'New Cold War' or twenty years' crisis? Russia and international politics

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The debate over the dynamics of Russian foreign policy has become ever more closely tied to controversy over the 'regime question': the problem of the nature of the political system that took shape during Vladimir Putin's two terms as president between 2000 and 2008. Indeed, it appeared that one could not be understood without the other being taken into account. While foreign policy can never be dealt with in isolation from domestic constraints, the collapse of the one category into the other in the discourse of the late Putin years is reminiscent of the essentialism that characterized debate in the Soviet era. This is just one example of the way in which, in a structural sense, Cold War patterns of thinking have once again surfaced in discussion about Russia and its role in the world. Putin's second term as president from 2004 was accompanied by ever more insistent suggestions that a new Cold War was in the making. This article will try to place these concerns in context and to provide both an empirical and a theoretical analysis of why the notion of 'Cold War' has returned to haunt us once again. It will deal with issues both substantive—namely, whether we are indeed entering a period that can be described as a Cold War—and discursive—why the category of Cold War remains so stubbornly entrenched in our understanding of international politics in general, and in relations with Russia in particular. I will begin by looking at the framework of Russian policy between 2000 and 2006, a period characterized by what we call a 'new realism'. From here I will move on to the unravelling of the new realism from 2006, and will then consider the features and causes of the putative 'new Cold War'.

From the new realism to Russia resurgent

For over two decades since Mikhail Gorbachev launched perestroika in 1985, Russia has been engaged in a grandiose modernization process. While developments in this period can be examined through the prism of theories of 'democratic transition', the transformation in Russia has unique features, above all its autochthonous character and the all-encompassing geopolitical shift involved. From being one of the world's two superpowers and the alternative pole in a bipolar system, Russia

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(as the legatee state of the USSR) suffered a precipitate geopolitical decline while at the same time engaging in economic and political transformation. An essential part of this transformation has been the attempt to find a new relationship with the developed West; but nearly two decades since the fall of communism it must be concluded that a satisfactory balance between integration and autonomy has not yet been found.[1]

In the 1990s Russia endured one of the greatest economic depressions in peacetime in modern world history. Russia exercised the attributes of a world power, with a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council and the second largest nuclear arsenal, but its weakened economic status opened up a contradiction between aspiration and capacity. Putin sought to transcend this gulf by developing a new approach to foreign policy that combined Russia's traditional orientation towards *realpolitik* with a recognition of what used to be called interdependence and the priority of international economic integration. Within the framework of the new realism Putin sought to craft a policy that asserted Russia's national interests while integrating it into the world community.[2] Russia's shedding of exaggerated illusions about its status in the world did not, however, itself call forth a willingness from the rest of the world to accept Russia into the international community on its own terms. By the time Putin came to power, moreover, the economic tide had turned, and, buoyed by a resurgent economy, Russia became ever more insistent in spelling out precisely what these terms would be. It is out of this fundamental difference in perceptions that the new realism foundered and the shadow of a new Cold War emerged.

Under the stewardship of Yevgeny Primakov (foreign minister between January 1996 and September 1998, and then prime minister until May 1999) the concept of 'pragmatism' predominated. Primakov's so-called pragmatism in foreign policy achieved few positive results, alienating Russia's friends and confirming the hostility of those traditionally suspicious of its intentions. Foreign policy in this period was imbued with a fatalistic dualism and appeared to operate at two levels: what Russia really wanted (foreign policy A), and what it was forced to do (foreign policy B). The tension led to incoherence and confusing signals. By the time he came to power Putin found himself in a position remarkably reminiscent of that facing Gorbachev when he became general secretary in 1985: associated with sullen allies and opposed by increasingly militant foes (a condition that appears to have been repeated by the end of his presidency). Primakov's zero-sum pragmatism was rooted in a highly traditional understanding of realism, underscored by a heavy dose of anti-western Sovietism and by calls for 'multipolarity', a code word for balancing and Cold War politics. Primakov's multipolarism sought to use the instruments of multilateralism to sustain and manage a competitive view of the world, a traditional realist approach. This is in contrast to policies that genuinely

[1] For an early overview, see Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the evolution of Russian foreign policy*, Chatham House Paper (Oxford: Blackwell for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003); see also Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's foreign policy: change and continuity in national identity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).

[2] For more detail on the new realism, see Richard Sakwa, *Putin: Russia's choice*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2008), ch. 10.

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seek to build on the normative values embedded in multilateral organizations to mitigate great power rivalries.

Putin came to power clearly aware of the counterproductive nature of Primakov's 'competitive pragmatism' as well as the great gulf between rhetoric and reality. Putin's overriding purpose from the very first days of his presidency was the normalization of Russian foreign policy. Russia was to be treated as neither supplicant nor potential disruptor, but as just one more 'normal' great power. Russia's first foreign minister (1990–96), Andrei Kozyrev, had also talked of Russia as a 'normal great power', and insisted that Russia would achieve its interests 'not through confrontation but through cooperation'.[3] Kozyrev stressed the distinction between 'the normalization of relations with other countries and normal relations with them', noting that while Gorbachev had begun the first task it was up to Russia to complete the second.[4] A decade later Putin was still talking in precisely these terms, and even as he left the presidency Russia's relations with the developed world were far from normal. Russia's view of itself as a great power means that it considers itself to be in a very different category from all other European post-communist states, and hence refuses to accept the tutelary role of western institutions that in one way or another have imposed conditionality processes on its neighbours.[5] Russia stands apart from the European Union's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), and its military culture has been inimical to the development of, for example, an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO.[6] While for the majority of the other post-communist countries these terms of engagement with western institutions signal liberation from former subaltern status and the transcendence of past dependency, for Russia they mean the precise opposite.

However, to leave the discussion at this point would be profoundly misleading, and would do no more than confirm the view of those who believe that Russia's inflated pretensions are the cause of new Cold War problems. It would leave out of account the other half of the equation: that Russia's view of itself as a great power is complemented by a no less deep desire to 'normalize' its relations with the world, and that in pursuit of this end it has actively engaged with existing institutions. Goldgeier and McFaul have argued that post-communist Russian foreign policy does not follow the pattern anticipated by realist thinking. According to them Russia has become a 'joiner', and does not conform to the 'balancing' stance anticipated by classical realist theory.[7] For Ambrosio, a state can either try to balance the major power in the international system, or it can bandwagon with it: the choice

[3] A. V. Kozyrev, 'Vneshnyaya politika preobrazhayushcheisya Rossii', *Voprosy istorii*, no. 1, 1994, p. 3.

[4] *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 1 April 1992, p. 3.

[5] For a perceptive analysis of the tutelary stance adopted by the EU, see Sergei Prozorov, *Understanding conflict between Russia and the EU: the limits of integration* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

[6] On this, see Roy Allison, 'Russian security engagement with NATO', in Roy Allison, Margot Light and Stephen White, *Putin's Russia and the enlarged Europe*, Chatham House Papers (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), ch. 5, pp. 94–129.

[7] James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, 'Russians as joiners: realist and liberal conceptions of postcommunist Europe', in Michael McFaul and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, eds, *After the collapse of communism: comparative lessons of transition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), ch. 7, pp. 232–56.

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depends on the structure of the environment and the country's political culture. In Russia's case Ambrosio identifies three strands: the Atlanticists, favouring alignment with the United States and the West (the bandwagoners); the imperialists, who favour the reassertion of Russia's power in opposition to the West (the balancers); and the neo-Slavophiles, who share the sentiments of the imperialists but stress the development of the country's identity.[8] Zimmerman argues that the fundamental divide is indeed between westernizers and Slavophiles, in a reprise of nineteenth-century debates, with the Slavophiles intent on counterbalancing American hegemony and finding an autonomous developmental path.[9] Putin is at most a moderate neo-Slavophile, trying to combine adaptation to international norms with a reserved area of autonomy and scope for indigenous development.

It has become almost a commonplace today to assert that Putin adopted a Eurasianist perspective on international affairs, but this is profoundly mistaken. Eurasianists insist that Russia remains the core of a distinctive civilization based on the unique mix of peoples who have shared a common destiny for nearly a millennium. The various strains of neo-Eurasian thinking, drawing on the ideas of the 1920s and 1930s (although in most fundamental respects contradicting them), are based on the belief that Russia's geopolitical position imbues it with unique geopolitical advantages that effectively force it to be a great power and to make a bid for world leadership. There are many strands of Eurasianism—so many, indeed, that the concept has almost lost any intellectual coherence. There is a pragmatic Eurasianism, which simply reflects the fact that Russia is both a European and an Asian power; a neo-Eurasianism, with a more imperialist and at times semi-fascist inflection that stresses geopolitical competition while denigrating the West;[10] a civilizational Eurasianism that stresses the 'ethnogenesis' of an entirely new society transcending old ethnic divisions in the Eurasian heartland;[11] and an intercivilizational Eurasianism, focusing on Russia's multi-ethnic identity.[12] Time has moved on, however, and Dmitri Trenin argues that China's growing strength in the east and the instability of the Islamic south mean that Russia's only geopolitical future lies with the West, including accelerated integration with the EU and solid relations with the United States.[13] This is something that Putin recognized: his thinking bears little trace of Eurasianism, but contains much to do with Russia's position in Eurasia. Putin certainly is not at one with the school of critical geopolitics that questions the imperatives of space and geography, but his new realism tried to break free from the traditionally static, monolithic and zero-sum representations

[8] Thomas Ambrosio, *Challenging America's global preeminence: Russia's quest for multipolarity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

[9] William Zimmerman, 'Slavophiles and westernizers redux: contemporary Russian elite perspectives', *Post-Soviet Affairs* 21: 3, July–Sept. 2005, pp. 183–209.

