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VLADIMIR VLADIMIROVICH PUTIN AND RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY FOR THE NEW MILLENIUM: A NEW APPROACH 2001-2002

by

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Preface

With the events of 11 September dominating the entirety of world relations, each nation had the opportunity to step to the plate and become part of the US-led coalition against terrorism. Some nations, and even alliances were reluctant to be part of the coalition. Clearly, most European nations were not aggressive in pursuing terrorism in their own countries nor were they overly interested in a high level of cooperation with the United States. This was made clear in the lukewarm responses received by the United States from the Europeans to overtures to extradite terrorist suspects or turn over information concerning the financial dealings of al-Queda in European cities.

This is in bold contrast to the warm reception and immediate promises of help offered by Russia under President Vladimir Putin. The Russians immediately condemned the terrorist action and further pledged all available support to the United States in the coming war against terrorism. This rapid response vaulted Russia into a place of prominence in the international community. What is most unusual was that Russia is at one of its weakest moments ever. Failing in the war in Chechnya, an economy constantly on the brink of collapse, and a military industrial complex best described as backwards and antiquated, the Russians managed to become the centerpiece of the Central Asian part of the war against terrorism. How did such a weak state vault into the forefront of international politics?

This question was a clearly one that I felt needed to be addressed, especially since the relationship between the Presidents of Russia and the United States has become so intensely

close. However, this is cutting edge analysis and much of what is contained in this paper will be based on recent statements by President Putin and his foreign policy team including his foreign minister Igor Ivanov. This analysis will also include numerous statements made by world leaders including important alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and non-governmental organizations such as the United Nations (UN). Therefore, I have used many publications and transcripts of radio and television broadcasts quoting principles involved in Russian Foreign policy both in Russia and in other capitals along with the current literature available on Russian Foreign Policy as well as the personalities involved with it. This paper is a dynamic topic. Therefore, current events have effected it along the entire course of its production and much of it will prove to be only a foreshadow of actual events. Therefore, it is only current as of 30 April.

This paper will survey the regional focus of Russian foreign policy with the goal to gain a view of the successes and failures of President Putin and his team. It is not meant to be a comprehensive review of every foreign policy initiative by the Russian Government. Instead, I will look at a number of events over the last year in the context of the overall Russian game plan. There has been a major shift in the approach of Russian external relations to one of compromise and rapprochement. Putin has introduced a new pragmatism and focus to the process while maintaining the supremacy of Russian objectives. In the end, this paper will draw some conclusions about the future of Moscow's objectives and what will prove to be important to them in the near and the long run.

This paper could not have been accomplished without the significant contributions from the database team at the Institute for the Study of Conflict, Ideology and Policy at Boston University. Specifically, the Institute's Director, Professor Uri Ra'anan and his able deputy Ms.

Miram Landskoy were instrumental in challenging my approach and thoughts on the entire region. Their encyclopedic knowledge has shaped both my perspective and understanding of Russia. I'd also like to thank Capt Walter Jackson, the US Navy Fellow assigned to the institute who also provided invaluable insight into the connection between defense and foreign policy. Finally, I need to thank my family who allowed me to ponder these questions regularly and allowed me the time to complete this work.

AU/SCHOOL/BETHEL/2001-04

Abstract

Russian foreign policy during 2001 – 2002 has taken on an entirely new approach. President Vladimir Putin and his Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov have expanded the scope of Russian external relations both in terms of numbers of nations and the depth of the relationships. The preceding administration of Boris Yeltsin had alienated many both internally and externally and there was much to do to rebuild the damage done.

The events of 11 September vaulted the Russians into a position of prominence that Putin and Ivanov could not imagine. A fast and firm show of support by Putin and the promise to assist in any way Russia could has meant that Moscow is at the center of the war against terrorism, both as a regional hegemon and as a partner with the US.

In the Middle East and Asia, the Russians have made every effort to make it clear that they are on the side of the "little guy". They have forged close military and diplomatic relationships with Iraq, Iran, India, and even China (though more slowly and cautiously). In addition, they have worked hard to stand behind the Palestinian Authority and effectively enhanced their position in the settlement negotiations. They have done so well vis-à-vis the solution that they have been included in the so-called "Quartet of Mediators" including the US, the UN, and the EU.

In Europe, the Russians have successfully increased both their access and status in NATO. Both NATO Secretary General George Robertson and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair have pushed hard for an increased Russian role, up to and including a limited vote for Russia on

NATO policy issues. At the same time, Russia has made significant inroads with the European Union and the World Trade Organization. Russian leaders including Putin have made numerous trips to European capitals in an effort to build diplomatic bridges that could be useful later.

In Central and South America, Moscow has successfully rekindled relationships in the Western Hemisphere. Putin has made personal visits followed up with effective military and diplomatic ties with Brazil and Argentina as well as becoming more visible throughout the region. The Russians have even been allowed to compete their highest technology weaponry against the US when bidding for purchase.

Russian relations with the US have been clearly improved. The relationship had languished under Boris Yeltsin, but has made significant strides under Vladimir Putin. Both Presidents Bush and Putin have made a personal and professional connection. The US Secretary of State, Colin Powell has brought Russia deeply into the negotiations in the Middle East and both US leaders have endorsed the Russian handling of the situation in Chechnya. However, there is still some Cold War feeling remaining and competition for influence still echoes in the relationship between Moscow and Washington.

The future remains uncertain for Russian foreign policy. But one thing is clear; it will not be without the pragmatic efforts of Vladimir Putin. He will make every effort to steer Russia that brings every advantage. US policy-makers should never underestimate the cleverness of the Russian leader nor his ability to exploit any situation. Finally, Russian foreign policy efforts are expanding not contracting. US leaders should be wary yet positive in that step, but never compromise American interests to gain Russian support. However tempting that might be.

Chapter 1

Russian Foreign Policy Under Vladimir Putin: Perpetual Transition

Vladimir Putin's Foreign Policy. Vladimir Putin inherited a foreign policy focus known as "Statism"[i]. Statism " rejects neither cooperation nor community-building in principle, but judges these ventures on whether they benefits the nation. Statism typically begins with an intense focus on the internal integrity of the state."[ii] Because of the government in a shambles he inherited, the training he received before becoming top man, and because of the person he is, Statism defines the foreign policy aims of Vladimir Putin.

Vladimir Putin inherited a Russia that was discredited, on the verge of bankruptcy, and considered a "former" world power. Under the previous administration of Boris Yeltsin, there had been a nearly successful coup including the complete takeover of the parliament building and the subsequent use of military force to bring the situation under control. In addition, Boris Yeltsin had not forged strong relationships around the world. In fact, Yeltsin had routinely antagonized other global leaders[iii].

The rift Yeltsin forged between East and West was at its zenith in the fall of 1999. Yeltsin and a majority of Russians were outraged at the NATO-led bombing campaign against Kosovo[iv] and the war in Chechnya was going from bad to worse. Russia had placed more than 200 troops in Kosovo in an effort to force NATO and the West to give Moscow a place at the table in the post-war Kosovo Force (KFOR) architecture[v]. In addition, Yeltsin regularly made

remarks about the aggressiveness of the West including planned NATO expansion and the concerns expressed by the World Bank concerning the probability of Russia meeting financial obligations and reluctance to extend any more credit to Moscow.

Finally, Yeltsin had entered office as a reformer, a democrat with the notion that with fall of communism it was a new day in Russia. As Mayor of Moscow he introduced a number of more moderate reforms to city government and claimed to have eliminated corruption.[vi] However, as he stayed in office, Yeltsin was unable to stave off the influence of the Oligarchs. The Oligarchs are a group of quasi-government and business leaders with alleged connections with organized crime and corruption and had extraordinary access to Yeltsin[vii]. Yeltsin vehemently denies the oligarchs power in his government. Yet his apparent inability to stave off corruption was rapidly followed by a rapid decline in his health. He had endured a major coup attempt and had been able to regularly hold power when the parliament claimed to have no confidence in him. It was clear that by the summer of 1999 he would not be able to hold power much longer.

Vladimir Putin came to power like a bolt of lightning in 1999. He rushed passed the apparent anointed successor to Yeltsin, Yevegieny Primakov in December. His meteoric rise surprised almost everyone in his intimate circle, in his own words, "I did not expect to be named President, though it was a surprise when Yeltsin announced to the whole country that I was his successor"[viii]. His wife, Lyudmila also was not surprised by his rapid advancement, "I wasn't surprised that my that my husband's career advanced at the speed of light…(Putin) is dedicated – not vain, but dedicated. He worked hard and always achieved his goals"[ix] .

A few pertinent details about Vladimir Putin:

- He was born and raised in St. Petersburg

- His Father was a simple laborer in a Rail Car Factory
- He is a black belt in Karate
- And he sums up his career in his own words this way:
    - I finished school and went to the University
    - I graduated the University and went to the KGB (Committee for State Security – Soviet Era)
    - I finished the KGB and went back to University
    - After University I worked for (Anatoly) Sobchak (Mayor of St Petersburg)
    - From there to Moscow and to the General Department
    - Then to the Presidential Administration
    - From There to the FSB (Federal Security Service – Russian era successor to the KGB)
    - Then I was appointed Prime Minister
    - Now I am President

    THAT'S IT[x]

But, there is much more to Putin than his simple synopsis. A careful reading of Putin's biographical information reveals a much more complex man. One thing is for certain; his 25 years of KGB experience colors all he does. This is true both in terms of meticulous bureaucratic methods and the ability to, when necessary act as an operative. Like any good spy, Putin can become all things to all people. His athletic background and especially his experience in Karate also have a deep impact on his current activities in terms of discipline and calmness under pressure. Finally, Putin is not demonstrative of his goals or aspirations. He is known to be ultra-cautious, but most interested in advancing the cause of the Russian people[xi].

Upon taking over as President, Putin had to recapture the status and prestige once enjoyed by the Soviet Union and lost as communism collapsed under Mikhail Gorbechev and further deteriorated under the flamboyant drunkard Boris Yeltsin. What was most important was for Putin, as Russia's leader to re-establish contacts and relationships throughout the world, which had been ruined by Yeltsin's own personality. Immediately upon taking office, Putin set about creating a more cooperative environment for Russian Foreign Policy throughout the world. From the time he took office in December 1999 until August 2001 Putin made more than trips abroad[xii].

