has drawn fire for the perception of piggybacking on the military efforts of the U.S. and NATO-led forces. However, this critique misses the mark; far from being an opportunistic policy, India's approach has complemented international counterinsurgency efforts and at the same time reinforced existing governance and empowered local Afghans. Unlike other international donors, who have relied on their own agencies and subcontracting (thereby creating parallel structures of governance), most of India's aid is currently channeled through the Afghan government and works in conjunction with local needs and priorities.

Moreover, India has actively provided assistance to women's groups through self-employment generation schemes, health and capacity-building. Such schemes, operational in Kabul and the western province of Herat, are hugely popular among local women's groups, making them long-term stakeholders in rebuilding the country's social and economic fabric. And this mode of aid delivery has proven effective even in difficult insurgency-prone areas.

There is indeed a critical security concern to India's involvement in Afghanistan, however—specifically, the possibility of terror emanating from the extremely volatile Pakistan-Afghanistan border and spilling over into India. A strong, stable and democratic Afghanistan would reduce the dangers of extremist violence and terrorism destabilizing the region. Since 9/11, New Delhi's policy has broadly been in congruence with the U.S. objectives of decimating the Taliban and al-Qaeda and instituting a democratic regime in Kabul.

Today, however, a resurgent Taliban and mounting instability have worsened the outlook for Afghanistan. In the coming days, India's "aid only" policy is bound to face new challenges—and adapt to them. While Delhi resists putting "boots on ground," it will need to widen its web of engagement in the rapidly-shrinking political space in Afghanistan. India must revive its traditional Pushtun linkages and at the same time re-engage other ethnic groups as it attempts to strike a balance between continuing support for the Karzai government and increasing its engagement with other factions. By doing so, India will position itself to influence Afghanistan's evolving political sphere, and serve as a serious interlocutor in the intra-Afghan and inter-regional reconciliation process now underway.

One thing is clear. As a major regional power with global aspirations, India cannot take a backseat in the unfolding struggle over Afghanistan's future.

Russia's Energy Challenges

Vladimir Paramonov

TASHKENT—During the 1990s, Russia's energy ties to its so-called "near abroad" of post-Soviet Central Asia centered on one country and one country alone: Kazakhstan. The symbiosis was natural; because of the close interdependence of their economies, especially in the border areas between the two countries, Moscow and Astana were natural energy partners. By contrast, the interaction between Russia and the region's other states (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), was practically nonexistent.

Today, however, the situation is very different. Vladimir Putin's assumption of the Russian presidency in the last days of 1999 coincided with a surge in world energy prices, prompting an intensification of the Kremlin's energy cooperation with the region. More than a decade later, the web of energy partnerships built by Moscow in the region is broad—and getting broader. Yet with this new level of interaction have come new difficulties and challenges, which together have served to impact Russia's standing in the region.

Kazakhstan

After two decades of intensive interaction, the scale of cooperation in the Russian and Kazakh oil and natural gas sectors has intensified dramatically. But so has the interest of foreign players in tapping Kazakhstan's energy wealth. Now Russian oil and gas companies face stiff foreign competition from Western corporate competitors, as well as from China, and their position in the Kazakh economy is increasingly tenuous—especially in terms of oil production and transportation. And while cooperation in other sectors (such as coal and electricity) is gradually improving, it is still far from the level and extent of Soviet times, when Kazakhstan was a Soviet republic.

Neither is nuclear cooperation thriving. Although interaction between the two countries in that sphere began to see a revival in the latter half of the last decade, it has withered under the weight of the global economic crisis and emerging competition from China. In general, prospects for energy cooperation still appear quite promising. Nonetheless, if Russia does not fundamentally change the format of its energy cooperation with Kazakhstan, it faces an erosion of its status, given the competitive environment in the Kazakh energy sector.

