

Rethinking U.S. Policy toward Russia:

Project of the *American Academy of Arts and Sciences*

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Premises

- The international context for U.S. policy toward Russia is fundamentally changed from that of the 1990s
 - (Detailed description of change.)
- Russia poses a fundamentally different challenge for U.S. policy from that of the 1990s
 - (Detailed description of change.)
- The combined effect of this dual transformation requires significant adjustments in the U.S. approach toward Russia.

Overall Framework

Part I. Strategic Assessment

- I. U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities and Russia's Place in them
- II. Understanding Russia: The Challenges It Faces and the Challenge It Poses
- III. The Goal: A Vision of U.S.-Russian Relations Four to Six years from Now
- IV. Character and Contents of a Strategic Dialogue

Part II. Policy Framework

- I. Specific Issue Areas, Problems, and Tasks
 - (Geographical) Spheres (Eurasia, Europe, Northeast Asia, China, Islamic South, Middle East, South Asia)
 - Issues (From BMD to the Arctic, from Iran to sovereign wealth funds)
- II. Integrating specific issue areas into the strategic vision
 - Short-run (tactical choices)
 - Longer-run (tactical and strategic choices)

I. U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities

Vital Interests

Immediate:

1. Stabilizing international financial context
2. Stabilizing the Southern Front
 - Stabilizing Afghanistan
 - Preserving a stable Pakistan
 - Handing off stabilizing Iraq
3. Achieving a durable Arab-Israeli *modus vivendi*

Medium-term (over next two-three years):

1. Creating the post-Bretton Woods international economic structure
2. Containing catastrophic terrorism
3. Restoring U.S. international leadership
4. Revitalizing the Euro-Atlantic partnership
5. Preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
 - Dealing with the “nuclear renaissance”
 - Making progress on Article VI commitments
 - Checkmating the most dangerous would-be state proliferators

I. U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities

Important Interests

(Those requiring a longer time frame)

1. Energy security for the United States and major allies
2. Managing the rise of the new powers, particularly China
3. Reconstituting a nuclear regime for a multipolar nuclear world
4. Mitigating climate change
5. Creating a more appropriate and effective architecture for global governance, including institutional reform (UN, IMF, etc.)
6. Encouraging (not forcing) the advance of democratic values and practice wherever compatible with stable change
7. Addressing the international effects of corruption, particularly within “criminalized states.”

I. U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities

Significant Interests

1. Preventing pandemics and reducing HIV/AIDS
2. Fostering “human security”
 - Containing the flow of small arms and the conflicts they fuel
 - Limiting human trafficking
 - Reducing the drug trade
3. Increased safety at sea, in particular, from piracy and terrorism

I. U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities and the Role of Russia

Vital Interests

Immediate:

1. Stabilizing international financial context
Russia has secondary but no longer inconsequential role. (Russian DFI, sovereign wealth fund, credits, and energy prices have a role to play.)
2. Stabilizing the Southern Front
Russia is a significant factor in the three cases, although of descending importance across the three.
 - Stabilizing Afghanistan
 - Preserving a stable Pakistan
 - Handing off stabilizing Iraq
3. Achieving a durable Arab-Israeli *modus vivendi*
Russia is a secondary factor, although a potential influence when dealing with Syria.

Medium-term:

1. Creating post-Bretton Woods international economic structure
Russia still basically a price taker rather than a price maker, although it will use leverage and voice to be a vocal advocate of alternative structures.
2. Containing catastrophic terrorism
Russia is a vital player.
3. Restoring U.S. international leadership capacity
This depends largely on U.S. efforts, but Russia can play the role either of spoiler or benevolent bystander.
4. Revitalizing the Euro-Atlantic partnership
Again this is largely a U.S.-European enterprise, but compatible U.S and European Russia policies are crucial.
5. Preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
Russia is key.

