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The 33rd in a series of conferences on American relations with Europe and formerly communist Eurasia was held August 12-18 in Krakow, Poland. Twelve members of Congress took part, along with eight scholars and speakers.

The discussions at the conferences are designed to enrich the Members' understanding of the background and context of American relations with Europe and formerly communist Eurasia and to address issues of policy with which they must deal, without merely recreating the ongoing debates in Washington. No consensus statement on desirable directions for American foreign policy is produced, but it is hoped that the discussions can lead to a better understanding of the issues and of the different approaches to them that are represented in the Congress. In this way, the conference series can contribute to the search for common ground on which effective American policy must rest. The subject of this conference was "U.S.-Russia-Europe: Cooperative Efforts."

The first session, *U.S.-Russian Relations: An American Perspective*, was introduced by Robert Legvold, Professor of Political Science at Columbia University. The relationship between the United States and Russia is a mixed one, which includes elements of both cooperation and discord. The two countries cooperate to oppose terrorism worldwide and to limit the nuclear threat to themselves and the world under the auspices of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. They also have a common interest in Russian membership in the World Trade Organization, although details of that membership have not yet been worked out.

As for elements of discord, Russia opposed the American invasion of Iraq while the American government has been critical of the ongoing authoritarian trend in Russian domestic politics. The Russian government, for its part, has resented American support for the democratic political forces active in the recent "color revolutions" in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan—countries that were once part of the Soviet Union.

Two issues in the relationship are particularly neuralgic for Washington and Moscow respectively. For the United States, the issue is Iranian nuclear weapons. While Russia does not favor Iranian acquisition of nuclear armaments, the Russian government regards the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a partner. For Russia, the neuralgic issue is the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO, a development to which the American government is at least nominally committed.

About this mixed relationship, at least three additional comments may be made. First, the mixed character of the relationship is a source of disappointment to both sides. When an independent, non-communist Russia emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union, neither the United States nor Russia intended or expected the relationship that they now have.
Both anticipated a closer and more harmonious one. In the immediate post-Soviet years it was common to speak of a partnership between the United States and post-Communist Russia. The two countries give different accounts of the reasons for the deterioration in the relationship, with each side tending to place responsibility for this deterioration on the other.

The second observation is that Russians have, at the moment, a view of their own future in the world that emphasizes the role of energy. They see themselves as a prospective energy superpower. The sharp rise in the price of oil in 2006 is the basis for this outlook. That price increase has greatly increased the revenue at the disposal of the Russian government and has engendered confidence among the Russian political elite in their country's future prospects. The idea of being an energy superpower seems to involve using Russia's reserves of gas and oil as leverage in dealing with countries in Europe and Asia. If the cutoff of supplies of natural gas to Ukraine earlier this year is a sign of future Russian tactics—and it is certainly possible that it is not—then it is ominous one.

Third, neither the United States nor Russia has a well-articulated vision of a cooperative relationship with the other. For that and other reasons, the relationship is likely to remain a mixed one and is unlikely to change sharply either for better or for worse in the near future. The conference's second session, "Russia Learns the West," was introduced by Dmitri Tremin, Deputy Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center. Russia is undergoing a passage from being a traditional society, albeit one dramatically modified by Communism, to modernity. This is a difficult transition that is bound to be protracted, lasting two or perhaps three generations.

Economically, Russia now lags far behind the West. Measured by purchasing power parity, the Russian economy today stands roughly where that of the United States did 70 years ago. Politically, Russia is not a genuine democracy. And, if there is little supply of democracy, there is relatively little demand for it from Russian society. The major concerns of individual Russians are personal and economic in nature, not political. The Russian political system may be characterized as "modern tsarism." The presidency is the only truly effective institution, although the president must achieve periodic popular ratification through an election. Russian political history for the foreseeable future is likely to be cyclical, with periods of change followed, as at present, by periods of retrenchment and consolidation.

Russian foreign policy may be described as "post-imperial. Russians have given up the idea of directly governing territories that were once part of the tsarist empire and the Soviet Union and are now independent. The basis of this temporary Russian foreign policy is independence. The Russian political elite does not believe that close alliances with other countries are feasible or perhaps even necessary. Russians are particularly sensitive to the specter of foreign domination and share a widespread belief that the early post-Soviet period, the Yeltsin era, was one of undue American influence in Russia.

Internationally, Russia is disposed to act pragmatically. Its actions will be governed not by any ideology but by the pursuit of what Russians see as their own national interests. This means, among other things, that Russia is willing to make common cause on specific issues with any regime or group even if it was once one of its enemies. Russia, if this serves Russian interests. The Russian political elite is determined that Russia be, in some fashion, a great power—that is, that Russia matter in the world. It is willing to use any instrument, the latest being energy, in pursuit of that goal.

As for American policy toward Russia, the United States cannot make major changes in how Russia is governed but can have influence at the margins. Specifically, the United States can assist the forces and trends that are now at work to create a more democratic Russia. Two of these, in particular, are present now in post-Soviet Russia but were missing previously. One such force is money—that is, free markets, private enterprise, and private property. Another force pushing Russia toward democracy is exposure to the outside world. American economic engagement with Russia can assist the first force and exchange programs with the United States can help nudge forward the second.

The third session of the conference, "U.S.-Russian and Russian-American Interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus," was led by Eugene Rumer, Senior Fellow, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University. When the Soviet Union ended, the United States devoted serious efforts to gathering up the nuclear weapons that were located in Central Asia and then foresaw active engagement in that region, and in the Caucasus as well, until the attacks of September 11, 2001 drew it back. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, the United States currently has three interests: energy, the threat of terrorism, and the presence in various forms of two countries important to the United States, namely Russia and China.

In these two regions, the United States has generally adopted a uniform—but almost a "cookie cutter" strategy—which has not always been effective. The preferred American routes for energy pipelines have reflected American political interests but have not always been geographically sensible. The United States has supported the independence of the post-Soviet countries of the two regions and has sought to promote democracy in both Central Asia and the Caucasus, not always successfully.

Russia is very much present in both regions and takes a proprietary interest in them, referring to them as part of its "Near Abroad." The Russian government tends to try to sustain its power in these two regions governments that are friendly to Russia if not necessarily democratic. Russia may ultimately change its view of where its interests lie in these regions and in any event may not have the resources to achieve the goals it has set for itself there.

As for Western Europe, in Central Asia, and to a lesser extent in the Caucasus, its interests and concerns are remote. The European Union does sponsor a few programs of economic cooperation with these regions. In Central Asia and the Caucasus, the United States would be well advised to adopt a nuanced approach, taking into account specific local conditions in the different countries of these two regions and varying political circumstances. Washington might also be wise to place less emphasis than at present on the immediate need for democracy in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Washington should certainly be careful not to do or say anything that would aggravate ongoing conflicts in Georgia and between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The United States should try to cooperate with both Russia and China where possible. Whether the protection of American interests requires a long-term military presence and what kind of presence is necessary for that purpose are matters of debate. Finally, the United States should try to foster regional cooperation in both the Caucasus and Central Asia on economic and especially energy issues.

The conference's fourth session, "Ukraine and Europe," was introduced by Alexander Motyl, Deputy Director of the Graduate Division of Global Affairs at Rutgers University. Ukraine is a success story. Politically it is both relatively stable and relatively democratic. All political factions and forces now accept the rules of democracy. Moreover, the Ukrainian economy is growing at a respectable rate.

The outcome of the March parliamentary elections in Ukraine both demonstrates and reinforces the trend toward democracy. Those elections did not reverse the results of the Orange Revolution. The protracted haggling among political parties in the wake of the election in order to form a government was conducted according to normal democratic rules. Even the emergence of the "villain" of the Orange Revolution, Victor Yanukovych, as prime minister counts as a sign of Ukraine's progress towards democracy. Yanukovych does represent important Ukrainian interests, principally the eastern, largely Russian-speaking part of the country, and he is likely to behave in office, in democratic fashion.
In foreign policy, Ukraine seeks to strike a balance between cordial relations with Russia, which is a geopolitical necessity, and an orientation to and eventual integration into the west. As for the Russians themselves, they have, after 15 years, seemingly accepted the fact that Ukraine is a separate, independent country, although they still have difficulty in regarding Ukraine as foreign.

Although relations between Ukraine and Russia are generally stable, however, there remain potential flashpoints between them—in particular, the status of the Crimean Peninsula.

The Ukrainian elite aspires to belong to Europe. The European Union (EU) has changed its view of Ukraine as a result of the Orange Revolution. Europe now is ambivalent toward Ukrainian membership in the EU, rather than, as it was previously, simply dismissive. But the EU has not declared its willingness ultimately to accept Ukraine.

In Ukraine, NATO is widely regarded as the antechamber to the European Union. This is one reason that members of the political establishment seek NATO membership. The Ukrainian public as a whole is opposed to NATO membership but this opposition does not necessarily constitute an insurmountable obstacle to joining. Russia, however, has indicated that it would respond to the inclusion of Ukraine in NATO in a negative manner.

U.S.-Russia Relations: An American Perspective

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Gone is the talk of "strategic partnership," not to mention the fanciful vision of a genuine Russo-American alliance held by some, including the former U.S. ambassador in Moscow, not so long ago. Gone is the aura of camaraderie created by Russia's instant support for the United States after September 11 and then the joint effort in winning the Afghan war. Gone are the benevolent winds stirred by Russia's mild response to the U.S. abrogation of the ABM agreement, tolerance of U.S. bases in Central Asia, offer of energy partnership, acceptance of a new Russia-NATO Council, and enthusiastic talk of U.S.-Russian cooperation at the May 2002 Moscow summit.

