CHAPTER FOUR

Russian Foreign Policy

Russian leaders and policymakers most often characterize Russian foreign policy as focused on two fundamental goals: Russia's desire to increase its global influence and to see its recent economic growth continue. To an extent, this is an accurate reflection of Russian approaches. The ways in which these goals are translated into policy, however, belie the simplicity of such statements. This chapter begins by discussing how various Russian policymakers and analysts view Russia's global environment and foreign policy priorities and choices. We then look at the broad implications of Russia's stated priority on economic growth. Next, we turn to Russia's interests and policies toward various parts of the world, examining them in the context of the country's major foreign policy goals to understand whom Russia sees as its friends and adversaries. After examining the Russian public's views on foreign policy, we conclude with a discussion of how Russian foreign and security policies may yet change and why.

Russian Foreign Policy: Focus on Prestige and Economic Growth

A Variety of Concerns and Priorities

Given the last 200 years or so of Russian history, an outside observer might argue that Russia is remarkably secure. No foreign state is poised to invade it militarily. No enemies are plotting imminent attack. Historically high rates of economic growth persisted for nearly a decade, making Russians substantially wealthier than anyone imagined they

could become in the aftermath of the 1998 economic crash. Russia is not without security concerns, of course. Not only is the conflict in Chechnya far from resolved, but increasing violence throughout the North Caucasus is also not unrelated to global terrorism. Russia is also a critical transit point for international crime. Nuclear proliferation and terrorism, particularly if combined, threaten Russia no less than they do the United States and the rest of NATO. But these are not existential threats, and they are threats against which Russia can battle in concert with the international community.

This view of Russia's foreign policy interests is held by some Westerners. It is not, however, a dominant view in Russia. There are many Russian perspectives on foreign policy, various of which end up reflected, at various times, in the policy choices and directions of the Kremlin. A wide range of positions can be found in the pages of Russian newspapers and journals, and in speeches by Russian policymakers.[1] These views reflect genuine debate about Russia's interests and its direction. Some Russian analysts and policymakers discuss transnational terrorism and transnational terror groups' ties to radical groups at home when they define Russian policy priorities.[2] Others disagree, arguing, for example, that international terrorists pose little threat to Russia and that responses to them have little to do with making Russia safer.[3] Some critics assert that domestic terrorists, broadly defined, are

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[1] Yury Fedorov, "'Boffins and Buffoons': Different Strains of Thought in Russia's Strategic Thinking," *The Royal Institute of International Affairs,* Chatham House, London, BP 06/01, March 2006.

[2] Sergei Ivanov, "Bol'shaya Strategiya: Vooruzhyonniye Sili Rossii i Eeyo Geopoliticheskiye Prioriteti [Grand Strategy: Russia's Armed Forces and Geopolitical Priorities]," *Rossiia v Global'noy Politike*, February 2004; A. S. Kulikov, "Bor'ba s Terrorizmom kak Vazhneyshaya Zadacha Obespecheniya Bezopasnosti Strani [Fight Against Terrorism as Critical Problem of Ensuring National Security]," *Voyennaya Mysl*, No. 4, April 2007, pp. 12–16; Yu Baluyevskiy, "Podkhodi Rossii k Obespecheniyu Mezhdunarodnoy Bezopasnosti [Russia's Approaches to Ensuring International Security]," *Rosiiskoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, No. 1, January 2007, pp. 2–10; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, *Obzor Vneshney Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatzii [Survey of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation]*, March 27, 2007b.

[3] Vladimir Anokhin and Igor' Shishkin, "Rossiia Vstupila Ne v Tu Voynu [Russia Has Joined the Wrong War]," *Voyenno-Promyshlenniy Kur'er*, September 27, 2006; and author

the more significant problem.[4] Other Russian analysts argue that more attention should be paid to possible threats from China.[5]

The most recent comprehensive statement on Russian foreign policy from the government itself is the *Obzor Vneshney Politiki Rossiiskoi Federatzii* [*Survey of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*]. This document, published by Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in March 2007 and endorsed by then-President Putin, was described as having been developed to guide Russia's foreign policy. It was prepared with input from a number of academic and government experts and can be considered representative of the views and direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at least at that time. The survey discusses transnational threats and emphasizes the need to cooperate with the United States and Europe on these and other issues. It explicitly articulates the importance to Russia of good relations with the United States.[6]

But the survey also raises a number of concerns about Russia's relations with Western countries and about these countries' intentions toward Russia. For instance, the survey discusses Russia's concerns about (1) other states that might interfere in sovereign Russian matters, (2) efforts to create a unipolar world where foreign systems and approaches are forced on countries, and (3) some states' overreliance on military force as an instrument of policy. These arguments are not just critiques of U.S. policies—they are also assessments that those policies are dangerous for Russia.

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discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Moscow, November 2006 and June 2007.

[4] Author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Moscow, November 2006 and June 2007.

[5] Mikhail Remizov, Aleksandr Khramchikhin, Anatoliy Tziganok, Roman Karev, and Stanislav Belkovskiy, *Itogi s Vladimirom Putinim: Krizis i Razlosheniye Rossiiskoy Armii* [*Results with Vladimir Putin: Crisis and Decay of the Russian Army*], Institute of National Strategy, November 2007.

[6] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b. The presidential approval statement of this document is Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, "Ob Odobrenii Prezidentom Rossii V. V. Putinim Obzora Vneshney Politiki Rosiiskoi Federatzii [On the Approval by Russian President V. V. Putin of the Survey of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation]," March 27, 2007a.

A number of statements by the Russian government further indicate that there are more than a few members of the inner circle who believe that the United States and its NATO allies are at the core of some of the most significant threats to Russia. For example, while he was minister of defense, Sergei Ivanov wrote that external threats to Russia included the new threat of foreign interference.[7] More recently, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov published a 2007 article that sounded similar themes in its criticism of NATO's "bloc" policies.[8] In the final year of his presidency, Putin made a number of speeches indicating that he too saw the United States and other Western countries as seeking to infringe on the sovereignty and interests of Russia and other countries. In a February 2007 speech to the Munich Security Conference, Putin warned the United States that it should not attempt to create a world "of one boss, one sovereign," and that it should stop interfering in Russian domestic politics.[9] Without mentioning the United States specifically, Putin also complained about countries that were trying to expand their power in the world much as the Nazis did before World War II.[10] In a number of other speeches in the run-up to the 2008 Russian presidential election, Putin continued this theme, suggesting that current policies on the part of some states present threats similar to the peacetime roots of World War II.[11]

Although the postulated threat from the West is rarely presented as a near-term military threat to Russia, Russian leaders have expressed concern that at least some current Western policies might have military repercussions and thus warrant a Russian military response. For exam-

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[7] Ivanov, 2004.

[8] Sergei Lavrov, "Nastoyashchiye i Budushchee Global'noy Politiki: Vzgliad iz Moskvi [Present and Future of Global Politics: A View from Moscow]," *Rossiia v Global'noy Politike*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2007a, pp. 8–20.

[9] Vladimir Putin, "Speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy," Munich, February 10, 2007a.

[10] Putin, 2007a. For a Russian analysis of the speech, see "Russian President Did Not Threaten the West," *International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 4, 2007, pp. 1–12.

[11] See, for example, Vladimir Putin, "Speech at the Military Parade Celebrating the 62nd Anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War," Moscow, May 7, 2007c.

ple, General Nikolai Solovtsov, commander of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces organization, stated that Russia has the capacity to target U.S. missile defense systems if such systems are deployed in Poland and the Czech Republic. In 2008, then-President Putin, discussing the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO, stated that if Ukraine permitted NATO missile defense systems to be installed on its territory, it too could be targeted by Russian nuclear weapons if the Russian government felt that those U.S. systems could weaken Russia's nuclear deterrent.[12] Western commentators have viewed such statements as bellicose.[13]

These views and statements contribute to confusion about Russia's goals and priorities. Particularly in light of the 2008 Russo-Georgian conflict, it seems critical to better understand Russia's interests and preferences. We believe that many answers can be found through a careful examination of what key officials and analysts have said and written and through a close look at Russia's actions in recent years.

A Prestige-Seeking State

As noted, Russians do not have a unified view of their country's interests or its future. That said, during Putin's second term as president, a substantial degree of consensus emerged about at least the broad outlines of Russian foreign policy goals. According to this consensus, Russia's goals were to solidify its increasing economic success and strive to be perceived as a "modern great power" or a "normal great power." Russia should not only be strong politically and militarily, but should also be prosperous economically, advanced technologically, influential culturally, and capable of asserting moral authority.[14]

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[12] Vladimir Putin, "Press Conference Following Talks with President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko," Moscow, February 12, 2007b.

[13] Martin Sieff, "BMD Watch: Russia Can Target BMD in Europe," UPI, Security & Terrorism, February 20, 2007.

[14] Bobo Lo, "Evolution or Regression? Russian Foreign Policy in Putin's Second Term," in Helge Blakkisrud, ed., *Towards a Post-Putin Russia*, Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2006.

The desire to project an image abroad of influence and importance is a critical component of this approach. Russia's leaders seek recognition by major global actors—e.g., the United States, the EU, China, Japan, and India—that Russia is one of the major centers of power in an increasingly complex international environment.[15] Russian decisionmakers do not want to relive the 1990s, when Russia, in its economic and political weakness, seemed to be a dependent of Western powers, one that followed their lead. Russia wants to play an important and visible role. Membership in the Group of Eight (G8) is an important component of achieving this recognition, as are presidential-level summits (particularly with the United States).[16]

In addition to employing traditional diplomatic instruments in pursuit of its foreign policy, Russia has taken an increasingly multidimensional view of power, recognizing the importance of economic, cultural, and public-relations instruments. This approach is perhaps most evident in Russia's relations with its neighbors. Fiona Hill has argued that Moscow has increasingly turned to economic and cultural "soft power"—including its energy resources, attempts to expand the use of Russian culture and language, sales of consumer goods, and investment abroad—to enhance its influence in other former Soviet republics.[17] This goal is reflected in Russian government policy statements that call for more economic integration within the CIS, in Russia's proposal for a customs union with Kazakhstan and Belarus, and in the country's discussions with Belarus about adopting the Russian ruble as Belarus's national currency. The Russian government has also tried to exploit its common cultural heritage with surrounding nations to pursue its interests.

Russia has not limited its use of public-relations tools and other instruments of soft power to its immediate neighborhood. For example, Russia has financed English-language television programs aimed at the

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[15] See, for example, Sergei Lavrov, "What Guides Russia in World Affairs," speech at Moscow State Institute, September 10, 2007b.

[16] For an analysis of how this approach has developed, see Bogaturov, 2007, pp. 54–69.

[17] Fiona Hill, "Moscow Discovers Soft Power," *Current History*, Vol. 30, No. 2, October 2006, pp. 341–347.

West. The annual Valdai meetings between Western Russia experts, Russian analysts, and Putin himself are another part of this effort, as is the launch of a Paris- and New York–based Russian think tank called the Institute of Democracy and Cooperation that is designed to study Western democracy. Although it is well under way, however, the soft-power approach is a work in progress. Russian spending on foreign cultural affairs in its "Near Abroad" and beyond remains limited. Moreover, the direction and strategy behind these efforts has not always been clear.[18] But for countries like Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, cultural ties to Russia will remain important factors in bilateral relations because of the close personal and family ties that continue to exist across these countries' borders with Russia, and because of ongoing, widespread use of the Russian language. Russian-language books, films, radio, and television play important roles in these countries.

Russia's foreign policy also parallels in many ways Russian domestic policy, both in the evident desire for control and stability and in the focus on sovereignty. In the foreign policy context, these goals lead to an emphasis on restoring Russia's international prestige and eliminating levers of influence that Western countries have had in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In one analyst's interpretation, the foreign policy of "sovereign democracy" centers on Moscow's right to restrict the impact of international law, global economic bodies, and world public opinion on Russia's domestic policies.[19] This Russian foreign policy bears a striking resemblance to the prestige-seeking approach that Hans J. Morgenthau identifies as one of the three categories of foreign policy approaches (or, in his terms, "basic manifestations of the struggle for power"). The other two categories are (1) policies of imperialism and (2) maintenance of the status quo. Morgenthau describes prestige as "the policy of demonstrating the power a nation has or thinks it has, or wants other nations to believe it has." He argues that prestige is rarely pursued in its own right, but is pursued more

[18] Vadim Konanenko, "Ob'yatiya 'Myagkoy Sili': Sozdat' Obraz Rossii? [The Embraces of 'Soft Power' to Create a Russian Image?]," *Rossiia v Global'noy Politike*, No. 2, 2006.