U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities and the Role of Russia

Important Interests

1. Energy security for the United States and Major Allies
Russia is vital.
2. Managing the rise of the new powers, particularly China
Russia can be a crucial factor either negatively or positively.
3. Reconstituting a nuclear regime for a multipolar nuclear world
For the United States no other country is more important.
4. Mitigating climate change
Russia has a substantial role to play, second only to the United States, China and India.
5. Creating a more appropriate and effective architecture for global governance, including institutional reform (UN, IMF, etc.)
When security as well as the international economic order is factored in, Russia has a vital role to play.
6. Encouraging (not forcing) the advance of democratic values and practice wherever compatible with stable change.
Russia is an obstacle , and in the post-Soviet space, an important one.
7. Addressing international effects of corruption, particularly within the “criminalized state.”
Russia is crucial.

U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities and the Role of Russia

Significant Interests

1. Preventing pandemics and reducing HIV/AIDS

Russia is more important as a country of concern than as a source of solution.

2. Fostering “human security”

- Containing the flow of small arms and the conflicts they fuel

Russia is a player both itself and as an influence on other post-Soviet sources of the problem.

- Limiting human trafficking

Again, Russia as Ukraine and Moldova are important sources of the problem.

- Reducing drug trade

Russia has a major stake in reducing the opiate and heroin trade from Afghanistan.

3. Increased safety at sea, in particular, from piracy and terrorism

Russia is playing a less active and effective role than it could and should be pressed to play.

I. U.S. Foreign Policy Priorities and the Role of Russia

1. In terms of key “framing issues”

1. European security
2. Mutual security in and around the post-Soviet space
3. Nuclear security
4. Energy security

2. Russia is crucial—as crucial as any other major power



I. Comparison of Top U.S. and Russian Foreign Policy Priorities

The United States

1. Stabilizing the international economic context
2. Stabilizing the southern front (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq)
3. Containing catastrophic terrorism
4. Preventing proliferation of WMD
5. Restoring U.S. status and capacity to lead in key areas of international affairs.

Russia

1. Minimizing the external effects stemming from the global economic crisis.
2. Balancing against the influence of other major powers in the post-Soviet space (most immediately, the United States and NATO)
3. Securing Russia's voice as a major power among major powers and an equal participant in shaping the international order.
4. Maximizing Russian influence (economic, political, and security) in the post-Soviet space.
5. Preserving stability in the post-Soviet space, particularly where instability threatens Russia's internal stability.

I. Where U.S. and Russian National Interests Have Conflicted

The United States

- Conflict
 1. Wants independent, autonomous, democratic or democratizing states in the post-Soviet region open to unimpeded external economic engagement.
 2. Wants a strong, enlarged NATO capable of out-of-area action.
 3. Seeks a substantial edge in conventional and nuclear capability and, at best, an arms control regime conducive to that.
 4. Wants to see “rogue regimes” change or be changed.
 5. Stresses values as key dimension.

Russia

- Conflict
 1. Wants dominant influence and a *droit de regard* in the post-Soviet space.
 2. Accepts a NATO with an out-of-area role in selective cases, but neither a NATO in the post-Soviet space nor a NATO arming on its immediate borders.
 3. Seeks to constrain areas of strategic innovation, such as weaponization of space and missile defense, as well as the scale of the U.S. effort.
 4. Opposes resort to force as a means of regime change—at least, in the case of “rogue regimes”—and most forms of humanitarian interventionism.
 5. Opposes intrusion of values issues.

I. Where U.S. and Russian National Interests Have Differed

The United States

1. Attaches highest priority to preventing proliferation of nuclear arms to regimes such as Iran and North Korea.
2. Approaches the challenge posed by Iran primarily in terms of nuclear proliferation, global terrorism, and the conflict in Iraq.
3. Is likely to reconsider missile defense only on technical and economic grounds, not the opportunity costs in U.S.-Russian relations.
4. Supports multiple energy supply lines out of the post-Soviet area.

Russia

1. Regards preserving and strengthening the NPT regime as important, but balances this objective against other foreign policy objectives.
2. Approaches the challenge posed by Iran in multiple dimensions (nuclear proliferation, but also energy, Central Asia, arms sales, etc.).
3. Entertains the idea of missile defense as legitimate, but only if collaborative and on a basis acceptable to Russia (and China).
4. Wants to monopolize energy supply lines out of post-Soviet area.