[10] A. G. Dugin, 'Evraziya prevyshe vsego: Manifest sovremennogo evraziiskogo dvizheniya', in *Osnovy Evraziistva* (Moscow: Arktogeya tsentr, 2002), pp. 5–15; for a commentary, see Alan Ingram, 'Aleksander Dugin: geo-politics and neo-fascism in post-Soviet Russia', *Political Geography* 20: 8, 2001, pp. 1029–51.

[11] Cf. Leo Gumilëv, *Ethnogenesis and the biosphere* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990).

[12] For an overview, see Paradorn Rangsimaporn, 'Interpretations of Eurasianism: justifying Russia's role in East Asia', *Europe–Asia Studies* 58: 3, May 2006, pp. 371–89.

[13] Dmitri Trenin, *The end of Eurasia: Russia on the border between geopolitics and globalization* (Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center, 2001).

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of Russia's role in the world. In short, Putin sought to normalize the debate on Russian foreign policy, stripping it of neo-Eurasian elements rooted in nineteenth-century views of competitive advantage and instead acknowledging twenty-first-century realities.

Putin's realism was thus tempered by a continuing strand of idealism, centred on the principle that Russia is part of a European civilizational identity and should be accepted on its own terms as an equal member of the international community. This idealism is accompanied by an instrumental strand of *realpolitik*, including severe overreaction when Russia's *amour propre* is perceived to have been slighted. The fact that these various approaches—the realist, the idealist and the instrumental—jostle cheek by jowl reflects the tension in Putin's new realism. It is a realism concerned not so much with balancing as with joining, tempered at the same time by neo-Slavophile concerns about autonomy and uniqueness and by pragmatic Eurasianist notions of the distinctive problems facing a country in the heart of the Eurasian landmass. It is more than standard neo-realism, in which the realist concern with power is tempered by issues of identity and consensus, although it certainly accepts some of neo-realism's basic postulates.[14] As Tsygankov puts it, 'Russia's attitude is essentially accommodationist', and in contrast to earlier policy the country did not try to exploit the threat posed by unipolarity.[15]

The new realism did not mean giving up aspirations to global influence, but it did mean the pursuit of a far more conscious attempt to match ambitions to resources, accompanied by modifications to the type of influence that the country sought. The new realism has not given up the notion of Russia as a 'great power', but the definition of what it means to be a great power has changed, as has that of the way it should behave. Russia would be a power acting as part of the status quo rather than as a putative revisionist force setting itself up as a competitor for global hegemony. The style and priorities of policy also changed. Putin devoted considerable attention to Russia's image abroad, exhorting the diplomatic corps on numerous occasions, notably when addressing them at the foreign ministry building on 12 July 2002 and again on 12 July 2004, to improve Russia's international prestige. Particular attention was to be paid to the preservation of Russia's leadership role in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS);[16] but how perceptions of Russian hegemony in the region were to be avoided was not addressed.

While Russia's policy remained within the broad neo-realist tradition, Putin insisted that Russia must join the community of western nations, but should do so in its own way.[17] Russia, in his view, would remain a great power, but it would be a 'normal' one—that is, not claiming to be the centre of an alternative ideological or geopolitical bloc. Russia's broad aim was no longer to set itself up as an alternative to the West but to act as the champion of the autonomy of sovereign states, and

[14] Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of international politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

[15] Andrei P. Tsygankov, 'Vladimir Putin's vision of Russia as a normal great power', *Post-Soviet Affairs* 21: 2, 2005, pp. 132–58 at p. 133.

[16] See Igor Torbakov, 'Putin urges Russian diplomats to be more active in the post-Soviet states', *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 1: 54, 19 July 2004.

[17] For an overview, see Alexander J. Motyl, Blair A. Ruble and Lilia Shevtsova, eds, *Russia's engagement with the West: transformation and integration in the twenty-first century* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2003).

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above all its own.[18] Russia would work with China but feared becoming trapped in an anti-western alliance with it, and hence took a rather contradictory approach to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Although it is quite rational for a vulnerable power to embed its security in a broader alliance system, neither Russia nor China is ready to cede sovereignty in security matters to the SCO. Soviet aspirations to world leadership are gone, but Russia's almost visceral aspiration to be taken seriously in world affairs is not. Russia does not set itself up as an *alternative* to the West; but it does claim *autonomy*. Today this preoccupation is buttressed by high oil prices, fostering notions that Russia aspires to become an 'energy superpower', although the term is discounted by most serious Russian policy-makers.[19] Traces of Russia as an alternative to the West did not entirely disappear, however, and were in tension with the striving for autonomy, especially when America set itself up as the champion of 'geopolitical pluralism' in the post-Soviet sphere over which Russia claimed a *droit de regard*. It is for this reason that so much of Russian policy retained a Primakovian dual character, with Russia becoming both an insider and an outsider.[20] Putin is the de Gaulle of our day: Russia, like France, wants to be part of the West, but on its own terms. While the West wants Russia to be a junior partner, Russia insists that it is a separate power in its own right.

Putin was concerned above all with the economic modernization of the country, and shared with de Gaulle a *dirigiste* inflection. His presidency saw an average annual growth rate of 6.9 per cent that propelled Russia to tenth position in the ranking of the world's largest economic powers by the end of his presidency. Buoyed up by high energy prices, by 2007 the Russian economy was back at its 1991 level, although it still had some way to go to return to the peak of 1989. Russia was a major beneficiary of the commodity-price boom of the early twenty-first century. Above all, the price of oil remained high, bringing in enormous revenues—every $1 rise in the price of a barrel of oil represents a $1 billion increase in Russian government receipts—and endowing the country with a large trade surplus. The price of oil rose from its 1998 trough of $12 a barrel (in part the reason for Russia's crisis that year) to an average of $61 in 2006. By the latter year Russia's oil and gas industries accounted for 35 per cent of Russia's exports and an even higher proportion (55 per cent) of export revenues, 40 per cent of gross fixed investment and, through taxes, 52 per cent of all revenues to the state treasury, up from 25 per cent in 2003. In June 2006 for the first time Russia extracted more oil than Saudi Arabia.[21] By 2006 energy production represented 16–20 per cent of Russian GDP. This windfall is considered critical in rendering Russia more 'cocky' on the world stage, but it should be kept in perspective. Although energy exports played a critical role in Putin's mini 'economic miracle', this should not be exaggerated. As one commentator put it, 'It would be wrong … to state that the growth in the Russian economy in the

[18] Tsygankov (*Russia's foreign policy*, ch. 5) calls this 'great power pragmatism'.
[19] e.g. Alexei Arbatov, interviewed in *Gudok*, no. 117, July 2007.
[20] This point is explored by Vladimir Baranovsky in 'Russia: insider or outsider?', *International Affairs* (Moscow) 46: 3, July 2000, pp. 443–59.
[21] *Independent*, 23 Aug. 2006.

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last seven years reflects nothing else than the boom in oil prices.'[22] A study by the Rand Corporation suggested that increased energy rents accounted for between one-third and two-fifths of economic growth between 1993 and 2005.[23] The substantial rise in real incomes fuelled a consumption boom that in turn generated economic growth.

Moreover, even Russia's 2007 GDP of about $1 trillion, while comfortably exceeding that of the Netherlands (a country with which Russia's economy had often been compared in the early Putin years) at $600 billion, was still small compared to those of the powers with which Russia sought to be ranked. In the same year, GDP in the United States was $13.2 trillion, and across the EU $12 trillion; even China still comfortably outdistanced Russia with a GDP of over $2.6 trillion.[24] The American defence budget for 2008 of $583 billion accounts for half of total global defence spending (equal to the spending of the next 14 countries) and is itself equivalent to more than half of Russia's total GDP, while defence spending in China was some $75 billion, compared to Russia's $20 billion. On a relatively narrow economic base Russia tries to maintain a space programme, advanced strategic rocket development, 1.1 million men in the armed services, an extended welfare system and a bureaucracy that is now bigger than the Soviet Union's, having doubled in size since the fall of communism to employ an extraordinary 1.46 million personnel by 2005,[25] while at the same time positioning itself for a leading role in world affairs. The mismatch between ambition and capacity that characterized Russian policy in the 1990s, therefore, has not disappeared, although it is no longer quite so striking. Whether Russia's view of its appropriate role should be considered an unwarranted pretension or a legitimate aspiration lies at the nub of evaluations of the new Cold War discourse.