Instead the U.S. vice president speaks of a Russia whose government "has unfairly and improperly restricted the rights of her people," threatening religion, a free media, political parties, and civic organizations, and which uses oil and gas "as tools of intimidation or blackmail." On the other side, the soul-plumbed eyes now see a "wolf" who knows "whom to eat," and it "is not about to listen to anyone." Voices in both countries again discuss the prospect of a "new Cold War."

What happened? How could a relationship that seemed so promising less than a half decade ago have so soured? That is the first question, but there is a second and third: What should happen (or should have happened)? And what could happen? The "should" question is about stakes; what, assuming each country managed to rise above today's distractions, are the deeper and more enduring interests each has in the relationship? The "could" question is about possibilities; what, given the drift of events, the circumstances constraining each country's foreign policy, and the pull of other priorities, can one expect of U.S.-Russian relations during Presidents Bush and Putin's remaining time in office?

What Happened?

Ask most informed Russians and you will get a different answer from that of most informed Americans, granted Russians differ in their judgments and so do Americans. The contrast is itself a reflection of what has gone wrong. Three years ago or five years ago the key divide would not have been between countries, but between groups, with some Americans seeing the relationship as some Russians, and other Americans a mirror image of other Russians. Now, however, mainstream views in the two countries favor distinctly different narratives.

In the United States, most policy makers, politicians, and pundits believe that the increased rockiness owes to the Putin leadership's steady movement away from democratic norms, eagerness to centralize power, including control over important economic sectors, and readiness to wield this power ruthlessly in order to have its way with weaker but unbowed neighbors. To add to the unease, many perceive Russia's past obstruction of a firm response to
Iran, extended hand to Hamas, and readiness to embrace neighborhood authoritarianism as a bad reminder of the old habit of fishing in troubled waters. True, there are Americans who either see Russia’s evolution as predictable and within bounds or the residue of an overly insensitve U.S. policy—a United States happy to see Russia weak, thrusting its power to Russia’s borders, and demanding cooperation on its terms. At the other end of the spectrum, there are those ready to write Russia off as already in the authoritarian camp, basically hostile to U.S. purposes, and bent on re-imposing its way over the lands on its borders. But the bulk of opinion lies in between.

In contrast, the mainstream view around Putin and far beyond offers a very different narrative. The problem, most Russians believe, arises because Russia has recovered its self-confidence, no longer cares to tolerate, in the words of one of them, a “pedagogical relationship,” has its own notion of what political forms will preserve national security and the country’s way forward, and intends to pursue its interests in the outside world by its own light. Having grown comfortable with a Russia whose weakness deprived it of options and perhaps still harboring a desire to put Russia in a box and keep it there, the United States, or at least, powerful elements within it, cannot adjust. True, as in the United States, the spectrum of Russian views is broader: frustrated democrats, while scarcely sympathetic with many aspects of general U.S. policy, have an equally harsh, albeit more sophisticated, view of trends at home, and, while supporting a self-confident Russian foreign policy, think Putin and his people have gone about it ham-handedly. At the other extreme, cruder types believe Russia is at last coming to its senses, and recognizing U.S. eminence for what it is. But, as in the United States, the center of gravity is elsewhere—and scarcely more helpful in reducing the gap in perceptions.

To describe the deterioration in relations, however, is not to explain it. The dueling narratives, of course, represent explanations, but, even if one is thought more right than the other, neither leads very far. They, in many respects, are more symptomatic than a genuine source of insight. For example, Russian bravo that U.S. politicians and leaders are simply surprised and uncomfortable with a resurgent and self-confident Russia seems to be the thin skin over three deeper sore points: first and oldest, the neuralgic sense that the United States never appreciated the contribution the Soviet Union made to and the price Russia paid for ending the Cold War, and instead treated the outcome as the spoils of victory. The chance to intrude a no-longer-hapless Russia on the U.S. consciousnes as providing emotional satisfaction. Second, and in a way following directly on the first, past U.S. policy toward Russia has for some time been judged along a spectrum ranging from well-meaning condescension (the Clinton administration’s tutoring, overblown promises, and ultimate insensitivity to Russian concerns on issues such as NATO enlargement) to ambiguous indifference (the Bush administration’s initial lack of interest in the relationship, readiness to act when and how it chose on a host of issues of concern to Russians, and later inclination to take Russian cooperation for granted). If the Americans do not like what they are getting, then they have a better sense of what life has been like for them. Third, recently and more directly, Russians, including Putin himself, are angered by U.S. criticism of Russian domestic and foreign policy, because they tell themselves that it is designed to serve other purposes (e.g., domestic U.S. politics in the case of Cheney’s Vilnius speech, a competitive edge in the maneuvering over oil and gas in censuring Gazprom’s hardball diplomacy, and a wedge intended to check Russian influence by questioning its role in the so-called “frozen” conflicts in Moldova and Georgia). This in turn feeds a widespread feeling that the United States has no compunction about practicing double standards—pillorying anti-democratic regimes when they identify with Russia, looking the other way when they serve U.S. interests, raising a hue and cry when Russia acts forcefully to defend its interests, allowing itself to do as it pleases when and where it wants.

Similarly, the blame Americans place on Russia for damaging the relationship by veering from democracy and behaving badly toward neighbors seems, in part, an echo of more complex impulses: For many, although perhaps only semi-consciously, the disinchantment stems from disappointment. It is not so much that the Russian leadership’s fall from grace measures up to the excesses of other regimes, including several among post-Soviet states or for that matter China, or that Putin does not command broad popular support. It is that Russia was not expected to backtrack. Russia, however slowly or unwilling to make it way toward democracy, not yield again to the authoritarian temptation. Since Clinton bought and Bush buys the so-called “democratic peace theory”—in Bush’s version, “Democracy leads to justice within a nation, and the advance of democracy leads to greater security among nations”—losing Russia or even such a prospect grates on the way many on the American side want the world to work. Nor, with the Soviet Union gone, did they imagine that U.S.-Russian relations could soon be clouded by genuine adversarial strains.

A deeper explanation, however, moves in three directions. First, behavior on both sides reflects a damaging ambiguity: Is the source of the change Russia’s desire for the West or continuing weakness? There is no confusion among those at the outer edge of the spectrum. Americans who fault the United States for carelessly letting the relationship unravel see Russia as still dangerously weak and so do Russians who condemn the policy failures flowing from Putin’s embrace of “bureaucratic authoritarianism” and “bureaucratic capitalism.” At the other end, Americans who are ready to write Russia off or swing a hammer believe Russia has or is acquiriing too many tools aiding an aggressive agenda; Russians who are convinced of the United States’ ill intentions underscore Russia’s capacity to stand up for itself or, with much the same effect, the United States’ inability to do much to Russia. The problem is the large, make-weight middle, who cannot decide whether Russia is (or soon will be) too strong or too weak—when, worse, that is not the issue. For Russia is both. Demographic trends, corroded institutions, uneven economic development, ethnic tensions, and the leadership’s lack of a coherent, long-term strategic vision keep Russia weak. High oil prices, great natural wealth, a monopol over key power and transport grids, a large and partially restored military, nuclear weapons, the UN veto, and China as a natural soul mate on many critical foreign policy issues render Russia strong. The tendency of leadership in both countries to water inconsistently between the two images rather than deal demandingly and carefully with the way the two are conjoined gives to narrow, near-term irritants a heightened resonance.

Second, trouble also results from a conceptual failure. U.S. presidents from Bush Sr. to Bush Jr. have wanted Russia to “choose” the West—to emulate its democratic institutions, adopt its economic order, and join in a common foreign policy agenda. And Russian presidents from Yeltsin to Putin have wanted Russia to think of itself and be thought of as European (hence, as part of the West). The problem is that neither leadership nor for that matter European leaders have ever seriously wrestled with the underlying conceptual challenge: viz., how to integrate Russia with the West, when it cannot be integrated into the West, that is, into the institutions that are at the core of Europe (the EU) and the Euro-Atlantic alliance (NATO). U.S. leaders, particularly in the Clinton era, assumed the problem would fade naturally as Russia democratized, modernized, and identified with the West. When this proved false, no one labored to confront the underlying conundrum. Washington’s response has been inertia and modest institutional fixes, such as the 1997 Final Act, the Russia-NATO Council, and an expanded G7. The Russians, for their part, counted on the United States and its European partners to solve the problem, caught as they were between their own sense of being unwilling
ed and ambivalence over how much a price they were willing to pay to be wanted. Without this deeper strategic ballast, when the everyday wear and tear of international politics took its toll, nothing kept the two countries from dwelling on the things each questioned or resented in the other.

Third, and in the end, what most added to the relationship's vulnerability arose from the two sides' underestimation of the stakes that they had in it. For all the florid talk of each country's importance to the other and the special responsibilities they shared, in truth, no U.S. administration and no Russian leadership since the collapse of the Soviet Union has been able to convincingly convey its media, and public, in no small measure because they have never convinced themselves, and, as the negatives mount, they are less inclined to try. Granted some of the stakes featured—such as securing Russia's nuclear weapons and material or collaborating against catastrophic, including nuclear, terrorism—are important, but neither they nor Russia's perishable stake in Western economic assistance, or the dubious notion that trouble in the Middle East and still farther afield has the power to unify them provides the basis for a deeper and more durable U.S.-Russian partnership. Which leads to the second question.

What Should Have Happened?