[19] Victor Yasmann, "Russia: Ideological Doctrine Paves Kremlin's Course," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, August 4, 2006.

often in support of either an imperialistic or status quo policy. Prestige is a means of demonstrating power so that other goals, whether short or long term, can be achieved.[20] Russia's efforts to demonstrate its power and ensure that it receives the respect it deserves are well in line with the way Morgenthau describes a prestige-seeking state. Russia's efforts to ensure that others do not interfere in its internal affairs also fit this paradigm.

The Importance of Economic Growth

In large part, strong economic growth in recent years is what has made it possible for Russia to increase its prestige on the international stage. Both Russia's status as the primary provider of Europe's gas and its growing economy help make it an important global actor. Russia today has real resources. In August 2006, Russia paid off its Paris Club debt early, despite penalties—a move that was hailed within the country as a reduction of Russia's obligations to the West. Russia's Stabilization Fund was restructured in 2008 into two parts: a Reserve Fund designed to bolster the federal budget as oil prices drop and a National Prosperity Fund for investments in public works, education, health care, and agriculture.[21] It has been drawn on heavily following the financial panic in the second half of 2008.

The basis of Russia's foreign policy has been described by the following paraphrase of a common misquote of former General Motors president and U.S. Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson: "What's good for Gazprom is good for Russia."[22] Indeed, although our analysis indi-

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[20] Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 2nd ed., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954, pp. 67–79, introduces and discusses prestige-seeking as a basis of foreign policy.

[21] "Russia's Stabilization Fund Hits $121.7 Bln as of Jul. 1," RIA Novosti, July 2, 2007.

[22] In 1953, Charles Wilson, then president of General Motors, the largest company in the United States at the time, was picked by President Dwight Eisenhower to be Secretary of Defense. At his Senate confirmation hearing, Wilson was asked whether he could separate the interests of General Motors from those of the country. Indicating that this was a false choice, Wilson said, "We at General Motors have always felt that what was good for the country was good for General Motors as well" (David Halberstam, *The Fifties*, New York: Villard Books, 1993, p. 118). This response has frequently been misquoted (or, perhaps,

cates that this view is simplistic and inaccurate (see Chapter Three), there is a common perception among analysts and policymakers in Russia and abroad that Russia's recent rapid rates of economic growth are entirely due to the country's energy resources and the high world market price of oil and natural gas. This view guides some of Russia's policy choices, including the state's strong support of Gazprom's strategy of acquiring downstream assets abroad and of Gazprom's efforts to ensure that it controls all gas leaving the territory of the former Soviet Union.

The Russian government has pressured Shell, TNK-BP, and other companies to relinquish or modify licenses and contracts that grant them permission to develop large Russian gas reserves. Similarly, a recent agreement signed by the Russian government and the governments of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan ensures that any gas those countries sell to Europe will continue to flow through Russia rather than through alternative routes. Gazprom has also signed memoranda of understanding to construct Nordstream, a gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea that will directly connect Russia with Germany. Gazprom is planning a Southstream pipeline that will extend from Russia to Turkey across the Black Sea. Gazprom and the Russian government appear to have decided that it is better to control a pipeline from start to finish than to be mired in disputes with potentially unfriendly or unreliable transit countries like Belarus, Georgia, Poland, and Ukraine. Whether or not these decisions advance other Russian foreign policy goals, the consolidation of control over gas production and transport puts Gazprom in a much better position to bargain with its European customers.

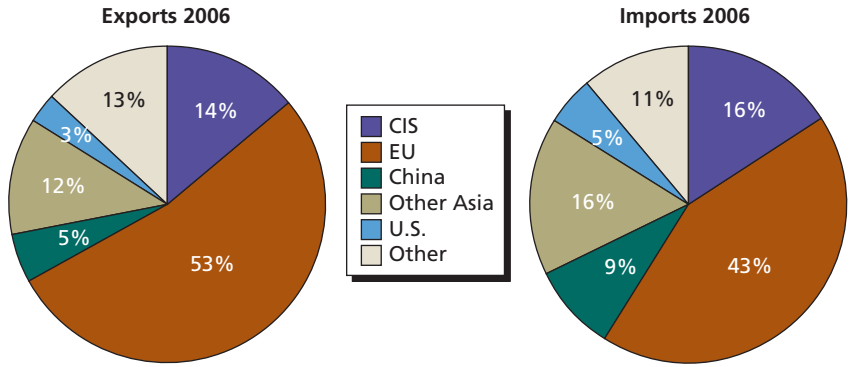
But is what's good for Gazprom good for Russia? The investment strategies of Gazprom, United Energy System (UES), and other major Russian corporations, both state-owned and privately held, suggest that first and foremost they are acting in their own economic interests, not

intentionally "corrected") into "What's good for General Motors is good for the United States."

necessarily in the best interests of the nation.[23] Charging Ukraine and Belarus prices for natural gas similar to those paid by Western European customers has contributed greatly to increasing Gazprom's profits.[24] Consolidating and maintaining control of energy pipeline routes out of Central Asia ensure that domestic gas demand will be met and that Russia can continue to export gas to Western Europe without cutting domestic consumption. But these policies do not endear Russia to its neighbors and, as we discuss, do not strengthen its influence over them in any real way.

Not surprisingly, Russia's most important foreign relationships reflect Russia's patterns of trade. The European states constitute Russia's most important regional trading partner (see Figure 4.1). Next come the other states of the former Soviet Union, although trade with that region has declined in recent years. Russia is working to build ties

Figure 4.1
Russian Exports and Imports by Region, 2006



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[23] Keith Crane, D. J. Petersen, and Olga Oliker, "Russian Investment in the Commonwealth of Independent States," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 46, No. 4, 2005, pp. 405–444.

[24] In his sixth annual press conference, President Vladimir Putin said, "We have no obligation to provide huge subsidies to other countries' economies . . . [while] huge numbers of Russians live below the poverty line" (Vladimir Putin, "Sixth Annual Press Conference: I Do Not Rule, I Simply Do My Work," *International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 2, Minneapolis, Minn., October 3, 2007d, pp. 1–9).

to Asia, including China, where its trade is growing. The United States is not a very important trading partner.

Russia's Post-Soviet Neighbors

A Critical Region

The countries on Russia's borders, its fellow successor states to the Soviet Union, are unquestionably important to Russia. Indeed, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' *Survey of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation* describes the countries of the CIS as the top priority of Russian foreign policy, citing economic and security goals. According to the survey, Russia wants neighbors on its periphery that are friendly, flourishing, democratic, and stable. It proposes policies to strengthen and build on the ties that exist.[25]

Clearly, Russian policy in the region has not been universally effective. Belarus, Tajikistan, and Armenia have extremely close ties to Russia and follow its lead on many issues, but other neighbors have taken pains to assert their independence since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The tensions that have resulted were manifested prominently in the Russo-Georgian armed conflict in August 2008. The three Baltic states (Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia) have joined the EU and NATO (and are discussed in that context below). Other countries walk their own lines, acquiescing and agreeing with Moscow in some areas while parting ways in others.

Why is it so important to Russia to maintain influence in this region? The reasons stem from Russia's quest for prestige, its history, its economic priorities, and its fundamental security concerns. Long before the Soviet Union came into being, these states were part of Russia's empire. Many Russians therefore see these countries as natural partners and allies that are crucial to Russia's national interests. A Russia without significant influence in these countries is less of a descendent of Imperial and Soviet Russia, and is thus less well aligned

[25] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

with Russians' view of their nation and its global role. The refusal of most neighboring post-Soviet countries to align readily and fully with Russia challenges Russia's ability to present itself as a global leader, and this challenge is perhaps more significant at home than abroad. Any country that makes inroads into this region and builds ties with these countries is seen as doing so at Russia's expense.

CIS countries are also important to Russia as trade partners. To sustain growth, Russia has a clear interest in pursuing normal trade relationships with its neighbors, including eliminating subsidies for energy exports. Thus, Russia has in recent years dramatically increased the prices Gazprom charges Ukraine and Belarus for natural gas. This is also the part of the world where Russia has perhaps the strongest interest in controlling pipelines and energy flows to enhance its pricing power with its European customers and to ensure that supplies meet its own domestic energy needs.

Russia's leaders are also concerned about two interrelated security issues in the region. The first fear concerns "conflict spillover": Russia's long, porous southern borders increase the risk that any nearby violence would permeate into Russia or demand Moscow's involvement. Discussions with analysts, the discourse in Russia's press and academic journals, and statements by Russian government officials suggest that perhaps the greatest concern Russia has today is that instability in neighboring countries might spill over into the country itself or drag Russian forces into conflict.[26] The second fear concerns instability and subversion short of armed violence. The dangers inherent in some forms of political change—such as a succession crisis, radicalism, or the failure of governments to maintain power—are viewed in Russia as dangerous in multiple ways. They are dangerous because they

[26] For examples, see Ivanov, 2004; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b; Mikhail Demurin, "Rossiia i Strany Sng: Tsivilizatsionnyi' Vyzov [Russia and the Countries of the CIS: A Civilizational Calling]," *Politicheskii' Klas*, No. 12, December 2007, pp. 17–26; Mikhail Delyagin, "Osnovy Vneshnei' Politiki Rossii [Underpinnings of Russian Foreign Policy]," *Nash Sovermennik*, No. 9, September 2007, pp. 163–180; and Remizov et al., 2007. This is also supported by author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Russia, November 2006 and June 2007.

could involve Russian forces, because they create uncertainties in zones of key interest to Russia, because they could cause neighboring states to become hostile, and because the mechanisms of instability could spread to Russia as well.

Russian Responses: Energy and Trade Policy

Many Russian commentators argue that Moscow's control over energy flows increases its strategic leverage with neighboring states. Mikhail Delyagin, for example, argues that Russia should foster a situation in which its neighbors trade their sovereignty for energy security (i.e., a guarantee of continued Russian supply).[27] Anatoliy Chubais, chief executive officer of UES, Russia's electric-power company, argued in 2003 that Russia should lead the CIS through an "economic occupation" of neighboring economies.[28] In his view, Russian investors should purchase foreign debts and acquire strategic economic assets in CIS countries. Putting his money where his mouth is, UES under Chubais purchased power companies in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Ukraine. Gazprom too is investing heavily in gas companies in these countries.

When Russia has tried to use energy as leverage to increase its policy influence, however, it has more often than not failed to get the outcome it desired. This is illustrated below in our discussion of Russian gas customers Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, and Moldova, and of gas producers Azerbaijan and the Central Asian states.

Ukraine. Throughout the 1990s, Russia repeatedly threatened to cut off supplies of oil and natural gas to Ukraine as a punishment for Ukraine's failure to pay for that gas. The threats were also a response to Ukrainian policy moves that Russia saw as hostile, especially those efforts undertaken after independence by each successive Ukrainian government to build ties with the United States, the EU, and NATO. Ukraine, however, refused to pay up and kowtow—and it continued to

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[27] Delyagin, 2007.

[28] Anatoliy Chubais, "Russia's Mission in the 21st Century," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, October 1, 2003; and "UES Chief Sees Russia as Liberal Empire," *The Russian Journal*, September 26, 2003.

receive its Russian gas.[29] Eventually, as its economy improved, Ukraine began to pay more of its bills. It did not substantially change its policies, however.

The same dynamic has repeated itself in the present decade. Since the Orange Revolution, Gazprom, with the Kremlin's backing, has repeatedly raised the price Ukraine pays for gas to levels commensurate with those paid by European customers. Many in Ukraine and the West see these price increases as retribution for the Westward leanings of Ukraine's recent governments.[30] Several cycles of negotiations over prices and repeated Gazprom threats to cut off supplies have occurred. Gas supplies were briefly halted in 2006 in accordance with a Kremlin decision and again in early 2009.

However, these measures and Ukraine's overall reliance on Russia for oil and natural gas do not appear to have dissuaded successive Ukrainian governments from pursuing eventual membership in the EU and NATO (even as the public remains divided about the latter goal). Moreover, Russia's rhetoric on Ukraine is far less critical than it could be. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs survey describes Ukraine as one of Russia's most important strategic partners (and Russia as Ukraine's). Vaguely referencing alien factors and a difficult transitional period, Moscow generally refrains from any criticism of Ukraine's leadership and describes Russia as committed to closer and deeper relations that are pragmatic, neighborly, and mutually beneficial.[31] Although forestalling Ukraine's membership in NATO remains a key Russian foreign policy goal, Russia cannot afford to cut Ukraine off—not only is Ukraine a transit state for Russia's crucial energy exports to Europe, but now that Ukraine pays higher prices, it has become an important customer of Russian gas.[32]

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[29] See Gregory V. Krasnov and Josef C. Brada, "Implicit Subsidies in Russian-Ukrainian Energy Trade," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 5, 1997.