Kyrgyzstan

Russia's energy cooperation with Kyrgyzstan is localized to the oil industry, and manifested mostly through the acquisition by Russian state natural gas titan Gazprom's gobbling up of the Kyrgyz petroleum market. Cooperation in other energy sectors—including hydropower, which is critical to the Kyrgyz economy—is barely developing. Future interaction is hampered by political

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instability in the country, and by Russia's own lack of attention to the political and economic health of its former satellite.

Tajikistan

Russian-Tajik energy cooperation today is significant, manifested through the joint exploration of hydrocarbon deposits and the construction of the Sangtuda hydropower plant on Tajikistan's Vakhsh River. Beyond these efforts, however, a further deepening of energy ties remains an open question. The nature and depth of any future such interaction is likely to be dictated by Russia's and Tajikistan's divergent approaches to regional problems (example: water and energy problems in Central Asia), which have made it difficult to implement joint economic projects, and has impaired political dialogue between Moscow and Dushanbe.

Turkmenistan

Cooperation between Russia and Turkmenistan remains largely at the level of the 1990s, limited strictly to the natural gas trade and the involvement of several Russian companies in the execution of orders on the Turkmen side. Although the period of 2001-2008 saw a rise in the volume of Turkmen gas supplies to Russia, the global economic crisis has constricted this trade considerably. Economically, meanwhile, deeper interaction is hampered by Turkmenistan's reluctance to allow an extensive foothold in its economy for Russian businesses. Therefore, the prospects of energy cooperation remain uncertain, especially given the growing foreign competition for the export and transit of Turkmen gas.

Uzbekistan

After years of exploration and development work, cooperation between Moscow and Tashkent on petroleum projects has expanded dramatically. But cooperation of other parts of the energy sector is still notional. Moreover, existing energy ties between the two countries have not contributed to the meaningful, diversified economy in the former Soviet republic. To the contrary, Uzbekistan's energy ties to Russia can be said to have retarded its economic (and political) evolution.

The results are telling. While the overall scope of Russia's energy investment in the region is enormous—as of early 2010, estimated at around $4.7 billion—significant problems remain. While some derive from unresolved resource and energy issues, others relate to growing competition from Western interests and China. Most of all, however, Russia's energy prospects in Central Asia seem to be circumscribed by a shift in the political winds, which now appear to be blowing away from Moscow.

Book Reviews

Staying the Course

Micah N. Levinson

Stephen Kinzer, *Reset: Iran, Turkey, and America's Future* (New York: Times Books, 2010), 288 pp. $26.00.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is forging ahead with its uranium enrichment in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions, even as the regime in Tehran continues to repress its domestic opposition. Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party, meanwhile, has steered that country on an increasingly anti-Western course, progressively abandoning its historic partnership with America and Europe in favor of closer cooperation with Iran, Syria, and Hamas.

All of which makes this a curious time to propound the idea that the United States should prioritize establishing good relations with Iran and Turkey, and reevaluate its historic alliances with Saudi Arabia and Israel. Yet that is precisely what historian Stephen Kinzer does in his new book *Reset: Iran, Turkey, and America's Future*.

Although he acknowledges that America's alliances with Saudi Arabia and Israel have benefited Washington in the past, Kinzer contends that these historic bonds have lost much of their luster. Instead, he argues, shared values and interests could now underpin a new U.S.-Iranian-Turkish alliance. *Reset*'s early chapters survey the history of the Iranian and Turkish pro-democracy movements, including the 1905-11 Persian Constitutional Revolution, the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, and the 2009 post-election protests in Iran. From this history, Kinzer concludes that Iran and Turkey share

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the distinction of having the longest democratic tradition in the Middle East and that, "from their struggles, both peoples have developed an understanding of democracy, and a longing for it, that makes them good soul mates for Americans." In addition, Kinzer argues that Iran and Turkey can promote our primary interest in the Middle East, stability in his reckoning, more effectively than can other countries.