Putin focused his travels regionally. He also made it clear that he was *going* to see other world leaders, not summoning them to Moscow. Going to see them was a clear departure from Yeltsin and previous leaders under the Soviet Regime. He also focused on nations somewhat out of the mainstream. Specifically those countries perhaps somewhat left out of the US sphere of influence such as North Korea, Myanmar (Burma), Iraq, India, and Iran.

At the same time, Putin put a strong Foreign Minister in place, appointing Igor Ivanov to the post. Ivanov is a career diplomat with tremendous experience in international negotiations and is considered one of Russia's strongest hands in Europe.[xiii] Putin allowed Ivanov great latitude during the Foreign Minister's own travels and Ivanov set about forging his own set of contacts and ties.

However, the efforts begun by both Putin and Ivanov were dramatically changed by the events of 11 September in the United States. Faced with the horror and drama, Putin and Ivanov were challenged to maintain their regional focus on those outside the mainstream while at the same time effectively articulating Russia's contribution to the efforts against global terrorism.

The Impact of 11 September: Rags to riches?

"Dear George(Bush),

I am shocked by reports about the tragic events that happened on the territory of the United States today.... The whole international community must unite in the fight against terrorism.

V. Putin"[xiv]

The impact of the attack on the world trade center and how that affected the status and prestige of Russia cannot be over-estimated. Prior to 11 September 2001, Russian foreign policy was in a defensive crouch. President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov were making every effort to respond on two main fronts. First, at every available opportunity Putin and Ivanov put pressure on the US National Missile Defense (NMD) program. They blamed US efforts for being a destabilizing influence on everything from peace in the Middle East[xv] to the Olympic Games[xvi]. Second, the Russians pressed on limiting NATO expansion. The Baltic states were poised to join NATO sometime in early 2002 with Bulgaria and Romania preparing to make a strong bid by 2004. At the same time Russia was trying to maintain some level of leadership over the foreign policy among the CIS and non-CIS former Soviet states and struggling with the drain of the war in Chechnya. All this in the context of a weak economy, weak military, and increasingly taking retrograde steps in terms of openness, freedom of the press, and individual rights. And then the terrorist attacks happened in the US on 11 September and everything changed.

Rapidly, Putin and Ivanov were the toast of the international community; the US president and Secretary of State regularly consulted them. The Russian leaders have been to Washington and Putin completed an extremely successful trip to Germany in early October 2001 where he not only met with national and business leaders, but he even addressed the German Bundestag in what was described as perfect German[xvii]. The results of this newfound importance have been profound. The US, through Secretary of State Colin Powell, has endorsed the Russian war in Chechnya as a fight against terrorism, thereby giving Russia free rein in the region. The EU and NATO leadership have echoed the new US sentiment on Chechnya[xviii]. Most striking is the fact that France, the most constant and harshest critic of Russian excesses in Chechnya, has agreed to tone down its comments toward this issue[xix]. In addition, when considering basing in any former Soviet country, both Powell and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld confirmed that Russia would be consulted as negotiations proceeded. Putin delivered the final tour de force during his visit to NATO on 3 October when he alluded to the idea that Russia might even consider itself as a candidate member to NATO[xx]. Finally, Moscow has gone to the forefront of attempting Middle East and even Israeli-Palestinian mediation and has tried to become a regional power broker among Arab states.

Why the sudden shift? The reasons are twofold. First, Putin has shown himself very skilled at taking advantage of any situation. He was able to salvage a public relations nightmare in the sinking of the Kursk and to retain public confidence. In a recent poll Russian children even say Putin is "cool."[xxi] He has been successful also at working with Western politicians. This is mainly due to his KGB background and training along with his longtime posting in Germany. Second, the West believes it needs Russia. This is true of both Western perception of Russian regional influence (even hegemony) over the post-Soviet space and of the Russian sponsorship

of the Northern Alliance opposition forces in Afghanistan. Finally it is important to note that with the focus of world attention on the Middle East, the Russians have one of the most experienced hands in the region, Yevgeny Primakov working diplomatic channels and assisting Ivanov. He is believed to have extensive contact networks in the area (including a close personal relationship with Saddam Hussein) and the ability to exploit them successfully[xxii]. In the end, Russia is making the most of extraordinary opportunity and will continue to feature prominently as this crisis develops.

Initially, the official Moscow stance of the events of 11 September consisted of sharp condemnation of the attacks and the attackers along with their sponsors. However, a brief capsule of comments reflects the evolutionary process of Russian policy development. Following Putin's original condemnation, his comments above were indicative of the general vagueness in terms of the role Russia might play in the "war against terrorism." He called for increased cooperation, meetings and consultations[xxiii]. Putin provided a great deal of rhetoric, but little substance in terms of specific areas of cooperation.

Putin's most senior lieutenants gave little more detail initially, but have highlighted their different approaches. Statements from the defense ministry offered limited clues to the Russian approach. Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov stated on 18 September that Russia has offered to provide the US with "vital information that could establish the true identity of those guilty of the terrorist acts in New York and Washington." (BBC, 18 Sep 01; via ISI Emerging Markets) Information is one thing, but Gen. Anatoly Kvashnin, chief of the General Staff of the Army, made it clear during a visit to Tajikistan that "Russia has never taken part in US military actions and has no intention of doing so." [xxiv]

Chapter 2

ASIA and THE MIDDLE EAST

The effect of September 11 on Russian external relations was not only limited to the United States and Europe. The prominence of the Russians has extended to its relationships worldwide. Russian leaders now speak with authority on regional issues were Moscow's views were unwelcomed and considered irrelevant. Now, Russia is sought as an important global partner in a variety of crisis situations. This is most obvious in the newfound Russian role in Asia and the Middle East.

The Statist agenda for the Russians in Asia and the Middle East appears to be focused on the use of various crises, diplomatic initiatives, and military sales to expand Russian regional influence past the Central Asian countries into Arab areas. Military sales is an excellent way for the Russians to gain influence while at the same time raise capital. Moscow prefers cash transactions for weapons sales, but will allow credit when necessary (such as Iraq). Further, Moscow will support countries that may be engaged in questionable behavior (such as Iraq and Iran) in an effort to find alliances and influence where possible.

The second important driver in Asia/Middle East relations is the desire for Russia to bring in nations that are not connected to the United States. Indeed, those nations (such as Iran and Iraq) that are alienated by the US. What the Russians desire is to create alliance structures that are in counterpoint to those dominated by America and its Allies. To this end, the Russians

are pursuing a number of policy initiatives. One of the primary venues Putin and his Foreign Minister have used to further Moscow's interests in the Far East was the Asia-Pacific Forum.

Vladimir Putin: Hobnobber extraordinaire

Russian President Vladimir Putin cashed in on his efforts to develop a network of relationships with foreign leaders during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum held in Shanghai in late October 2001. This was one of the first opportunities for the Russian President Putin to connect with Asian leaders after Russia's newfound prominence in the world order following September 11 and he clearly intended to waste no time during the conference. He had already sent a high-level advance team to Shanghai, including Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov[xxv]. Putin arranged meetings with a number of Pacific leaders, both for closing deals and laying the groundwork for future cooperation. Among the highlights:

* 19 October meeting with South Korean President Kim Dae-jung. The two leaders confirmed increased cooperation in transportation, energy and fishing. More significantly, Putin re-established a role for Russia in any settlement between the two Koreas[xxvi]. The statements were even more noteworthy in light of this summer's visit to Russia by North Korean President Kim Jung-il. During that visit, the first by the North Korean president since the early 1980s, similar cooperation agreements were discussed[xxvii].

* 19 October meeting with Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri. This meeting was notable because of the large Muslim population in both countries and in light of Russia's ongoing struggles with Muslim minorities throughout the North Caucasus[xxviii]. The meeting focused on

efforts to curb international terrorism. However, Putin also raised the issue of increased security cooperation between the two countries and closer working relationships between the two governments[xxix]. It is likely also that Putin used the increased security cooperation clause as a springboard for discussions of the potential arms sales to Indonesian. Russia has long desired a greater market share in Asia and could offer Indonesia significant upgrades at low cost without the human rights limitations which often accompany Western arms sales. The major arms deal with Iran in October (another country with a large Muslim population) could serve as a model for increased cooperation between Russia and Indonesia

* Putin also met with other heads of state including those of China, Japan and Malaysia. Little or none of the substance of these talks has been publicized so far[xxx]. Still, it is likely that Putin is laying the groundwork for further cooperation.

This is not to imply that everything went the Russian president's way during the APEC summit. He was quick to point out that he had hoped that the conference could focus primarily on economic issues[xxxi]. However, never missing an opportunity or being slow to go with the flow, Putin put those aspirations aside for this conference and joined in the chorus condemning global terrorism. But, he put the onus on the Asian leaders on notice at the next conference he would expect substantive progress in "regional economic activity."[xxxii]

China

Russian relations with China, the region's main superpower have warmed significantly over the last year. Russia has renewed the treaty of friendship and cooperation with China and has

encouraged a number of military and technical exchanges during 2001 – 2002. However, the Chinese-Russian relationship is still marred by distrust and uncertainty. But, it is to the mutual advantage of both countries to make every attempt to forge a stronger relationship.

China and Russia have agreed on at least one major policy issue; opposition to the US ABM treaty withdrawal and continued development of the missile defense technology.[xxxiii] Russia and China have issued a number of joint communiqués demanding the US stay within the treaty restrictions and together the two nations have pressed for confirmation of the treaty in the UN.[xxxiv] Presidents Jiang and Putin have met three times in the last year and appear to have formal yet cordial rapport, though not as warm as between the Russian President and President Bush.

The Russians have also contracted to provide the Chinese with a new Battleship using an existing keel with some more advanced navigation and propulsion upgrades.[xxxv] The Russians have also sold both conventional weaponry and technology including nuclear power plants to the Chinese. Both nations have pledged continued exchanges in both military and technology areas.[xxxvi]

However, the Chinese-Russian relationship will continue to progress slowly. Both nations find themselves in similar positions in the global environment and there is much history of distrust and competition left over from the Cold War era. The activities and agreements between the two will reflect the desire to ensure an advantage and to continue to make the effort to gain position. This is in stark contrast to others Russia is working in the region.

Whom are the Russians courting now?