The unravelling of the new realism

Under Yeltsin, Russia appeared to enter a twilight zone of semi-acceptance into the western political community, but the strategic direction had been established, and it was on this that Putin built.[26] He sought to move Russia from the periphery to the core in international politics. Neo-realists would argue that this aim simply reflected Russia's recognition of the actual distribution of power in the international system, while liberal realists like John Ikenberry would go further and argue that liberal values have a positive attraction, especially when the United States exercises its hegemony in a consensual manner.[27] From an international political economy perspective, growing convergence between Russian and western policy directions

[22] Gérard Roland, 'The Russian economy in the year 2005', *Post-Soviet Affairs* 22: 1, 2006, pp. 90–98 at p. 92.
[23] Charles Wolf, 'A mighty country's progress and regress', http://www.rand.org/commentary/010407PS.html.
[24] http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html.
[25] *Russia in figures: 2006* (Moscow: Rosstat, 2006), p. 50.
[26] The strategy of integration was outlined by Yeltsin's last foreign minister and Putin's first, Igor Ivanov, in 'Russia, Europe at the turn of the century', *International Affairs* (Moscow) 46: 2, 2000, pp. 1–11.
[27] John G. Ikenberry, *After victory: institutions, strategic restraint and the rebuilding of order after major war* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

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reflected the failure of state-led semi-autarkic modernization programmes and the changed opportunity structure offered by economic globalization.[28] In practice Russia's move from outsider status to core membership of the leading group of nations proved traumatic and long drawn out—and is far from complete, largely because it became intensely politicized. In various and uneven ways the West tried to devise strategies to make integration possible, but always accompanied by conditionality features designed for countries in the process of accession to western institutions, which ultimately proved counterproductive in Russia's case. Relations with bodies such as NATO and the EU improved in the early Putin years, although accession was ruled out in the near to medium term. These salad days of the new realism, however, did not last. If at first Russia's economic weakness was an impediment to deeper integration, growing economic self-confidence later proved no less of an obstacle.

Despite its flaws and limitations, the new realism reflected the fact that in Putin Russia had one of the most internationally minded leaders in its history. He sought to integrate Russia into international organizations and the world system, but the nature of international politics in the 2000s was not able effectively to manage this process. There remains a fundamental contradiction in Russo-western relations captured by the traditional terms to describe nationality politics in the Soviet Union: while *sblizhenie* (coming together) is accepted by all, there remain fundamental reservations about *sliyanie* (merging). In the early 2000s, as Dov Lynch puts it, Russia still faced the same basic problem as in the 1990s: the attempt to gain 'an equal voice on major security developments in and around Europe without incurring the costs of membership, which is seen to impose restraints on Russia's domestic room for manoeuvre'.[29] The West faced no less of a problem: how to manage integration without ceding hegemonic predominance to the newcomer, a problem that has been postponed in the case of China but that will have to be faced sooner or later.

The attempt to achieve integration without membership proved unstable and ultimately even unsustainable. There were structural impediments of two main types: first, Russia's own problems, above all criminality, corruption, increasing political monocentrism and economic statism; and second, a profound resistance on the part of western institutions to allowing Russia's integration at a time when the country remained in the throes of an enormously complex process of social transformation. The long-drawn-out negotiations for Russia's entry into the World Trade Organization illustrate the problem. Russia first applied to join in 1993 and accession was a priority for Putin. Both the EU, which tied membership to Russia's adoption of the Kyoto Protocol, and America took a highly politicized approach to the question, especially in the final stages of the negotiations when WTO membership was linked with an ever more bizarre list of concerns ranging from Russian policy on Iran to the price of yogurt in Moscow. Putin's hopes of

[28] John Williamson, ed., *The political economy of policy reform* (Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, 1994); Martin Wolf, *Why globalization works* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

[29] Dov Lynch, 'Misperceptions and divergences', in Dov Lynch, ed., *What Russia sees*, Chaillot Paper 74 (Paris: Institute for European Studies, Jan. 2005), p. 9.

announcing Russia's admission at the G8 summit in July 2006, which Russia hosted in St Petersburg, were disappointed.

The postulates of the new realism were pursued throughout Putin's presidency, although inconsistently, and by the end of his rule had become less dominant. It is not clear whether the new realism was flawed in conception or in implementation, or whether exogenous factors were ultimately responsible for its unravelling. Putin himself never entirely gave up on its principles (even at his most shrill in 2007), and hence suggestions that there were 'two Putins' are misconceived. Boris Nemtsov, for example, has argued that 'there are really two Putins. There is an early Putin, who lowered taxes, gave people land, supported America on September 11 [2001], first expressed his sympathies to President [George W.] Bush, and everything was somehow very touching', whereas the second Putin was born with the arrest of Mikhail Khodorkovsky and allegedly moved to crush the opposition.[30] In foreign policy Putin's leadership has also been divided into two periods, with the early Putin apparently ready to accept and live with American unipolarity, in the belief that America's voluntaristic application of hegemonic power would not last, and the later Putin realizing that the invasion of Iraq demonstrated not only that unilateralism would continue but that, in all likelihood, it would be intensified.

Such an approach can be credible only if we believe that Putin from the start was pursuing a type of Primakovian double policy, where actual policy diverged from what was desired; but there are no indications of such a deliberate dualism in Putin's conduct of foreign affairs (although, as we have noted, a residual dualism is probably ineradicable from Russian foreign policy). What we have instead is a growing sense of disenchantment, based on disappointment that Russia's views on world affairs were discounted and attempts to manage its multiple domestic crises portrayed as the destruction of democracy in its entirety. These concerns were reflected in Russia's first Foreign Policy Review in March 2007, which remained loyal to the new realist agenda but lamented the difficulties in its implementation.[31] The lack of transparency in Russian politics has not helped build trust, but while there are numerous points over which one may take issue with Putin's administration, the relentless negativity in which every action was perceived to be yet another brick in the edifice of an authoritarian order under construction in Russia is fundamentally mistaken. Russia's highly complex and undoubtedly contradictory process of re-establishing the authority of the state and some rudimentary notion of order was reduced to a single narrative of authoritarian restoration, and prepared the way for what many considered to be a reprise of Cold War confrontation. The new realism was in danger of unravelling, to an extent because of its internal contradictions but perhaps even more because of the resistance it encountered in the West.

The disjuncture in discursive worlds with much of the West fostered the spirit of resentment in Russia. This was fed in particular by a powerful mythology of the 'catastrophic 1990s', in which much fair criticism of the pell-mell rush to the

[30] 'Russia: Nemtsov urges opposition to back single candidate', interview with Brian Whitmore, RFE/RL, *Russia Report*, 11 June 2007.

[31] 'Obzor vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii', 27 March 2007, http://www.mid.ru.

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market and the world is mixed with highly tendentious readings of the Russian 'transition'. Russia's allegedly supine and defeatist foreign policy has come in for particular criticism. Russia's role in brokering a ceasefire in June 1999 after the 78-day bombing campaign against Serbia is now considered an act of weakness, in pulling NATO's chestnuts out of the fire;[32] many vow that the experience will not be repeated by facilitating independence for Kosovo.[33] Similar sentiments are expressed about Russia's alleged commitment in Istanbul in November 1999 at the time the adapted Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty was accepted to withdraw its forces from Moldova and Georgia.[34] The view that the West ruthlessly exploited Russia's complaisant attitude now spills over into an exaggerated fear that any concession will be interpreted by the West as capitulation. As the political commentator Alexei Pushkov put it, since Russia's relations with the EU are painted in such relentlessly competitive terms, any concession by Russia would be taken 'not as an act of partnership, but as the defeat of a competitor who surrendered to pressure'.[35] This was hardly an atmosphere of constructive engagement, although perhaps not quite a new Cold War. Russian popular anti-Americanism has developed in waves; although in the wake of each outburst (as after the Kosovo war of 1999) it has ebbed, each time the residual level remains ratcheted up (as after Iraq) at a higher point.[36] The fundamental object of Russian criticism of the United States, however, is its policies, and not its ontological status.[37] This is certainly the case with Gorbachev, who argued that America 'gave birth to the idea of a new empire' after the Cold War, accusing it of 'unilateral actions … wars … ignoring the UN Security Council, ignoring international law and ignoring the will of the people'.[38] Equally, when Putin referred to Britain's approach to the Andrei Lugovoi extradition request—in the course of which, with a shocking casualness, the British ambassador called for the revision of Russia's constitution[39] —as 'an obvious vestige of colonial thinking', few in Russia could have disagreed with him.[40]

Russia's deep-seated resentment is tempered by a no less profound rationality. The new realism ultimately meant accepting the realities of the international system, characterized by the overwhelming predominance of a single power.

[32] Alexei Pushkov, RFE/RL, *Russia Report*, 13 July 2007.

[33] Speaking at the opening day speech at the Moscow State Institute for International Relations on 3 Sept. 2007, Lavrov argued that Kosovan independence was a 'red line' that Russia considered inviolable: www.mid.ru.

[34] Vladimir Evseev, 'Stambul'skii uzel', *Vedemosti*, 17 July 2007, p. A4.

[35] Pushkov, RFE/RL, *Russia Report*, 13 July 2007. He also noted that Russia had come away disappointed after a previous attempt to cooperate with the United States in Afghanistan after September 11.

[36] The *New Russia Barometer XV: the climax of the Putin years*, surveying in April 2007, found that 16% of Russians considered the United States a 'big threat', and 35% 'some threat': *Studies in Public Policy* 426 (University of Aberdeen, Centre for the Study of Public policy, 2007), p. 32.

[37] This is reflected in a Levada Center poll of 10 Aug. 2007, which found that 53% retained a 'very positive' or 'basically positive' view of the United States. The same poll found a 66% positive rating for the EU. See http://www.levada.ru/press/2007081001.html.

[38] *Guardian*, 28 July 2007, p. 24.

[39] Asked directly about article 61(1), which clearly states that 'A citizen of the Russian Federation cannot be expelled from the Russian Federation or extradited to another state', Tony Brenton insisted that the constitution was open to interpretation and, adding insult to injury, asserted that a number of other provisions of the constitution were not fully applied! *Kommersant*, 23 July 2007, p. 7.

[40] 24 July 2007, www.kremlin.ru.