Kinzer claims that Middle Eastern stability depends on good U.S. relations with Iran, because "pacifying Iraq, stabilizing Lebanon, ending the Israel-Palestine stalemate, weakening Islamic fundamentalism, crushing al-Qaeda, moderating nuclear competition, and reducing the threat of future wars" requires Iranian cooperation. He is half-right; Iran can indeed contribute handsomely to stabilizing the Middle East, but that is mostly because it itself is responsible for so much of the current instability. Iran's sponsorship of Hezbollah, Hamas, and anti-American militias in Iraq and Afghanistan has set the region ablaze. Furthermore, Iran's nuclear program could promote nuclear proliferation throughout the Middle East and might, in large part because of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's call to wipe Israel "off the map," ignite a regional conflict.

However, *Reset* does not outline in detail how the United States might prevail upon Iran to stop destabilizing the Middle East and align itself strategically with the country it calls the "Great Satan." In fact, Kinzer concedes that "it may well prove impossible for the United States to make Iran a partner as long as the current regime is in power." Nevertheless, he counsels, America should not do anything that will "make that partnership more difficult to achieve when conditions are right." Accordingly, Kinzer warns against alienating the current Iranian regime by making onerous diplomatic demands and refusing to rule out military action against Iran's nuclear facilities. At the same time, as a way of reassuring readers that Iran's current political orientation may change, Kinzer recounts Germany's transition from Nazism in the 1930s and 1940s to its contemporary status as a trusted American ally. But he forgets to mention that that transition would not have occurred without the behavioral corrective administered by the Second World War.

Kinzer's case for a strong Turkish-American alliance is more compelling. He contends, with some merit, that Turkey could promote stability in the Middle East by serving as an intermediary between the United States and Middle Eastern states, a job Kinzer believes is necessitated by America's lack of the "cultural tools necessary to navigate effectively through the Middle East." He points to Turkey's good relations with Iran, Afghanistan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Taliban, and Israel (at least until the 2008-2009 Gaza War) to make the case that no other country could be as successful an intermediary. However, Kinzer conveniently ignores the fact that Turkey can only serve as a successful intermediary if it continues to have the trust of Israel and the moderate Arab states. Yet Turkey's current Islamist-leaning government has strained relations with Israel by barring it from planned military exercises, withdrawing Turkey's ambassador to Israel in response to the 2010 Gaza flotilla raid, and embracing the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas, which Turkey's Prime Minister has character-

ized as a resistance group fighting for Palestinian land.

Turkish-Israeli relations deteriorated further in October 2010 when a paper published by Turkey's National Security Council officially designated Israel as a "central threat" while removing Iran and Syria from the same list of threatening nations. These Turkish actions have undermined Israeli faith in Turkish goodwill. Similarly, Turkey's opposition to UN Security Council Resolution 1929, which imposed a fourth round of sanctions on Iran to convince it to suspend its uranium enrichment and answer outstanding questions about its nuclear program, has also helped undercut moderate Arab states' confidence in Turkey.

While emphasizing the liberal values Americans, Iranians, and Turks purportedly share, Kinzer takes pains to diminish Washington's commonalities with Jerusalem and Riyadh. He ignores Israel's democratic tradition, which is stronger than that of Iran and Turkey, focusing instead on Israel's support for right-wing dictatorships during the Cold War, Palestinian casualties, and the Zionist sentiments of some American Jewish gangsters. In a puerile attempt to blacken Israel's name, Kinzer devotes more space in his account of Israel's founding to the gangster Bugsy Siegel, whose involvement was immeasurably marginal, than to David Ben-Gurion, the leader of the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine and Israel's first Prime Minister.

In much the same way, Kinzer takes pains to point out that Americans share few values in common with Saudi Arabia, "where dating is illegal, women are forbidden to drive, and a royal family rules by decree." Indeed, to hear him tell it, the glue in America's alliances with Saudi Arabia and Israel was the willingness of both countries to fight Cold War battles, without rules, that the United States could not or would not. However, Kinzer argues, the USSR's collapse devalues Saudi money and Israeli muscle—and makes the case that the United States should no longer conduct business as usual with either country.