[30] See, for example, "Imperialist Gas," editorial, *The Washington Post*, April 23, 2006.

[31] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

[32] For historical discussions, see Sherman Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the Emerging Security Environment of Central and Eastern Europe*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie

Georgia. Georgia, in contrast, is not a crucial transit country for Russian gas or oil. However, as with Ukraine, Russia has failed to translate Georgia's dependence on Russian energy into strategic gains. Although Russia's relations with Georgia were far from smooth when Eduard Shevardnadze was president, they have deteriorated further since Mikheil Saakashvili came to power in the Rose Revolution. Saakashvili's government has consistently and actively sought membership in NATO. Russia, for its part, angered the Georgian government by supporting Abkhazia and South Ossetia, separatist regions within Georgia. For years, Georgia accused the Russian military "peacekeeping" presence in those regions of exacerbating tension and threatening Georgia through violations of Georgian airspace and other actions. Tensions escalated in 2006 when Russia banned imports of Georgian wine and water. Georgia then detained and expelled four Russian military officers, accusing them of spying. Russia retaliated by withdrawing its ambassador, imposing more economic sanctions, cutting transport links, and expelling Georgian nationals. Most recently, the Georgian effort to retake South Ossetia by force in August 2008 spurred a Russian invasion of the smaller country.

In the energy context, Georgians have argued that frequent ruptures in the pipeline that serves Georgia have been deliberate acts of sabotage on the part of Gazprom. The Georgian foreign minister described Gazprom price increases as a form of political pressure.[33] During the 2008 conflict, Georgians accused Russia of targeting energy pipelines.

Russian economic sanctions hurt Georgia. Russians had formerly been long-standing customers of Georgian wine and mineral water. Remittances sent home by Georgians working in Russia had been an important source of income for those who stayed behind. Russian sanctions led to the expulsion of Georgians from Russia and created difficulties in transferring funds. Although many sanctions were even-

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Endowment for International Peace, 1997, p. 71; and Margarita Mercedes Balmaceda, "Gas, Oil, and the Linkages Between Domestic and Foreign Policies: The Case of Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2, 1998, pp. 258–259.

[33] See Andrew Osborn, "Moscow Accused of Using Gas Prices to Bully Georgia," *The Independent*, November 3, 2006.

tually lifted, bilateral relations remained poor and efforts to normalize relations were short-lived. In contrast to its discussion of Ukraine, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs survey is unabashedly critical of Mikheil Saakashvili's "ethnic nationalism" and of Western (and especially U.S.) support for Georgia. The survey also blames the Georgian government for increased tension in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[34] But Russia's use of energy and other foreign policy instruments failed to force Saakashvili to back down. Georgia's Western-leaning policies remained unchanged, as did the country's unwillingness to acquiesce to Russian pressure, culminating in August 2008 in armed conflict.

Belarus. Gazprom has also raised gas prices in Belarus. It threatened to cut off gas supplies to that country in late 2006 when Belarus objected to the new prices. As in Ukraine, Gazprom had halted gas flows to Belarus in 2004 when it accused Belarus of siphoning off gas intended for downstream customers. It is difficult, however, to imagine that Gazprom's motives were political in this case. Belarus has not undergone a color revolution and it has poor relations with the EU and the United States. Belarus's foreign policy remains as pro-Russia as Russia could wish: Russia under Putin, and Belarus under the one-man rule of Alexander Lukashenko, have had the highest level of political and economic integration of any two countries in the CIS. Gazprom's decisions to increase prices for Belarus appear to have been motivated solely by money.

Moldova. Relations between Russia and Moldova have been strained by Russia's support for the autonomy, if not independence, of Transnistria, a region in the eastern part of Moldova. Separatists in Transnistria have survived in part because of continued supplies of Russian natural gas and the presence of Russian soldiers (peacekeepers). Moldova, too, depends on Russia to fulfill almost all of its energy needs. Moreover, gas pipelines to Moldova transit breakaway Transnistria. As with Georgia, Russia temporarily banned imports of Moldovan wine to show its unhappiness with Moldova's interest in improving its relations with the West (imports have now resumed).

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[34] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

Moldova did not back down in the face of Russian pressure. When Russia cut gas supplies to Moldova during a dispute over price in the winter of 2005–2006, Moldova bought gas from Ukraine's reserves and eventually negotiated a gradual price increase with Russia.

In early 2008, Moldova reportedly asked Russia to recognize Moldovan sovereignty over Transnistria; in exchange, it pledged to remain neutral and permanently forgo NATO membership.[35] In April 2008, Moscow brokered direct talks between the Moldovan president and Transnistria's leader. These talks were hailed by the OSCE as a potential thaw in a formerly frozen process. Although these developments suggest that Moldova may have been more responsive to Russian pressure than Ukraine or Georgia, it is not clear that energy is the reason. Rather, both countries seem to be engaged in a protracted negotiation over strategic issues.[36]

Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Russian failure to translate energy dependence and interdependence into influence is also evident in its relations with Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Although Central Asian energy producers Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan continue to depend on Russia to export their gas to European markets, including Russia's, Moscow has failed to dictate their foreign policies. Kazakhstan has pursued an independent course since independence, building ties with China and the United States as well as Russia. From independence through 2005, Uzbekistan actively turned its back on Russia and sought closer ties with the United States; after 2005, when relations with the United States faltered, Uzbekistan sought rapprochement with Russia. Turkmenistan maintained an isolationist foreign policy under the rule of Saparmurat Niyazov, avoiding alignment with any country, including Russia (this stance may be changing under Niyazov's successor, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov). Just as Gazprom has occasionally shut off gas flows during price disputes, Turkmenistan in

[35] Corneliu Rusnac, "Moldova Pledges Not to Join NATO If Russia Accepts Its Sovereignty over Trans-Dniester," Associated Press, March 12, 2008.

[36] Jean-Christophe Peuch, "OSCE: Efforts to Thaw Frozen Conflicts Growing More Complicated," *Eurasisa Insight*, Eurasianet.org, April 16, 2008.

2004 turned off the taps on Russia.[37] Azerbaijan, which has become increasingly less dependent on Russia as a transit corridor because of the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline, has sought to maintain good relations with Russia, as well as with the United States and Iran.

Russian Responses: The Security Dimension

Throughout 2006 and 2007, Russia's security concerns in the region were focused most on Georgia and the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs survey described this situation as making the Nagorno-Karabakh situation look rather less worrisome by comparison.[38] Although many in the West might argue that it was Russia that took a consistently confrontational stance with Georgia, Russian analysts, including liberal ones, viewed and continue to view Georgia's government as provocative and believe that Russia has merely responded to these provocations. They expressed concerns that Georgian actions would require a Russian military response.[39] Indeed, in August 2008, Georgian forces moved to take control of South Ossetia, and Russian troops moved into that region to force them out, pushing through South Ossetia and into Georgia proper before turning back.

Russia has also remained concerned about the possibility of conflict in Central Asia. At the core of these concerns are worries about government instability in Central Asia countries. These fears stem in part from broader worries about subversion and changes in government supported by hostile actors abroad (the context in which Russia sees events in Georgia). This view unites Russian, Chinese, and Central Asian leaders and is substantially different from the perspective taken

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[37] For more on the foreign policies of the Central Asian states, see Olga Oliker and David Shlapak, *U.S. Interests in Central Asia: Policy Priorities and Military Roles*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-338-AF, 2005.

[38] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

[39] Author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Russia, November 2006 and June 2007.

by most European states, the United States, and some other post-Soviet countries. Russia, China, and the Central Asian states have increasingly tended to equate political opposition of any sort, at home or abroad, with radical opposition and terrorism (see Chapter Two). They believe that security in the region is best advanced through stability, defined as the maintenance of existing structures, limited political opposition, and increased autocracy.

The color revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan are thus viewed as worrying experiences that could unleash a variety of unwelcome elements. Russia does not wish to see these revolutions repeated elsewhere.[40] Aside from the danger of hostile states aligned with Western powers, there is also the threat that instability or regime change could bring Islamist radicals to power in Central Asia. Although Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan have survived very different forms of political change without substantial violence or changes in domestic or foreign policies,[41] Russian officials and analysts worry that future political change in these or other states could be more volatile and that radical Islamist groups could somehow gain a foothold in the region. These fears are primarily focused on Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, whose current leaders are aging and where succession remains unclear.

The August 2008 conflict with Georgia has further underlined for Russia the view that Western efforts to promote reform are destabilizing and threatening to Russia. Well before the Georgian conflict, Russian officials openly disagreed with their Western counterparts about democracy promotion and election monitoring.[42] Russian government statements during the Georgian conflict indicated that they blamed Western influence, at least in part, for what took place.

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[40] For a discussion of this in the context of U.S. efforts to promote democracy in the region, see Olga Oliker, "Two Years After Andijan: Assessing the Past and Thinking Towards the Future," testimony presented before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, May 18, 2007.

[41] Street protests in Kyrgyzstan forced the resignation of the president; in Turkmenistan, Niyazov's death led to a new leader coming to power.

[42] See, for example, Yelena Suponina, "Lavrov Clashes with Other OSCE Foreign Ministers," *Vremya Novostei*, November 30, 2007, p. 5.

According to both the Russian government and the Russian foreign policy community, Russia is by no means eager to use force in its "Near Abroad." Prior to the 2008 conflict, for example, Russians argued that their country's actions in Georgia had been far from provocative; in fact, they believed that Moscow was trying to deter Tbilisi from adventurism in its separatist regions.[43] Russia's actions in the conflict itself were presented to domestic audiences as a matter of "punishing" Georgia for its excesses; Russian government statements played up the suffering of the South Ossets. There is little doubt, however, that Russia's actions in that conflict also demonstrated Moscow's willingness to use force if it felt force was called for. This sent a signal to neighbors and others that in its attempts to exert influence, Russia was not going to limit itself to soft power and ineffective energy blackmail. Military action is now also clearly on the table.

Regional Organizations

Regional organizations continue to play a role in Russian regional policy. The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) have become particularly important in the security realm. It is also important to mention the CIS, whose security mechanism the CSTO was created to be, and the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC). Despite Georgia and Ukraine's decision to withdraw from the CIS, it still survives; its activity, however, is limited. EurAsEC, also created in the CIS framework, aims to establish a customs and trade union. Thus far, progress toward any actual economic integration has been minimal.

Russia has consistently sought to elevate the prestige of the CSTO, in which it is unquestionably the lead country. The CSTO is structured as a military organization and is based on the Russian military system. CSTO member states carry out some joint training, and use Rus-

[43] See the discussion of Georgia in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b. Author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Moscow, November 2006 and June 2007, found a consensus even among critics of the Russian government that Georgia was the more provocative actor.

sian weapons.[44] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs survey contemplates developing the CSTO as a political-military alliance and developing its peacekeeping capacity, military-technical cooperation, and international "authority" (partly through increased ties with NATO and coordination with EurAsEC).[45] Thus far, there has been little progress toward these goals. Although members participate in CSTO military exercises and meetings, few see it as a key alliance.

It is the SCO—not the CSTO—that has seemingly emerged as the regional organization to watch, although some complain that it has not done enough in either the economic or strategic realms.[46] The SCO has enabled its member states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Russia, and China) to craft cooperative and collaborative policies around issues on which they agree, including political stability, terrorism, and extremism. The members have jointly expressed concern about U.S. involvement and influence in the region. However, as Aleksandr Lukin notes, to view the SCO as an anti-American bloc would be a mistake: Such a posture would run counter to the interests of most of the group's members.[47] The SCO has been a mechanism to carry out military exercises and issue joint statements, which have been useful as a means of communicating to other countries, especially the United States, that the members agree on many issues. Even if the actual exercises have been limited and the depth of strategic and intelligence cooperation between the SCO states is questionable, these actions have a basis in common interests and concerns.

Some Russian policymakers see the CSTO and the SCO as competing structures, a competition that the former organization is losing.

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[44] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

[45] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

[46] Aleksandr Lukin, "Shanhaiskaya Organizatziya Sotrudnichestva: Chnto Dal'she? [Shanghai Cooperation Organization, What Next?]," *Rossiia v Global'noy Politike*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2007, pp. 78–93.

[47] Lukin, 2007.