However, as the limits of that power became apparent in Iraq and elsewhere,[41] and as Russia's economic and political situation stabilized, Russia appeared to defect from its own new realist agenda and become an increasingly revisionist power. Fyodor Lukyanov argues that 'The Kremlin intends to push for a revision of the global rules of the game, which took shape during the period when Russia was unable to influence that process to any substantial extent.'[42] The adoption in early 2007 of a seven-year $200 billion rearmament plan, including the purchase of a new generation of missiles, planes and aircraft-carriers, certainly suggests a new self-confidence. Whether this makes Russia a revisionist power is a moot point. Russia remains committed to joining the existing system by and large as it now exists, although the mere fact of its membership as an active and equal participant entails a revision of the existing order. Russia's 'new revisionism', moreover, does not entail the repudiation of the entire new realist agenda.

The new realism was always a highly complex and contradictory approach, and meant that, as the international situation changed, so different elements came to greater prominence. Russia's actions are characteristic, as Paul Kennedy argues, of 'a traditional power elite that, having suffered defeat and humiliation, is now bent upon the recovery of its assets, its authority, and its capacity to intimidate'.[43] Even at the end of Putin's presidency, when relations with much of the West had severely deteriorated, the new realist agenda was not abandoned. The new realism was one of the most sustained attempts to find a cooperative way of resolving the age-old challenge of combining integration and autonomy, but its attempt to combine incompatible elements ultimately proved unsustainable. There is no systemic basis for a new Cold War, however; and so the enigma to be explained is why the world is once again in danger of becoming locked in a futile, dangerous and unnecessary conflict.

Cold War redux?

Nearly two decades since the Cold War was transcended by the Soviet Union's refusal to play the game any more,[44] why has the rhetoric of the Cold War resurfaced? Nuclear sabres are once again being rattled, and the lines of a new global struggle for geopolitical advantage are beginning to emerge. This, however, would be a very peculiar new Cold War, since no fundamental interests divide the two former superpowers (one has been reduced to great power status, while the other has become a hyperpower). There are no fundamental ideological contradictions,

[41] For a discussion, see Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The choice: global domination or global leadership* (New York: Basic Books, 2004); Michael Mann, *Incoherent empire* (London: Verso, 2003); Christian Reus-Smit, *American power and world order* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004); for a general overview, see David Held and Mathias Koenig-Archibugi, eds, *American power in the 21st century* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004).

[42] *Vedemosti*, 9 July 2007.

[43] Paul Kennedy, 'Worried about Putin's Russia? Read on', *International Herald Tribune*, 20 Aug. 2007.

[44] For a critique of the argument that Ronald Reagan, Star Wars or other exogenous factors forced the USSR to sue for peace, which stresses the normative changes within Soviet thinking that allowed the Cold War to be transcended, see Archie Brown, 'Perestroika and the end of the Cold War', *Cold War History* 7: 1, Feb. 2007, pp. 1–17. For an earlier and more detailed treatment, see his *The Gorbachev factor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), ch. 7. See also Dimitri K. Simes, 'Losing Russia', *Foreign Affairs* 86: 6, Nov.–Dec. 2007, pp. 36–52.

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direct conflicts over resources or major differences over the substantive issues that face the international community. Indeed, in some ways Russia could have become the natural ally of America and the EU on a range of questions. So why have the differences become so sharp, and why has the whole architecture of post-communist security arrangements been brought into question? In a rather schematic manner below I will suggest that there have been four major failures in adjusting policy to the new circumstances: political, strategic, intellectual and cultural. The key question is: How can we find our bearings in what we had assumed would be the post-Cold War era, to ensure that it is indeed the end of this particular global confrontation?

The political failure

There has been a profound asymmetry in the transcendence of the Cold War. While the structures that fought the Cold War (including the ideological ones) were dismantled on the one side, they were retained on the other. The functions of bodies such as NATO have not been replaced by a common collective security regime, but instead have been strengthened and enlarged. Russia's early enthusiasm for the OSCE reflected the aspiration to create a genuine common security regime, but failed to take into account the asymmetrical end to the Cold War. The same applies to the 'softer' Cold War structures, including the whole ideological-security apparatus. These are active in Washington and London, but in a different way no less alive in Moscow, and have been the easiest structures to revive in a renewed period of confrontation.

The asymmetrical transcendence of the Cold War is accompanied by an internal asymmetry at the heart of Russian politics. Russia renounced its claims to the ideological leadership of an alternative system to the world capitalist order and the geopolitical leadership of an alternative military and political bloc, but it did not renounce its civilizational identity or its aspirations to participate in global leadership. The external asymmetry allowed one side of the old Cold War conflict to claim the right to oversee the transformation of the other; and while this was at first welcomed in Russia, it increasingly came to be resented and exacerbated the tensions within the internal asymmetry. While the neo-conservatives in Washington stressed the imperial and global role that the promotion of democratic values should play, Moscow began to reassert an aggressive autonomy in international affairs, insisting on the sovereign right of each country, if not to claim a *Sonderweg*, then at least to choose its own path and to define democracy as it saw fit: the new ideology of 'sovereign democracy' that came to the fore after Ukraine's 'Orange' revolution in late 2004.[45]

The fundamental failure in the post-Cold War era has been to find ways to compensate for the twofold asymmetry. Even the recognition of the problem—that Russia could not easily be categorized as just another 'post-communist' country—was a long time coming. The general difficulty of adjusting the international system

[45] For a collection of key articles, see Nikita Garadzha, ed., *Suverinitet* (Moscow: Europa, 2006).

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to the end of the bloc politics and hegemonic aspirations that were characteristic of the Cold War has still not been resolved. The key challenge after the dissolution of communist power in 1989–91, the winding-up of the Warsaw Pact in 1990 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, was how to insert Russia into the new global order. This would have been relatively easy if Russia had been a defeated power (like Germany and Japan after 1945), but proved much harder to do on its own terms, as an endlessly proclaimed 'great power'. As early as the December 1992 meeting of what was still the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Kozyrev warned of the onset of a 'new Cold War', and such warnings have sounded regularly since then. The legitimacy of Russia's ambition to be a great power, even a 'normal' one, has been questioned, even more than Britain's and France's aspirations in this respect. The major difference, of course, is that Russia's readjusted role has been accompanied by a profound change in its internal political order, a process that is far from over. Grave issues of international politics have become interwoven into a constant regime of inspection over how Russia is doing internally.[46]

This asymmetry has been effectively exploited by the opposition in Russia. Domestic political actors soon learnt that easy political capital could be made by working the international circuit, condemning the latest alleged malfeasance by Russia's rulers.[47] Some of Russia's neighbours learned the rules of this game only too well, and fed a constant stream of anti-Russian material to receptive ears on Capitol Hill and elsewhere.[48] This then fed back into profoundly misinformed statements about developments in Russia and its policies, which in turn provoked Russian reactions that only deepened distrust and exacerbated suspicions about policy motivations.[49] Thus all sides entered into a deeply negative spiral of mutual suspicion that gradually hardened into abuse which in turn gave way to threats and counterthreats. Russian domestic struggles were projected onto interstate rivalries. Indeed, the scholar Dmitry Furman argued that 'There is only one opposition to Putin at present—other countries.'[50] At the same time, America's ideological wars

[46] This regime of inspection reached the height of absurdity with the annual Freedom House 'Freedom in the World' survey, which in the 2007 version judged Russia to be as unfree as the Congo, ignoring entirely the social and political context in which various freedoms operate and the vastly differing levels of effective governance. See http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=363&year=2007.

[47] A particularly adept player in this game was Grigory Yavlinsky, the head of the liberal Yabloko party, who celebrated his contribution (by refusing to ally with other liberal parties) to what Vladimir Ryzhkov calls the 'liberal débâcle' in the December 2003 parliamentary elections ('Demokraty posle bankrotstva', *Moskovskie novosti*, no. 47, 16–22 Dec. 2003, p. 6) by a lecture tour in the West that helped frame a discourse of condemnation of Putin's alleged authoritarianism.

[48] Georgian and Ukrainian Russophobia was particularly widespread in Washington. This led politicians who were particularly susceptible to this disinformation, such as Tom Lantos and John McCain, to call for Russia's expulsion from the G8 in the run-up to the meeting in St Petersburg in July 2006.

[49] Boris Berezovsky was quite explicit about his role: 'I split my support of revolution in Russia into two subjects. The first one is to help people in the west to understand that Putin is not a friend of the west; that Putin is a real danger to the west. And I spent a lot of money, a lot of time, to help you [the British], if it's possible to say so, to understand that Putin's Russia is dangerous.' In this interview Berezovsky claimed to be funding the 'Other Russia' opposition coalition in Russia; its members denied this and tried to bring him to court to force him to retract the allegation: *Financial Times*, 31 May 2007. In a later article Berezovsky quoted John Locke to the effect that 'If a government violates the law, overthrowing it is not just a right, but an obligation of responsible members of society': 'Call Putin's bluff: save Russia', *Sunday Times*, 26 Aug. 2007.

[50] *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 Aug. 2007.

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for and against various abstractions—against terror and authoritarian capitalism, and for 'global freedom' and the like—affect specific countries, not least Russia.[51] The net result is that the security of Europe and the world today is facing the gravest threat to peace since the end of the bloc politics of the Cold War. In some ways the threat is even greater, since the earlier confrontation had devised rules and stable expectations about how the conflict would be managed. Cold War conflict management procedures have been dismantled, while elements of the conflict have re-emerged in a far more anarchic context.