Kinzer erroneously argues that the "greatest service that Americans could render to the cause of reform in Saudi Arabia would be to loosen ties between Washington and Riyadh" because U.S. calls for reform delegitimize Saudi reformers by "making them seem to be America's pawns." Actually, Saudi Arabia conducted its most important reforms, including abolishing slavery, as a result of U.S. pressure. And, if Washington were to loosen ties with Riyadh, the Saudis would undoubtedly find new Russian and Chinese protectors who would care less about political reforms than does Washington. Kinzer also fears that the United States delegitimizes the Saudi leaders by "press[ing] them to become allies in foreign wars, especially against other Muslim countries." Yet, historically, Saudi Arabia has pressured the United States to wage foreign wars on its behalf and not the other way around. Riyadh, after all, was only too happy to pay for the Gulf War that liberated Kuwait and removed the Iraqi threat to Saudi Arabia's oil fields. More recently, documents disclosed by WikiLeaks reveal that Saudi Arabia has repeatedly implored the United States to launch an attack on Iran's nuclear installations.

That the United States has been reluctant to do so makes Israeli muscle all the more valuable. Today, Israel is the only Middle Eastern

country capable of militarily confronting the states that threaten our Arab allies, including Saudi Arabia. That explains why rumors persist that Riyadh authorized the Israelis to use Saudi airspace to attack Iran's nuclear facilities. And as America wearies of its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and seeks to reduce its military commitments throughout the world, the value of Israel's military capabilities will only continue to rise.

So, until Turkey regains the trust of Israel and the moderate Arab states, it will not be able to serve as an effective intermediary between the United States and Middle Eastern countries. And until Iran ceases to abandon its efforts to promote regional instability and anti-Americanism, the notion of a rapprochement between Washington and Tehran will remain a pipe dream. Under these conditions, America's best bet isn't to "reset" its regional alliances, but to double down on its investment in those partnerships that can best promote its regional interests.

Toxic Tradecraft

Paul Janiczek

BORIS VOLODARSKY, *The KGB's Poison Factory: From Lenin to Litvinenko* (Minneapolis: Zenith Press, 2010), 256 pp. $25.00.

On July 8, 2010, Russia and the United States exchanged prisoners at the international airport in Vienna. The location was logical; Austria has long been a battleground in the cloak-and-dagger world of spy versus spy—and a neutral location for competitors to quietly swap the clandestine heroes of their secret services. On that day, Russia sought the return of ten officers assigned to the "Illegals" directorate of the Russian Foreign Intelligence service (known as the SVR). America, in turn, secured the handover of Russian experts and intelligence officers who had been fingered by Russian authorities as collaborators with Western interests.

These details are comparatively well-known. What is less so was the cryptic comment made by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin after meeting with the newly returned spies: that the illegals were arrested as the result of a betrayal. Some months later, an article in Moscow's *Kommersant* newspaper revealed that a high-level officer of the SVR directorate S—charged with the operations of "illegals" in North America—had defected two weeks before the net had closed on this spy ring. In the same article, a Kremlin insider implied that an assassination team had already been dispatched to find the turncoat.

Such is the *modus operandi* of the ruthless men who run the Kremlin. To most practitioners of intelligence, "wetwork" (a euphemism for assassination) is often viewed as a regrettable occasional necessity—one fraught with major risk. Boris Volodarsky, on the other hand, presents a different perspective: that wetwork has served as a staple of Russian spycraft since the Russian revolution of 1917. In his book, *The KGB's Poison Factory*, Volodarsky chronicles a long list of murdered dissidents, journalists, ex-spies and inconvenient irritants to the ruling elite in Moscow.