On his way to meet Boris Yeltsin for the first time, Bill Clinton at the Naval Academy on April 1, 1993, argued that Russia "must be a first-order concern" because "... the world cannot afford the strife of the former Yugoslavia replicated in a nation, as big as Russia, spanning eleven time zones with an armed arsenal of nuclear weapons that is still very vast." Unless the United States and the rest of the West acted, he said, four historic opportunities might well be squandered: First, a chance to enhance national security and avoid the danger of Russian seized again by tyranny or sunken in chaos; second, a chance to turn Russia from an adversary in foreign policy to a partner in global problem-solving; third, a chance to enhance the West's economic well-being by turning defense spending to more productive use; and, fourth, a chance to invest in an "inherently rich nation" that, when reformed, can contribute greatly to global economic growth. It was a compelling list, but not one that became the lodestar for his or successor administrations.

The agenda for the new Russia-NATO Council (2002) offers a reasonable, more concrete and contemporary version of the stakes: fighting global terrorism, controlling weapons of mass destruction, and working together to limit regional instability. Or one might add two larger and more fundamental goals: to draw Russia, in mutually beneficial fashion, into a global order that respects its interests and its place in global governance, and to sculpt with Russia and the other major nuclear "haves" an international regime that limits the perils of competitive arms racing, a destabilizing race toward the weaponization of space, the temptation to destroy the nuclear "firebreak" by making nuclear weapons useable from either a position of weakness (Russia) or a position of strength (the United States), and that puts in place new implicit or formalized rules of the road in a world of multiple nuclear rivals. In either or both cases, however, worthy as these objectives are, they remain a doughnut with a missing hole.

Had Russia and the United States (Russia and the West) from the start, thought aloud about the single overarching interest uniting them—a concern of comparable scale to that sustaining the post-war alliance between the United States and Western Europe—it would have been stability and mutual security in and around the Eurasian land mass. Across this great hinterland of the world's critical strategic theaters (Europe, East Asia, and the turbulent Muslim south), no two powers have a greater stake both in progressive but stable change and in security, mutual as well as national, than the United States and Russia. No two powers, including China and India, are more crucial to the fate of this vast sweep of territory than the United States and Russia. The stakes are immense: not simply preventing new zones of international conflict or ensuring that the violence already present does not bleed into turbulent neighboring regions, especially to the south, or, in reverse, import into the post-Soviet space echoes of the turmoil in Afghanistan, Iraq, and further to the west; not only avoiding the radicalization of the 65 million Muslims spread across the former Soviet Union; not only guaranteeing that the post-Soviet region's vast oil and gas wealth is a source of growth, not tension; and not only adding to global welfare the talents, resources, and technology of what in the next quarter century could be the world's second most dynamic region; but managing rather than wrecking the safe and constructive interactions generated by its already sizable and growing international setting. The salients are China and the new "lands in between," Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova. Had the mutual stake in "stability and mutual security in and around the Eurasian land mass" been made primary, elevated to the position history will judge as having been necessary, and recognized as a genuinely compelling reason for U.S.-Russian partnership—even a durable alliance—nearly all of the perils that roll U.S.-Russian relations today would either not have emerged or would be to the side, much as the frictions that regularly washed against the transatlantic alliance during its post-war life. And the approach to the specific state listed a moment ago would have been predominantly cooperative, not, as we have instead, an approach constantly teetering on the predominantly competitive.

Pie in the sky? So it would seem. If Russian leaders were fated to address the angst they felt and the chaos they had experienced by privileging a strong state over a flourishing democracy, and with popular blessing, while the United States expected any real and reliable major ally to be democratic, what chance did the idea have? If the asymmetries in power and security more or less guaranteed that Russians would react with mistrust and a spirit of rivalry to a U.S. or NATO role in what yesterday had been their empire, and the Americans, in fact, had little desire to make major commitments in the region, what possibility existed of forging an ambitious partnership? And, if Russian weakness and self-preoccupation meant that Washington could safely concentrate on other more immediate problems, what could have moved its leaders to embrace such a broad-minded but demanding goal, particularly when neither the Congress nor significant political forces wanted it or even let the notion cross their minds?

But the idea need not have been so quixotic nor need it be thought yet so unthinkable. When the U.S. agenda with Russia was primarily to mitigate the effects of its weakness, e.g., containing the flight of weapon-grade nuclear materials and guarding against the flow of such materials to (and from) rogue humans, pirated goods, and disease—it was easy to compartmentalize these tasks, and place them among other second- or third-order priorities. When the United States was in the flush of the "unipolar moment," confident of its ability to deal with the perils of international politics largely on its own terms and, when necessary, basically by itself, Russia could be reduced to a useful but part-time friend. Neither condition, however, is now in force.

Russia counts. It has emerged as a major alternative oil and gas axis, more important for some, such as Europe and potentially China, than the Middle East. Its role on crucial international issues, like Iran and North Korea, particularly in tandem with China's, is no longer marginal. And, for good and ill, its capacity to shape Ukrainian and Belarusian options as well as to affect Central Asian security is greater than any other state. Even its potential influence on Chinese policy is far from negligible. The United States, therefore, has reason to rethink the place Russia occupies in its foreign policy. Lest the Russian leadership treat the same considerations as justifying no rethinking on its part, however, it should be mindful of the other side of the coin: the more Russia becomes part of the global economy, as the U.S.-China relationship demonstrates, the more it will encounter the United States. The sooner its oil flows less astoundingly (2010) earns a good deal
This does not mean the deal that Putin's Russian critics think he seeks is to be had: "Tone down your criticism of Russia's domestic course, including the 'police action' (he insists that it is no longer a war) in Chechnya and back off of your aggressive efforts to expand U.S. influence in the post-Soviet space, and you can count on Russia as an energy partner and a supportive party on most other foreign policy issues." Neither de jure or de facto would either the Bush administration or any other U.S. leadership agree; nor, for that matter, could Putin deliver on the deal. Others suggest that the Russian leadership and much of the political elite have something else in mind: that steadily over the last two years they have given up on the idea of integrating with the West (never mind, into the West), and, in the phrase of Dmitri Trenin, decided to fashion their own "solar system" and place Russia at its center. By gathering a cluster of states, mostly in the post-Soviet space, whose needs, vulnerabilities, and preferences parallel Russia's, they mean to create an anchor permitting Russia to cooperate when and on what grounds it wishes with Europe, Japan, China, and, not least, the United States.

Still, other voices, including an entirely mainstream political figure like Konstantin Kosachev, the chair of the Duma's foreign affairs committee, insist that Russia is and must be a Euro-Atlantic state, but of late this reality has been continually thwarted by counterproductive U.S. and Western policies.

All three portraits are compatible with a path to a status quo plus, albeit each with a different content and implications. So, however, is each compatible with a status quo minus. Given the pace with which the tone in U.S.-Russian relations has degenerated over the last two years (the best Putin could muster after the July summit was "we remain reliable and mutually interested partners"), the momentum could well continue. Take three fundamental juxtapositions in U.S. and Russian foreign policies: (1) the only thing worse than war with Iran, say the Americans, would be a nuclear Iran; the only thing worse than a nuclear Iran, say the Russians, would be war with Iran, to use Alexei Arbatov's formulation; (2) we prefer Ukraine in NATO and the EU, say the Americans; we do not, say the Russians; and (3) in any significant instance, the United States must reserve to itself the right to use force, say the Americans; in anything other than a clear case of self-defense, the UN Security Council must sanction the use of force, say the Russians. The three do not exhaust the contrasts, but they are critical and representative. If push comes to shove on any of them or counterpart cleavages, and if either the United States or Russia sticks rigidly to its end of the juxtaposition, U.S.-Russia relations will almost certainly descend another level lower.

Or, if Russia were, say, to seize on Western recognition of Kosovo independence to do the same toward Transdniestr, Abkhazia, or South Ossetia, or tensions with Georgia were to spin out of control, more incremental harm would be done. Or, so too, would the damage mount if the next unexpected international crisis drives the two apart rather than together.

And, of course, finally if, despite the silly efforts to put on a good face, Putin's entourage goes too far in guaranteeing the electoral outcomes they want in 2007 and 2008 and/or Bush feels or is compelled to do more than just "philosophically" over cogniz, trouble will follow.

The difference in outcomes at the end of the two paths is obviously of some consequence, and, therefore, the stakes for each country matter. But in policy terms they are about maximizing minimal opportunities and minimizing modest opportunity costs. They are not about tragedy, about a relationship going over the edge. Alas, for now, neither are they about seizing what was a historic opportunity.
Russia Leaves the West*

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Summary: Just 15 years after the Cold War’s end, hopes of integrating Russia into the West have been dished, and the Kremlin has started creating its own Moscow-centered system. But instead of just attacking this new Russian foreign policy, Washington must guard against the return of dangerous great-power rivalry.

The End of the Affair

As President Vladimir Putin prepares to host the summit of the G-8 (the group of eight highly industrialized nations) in St. Petersburg in July, it is hardly a secret that relations between Russia and the West have begun to fray. After more than a decade of talk about Russia’s “integration” into the West and a “strategic partnership” between Moscow and Washington, U.S. and European officials are now publicly voicing their concern over Russia’s domestic political situation and its relations with the former Soviet republics. In a May 4 speech in Lithuania, for example, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney accused the Kremlin of “unfairly restricting citizens’ rights” and using its energy resources as “tools of intimidation and blackmail.”

Even as these critics express their dismay, they continue to assume that, if they speak loudly and insistently, Russia will heed them and change its ways. Unfortunately, they are looking for change in the wrong place. It is true, as they charge, that Putin has recently clamped down on dissent throughout Russia and cracked down on separatists in Chechnya, but more important changes have come in Russia’s foreign policy. Until recently, Russia saw itself as Pluto in the Western solar system, very far from the center but still fundamentally a part of it. Now it has left that orbit entirely: Russia’s leaders have given up on becoming part of the West and have started creating their own Moscow-centered system.