The United States

5. In China policy, neo-containment figures in the policy dialogue.
6. Seeks to isolate regimes seen as destabilizing in international politics and overtly hostile to U.S. interests.
7. Has a different conception of the global terrorist threat (who and what) and assigns global terrorism the highest priority

Russia

5. In China policy, pursues a *hedged* alignment strategy.
6. Willing to “truck, barter, and exchange” with regimes hostile to the United States (Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, Syria).
7. Has a different conception of which groups are terrorist and what constitutes terrorism, thinks of terrorism in regional terms, and assigns the larger global threat a lower priority.

I. Overlapping U.S.-Russian Interests*

1. Stability on the southern front (from Turkey to the Chinese border), including a constructive working relationship with the Islamic world.
2. A stable nuclear regime among the nuclear weapons-possessing states and a reduced role for nuclear weapons in national defense policies.
3. A stronger NPT regime that successfully blocks the growth of nuclear weapons-possessing states
4. A stable, modernized international financial architecture capable of regulating and managing capital markets, the new forms of capitalization, and an outdated trade system.
5. An enhanced role for multilateral institutions that are reformed and rendered more effective in dealing with regional conflicts, civil wars, and the new threats to international security.
6. Progress in addressing climate change in ways preserving economic growth in the developed industrialized states.
7. Minimizing the national and international threat posed by terrorism.
8. A predictable and equitable energy trade and development regime between the national economies of the Euro-Atlantic importing states and the post-Soviet exporting states.
9. Peace and stability in and around the post-Soviet space.
10. The modernization and structural reform of the Russian and other post-Soviet economies permitting *sustainable* economic growth.
11. Successful measures to contain and then reverse the health crisis (HIV/Aids, tuberculosis, and cardiac disease) key to the demographic challenge facing Russia and Ukraine.
12. Averting trends stimulating strategic rivalry among any two or more major powers, and containing strategic rivalry where it exists (India-Pakistan).

* Cast in basic and general terms. Differences arise when going from the general to the specific.

II. Understanding Russia and the Challenges It Faces

- How different is Russia from the past
 - Embedded in global economy
 - 45% of investment needs met by foreign capital
 - Historically new obstacles to a restoration of a thorough-going authoritarian state (*e.g.*, emerging middle class, for the first time in a millennium change is from below, a generation that has experienced freedom, a population connected to internet highway)
 - Pragmatism has replaced ideological impulse
 - De-militarization of the political and, particularly, the economic system
 - Institutionalized political succession, albeit with vulnerability
 - Power and property entwined but no longer as patrimony of the state
 - Freedom to travel, practice religion, and make and spend money
- Key historical continuities:
 - The authoritarian temptation
 - Centralization (and resistance to institutionalized decentralization)
 - Institutionalization only at the top, weak institutionalization below
 - Personalism in leadership
 - Inchoate civil society managed by the state (hence, strong-state/weak-society model)
 - The value of the state privileged over the value of the individual.

II. Understanding Russia and the Challenges It Faces

- Fundamental challenges
 - Demographic decline (entwined with the health crisis)
 - Recovering from de-industrialization and addressing industrial obsolescence
 - Defending the territorial integrity and unity of Russia in a globalizing world
 - For perhaps the first time in at least the past 400 years, Russia is surrounded by regions that are either more vibrant economically (East and South Asia) or more attractive economically and politically (Europe). And to the south by militant Islamic forces with a potential audience in Russia.
 - With strong lines of internal communication, Russia could act as a link between East and South Asia and Europe. Absent such lines (the case today), various parts of Russia are likely to be pulled economically/commercially toward East Asia, South Asia, and Europe.
 - Modernization: of the political system and diversification of the economy
 - Can the Russian system continue to bring success in a country in which the population is declining and success requires reliable information, flexibility, creativity, and innovation?