In a continuing effort to forge a unique foreign policy approach, Russia has grown increasingly close to two potentially fragile allies, India and Iraq. Moscow's push toward these two longtime allies is the result of two key factors. First, Russia has longstanding military sales connections with both countries, including a number of co-production deals in the case of India and the (previous) export of high-tech air defense and early warning components to Iraq. Clearly, the objective of Russian goals towards states such as India and Iraq is to find a niche among countries that, for very different reasons, do not enjoy a close relationship with the United States and its allies. This effort is somewhat reminiscent of the non-aligned movement founded in the 1950s by India's Nehru and further championed by Yugoslavia's Tito during the 1970s and 1980s[xxxvii].

Ultimately, Russia appears to be primed to become the focal point for states desiring to chart their own course away from US influence. This includes the aforementioned contracts with India and Iraq, as well as significant efforts in Asia, and ongoing diplomatic initiatives in South America.

New Delhi and Moscow

During the past year, a number of high-level diplomatic meetings between New Delhi and Moscow have focused on increased military cooperation and political harmony. Military cooperation has taken pre-eminence for some time since India is rapidly building up its power projection capability, and views with concern the current close relationship between the US and Pakistan.

Russia and India are in long-term discussions for an upgraded version of the Brahmos cruise missile. The Brahmos has been under development by a joint India-Russia consortium since February 1999 and is capable of launch from a variety of platforms[xxxviii]. In addition, the Indians have begun preliminary discussions on the possibility of leasing up to four Tu-22M3 long-range bombers, and an initial exchange of proposals has taken place for a co-production deal for the Il-214 transport aircraft[xxxix]. These deals come on the heels of larger weapons packages that have been discussed extensively, including co-production deals for the MiG-29 fighter and a number of surface combatants.

Concurrent with these military agreements, Russia has given a clear signal that it is foursquare behind India on a variety of regional issues, most notably the terrorist operations against India that New Delhi assumes are conducted from Pakistani territory. Though the Pakistani government denies the allegations, the Russian foreign minister, Igor Ivanov, has said, "[Russia] condemns all acts of across-border terrorism against India, including the terrorist attack against the Indian Parliament in December last year."[xl] That is among the clearest statements to date placing the origin of attacks in Pakistani territory, though not directly implicating Pakistan's leadership.

Ivanov did directly take Islamabad to task, using a somewhat less aggressive tone, but nonetheless placing responsibility for regional tensions squarely on the Pakistanis. "Pakistan must take sustained and irreversible steps to end cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and create a conducive environment for the resumption of Indo-Pak dialogue," he said[xli]. There was benefit for Moscow as India followed with a statement supporting Russia's approach to arms reduction and to the ABM treaty[xlii].

Moscow has several advantages in throwing its weight behind India. First, such a stance allows the Russians to put themselves in a position to counterbalance the growing US influence in South Asia. Most notably, it keeps in check potential Pakistani excesses while under the "protection" of the US and ensures that Pakistan cannot try to leverage its unique place in the "war against terrorism" against its neighbor. Second, Russia can insert itself in the role of crisis solver or at least a major participant in finding the solution to an international crisis. Ultimately, Putin and Ivanov will take advantage of calculated opportunities to raise Russia's international visibility. In the near term, Russia's foreign policy team is likely to continue to keep the pressure on Islamabad while supporting New Delhi. However, given the long-standing enmity between these volatile nuclear powers, Russia's steps will be taken with a dose of caution.

Aziz in Moscow

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz made several visits to Moscow during late December 2001 and early January 2002 and has continued to keep up the diplomatic dialogue between Baghdad and Moscow. The purpose of his visits was twofold -- to increase cooperation between the two countries and once again to solicit assistance from Russia in Baghdad's ongoing effort to reduce or even eliminate the trade sanctions against Iraq. In light of the US attitude toward Baghdad, it is most interesting is that Russia has continued an overt relationship with Iraq.

Aziz visited Moscow to close deals on several important projects between the two nations, including the restoration of several power plants (still in limited operation as a result of damage from DESERT STORM) in Iraq by a Russian consortium of companies. This

undertaking will restore full power capacity to Baghdad for the first time since the Gulf War.[xliii] In addition, Aziz noted that the "development of economic relations between Moscow and Baghdad was given a prominent place in our talks."[xliv] Trade between Russia and Iraq is dominated by military hardware, but includes also a variety of manufactured goods, petrochemicals, and other raw materials. Indeed, Aziz announced, "Russia has become Iraq's biggest trading partner."[xlv]

Of more pressing concern to the Iraqis was the specter that the US-led "war against terrorism" soon could be bearing down on Baghdad. With that in mind, Aziz met with anyone and everyone from whom he seemed able to solicit help, including Foreign Minister Ivanov, members of the Duma, and a multitude of media representatives. Aziz sought and received a strong condemnation from the Russians regarding possible attacks against Iraq and the continued extension of UN sanctions against Baghdad. "Russia is not prepared to support the extension of the international anti-terrorist operation onto Iraqi territory," Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said[xlvi]. Ivanov also chastised the US for applying "double standards" to the anti-terrorist operation.

Following a meeting with the speaker of the State Duma, Gennady Seleznev in January, Aziz made it clear that he expected and was promised full Russian backing and, in return, offered Iraq's support of Russian efforts in Chechnya: "Despite the fact that Iraq is an Islamic State, it fully backs Russia on Chechnya." In addition, Aziz said that "the US wants to have under full control the entire Middle East and the Gulf zone, but this is not suitable for Iraq as an independent state." [xlvii] Moreover, the Iraqi deputy prime minister did receive assurances from Seleznev that "Russia is flatly against air strikes."[xlviii]

Russian diplomats and leaders have long opposed the UN sanctions and have been supportive of the Iraqis. These stands are unchanged. One manner of support, apparently, is the encouragement of a renewal of communication between Iraq and the UN. "Russia attaches great significance to the dialogue between Iraq and the UN Secretary General over all the complex issues concerning the Iraqi settlement," Ivanov said[xlix]. Ivanov also suggested that Iraq should join in the fight against regional terrorism, noting that Baghdad is the key to regional stability[l].

A close relationship between Iraq and Russia is useful to both countries. The Iraqis are gaining unfavorable world attention due to their support of terrorism and continued development of weapons of mass destruction[li]. They need a friend who can wield clout on the international stage. They also need Moscow's assistance in moving and buying Iraqi goods. Russia, for its part, seems to appreciate the notion of being able to leverage support for the Iraqis against the US and is regularly in the forefront of countries opposing continued sanctions against Iraq. Supporting Iraq is an opportunity to do something the US opposes, but much of the rest of the world -- including Western Europe -- does not. So, it is likely that the strong Iraqi-Russian tie will continue for the foreseeable future and even grow. However, should the US decide to deal with Iraq militarily, Russia would be hard-pressed to offer Iraq anything other than diplomatic support.

Making nice with Iraq

After Aziz visited Moscow, the Russians instituted a more aggressive regional effort to elicit support for its initiatives concerning Iraq. During the week of 17 February 2002, President Putin dispatched Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov to meet with Gulf leaders from

Iraq, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. During this trip, Saltanov's message was clear and threefold.

First, Moscow opposes any unilateral military action taken against Iraq by the United States. A joint statement issued by the Iraq and Russia clearly stated the two countries' position: "It is unacceptable that Iraq is again subjected to the threat of aggression."[lii] Though this is among the more forceful statements made by the foreign ministry, it is not out of character in terms of the theme Russia wants the US to understand: Unilateral action against the Iraqis will be met by certain recriminations from Moscow.

Second, the Russians oppose the connection between the Iraqis and the so-called global terrorism. "(The US) is incorrect in its attempts to link Iraq with some 'Axis of Evil'."[liii] Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and President Putin have spent a lot of time and energy over the last three months portraying the Iraqis as poor victims of the UN sanctions. In addition Iraq owes Russia some $200 million in back payments for weapons and military hardware[liv]. Moscow intends to collect that debt at some point and hopes to expand trade with Baghdad to a level of about $2.3 billion.[lv]

Third, Russia seeks to be an integral part of the overall peace process in the Middle East. This extends to the situation in Iraq as well as the troubles in Israel. In fact, Russia wants to assume a leadership role in that process. The only way for the Russians to increase visibility is to do so at the expense of the US. The current US administration is perceived to be leaning away from the Palestinians and closer to the Israelis. This gives the Russians a real opening with the rest of the Arab world, which, of course, supports the Palestinian position.

Moscow's stance toward Iraq was clarified during March and April 2002. Russia confirmed its role as Saddam Hussein's staunchest backer and appears headed for an even deeper commitment. A series of meetings held in Baghdad between representatives of the energy sector from both countries yielded several key areas of increased cooperation. These included the construction of additional power generator facilities in Iraq by Russian firms as well as increased linkage in oil production[lvi]. Further, the Russians have committed to long-term economic interaction in the "tens of billions of dollars."[lvii]

Meanwhile, Moscow continues to lobby for Iraq. Another high-level economic delegation to Baghdad (led by Yuri Shafranik) noted that the UN sanctions against Iraq were "not working or are completely ineffective."[lviii] The current Russian effort aimed at limiting any US-sponsored expansion of the quantities and types of products on the UN restricted list[lix]. The delegation pledged "full opposition" from the Russian government to the sanctions and confirmed Russia's belief that lifting the sanctions entirely was the best approach[lx].

The issue of sanctions makes for strange twists. The Iraqis have circumvented successfully the entire sanctions process for more than 10 years. Their oil production is at the same level it was in 1990 (before Desert Storm) while the amount of raw crude processed and exported actually has increased[lxi]. European countries regularly have bought Iraqi oil and neighboring countries have mixed Iraqi oil with their own in an effort to disguise its source. However, the income derived from these exports has not translated into a healthy Iraqi economy; the per capita income of the average Iraqi plummeted from $3,104 in 1984 to $1,501 in 1999[lxii]. Still, Iraqi leaders live lavishly and Saddam Hussein offers the family of each Palestinian suicide bomber $25,000. Russia also continues to supply the Iraqi regime with significant military hardware. Moscow just completed a deal to sell trucks and passenger vehicles to Baghdad[lxiii].

Iraq does not pay cash for purchases from the Russians, so there is a vested interest in Moscow to limit the sanctions in the hope that some $20 billion in debt might someday be rapid.