The Kremlin’s new approach to foreign policy assumes that, as a big country, Russia is essentially friendless; no great power wants a strong Russia, which would be a formidable competitor, and many want a weak Russia that they could exploit and manipulate. Accordingly, Russia has a choice between accepting subservience and reasserting its status as a great power, thereby claiming its rightful place in the world alongside the United States and China rather than settling for the company of Brazil and India.

The United States and Europe can protest this change in Russia’s foreign policy all they want, but it will not make any difference. They must recognize that the terms of Western-Russian interaction, conceptualized at the time of the Soviet Union’s collapse 15 years ago and more or less unchanged since, have shifted fundamentally. The old paradigm is lost, and it is time to start looking for a new one.

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A Half-Open Door

The West deserves some of the blame for the shift in Russian foreign policy. The sudden collapse of Soviet power and the speed of German reunification took the United States and Europe by surprise. European governments, led by France, responded by transforming the European Community into a more tightly knit European Union (EU), while deferring the question of what to do about Eastern Europe and Russia. Washington, meanwhile, focused on managing the ever-weakening Soviet Union and rejoicing in its victory in the Cold War, neglecting to define a strategy for post-Soviet Russia. Bush's "new world order," articulated when the Soviet Union still existed, asked only that the Soviets stop their meddling around the globe. Only later did policy makers start thinking about organizing a true post-Cold War order and, when they did, their approach to handling post-Soviet Russia almost guaranteed failure.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1989, Western governments created a multitude of partnerships with their former communist adversaries in an effort to project their values and influence beyond the ruins of the wall. They hoped that some countries would quickly join Europe, now "whole and free," while others would gravitate toward it more slowly. The conflict in the Balkans dampened this early enthusiasm and demonstrated the United States' aloofness and Europe's weakness in the face of the forces released by the end of the superpower confrontation.

From the beginning of the post-Cold War era, the West saw Russia as a special case. Armed with nuclear weapons, its great-power mentality shaken but unbroken, and just too big, Russia would be granted privileged treatment but no real prospect of membership in either NATO or the EU. The door to the West would officially remain open, but the idea of Russia's actually entering through it remained unthinkble. The hope was that Russia would gradually transform itself, with Western assistance, into a democratic polity and a market economy. In the meantime, what was important was that Russia would pursue a generally pro-Western foreign policy.

Moscow found such an offer unacceptable. It was only willing to consider joining the West if it was given something like co-chairmanship of the Western club—or at least membership in its Politburo. Russian leaders were not willing to follow the guidance coming from Washington and Brussels or to accept the same rules that its former Soviet satellites were following. Thus, despite all of the talk about Russia's integration into Western institutions, the project was stillborn from the beginning. It was just a matter of time before that reality became obvious to both sides.

As other former Warsaw Pact countries were being drawn into the expanding West, Russia, considered too important to ignore, was offered new arrangements, but it was still kept at arm's length. Bringing Russia into the G-7 (to make it the G-8) was intended to tie Moscow to the West politically and to socialize its leaders. The NATO-Russia Council was supposed to harmonize security agendas and promote military reform in Russia. The EU-Russia "common spaces" were designed to "Europeanize" Russia economically and socially and associate it with Europe politically. The Council of Europe, to which Russia was admitted while the first Chechen war was unfolding, was supposed to promote Western values and norms in Russia.

These arrangements did not so much fail as grossly underperform. The G-8 is still the old G-7 plus Russia, even though Russia technically has equal status with the other countries (except when the finance ministers meet). The NATO-Russia Council is merely a low-key technical-cooperation workshop operating at NATO's side. The EU-Russia road maps for the creation of the "common spaces," meant to enhance cooperation on the basis of greater mutual compatibility, offer only a set of very general objectives with no hard commitments that just paper over a growing gap. The Council of Europe, especially its Parliamentary Assembly, has turned into an oratorical battle-ground between Russian lawmakers and their European counterparts on Chechnya and other human rights issues. (Moscow has even threatened to halve its contribution to the council's budget if the criticism does not cease.) Even the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, which date from the Cold War, are floundering. Russia has chosen to ignore the former, which it accuses of political meddling in post-Soviet states, and has indicated that it might withdraw from the key provisions of the latter, which Moscow believes place unfair constraints on the Russian forces. So much for integration with the West.

After 9/11, Putin took the opportunity to offer the White House a deal. Russia was prepared to trade acceptance of U.S. global leadership for the United States' recognition of its role as a major ally, endowed with a special (that is, hegemonic) responsibility for the former Soviet space. That sweeping offer, obviously made from a position of weakness, was rejected by Washington, which was only prepared to discuss with Moscow the "rules of the road" in the post-Soviet Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

The Kremlin gave Westpolitik another try by joining the "coalition of the unwilling" at the time of the Iraqi war. By joining the major European powers in opposition to the Bush invasion, Moscow hoped to enter the Western system through the European door and create a Russo-German-French axis to counterbalance Washington and London. Russia failed again. A new anti-American sentiment did not materialize; situational agreement with Moscow (and dis-agreement with Washington) could not overcome the fundamental character of transatlantic relations.

Instead, transatlantic and European institutions continued to enlarge to the east, taking in the remaining former Warsaw Pact and Council for Mutual Economic Assistance countries and the Baltic states. With the entry of Poland and the Baltics into the EU, the EU's overall approach became even more alarming for Moscow. At the same time, both the United States and Europe began supporting regime change from within and geopolitical realignment in Russia's borders, most notably in Ukraine and Georgia, thus projecting their power of attraction beyond the former Soviet border into the CIS. The concept of "the near abroad," which Moscow used in the 1990s to justify its hegemony over the new states on Russia's periphery, was suddenly revived—only now there were two versions of it, one from the perspective of Moscow, the other from the perspective of Brussels, both of which were claiming the same territory. From 2003 to 2005, for the first time since 1991, Moscow's relations with both parts of the West—the United States and Europe—soured at the same time.

Paradigm Lost

Towards the end of Putin's first presidential term, in 2004, Western governments finally concluded that Russia was not going to turn democratic in the foreseeable future. In their view, Russia no longer belonged to the same group as Poland, or even Ukraine. Reluctantly, they put Russia into the same slot as China, even while still hoping—improbably, perhaps—to make the most of the partnership established in a happier era.

But the changes on the Russian side went beyond domestic politics and had broad implications. For two decades prior to 2005, Russia had been continuously retreating in the realm of international politics. The "color revolutions" in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan made it clear that even the post-Soviet space—an area where Moscow was still dominant and felt more or less at ease—was starting to disintegrate. In late 2004 and early 2005, in the wake of the Beslan school hostage crisis and the Ukrainian election fiasco, the self-confidence of the Putin government hit an all-time low.

Astonishingly, the Kremlin bounced back—and very quickly. Lessons were learned, new resources mobilized, and morale restored. It helped along mightily by high oil and gas prices. At first, Moscow acted cautiously, still
somewhat unsure of itself. It joined Beijing in calling for the withdrawal of the U.S. military from Central Asia. Then, toward the end of 2005, it boldly embraced Uzbekistan as a formal ally, and the year ended with a dispute with Ukraine over gas supplies. The Kremlin did not hesitate to take on the post-Soviet republics’ “beacon of democracy.”

In the past year, Russia has begun acting like the great power it was in tsarist times. It conducted its first-ever military exercises with China and a smaller one with India. It ended gas subsidies for its former Soviet neighbors and cut off supplies to Ukraine when Kiev balked at a 400 percent price increase. It welcomed Hamas leaders to Moscow after the United States and the EU declared that they would not talk to them and offered financial support to the Palestinians even as the Americans and the Europeans were cutting off or suspending theirs. Russia has squarely rejected taking Iran under sanctions for its uranium-enrichment activities and has declared that its nuclear energy cooperation and arms trade with Tehran will continue and that the Russian armed forces would stay neutral should the United States decide to attack Iran.

Having left the Western orbit, Russia is also working to create its own solar system. For the first time, Moscow has been the leading member of the post-Soviet Union, Moscow is treating the former Soviet republics as a priority. It has started promoting Russian economic expansion in the CIS in an effort both to obtain lucrative assets and to enhance its political influence.

Facing what it sees as an emerging new world—which features a new version of great-power nationalism—the Russian leadership exudes confidence. Beyond the former Soviet space, Russia sees U.S. influence gradually waning and considers the EU as an economic, but not a political or military, unit that will remain self-absorbed for a while. Moscow admires China’s progress and, careful but not fearful of its giant neighbor, is cooperating ever more closely with Beijing; it considers the more distant India unproblematic.

Part of the reason for Moscow’s confidence is Russia’s much-improved financial situation and the consolidation of power in the hands of the ruling circle. High energy prices have resulted in a huge surplus in Russia’s coffers, which has allowed the Kremlin to build the third-largest currency reserves in the world, set aside over $50 billion in a domestic “stabilization fund,” and start repaying its foreign debts ahead of schedule. With the standard of living in Russia rising, the political opposition marginalized, and government authority recentered, the Kremlin has grown assertive and occasionally arrogant. The humiliation of the post-Soviet period has passed: Russians have made it clear that their domestic politics is no one else’s business—Vladimir Surkov, Putin’s chief-political-officer-cum-ideologue, often emphasizes that the country is a “sovereign democracy” and Russian leaders have begun playing hardball in the world arena.