Ivan Safranchuk points out that the two organizations not only share membership (China is the sole SCO member that does not belong to the CSTO; Armenia and Belarus are members of the CSTO but not of the SCO) and tasks, but they also involve the same government bodies (as does the CIS). He believes that cooperation between the two organizations is unlikely, but argues that the Central Asian member states see benefits in both structures: Membership in the SCO brings in China, which tempers Russian influence, but the existence of the CSTO moderates China's role.[48]

Lukin writes that Russia's concern that China will be the preeminent partner in the SCO has kept Russia from developing the organization as it could be developed, particularly in the economic realm. He believes that China's failure to invest in ways that help the region (rather than just China) has further hampered the organization. He believes that an active Russian role, a greater focus on development, and a broadening of the group's membership to include South Asian countries (but not Iran) could make it a very useful organization for all the member states.[49]

Many Russian analysts characterize the SCO as a Chinese organization rather than a Russian one. China is seen as the dominant great power in the SCO; Russia is viewed as a junior partner. In the absence of other comparable strong organizations, and given the limited relevance of the CSTO, the SCO is also an important way for Russia to engage Central Asian states and China. It supplements the more-important bilateral relationships and is itself a key means of signaling cooperation and Russian influence, even if the degree of Russian influence falls short of Moscow's hopes.

[48] Ivan Safranchuk, "Konkurentzia Za Bezopasnost' Tzentral'noy Azii [Competition for the Security of Central Asia]," *Rossiia v Globalnoy Politike*, No. 6, November–December 2007.

[49] Lukin, 2007, pp. 78–93.

Europe

The Russian View of Europe

Many Russian leaders, as well as a significant proportion of the Russian public, see themselves and their country as European.[50] Although others disagree, arguing that Russia should look more, or at least equally, toward the East,[51] Russian cultural and historical ties to Europe are indisputable. As Russia defines its policies toward Europe (or, perhaps, the rest of Europe), this history, and this debate, create a subtext for Moscow's relations with capitals to its west.[52]

Angela Stent postulates that Europe, particularly Western Europe, has historically been viewed by Russia in three dimensions.[53] First, Europe has served as an idea, a concept of what an enlightened society should look like. This is the Europe of representative government, religious tolerance, democracy, and rule of law. Russia may be a long (and widening) way from this ideal, but this vision of Europe, and of Russia as European in this way, has always appealed to the progressive and liberal elements of Russian society as a goal for their own country.[54] During the Putin presidency, the idea of Europe as an aspirational model for Russian domestic politics was considerably discredited. Emulation of Europe has been equated by many analysts with

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[50] Yu Baluyevskiy, "Podkhodi Rossii k Obespecheniyu Mezhdunarodnoy Bezopasnosti [Russia's Approaches to Ensuring International Security]," *Rosiiskoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, No. 1, January 2007, pp. 2–10; and "Rossiia: Dushoi—v Evrope, Telom—v Azii [Russia: Soul in Europe, Body in Asia]," *VTzIOM*, No. 652, March 16, 2007.

[51] Sergei Lavrov, "Vostochnoye Napravleniye: Pod'yom Azii i Vostochniy Vektor Vneshney Politiki Rosii [Eastern Direction: The Rise of Asia and the Eastern Vector in Russian Foreign Policy]," *Rossiia v Global'noy Politike*, April 2006, pp. 129–141.

[52] In this section, we use the term *Europe* to refer not to the geographical continent but to the European countries that lie west of what was once the Soviet Union. We also include the Baltic states in our definition.

[53] Angela Stent, "Reluctant Europeans: Three Centuries of Russian Ambivalence Toward the West," in Robert Legvold, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century and the Shadow of the Past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007a.

[54] Stent, 2007a.

a policy of following the United States' lead at the expense of Russia's own interests.[55]

Second, Europe has served as a model of how a society can achieve modernization and economic progress: through the ideals of the European concept. According to Stent, this concept has also lost popularity to an alternative vision of Russia following its own unique path to modernity and prosperity.[56] That said, one could argue that the "European" end state remains a part of Russian goals, even if the path does not. Russians have enjoyed rising incomes in recent years, and have used these incomes to purchase an ever broader range of consumer goods. The growing Russian middle class pursues lifestyles and goals not dissimilar to those of many Europeans.

Third, Russia interacts with European states as it seeks to advance its own national security and economic goals. Russia interacts with European states bilaterally, with European institutions, and alongside European nations in larger forums (e.g., the G8). These interactions provide Russia with opportunities to attain and cement its great-power status and to signal Russia's importance at home and abroad.[57] This helps drive Russia's continued involvement in the Council of Europe and the OSCE even as Russia seeks to limit these organizations' ability to directly influence its internal politics. Even those who are critical of Russia's past efforts to court the West argue that good relations with Europe are crucial for Russia's future, partly because Russia itself is European.[58]

The European Union: Trade and Tension

As the locus of Russia's most important trading partners, Europe is no less critical to Russia's desire for continued economic growth than to

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[55] Evgeniy Aleksandrov, "V Chyom Slabost' Vneshney Politiki Rossii [Where the Weakness of Russian Foreign Policy Is]," *Molodaya Gvardiya*, February 2006, pp. 89–95; and Bogaturov, 2007, pp. 54–69.

[56] Stent, 2007a.

[57] Stent, 2007a.

[58] V. Kuvaldin, "A Quest for Russia's Foreign Policy," *International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 4, 2007; and Baluyevskiy, 2007.

Russia's desire to enhance its prestige. Russian exports to the EU are dominated by oil, natural gas, and metals. Many European countries purchase almost all their natural gas from Russia. However, in contrast to Russia's energy relations with some of its post-Soviet neighbors, there is no doubt in Russia that EU countries are Russia's most important markets for natural gas. Gazprom has a clear understanding of how much it needs Europe. No other market could buy the volumes of natural gas that Russia sells to the EU.

Russia's leaders see the EU institution as a mixed blessing. On one hand, Russia's interactions with the EU provide a forum to enhance Russia's prestige and to discuss issues of common interest.[59] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs survey describes the EU as Russia's main European partner.[60] Russia and the EU have found common ground in efforts to promote economic integration, boost trade ties, and harmonize regulations. International health issues (such as the spread of HIV/AIDS), environmental concerns, and other soft security issues have also been areas where Russia and the EU have been able to cooperate.

On the other hand, the EU can be a difficult partner. Its complicated bureaucracy can make it easier for nonmembers to pursue bilateral relations with member states than to try to wade through the tangles in Brussels.[61] Although the EU's Russia policy may not always be clear, the EU as a structure does have an explicit goal of extending what it sees as European values (such as human rights and political freedoms) beyond its own borders and into the former Soviet states. Russian critics claim that the EU "operates on the principle that all things on earth are its business" and that "all organizations operating within the Euro-

[59] See Alexander Grushko, "New Russia Statehood and Prospects for Russia's Activities at the Council on Europe," in "Towards a United Europe Without Divides," *International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 2007.

[60] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

[61] Stent, 2007a, p. 426.

pean framework" must adhere to EU rules.[62] Russia's disagreements with the EU have hampered negotiations for a new EU-Russia Partnership and Co-operation Agreement. (The 1994 agreement, signed in 1997, expired in June 2008.) Efforts to negotiate a new agreement continue, but disagreements about goals and purpose persist. One sticking point is that the EU continues to push for Russia to sign Europe's Energy Charter Treaty, which Russia has consistently rebuffed. The treaty would, among other things, make it easier for other European states to invest in Russian energy firms and projects.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Russo-European tension is also reflected in Russia's relations with the OSCE. Although Russia is involved in a large number of OSCE initiatives and is an active member, it has also consistently criticized OSCE efforts to promote democracy and human rights in its member states as interference in domestic Russian affairs. Russia has also criticized OSCE election-observer missions, particularly in post-Soviet states, as biased. Russian restrictions on OSCE observers led the organization to decide not to monitor either Russia's parliamentary elections in 2007 or its presidential elections in 2008.

Key Bilateral Relationships with Western European States

The EU has not articulated a clear unified policy on Russia, so there is no reason for Russia not to pursue separate policies with member states.[63] France and Italy are major consumers of Russian energy and are important partners in their own right. In addition to trade ties, opposition to the U.S. invasion of Iraq united several Western European countries, including France, with Russia. Germany has been an especially important partner for Russia. Putin enjoyed good personal relations with former German Chancellor Gerhardt Schroeder and built a solid relationship with current Chancellor Angela Merkel. Despite

[62] Yuli Kvitsinsky, "Statement at the Conference on New Russia Statehood and Prospects for Russia's Activities at the Council on Europe," in "Towards a United Europe Without Divides," *International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 2, 2007, pp. 104–120.

[63] Stent, 2007b, pp. 46–51.

concerns that Nicolas Sarkozy's election in France and Merkel's in Germany might lead to a deterioration of these states' ties with Russia, relations have remained fairly good, although both of the new leaders have been critical of Russia's domestic politics. Both France and Germany have been clearly interested in increasing economic cooperation and strengthening other ties.

One example of this cooperation is Putin and Schroeder's 2005 agreement to build Nordstream. Germany has also been less critical than other European states of Russia's domestic politics, particularly its limits on civil and political freedoms.[64] In the wake of the Russo-Georgian conflict in August 2008, Chancellor Merkel's position was more tempered than that of many others. She stated that "both sides were probably to blame" for the conflict, although she also later affirmed that Georgia remained a candidate for NATO membership.[65] French President Sarkozy, seeking the key mediating role in the conflict, brokered a cease-fire agreement.

Russia's relationship with the United Kingdom is more complicated. London's willingness to provide asylum to Chechen separatist leader Akhmed Zakaev and continue to host other Russian expatriates wanted in their homeland, including businessman Boris Berezovsky, has triggered a steady stream of complaints from Moscow. Relations have deteriorated markedly since 2006. Russia has accused British diplomats of espionage, and tensions were further exacerbated when the United Kingdom requested the extradition of Andrei Lugovoi, a former *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* [Committee for State Security] (KGB) agent who became a businessman (and then a Duma member). Lugovoi is wanted in connection with the poisoning of former KGB officer and Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko. As tension spiraled in 2007, Moscow shut down several offices of the United Kingdom's cultural outreach arm, the British Council. The *Survey of the Foreign*

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[64] For an assessment of Russo-German relations, see "Berlin's Russia Challenge," *The National Interest*, March/April 2007b, pp. 46–51.

[65] Andrew E. Kramer and Clifford J. Levy, "Rice, in Georgia, Calls on Russia to Pull Out Now," *New York Times*, August 16, 2008; and Frederick Kunkle, "Bush, European Leaders Urge Quick Withdrawal from Georgia," *Washington Post*, August 18, 2008.

Policy of the Russian Federation describes the United Kingdom as an "important, although difficult, partner."[66]

Russia's conflict with Georgia has implications for its relations with its European partners. As noted above, countries such as France and Germany have tried to tread a careful path: critiquing Russia while seeking not to antagonize it. In the long run, their relations with Russia are stronger and more strategically important to them than their relations with Georgia. While U.S. choices may push key allies into difficult decisions, far more dangerous for Russo-European relations are winter gas cutoffs that result from disputes with Ukraine. If Europe ceases to see Russia as a reliable energy supplier, one of the core bases for this relationship could be undermined.

Eastern Europe and the Baltic States

EU and NATO enlargement into former Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe and the Baltic states has further complicated Russia's relations with Europe. Poland and the Baltic states are determined to resist any perceived Russian influence in their affairs and to use their new status as EU and NATO members to help cement the independence of neighboring Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine (as well as Georgia). These policies impinge on what Russia perceives as its zone of influence in Eurasia and they inflame Russian nationalism. Tension with Estonia and Latvia, especially, over alleged discriminatory treatment of ethnic Russians and Russian-speakers in those countries has been a consistent problem. Tensions came to a head in 2005 over commemorations of the end of World War II. Estonia and Latvia refused to attend commemorative ceremonies in Moscow unless Russia admitted to having occupied those countries after the war.[67] The 2007 relocation of a statue that commemorated Red Army liberators (according to Russia) or occupiers (according to Estonia) from its position in a central square in Tallinn to a local cemetery resulted in a war of words, demonstrations, and cyber attacks on the part of the Russian and Estonian governments and publics.

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[66] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

[67] Stent, 2007a.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Despite these points of contention with new NATO members, despite NATO's enlargement to Russia's western border, and although NATO is seen by many in Russia as a limit on Moscow's freedom of action and capacity to assert itself globally, there has been real progress in Russo-NATO relations in recent years. This sustainability of this progress in the face of the August 2008 Georgia crisis is in doubt, however.

The increasing institutionalization of Russian relations with NATO, which has taken place through the NATO-Russia Council and Russia's associated military and diplomatic missions to NATO, has combined with solid Russian relations with NATO member states to create an improved atmosphere over time. Despite problems, real cooperation and coordination between Russia and NATO existed at the time of the Georgia conflict.