Indeed, the political failure in the early 1990s, and once again in the early 2000s, to build on the evident desire of Russia to move beyond the Cold War, and to create new organizations that could provide common institutional mechanisms to solidify what was by any reckoning an epochal shift in global politics, allowed old institutions and ways of thinking to reassert themselves. Integration within the framework of the EU was not accompanied by an inclusive pan-European unification process. In Moscow the representatives of the old bloc mentality are now certainly in evidence once again, and their views are encouraged by their counterparts in the West. Sergei Karaganov, director of the Council for Foreign and Defence Policy (CFDP), argues that this is evidence that a 'new epoch of confrontation (NEC)' is beginning. Even in the 1990s 'any attempt by Russia to stop the panicked retreat produced by the disintegration of the USSR was declared to be "neo-imperialism"', to the point that today 'the oversimplification of criticism on some parameters is even worse than in the Cold War … Any critic or opponent of the Russian president and the Kremlin automatically becomes a democrat and friend of the West.' Europe's failure to act as an autonomous power and the intensified rivalry between 'the traditional West and the energy-producing countries for control of energy resources' mean that Russia 'has been forced by history into the centre of a new competitive struggle between the liberal-democratic and authoritarian models of capitalism'.[52] A report issued to mark the 15th anniversary of the CFDP on 16 March 2007 talked about a global 'crisis of manageability', in which no single power centre on its own could manage the crisis engendered by the growing number of failed and failing states.[53]

Strategic failures

The international system today does not have a mechanism for integrating rising great powers. This applies to China, as well as to Russia and some other countries. As Andrew Hurrell has argued, the criteria for membership of the club of great powers in the past militated against certain countries, such as Japan in 1918–19. He recognizes the absence of open balancing activity against the United States, but at the same time notes how hard it can be to find the appropriate bandwagoning

[51] The argument is made by Alexei Bogaturov, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 Aug. 2007.
[52] Sergei Karaganov, 'Nastupaet novaya epokha', *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 6 July 2007, republ. as 'A new epoch of confrontation', *Russia in Global Affairs* 5: 4, Dec. 2007, pp. 23–36.
[53] http://www.svop.ru/live/.

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strategy.[54] This has certainly been the case with Russia. While the costs of balancing in present conditions are exorbitant (a fact recognized by Putin's new realism), bandwagoning has not proved a feasible strategy either. Intimations of a new Cold War have grown out of this impasse. The situation is comparable to the emergence of the Soviet Union as a superpower after 1945, when there were fundamental questions not only about the legitimacy of the emergent state's geopolitical claims (first in its expanded security sphere in Eastern Europe, and then on a global scale) but also about its social order, which gave birth to the original Cold War. Contemporary Russia emerged, of course, by asking precisely those questions about the Soviet Union; hence it feels doubly aggrieved to find itself cast in a similar role today. There has been a strategic failure to resolve numerous issues, some of the most important of which are outlined in the following paragraphs.

The first and perhaps most dangerous strategic failure is the onset of a new nuclear age.[55] As Gorbachev recently noted, 'A remilitarization of thinking is under way in the nuclear sphere.'[56] America's unilateral abrogation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty in December 2001 heralded a new instability in proliferation issues. The Americans have indicated clearly that they do not plan to extend the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) beyond its expiry date of 5 December 2009. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 appeared to signal that countries without nuclear weapons are liable to be attacked, whereas those with them (for example, North Korea) are dealt with through diplomatic channels. The lesson was not lost on the Iranian leadership. Already India and Pakistan have been welcomed into the club of nuclear powers, Israel is a covert nuclear power, and the list is likely to lengthen soon. Britain's planned renewal of Trident goes against the spirit of article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which pledges countries to work 'in good faith' towards nuclear disarmament. America's nuclear superiority over both China and Russia was trumpeted in a well-known article, which made no bones about declaring: 'It will probably soon be possible for the United States to destroy the long-range nuclear arsenals of Russia or China with a first strike.'[57] The American plan announced in January 2007 to deploy elements of missile defence (MD) in Poland (a battery of ten anti-ballistic missiles) and the Czech Republic (a radar installation to track missile launches) represented a qualitative leap in bringing nuclear weapon deployment back into the heart of European politics. Russian and American missiles remain in a launch-on-warning mode, and with the deterioration in the quality of Russia's warning system since the end of the Cold War, the risk of accidental nuclear war has greatly increased, as has the threat of nuclear terrorism.

Doubts remain about the viability of the technology and cost-effectiveness of the MD plan (and, indeed, about whether it will gain adequate congressional

[54] Andrew Hurrell, 'Hegemony, liberalism and global order: what space for would-be great powers?', *International Affairs* 82: 1, 2006, pp. 1–19 at pp. 4, 5, 12–13.

[55] Cf. P. D. Smith, *Doomsday men: the real Dr Strangelove and the dream of the superweapon* (Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 2007); William Langewiesche, *The atomic bazaar* (Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 2007).

[56] Simon Sardzhyan, 'A veteran delivers weapons warning', *Moscow Times*, 6 Dec. 2007, p. 1.

[57] Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, 'The rise of US nuclear primacy', *Foreign Affairs* 85: 2, March–April 2006, pp. 42–54 at p. 43.

funding), as well as about its stated strategic purpose to intercept North Korean and Iranian missiles. The American proposal, moreover, was announced independently of NATO, and highlights the failure of European agencies to take control of strategic issues on their own territory. While Jacques Poos, the foreign minister of Luxembourg, announced on the eve of the Yugoslav disintegration that 'the hour of Europe' had come, the ability of Europeans to take responsibility for the security of the continent, in partnership with the United States if possible but not at any price, has never been further away. We have the paradoxical situation where the security of the continent is now imperilled by precisely the hypertrophy of the security structures that were created to ensure that security. The readiness of the 'New European' powers (now members of the EU and NATO) to act as willing accomplices to American actions (including facilitating extraordinary rendition and torture), as well as to act as nuclear and conventional pedestals for American power, has rather undermined EU claims to be a community based on normative values. Another ingredient in the nuclear pot is the onset of a new age of nuclear power generation, which will produce great quantities of fissile-grade plutonium.

The Russian reaction to the planned deployment of MD installations in Eastern Europe veered between the sceptical and the affronted. Putin's offer to make available the Gabala radar base, which it leases from Azerbaijan, was rejected by the Americans, as was the plan offered during his meeting with Bush in Kennebunkport on 2 July 2007 to create a joint missile defence system with US and NATO participation. In response to this aloofness, the First Deputy Prime Minister and former Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov warned of the possible deployment of Russian medium-range missiles in the Kaliningrad exclave,[58] and warned that western plans would 'create a new dividing line, a new Berlin Wall'.[59] The whole affair is a classic case of action and reaction as the conflict over motives and intentions escalated. American statements that Russian concerns were 'ludicrous' was true at one level—the ten missiles to be deployed in Poland hardly change the strategic balance—but failed to engage with deeper Russian concerns about long-term security. These were exacerbated by plans to establish American bases in Bulgaria and Romania. The US failure to understand the perspective of others is one of the country's greatest failings in the post-Cold War era. The announcement of the resumption after a 15-year hiatus of regular long-range patrols by Russian strategic bombers in August 2007, justified by Putin on the grounds of strengthening national security and allowing pilots to sharpen their skills, was yet another sign of Russia's attempts to restore symmetry in the transcendence of the Cold War.[60]

The second strategic failure is the asymmetrical advance of NATO, accompanied by the Russian retreat. NATO enlargement has been a matter of considerable

[58] Ivanov probably had the Iskander missile in mind, whose range falls below the 500 km allowed by the INF Treaty. Vladimir Socor, 'Russia warns of missile forward deployment in Kaliningrad region', *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 4: 131, 6 July 2007.

[59] Interview on Rossiya television, 8 July 2007, AFP.

[60] The announcement on 17 August was made in Chelyabinsk during the SCO's 'Peace Mission 2007 Counterterrorism Exercises', with a large Chinese military presence. Putin noted that in 1992 Russia 'unilaterally stopped sending its strategic aviation on long-range patrols. Unfortunately, not everyone has followed our example': http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2007/08/17. The military significance of the flights was negligible, but they had great symbolic importance.

controversy since first mooted in the wake of the Soviet collapse, and the various arguments will not be rehearsed here. While Moscow has never welcomed NATO's growth, its attitude has steadily hardened. Yeltsin in the early 1990s took a relatively relaxed view of enlargement, and when Putin was asked by David Frost in an interview on 5 March 2000 if Russia would one day join, he answered, 'And why not?', albeit on 'equal terms'. The sentiment was reiterated by Vladimir Lukin, at the time head of the Duma's foreign affairs committee, who argued that the optimal solution would be 'the widening of NATO to Vladivostok'.[61] In the spirit of the new realism, in his press conference on 18 July 2001 Putin noted: 'We do not consider NATO an enemy organisation or view its existence as a tragedy, although we see no need for it. It was born as the antipode to the Warsaw Pact, as the antipode to the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe. Now there is no Warsaw Pact, no Soviet Union, but NATO exists and is growing.'[62] With the Baltic republics now members, and NATO increasingly engaged with countries on Russia's borders from Ukraine to Georgia, it is hardly surprising that Russia's leaders are beginning to feel 'contained'. NATO's leaders, and in particular Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, have made considerable efforts to ensure that Russia was not entirely excluded. The establishment in June 2002 of a reconstituted NATO–Russia Council built on the 1997 Russia–NATO Founding Act, but instead of the model being 19 NATO members relating to Russia singly, the new 'NATO at 20' (now 27 including Russia) elevated Russia symbolically to equal rank with all the others and thus represented an important step to rectify the asymmetry in the end of the Cold War.