From Ironclads to Oil Rigs

In the late nineteenth century, Russia’s success was said to rest on its army and its navy, today, its success rests on its oil and gas. Energy is a key resource that should be exploited where prices are high, but it is also an effective political weapon, although one that be handled with care. So far, Moscow has done the right thing—selling energy subsidies to the former Soviet republics—but in the wrong way. Rather than reforming the energy relationship with Ukraine in a steady and open manner, for example, Russia’s state-controlled energy company Gazprom, resorted to an eleventh-hour pressure tactic, which seemed like blackmail and made Russia look like a threat to global energy security.

To the extent that the Russian ruling elite cares about the West, it cares about economics, particularly the markets for oil and gas. The elite was overjoyed by Gazprom’s steep rise in capitalization in early January 2006, which it took as vindication of its hard-line policies toward Ukraine. It wants Russian corporate giants to become transnational, and Gazprom is one of the world’s biggest corporations. In several industries, including energy, metals, and chemicals, Russian national champions are looking to compete for places in the top ten.

By and large, however, Russian leaders do not care much about acceptance by the West; even the Soviet Union worried more about its image. Officials in Moscow privately enjoy Senator John McCain’s thunderous statements about kicking Russia out of the G8 because they know it is not going to happen and they take pleasure in the supposed impotence of serious adversaries. Public relations and lobbying are simply not high on the Kremlin’s agenda. GR—government relations—is considered more important than PR. Russia’s engaging former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder’s plan for a gas pipeline project and wooing Donald Evans, the former U.S. commerce secretary, for an oil job are just two stunning examples of this approach. Russia, the Kremlin believes, will get heard in the West almost no matter what it does, so why bother?

All of this promises serious tension, and even conflict, between Russia and the West, although nothing like a return to the Cold War. There is no ideological antagonism, since today’s Russia lacks a state ideology. And in a number of important areas—including fighting Islamist radicals—there will be cooperation. On others, such as the rise of China and energy security, there will be some cooperation, but Russia will hardly side with the West as a matter of course. In the test case of the war in Georgia, when push comes to shove, Moscow would prefer to see Tehran pursue its nuclear program, even if it is imperfectly safeguarded, than a U.S. attack to stop it. Whereas the Iraq war led the Kremlin away from the White House and into the arms of l’Élysée, a war on Iran is likely to push Moscow further away from both Washington and Brussels—and into the arms of Beijing.

Neither With Us Nor Against Us

The West needs to rethink the fundamentals of its approach to Russia. Russia’s domestic transformation will not follow the course of, say, Poland’s: modernizing Russia by means of EU integration will not be an option. Nor will Russia adopt the French approach: an occasionally dissenting but solidly Euro-Atlantic foreign and security policy. Nor should the West be banking on a historical shortcut: no democratization, no Western tsar will suddenly emerge from some color revolution to hatch Russia to the U.S.-EU wagon.

On the other hand, Russia today is not, and is not likely to become, a second Soviet Union. It is not a revanchist and imperialist aggressor bent on reabsorbing its former provinces. It is not a rogue state, nor a natural ally of those states that may be called rogues. A Sino-Russian alliance against the United States could only occur as a result of exceptionally shortsighted and foolish policies on Washington’s part. Today’s Russia may not be pro-Western, but neither is it anti-Western.

In light of Russia’s new foreign policy, the West needs to calm down and take Russia for what it is: a major outside player that is neither an eternal foe nor an automatic friend. Western leaders must disable themselves of the notion that the Kremlin is actually plant Russia. Russia will continue to change, but at its own pace. The key drivers of that change must be the growth of capitalism at home and openness to the outside world. The West needs to adopt an issue-based approach, which is not necessarily coordinated with the Russian government, but it should not expect Moscow always to follow its lead. Engaging Russia is over, and engaging with Russia, where possible and desirable, must be based on mutual self-interest. Most important, Western leaders have to avoid wishful thinking when trying to embrace either a Kremlin ruler or a liberal opposition figure.

Looking ahead, the current complications are likely to get worse in the near and medium term. The G8 summit in St. Petersburg will be accompanied by intense criticism of Kremlin policies in the Western media. Russia’s World Trade Organization accession process has already slowed down as a result of U.S. and EU demands. Kosovo’s coming formal independence from Serbia will be taken up by Russia as
a model for resolving the stalemate conflicts in Georgia and Moldova, where the West is insisting on territorial unity and Moscow is supporting the separatist enclaves. On the all-important issue of Iran, Russia will continue essentially to share Western goals while opposing Western (and especially U.S.) hard-line policies.

Tension will culminate in 2008, the year of the Russian and U.S. presidential elections. Supreme power will likely be transferred from the current incumbent to another member of the ruling circle in Moscow, and this appointment will be legitimized in a national election. (There are other scenarios, of course—ranging from Putin’s running for a third term to a union with Belarus—but they seem less probable at the moment.) Thus, the real question will be not about the Russian election but about the reaction to that election in the West, and above all in the United States. Will it be pronounced free but not fair, as before? Or neither free nor fair? Declaring the post-2008 Russian leadership illegitimate could push the U.S.-Russian relationship from cool estrangement to real alienation. And all of this would be happening in the midst of the U.S. presidential campaign and could coincide with Ukraine’s taking an important step toward joining NATO.

With U.S.-Russian relations at their lowest point—and the Kremlin at its most confident—since 1991, Washington must recognize that frustrated Russia-bashing is futile. It must understand that positive change in Russia can only come from within and that economic realities, rather than democratic ideals, will be the vehicle for that change. And most important, as president and CEO of the international system, the United States must do everything it can to ensure that the system does not once again succumb to dangerous and destabilizing great-power rivalry.

### American, Russian and European Interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus

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The United States, Russia and Europe have significant interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia. These interests coincide in some areas and differ in others. The likelihood that all three will continue to play an important role in these regions provides a compelling rationale for them to reconcile their differences and develop a common agenda that would serve the interests of all concerned. Such a modus operandi has proven elusive. The ability of the United States, Russia and Europe to reach a consensus on Central Asia and the Caucasus could play a big role in their overall relationship.

### Russian Interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia

Russia has a much bigger stake than Europe or the United States in the lands it controlled until fifteen years ago. It remains the most important power for both the Caucasus and Central Asia. It also views the two regions as to its security, as well as the locus of its most important economic interests.

For Russia, the Caucasus is the soft underbelly. It has fought two wars—in 1994 and 1999—in separatist Chechnya. The conflict continues to simmer, threatening the fragile status quo in the entire North Caucasus, which lies within Russia proper, but borders on independent Georgia and Azerbaijan. The North Caucasus region is crisscrossed by ethnic and religious fault lines and plagued by poverty. For more than a decade Russia’s security establishment has repeatedly blamed Georgia and Azerbaijan as contributors to the North Caucasus insecurity.

Georgia and Azerbaijan, Russian officials have claimed, do not control their borders and allow Chechen terrorists to continue their operations. Moreover, Russian officials have charged that Georgian authorities were deliberately turning a blind eye to Chechen terrorist activities as a means of asymmetrical warfare against Russia.

With Georgia and Azerbaijan making no secret of their desire to join NATO, Armenia has emerged as the key Russian partner in the region. Its legacy of massacres by Turks in the early part of the 20th Century, which Turkey has refused to acknowledge, and a stalemates conflict with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, make it a natural partner for Russia.

The Caucasus has been a major theater of Russian-Turkish competition for centuries. Memories of that competition are alive and well in Moscow (as well as Ankara for that matter). As Turkey has sought to reestablish its influence in the Caucasus since 1991, Russian-Armenian relations have taken on new significance for both. Armenia shares a border with Iran, which remains the most reliable interlocutor for
Russia in the Middle East and the only entry point for Russia in Middle Eastern politics. Armenia, squeezed by unfriendly Turkey, hostile Azerbaijan and unstable Georgia, can ill afford to antagonize Tehran, and shares with Russia an interest in good relations with that country. Armenia thus provides a springboard for Russia to balance U.S. influence, which in turn rests on relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Long opposed to NATO's eastward expansion, Russia's national security establishment views the prospect of NATO in the Caucasus with alarm because as a non-NATO member, Russia would find itself marginalized (at best) in regional security.

Central Asia also looms large on Russia's national security agenda. It is vast, full of weak states and besides Russia borders on China, Afghanistan and Iran. In the words of one Central Asian leader, this is a tough neighborhood.

Russian security concerns in Central Asia are dominated by the specter of instability, which could spill into Russia. Refugees, Islamic militants infecting Russia's own Muslim heartland (Tatarstan) and the prospect of another Afghanistan-like entanglement must be high on the list of concerns of many Russian officials.

Another major Russian concern in Central Asia is drugs. The region has served as a conduit for drugs from Afghanistan, and Russia has been increasingly a victim of that traffic. Thus, Russia has a strong interest in Central Asia as both a springboard to and a bulwark against threats emanating from Afghanistan.

Russian concerns about Central Asia have been heightened as a result of U.S. efforts to promote democracy there. U.S. support for the "Tajik revolution" in Kyrgyzstan, which overthrew a government friendly to both the United States and Russia, was seen in Moscow as threatening to the entire region and destabilizing.

Russia has long felt that its interests would be well served by "balancing" U.S. presence. As a result, Russia has intensified its relations with Central Asian countries, emphasizing strong ties with incumbent regimes regardless of their domestic political complexion. Moreover, Moscow has sought to use the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which includes Russia, China and most Central Asian countries, as a vehicle for balancing the United States in the region. However, Russia has to be careful not to undermine the United States in Central Asia too much, because it could have an adverse impact on U.S. operations in Afghanistan.