Russian hostility toward and concern about NATO cannot, however, be discounted. There is general agreement in Russian government and analytic circles that NATO expansion threatens Russia's interests, particularly as it continues to reach deeper and deeper into what Russia sees as its own sphere of influence. Russia is not alone in thinking this. As noted, many of the newer NATO members, such as the Baltic states and Poland, view NATO membership in part as "protection" against Russia. Thus, Russians view the possibility of NATO expansion into Georgia and Ukraine, states that also seek to join NATO in part to counter Russian pressure and influence, with particular hostility.

At the April 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO decided against extending Membership Action Plans to Ukraine and Georgia (although eventual membership in NATO was pledged). The decision was seen as a victory for Russia. However, in the aftermath of the Russo-Georgian conflict in August 2008, several European and U.S. leaders have reiterated support for eventual Georgian and Ukrainian NATO membership. The Baltic states, the United States, and Poland have been particularly strong supporters of this eventual enlargement of the alliance.

Given this background, it is not surprising that Russian government statements and documents exhibit seemingly contradictory views of NATO as a hostile actor and a structure with which Russia should

cooperate.[68] The future of the relationship at the time of this writing remains unclear.

Turkey

Turkey, a NATO member but not an EU member, presents a somewhat different question. The two countries have built increasingly close ties in recent years. Russia is now Turkey's largest trade partner and the source of nearly two-thirds of Turkish imports of natural gas. Informal trade in consumer goods (the so-called shuttle trade) between the two countries is substantial and important to both. The two states have cooperated on energy pipelines and projects. They also agree on a number of security issues, particularly regarding the Black Sea, where neither wants heightened NATO involvement.[69] Though a U.S. ally, Turkey shares Russian concerns that certain U.S. policies in the Middle East are destabilizing. The two countries' views on extremism and separatism are also fairly well aligned. Although their situations are far from parallel, both states face criticism from outside powers for their domestic policies and are exhorted to allow greater political pluralism.[70]

The relationship is not without its problems, however. Turkey's relationships with the Caucasus and Central Asian states have been cause for concern in Russia. Like China and the United States, Turkey is seen as a rival there, although it works hard to balance good relations with those countries with its excellent ties to Russia. One example of Turkey's efforts to do this is its pursuit of a Caucasus "Stability and Cooperation Platform," which involved both Georgia and Russia, just days after Georgia and Russia agreed to the August 2008 cease-fire.[71]

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[68] Lavrov, 2006, pp. 129–141; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

[69] F. Stephen Larrabee, *Turkey as a U.S. Security Partner*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-694-AF, 2008, pp. 20–21.

[70] Suat Kiniklioglu, "The Anatomy of Turkish-Russian Relations," *Insight Turkey*, April–June 2006, pp. 81–96.

[71] "Russia, Georgia Green Light Turkey-Sponsored Caucasian Union," HotNewsTurkey.com, August 19, 2008.

The Russian Duma's 2005 decision to pass a resolution on Armenian genocide was, not surprisingly, unwelcome in Turkey. Russia also worries that if Turkey joins the EU, economic relations would change for the worse.[72] However, although some argue that Russo-Turkish rapprochement is driven by such divergent strategic interests that the rapprochement is not sustainable, for now, at least, leaders on both sides seem keen on maintaining and building ties.[73]

The Middle East

Russia's policies on the Middle East can be divided into two components: Iran and the rest of the region. In Iran, Russia has been pursuing its energy and economic goals through cooperation with the Iranian government. At the same time, Moscow seeks to play a global role and to advance nonproliferation goals by lending support to selected efforts to prevent Iran from pursuing nuclear fuel enrichment and thereby moving toward becoming a nuclear weapon state. Russia's role on the nuclear issue has enhanced the country's importance as an international actor.

Elsewhere in the region, Russia's policies are driven by its quest for prestige. This quest has led it to maintain a seat at the table on issues of global importance (such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) and pursue and retain contacts with various countries in the region (such as Syria). Russia would like to become an influential actor in the Middle East, but aside from a general desire for stability in and trade with the region, this desire is motivated less by a particular vision for the Middle East and more by a belief that Russia, as a great power, should play a role in such an important region. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs survey contains a relatively short section on the Middle East that describes the

[72] Larrabee, 2008; Kiniklioglu, 2006.

[73] Larrabee, 2008; Kiniklioglu, 2006. For the view that the relationship is not sustainable, see Igor Torbakov, "Making Sense of the Current Phase of Turkish-Russian Relations," Jamestown Foundation Occasional Paper, October 2007.

dangers of conflict and instability and the need to build mutually beneficial ties, including trade ties, in this part of the world.[74]

Iran

There is no question that Russia is a major player in continuing discussions of Iran's nuclear program, and that it continues to hope that, as Iran's energy partner, it can provide a solution to this problem. Russia has therefore continued to work on Iran's civilian nuclear power plant in Bushehr. To date, there is no evidence that Russia's cooperation on nuclear energy with Iran has been outside the guidelines set by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Russian government has halted its distribution of sensitive equipment to Iran and has cooperated with the international community to prevent Iran from obtaining sensitive nuclear technology. Bushehr is now at risk, however. Russian companies claim the Iranians have been unable to come up with the financing necessary to complete construction of the plant. Russia has advanced proposals to process Iran's spent fuel to preclude the development of a nuclear weapons program and thus help ensure that Iran's nuclear program is peaceful. Although these proposals would benefit the Russian nuclear industry, they could also assure the world that Iran is not developing nuclear weapons.

Iran's failure to cooperate—it has often agreed to proposals, then pulled back—and its insistence on continuing its enrichment of nuclear fuels flummox Russia, and put Moscow in an increasingly uncomfortable position. Moscow's ties with Tehran are a complex combination of partnership on economic and energy issues, a mutual desire to demonstrate independent interests and action, shared views on sovereignty, and Russia's genuine concern about Iran's nuclear program. Russia does not want a nuclear-armed Iran. But if a nuclear-armed Iran is inevitable, Russia would rather be its friend than its enemy.

Some Russian analysts also express concern that Iran seeks accommodation with the United States and, having received it, may turn its

[74] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

back on Russia. They note that Iran's trade with Russia is dwarfed by, for example, Iran's trade with Germany.[75]

Other Relationships in the Middle East

Elsewhere in the Middle East, Russian policy is less well defined. Some analysts argue that Russia has seen itself as a potential broker between the Muslim world and the West due to the legacy of good Soviet relations with the Middle East and Russia's own Muslim population. Russia does maintain good relations with Syria and with Iran. In July 2005, Russia gained observer status in the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It has sought to improve ties with the Gulf states and continues to export weapons to a number of Middle Eastern countries. Its relationship with Israel goes up and down, but the countries have maintained a bilateral dialogue even though Israel was unhappy with Russia's decision to host Hamas's leaders for talks in 2006. However, none of these measures has translated into real influence. Moreover, Russia has failed to clearly articulate its goals and interests in the region.

Russian policymakers and commentators have voiced two predominant views on the Iraq War. One is glee at the difficulty the United States has experienced in its efforts to achieve military victory and spread democracy. Some even argue that because it does not damage Russian energy interests or trade ties, the war does Russia no harm. Others, including former Russian Foreign Minister Evgeniy Primakov, see Iraq's destabilization, and the threat of its spread, as dangerous.[76]

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[75] Author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Moscow, November 2006 and June 2007; and Aleksandr Lukoyanov, "Iran: Vzgliad Bez Predubezhdeniya [Iran: A View Without Preconception]," *Rossiia v Global'noy Politike*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2008, pp. 120–130.

[76] Svetlana Sorokina, "V Kruge Sveta [In the Circle of the World]," radio interview with Evgeniy Primakov, Ekho Moskvi Radio, January 21, 2006; Gennadiy Evstafyev, "Melodiya Dlya Kvarteta [Melody for a Quartet]," *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, July 11, 2007; Interview with Evgeniy Primakov, "Segodnyashnyaya Situatziya na Blizhnyem Vostoke—Ochen' Khoroshaya Illyustratziya Togo, k Chemu Privodit Amerikanskii Eksport Demokratii [Today's Situation in the Middle East—A Very Good Illustration of What American Export of Democracy Leads To]," *Indeks Bezopasnosti*, Vol. 1, No. 81, 2007, p. 13; and "Press Conference with Evgeniy Primakov," *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, July 11, 2007.

Asia

In Asia, as elsewhere, Russia is focused on building and ensuring its great-power status and increasing trade. Russia's overall goals in the Asian Pacific region, however, are not clearly defined. Russia's Asia policies have been focused to a large extent on China and to a lesser extent on Japan and the Korean peninsula. In an excellent 2007 article, Viktor Larin argues that Russia's Asia policy is too responsive to Russian relations with the West, and that it should be more focused on Russia's actual interests in Asia. Larin calls on Russia to define its interests in Asia in a way that takes advantage of the opportunities the continent presents. With the exception of its ties with China, Russia has focused on international organizations rather than bilateral ties, and has built little in the way of trade, at least compared to what is possible. Russia's relations with Japan, South Korea, and the United States (in its role as a Pacific power) remain rooted in the Cold War, he argues. Meanwhile, Asian states neither trust Russia nor see it as an Asian power.[77]

China

Relations between Russia and China, long complicated, have probably never been better. China has become an important trading partner and is a major arms customer. Friendship with Beijing helps Moscow further a number of its goals and enhance its prestige. The two countries support one another in international and bilateral forums on issues such as missile defense, terrorism, sovereignty, territorial extremism, and North Korea. They have carried out joint military and police exercises, both bilaterally and in the SCO. These exercises mark a radical change for China, which had not engaged in exercises of this sort with other states in the past.[78] In the UN, the two countries consistently

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[77] Viktor Larin, "Tikhookeanskaya Politikia Rossii v Nachale XXI Veka [Russian Policy in the Pacific at the Start of the XXI Century]," *Svobodnaya Mysl*, No. 2, February 2007, pp. 142–154.

[78] Yuri Mukhin, "'Mirnaya Missiya 2007': Antiterror v Deystvii ['Peace Mission 2007': Counterterror in Action]," *Rossiiskoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, September 2007, pp. 8–11; and Aleksandr Aleksandrov and Vitaly Denisov, "'Khirurgi' Antiterrora ['Surgeons' of Counterterror]," *Krasnaya Zvezda*, September 12, 2007.

vote together. In 2006, they voted together 100 percent of the time on resolutions concerning nonproliferation, Iraq, Iran, North Korea, and Sudan. China is a solid supporter of Russia when Russia questions U.S. actions and policies, and, like Russia, it views the United States as destabilizing in Central Asia and other post-Soviet states. Both countries are strongly opposed to U.S. democratization efforts abroad (and to U.S. criticism of their own domestic policies and institutions). Some Russians argue that China should be Russia's most prominent partner, and that ties to China, including those extended through the SCO, should eclipse Russia's relationship with NATO.[79]

China helps guarantee Russia's place at the table in discussions about North Korea and supports it on a variety of other issues. However, the two countries also disagree and distrust each other in some key areas, as has been the case for decades. Russian policymaking circles are highly uncertain of the future of the relationship and are unsure whether interests will align or conflict in years to come.

As is the case elsewhere, China is viewed in Russia as a rising global power. This worries some Russians, who believe that China may be eclipsing Russia's own efforts to gain prestige. China's growing ties with the Central Asian countries and its leadership role in the SCO make some Russian policymakers nervous. Russian analysts worry that Russian and Chinese economic and political interests in that region will diverge, and that China's influence will grow at the cost of Russia's.[80]

Although bilateral trade is growing, both countries trade far more extensively with others than with each other. Russo-Chinese patterns of trade have shifted: Russia exports raw materials to China, and imports

[79] A. Klimenko, "Politika: Strategicheskoye Partnyorstvo Mezhdu Rossiiey i Kitayem v Tzentral'noy Azii i Nekotoriye Puti Sovershenstvovaniya Regional'noy Sistemi Bezopasnosti [Politics: The Strategic Partnership of Russia and China in Central Asia and Some Paths to Developing a Regional Security System]," *Problemi Dal'nego Vostoka*, No. 2, April 2005, pp. 6–22.