To seasoned watchers of Russian security matters, Volodarsky's opus doesn't offer many new revelations regarding the conduct of KGB/SVR/GRU activity. What it does accomplish, however, is a dispassionate, exhaustively-detailed retelling of the intricacies of Russia's extensive intelligence apparatus. In the process, the reader is introduced to the theme animating the book's title: the historic fascination with poisons to kill state enemies.

Not surprisingly, much of the narrative centers on the November 2006 poisoning of former FSB agent Alexander Litvinenko. Volodarsky discusses at length how Russian operatives got close enough to Litvinenko, then hiding out in London, to slip him the radioactive mickey.

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He also chronicles the relative impunity with which Russia operates. To this day, the chief suspect in the killing, Andrey Lugovoy, remains a free man, despite being wanted by British authorities. Lugovoy is hardly in hiding; since the Litvinenko affair, he has become and remains a sitting member of the State Duma, the lower house of Russia's legislature.

Volodarsky uses the Litvinenko narrative as a running backdrop to discuss the evolution of Russian techniques and innovations in wetwork. It also frames how, over the decades, the Russian state has used such killings to quell external criticism, to repress dissent, to make an example of traitors and reward loyalists of the state. The narrative reinforces the authoritarian nature of Russian politics, and details how the Soviet elite in its day, and now a rising group of plutocrats, have seized and held power.

Volodarsky should know. He himself was an officer of the GRU (Russian Military Intelligence), serving in the elite Spetsnaz (Special Purpose forces) unit, a corps of highly-trained soldiers familiar with a range of military disciplines, who specialize in sensitive missions requiring discretion or sometimes dramatic effects. There is no exact parallel to U.S. units, but if there were, it would be akin to a cross between the Green Berets and elite intelligence units. These are officers adept at blending into their surroundings through cultural awareness, human behavior, disguise, guile and deceit. The result is a cadre of killers capable of blending into any social situation at any moment in any part of the world. Volodarsky thus makes his case from a position of authority.

To the casual reader, some of the detail, as well as the book's poor organization, will require patience. But the historical narrative and practical facts read like a compendium of murder thrillers. A reader of spy fiction may also gain a number of practical insights into the organization of the Russian security services: a bewildering maze of offices, directorates, "lines" and stations. To those who understand the neo-imperial nature of the new Russia, *The KGB's Poison Factory* will serve to confirm suspicions, and clarify arguments.

These days, it has become fashionable among security practitioners in Washington to refer to all of the organs of Russian state security as "the KGB." The implication is that, regardless of what organization within the Russian government is acting, it does so at the direction of a small cadre close to the office of Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, himself a product of the Soviet intelligence state. Volodarsky briefly chronicles the rise of this clique to power in the closing pages of his book, while the volume itself addresses the extremes to which its members would go to retain that power. In the era of the U.S.-Russian "reset," Volodarsky's book tells a cautionary tale. The aims of the Kremlin have not changed all that much since the October 1917 revolution. Neither have the means by which successive Russian governments preserve their standing. Western policymakers would do well to remember.

Learning to Live With the Bomb

George Michael

JOHN MUELLER, *Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al Qaeda* (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), 336 pp. $27.95.

Despite substantial reductions in both the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, the Federation of American Scientists estimates that over 20,000 nuclear warheads still remain around the world. Moreover, in recent years, the nuclear aspirations of North Korea and Iran have stoked fears among their neighbors and may set off one or more waves of new regional proliferation. And in April 2010, on the eve of the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., President Obama announced that the prospect of nuclear terrorism had emerged as the greatest national security threat to the United States. Yet, argues John Mueller in his book *Atomic Obsession*, our fears of the bomb are overwrought.

Mueller concedes that, if used, nuclear weapons would be devastating. Nevertheless, he points out that their main effect is suddenness. After all, destruction can also be wrought by conventional weapons—as evidenced by the bombing raids on Tokyo, Hamburg, and Dresden during World War II. Indeed, argues Mueller, nuclear weapons have had only a modest influence on history, and may not even have been determinative in bringing an end to World War II as commonly claimed since, by August of 1945, the defeat of Japan was already a foregone conclusion.