Russian interests in Central Asia include relations with China. China's rise is the single most difficult issue on Russia's foreign policy agenda. Central Asia is but one theater where Russian interests will be challenged by the ever-expanding Chinese economic, political and security footprint. Balancing China's influence in Central Asia is likely to be an important and increasing interest of Russia's in the years to come.

It is an interest that Russia is likely to share with the countries of Central Asia. For them, the SCO could play a useful role as force multiplier for constraining China's influence. Perhaps this is a sign of a future Russian strategy in the region, which could eventually combine elements of cooperation and competition with both China and the United States, while forging alliances with local regimes in Central Asia.

In the economic sphere, Central Asia and the Caucasus have received a great deal of publicity because of substantial reserves of oil and gas located on their territory, as well as the intense competition for control of these resources and their export routes, in which the United States, Russia, China and to a lesser degree Europe have participated since the mid-1990s.

Russian interests with regard to energy are skewed heavily toward Central Asia. In the Caucasus in the 1990s, Russia had a strong interest in controlling energy flows from oil and gas fields in the Caspian Sea. But that was primarily a matter of strategic considerations aimed to retain Russian control of the region.

Although control over the Caucasus and Central Asia undoubtedly remains an important Russian objective, lately Russia has acquired a new interest in Central Asian energy: The prospect of a significant shortfall in Russian domestic gas production and the importance for Russia to sustain its own lucrative gas trade with Europe make it imperative for Russia to control Central Asian gas flows.

The articulation by Russia's foreign policy experts of the concept of an "energy superpower," as the reentry card for Russia into the circle of major world powers further underscores the value of Central Asian gas exports to Russia. The ability to control them could prove decisive to Russia's relations with Ukraine, which relies heavily on a mix of Russian and Central Asian gas, as well as Europe, which relies on long-term contracts with Russia to supply gas to its environmentally-conscious consumers.

Russia is keenly interested in another import from Central Asia and the Caucasus—their labor. Russian population has been declining by as much as 900,000 people annually. Economic growth in Russia has generated demand for labor, which Russia has satisfied by importing millions of migrant workers from the former Soviet countries, including the Caucasus and Central Asia. This traffic has become a two-way dependency—Russia's on migrant labor and its neighbors' on remittances from Russia.

Ethnic Russians in Central Asia represent another Russian concern. Many have moved back to the Russian Federation, but some 7 million still remain (the numbers are considerably lower in the Caucasus). No Russian government will be able to ignore their fate in the event of significant disturbances in the region.

Russian interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia are deep, diverse and complex. After seven years of economic growth and political recovery, preceded by a decade of retreat and chaos, Russian policymakers feel that Central Asia and the Caucasus represent a final frontier beyond which Russia, as a regional power, cannot retreat.

U.S. Interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, the United States made a political commitment to support the independence and sovereignty of the Caucasus states and work to resolve the conflicts that erupted in the region—Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The conflicts have not been resolved, but the United States is still committed to their peaceful resolution.

Another important U.S. concern in both regions from the very first days of their independence has been the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Efforts to prevent and counter it have been at the top of the U.S. security assistance agenda before and after 9/11 and are bound to remain there for the foreseeable future, given the region's vast stockpiles of materials and know-how in this field.

The fate of the Caucasus region resonates with an important segment of the U.S. population and has domestic political significance in the United States. The Armenian community in the United States takes an active interest in the fate of independent Armenia and has ensured that U.S.-Armenian relations consistently get the attention of senior U.S. policymakers.

The Caucasus has also emerged as an important region in the U.S. policy of democracy promotion. The "Rose revolution" in Georgia has become a symbol of this policy, attracting high-level attention to that country, as well as to the entire region. Georgia's progress in its democratic transformation and integration in European institutions would validate U.S. support for democracy as an element of U.S. policy.

The United States has an interest in the Caucasus as a neighbor of Iran and as a staging area for supporting U.S. operations in Central and South Asia. Access to the Caucasus will be a U.S. interest as long as U.S. presence in Afghanistan is required.

U.S. economic interests in the Caucasus, as well as in Central Asia, are modest. Oil deposits in Central Asia and the Caucasus, located pri-
mality in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, but also in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, are estimated to generate less than 5 percent of global oil supply once full production is achieved. The land-locked region will eventually be serviced by three pipeline routes—through Russia, to China; and across the Caspian to the recently completed Baku-Ceyhan pipeline to the Eastern Mediterranean. Given the limited volume of Caspian oil and its proximity to major markets in Europe and Asia, very little, if any, of it is likely to reach the U.S. market.

For the United States, Central Asia’s importance is derived largely from its location. Next door to Afghanistan, it has served as a stepping stone to the remote, land-locked country, which otherwise would be even less accessible to the United States and its allies. Central Asia itself is only marginally more accessible than Afghanistan, but that margin makes an important difference, one that proved crucial during the early stages of the military campaign against the Taliban in 2001. Air bases in Kyrgyzstan and, until U.S. expulsion in November 2005, in Uzbekistan, have played an important role in facilitating U.S. operations in Afghanistan.

But Central Asia is more than a stepping stone to Afghanistan. It is the heartland of Eurasia, surrounded by every key continental power—Russia, China, India, Pakistan and Iran. In the context of the U.S. global posture which puts a premium on unimpeded access and ability to deploy forces quickly, the crossroads of Eurasia is an important piece of real estate. Its control by a hostile power resulting in U.S. loss of access could hurt U.S. interests in several regions—from China to the Middle East.

Since 2001 and the outset of the Global War on Terror, the United States has had a strong interest in preventing state failure and uncontrolled spaces in the Caucasus and Central Asia where states are weak and face multiple risks.

Long-term U.S. interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus are those of a global power. In other words, they are regional in nature and as such do not rise to the top tier of the U.S. national security agenda except in special circumstances. The Caucasus and Central Asia are important to the United States because of U.S. interest in the neighboring regions and global concerns.

European Interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus

Europe’s interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus lack the intensity generated by shared history and geography peculiar to Russia’s stake in these regions. Europe also lacks the global ambition of the U.S. approach to them. Europe’s concerns about the two regions have been largely those of a remote regional power without a compelling rationale for a more active involvement there.

This generalization requires some caveats. The so-called “New Europe,” or countries of Eastern Europe with firsthand experience of Soviet occupation, has seen it in its interest to support democratic change in the former Soviet lands as a means of countering Russian influence. Georgia, following the “Rose revolution” has been the leading beneficiary of this policy.

In Afghanistan, the deployment of European allies has given Europe a new interest in Central Asian security affairs, but it has yet to translate into a more active involvement there on the part of the Europeans. This is also due to limited absorption capacity by regional governments of security assistance.

In energy matters Europe has taken a back seat to the United States even though it will benefit from Caspian oil and gas far more than the United States. Europe—with the notable exception of Eastern Europe—has tended to see this issue more as a matter of commerce than strategy.

Europe has undergone major expansion and has yet to come to terms with the role of a major power. It is facing pressures for further expansion from the Balkans, Turkey and Ukraine. It is a big agenda that leaves little time for secondary issues, which the Caucasus and Central Asia are, relative to everything else Brussels needs to address.

Concluding Observations

The United States and Russia will be the key actors in these regions for the foreseeable future. Europe will remain in a supportive role. Despite U.S.-Russian differences about Central Asia and the Caucasus, it has been increasingly clear that competition is likely to hurt all involved. Russia no longer has the means to act as security manager in its borderlands. But it can still act as a spoiler.

The United States, with help from Europe, plays an indispensable role in Central Asia by continuing to secure Afghanistan. Russia was and is unable to fulfill that mission. It has a big stake in U.S. success there. Nor is Russia able to secure the Caucasus alone. The United States, also with Europe’s help, has helped stabilize that region too, serving Russian interests in the process.

Moreover, in Central Asia, Russia and its regional partners have to contend with the prospect of a rising China. The United States could prove a useful partner to Russia and Central Asia in that context as well.

But cooperation requires compromise. For Russia and the United States, it means recognition of each other’s interests. For Europe, it entails accepting greater international responsibilities. For Russia and its local partners in Central Asia and the Caucasus, it involves recognizing that reform is necessary for the sake of long-term stability. For the United States, it calls for recognition that democratic change could lead to protracted instability and that it needs to be promoted with caution.

All of this is self-evident in the abstract, yet little of this has been recognized and accepted in the real world. In Washington, Russian actions toward Georgia are often discussed with the intensity one would expect to encounter if the threat to U.S. interests was coming from across the Rio Grande. In Moscow, the prospect of Georgia’s membership in NATO is treated as if NATO armies were poised to strike from Georgia into the Russian heartland.

Words have consequences and could cast a long shadow over bilateral relations. A new Cold War is not in the cards. But the future of Russia’s neighborhood has emerged as one of the most contentious issues in U.S.-Russian relations. What it would take for the parties to act as responsible stakeholders, recognizing both stakeholders’ rights and responsibilities, is not clear. The sooner the need for this change is recognized and acted upon, the better it will be for all concerned.
Ukraine and Europe

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Is Ukraine in Europe?

The title of this paper suggests that Ukraine is not a part of Europe. Most Ukrainians would disagree, arguing that Ukraine is fully European—geographically, linguistically, culturally, and since the 2004 Orange Revolution, even politically. Skeptics of Ukraine’s European credentials point to Europe’s commitment to “European values” such as rule of law, human rights, and democracy. But European values also include racism, fascism, and imperialism. Ukrainians know—having experienced two world wars in which Europeans devastated their country. Ukrainians also know of Europe’s indifference to the repression Ukraine and other “captive nations” suffered under Soviet rule.