Recently, Baghdad has expressed interest in the formation of "an international coalition headed by Russia to prevent US aggression against Iraq," according to Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz[lxiv]. Aziz made this proposal during a roundtable meeting celebrating the 30th anniversary of the friendship and cooperation treaty between the two countries in April 2002. His goal is to form a strong enough block to oppose any proposals to "increase sanctions or conduct attacks against Iraq."[lxv]

There was no immediate response from the Russian side. However, it is very unlikely that Moscow would enter into a formal agreement, especially one obligating Russia to take military action in support of Iraq. First, the Russians have extremely limited power projection capabilities. In fact, Russia is greatly reducing its overseas presence by closing facilities in Cuba and Viet Nam. Second, Russia is not equipped to conduct operations in Iraq or any other desert environment -- its hardware has proven time and again to be unsuited for hot dusty climates. In addition the Iraqis, though close allies of the Russians, are not predictable and may commit themselves to more than Moscow could support. The Russians simply will continue to oppose sanctions in the diplomatic sphere only.

The Russians hope to increase their visibility as a "protector of the small guy" through support for Iraq and, to some extent, Arafat's Palestine. Saltanov summed up the Russian approach to the Gulf during a departing press conference: "We hope to reach a comprehensive settlement to the problems in Iraq and Palestine. The solution should foresee, on the one hand, restoration of cooperation between Iraq and the international community and suspension of sanctions and the greater peace in the Middle East." [lxvi]

Part of the Solution in Israel

Russia has increased its visibility in the Israeli peace process through the offices of the US Secretary of State. Secretary Powell invited the Russians to become part of the so-called "quartet" of mediators now meeting daily in the region[lxvii]. This group includes the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations. Inclusion in such a high-level group gives Russia first-rate status in regional issues. It also gives Russia a platform to make a variety of pronouncements concerning the future of the conflict.

Russia's lead spokesman is Andrey Vdovin, Moscow's special envoy to the Middle East, although Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov provides regular input; both have made similar appeals to the world community. "We demand the adherence of all parties to existing UN resolutions 1397 and 1402 and additional, enforceable resolutions to stop the violence," Ivanov said[lxviii].

Bowing to the Russian desire to play an increased role, the US has included the Russian envoy in the mediation talks. Vdovin has attended daily meetings with the "quartet of mediators". The Russian envoy claims to be frustrated with the lack of progress and said, "the situation in the 'occupied territories' is extremely grave and there is little hope for improvement in the near term."[lxix] He said there was not enough pressure coming from either the UN or the US to force the Israelis to comply with UN resolution 1402, which actually calls for an immediate cessation of violence as well as the withdrawal of Israeli forces[lxx]. As a result he left the region in protest on 4 April for three days[lxxi].

The Russians continue their support for Yassir Arafat as a putative participant in negotiations. "We find it most desirable that Yassir Arafat, whom we believe to be the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, be given the opportunity to act as the head of the

Palestinian National Authority," Ivanov said. Arafat has visited every Soviet and Russian leader since Brezhnev and has signed all Palestinian agreements of cooperation with Russia[lxxii].

The Russians are faced with a perception problem in the current Middle East crisis. They have long favored the Palestinian side in this equation, yet cannot escape two critical factors. First, the Palestinian Authority, and specifically, Yassir Arafat, refuse to make any meaningful efforts to curb the suicide bombers[lxxiii]. Second, Arafat repeatedly has been offered very favorable conditions, including a significant amount of land to establish a Palestinian state (as well as some very attractive offers of long-term economic development from the US and the EU)[lxxiv]. It is increasingly difficult to continue staunch support for the PLO under these circumstances; it is possible that Moscow will adopt a more pragmatic approach and, if the crisis escalates, may back away and allow the Palestinian Authority to take the consequences of its actions.

Forging closer ties with Iran

Russia also is working hard to establish friendly relations with Tehran. Besides concluding the biggest arms deal since Iran's revolution last summer, Russia has moved quickly to bolster closer diplomatic and military ties with the Fundamentalist Islamic state. The Russians again are courting a country "outside" the international mainstream and attempting to develop some dependence on Moscow for security and even protection.

To accomplish this, Moscow has reached out to the new, "more moderate" government in Tehran. In addition to the major arms deals, there is increased effort in both capitals to establish longer-lasting relations. Recent talks between diplomats in Tehran yielded some important clues as to the future of relations between the two countries.

"The development of Russian-Iranian cooperation will create conditions for the building of a security belt in the region," Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov said[lxxv]. Clearly, the Russians view Iran as a strategic partner rather than just a weapons sales client. This is a significant shift in regional alliances; Russia is the first nation to court Iran openly.

Of further interest is Russia's ability to protect both a client and strategic partner from alleged indignities suffered at the hands of the United States. Russia's ambassador to Iran said, "to date, the American side has failed to present any hard evidence of Tehran's alleged involvement in supporting terrorism."[lxxvi] In the face of American foreign policy aimed at containing what it considers to be the rogue states in the "Axis of Evil," Russia is demonstrating its determination to deal with any country it pleases until linkages to international terrorism can be proven. This applies especially to Iran and Iraq.

Russia and Iran already enjoy a close military sales relationship. Moscow recently began to take steps to sell modernized air defense systems to the Iranians. A spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry confirmed, "Iran hopes for ongoing military-technical cooperation with Russia. Our country plans to modernize Iranian Air Defense and it will ask Russia to sell some air defense systems in support of that."[lxxvii] So far, it appears that Iran is one of Russia's best customers, paying cash for most of its purchases and willing to engage in further trade.

Another reason behind Russian support of the Iranians is the need to dispel the charges that Moscow has provided Tehran with nuclear, biological and chemical technology. Russian Ambassador Aleksandr Maryasov said, "in accusing Iran of attempting to gain access to weapons of mass destruction, primarily nuclear weapons, the Americans obliquely and sometimes directly hint at cooperation between Moscow and Tehran."[lxxviii] Though engaged in ongoing arms trade

with all three of the countries identified by President Bush, Russia wants to ensure that it is not considered to be in any way an exporter of weapons of mass destruction.

However, Russia will continue to support Iran politically and diplomatically in order to ensure a good customer is on board for the long haul. In addition, Russia wants to send a clear message to other states pushed out of the mainstream by the US-dominated international community that there is an alternative. Russia long has desired to return to international prominence; allying itself with outsiders such as Iran is one route to that end.

In another change, abandoning the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement[1], in October 2001, Moscow inked a major arms deal with Teheran for an estimated $7 billion[lxxix]. Included in the deal is some of Russia's best gear, such as Su-27 and Su-30 fighter jets, Ka-50 and Ka-52 helicopters, and T-90 and T-82U tanks.

This contract is particularly significant for both countries. For the Russians it holds much promise. First, Iran will pay cash, a commodity in short supply in Moscow. Second, it opens additional opportunities for expanded markets throughout the region. A successful delivery to Iran certainly will impress its neighbors and perhaps entice them also to seek a deal. For the Iranians it is equally important. Such a deal further cracks Western pressure on its economy via sanctions. Since it is not able to get access to the best Western military technology, the Russian equipment will provide Iran with its first major upgrade since the revolution of 1979. Iran also will become a much more powerful nation able to threaten the Straits of Hormuz with advanced fighters, missiles, and vastly improved radar.

Is Russia moving toward OPEC?

During talks with President Hugo Chavez in February 2002, the president of Venezuela and current chairman of OPEC, Vladimir Putin appeared to take a step toward increased cooperation with that cartel. The conversation reportedly lasted longer than planned and included a multitude of topics relating to oil production, distribution and pricing[lxxx]. Russian Fuel and Energy Minister Igor Yusufov, who confirmed that, as production fluctuates, "Russia will coordinate its efforts with OPEC", made the most significant statement.[lxxxi]

Though Russia is estimated to have substantial oil reserves, most of its fields currently are under producing or have experienced large fluctuations often tied to the rise and fall of oil prices set by OPEC[lxxxii]. Most of the regional oil is to be found in Kazakhstan (particularly the Tengiz field), Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. These countries are not under Moscow's control, however, Russia wants to control the transshipment of oil from fields located in these countries through its Caspian pipelines to Russian ports on the Black Sea.

By allowing Moscow to act, de facto, as spokesman for the region, the US and NATO permit Russia to exert increasing hegemony over the area. This contradicts the long-term Western strategy of diversifying sources of energy supplies, enhancing the independence of the non-Russian republics and enhancing their control of the flow of oil. The more the West acknowledges Russian hegemony, the more Moscow will assume it.

The Gore-Chenomyrdyn pact prohibited Russia from among other things prohibited Russia from entering into any long-term weapons agreements

Stirring the pot with Jordan...

In November 2001 Russian leaders met with King Abdallah II of Jordan. Abdallah's visit was aimed at keeping Russia involved in the Middle Eastern peace negotiations. The Jordanian monarch clearly stated "Russia, side by side with the USA and Europe must play a vital role to end the circle of violence in the Palestinian territories and prepare the proper ambience to put the peace process on the right track." [lxxxiii]

The substance of the talks was limited, resulting in only a modest military-technical agreement between the two countries that could result in a few million dollars in arms sales, including some armored vehicles, tanks, and perhaps some upgraded radar components for the Jordanians[lxxxiv]. The important aspect of the meetings was the king's endorsement of a central role for Russia in the Middle East peace process. The new King does not carry the same influence as his father, but still, he has a regional impact.

King Abdallah and President Putin also touched briefly on both nations' mutual interest in Iraq. In a joint statement, the two leaders said that a continued push in the UN for a relaxation of sanctions and a concerted effort to bring Iraq back into the family of nations is the "best approach."[lxxxv]

Russia will continue to press hard to be a regional force in Asia. During the Soviet era and under Gorbachev and Yeltsin, relations with Asian powers languished. This is especially true of relations with China. However, using the Indian model, Russian has rekindled ties in the region. With North Korea on the list of countries in the so-called “Axis of Evil”, there is ample room for Russia to increase its regional influence. As the campaign against terror continues, Russia will be able to act more aggressively in Asia and the Middle East. How much hegemony

they will be able to exert will depend on the level of risk taken. Neither Putin nor the rest of the Russian Government takes unnecessary risks and the lack of extensive experience in the region means that Moscow will most likely approach Asian relations with caution. However, Russia will certainly continue to press for better opportunities in this developing part of the world

Chapter 3

NATO AND EUROPE

Russia's relationships with Europe are much the same as they have been for more than 200 years. Even under the Tsars, Russia has always considered itself a European Power with an Asian component. As a result, Moscow has pursued a more "European" set of alliances and international participation. However the Europeans have always kept the Russians at bay. In the past, European reluctance to include Russia was because of the differences in religion (orthodoxy vs. protestant reformation) and because Russia was so backward politically and socially as compared to the rest of Europe. Now, Europe is reluctant because of the poor quality of the Russian economy and because Russia is STILL considered backward politically and socially. However, Europe after Sep 11 has moved more aggressively, especially as it applies to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to bring Russia into the family.