[80] For a view of China as a threat, see Remizov et al., 2007. See Klimenko, 2005, for a far more positive view that raises concerns about Central Asia but argues that Russo-Chinese differences will be outweighed by common interests.

manufactured goods; a reversal of historical trade relations.[81] Some Russians fear that over the long term, the two countries' economic interests will diverge further, and Russia will lose out from the relationship while China harvests forests in Russia's Far East and exports its labor to that region.[82] Worries about the impact of Chinese migration into the sparsely populated Far East have appeared frequently in the Russian press for some time, although reports of huge numbers of Chinese moving into the region are exaggerated.[83] Russians living in the Far East and Siberia also worry about Chinese pollution of the Amur River, which has been a continuing problem. Far Eastern residents feel that Moscow has only recently begun to respond to their concerns about environmental issues and to voice those concerns to Beijing.[84]

Russian public opinion on China and on the state of Russo-Chinese relations is, unsurprisingly, decidedly mixed.[85] Russia and

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[81] Author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Moscow, November 2006 and June 2007. See also "Certain Aspects of Improving Russian-Chinese Strategic Partnership," *Far Eastern Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 35, 2007, pp. 1–15; and Georgy Kunadze, "What's at Stake," *Kommersant*, October 24, 2007. Trade data are available at United Nations Statistics Division, United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database, undated. The Russian and Chinese numbers do not fully align with one another, it should be noted.

[82] Vladimir Shlapentokh, "China in the Russian Mind Today: Ambivalence and Defeatism," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 59, No. 1, January 2007; and author discussions with Russian demographic specialist, Khabarovsk, Russia, June 2007.

[83] On migration, see E. L. Motrich, *Haseleniye Dal'nego Vostoka Rosii [Population of Russia's Far East]*, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk: Economic Research Institute, 2006; Aleksandr Gabuyev, "Naseleniye na Eksport [Population for Export]," *Kommersant-Vlast'*, Vol. 9, No. 713, March 12, 2007; and Dmitri Trenin, "The China Factor: Challenge and Chance for Russia," in Sherman W. Garnett, ed., *Rapprochement or Rivalry? Russia-China Relations in a Changing Asia*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000, pp. 39–70. Author discussions with a Russian demographic specialist, Khabarovsk, Russia, June 2007, also indicate both concern and exaggeration.

[84] Mikhail Vorobyov, "U Benzol'nikh Beregov Amura [By the Benzene Banks of the Amur]," *Rossiia XXI Vek Kitai*, February 2006.

[85] See "Kitai Dlya Rossii, Partnyor Ili Konkurent [China for Russia: Partner or Competitor?]," *VTzIOM*, Press Release No. 268, August 15, 2005; "Russians Positive on China's Foreign Policy, Economic Model, Negative on US Policies, Bush," Worldpublicopinion.org, May 30, 2006; "China and Russia," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, February 8,

China resolved their last territorial disputes in 2004, agreeing to share territory on three islands and to permit Chinese control of Tarabarov Island and part of Bolshoi Ussuriisky. Although the Russian government emphasized that Russia was not giving up land, and hailed the agreement as a win-win, the terms of the settlement were controversial. The Russian parliament ratified the bilateral agreement in 2005 on the strength of United Russia's pro-government support, but opposition politicians openly described the agreement as a concession of land on Russia's part. Formal and informal polling indicated opposition to the agreement throughout Russia, particularly in the Far East.[86] This opposition, and Far Eastern concern about environmental issues, lends credence to Larin's argument that the residents of Russia's Far East fear Beijing less than they fear that Moscow will not respond to their needs and interests.[87]

Russian scholars who see China as a threat often cite Chinese historical claims in the Russian Far East. Large portions of that territory were Chinese until the late 19th century, when they were ceded to Russia. Although no prominent Chinese leader or scholar has suggested a claim to this territory, certain Russian analysts argue that the Chinese might yet do so.[88] Some in Russia fear that China's extensive trade with the United States will eventually lead Beijing to favor Washington, not Moscow, in its foreign policy decisionmaking.[89] Russian and Chinese analysts have discussed China's own fears that Russia will eventually turn to the United States, aligning with it against China.[90] Some analysts have postulated that if Sino-U.S. relations deteriorate, and if the two countries come into open conflict over Taiwan, Russia

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2007; and "Rossiiane Khotyat Druzhit' s Kitayem, No na Rasstoyanii [Russians Want to Be Friends with China, but at a Distance]," *VTzIOM*, Press Release No. 674, April 16, 2007.

[86] Sergei Blagov, "Russia Hails Border Deal with China Despite Criticism," *Jamestown Foundation Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 2, No. 102, May 25, 2005; and Shlapentokh, 2007.

[87] Larin, 2007, pp. 142–154.

[88] Shlapentokh, 2007; and author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Moscow, November 2006, and in Moscow and Khabarovsk, June 2007.

[89] Portyakov, 2007.

[90] Klimenko, 2005.

might find itself forced to decide whether to support China against the United States in an armed conflict.

Although the costs and benefits of ties with China are much debated, most analysts believe that any threat from China is unlikely to come to a head for at least a decade. The extent to which the perceived threat is military—rather than economic or demographic—is unclear. Many in Russia may feel that there is a need to hedge against a future Chinese threat, but few seem to feel the danger is imminent.

Japan

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Japanese and Russian leaders have sought a breakthrough on their long-standing territorial dispute over the Kurile Islands. The strong leadership of Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro and President Putin in their first terms seemed to herald the potential for the issue to be resolved, which would have allowed Japan and Russia to normalize their relations. In fact, both Yeltsin and Putin had talked of the possibility of ceding the four southernmost islands back to Japan as part of an agreement.[91] The nationalist turn of both leaders in their second terms made them less inclined to compromise.[92] The dispute has not prevented the development of close economic contacts, and discussions about energy have flourished. Furthermore, Japan supports Russia's role as a fellow member of the G8, just as the European members do. Trade between Russia and Japan has increased to $18 billion annually in 2007, and investments by Japanese companies in Russia have continued. Of special symbolic importance was the opening of a Toyota assembly line near St. Petersburg, which Putin attended.[93] Some Russian analysts see Japan as an excellent prospective partner for Russia and believe that Japan could

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[91] Dmitri Trenin, "Rossiia v Mire 2017 Goda, Konturi Liberal'noy Vneshney Politiki [Russia in the World of 2017, the Contours of a Liberal Foreign Policy]," *Znamya*, No. 11, November 2006b, pp. 160–170.

[92] Gilbert Rozman, "Russia in Northeast Asia: In Search of a Strategy," in Robert Legvold, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy in the 21st Century and the Shadow of the Past*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, p. 348.

[93] "Russia-Japan Trade May Reach a Record 18 to 19 Billion Dollars in 2007," ITAR-TASS, December 27, 2007.

become an even more valuable trade partner than it already is. The government of Japan rarely criticizes the domestic policies of other states, and it presents an alternative (or at least a complement) to China as an economic and political partner.[94] Others, however, raise concerns about Japan's remilitarization and its impact on the region,[95] and the Kurile issue remains a fundamental barrier to closer ties—or even the signing of a peace treaty to formally conclude WWII between the two countries.[96]

North Korea

Russia greatly values its role in the Six-Party Talks, the multinational diplomatic initiative convened to respond to North Korea's nuclear program. Russia's involvement contributes to its efforts to enhance its prestige, ensure nonproliferation, and build trade ties and a stronger overall relationship with South Korea. For the most part, Russia has followed China's lead during the talks. Russia agrees that the situation should be resolved through the Six-Party Talks, and that any resolution should require North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and the United States to offer some concessions.[97] Russia's involvement has had constructive results. In the summer of 2007, Russian banks, with government permission, transferred frozen North Korean assets, enabling negotiations, similarly frozen, to move forward.[98] Peaceful resolution of the Korean issue would be good for Russia because it would permit the creation of a transportation corridor from Vladivostok to Pyongyang. That corridor could then be linked to a rail line to Seoul, providing Russia with an additional long-distance transport option for oil exports. Unlike China, Russia could also benefit from Korean unifica-

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[94] Kunadze, 2007. See also Vasiliy Saplin, "Rossiia-Yaponiya. Kak Ustranit' Asimmetriyu v Otnosheniyakh? [Russia-Japan. How to Mitigate the Asymmetry in the Relationship?]," *Mezhdunardnaya Zhizn'*, May 2007, pp. 63–70.

[95] Larin, 2007.

[96] Kunadze, 2007; Saplin, 2007.

[97] Rozman, 2007, p. 357.

[98] "Russia to Help North Korean Funds Row," BBC News, June 12, 2007.

tion, which would improve trade prospects with the peninsula.[99] How Russia's interests on these issues develop will likely depend on how relations with the two Koreas (and relations between the two Koreas) evolve.

Other Relationships in Asia

Russia has a long-standing relationship with India. It includes a very substantial arms trade that is one of the largest components of overall trade between the two states. However, relations have remained somewhat stagnant on other issues, possibly because of India's equally long-standing commitment to nonalignment and its difficult relationship with China. Deepening the Russo-Indian relationship is described as a priority in Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs survey, which discusses India in the context of China, energy sales, and proliferation.[100]

Russia is also seeking to expand trade, including its mainstays of energy and weapons sales, throughout Asia. Recent plans to extend pipelines to China involve getting Russian oil to ports whence it can be exported throughout Asia. But, as Larin notes, Russia's argument that it is an Asian country is belied by the absence of a consistent Asia policy emanating from Moscow.[101]

Transnational Threats

Terrorism: Definitions and Threats

A surprising number of Russian analysts and at least some portions of the Russian government have been strikingly sanguine in recent years about the dangers posed by transnational threats such as terrorism, weapon of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, and transnational

[99] Elizabeth Wishnik, "Why a 'Strategic Partnership?' The View from China," paper presented at the Conference on China-Russia Relations in the 21st Century, Washington, D.C., February 22–23, 2007. See also Elizabeth Wishnick, "Russia and China: Brothers Again?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 41, No. 5, September–October 2001, p. 817.

[100] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

[101] Larin, 2007.

organized crime. Analysts and policymakers do not deny the existence of these problems, and Russia has certainly used shared views on terrorism and extremism to help it build ties with Central Asian leaders and China. It has also used the threat at home to build up domestic security structures, as discussed in Chapter Two. Despite these acknowledgments, however, some Russian analysts believe that the transnational nature of these dangers has been somewhat exaggerated, at least when it comes to their effect on Russia. One analyst, speaking with the author in November 2006, asked rhetorically, "When was the last time there was a terrorist attack in Russia?" In fact, there had been a series of seemingly coordinated attacks in the fall of 2005, as well as several high-profile attacks in prior years.

One reason that terrorism is no longer perceived as a serious threat, according to the analysts who argue that it is not, is Russia's "success" in pacifying Chechnya. This is believed to have removed much of the motivation for terrorism in Russia, and has given the government confidence that it can deal with the challenges posed by radical Islam—even as violence elsewhere in the North Caucasus has grown.

For many years, Russia made a strong argument that the support of foreign groups and fighters for the Chechen radicals meant that Europe, the United States, Russia, China, and the Central Asian countries were all fighting the same enemy. Analysts now question whether this is the case. Without Chechnya to motivate them, some Russians argue, there is no reason for al Qaeda and its ilk to target Russia. Some posit that Russia's historically good relations with the Muslim world and large Muslim population also help protect the country.[102]

Many Russian and outside analysts find these arguments naïve. They argue that Russia exaggerates both its success in Chechnya and the warm feelings it engenders among Muslims abroad. Violence in Chechnya has not ended. Indeed, clashes between Russian forces and Ramzan Kadyrov's local forces continue, as does violence between those "allies" and insurgents. Chechnya and the rest of the North Caucasus remain a rallying point for Muslim criticism of the developed world,

[102] Author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Moscow, November 2006 and June 2007.

including Russia. Russia itself has drawn attention to the foreign fighters who fought there in the 1990s. Some argue that Russian advances toward Muslim states and organizations on the international level may have been motivated by the desire to reduce criticism of its internal policies toward Muslims and traditionally Muslim regions.[103]

Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that radical Muslims view Russia any differently than they do the United States or the European nations. There is no reason to believe that Arab countries, secular or otherwise, see Russia as an unusually close or reliable ally. According to critics of Russian policy, violent Islamist political radicals see Russia as simply another Judeo-Christian-secular state, perhaps one easier to attack than others because of its porous borders.

Those Russians who do see transnational terrorism as a threat conceive of terrorism differently than analysts in the United States. Although Russia is threatened by transnational terrorism, this terrorism is powerful only to the extent that transnational groups support domestic radicals, particularly Islamist radicals. The Russians who see transnational terrorism as a threat believe that the United States and its partners do not understand the specific threat that Russia faces. Indeed, they believe, these countries exacerbate that threat. They note that the United Kingdom has refused to extradite Zakaev, and a U.S. television network broadcast an interview with Shamil Basaev before his death.[104]

Russian analysts who view terrorism as a threat and advocate it as a focus of security planning tend to define terrorism broadly: They include a range of opponents of the Russian state in its ranks. Russian counterterror laws reflect this. Terrorism, separatism, and extremism are considered part and parcel of a single whole—or at least are viewed as inextricably linked to one another. This is a wider view of terrorism than is accepted in the United States and Western Europe, although

[103] Malashenko, 2007.