Be that as it may, the image of the atomic bomb as the world's most destructive weapon was seared into the public consciousness at the end of the war. As Mueller explains, in the immediate aftermath of World War II, both the Americans and the Japanese had an incentive to inflate the significance of the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For the United States, as the world's sole possessor of nuclear weapons, the attacks underscored American prestige and influence in the region. For Japan, the bomb offered a convenient explanation that assuaged the country's wounded pride—Japanese defeat could be said to have come about not as a result of leadership mistakes or a lack of martial valor, but rather because of an unexpected advance in science.

More recently, despite initial fears of widespread proliferation in the nuclear age, relatively few countries have actually acquired the bomb. For Mueller, there are several reasons why countries eschew nuclear weapons. First, he sees limited military value in possession of such a capability. To be sure, the effects of nuclear weapons are devastating, but the world-wide opprobrium against their use and the risk of massive retaliation

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render them marginal as an effective instrument of warfare absent the most existential threat. Moreover, the declining incidence of state-to-state warfare suggests their continued marginalization as an instrument of statecraft. Thus, argues Mueller, there is very little strategic advantage for those countries that possess nuclear arsenals.

Second, developing nuclear weapons is an extremely wasteful proposition—which explains why so many capable countries have decided to forego their acquisition. The economic cost of nuclear weapons is enormous: for the United States during the Cold War, the estimated cost of developing an offensive nuclear capability was between 5.5 and 10 trillion dollars. What's more, the development of nuclear arsenals leads to a tremendous diversion of scientists, engineers, and technicians who could devote their talents elsewhere to more productive endeavors.

Finally, in contemporary international affairs, Mueller sees little status accruing to nuclear aspirants. He cites the example of Italy, which boasted in 1987 that it had surpassed Britain in its gross domestic product. Absent in Britain's reply was any reference to its military superiority or its possession of nuclear weapons. Acquiring the bomb, meanwhile, can have severe consequence for the aspirant, as the country could find itself diplomatically isolated. Sanctions could be imposed and neighbors may seek to counterbalance nuclear proliferation by strengthening regional alliances arrayed against the aspirant country. For instance, nuclear weapons have not helped North Korea, which remains isolated, backwards, and poor. Likewise, Iran, despite the talk of a "Shia Revival," remains a pariah nation in the minds of much of the world community. Even Muammar Qaddafi finally realized that nuclear weapons were not worth the hassle. By foreswearing their development, he was able to reintegrate Libya into the global community of which it had been shut out due to his previous support for international terrorism.

Not surprisingly, Mueller is scathing in his criticism of U.S. counterproliferation policies. He concedes that nuclear weapons are destructive, but in counterintuitive ways insofar as non-proliferation and counterproliferation policies can entail substantial human costs. Most notable is the case of Iraq. Saddam Hussein's alleged pursuit of WMD, including nuclear weapons, was ultimately the justification for the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, which resulted in a protracted conflict and human suffering. The sanctions regime that followed the first Gulf War resulted in much privation, as medical supplies were prevented from entering the country. In fact, the sanctions and the war resulted in more human destruction than the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined. Likewise, Mueller warns that saber-rattling on the Korean Peninsula could also be potentially catastrophic, insofar as another Korean War could result in the deaths of as many as 1,000,000 people (including 80,000 to 100,000 U.S. servicemen), according to a Pentagon estimate.

The proliferation fixation, according to Mueller, also stymies the development of nuclear power as a valuable and efficient energy source. Amid the growing concern about global warming, increasingly, nuclear power is seen as an attractive and cleaner alternative to burning fossil fuels to generate electrical power. In fact, in the United States, about 20 percent of all electricity is generated by nuclear power plants. The number of nuclear

reactors worldwide is projected to double by the end of the century.