Talk of “European values,” like talk of some mystical “Europe,” is for the most part empty Euro-rhetoric. The question of Ukraine’s relations with Europe is really about the European Union (EU). As Ukrainians point out, Ukraine may not be rich and democratic enough to join anytime soon but, if current trends continue, it should be some day. In that case, if such culturally diverse countries as Poland, Hungary, Greece, Romania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Slovakia as well as, possibly, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, and even Albania are European enough to belong to the EU, then so is Ukraine.

The Orange Revolution

The Orange Revolution marked a turning point in Ukraine’s post-Soviet development. Until late 2004, Ukraine, like Belarus and Russia, was moving toward authoritarianism. Ukraine’s trajectory changed when, outraged by fraudulent presidential elections, millions of Ukrainians took to the streets and demanded justice, dignity, and democracy. Their exalted expectations of immediate transformation were inevitably dashed, because complex societies cannot be changed over night, especially by non-violent means. Although the prevailing mood two years later is one of profound disappointment, Ukraine is a far different, and better, country today. It has opened itself to the world. It is democratic and free, even if chaotically so. Civil society and the media are robust, open debate is the norm, Foreign Direct Investment has boomed, and rule of law has improved. Ukraine remains poor and corrupt, but, unlike Belarus and Russia, it is anything but an authoritarian state with a dictatorial leader and a passive population.

How could a democratic breakthrough take place in a country known for systemic stasis and government deadlock? Paradoxically, the “stagnation” of the 1990s made the Orange Revolution possible. It takes time for institutions—or valued rules of the game—to take hold. They “stick” only after people use them repeatedly and come to view them as effective, valuable, and “natural.” Since such rule-based behavior evolves slowly, almost inevitably, many observers failed to see that Ukraine had
become transformed since independence in 1991, when it was a post-totalitarian and post-imperial "space" without the institutions of a state, rule of law, democracy, a market, and civil society.

That has changed in the last fifteen years. A state apparatus and skilled administrative elites emerged, parties were established, regular elections were held, popular activism grew, and market relations took hold (today two-thirds of Gross Domestic Product is produced privately). Because all political players practiced "formal democracy," Ukraine's fractious parliament never submitted to the increasingly authoritarian President Leonid Kuchma, in power since 1994. That made him vulnerable to pressure from civil society and encouraged him to forge alliances with economic clans that benefited from crooked privatization schemes. The result was a rough balance of power between parliament, president, civil society, and business. Kuchma's illegitimate regime crumbled during the Orange Revolution, when civil society rose in protest, and parliament and the oligarchs stood on the sidelines. Constrained by a constitution invoked by everyone, the Revolution's protagonists and antagonists resolved the crisis by negotiating—and not by shooting—thereby enabling the people to elect Viktor Yushchenko president.

Orange Ukraine

This power balance ensures Ukraine's continued democratic development. It also means that systemic change will remain incremental: Unconsolidated democracies move slowly. Ukraine's constitution is a recipe for government volatility, and its corrupt political and business clans will resist reforms that undercut their interests. The continued power of shadi- oso oligarchs has been, and will remain, a source of deep disillusionment for the Orange Revolution's supporters, who expected corruption to end and the "bandits" to be jailed. Although their anger at reckless Orange politicians is understandable, the best way to build stable democracies and markets may be—not to repress Ukraine's versions of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and thereby undermine the rule of law—but to integrate and thereby transform them into a productive "national bourgeoisie." That's what the United States and Western Europe did—and that's what Ukraine appears to be doing as well.

The March 2006 parliamentary elections and their aftermath are a case in point. Ukrainians expected the elections to be fair and free, as indeed they were. The results—with 92 percent of the vote going to the Party of Regions (PR), 22 percent to the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, 14 percent to the pro-presidential Our Ukraine bloc, 6 percent to the Socialists, and 4 percent to the Communists—were also accepted as legitimate. The "Blue" PR, which represents the oligarchic interests of Ukraine's Russian-speaking and anti-Russian eastern rust belt, behaved democratically before, during, and after the ballot. Its leaders are demagogues and oligarchs, but they appear to know that the constitution is the only game in town. With the Communists, whose candidate for president won 38 percent of the vote in 1999, having been discredited and, the PR continues to dominate the Ukraine's equivalent of "post-Communists."

Attempts by the Orange forces—the Tymoshenko Bloc, Our Ukraine, and the Socialists—to form a governing coalition produced months of horse-trading and paralyzed government. After calling for a new electoral law, they finally signed a coalition agreement in late June, some Socialists bolted and joined the PR and Communists, provoking further rounds of mudslinging. Ukrainians were disgusted by their leaders' infante shenanigans but the seemingly endless post-electoral negotiations did show that Ukraine's politicians, like their counterparts in other democratic countries, were, despite deep personal animosities, resolving their differences according to the rules of the game. Our Ukraine's parallel negotiations with the PR about a Blue-Orange coalition, like the Socialists' decision to back Blue, also testified to an emerging consensus on centrist principles. Blue and Orange agree that Ukraine should be an independent, democratic, multinational, and rule-of-law state with a market economy. They insist on the inviolability of the constitution, want a vibrant parliament, support a free press, a market economy, and cultural tolerance, and oppose Ukraine's fragmentation. They believe that Ukraine should enter the EU and the World Trade Organization and maintain good relations with Russia and the United States. Unsurprisingly, they also disagree violently on many policies, such as Ukraine's joining NATO, relations between Kyiv and the provinces, the pace of privatization, and the status of the Russian language.

Notwithstanding the fireworks, Ukraine's squabbling elites are searching for, and finding, a modus vivendi in an institutionally democratic country that is as suited today as Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia were in 1989 to consolidate democracy and the market. Moreover, in contrast to the Kuchma years, Ukraine's politicians must also answer to an empowered population. Some five million, primarily young, people took part in the Orange Revolution. For much of Ukraine's youth the Revolution was a formative experience, along the lines of "1968" in the United States and Europe or of Solidarity in Poland. For Ukrainians in general—and especially for those in the formerly quiescent Blue eastern provinces—Orange Revolution was a defining moment that forced them to abandon their apathy, take a stand, and become citizens. The PR faces an especially difficult task. It must adapt to democratic rules and answer to a mobilized populace that detests corrupts—even if Russian-speaking—oligarchs.

Ukraine and the EU

Until late 2004, both Ukrainian and European officials had a perfunctory, and mutually reinforcing, attitude toward the possibility of Ukraine's joining the EU. The former were reluctant to abandon their authoritarian leanings, while the latter preferred not to deal with a large, poor, and quasi-democratic country that Russian elites claimed as part of their sphere of influence. Both sides were comfortable with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) that was explicitly premised on Ukraine's non-accession.

By sweeping away the Kuchma regime, the Orange Revolution upset this cozy arrangement. President Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko openly proclaimed their allegiance to democracy, rule of law, and human rights. They also said they really expect Ukraine to join the EU. Brussels had no choice but to welcome Ukraine's turn toward democracy and Europe—if only because it had been insisting since 1991 that Ukraine do so. The December 2004 EU/Ukraine Action Plan was a response to the Orange Revolution, but, like the PCA, it proposed enhanced cooperation between two "neighbors," largely within the context of the EU's Neighborhood Action Plan. The EU's late-2005 certification of Ukraine as a market economy opened the road to WTO membership and a free-trade agreement with Brussels.

The Revolution also placed Ukrainian and EU policy makers in a bind. Ukraine's democrats desperately needed a green light from Brussels. They knew the experience of the East European states that a declaration of the EU's willingness to integrate Ukraine would enhance their legitimacy and help them promote reform. But the EU was suffering from "enlargement fatigue" and had been threatened by the French and Dutch rejection of the EU Constitution. More important, Europe's energy dependence on Gazprom and the EU's institutional incapacity to respond geopolitically to Russia's challenge or to agree on a common EU defense, security, and energy policy meant keeping a respectful distance from Ukraine lest the Kremlin's neo-imperialist feathers got ruffled. Torn by competing visions of the EU as a paragon of democracy or as a hard-nosed quasi-state—visibly embarrassed EU officials have hemmed and hawed and prefered to deflect attention to "European values."

Notwithstanding the charms of heightened Euro-enthusiasm, Ukrainian foreign policy remains
constrained by formidable geopolitical realities. Ukraine cannot join Europe as long as the EU is unwilling to let it join—even if Ukraine fulfills every single paragraph of the acquis communautaire, the body of EU laws specifying the common rights and duties of member states. The United States is favorably disposed toward Ukraine today; in early 2006 Washington graduated Ukraine from the 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment, a symbolically important gesture that meant that U.S. trade restrictions would not have to be waived annually by the president. But U.S. policy toward Ukraine has also been flimsy, tending to be a function of U.S. relations with Russia. And besides, American support can be a liability, inasmuch as the United States is associated with the war in Iraq and the hugely unpopular Bush administration. Worse, the EU wants Ukraine to pursue good relations with Russia, while inadvertently encouraging the very thumpeting that terrifies all of Russia’s neighbors. By suggesting that Russian gas supplies could take precedence over Ukraine’s democratic and European future, European policy makers only reinforce Russian high-handedness toward Ukraine and Ukrainian suspicion of Russia. Germany, alas, which really should know better, has pursued a neo-Bismarckian “Gaspolitik” that has outraged its eastern neighbors, all with long memories of fatal partitions and hateful pacts.