It did not, however, deal with the structural problem of NATO being a club that Russia could not join as an equal, or with Russia's fears of encirclement. NATO itself veered between outright rejection of the notion of Russian membership and a cautious welcome of the idea. However, right from the start Russian policy-makers were well aware that the very existence of an expanded NATO creates a permanent source of tension in the centre of Europe. As Kozyrev put it, 'NATO's advance toward Russia's borders cannot but be seen as a continuation, though by inertia, of a policy aimed at containment of Russia.'[63] This was made explicit in 2007 by the once and future Prime Minister of Ukraine, Yuliya Timoshenko, when she argued: 'The West must seek to create counterweights to Russia's expansionism and not place all its chips on Russian domestic reform.'[64] She gave no evidence of Russia's 'expansionism', and the article reflected many of the Cold War stereotypes that are prevalent today. The journal *Foreign Affairs* was apparently prepared to carry an article in response by the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, but he withdrew it, allegedly because the periodical imposed editing requirements (an allegation which it denied) that he found unacceptable. In the article Lavrov criticized the American concept of 'transformational diplomacy' and condemned the neo-containment rhetoric, insisting that 'Russia has become a part of the universal consensus to the effect that democracy and the free market should form

[61] RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 3 July 2001.
[62] http://president.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2001/07/28591.shtml.
[63] Andrei Kozyrev, 'Partnership or Cold Peace?', *Foreign Policy*, no. 99, Summer 1995, pp. 3–14 at p. 13.
[64] Yuliya Timoshenko, 'Containing Russia', *Foreign Affairs* 86: 3, May–June 2007, pp. 69–82.

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the basis of social and political order and economic life'. Condemning unipolarity, he insisted that 'Multipolarity does not predetermine confrontation in any way', but noted: 'Having inherited Cold War problems, the international community set out on the path of creating new ones.'[65] This, he argued, was reflected in the increased militarization of international politics.

The asymmetry of strategic advantage (and the third strategic failure) is nowhere more marked than in former Soviet bloc members being incorporated into the enlarging western institutions while failing to transcend their historic animus against Russia, fuelled in part by their experience of Soviet occupation during the Cold War. NATO enlargement to encompass ten former communist countries in 2004, with more to follow, accompanied by the EU's enlargement in 2004 and 2007 to gather in the same ten, has not provided a mechanism to transcend suspicions and fears in the region. Both organizations now face the danger that their rather idealistic rhetoric about extending the European sphere of peace and prosperity to the East may be subverted, indeed inverted, so that the enlargements may import into NATO and the EU the insecurities of the East. As the Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves argued, disagreements between the eastern and western halves of the EU stem from the failure of most of the old EU-15 to take a hard line against Russia.[66] The consequences were seen most vividly at the time of the Bronze Soldier crisis in Estonia in May 2007 (when the Estonian authorities moved a Soviet-era war monument on the eve of the 9 May victory day celebrations), which revealed the lack of historical depth and understanding of the sensitivities involved on the part of EU officialdom. The assertion that the EU has to show 'solidarity' with its members, while of course an understandable approach, opens up the danger of the EU being manipulated by its new members to pursue their own sectarian historical and political agendas. It also resurrects once again the old bloc mentality that characterized the Cold War. The EU was created as a peace-enhancing institution, but today it is becoming transformed from a normative power (based on values) into a soft power, which is something quite different, once again playing (however weakly) the traditional realist game of exclusive advantage and spheres of influence, despite the best intentions of the Commission.[67] For this reason, as well as because of the perceived failure of the attempt to engage with the EU as a multilateral organization in the early Putin years and Russia's striving to act as an independent international actor, Moscow has increasingly downgraded its relationship with the EU.[68]

[65] Sergei Lavrov, 'Sderzhivanie Rossii: nazad v budushchee?', *Rossiya v global'noi politike*, 5: 4, July–Aug. 2007, http://www.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/27/8063.html; republ. in English as 'Containing Russia: back to the future?', *Russia in Global Affairs* 5: 4, Oct.–Dec. 2007, pp. 8–22.

[66] Toomas Hendrik Ilves, 'The Pleiades joins the stars: transatlanticism and eastern enlargement', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 18: 2, July 2005, pp. 191–202.

[67] Joseph Nye, 'Hard and soft power in a global information age', in Mark Leonard, ed., *Re-ordering the world* (London: Foreign Policy Centre, 2002), pp. 2–10 at p. 5. For a more extended discussion of the various cultural and other ways in which 'soft power' is exercised by the United States, see Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Bound to lead: the changing nature of American power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), ch. 2. Soft power belongs to the same realist family as hard power, whereas normative power seeks to transcend the logic of hard/soft power.

[68] Sabine Fischer, 'The EU and Russia: stumbling from summit to summit', *Russian Analytical Digest*, no. 26, 4 Dec. 2007, pp. 10–13.

A fourth arena of strategic failure is the potential breakdown of the CFE agreement. Western powers conceded that the original treaty of 19 November 1990 imposed particularly severe restrictions on Russia: accordingly, the flank limits were slightly revised in late 1995, and a full review in May 1996 granted Russia three extra years to comply. The treaty was modified in Istanbul in 1999 to take into account post-Cold War realities. However, only four countries—Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan—ratified the modified treaty, while 'NATO newcomers such as Slovakia [in fact Slovenia] and the Baltic republics', Putin noted in his address to the federal assembly on 26 April 2007, 'had not joined the CFE treaty altogether'. He rejected the link made by the western powers between ratifying the treaty and Russia's Istanbul commitments stipulating the withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgia and Transdnistria. At that time only a few hundred Russian troops were left in the Gudauta base in the breakaway Abkhaz region, and 1,300 in Transdnistria guarding 49 trainloads of munitions and matériel. In the same address of 2007 Putin warned that Russia would impose a moratorium on its implementation of the treaty, arguing that it made no sense for Russia to observe its conditions when they were ignored by NATO. He further warned that Russia would repudiate the treaty in its entirety if no progress were made in ensuring its full implementation.[69] The CFE Treaty makes no provision for a moratorium, and thus Russia has to be either in or out. The emergency conference of the OSCE states, convened at Moscow's request in Vienna from 12 to 15 June 2007, failed to break the deadlock, and indeed Russia broadened the agenda to include renegotiation of the whole system of European security, proposing among other things that the flank limits be lifted entirely and collective ceilings be imposed on the enlarged NATO's heavy weaponry. On 14 July 2007 Putin notified the 29 other state parties to the 1990 treaty that Russia would suspend its participation in the treaty with effect from 150 days after the notification; this withdrawal took place on 12 December 2007. The CFE was one of the cornerstones of post-Cold War security, but its collapse could be an opportunity to negotiate a new conventional forces treaty that reflects contemporary realities.

The fifth strategic failure concerns energy and pipeline politics. The Russian shutdown of energy supplies to Ukraine in January 2006 and to Belarus a year later provoked endless discussion of whether Russia was abusing its energy resources as an instrument to 'blackmail' its neighbours and pursuing a policy of becoming an 'energy superpower'. Both cases have their own long histories, with Putin in particular having long complained about the $3.5 billion provided in annual subsidies to Ukraine in the form of cheap energy. Russia had tried throughout 2005 to raise prices closer to the world level—as international financial organizations had long been demanding it should—but the timing of the supply withdrawal, coming soon after the Orange revolution, in which Russian policy had suffered a notable failure, suggested that political motivations predominated. While this factor may not have been totally absent, even Russia's closest allies, such as Armenia, have seen

[69] 'Poslanie Federal'nomu Sobraniyu Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 26 April 2007, http://president.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2007/04/125401.shtml.

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the price of Russian energy rise; indeed, Armenia's energy infrastructure passed almost entirely into Russian ownership through debt-for-equity deals. Years of high energy prices have certainly encouraged resource nationalism, as it has done in Venezuela and Bolivia, but it would be going too far to talk in terms of 'energy imperialism'. Despite ever denser mutual interdependence between the EU and Russia, the energy dialogue launched in 2000 has not blossomed into a genuine energy partnership. At the same time, there were endless struggles over pipeline routes, with the United States vigorously advocating projects (notably the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan and Baku–Tbilisi–Erzerum pipelines) that bypassed Russia, while Russia sought to control the direction of the flow of Caspian resources, scoring a notable success in May 2007 when it gained the agreement of Central Asian countries to build an East Caspian coastal gas pipeline to Russia. The struggle has been interpreted as a reprise of the Great Game, with control over strategic energy resources at stake and democracy little more than an ideological veneer over a profound geopolitical contest.[70]

The list of problematic issues could be continued indefinitely. On question after question, the absence of trust and constant struggle for geopolitical and geo-economic advantage between Russia and western states has led to a steady deterioration in relations. This was reflected in Putin's speech at the Munich Conference on Security Policy on 10 February 2007, which revealed deep disappointment that his new realist policy was disintegrating. He stressed the 'universal, indivisible character of security', and noted that 'the Cold War left us with live ammunition, figuratively speaking … ideological stereotypes, double standards and other typical aspects of Cold War thinking'. He also warned against the dangers of establishing a 'unipolar world', 'a world in which there is one master, one sovereign', and warned: 'At the end of the day this is pernicious not only for those within this system, but also for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within', while noting that 'those who teach us [about democracy] do not want to learn themselves'. 'Unilateral and frequently illegitimate actions have not resolved any problems', Putin argued, and he went on to list a range of strategic problems, including the marginalization of the UN, failure to ratify the CFE Treaty, the remilitarization of Europe through missile defence development, NATO enlargement (which represented 'a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust'), the weakening of the non-proliferation regime and the attempt 'to transform the OSCE into a vulgar instrument to promote the foreign policy interests of one or a group of countries'.[71] The tone of the speech was as important as its content. Many of the issues had been raised earlier: in particular, in his address to the German Bundestag on 25 September 2001 Putin had noted that 'Not long ago it appeared that a real common home would appear on the continent, where Europeans would not be divided into Eastern or Western, Northern or Southern. However, these "lines of division" will continue, primarily because we were unable completely to free ourselves from many of the stereotypes and