One possible consequence of this trend, though, is the potential for the diversion of fissile material into the custody of a rogue state or terrorist group. However, Mueller finds this scenario highly unlikely, and argues that the hyperbole surrounding such a proposition is counterproductive. As he points out, a nuclear device fabricated by a terrorist group would probably have a comparatively low yield. And the hurdles that a terrorist group would have to overcome to build or acquire a nuclear bomb are formidable (from safety devices and procedures to the need for highly competent technicians, unflinching loyalty and discipline). Using a multiplicative rule of probability for twenty steps necessary to carry out a nuclear attack, Mueller calculates that the probability of such an eventuality is one in over three billion. The bombastic rhetoric surrounding nuclear terrorism, Mueller argues, only encourages terrorist groups to explore that option.

And even if a single nuclear device were detonated, it would not portend the demise of an entire city, much less the economy of a country, the government, or a civilization. Rather, Mueller believes that America would be resilient, citing the example of Japan during World War II, which sustained an intense nation-wide conventional bombing along with two nuclear attacks, yet whose civil society and government survived. Conceding that a nuclear attack could devastate a locale, Mueller still dismisses the notion that it would extinguish the rest of the country. As he puts it: "Do farmers in Iowa cease plowing because an atomic bomb went off in an Eastern city? Do manufacturers close down their assembly lines? Do all churches, businesses, governmental structures, and community groups simply evaporate?"

Arguably, though, this analysis is somewhat facile and gives short shrift to the possibility of strategic nuclear terrorism. For instance, a nuclear device planted in a certain place (near the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.) at a certain time (the President's State of the Union Address) could conceivably decapitate the U.S. government. Although there is a plan of presidential succession, it might not be carried out smoothly. Moreover, in such a scenario, if power was contested by different officials, would the rest of the country recognize their authority? And without a functioning government, would the state governments, which depend so much on the federal government, really be viable for very long? In time of crisis, Americans have come to assume that the federal government will take the lead. If the federal leadership were decapitated, it might not be that easy to put Humpty Dumpty together again.

More significantly, Mueller seems to ignore the importance of vigilance. The reason nuclear terrorism remains a highly unlikely proposition is because it is taken so seriously. As a consequence, it is exceedingly difficult for terrorists to succeed at each stage of the plot because various measures have been implemented to thwart such an occurrence. And though it is highly unlikely that a state would convey a nuclear weapon to a terrorist group, it is conceivable that if a regime felt particularly threatened it might do so. In such a scenario, a collapsing regime could transfer a nuclear weapon to a terrorist group in order to exact revenge against an adversary.

Moreover, if a regime collapsed, state control over nuclear weapons

could evaporate, thus allowing a terrorist or criminal group to obtain weapons from the nuclear arsenal. As was the case during the early 1990s, in some of the former Soviet republics, the security at some of the nuclear sites was often less than adequate. In fact, the Russian government was not even aware of the location and amount of much fissile material due to poor accounting practices.

Although Mueller's study might be tendentious, it is well-researched and certain to provoke discussion on serious topics surrounding nuclear issues. At the very least, it provides a compelling counterpoint to the conventional wisdom on nuclear terrorism.

The Next Battleground

James Colbert

ROBERT D. KAPLAN, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2010), 384pp. $28.00.

One of the great chroniclers of contemporary geopolitics, Robert D. Kaplan, believes the Indian Ocean to be the stage upon which the great struggles of the 21st century will be played out—and to which the United States will increasingly strain to stay committed. From the opening pages of his latest work, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power*, he observes: "[A]s China and India compete for ports and access routes along the southern Eurasian rimland, and with the future strength of the U.S. Navy uncertain, because of America's own economic travails and the diversionary cost of land wars, it is possible that the five-hundred-year chapter of Western preponderance is slowly beginning to close."