- Implications of current global financial crisis:
 - If the crisis is prolonged, will the challenges noted above become acute?
 - If major economies (U.S., European, Japanese and Chinese) use the crisis to invest in ways enhancing their competitiveness, will Russia emerge from the crisis even less competitive?
 - Will this be the consequence of the state's increasing role in the economy?
- State capacity
 - Leadership has been able to produce 500 page “Concept for Long-Term Socio-Economic Development of the Russian Federation” (2020 plan)
 - Committed to the third of three development scenarios:
 - Inertia: envisions a continuation of today's resources-dependent development model despite decreasing hydrocarbon production
 - Resource-based: foresees innovation limited to the energy sector, meaning that the country remains uncompetitive in manufacturing and human capital
 - Innovation-based: entails Russia broadening its comparative advantage beyond natural resources and becoming a leader in technological development.
 - Appears able to target resources
- But:
 - Is it able to generate resources?
 - Labor: were the contribution of human resources to gross national wealth improved from 14% to 60% (in OECD countries the figure is 80%) by 2020 this would offset the deteriorating demographic effects, but can it be achieved?
 - Finance : sustainable growth (7% for 12 years) with or without diversification?
 - Price risk in commodities
 - Investment requirements in oil and gas
 - Wasting assets (gas) after 2010

- Political stability (which in turn is a key factor in state capacity)?
 - Durability (or fragility) and effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of dual power?
 - Threat to social bargain (popular political support in exchange for economic benefits)?
 - If, in the current economic crisis, the “bargain” either comes undone and social unrest turns to political protest or the leadership overreacts in anticipation of trouble, the relative political stability of the moment could rapidly dissipate.
 - Intensified competition among competing factions at the top leading to incoherent and ineffective policy and/or political disarray at the regional and local level?
- Potential shocks
 - Impact of financial crisis and \$40-60 a barrel oil (2009 budget assumes \$75 a barrel oil)
 - Although opinion polls indicate continuing popular support for the leadership and a dissociation of government policy from an economic crisis now widely perceived, this is likely a fragile balance that could tip radically and suddenly.
 - Major terrorist attack or series of attacks
 - Sudden and intense escalation of violence in, and particularly across, the north Caucasus republics

II. Understanding Russia and the Challenge It Poses for the United States

1. Dealing with a Russian leadership and political elite that are deeply suspicious of U.S. policy and purposes, leading to:
 - A perception of many U.S. actions as purposefully hostile to Russia
 - And, when specific U.S. initiatives are seen as hostile, to emotional responses
2. Coping with the cognitive dissonance characterizing the Russian leadership's testy, often confrontational posture and its awareness of the limits to Russia's real ability to affect critical outcomes.
3. Recognizing and adjusting to Russia's ongoing and incomplete struggle to work out a "national identity," resulting in:
 - The absence of a longer-term strategic vision to guide external behavior.
 - An inability or unwillingness to make basic strategic choices:
 - In terms of strategic alignment(s) (with or against the West; with all major powers; or a free-hand vis-à-vis all major powers?)
 - In terms of the structure and content it would give to security architecture in Europe and Northeast Asia
 - A reflexive inclination to favor coercive over accommodative approaches when dealing with (weaker) neighbors

4. Responding effectively to the undemocratic, often anti-democratic, preferences and actions of the Russian leadership, which:

- Creates tension over basic values animating leadership in the two countries and constricts the foundation on which a relationship can be built.
- Stirs negative reflexes and attitudes in the U.S. congress and media that generate obstacles to and pressures on U.S. policymaking.
- Adds to the suspicions and tensions between Russia and nearby states, increasing the lobbying pressure they place on the United States.

5. Addressing the problems raised by a non-transparent political regime suffering from thorough-going corruption:

- Prejudicing the environment for direct foreign investment both in Russia and other post-Soviet states
- Impeding the struggle to deal with illicit trade (from arms to endangered species, from drugs to money laundering)
- Creating an opaque policymaking process obscuring where and by whom decisions are made

6. In the near term, a new element of unpredictability is introduced by the uncertain direction the economic crisis may give domestic politics leading either to:

- An increasingly harsh, authoritarian response
- Or a renewed readiness to advance economic reform as a way out, and then, perforce, the political easing needed to make reform work.

Or the uncertain direction the economic crisis may give to foreign policy behavior leading either to:

- A defensive, contentious reaction that seizes on external scapegoats or manufactures external enemies
- Or a less edgy and strident demeanor accompanied by a greater readiness for accommodation.