[70] See e.g. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, oil, and the new Great game in Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002).
[71] http://president.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2007/02/118109.shtml.

clichés of the "Cold War".'[72] The harsh tone of 2007 reflected the Russian leader's accumulating frustration that such issues had not been resolved, and his disillusionment with a West that he had hoped would act in good faith. Russian concerns had too often been discounted as illegitimate, and the West appeared to act with a reckless impunity that now provoked a Russian backlash. For Lavrov, 'The primary importance of Putin's Munich speech is that it helped foil a conspiracy of silence on fundamental issues concerning the global security architecture.' [73] The western response on the whole failed to engage with the substantive issues, simply intensifying criticism of Putin's regime and dismissing its concerns.[74]

The intellectual failure

Whether we are talking about a new Cold War or a revival of the great power politics of the nineteenth century, we are faced with a complex problem that needs adequate scholarly analysis, something that has been signally lacking in recent years. The problem is simple: why was the opportunity missed in the 1990s and early 2000s, when Russia was more open than perhaps at any other time in its history to engage and join with what is conventionally called the West, to create a new community based on common interests and, ultimately, joint values? Part of the answer lies in the strategic failures noted above, but there is also a deeper intellectual failure of imagination.[75]

The collapse of the communist system was accompanied not only by the intellectual disorientation of what used to be called the left, but also by its effective delegitimation. Somewhat simplified theoretical approaches to the nature of the radical socialist challenge to the democratic capitalist order have come to predominate. This has emboldened the western political class: for example, the resolution passed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) equating communism with fascism was something that was not dared even at the height of the Cold War.[76] The totalitarian paradigm has emerged as an almost unchallengeable proposition,[77] although it is a wholly inadequate model for the post-Stalin era in the USSR. Painting the Soviet experience, its origins, development and very existence, as fundamentally illegitimate renders Russia's claim to great power

[72] http://www.president.kremlin.ru/appears/2001/09/25/0002_type63377_28641.shtml.

[73] Sergei Lavrov, 'The present and the future of global politics', *Russia in Global Affairs* 5: 2, April–June 2007, pp. 8–21 at p. 13.

[74] e.g. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who insisted that 'Russia should abandon its "confrontational" rhetoric': 'Russia must join with West, says NATO chief', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 July 2007, p. 18.

[75] This is not the first time the ending of a war has been followed by a lost peace. On this theme, see Andrew J. Williams, *Failed imagination: new world orders of the twentieth century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

[76] The resolution adopted by PACE on 25 Jan. 2006 condemned the totalitarian ideologies of communism and Nazism for mass crimes and the suppression of human rights, and urged post-communist governments and parties to promote the study of the historical record of communist regimes: Vladimir Socor, 'Council of Europe condemns communism over Moscow's opposition', *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 3: 19, 27 Jan. 2006.

[77] See Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowksi, Karel Bartosek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *The black book of communism: crimes, terror, repression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); for the follow-up discussion, see Stéphane Courtois, ed., *Du passé faisons table rase! Histoire et mémoire du communisme en Europe* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2002).

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status (and in some quarters its very existence) also illegitimate. As might have been anticipated, Putin's extreme response to this interpretation in his final year in office was to encourage an official version of Soviet history that once again whitewashed some of its crimes while exaggerating its achievements.[78] This is the classic Cold War dynamic.

The asymmetrical end of the Cold War was accompanied by a continued discursive rupture. Putin's new realism was devised precisely at a time when much of the western world was seized by what Sergei Karaganov calls 'democratic messianism'.[79] This period was characterized by the dominance of teleological rather than genetic approaches to political transition. As early as September 2000 a report of the Project for the New American Century had made no bones about its belief that 'America should seek to preserve and extend its position of global leadership by maintaining the pre-eminence of US military forces … At no time in history has the international security order been as conducive to American interests and ideals. The challenge for the coming century is to preserve and enhance this "American Peace".'[80] Despite the grandiose talk, Washington's ability to influence Russian policy appeared limited, even though Bush's new National Security Strategy of 16 March 2006 noted that 'America is at war' and insisted that 'We seek to shape the world, not merely be shaped by it.'[81] In April 2007 the State Department, with the US Agency for International Development, revealed its Strategic Plan covering the years 2007–2012, which outlined seven strategic goals within the framework of what Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called 'transformational diplomacy'; she stressed that 'In today's world, it is impossible to draw clear lines between our security interests, our development efforts, and our democratic ideals.'[82] Quoting the 2006 National Security Strategy document, the plan argued that 'The fundamental character of regimes matters as much as the distribution of power among them.'[83] The plan was astonishingly outspoken in stating that its top priority was to counter Russia's alleged 'negative behavior' in several areas, from weapons sales to dubious regimes to pressure on former Soviet republics, whose future America explicitly linked to 'color revolutions'. America committed itself to helping the GUAM states (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) move closer to Euro-Atlantic institutions, while 'Elsewhere in Eurasia, people yearn for the hope kindled by the "color revolutions" of 2003–2005.'[84]

[78] The textbook, intended for the teachers of final year school pupils, was edited by Leonid Polyakov and praised Russia's great power role while adopting an unabashedly anti-American line. In Russia's decentralized school system no single textbook is mandatory. See Andrew Osborn, 'A do-over for Russian history? Putin-backed manual spurs concern nation is whitewashing its past', *Wall Street Journal*, 6 July 2007.

[79] Sergei Karaganov, 'Rossiya—SShA: obratno k mirnomu sosushchestvovaniyu?', *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 24 March 2006, p. 19.

[80] *Rebuilding America's defenses: strategy, forces and resources for a new century* (Washington DC: Project for the New American Century, 2000), p. iv.

[81] *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006; quotations from President George W. Bush's prefatory comments, p. 2.

[82] *Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2007–2012* (Washington DC: US Department of State/US Agency for International Development, 2007), p. 4.

[83] *Strategic Plan*, '2007', p. 10.

[84] *Strategic Plan*, '2007', pp. 49, 48.

It was clear that America was settling in for the long haul to combat Moscow's residual influence in a region that it could not even bring itself to call the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). At the same time, the new realism emerging in Russia came into contradiction with the West's focus on the 'regime question', the quality of Russia's democracy. This was reflected in the Council on Foreign Relations independent task force's report of early 2006, which subjected Russian policy, and ultimately Russia itself, to sustained criticism, insisting that Russia was taking the 'wrong direction'.[85] As far as many Russians were concerned, 'What really upsets the United States is Russia's unique role in the global energy market';[86] Lavrov condemned what he called 'attempts to divide the world into the so-called "civilized mankind", and all the others', and noted that the 'civilization-forming countries as India and China' would not permit such a division.[87] Russia would assert its aspiration to autonomy and try to find its own way to a viable modernity.

The cultural failure

The West has found Russia a difficult presence for some 300 years, and the search for a comfortable relationship between the West and Russia's distinct civilization and geopolitical concerns has still not ended. Ultimately, however, there is nothing particularly enigmatic about Russia. Russia is neither an automatic foe nor a natural friend of the West, and Putin's new realism was a perfectly rational response to the challenges facing his country. The unravelling of the new realism, however, brought to the fore the unresolved problems associated with the asymmetric end of the Cold War. If the long nineteenth-century crisis in Russo-Western relations is remembered by a catechism that includes Balaklava, Sevastopol, Plevna and San Stefano, today we have a no less impressive litany of issues that may in turn be remembered as steps to a new apocalypse.

It may be an exaggeration to talk of the revival of the global divisions of the postwar world; but if we do not have a Cold War, are we facing a revival of the historic 'Russia problem', the perceived failure of Russia to make the necessary adjustments to its ambitions, its claimed status and its policies? From this perspective, we are returning to a condition that prevailed for most of the nineteenth century, when Russia was not only an awkward member of the European security system, but also vilified for its domestic politics.[88] Fear of Russia's ambitions precipitated

[85] *Russia's wrong direction: what the United States can and should do*, Independent Task Force Report 57 (chairs: John Edwards and Jack Kemp; project director: Stephen Sestanovich) (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2006).

[86] Vitalii Ivanov and Konstantin Simonov, 'Vernyi put' Rossii: chto khotyat sdelat' SShA?', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 28 April 2006, p. 10.

[87] Lavrov, 'The present and the future of global politics', p. 10.

[88] For an excellent discussion of the West's immanent Russophobia and inability to accept Russia on equal terms, see Martin Malia, *Russia under western eyes: from the Bronze Horseman to the Lenin Mausoleum* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2000). He sees Russia as consistently lagging behind the developed West by some 50 years, but not essentially different from the West except for this temporal imbalance. For a recent restatement of the view that Russia is substantively different from the West, see Stefan Hedlund, 'Vladimir the Great, Grand Prince of Muscovy: resurrecting the Russian service state', *Europe–Asia Studies* 58: 5, July 2006, pp. 775–801.