[104] Anokhin and Shishkin, 2006; Anatoliy Porobov and Sergei Ulanskiy, "Voyennaya Politika Rosii v Sisteme Soveremennikh Mezhdunarodnikh Otnosheniy [Russia's Military Policy in the Contemporary System of International Relations]," *Suvorovskiy Natisk*, May 29, 2007; Kulikov, 2007.

it is consistent with views of terrorism in China, Central Asia, and a number of other states.[105] Russian defense and security planning and spending reflect (1) Russia's general lack of concern about terror as a transnational threat as it is defined by the United States and (2) significant Russian concern about domestic terror, broadly defined. Russian military exercises, including ones conducted jointly with other states, often include "terrorism" scenarios, but the actual maneuvers and operations seem far more related to traditional, conventional combat. This is further discussed in Chapter Five.

WMD Proliferation

Russian attitudes toward nuclear and WMD proliferation are also at variance with those found in the West. In a series of interviews with current and former Russian defense officials in 2005, Celeste Wallander and Robert Einhorn found a "striking consensus" among officials on the issue of nonproliferation. These interviews suggest that nonproliferation quite simply does not fall high on the priority list of Russia's prestige-oriented foreign policy. As with terrorism, Russia sees little threat to its own soil and citizens from proliferation by either states or nonstate actors.[106] This was further supported by our own discussions with analysts in Russia in 2006 and 2007. Russian officials and analysts noted that Iran and North Korea do not fear Russia and that the acquisition of nuclear weapons by al Qaeda is highly unlikely. They dismiss the notion that al Qaeda views Russia as just as desirable a target as Western states. Although avoiding proliferation is certainly perceived as a goal of Russian foreign policy, and although involvement in discussions about North Korea and Iran are of great benefit to Russia's prestige, nonproliferation itself ranks comparatively low on Russia's list of priorities.[107]

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[105] See Anokhin and Shishkin, 2006; Klimenko, 2005; Lukin, 2007.

[106] Celeste Wallander, "Geopolitics, and Neo-Containment, as Well as Common Security," *PONARS Policy Memo*, No. 371, Center for Strategic Studies, December 2005.

[107] Wallander, 2005; and author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Russia, November 2006 and June 2007.

Many Russian analysts fear that their government and their colleagues underestimate the threat of proliferation. With its porous borders, Chechen war, and continued unrest in the North Caucasus, Russia may be a tempting, convenient target for nonstate proliferators. Proliferation by Iran and North Korea would have negative repercussions for Russia. Weakened global regimes; a Teheran strengthened not just in the Middle East, but also vis-à-vis Moscow; and turmoil on the Korean peninsula do not benefit Russia. However, even analysts who take a pessimistic view believe that their government remains optimistic about the dangers of transnational terrorism and proliferation and is unlikely to truly believe, despite statements to the contrary, that cooperation with Western states against these shared threats should be a priority that trumps other concerns.[108]

The United States

Russia has few economic ties with the United States. As noted above, its volume of trade with the United States is far lower than its trade with the EU or China. The United States is thus not that important to Russia in the economic dimension. The CIS countries are identified as Russia's top priority, and Europe receives page after page of discussion in Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs survey. In contrast, according to the survey's short section on the United States (and Canada), attention to the United States is dictated by the need for cooperation with Washington on a range of international issues and by Washington's involvement and weight in the broad range of global affairs.[109] Although the survey's section devoted to the United States is short, the United States

[108] Author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Russia, November 2006 and June 2007.

[109] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

is mentioned—sometimes as a partner, and sometimes as a problem—in most if not all of the survey's other chapters.[110]

According to some Russian analysts, the United States is less a driver of Russian policy decisions than a constraint on some and a consideration in others.[111] But the evidence calls such assertions into question. A simple glance at Russian newspaper headlines reveals that the United States and its activities are important to Russia and to Russians. Discussions about other foreign policy issues often lead to the question of the United States.

Although the United States is not economically important to Russia, it is critical to Russia's efforts to rebuild its global prestige. When Moscow and Washington cooperate as equals, Russia's global importance is clear at home and abroad. The personal relationship between Putin and President George W. Bush helped legitimize Russia's government and elites. Similarly, arms control talks and other discussions with the United States about nuclear weapons remind the world of Russia's status as a nuclear weapon state of the first order: No other powers have arsenals to match Moscow's or Washington's. Partnerships between the two countries on such issues as North Korea and Iran are important both in and of themselves and as a way of demonstrating Russia's unique capacity to contribute to world affairs alongside the United States.

But if cooperation with the United States in some areas helps build Russia's prestige, so do criticizing and countering U.S. policy. When the United States accuses the Russian government of rolling back democracy, as Vice President Richard Cheney did in Vilnius in 2006, Russia responds.[112] Soon after Cheney's comments, then-President Putin accused the United States of hypocrisy in crusading for democracy and human rights in some countries but ignoring them in

[110] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007b.

[111] Author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Moscow, November 2006 and June 2007.

[112] Richard Cheney, "Remarks at the 2006 Vilnius Conference," May 4, 2006.

others.[113] The United States can withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, but Russia can suspend the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Russia can also protest the U.S. invasion of Iraq and U.S. plans to build radars in Poland and the Czech Republic. These and other declarations express genuine dissatisfaction with U.S. policies that Russia sees as dangerous, but they also demonstrate to Russians and the world that Moscow can and will stand up to Washington to protect its interests.[114]

In recent years, when the United States was unpopular in much of the world, Russian criticisms of the United States did not just establish its own independence; they also provided an alternative view—voiced by a major power—that other states (and their populations) could embrace. At times, Russian leaders have also appeared to present Russia itself as an alternative model of development to the United States or Western Europe.[115]

Russian opposition to U.S. actions and proposals also stems from Russia's genuine security and foreign policy concerns. Although few Russians would argue that the United States plans an armed attack on Russia, many if not most Russians in policymaking and analytical circles see the United States as a force that causes instability in the world, is capable of threatening Russia, and is hostile to their country.[116] It is true that the Russian government supported U.S. actions after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Russian leaders might even have thought that the attacks would usher in a new era of cooperation between the two countries. The contribution the United States made to the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, which Russia had been backing against the Taliban for years, drove the Taliban from power. The stabilization of Afghanistan was certainly a shared hope of the two coun-

[113] Putin, 2006.

[114] Bogaturov, 2007.

[115] See Lavrov, 2007a and 2007b. The Russian "model" is also discussed in Sergei Karaganov, "Novaya Epocha Protivostoyaniya [A New Era of Confrontation]," *Rossiia v Global'noy Politike*, Vol. 5, No. 4, 2007, pp. 58–69.

[116] For an extreme example of this view, see Aleksandrov, 2006. See also Anokhin and Shishkin, 2006.

tries. At the time, the Russian government was still very much engaged in a bloody conflict in Chechnya. It believed that the United States was coming around to its way of thinking about the transnational terror threat, particularly in regard to radical Islam.

The years since September 11, however, have disappointed both countries. Cooperation on counterterrorism failed to materialize fully. Russia has come to fear transnational terrorism less, and has put more of a premium on stability. From Russia's point of view, the United States seemed to have embarked on a global strategy of regime change. The Iraq War and the color revolutions, for which Russia blames the United States, were seen as destabilizing. Criticisms of Russia's own domestic policies created the impression that the United States is hostile to Russia and its government.[117]

Pavel Zolotarev argues that although the United States' foreign and security policies may not be focused on weakening Russia, they certainly do not help make Russia safer.[118] From the Russian perspective, U.S. policies often hamper Moscow's pursuit of prestige and economic growth. The United States consistently supports proposals for energy pipelines that circumvent Russia. Two consecutive two-term U.S. presidents have opposed the construction of pipelines that would go through Russian territory. U.S. support for the color revolutions and the continued U.S. presence in Central Asia are seen as potentially destabilizing and as a play for influence in Russia's backyard. The U.S. government criticizes Russia's domestic and foreign policies and was extremely critical of Russia during the crisis with Georgia—even as it refrained from public critiques of the Georgian government. The United States unilaterally withdrew from the ABM Treaty and announced that it would put components of an ABM defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic. Russian policymakers see these measures in particular as direct efforts to weaken Russia's nuclear deterrent. As discussed in more detail in Chapter Five,

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[117] For a Russian analysis of U.S. policy toward Russia in recent years, see P. T. Podlesniy, "Rossiia i SShA v Nastupivshem Stoletii: Problemi i Perspektivi [Russia and the USA in the New Century: Problems and Perspectives]," *SShA-Kanada, Ekonomika, Politika, Kul'tura*, May 2007, pp. 61–76.

[118] Pavel Zolotarev, "Tzeli i Prioriteti Voyennoy Politiki Rossii [Goals and Priorities of Russian Military Policy]," *Rossiia v Global'noy Politike*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2007, pp. 76–87.

the Russian government believes that U.S. nuclear planning remains focused on Russia. Perhaps worst of all, the United States acts without consulting Russia, even on decisions that Russia believes affect its vital interests.[119]

Some Russian analysts believe that the United States is a declining power. The war in Iraq, U.S. economic problems, and an erosion of Washington's prestige abroad are the apparent signs of decline.[120] Some view the weakening of U.S. power as a motivation behind U.S. hostility toward Russia, which, like China, is growing stronger. Sergei Karaganov agrees that growing U.S. weakness is indeed a factor in U.S. criticism of Russia; but he also believes that Russia's responses to this criticism stem from its failure to recognize just how much stronger it has become.[121] Others argue that although the United States is losing influence globally, this is not in Russia's long-term interests, because the U.S. decline will lead to more regionalization and a more dangerous world.[122]

All that said, the Russian government consistently argues that some cooperation with the United States is necessary. It identifies the same areas that U.S. leaders do when arguing for cooperation with Russia: the fight against terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and other transnational threats.[123] The United States should be concerned, however, that these issues—which form the core of current U.S. foreign policy—are not top Russian foreign policy priorities. Moreover, one core issue for the United States—counterterrorism—is defined very differently in Russia. Many Russian analysts and officials directly and

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[119] Author discussions with Russian and Russia-based specialists and analysts, Moscow, November 2006 and June 2007.

[120] V. Inozemtzev, "'Postamerikanskiy Mir:' Mechta Diletantov i Neprostaya Real'nost' ['Postamerican World': Dilettantes' Dream and Difficult Reality]," *Mirovaya Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodniye Otnosheniya*, March 2008, pp. 3–15.

[121] Karaganov, 2007.

[122] Inozemtzev, 2008.

[123] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Department of Information and Press, 2007a; Podlesniy, 2007.

indirectly accuse the United States of using the fight against terror as an excuse to increase its own power and influence in the world.[124]

Russia and the United States share common interests, and U.S. policy goals will necessitate some level of cooperation with Russia (and vice versa). However, these common interests are insufficient in and of themselves to induce Russia to cooperate with the United States consistently and broadly.

Russian Public Opinion on Foreign Policy

Russian public opinion on foreign policy issues can be a useful indicator of how Russian policy will evolve. The views of the public matter to Russian policymakers, and views on Russia's role in the world are in many ways elucidating. Russians' opinions of regional actors and the international scene can be summed up as affinity for Europe, uncertainty about Asia, ambivalence toward the United States, and defensiveness in regard to the "Near Abroad." According to one poll, more than two-thirds of respondents believe that Russia should seek closer ties with Europe, and more than half feel that Europe seeks good relations with Russia.[125] Of European countries, Russians have the highest opinion of Germany, characterizing it as a superpower and one of Russia's closest friends, and ranking it the world's most successful polity and society.[126] There are, however, elements of distrust in Russians' attitudes toward Europe: More than half of Russians polled in 2006

[124]Anokhin and Shishkin, 2006; Klimenko, 2005; Baluyevskiy, 2007.

[125]See "Rossiia i Evropeiskoe Soobshchestvo [Russia and the European Community]," Levada-Center, July 20, 2007; "Otnosheniia Rossii i Vedushchikh Evropeiskikh Stran [Relations of Russia and the Leading European Countries]," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, June 8, 2006; and "Rossiia Usilivaetsia. No Eto ne Povod Ssorit'sia s Zapadom! [Russia Is Growing Stronger. But That's No Reason to Argue with the West!]," *VTzIOM*, No. 704, June 4, 2007.