III. The Goal: A Vision of U.S.-Russian Relations Four to Six Years from Now

- A U.S.-Russian strategic partnership:
 - The United States and Russia cooperating in their approach to energy security
 - Jointly constructing a new nuclear regime for a multipolar nuclear world
 - Working together to mitigate the most significant instances of regional instability
 - Collaborating more ambitiously in the struggle against global terrorism
- A cooperative Russian attitude on:
 - Stability on the Korean peninsula
 - Flows of DFI in both directions
 - The task of promoting progressive change in the post-Soviet states
 - Access to Arctic resources
 - Fashioning improved global governance and institutional reform
- A substantial Russian contribution to:
 - Aiding the most impoverished nations
 - Progress on climate change
- Positive Russian strategic vision and strategy:
 - Strategy of “reassurance” when dealing with neighbors (rather than coercion or compellance)
 - Collaboration with United States in safely integrating rising powers into the international system
 - Russian efforts to achieve domestic modernization through more, not fewer, liberal forms

IV. Strategic Dialogue

■ Assumptions

1. The need for a strategic dialogue is greatest when conflicts on specific key issues require an effort to understand and discuss the underlying impulses and concerns driving each side's position.
2. A strategic dialogue focused on the larger or more fundamental issues at stake in the relationship creates the basis for a more comprehensive and coherent U.S. policy toward Russia.
3. A strategic dialogue can only succeed if:
 - It is led on each side by a figure with direct access to and the full confidence of the national leader(s) in both countries.
 - It is small, flexible, guided by a clear set of principles, and freed from bureaucratic encumbrance.
4. And, most important, a strategic dialogue, like the larger U.S. Russia policy of which it is part, must be calibrated with the efforts of European allies.

IV. Strategic Dialogue

■ Content

❖ Priority Topics:

1. European Security

- An open-ended discussion of a potential architecture that:
 - Promotes the mutual security of NATO members, Russia, and the states in between as understood by each
 - Probes and develops jointly the content of Dmitri Medvedev's call for a new "European Security Treaty"
 - Develops a framework within which NATO and security institutions in the post-Soviet space can be embedded in ways producing cooperative approaches to European and global security challenges.

2. Mutual Security in and around the Eurasian land mass

- A frank and practical discussion of how each side sees its own and the other side's legitimate concerns, interests, and role in the post-Soviet space that :
 - Addresses comprehensively the sources of friction in all of its dimensions (NATO's activities, the "frozen conflicts," the use of Russian leverage with neighbors, the activities of Western NGOs, and competition over oil and gas).
 - Seeks ways of reducing competition and enhancing cooperation in dealing with regional conflicts and potential sources of instability within the post-Soviet space.
 - Plots practical steps by which the effects of the Georgian war can be mitigated and the path opened to a stable, constructive Russian-Georgian relationship.
 - Airs each side's expectations concerning the uncertainties surrounding Ukraine and Belarus' future.
 - Looks for new ways to improve cooperation in dealing with the wide range of security threats in and around Central Asia and the Caucasus.

3. Nuclear security

1. Non-proliferation: Iran, North Korea, 2010 NPT Review Conference
2. “Nuclear renaissance” and implications for the NPT regime
 - Proliferation-proof civil nuclear technologies
 - Internationalizing the fuel cycle
 - Bilateral civil nuclear cooperation (123 agreement)
3. Nuclear disarmament: Getting to zero (whether and, if desirable, how to do it)
4. Strategic arms control
 - START III or SORT II
 - The role of offensive versus defensive capabilities in nuclear postures
5. Managing a multipolar nuclear world
 - De-nuclearizing national defense policy (nuclear weapons only as deterrent against use of nuclear weapons)
 - Creating a mechanism for constructing a wider regime stabilizing the India-Pakistan nuclear relationship, addressing the de-stabilizing aspects of the Chinese, Indian, and Pakistani nuclear postures, and regulating the modernization programs of all nuclear-weapons possessing states.