The Statist aim for Russia in Europe is first and foremost to become a legitimate European power. This would include being part of the major alliance structure such as the European Union (EU), World Trade Organization (WTO) or NATO in some form. However, the Russians do not want to be locked into an alliance situation where they may be open to scrutiny either of their economy or their military. So, the Russians have expressed willingness to participate in international forums and to cooperate with the Europeans via areas of shared

interest such as Bosnia and Kosovo. Also, Putin himself has made every effort to visit and forge better working relationships with as many European leaders as possible. It would appear that he is closest to Gerhardt Schroeder of Germany, Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, and Tony Blair of the UK. So, Putin will go to the European leadership for support and forge bilateral agreements in an effort to further Russian goals.

Move over Churchill -- the Brits want Russia in NATO!

In a strange twist of history, since the events of Sep 11, the UK has led a serious effort to bring Russia into increased participation in NATO. This could include everything from creating a new forum for the Russians to have increased input to NATO leadership all the way to a full Russian veto over decisions by the alliance.[lxxxvi]

Leading the charge are none other than UK Prime Minister Tony Blair and NATO Secretary-General George Robertson (also British). News of this proposal leaked out in the Russian and Ukrainian media nearly two days before Robertson and Blair made separate, but similar proposals, on 22 November.[lxxxvii] But that did not dampen the enthusiasm of the two-pronged British offensive aimed at the Russians.

Robertson offered the Russians the immediate opportunity to participate in NATO discussions on counter-terrorism and other "selected topics" agreed to by the existing member states.[lxxxviii] For his initiative, Robertson claims he has the full backing of President Bush, PM Blair, and the rest of NATO. [lxxxix] What is even more shocking is that Robertson has offered the so-called "19 plus 1" format, which would mean that on some issues, Moscow would have a vote, and therefore might even have veto power over NATO policy and planning initiatives.[xc]

For Blair and Robertson, these efforts could be driven by various reasons. Perhaps they believe in the sincerity of Russian intentions. Or, perhaps, they feel that by bringing the Russians into the debate and giving them a vote, one might obviate Russian verbal sniping over actions handed down from NATO's highest decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council (NAC).

However, it is to Russia's advantage to have such a relationship that would allow Moscow to decide what issues are "in" and which are "out" as far as a Russian de facto veto is concerned. Clearly Putin and his foreign policy team will resist full membership for two key reasons. Most importantly, full NATO membership would force the Russians to lay open their entire military apparatus to the scrutiny of the other 19 members. Such scrutiny would reveal fully the woeful condition of the Russian military and hamper efforts at regaining great-power status. Secondly, Moscow would have to comply with any number of NATO rules about arms dealing. Right now Putin and his foreign policy team are effectively using the international arms market as a tool to gain new allies and re-establish key alliances that have languished since the fall of the USSR (see above such as Iran, Iraq, and India). Russia certainly would have to answer in the NAC for its recent major arms deal with Iran and its longstanding supply to Iraq and other countries with horrible human rights records. Even now, Putin already has begun to make it clear that Russian foreign policy cannot be questioned, but that the only issue for discussion is how Russia and NATO can fight terrorism more effectively together. Further, in all foreign policy initiatives the Russian president has left no doubt that Russian national interest will always come first. [xci]

Finally, full NATO membership would be a less effective approach for Moscow as opposed to a series of bilateral relationships with individual NATO members. Through such agreements Moscow can exploit NATO weaknesses and maneuver from a position of strength.

Thus, the more formal the relationship between the Russians and the alliance becomes, the less room Putin has to wiggle. However, even allowing the Russians a seat at the table, let alone a chance to vote, would constitute a real shift in the relationship between Russia and NATO and the effect of any such a shift remains to be seen.

NATO expansion (or is it enlargement?), Russia, and the rest of the story...

Over the weeks since the Bush-Putin meetings in Washington and Crawford in December 2001, Texas, the NATO-Russia relationship took center stage. Surprisingly, this issue is getting more international press than any other, including the ABM treaty status, nuclear force reduction, or even Russian contributions to the "war on terrorism."

Prime Minister Blair took the initiative by making a bold proposal to institute a new forum called the Russia-North Atlantic Council in January 2002.[xcii] The most interesting aspect of Blair's proposal is that it appeared to have come as a surprise to many of the 19 NATO members.[xciii] Several alliance members, among them France and Germany, seem to have been completely unprepared for Blair's radically more formal relationship which envisioned a Russian voting role on some matters of NATO policy.[xciv] Blair neither made it clear on which issues Russia might vote, nor did he (more importantly) specify whether the Russians would have the same veto power as NATO members. This issue has brought the most reaction from alliance members.

In response, both Secretary-General Robertson and PM Blair made every effort to refine their proposals and to clarify their remarks. Robertson visited Moscow on 23-25 November 2001 in an effort to solidify the growing relationship. During the visit, he regularly affirmed the desire for NATO to deepen the relationship between the alliance and Russia, and even committed

NATO to "represent no threat at all to Russia."[xcv] One noteworthy element is that Robertson no longer refers to increasing NATO membership as "expansion" but rather as the less threatening "enlargement."[xcvi]

NATO has signaled its seriousness towards this new relationship by better defining issues with which the Russians may play a role at the highest levels of NATO. In a statement released at the end of the foreign ministers' meeting at the NAC, NATO's highest decision-making body, the issues for which Russian cooperative involvement is sought currently were defined. Besides the struggle against terrorism, Russia and NATO suggested that they could work together in such areas as crisis management, nonproliferation, arms control, theater missile defense, search and rescue at sea, military-to-military cooperation and civil emergencies. [xcvii] They also moved closer to defining the so-called "19 plus 1" formula for how the Russians would be given the right to vote, or to veto, in the proposed new body. The NAC has deferred formalizing the new construct until May when its next set of ministerial meetings is scheduled to take place in Iceland.[xcviii] There have been some unsubstantiated reports in the press that the US, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic have expressed the desire to slow down the formalization of a NATO-Russian relationship.[xcix]

In Russia, however, Putin was able to parlay the entire NATO issue into another policy success for himself. He kept the focus in his speeches and press conferences on limiting the eastward expansion of NATO.[c] He also has made it quite clear that Russia's movement towards NATO will be on Moscow's terms. "....I would like to repeat again: Russia does not intend to queue up for NATO membership," Putin said during a public TV forum[ci]. It is clear that he doesn't want to seem too eager to be drawn into a Russian-NATO relationship not to his liking nor one that he can't say is in the best interests of the state. It is also unlikely that Putin will

establish a broad NATO relationship at the expense of bilateral relationships with individual NATO countries or allow any close scrutiny of the Russian military.

There has been remarkable solidarity in Russia concerning this rapprochement with NATO. Even senior military leaders, who often have clashed with Putin's military policy, appear generally to favor closer ties with NATO. During some very pointed remarks General Staff Deputy Chief Colonel General Yury Baluevsky said that he supported Putin's efforts and that "Moscow is prepared to expand cooperation with NATO, as long as it is done under conditions that safeguard Russian national security interests."[cii] Though Baluevsky was critical of Putin concerning possible flexibility on the ABM treaty and reductions in warheads, he expressed the defense ministry's general view that increased cooperation with NATO is a good thing.

The future still remains somewhat uncertain for NATO-Russian relations. However, there are three major conclusions that can be drawn from the events so far. First, the nature of the formal arrangements between the two countries will change by the NATO ministerial meetings in Iceland in May. The particulars will depend on events, personalities, and other exchanges occurring between now and then. However, it is clear that the UK prime minister and the NATO secretary-general want that relationship to be deeper and more formal. Second, Russia, more specifically President Putin, is in no hurry to enlist in NATO. He doesn't want to be tied down by the cumbersome alliance; it is more useful to be courted and see what concessions he can garner in the process. NATO's interest in Russia could be an effective springboard to membership in the World Trade Organization or even increased levels of Russian participation in the European Union. Finally, the US remains committed to deepening its relationship with Russia. President Bush has stated repeatedly his desire for increased cooperation with Russia and greater trust between himself and Putin. However, a strong Russian presence in NATO dilutes US primacy in

Russian relations with the West and it introduces a complication for US dominance in NATO. Though Blair and Robertson have claimed US support for their initiatives, the US officials have been strangely silent regarding changing the Russian-NATO relationship. How the US policy evolves in terms of the nature of the NATO-Russia relationship will be the lynchpin in its success or failure and will be the barometer to watch until the ministerials and beyond.

Staying relevant in NATO – Where do things stand now

After the flurry of activity late in 2001 and early in 2002, inertia set into Russia's relationship with NATO. The Russians recently expressed some dissatisfaction concerning their involvement in cooperative NATO peacekeeping efforts, but did evince interest in another meeting of the Russia-NATO council, possibly in Italy.[ciii]

The Russians have long claimed that they are viewed as a junior partner in terms of the international missions in Bosnia and Kosovo. In neither place do the Russians have their own sector to command (in Bosnia they share charge of the US sector and in Kosovo they are partners with the UK) and all activities must be fully coordinated through a NATO command structure. The Russians receive extensive monetary and logistical support through the NATO coffers to ensure they meet payroll and other needs.

In interviews many NATO leaders have expressed the view that the Russian presence in both the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) as an acceptable nuisance, and as a gesture of appreciation for Russia's role in the peace negotiations in both conflicts. This was particularly true when Boris Yel'tsin personally participated in bringing Operation Allied Force to a close. However, the Russian Army cannot compare even with the

least capable NATO force, and so requires significant support to maintain forces in the region. In addition, the Russians wanted access to NATO military planning (usually at the NATO Secret level) and a hand in decisions made regarding the area. NATO routinely has balked at the notion of making Russia an equal partner in the regional decision-making process either in Bosnia or Kosovo and is not likely to give Moscow access to NATO Secret plans any time in the near future.

As a result, Russia's inflated expectations have not been met. Discussions with alliance military staff members confirm that Russia's contribution to SFOR and KFOR has diminished while its "wish list" of desired monetary and materiel support has grown. As a result, until the Russians can become a full contributing member of the SFOR/KFOR team, they can expect to be treated as increasingly irrelevant.