[126]"Rossiia—Mezhdu Vostokom i Zapadom [Russia—Between East and West]," *VTzIOM*, No. 361, December 19, 2005.

believed that Russia's relations with the leading European countries would never be truly friendly.[127]

Russians cast their country as a unique European civilization that, because of its geographic position, also has many Asian interests.[128] Most Russians have positive feelings about Asia, but many are concerned about Russian relations with China.[129] In an April 2007 poll, 36 percent of Russians felt that relations with China were "better than average," and 40 percent classified them as normal or peaceful.[130] China has been consistently named one of the friendliest countries toward Russia.[131] Yet feelings of military and economic rivalry remain. Very few Russians consider China an enemy, but a significant proportion of Russians expect China to become a dangerous neighbor or competitor during the 21st century.[132]

Russians' views of the United States seem to be closely intertwined with their judgments about U.S. foreign policy and world events. The highest level of support (70 percent) for the United States occurred in September 2001; support dropped to a low (27 percent) in March 2003 when the United States invaded Iraq.[133] More than half of Russians surveyed feel that the United States plays a negative role in the world, and approximately one-third believe that the United States

[127] "Rossiia i Evropeiskoe Soobshchestvo [Russia and the European Community]," 2007.

[128] "Rossiia: Dushoi—v Evrope, Telom—v Azii [Russia: Soul in Europe, Body in Asia]," 2007.

[129] "Rossiia: Dushoi—v Evrope, Telom—v Azii [Russia: Soul in Europe, Body in Asia]," 2007.

[130] "Rossiiane Khotyat Druzhit' s Kitayem, No na Rasstoyanii [Russians Want to Be Friends with China, but at a Distance]," 2007.

[131] A. Golov, "Druzhestvennye i Nedruzhestvennye Strany dlya Rossiian [Friendly and Unfriendly Countries for Russians]," Levada-Center, May 30, 2007; and "Druz'ia i Vragi Rossii [Friends and Enemies of Russia]," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, October 5, 2006.

[132] "Druz'ia i Vragi Rossii [Friends and Enemies of Russia]," 2006.

[133] The figure as of June 2007 was 48 percent; the 7-year average is approximately 57 percent ("Indeks Otnosheniia k SSHA [Index of U.S. Relations]," Levada-Center, undated).

is a threat to Russia's national security and economy.[134] Nearly one-third of respondents think the United States could go to war against Russia, and even more view the United States as one of the world's least-friendly countries to Russia.[135] Nevertheless, the United States is respected as one of the world's superpowers, and almost half of Russians surveyed would like to see Russia pursue closer relations with the United States.[136] Russian attitudes toward Americans as a people are consistently very positive.[137]

Most Russians indicate that their country must seek to maintain influence over the CIS.[138] Neighboring Kazakhstan and Belarus are frequently recognized as Russia's closest friends, whereas the three Baltic states and Georgia are seen as unfriendly toward Russia.[139] Most Russians polled feel threatened by the possibility of Ukraine or Georgia joining NATO and are dismayed by Ukraine's closeness with the West.[140]

Most Russians polled see their country as strong but not a superpower. Superpowers have strong economies and high standards of living, and most Russians feel that Russia has not yet met these criteria. A majority thinks that Russia will be a superpower in 15–20 years.[141]

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[134] "Rossiicko-Amerikansie Otnosheniia i Vybory v SshA [Russo-American Relations and U.S. Elections]," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, February 7, 2008; and "Rossiia—Mezhdu Vostokom i Zapadom [Russia—Between East and West]," 2005.

[135] Golov, 2007.

[136] "Rossiia—Velikaia Derzhava? [Russia—A Superpower?]," *VTsIOM*, Press Release No. 616, January 24, 2007; and "SSShA i Rossiia: Novye Plany po Sozdaniiu PRO [USA and Russia: New Plans on Creation of NMD]," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, June 21, 2007.

[137] "Rossiia i SshA [Russia and the USA]," Levada-Center, December 20, 2007.

[138] "Rossiia Usilivaetsia. No Eto ne Povod Ssorit'sia s Zapadom! [Russia Is Growing Stronger. But That's No Reason to Argue with the West!]," 2007; "Obshchaia Otsenka Rossiiskoi Vneshnei Politiki [General Appraisal of Russian Foreign Policy]," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, October 5, 2006; and L. Sedov, "Strana i Mir [Country and World]," Levada-Center, May 6, 2006.

[139] Golov, 2007.

[140] Sedov, 2006.

[141] "Rossiia—Velikaia Derzhava? [Russia—A Superpower?]," 2007.

Russia's participation in and cooperation with certain international organizations is generally viewed as important for maintaining a sufficiently high profile on the world stage. Russian opinions of the UN are markedly lukewarm. Two-fifths of Russians polled feel that the UN plays a positive role in the world but that UN activities do not align with Russia's national interests. Nearly half of those polled believe that Russia has very little or no influence in the UN.[142] The WTO and the G8, on the other hand, generally meet the approval of respondents. Nearly half of Russians surveyed feel that entry into the WTO is in Russia's interests, and three-fourths support Russia's continued participation in the G8.[143] Forty percent of Russians agree that NATO is a threat to Russia, yet half of Russians polled believe that partnership with NATO is in Russia's interests.[144] When asked to identify elements of NATO's mission, Russians provided a variety of responses, ranging from protecting the interests of the United States to stopping WMD proliferation. Some believe that NATO has lost its mission and is a remnant of the Cold War.[145]

For the most part, Russians believe that their country plays a leading role in the world and that Russia's influence is growing.[146] Reviving Russia's superpower status is an important goal for one-third of respondents, and the economy—widely seen as insufficiently modern compared to the economies of other world actors—was mentioned as the primary obstacle. Nearly half of Russians polled feel that Russia's

[142] "Otnosheniia k OON: Monitoring [Relations Toward the U.N.: Monitoring]," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, April 26, 2006.

[143] "Rossiia v 'Bol'shoi Vos'merke [Russia in the 'G8']," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, June 22, 2006.

[144] "Ugrozhaet Li NATO Rossii? [Does NATO Threaten Russia?]," *VTzIOM*, No. 454, May 24, 2006.

[145] "Ugrozhaet Li NATO Rossii? [Does NATO Threaten Russia?]," 2006.

[146] "Rossiia Usilivaetsia. No Eto ne Povod Ssorit'sia s Zapadom! [Russia Is Growing Stronger. But That's No Reason to Argue with the West!]," 2007; and "Rol' Rossii v Mire: Monitoring [Russia's Role in the World: Monitoring]," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, May 25, 2006.

recent economic upswing was based on high oil prices.[147] Russians were also pleased with President Putin's handling of foreign policy.[148] They identify support for peace and action against international conflict as key characteristics of a "correct" foreign policy for Russia.[149] More than half of Russians polled feel that Russia is internationally respected, even feared. Yet approximately 40 percent of respondents feel that Russia is not a developed or leading country and that Russia has an insufficient number of allies.[150]

Russia's Evolving Goals

Both the Russian government and the Russian public have embraced a prestige-seeking worldview. Countries that seek prestige seek it for one of two reasons: to cement their current influence and political and economic power, or to ensure that this influence and power will grow. In Russia's case, the Russian government wants more influence and more power than it has today and is building up its prestige toward that end. That said, Russia's pursuit of more prestige is not necessarily at odds with the goals of most other states. The exception to this lies in Russia's efforts to expand its influence in its immediate neighborhood, where Russia's goals and actions could escalate tension, damage relations, and draw in a broad range of states.

Russia has little interest in expanding territory through force of arms: Indeed, it does not seek more territory, simply more influence. It has shown that it is willing to use military power to build that influence, but its designs on South Ossetia and Abkhazia, for example, are

[147] "Rossiia Usilivaetsia. No Eto ne Povod Ssorit'sia s Zapadom! [Russia Is Growing Stronger. But That's No Reason to Argue with the West!]," 2007.

[148] "Obshchaia Otsenka Rossiiskoi Vneshnei Politiki [General Appraisal of Russian Foreign Policy]," 2006; and "Otsenki Deiatel'nosti [Activity Evaluation]," Levada-Center, March 2007.

[149] "Obshchaia Otsenka Rossiiskoi Vneshnei Politiki [General Appraisal of Russian Foreign Policy]," 2006.

[150] "Prestizh i Imidzh Rossii v Mire [Russia's Prestige and Image in the World]," FOM: Public Opinion Foundation, May 31, 2007.

not attempts at territorial aggrandizement in and of itself. Rather, they are a demonstration to Georgia and other neighbors that Russia will defend its interests. Although Russia is not quite a status quo power, its expansionism is defined by a desire for more respect and for other great (and lesser) powers to show greater consideration for its interests. As Aleksei Bogaturov argues, Russian criticism of Western policies is less a reflection of anti-Western sentiments than an expression of the country's desire to be seen as an equal player and to receive Western and global respect.[151]

Despite Russia's current relative security against substantial external threats, the country's recent weakness has generated fear among Russians that this security will not last. Some believe that Russia must strengthen itself now to protect itself later. Russia's continued efforts to transform energy interdependencies into political leverage—despite the lack of effectiveness of these policies in the past—can be seen in this light, as can the military campaign in Georgia. The logic behind these efforts is that if Russia's actions garner it the respect it needs now and in the future, the mistrust they engender is acceptable and manageable. From an outsider's perspective, the danger is that Russia's fears will drive it to increasingly hostile postures vis-à-vis other states, particularly the United States, and that those states will respond in kind. A downward spiral of mutual recriminations may not prove that easy to fix.

Russia' attitudes could change. Any one of several events could alter Russia's foreign policy course. For instance, a major terrorist attack in Russia that is credibly linked to al Qaeda could demonstrate that transnational terrorism poses as much of a threat to Russia as it does in the West; this realization could then lead to much closer cooperation. Terror attacks originating domestically or in the "Near Abroad" could also heighten Russia's sense of insecurity. Instead of bringing it closer to the United States, however, these attacks could be used as an argument for stronger domestic control. Russia could even come to blame such an attack on the United States, arguing, for instance, that the

[151] Bogaturov, 2007.

United States supports "destabilizing" opposition groups in neighboring countries.

U.S. and European actions will also shape Russian foreign policy. The more that the United States or EU member states are perceived as hostile by Russia, the more the Russians will respond in kind. Russia's response to continuing Western criticism of the country's domestic policies is a case in point, as are Russian responses to U.S. relations with other former Soviet republics, U.S. plans for missile defenses in Europe, and U.S. efforts to promote pipeline routes that circumvent Russia. Russia responds with accusations and actions of its own, creating a cycle of hostility. Russian efforts to use energy as a lever with its immediate neighbors make Western European states nervous, and may over time lead them to seek alternative energy suppliers. Tense relations between Russia and Central and Eastern European EU members (such as Poland and the Baltic states) may contribute to growing tension. Further armed conflict in Central Asia or the Caucasus that involves Russia will almost certainly lead to further criticism from the West, as the experience with Georgia has shown. Given the scale of trade between Russia and Europe, however, it seems unlikely that Russo-European relations will become truly hostile. Russo-U.S. relations are at greater risk.

Although Russia and the United States may be on a path that strains their relations, the spiral of hostility could be broken. Opposition and free speech in Russia are not what they once were, but there remains considerable debate on the future of Russia's foreign policy, including attitudes toward the United States. Although these are represented more, or at least more openly, in the academic debate, they also influence government positions and policies.

Moreover, the recent change in government in Moscow that made Medvedev president may, over time, create some room for maneuver and policy change. Putin remains the clear guide of Russia's foreign policy, but Medvedev may come to play more of a role, and may have different views on some key issues. For example, two of Medvedev's allies, Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin and State Electricity Chief Anatoly Chubais, have complained that Putin's tough foreign policy toward

the West hurt Russia's economy.[152] They advocate greater international cooperation, including membership in the WTO (a long-standing goal of successive Russian governments), and have complained about increasingly hostile relations between Russia and the United Kingdom.

The recent presidential elections in the United States also open up room for change, even as they come at a time of great tension between the two countries. Like Medvedev, only more immediately, new U.S. President Barack Obama will have an opportunity to define new policies and reevaluate old ones. This creates the potential to spur cooperation, particularly in areas where both Russia and the United States see substantial opportunities for mutual gain. The two countries could usefully engage in the Caucasus, cooperating (rather than opposing one another) as conflicts are resolved and focusing on shared interests rather than competition.[153] The same can be said of their engagement in Central Asia. Transnational threats remain an area of concern for both, even if definitions differ. Arms control, discussed in Chapter Five, presents possibilities for cooperation. One key to success in improving relations will be a better mutual understanding of the other country's interests and goals; this will allow both parties to know who is doing whom a favor, and when. Another key to success will be a genuine willingness on the part of at least one of the two nations to face the risks, at home and abroad, inherent in this sort of cooperation.

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[152] Greg Bryanski, "Top Russian Officials Want Foreign Policy Shift," Reuters, January 30, 2008.

[153] R. Craig Nation, "Russia, the United States, and the Caucasus," Strategic Studies Institute, February 2007.