4. Energy security

1. Revive 2002 dialogue over an “energy partnership” focused on:
 - Potential development North Atlantic oil and LNG route
 - Cooperative strategy for developing oil and gas pipeline out of the post-Soviet states
 - Designing joint measures to ensure the security of Central Asian and Caspian energy transport
2. In cooperation with the EU explore with Russia:
 - Ways to reduce sense of vulnerability to energy dependency on Russia
 - Explore the implications of Russian and Central Asian energy trade with Asia versus Europe

IV. Strategic Dialogue

- Content

- ❖ Other Important Topics:

1. Climate change, perhaps as a trilateral dialogue among the United States, Russia, and China
2. Refashioning the institutions of global governance
 - A new financial architecture shaped not only by the OECD countries, but by BRIC
 - The relationship among regional security organizations
 - UN reform
3. A dialogue over values, including a constructive discussion of democracy and human rights, focused initially on areas where each country faces challenges (*e. g.*, dealing with illegal immigration, the tension between national security when dealing with terrorism and civil rights, etc.)
4. Trade and investment issues in new and far more ramified forms

How the World Has Changed Since the 1990s

- A world wracked by an unprecedented global economic crisis.
- A world in which terrorism has become a central security concern, because it has crossed a qualitative threshold from terrorist incidents to global or catastrophic terrorism.
- A world in which the tension between the supply and demand for energy has risen to a point rendering energy security a primary concern.
- A world in which both the “nuclear renaissance” (driven, in part, by the energy picture) and the nuclear temptation—manifest in North Korea, Iran, and more broadly the Arab Middle East—have placed the NPT regime under unusual stress.
 - *Inducing governments and key voices to take seriously the goal of a denuclearized world and to begin wrestling seriously with the question of how one would get there.*
- A world in which climate change, once a secondary and disputed issue, has acquired urgency and priority for an important range of governments
 - *Not least because its potential effects are now seen as raising new kinds of threats to international security within a matter of decades.*
- A world in which the straight-line transformation of the post-Soviet states to democracy and smoothly functioning markets has veered from the hoped-for trajectory and toward illiberalism, seriously complicating all other aspects of U.S. relations with Russia and a number of these states.
- A world in which the dark sides of globalization (illicit trade, human flows, technological vulnerabilities, global terrorism, pandemics, etc.) rival the positive welfare effects.
- A world in which, whatever the underlying configuration of power in international politics, the United States no longer has or sees itself as having the unchallengeable influence or free hand that it took for granted at the end of the Cold War.
- A world in which renewed strategic rivalry among major powers (the U.S.-China, China-Japan, and, at the regional level, U.S.-Russia, Russia-China) can no longer be brushed aside as far-fetched.
- And a world in which refashioning global governance, beginning with the financial architecture, is now a pressing practical challenge, no longer an abstract discussion theme.
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How Russia Has Changed

- No longer a country suffering the disorienting effects of economic collapse but one with nearly ten years of rapid economic growth, although now threatened by a deepening economic crisis.
 - No longer a supplicant to the IMF, with razor thin reserves, and an inability to meet Paris and London Club debt, but one with the world's third largest reserves (even after the fall 2008 financial crisis).
 - No longer an object of foreign assistance, but a member of the club with substantial sovereign wealth funds.
 - No longer a country without the wherewithal to sustain an active foreign policy, but one whose oil and gas wealth has been parlayed into a major foreign policy instrument—although here too the economic crisis challenges the durability of this assumption.
- No longer a country whose leadership is picking its way uncertainly through the steps toward a more democratic order, but a politically consolidated regime preoccupied with reinforcing the centralization of power and managing the evolution of civil society.
- No longer a country agitated over its prospects of being integrated *with* (if not *into*) the West, but one abjuring strategic alignment and content to play the field among all major power centers.
- No longer a country with a fleeting, ambivalent, and unsystematic approach to the post-Soviet space, but one motivated by a determination to preserve and enhance Russian influence throughout the area, buttressed by the coordinated use of Russia's foreign policy instruments to this end.
- As noted, the global economic crisis that has engulfed Russia casts a shadow over these assumptions. Still, any basic shift in domestic political trends or the thrust of foreign policy that may follow will simply heighten the contrast with the Russia of the 1990s.
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