Russia is interested in continuing the positive trend in relations with NATO. During a recent visit to Italy, Foreign Minister Ivanov noted the proposal that the agenda of the next meeting of the NATO-Russia cooperation council include furthering "the collaboration in the international coalition against terrorism and beyond."[civ]

After a rapid acceleration at the end of 2001, the Russia-NATO relationship has cooled. Several major proposals, including the initiation of the Russia-NATO Cooperation Council, were made without a clear indication of how to implement them. Most radical was the proposal of NATO Secretary-General George Robertson, in concert with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, for near-full membership in NATO for the Russians. Such a proposal raises the specter of Russian veto power NATO initiatives. Russian diplomats continue to try to downplay that aspect, but despite their efforts they have been unsuccessful in reducing fears in Western

capitals[cv]. However, it is likely that some closer Russia-NATO relationship will emerge following the NATO Ministerial meetings in May.

Ultimately the Russians are angling for increased visibility at the European table. They are seeking concurrently a larger role in the European Union and NATO. The good news for Moscow is that Secretary-General Robertson was very aggressive in pursuing the Russians with promises of greater inclusion following Moscow's highly publicized efforts to assist in the war against terrorism. Russians have long memories and will press NATO to follow through. Just how much Brussels is prepared to give the Russians will be seen over the next several months.

Regardless of the relationship with NATO, Russia wants to be part of the club

Russia still desires to be part of European-dominated international organizations such as the European Union (EU). During talks with European leaders, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his foreign policy team stressed the importance of increased cooperation. In meetings with the French president, Putin pointedly identified his goals: "I would like to emphasize that Russia is interested in the creation, as soon as possible, of a single security space in Europe and common economic, cultural, educational, and legal spheres." [cvi]

Putin also continues to push for Russian membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO). During the week of 21 January 2002, the WTO met in Geneva to continue deliberations on whether to bring Russia into the fold. The organization has established a working group to examine specifically Russia's putative involvement[cvii]. Russia already has close ties with the WTO by means of significant representation on important working groups, including those dealing with agriculture and roadworks; however, currently it does not enjoy full member status.

The main obstacle to Russia's viability in the WTO or the EU is that Moscow has not come far enough politically, economically, or socially to be on a par with the other members. There are grave concerns in Europe over crackdowns on free speech. Foremost on the minds of Europeans are the "treason" trials of prominent Russian journalists and the forced closure of TV-6, the remaining major independent station[cviii]. Also, Russia has not instituted sufficient market reforms to demonstrate to Europe that it is ready to compete with free market economies.

Putin is hoping to parlay his foreign policy asset as a supposed major factor in the "global war against terrorism" into increased status in the world markets. However, without some degree of confidence that extending Moscow an invitation to join the world's economic elite will mean increased profits and potential markets for Europe, it is likely that the notion of bringing Russia into the EU or WTO will remain a discussion point only. If Putin were to demonstrate that Russia is serious about reform and is prepared to loosen the "services"' grip on the media, Moscow probably would be on the fast track to being part of "the club."

In the end, Russia and Europe share a common interest in blunting US dominance worldwide. In that regard, both Russia and Europe have openly expressed a desire to create a counter-balance to the new power worldwide, according to even his sharpest liberal critics "Mr. Putin shares a desire with Europe to ensure that the US does not use the war on terrorism or any other pretense to expand its influence or even take over certain parts of the world".[cix] As a result, there is another, unspoken shared interest between the Europeans and the Russians which US-policy makers must factor in to any decision.

Chapter 4

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Russia has had a limited role in South American political relations. This is primarily due to the fact the South America has a wild and wooly revolutionary past and has been dominated by European powers at first, and to lesser extent subsequently by the US. The exception to this rule is the longstanding relationship Russia (and even more so the Soviet Union before it) has had with Cuba. However, Putin and the Russian Foreign Policy Team have recently begun to pursue stronger relations with Central and South American Governments.

Russia's Statist aims in Central and South America are less clear than in other regions. First, this is because Moscow is on really unfamiliar territory. Though during the Soviet era there were several military exchanges including bases in Cuba and significant support of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the main interaction between Russia and Latin America was through military sales. The Russian foreign policy team does not appear willing to risk much in Latin America, but will continue to be visible both through increased military and technology exchanges. Russia is carefully re-assessing its roles in the region and moving away from Cuba and increasingly toward larger regional powers such as Argentina and Brazil.

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), Russian style

Russia decided to close its highest-profile and longest-standing overseas military installation at Lourdes, Cuba. Lourdes has been a listening post for the Russian intelligence services for more than 40 years[cx]. The official explanation for the proposed closure is that the savings to the Russian economy will be on the magnitude of $200m annually for the Lourdes site[cxi]. However, some analysts believe that these figures are somewhat inflated.

Regardless of whether the numbers are entirely accurate, it is clear that the Russian military would benefit from any reduction in expenses for overseas locations. The utility of the Lourdes site is questionable because of the introduction of highly capable eavesdropping satellites and ship-borne intelligence-collection packages.

Some analysts believe that the Russians may want also to use the closure of this installation as leverage to induce the US to reduce its much larger overseas presence. Moscow already has mentioned the US radar installation in northern Norway as a place for such a "trade-off." Whether the Russians will pursue US closures in kind remains to be seen. However, in the short run, regardless of the specific numbers, there will be substantial savings through closure by the Russian Defense establishment.

Reviving the market?

Two recent developments indicate Moscow's interest in expanding sales of its advanced weapons to a relatively new market in Central and South America. Russia has had an off-again, on-again military sales relationships with this region, including some major deals with Nicaragua and Peru. Since the fall of Communism, those ties have languished. However, Russia has reopened links to Brazil and Nicaragua.

Brazil accepted Russia's proposal to have the Sukhoi (Su)-35 compete against Western fighter planes as the Brazilian Air Force attempts to upgrade its 1960s-technology (primarily US) aircraft. Brazil also will look at the US F-16 Fighter[cxii]. The Russians also are offering their most advanced engine, the AL-31, to sweeten the deal, making their aircraft more competitive as compared with the US F-16[cxiii].

At the same time Russia is courting Nicaragua. The Russians signed a military-technical cooperation agreement with Managua, creating the framework for "strengthening the integration between the two countries."[cxiv] This agreement rekindles a longstanding relationship begun under Daniel Ortega's Sandinista regime. Though Nicaragua may not be the largest or most lucrative market in Central/South America, it provides another opportunity for Russia to expand its market share among states needing to modernize aging fleets.

The most significant aspect is that Russia will be competing directly against US weaponry in the Western Hemisphere. This gives Russia another opportunity to showcase its hardware against a peer competitor; the Sukhoi design bureau has made great efforts to bring its products up to a global standard. Moreover, it hits a market area historically dominated by the US. A quick look at the inventories of Central and South American countries shows a dominant US flavor (F-5s, Iroquois helicopters, etc.). From a foreign policy standpoint, Russia also offers something the US does not: no-strings-attached deals. Moscow does not tie the delivery of advanced weapons to compliance with human rights, or commitments to refrain from aggression. The Russians deal on a strictly cash-and-carry basis.

Given the checkered history of the region in terms of human rights abuses, coups and corruption, the Russian option may look increasingly attractive. Of course, the lower price of Russian hardware also plays a role. The Monroe Doctrine doesn't extend to foreign military sales and Washington has to stop assuming that it is the only supplier on the block.

The Argentine crisis

One of Moscow's main diplomatic initiatives in the region has been fragile Argentina. Just days before the monetary and political crisis in Argentina turned ugly in December 2002, a top Russian diplomat, Georgi Mamedov, met with ambassadors from the major Latin American countries to stress Russia's solidarity and commitment to the region[cxv]. Specifically, Mamedov committed his country to helping Argentina find a solution to its current crisis.

Moscow's interest in this situation is two-fold. First, the Russians have re-cracked the South American arms market successfully and wish to follow-up. Brazil has agreed to allow Russia to participate in bidding for Brasilia's next fighter purchase and Venezuela is interested in providing Russia with an alternative launch site for its space program[cxvi]. Second, the US has not been aggressive in terms of increasing close ties, both militarily and politically, with its neighbors to the south. The efforts of the South American governments to foster increasingly close relationships with Russia reflect in part American disinterest and, in part, the desire of the South American countries to forge their own way rather than fold to "Yanqui Imperialism."[cxvii]

For the Russians, however, the Argentine crisis is out of area. Putin and his foreign policy team are reluctant to become a driving force in the situation. First, the Argentine political-monetary crisis is quite messy. Amidst allegations and counter-allegations, three presidents were sworn into office in December. Therefore, Moscow is unsure with whom to deal to effect any sort of a long-term or even interim solution. Second, the Russians feel the need to be part of a coalition solution. Thus, they have pursued a joint statement on the part of the G-8, but the group thus far has been unwilling to issue such a statement[cxviii].

Russia most likely will leave the Argentine situation alone for the time being, choosing to concentrate on markets with more potential such as Brazil. In the long term, however, there are ample opportunities for Moscow to increase both visibility and activity in America's backyard. A major arms deal constitutes one approach concerning which the Russians already have both experience and success in other developing regions.

CHAPTER 5

THE UNITED STATES

Russia's relationship with the US is its most critical and yet it is where there is the most friction. There is a great deal of history between the two countries, focusing mainly on the Cold War period during which the competition for world domination was centered between Moscow and Washington. As a result, often times there is still friction between the two former super powers.

However, the events of 11 September caused a seismic shift in US-Russian relations. As noted in Chapter One, before the 11th, Russia was in a Defensive posture, constantly explaining the poor state of its economy, its abysmal performance in Chechnya, and the precipitous return of the political structure to a more authoritarian rule[cxix]. The issues have been defined in several meetings between the two Presidents. The first critical meeting between Bush and Putin occurred at the American President's ranch in Crawford, Texas and has formed the foundation for subsequent discussions.

In terms of Russia's statist goals, there is conflict in Moscow. On the one hand Russia needs the US to both support its entré into organizations such as the WTO and the EU and to ensure Moscow continues to have access to IMF and World Bank credits. In addition, the US is the only remaining world superpower, so a solid relationship is important. However, there is still

the specter of the Cold War and the competition between the two former superpowers looming in the background.

The Russians will allow global leadership to remain with the US right now. In fact, for the furtherance of Moscow's goals, Putin has expressed his willingness to participate in the process as an ally of the US. Russia needs the US endorsement to ensure financial and diplomatic stability, at least for the short run. The framework of Russia's aims came into focus during the first major meeting between the two Presidents.