A national correspondent for the *Atlantic Monthly*, Kaplan has made quite a career for himself covering regions of the globe largely ignored by the mainstream media. In his typical (but never mundane) style, he combines history, interviews, anecdotes and personal observations to make a powerful case that the Indian Ocean region will be as geo-strategically prominent in the 21st century as Europe was in the 20th century.

Strategists can focus on any number of crucial factors that make the Indian Ocean worthy of study. But, Kaplan contends, one stands above the others in importance: the Indian Ocean's waters lap the shores of the richest and the poorest Muslim-dominated states, where radical Islam's war for supremacy rages. Drawn into this great struggle are a diverse mix of countries lining the ocean's edge; authoritarian Burma, democratic India, emerging democracies like Indonesia and failed states including Somalia. Half of the world's container traffic and 70 percent of its petroleum products move through these troubled waters, a never-ending maritime train of container ships and supertankers carrying all manner of finished goods and raw materials between East and West.

Kaplan has few peers in his ability to impart relevant history while homing in on the salient facts necessary to understanding the forces shaping the present and the near future. His own worldview permeates *Monsoon*, providing a cold-eyed view of state-to-state interactions. Kaplan's preference for human rights and representative government, however, is always right below the surface.

A central theme of the book concerns the economic and strategic/military competition between democratic India, struggling to modernize while many of its internal states

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fight to preserve the economic promise of socialism, and China, a global economic superpower due to its government-mandated embrace of what is often called a nationalist-capitalist economy. This tug-of-war is played out in Kaplan's narrative as the book moves from west to east, covering in turn Oman, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Burma and Indonesia. Each chapter includes fascinating profiles and interviews with local power brokers and key players.

After a *tour d'horizon*—what Kaplan calls a "broad strategic overview"—and a brief primer of the ocean as an historic trade route, each subsequent chapter advances Kaplan's conviction that "it is the intermingling of challenges in each place—religious, economic, political, environmental—rather than each challenge in isolation, that creates such drama."

Curiously, China is the one country that does not get its own chapter. Its influence, goals and concerns are relayed through each of the other countries. Kaplan must have taken his book's title seriously; China does not possess Indian Ocean shoreline, despite playing such a dominating role in that region's affairs.

To more fully comprehend what is happening, the reader must understand the key persons involved. Each chapter features at least one penetrating interview/profile of those leading their country's charge, whether it is toward further progress and freedom, or to strife and a weakening of pluralistic values. Or sometimes both.

Highlights of Kaplan's travels for *Monsoon* (one must wonder how many times he has made the "million-mile club" in his globe-trotting career) include a fascinating look into the nearly-closed country of Burma and the failed state that is Somalia. Here Kaplan illustrates the range of Indian Ocean challenges from China's strategic goal of creating a "string of pearls" of friendly Indian Ocean ports to the ongoing crisis of Somalia, which fosters piracy and serves as a possible sanctuary for al Qaeda and other groups eager to take advantage of a strategically located and lawless failed state.

Bringing his sprawling work to a close, Kaplan looks to the future and concludes that development and investment in the littoral states of the Indian Ocean will be challenged by several factors. Chief among them are loyalties to clan, ethnic group, and religious/sectarian affiliation which all too frequently make state borders irrelevant. Perhaps as a warning to China and, to a lesser degree, India, Kaplan advises that any attempt to build solid infrastructure must factor in those considerations. One example is the Chinese-financed port of Gwadar, located in Pakistan's restive Baluchistan province. Beijing may ultimately discover that Gwadar's usability may be decided by factors beyond Islamabad's control. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Kaplan believes the future of the major states girding the Indian Ocean rests on the extraction and transport of oil—a business that will dominate regional and global economic interests for at least another half-century.

In *Monsoon*, Kaplan makes a convincing case for why this is so, and why the Average Joe and policy wonk alike should pay attention to a region that is likely to become a locus of global conflict.

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