The Russian Problem

Thanks to its enormous geographic, military, demographic, and economic size, Russia will always be a challenge for its non-Russian neighbors. Ukraine included. Sadly, Russia currently is, and is all too easily perceived as, a threat to them because it has become—thanks in large part to Vladimir Putin’s predilection for strong states, grandiose mythmaking, and zero-sum thinking—neo-imperial, xenophobic, authoritarian, and unstable. The Kremlin hopes to resurrect a sphere of influence in the “near abroad.” Too many Russians openly dislike non-Russians. Putin has constructed an unapologetically authoritarian state whose elites view democracy as a threat. And Russia is a “petrol-state” bent with weak political institutions, inefficient government control of a resource-based economy, pervasive corruption, and high instability. Whatever such a post-Weimar Russia does—from waging a “gas war” against Ukraine to banning Georgian wine to promoting its legitimate economic and security interests—evokes deep suspicion among non-Russians. That most Russians support Putin is even more cause for alarm.

Ukrainians have ambivalent feelings about Russia in general and Putin’s Russia in particular. All speak Russian and know Russian culture intimately, and most have close ties with family and friends in Russia. But many also resent the general Russian disdain for Ukrainian language and culture and the widespread Russian view of Ukraine as a wayward province that will, in time, come to its senses and return to Mother Russia’s fold. Over half of Ukrainians prefer the West to Russia, about one-fifth are unconditionally pro-Russian, and about one-third want to find a balance between Russia and the West. Thanks to Putin’s neo-imperialism and authoritarianism, that third group has been placed into an untenable position and is tilting increasingly toward the West. Kyiv’s response to geopolitical reality and divided domestic loyalties has been, is, and will remain to try to maintain good relations with Europe, the United States, and Russia. However hard it may be to satisfy the competing interests of all three, Kyiv has no alternative to a reactive “multi-vector” policy—unless Russia forces its hand. The more neo-imperial, xenophobic, authoritarian, and unstable Russia becomes, the more Kyiv will have to move toward the West, regardless of whether Ukraine has an Orange, Blue, or Orange-Blue government. A pipeline rattling Russia will also induce the West to view Ukraine as a geopolitical, if not democratic, asset in the quest for energy security.

Globalizing Ukraine

Ukraine’s encounter with the twentieth century was catastrophic. Ukraine’s people experi-enced some forty consecutive years of relentless death and destruction, starting in 1914 and ending in 1953, when Stalin died. Over three decades of normal totalitarianism then followed. Everyday violence ended, the death camps were disbanded, and living standards improved, but no elements of democracy, the market, and civil society could emerge. Sixty years of Communist domination, irrational central planning, and stifling ideological control produced a close-minded and provincial population. Even as late as 1991 Ukrainians knew little about the world, and the world knew nothing about them.

A sea change has taken place in the fifteen years since independence. Ukraine is in the world and, willingly, in Europe. Several hundred thousand Europeans now take advantage of visa-free regulations to visit Ukraine. One to two million Ukrainians work, for the most part illegally, in Eastern and Western Europe. Some will stay, many will go back; all will adopt European values, both good and bad. Thousands of Ukrainians study at European and American universities. The EU accounts for about 35 percent of Ukraine’s total trade, and is also the largest donor to Ukraine, having provided 2.5 billion euros of aid since 1991. Almost half of FDI into Ukraine comes from Europe and over one-tenth from the United States. American and European music, books, and films are freely available in Ukraine; three-quarters of all Ukrainians have mobile phones, and a growing minority has access to the Internet. Every major airline flies to Ukraine. Ukrainian diplomats—confined to secondary roles in the United Nations in Soviet times—play an active role in every international and European organization. Ukraine’s oligarchs invest in Europe, vacation on the Cote d’Azur, actively pursue global business, and seek to hire Americans, Europeans, and Western-educated Ukrainians.

Ukraine’s opening will culminate in 2006 or 2007, when it almost certainly will join the WTO. Once that happens, a trade-free zone with the EU is likely. Accelerated economic and political integration into the world will reinforce Ukraine’s democratic and market gains and prevent its reintegration into an authoritarian Russia’s sphere of influence. NATO membership would facilitate Ukraine’s opening, but prospects for joining the alliance remain mixed. An Intensified Dialogue was initiated in 2005 as a prelude to a Membership Action Plan, a process most Ukrainian policy elites support. Two-thirds of Ukrainians oppose NATO membership—up from one-third in 2004—because the Party of Regions and some marginal leftists have played on widespread doubts about the war in Iraq and the Bush administration to stoke anti-Western sentiment. But just as Ukrainian popular attitudes toward NATO are malleable, so too the PR’s opportunistic leaders could easily reconcile with NATO—especially if Russia remains its own worst enemy. After all, despite Blue’s declared opposition to NATO membership, it was the Kuchma regime that endorsed joint military exercises, the Partnership for Peace, the NATO-Ukraine Commission, and the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan.

The United States and the EU can promote their own interests by helping Ukraine complete its transition and making its opening to the world irreversible. They should ensure Ukraine’s rapid membership in the WTO, incorporate it into their energy strategies, and assure Kyiv that it will not be forgotten in the West’s pursuit of its strategic interests, and support a quiet public relations campaign aimed at convincing Ukraine’s elites and public of NATO’s benign nature. Regardless of who rules in Kyiv, the EU must also muster the courage to make a simple declaration: “Ukraine is European and, once rich and fully democratic, deserves to be within the EU.” Such a statement costs nothing and entails no risk, while instantly legitimizing Ukraine’s European aspirations and reinforcing the EU’s rationale as a community of values. If EU officials fail to make it, they will have effectively repudiated the European project. Ukraine will survive such hypocrisy. The EU might not.
U.S.-Russia-Europe: Cooperative Efforts

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

Krakow, Poland
August 12-18, 2006

Members of Congress

Senator Robert Bennett
and Joyce Bennett
Representative Howard Berman
and Janis Berman
Representative Tom Cole
and Ellen Cole
Senator John Cornyn
and Sandy Cornyn
Representative Susan Davis
and Steve Davis
Representative Lloyd Doggett
and Libby Doggett
Representative Jim Kolbe
and Hector Alfonso
Senator Richard Lugar
and Charlene Lugar
Representative George Miller
and Cynthia Miller
Representative David Price
and Lisa Price
Representative Henry Waxman
and Janet Waxman
Representative Roger Wicker
and Gayle Wicker

Guest Speakers

Janusz Onyszkiewicz
The European Parliament

Oleksandr Pavluk
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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U.S.-Russia-Europe: Cooperative Efforts

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Krakow, Poland
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U.S.-Russia Relations: An American Perspective
(Roundtable Session)
Robert Legvold, Columbia University

While official relations with Russia remain, if not entirely cordial, at least proper, developments in Russian domestic affairs and foreign policy are increasingly sources of concern for the United States. What does Putin’s consolidation of power mean for Russian-American relations? Will Russia cooperate with the U.S. on the vital issues of counter-terrorism and nuclear nonproliferation? Should American policies toward, and programs in, Russia be adjusted to fit new circumstances?

U.S.-Russia Relations: A Russian Perspective
(Roundtable Session)
Dmitri Trenin, Carnegie Moscow Center

How do the Russian government and the Russian public see their country’s relations with the United States and Western Europe? How do these relations fit into Russia’s view of its role in the world? How does Russia plan to use its energy resources? How, if at all, can the United States and Western Europe encourage Russia to carry out foreign policies in harmony with American and European goals and conform to democratic practices?

American, Russian, and European Interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus
(Roundtable Session)
Eugene Rumer, National Defense University

The recently independent states of Central Asia and the Caucasus have become important for the United States for several reasons: they are located in a crucial part of the world; several of them harbor substantial energy reserves; and they are potential bases for terrorism. They are also countries with the potential to spawn conflicts between the United States and Russia. How do the United States, the European Union, and Russia define their interests in these countries? What are the crucial issues for each of the three parties? Do these issues present opportunities for American cooperation with Russia and/or the EU?
The Future of the European Union: The View From Eastern Europe

(Luncheon Session)

Oleksandr Pavliuk, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

The defeat of the proposed European constitutional treaty in referendums in France and the Netherlands in the late spring of 2005 has thrown the future of this organization, which is so important for American foreign policy and America's international economic relations, into turmoil. The future of the EU has become unclear. How do the EU's new members, in Central and Eastern Europe, see that future? How much more political and economic integration do they seek? And what kind of relationship with the United States do the Eastern European members of the EU want that organization to have?

Ukraine and Europe

(Roundtable Session)

Alexander Motyl, Rutgers University

The “orange revolution” of 2004, in which peaceful demonstrations in Ukraine reversed an undemocratic election and forced a new one that brought to power a reformist administration, captured the attention of Europe and the world. It angered neighboring Russia, whose president weighed in on the side of the candidate for president who ultimately lost. And it was the occasion for an extensive and effective campaign to promote democratic procedures by the European Union. In retrospect, what was the significance of these events? How well is the elected government doing in consolidating democracy and promoting economic reform and more rapid growth? Have Ukraine's relations with Russia improved, and what are the dangers of poor relations between them? And how can the United States and the EU best cooperate to promote democracy, stability, and prosperity in Ukraine?

Closing the Gap in U.S.-Europe Relations

(Luncheon Remarks)

Janusz Onyszczukiewicz, The European Union

In the last several years frictions between the U.S. and Europe have increased, partially, but not entirely, as a result of the war in Iraq. How serious are the divisions? Have tensions eased over the last year? What can be done to improve relations further? Are there issues that are likely to widen the divide in the future? Are there opportunities for cooperation of which the allies are not taking full advantage?