The Crawford Summit

The first significant meeting between Presidents Putin and Bush took place in Crawford, Texas between 13 and 15 November 2001. The issues facing these two men were considerable and the leader who would be most successful during this diplomatic process was the one who had a clearer agenda. Some analysts speculated that these talks would constitute a watershed in Russia-US relations and might have provided significant themes for future negotiations. Since everything is stained with the brush of the 11 September attacks, of course, the meeting focused to some degree on counter-terrorism, but there were other issues with possibly broader implications.

Some of key the issues on the table:

--**The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972**: The Russians did a remarkable job of keeping the Americans off balance on this issue even after 11 September. Putin and Ivanov kept the world guessing with their incompatible public pronouncements on this issue. Putin has

been elusive concerning his long-range goals. During press conferences at NATO headquarters and later in Moscow, he was evasive when asked specific questions relating to future negotiations in this area, stating, at the same time, that Moscow intended to adhere to the letter of the treaty. In addition Russia introduced a resolution at the UN to confirm the "preservation and compliance" with the treaty[cxx].

On the other hand, Ivanov left the door open for negotiations in this area. During an open discussion Ivanov said, "Russia is ready to discuss a new framework for strategic cooperation."[cxxi] However, in later pronouncements he was less than enthusiastic about the prospects of genuine movement in this area[cxxii]. Russia was not ready to make formal concessions, yet with the apparently cordial relations between Bush and Putin, the Russian president may be willing to foster some flexibility on NMD for Russian long-term gains concerning other issues.

-- **Increased Russian Participation in World/European Gatherings**. It is no secret that Russia views itself as a European power with Asian interests (though this sentiment was not evinced at the recent APEC meetings in Shanghai where Russian leaders made it clear that it is a European AND Asian power) and has long sought increased representation in important all-European organizations. Recently, both Putin and Ivanov have endorsed strongly the viability and importance of such entities as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)[cxxiii] and the European Union[cxxiv]. Similarly, for more than three years the Russians have lobbied hard for entry into the World Trade Organization[cxxv]. Putin probably made every effort to make Bush endorse increased Russian visibility in these organizations in the hope that such backing may enhance Russia's quest for a major role in Europe, as well as globally.

-- Endorsement of a larger role for Russia in any Middle Eastern settlement. Russia has been increasingly visible in the search for a Middle Eastern settlement adopting a somewhat less one-sided stance, although still tilting towards the Palestinian side. There have been several high-level meetings between Russians and Arab officials and fewer between the Russians and Israelis. However, Aleksandr Yakovenko reiterated the older (Soviet) line, stating, "We (US, Russian and European leaders) are of the unanimous opinion that a key final goal of the Middle East settlement is to implement the national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and a national state."[cxxvi]

More than meets the eye -- what happened at the Crawford Summit

The results of the summit between Presidents Bush and Putin at the Bush ranch in Crawford, Texas were more important than what appears on the surface. This meeting was one of the most hyped meetings between two heads of state in recent memory. So much was said in the Russian and American media about this conference that, whatever the final outcome, it wouldn't match the prognostications and predictions made by leaders and pundits in both countries.

Clearly the two leaders had different public and private agendas. Apparently President Bush's personal aim was to deal with the Russian leader in an informal setting and to achieve a new camaraderie in Russian-US relations, Texas-style. Bush said, "The best diplomacy starts with getting to know each other -- and I want him to know my values and I want to know his values."[cxxvii] For Putin, Russia's focus in the near-term relationship with the US was threefold:

First, to put the spotlight on the ABM treaty and demonstrate Russian largesse by allowing the US to continue testing toward the development of a National Missile Defense (NMD) capability, while giving the perception of full support to the US "war on terrorism"; second, to re-establish Russia's place as an important and equal partner with the US and perhaps with NATO while, in general, increasing Putin's profile in America and among Americans[cxxviii]; and third, to confirm the resurgence of Russian regional hegemony[cxxix].

Wrapped up in these competing agendas was the gray area of an informal meeting with formal expectations. Many hoped to see concrete resolution of the issues at hand to include some movement towards a revision of the ABM treaty. The actual result rested mainly on a de facto agreement to reduce the aggregate number of warheads on both sides. This decision simply reflects the declining dependence on these weapons as a cornerstone of both countries' national defense.

When the summit broke up on 15 November, it seemed that very little had been accomplished. No formal agreements were signed and limited official pronouncements were made. However, does that mean that the overall effect of the summit was nil? Hardly.

Off-the-record statements by Senior National Security Council staffers provided some insight into the actual results of the Crawford Summit[cxxx]. First, the flurry of public posturing concerning Russia's position on NMD by Foreign Minister Ivanov and President Putin meant that by the time the summit began there was uncertainty in the US camp as to the real Russian stance on the important ABM question. During the summit the actual position of both countries was clarified. The Russians were apparently willing to bend but not break on ABM. It appears that they would be willing to make some concessions clearing the way for US to continue to develop

the capability, while maintaining that a full-scale fielding of an ABM system is counter to both the 1972 treaty and to long-term Russian interests. However, once NMD is fully mission capable, there would indeed be further negotiations concerning its fielding. The Russians want near-term advantages in the areas of increased trade (WTO membership) and desire development money in the form of long-term loans[cxxxi]. It appears Putin would be willing to back off on ABM rhetoric if the US would support Russia's desires to expand its economy.

In terms of increasing Russia's profile in the US, Putin scored high marks during his visit. He participated in several press conferences culminating with his widely publicized (both in the US and Russia) appearance on a National Public Radio call-in interview which included hundreds of would-be callers and more than 2,000 e-mails[cxxxii]. He addressed a variety of subjects during the two-hour program, though he was circumspect in most. In the end, the interviewer, rather fulsomely, summed up the exchange by thanking Putin for "sharing so much of himself with us."

Russia's role in the Middle East "peace process" was left as undefined but the delegation was given assurances that they would be “an integral part” [cxxxiii]as yet though Moscow's regional profile is increasing with the support of the US. That Foreign Minister Ivanov met with Syrian and Jordanian officials in New York as part of Putin's US trip is further indication of America's enhancement of Russia's visibility in ongoing negotiations[cxxxiv].

According to senior NSC staffers, the main US goal was to keep the Russians firmly in the "anti-terrorism coalition." But running a close second was the need to keep the Russians from pushing for a scaling back of NMD testing and to keep the US from having to move toward a position of unilateral withdrawal from the ABM treaty[cxxxv]. In fact, there was no indication that

the Russians were wavering in their public support of the anti-terrorism effort. According to President Putin, they are considering ways to increase participation in the coalition[cxxxvi]. The US seemed at pains not to challenge Russian assertions of hegemony in some portions of post-Soviet space and even to inflate Moscow's relative importance. Further, Putin never really pressed the ABM issue and has toned down his rhetoric on the issue. It appears the US administration was satisfied with the outcome of the meeting[cxxxvii].

In the final analysis, the Crawford Summit yielded some clarification of the near-term future of US-Russian relations. A lot was agreed on a handshake and verbal basis, much to the chagrin of the US Congress[cxxxviii], while written agreements are yet to be determined. As for the counter-terrorism "coalition" and Russia's desire for more representation in international fora and increased global economic opportunities, Russia continues verbal support for the US stance and the US is inclined to support Russia's request for membership in such organizations as the WTO. On the thorny issue of the ABM treaty an understanding was reached. Heretofore, the debate has been fought out through thrust and parry via official pronouncements, recriminations, and justifications. Now, it seems there is a tacit understanding of what the future holds for NMD and ABM. For the near term at least, the debate will be on the back burner. That is, for at least as long as continued need for the anti-terrorism "coalition" is apparent.

In other news: the US ABM withdrawal is a non-issue in Moscow

In early January 2002, President Bush decided, after significant efforts to gain some sort of Russian acquiescence. The US announcement of its pullout from the 1972 ABM treaty did not meet with a major reaction in Moscow. The initial statement by President Bush led to a curt

response by President Putin noting his disappointment, but vowing to continue dialogue with Washington. Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov went further by saying, "Russia [will] continue talks with the United States to hammer out a new framework for the two countries' strategic relationship and to find ways to reduce offensive strategic armaments."[cxxxix] Moreover, Ivanov stated that he hoped to meet with US Secretary of State Colin Powell to produce some alternative to the ABM treaty.

It seems that the US withdrawal came as no surprise to anyone in Moscow. With all of the shuttle diplomacy regarding the matter through the fall of 2001, the respective positions were quite clear. Secretary Powell made four trips specifically aimed at an ABM compromise and the topic was high on the agenda for the Bush-Putin summit at the end of last year.

The Russians have had ample opportunity to prepare for the eventual US withdrawal from this treaty. Moscow certainly will continue expressing disappointment in the press. But, the US probably assured the Russians that they have nothing to fear from the US pullout. Perhaps some sort of compromise was struck between Presidents Putin and Bush to ensure the US could continue with its National Missile Defense. The Russians want to maintain good relations with the US; the ABM treaty is a "dead horse."

Impact of US troops in Georgia

In February, in response to a request from the Georgian Government, President Bush offered up to 200 advisors to train the Georgian military to bring the situation in the Pankisi Gorge under control[cxl]. This new deployment and the reactions of the Russian and US foreign policy teams show indicate significant changes in East-West relations.

In brief, Georgia has a made regular appeals to obtain US military support and, perhaps, NATO membership. Now, Tblisi has requested US assistance to deal with the lawless situation in the Pankisi Gorge (Georgia's northwestern region)[cxli]. The Russians have been alleging that high-profile Chechens are hiding there (adding, for good measure, Osama bin Laden and other terrorists). (REUTERS, 1 Mar 02; via yahoonews.com) Russia has "offered" its troops to subdue the area, but Georgia knows that such operations would undermine its sovereignty.