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the Crimean War (1854–6), and played a key role in various Balkan conflicts. Only Bismarck in Germany understood the importance of avoiding conflict with Russia; his successors' failure to remember this prescription helped provoke the cataclysm of the First World War. It is salutary to remember the hundredth anniversary of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 31 August 1907 when the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, stood out in arguing that Russia had legitimate national interests, an assertion of principle that remains as surprisingly contentious today as it was then. The absence of a serious debate over the substance of these legitimate interests is no less disturbing. We may well have a Russia problem, but we also have a 'West problem'. As Thomas Graham notes, 'Increased Western concerns about Russian actions arise not only from Russian behaviour, but also reflect a declining confidence in its own abilities and the effectiveness of Western policy.'[89] Russia has not repudiated the Europeanization agenda; but, like Serbia, to which it is increasingly likened, a domestic consensus has to be forged first. Matters are not helped, as Nikonov notes, by the West's continuing to try to delegitimize the Russian regime.[90]

Looking at the broader picture, it is clear that the post-Cold War status quo was unsustainable. While Russia's motives in challenging the new world order undoubtedly contained an element of short-term politicking, in particular as the electoral cycle approached the key phase of 2007–2008, there were also substantive arguments involved which have too often been dismissed rather too easily in western debates. At the most abstract level, different concepts of how to manage global problems were raised, with Russia defending the role of the UN and other multilateral agencies. Russia's defence of state sovereignty may well have been self-serving, but it ties in with a respectable philosophical tradition arguing that sovereignty is essential for a political community to take responsibility for its political potential.[91] Equally, Russia insisted that it should be allowed to find its own pace towards democracy, and rejected the quasi-messianic elevation of the concepts of freedom and democracy in American discourse. Although few would deny some major deficiencies in Russian democracy (and it certainly is not the only major country of which this could be said), the picture was certainly not as bleak as new cold warriors in the West like to make out. The intellectual failure is even deeper than this. We have noted the strategic challenge of incorporating rising great powers into an expanding international community, and this is accompanied by the intellectual challenge of providing a model of how this could be done. Instead, the opposite has happened, with new lines of division being drawn and new messianic eschatologies imposed.[92] As Michael Cox has noted, the fundamental question is not whether the United States is in decline, but how it will recognize the fundamental fact of international politics: 'that, however singular and exceptional a

[89] Quoted by Sergei Markedonov, 'Neterpenie ot uspekhov', Polit.ru, 6 July 2007.
[90] Vyacheslav Nikonov, *Izvestiya*, 31 May 2007.
[91] For a recent assertion of this view, see Christopher J. Bickerton, Philip Cunliffe and Alexander Gourevich, eds, *Politics without sovereignty: a critique of contemporary international relations* (London: Routledge, 2007).
[92] For a broad overview of how post-Cold War thinking fits in to the larger pattern of enlightenment eschatology, see John Gray, *Black mass: apocalyptic religion and the death of utopia* (Harmondsworth: Allen Lane, 2007).

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powerful nation's qualities might be, it cannot, for ever, expect to determine the way in which the international system operates'.[93] Hegemonic theory in the 2000s was tested, possibly to destruction.

The key concept in the cultural study of the post-Cold War failure is the category of 'civilization'. The World Public Forum, strongly supported by Russia and chaired by one of Putin's most influential confidants, Vladimir Yakunin, has since 2003 organized an annual conference on the theme of 'Dialogue of Civilizations', inspired by former Iranian President Mohammed Khatami's address to the United Nations on 5 September 2000. To employ the concept is to recognize a division between civilizations. Although 'the West' is far from homogeneous, with Europe struggling to ensure that the concept does not become a synonym for America, there remains a dividing line somewhere across Eurasia beyond which there is a non-West. The EU itself is not quite sure where the line should be drawn; hence the continuing debates over the eligibility of Turkey and Ukraine to join the EU. As far as Russia is concerned, fear that it would be relegated to the periphery and treated as such provoked a range of defensive reactions, in particular over Kosovo in 1999 and later, as well as attempts to reassert its traditional influence in the former Soviet space. The lands between Russia and the EU became a sphere of competing 'near abroads'.

Conclusion: new Cold War or twenty years' crisis?

E. H. Carr described the period between the two great wars of the twentieth century as a 'twenty years' crisis', during which none of the major items on the agenda after the end of the Great War in 1918 were resolved, and many were exacerbated.[94] Then, too, there was a strategic failure in rendering Germany a permanent outcast and humiliated nation, and also an intellectual failure, in failing to confront militarism (Japan), fascism (Italy) and Nazism (Germany) in a timely manner. The first twenty years' crisis ended in the greatest conventional war of all time, but in the nuclear age a renewed confrontation would be even more dangerous. Just as the Second World War was a legacy of the failed peace settlement following the First, so this 'new' Cold War is the outcome of the inability effectively to overcome the structures and sentiments that accompanied the original struggle.[95] The debate over the onset of a new Cold War raises fundamental issues that we ignore at our peril. The attacks on America in September 2001 and the ensuing 'war on terror',

[93] Michael Cox, 'Is the United States in decline—again?', *International Affairs* 83: 4, 2007, pp. 643–53 at p. 653.

[94] E. H. Carr, *The twenty years' crisis, 1919–1939: an introduction to the study of international relations* (London: Macmillan, 1939).

[95] Speaking on 9 May 2007 at the military parade celebrating the 62nd anniversary of victory, Putin noted: 'We have a duty to remember that the causes of any war lie above all in the mistakes and miscalculations of peacetime, and that these causes have their roots in an ideology of confrontation and extremism.' His next paragraph was one that much exercised the Americans: 'It is all the more important that we remember this today, because these threats are not becoming fewer but are only transforming and changing their appearance. These new threats, just as under the Third Reich, show the same contempt for human life and the same aspiration to establish an exclusive dictate over the world.' http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches./eng/text/speeches/2007/05/09.

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accompanied by a broader disruption in world affairs,[96] has distracted attention from perhaps the most important problem of our era: integrating Russia, China and other rising powers into an expanded global consensus.

The end of the Cold War has been repeatedly announced, yet the beast stubbornly lives on.[97] Nearly two decades after the fall of communism we have once again entered a period of self-reinforcing suspicion and distrust between the major nuclear powers. This does not necessarily mean that the world will enter a period of sustained and institutionalized rivalry between two powers that act as magnetic poles in global affairs. The conditions for a replay of the old Cold War in its classic form are simply not present. Russia and America do not lead rival ideological projects on a global scale; although disagreements over such issues as the appropriate role of multilateral mechanisms do exist, they exist also between NATO allies. Nor are there sustained and entrenched policy differences over such issues as nuclear proliferation, global warming or any number of other fundamental issues facing the world. Russia is just one among a number of potential great powers, and therefore old-fashioned bipolarism is a thing of the past, and Russian–American relations are no longer the axis on which world politics turns. Even the issue that has much exercised the policy community in Washington, Russia's alleged 'democratic backsliding', is a matter of interpretation, and in any case new leaderships in both countries may provide an opportunity for the regime question to become less sharp.[98] The term 'Cold War', therefore, is a contemporary international relations metaphor for a fundamentally strained relationship that cannot be resolved within the framework of the world views of either party but requires a rethinking of both.

Russian foreign policy in the Putin era was characterized by conformity to the realities of power relations in the international system coupled with a redefinition of what constitutes Russia's national interests. A type of constrained adaptation to the international system emerged in which the strategic direction was clear—integration without accession (although in the long term accession is not excluded)—but the pace and forms of integration would remain at Russia's discretion. Russia under Putin sought to enter the core of the international system, and to do so on its own terms and thus to redefine the hegemonic structure of the core states. In trying both to join and remain autonomous, Russia's policy was fundamentally ambiguous, if not contradictory. There is no precedent for a dual core to a hegemonic system. Instead, new forms of polarity began to emerge. The idea of Russia establishing itself as a 'new West', unable to integrate into the existing core but not setting itself up as an alternative, captures some of the dilemmas

[96] Kenneth Booth and Timothy Dunne, eds, *Worlds in collision: terror and the future of global order* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

[97] Cf. Allen Lynch, *The Cold War is over—again* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992).

[98] There is some scepticism about this in Russia. A recent pro-regime book, addressed to the Russian political elite, argues that American attitudes are so deeply entrenched that a mere change of political leadership would make little difference to the country's relations with Russia: Veronika Krasheninnikova, *Amerika—Rossiya: Kholodnaya voina kul'tur—kak amerikanskie tsennosti prelomlyayut videnie rossii*, intr. Sergei Markov (Moscow: Europa, 2007). This also applies, albeit to a somewhat lesser degree, to Britain, where policy too often appears to have been driven by the views of Putin's opponents in exile in London.

facing the country.[99] The new realism promoted constrained adaptation, a policy of autonomy without alternativity. Domestic reconstruction became the priority, but external ambitions in Eurasia and the world were not abandoned. At the same time, the West lacks a convincing paradigm within which to understand Russia's concerns, leading to major political, strategic, intellectual and cultural failures. It is still not clear what a 'normal' relationship between Russia and the West would look like. Encountering hostility to its claims to autonomy, Russia once again began to espouse the claims of alternativity. The outlines of a very peculiar new Cold War are in the making, but even this constrained conflict may be preferable to the global failure that attended the twenty years' crisis.

[99] Dmitri Trenin, *Integratsiya i identichnost': Rossiya kak 'novyi zapad'* (Moscow: Europa, 2006).

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