Initial responses to the US move by Putin, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov and Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov showed some disconnect. "I would approach reports of this kind with very great care, media reports often contain unverified information," Sergei Ivanov warned initially[cxlii]. A statement followed this from Igor Ivanov who said that "[the deployment of US troops] could still further complicate the already complex situation in the region." [cxliii]

Putin then toned down the reaction to US efforts in Georgia, presenting an almost-cavalier attitude toward the dispatch of US forces. Noting that the US already has deployed personnel in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, while Kazakhstan has offered its airspace and expressed its willingness to increase support to the US, Putin asked "Why should [the US forces] be in Central Asia and not in Georgia?"[cxliv] He further said that it was "no tragedy" that the US was planning to deploy forces to assist the Georgians.[cxlv]

In fact, the states of the CIS, particularly Georgia, have long sought US military assistance and cooperation. The US shrewdly used Russia's own complaints about the Pankisi region to expand cooperation with Georgia and bolster its government. Russia was in no position to oppose US assistance since it had identified the Pankisi area as a hotbed of "terrorism" that supported "terrorists" in Chechnya. Meanwhile, Tbilisi and Washington are interested in

expanding their security relationship. US advisors have assisted Georgia in setting up more effective border controls and America provides 20 to 30 military advisors in various ongoing programs[cxlvi]. Still, there were immediate recriminations from the more belligerent factions in the Duma[cxlvii].

The new cooperation includes actual and possible advantages: (1) The government of Shevardnadze, a staunch US ally beset by separatist and pro-Russian opposition movements, is bolstered; (2) The Pankisi region could be stabilized without subjecting the civilians to a Russian-style cleansing; (3) The effectiveness of the Georgian military is likely to be improved; and (4) The US gains allies in the region and ensures that al Qaeda does not penetrate the area.

So far, both the Russians and the US have been positive about the US presence in Georgia, and indeed about the US presence in Central Asia. As a result of the War on Terrorism, the US has established bases in 3 other Central Asian Republics and has created relationships with nations previously dependent on Moscow. This is indicative of the nature of US-Russia relations – a still competitive environment where both nations are vying for influence, even in the others back yard.

Regardless of the personal relations that may develop between Putin and Bush, there is still a great deal of history clouding the relationship. As long as the primary players in the policy relationship between Moscow and Washington are veterans of the Cold War there will still be suspicion and uncertainty. "The entire relationship between Russia and the United States will be stained with the mantel of the Cold War for some time to come. There will be distrust to the point that even some of the most benign proposals will be tainted with the notion that there is

something sinister lurking just behind."[cxlviii] Until there is a major generational change coupled with a pattern of collegial behavior on both sides, progress between East and West will be slow.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

The Russians under Vladimir have made foreign policy a priority. He's made more than 36 trips abroad over the last year and intends to make more in the future.[cxlix] However, it is important to always bear in mind that Putin and the Russian foreign policy is based on the notion of Statism. The Russian policy of today is about expediency and may or may not reflect the long-range goals of the government. Therefore, it is challenging to determine the likely future course of Russian foreign policy.

However, a study such as this is incomplete without an assessment of the likely courses of action for Russia. Overall, the Russians will most likely continue a cautious and pragmatic approach to foreign policy. However within each region, there are some likely goals, approaches and actions in the long run.

Asia and the Middle East. The Russians have already established a clear pattern in the Middle East. Moscow has thrown its support behind the Palestinians in terms of the trouble between the Palestinian Authority and Israel and will continue to push on two major fronts. First, the Russians will continue to remain in the thick of the mediation process. That includes staying part of the "quartet" and even, over the next few months introducing some initiatives. Moscow may try to introduce UN resolutions aimed at curbing the Israelis or may even propose some more formal peacekeeping efforts.

However, it is imperative for the Russians that the Palestinians reign in any excesses on their part and don't put Moscow in a position to have to make the decision where supporting the Palestinian cause is too costly in terms of international prestige. That will be the wildcard for the statism side of Russian policy for the Palestinian-Israeli questions.

Russia will also likely continue to support Sadaam Hussein. Moscow's efforts are both self-serving insomuch as support for Iraq means a counter-balance to the US and Iraq owes the Russian Government and Defense Industries more than $8 billion for hardware bought on credit. It would be of great benefit to the Russian treasury if Iraq were once again a stable participant in the international community. However, the challenge for the Russians will be if the Iraqis are either linked to the export of Weapons of Mass Destruction or to the international terrorist operations. Putin and Ivanov have committed Russia to stand with the US against both of these activities as part of the anti-terrorism coalition. If there is definitive proof that Iraq is exporting either WMD or terrorism, it will be almost impossible for Moscow not to abandon Baghdad. However, Putin can rest in the fact that Sadaam Hussein has proven time and again to be clever enough to elude confirmation of illicit activities and likely hope he will do so in the future.

Elsewhere in the Middle East and Asia, Russia will continue to forge ties with Iran, India, and China. Such an alliances will continue to benefit both. For the Iranians, Moscow's embrace begins the process for them to return to a viable roll in the international community. For the Russians, courting Teheran is a counterpoint to US regional efforts and the Iranians pay cash for weapons. India will also remain an important focal point for Moscow's efforts both in terms of military exchanges and

economic relations. Delhi is a longtime partner Moscow wants to keep happy. Putin's overtures to China will also continue. Friendly relations between the two countries are of great benefit to both and though neither nation is individually powerful vis-à-vis the United States, a close association and effective alliance, especially in the UN Security Council can keep the US off balance.

Central/South America. The Russians will most likely proceed with caution in this region. First, Moscow's objectives there, at least in the short term appear to be limited to expanding the weapons market. Russian diplomatic and political goals there are modest and likely limited to statements and rhetoric rather than direct involvement in the politics of the region. Second, the Russians are fully aware of the dynamic and unpredictable nature of Latin American politics and are clearly not interested in becoming embroiled in the intrigues of the cross-border and internal relationships. Russia will most likely continue to increase the availability of high-tech weaponry to the region and do so in Moscow's usual "no-strings attached" in terms of human rights abusers and political despots being denied weaponry. The Russians are also unlikely to take many risks in the area since the payoff would negligible and the possibilities uncertain. Putin has proven himself the ultimate pragmatist and will not likely pursue a risky policy or back a fragile regional political leader.

Europe. Russian objectives in Europe are at the same time more identifiable and more homogenous. Russia's designs on European participation have a longer history of

focused activity. Further, more than any other area, the Russian leadership seems to believe that the nation's future is linked with that of Europe.

President Putin has worked hard to forge new and closer relationships with European countries and individual leaders. His newfound friendship with Gerhardt Schroeder, Tony Blair, and Alberto Berlusconi are a testimony to his efforts to confirm one on one relationships with other global leaders, which may enable him to tap into that network of colleagues at the highest levels when and if he needs them. It is most likely that Putin will continue this approach. First, because most of the leaders he is courting are in a position to help Russia economically and politically. They are among the leaders among European Union members and also instrumental in other international organizations such as the WTO. Second, close relationships with European leaders expand the network available to Putin and the Russians and make them less dependent on the US for support and even may act as a counter-balance to pressure placed on the Russians by President Bush or subsequent administrations.

For Europe, the clear approach is through diplomacy and alliance building. To further short and even long term Russian goals, Moscow has been willing to negotiate and even be somewhat transparent with the Europeans and even with NATO, but they have stopped short of becoming part of the alliance proper. Russia has made information concerning its military and economy opaquely available to the west and has even submitted its economy to audit, though the comprehensiveness of the data provided to the auditors was suspect.[cl] Ultimately, the more closely linked the Russians hope they can become economically and militarily with Europe, the more transparent they will have to become.

Moscow will most likely seek additional opportunities to cooperate both militarily and diplomatically. Russia is closer to the Europeans than the US on questions concerning the Middle East (where the Europeans also favor the Palestinians)[cli] and its policy towards the so-called "axis of evil"[clii]. In both cases the Russians and Europeans favor a more moderate, negotiative, UN-resolution-based solution. Ultimately, the Russians and the Europeans share an unstated, yet common goal; limit US dominance.

The United States. Russia will continue to pursue closer relations with the United States and at the same time make every effort to counter-balance American influence and cautiously re-assert Russian influence globally. Though those seem like juxtaposed objectives, they are what the Russians have demonstrated to pursue during the last year. With a statist approach, Russia will likely flow between the two in an attempt to keep Russia progressing economically and politically.

For the Russians, a close relationship with the US can be of great benefit but rife with risks, especially domestically. The majority of Russian adults were brought up on a steady diet of suspicion and distrust of the West in general and the United States in particular. Thus, Putin must continue to approach the US with pragmatic cautiousness and when considering what is in the best interests of the Russian state, he must clearly define what benefit Moscow gains from giving any ground to the US. So far, Putin has been able to conduct foreign policy without the Russian people's interest. In a recent poll, only one in ten surveyed cited his foreign policy record affected their view of him.[cliii]

Unlike his predecessor, Putin wants to confirm that he can deal with the US and the US President on an equal basis.[cliv] From a statist perspective, Putin has given significant ground to the US over the last year:

- He has condoned the presence of US troops in Central Asia, including Georgia
- He has backed away from strong rhetoric on NATO enlargement
- He has given in on the substance of the US Ballistic Missile Defense Program[clv]

These have served the Russians at least in the short term because the US has backed away from strong scrutiny of Russia's war in Chechnya and has supported Russia's desire to enter the WTO. However, to keep his critics in check, any further flexibility toward the US will have to have a more concrete advantage for the Russians.

Moscow's relationship with the US is arguably its most important. Where it goes through the next year will be a test of the diplomacy and skill of Vladimir Putin. He can and probably will be able to continue to maintain a positive relationship with President Bush, though with the ongoing operations against terrorism and the specter of a renewed war with Iraq looming, time will tell what the possible points of contention may be.

During the past year Vladimir Putin has led Russia through the greatest diplomatic challenge since the fall of Communism with skill and savvy that has surprised both his detractors and fans alike. There is nothing like the fire of conflict to test the mettle of a leader. Putin has been deft and capable with every difficulty and has proven time and again that he can effectively operate in the most intimidating circumstances.

The future is bright for Vladimir Putin. His carefully crafted foreign policy was given an extraordinary shot in the arm as a result of the events of 11 September. He was able to effectively propel Russia into the international limelight and into the mainstream

of global decision-making. His efforts appear to on the precipice of bearing significant fruit:

- NATO has announced its plans to incorporate Russia in its decision process[clvi]
- The EU is preparing to formalize an economic relationship with Russia[clvii]
- Italy is aggressively seeking accelerated entrance of Russia in the WTO[clviii]

What further fruit is forthcoming for the Russians remains to be seen. However, Putin and his foreign policy team have prepared the ground in each region of the world. Putin the careful pragmatist will not miss an opportunity to gain advantage, and Putin's hope is that his advantage will be to Russia's advantage.

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