”LIFTING THE VEIL OF HOSTILITY”: DISCOURSE ON RUSSIA BY BRITISH AND AMERICAN POLITICAL LEADERS

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CHAPTER EIGHT

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Russia, as the dominant power in the USSR, was the great enemy of the Cold War and the primary target of cold-war rhetoric in both Britain and the United States. From the "iron curtain" speech by Churchill in 1946 to the "evil empire" discourse of Reagan in 1983, Russia received the central focus of Cold War oratory which, simply put, tended to focus on fear and hostility. Mikhail Gorbachev's assumption of the reins of power in 1985 and his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* began a re-evaluation of attitudes towards Russia which now appeared less threatening to the west. In 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed and eventually split into 15 different countries with the reformer Boris Yeltsin president of Russia. Neither the British nor the American governments had foreseen this development and both had problems adjusting to it. The west reacted ambivalently and, at times, with indifference to this radical change and to the economic plight of the former Soviet Union. We shall trace here the evolution of discourse by political leaders in both the United States and the United Kingdom from the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 to the election of Dmitry Medvedev as president of Russia in 2008. We shall see that, although both nations expressed great hope about the future of Russia, fear, hostility and criticism were never far, and had a propensity to dominate discourse at the end of the period. Indeed, one is frequently struck by the continuation of Cold War rhetoric rather than a break from it.

When the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991, the then American president, George H.W. Bush, showed remarkably little interest in the development and in the future of its former members. Indeed, in several areas the British reacted faster than the Americans. They invited Gorbachev, the first time a Russian leader had been so honoured, to the 1991 G-7

Conference which they hosted in London and later, in 1998 when the British next hosted it, the group officially became the G-8. British leaders believed that the West had to help stabilize Russia–in spite of the apparent lack of interest of the Bush administration. As the Labour Defence spokesman, Gerald Kauffman explained:

> The West bears its own heavy responsibility for what has taken place. At the G-7 summit six months ago, Mikhail Gorbachev was treated like a mendicant. Seeking aid for his country, he was sent home empty-handed and humiliated.[1]

A key idea here was Russia's feeling of humiliation as a fallen superpower–a feeling that Britain, an ex-superpower herself, might understand and sympathize with. The general consensus in the U.K. held that something had to be done to show Russia that she was still respected and played a major role in the world. The fact that John Major, British Prime Minister from 1990 to 1997, had invited Gorbachev to the conference showed already that the Conservative government felt the need to help Russia and involve it in Western institutions. In February 1994 the then Foreign Minister, Douglas Hurd, wrote in his diary: "It's this sense of being ignored which really damages, and could be fatal to Yeltsin if we go on doing that."[2] Major echoed this idea in his memoirs, writing: "To disregard Russia when she was weak might not be forgotten when she was strong once again."[3] Britain had a real opportunity–or so its leaders felt–to influence Russia, gaining its gratitude and friendship and thus help the U.K. in its quest to continue playing a major role on the world scene. Kauffman stated this clearly:

> The question now for the international community is not what can be done to restore the old stability – that is not possible – but how to create a new and lasting stability. With the United States still dominant, but economically weak and ready to accept others sharing its hegemony, there is an unprecedented opportunity for the United Kingdom to give a lead not as a superpower but as a catalyst. Britain can count in the world. There is an agenda waiting to be implemented and Britain can help to formulate that agenda.[4]

If America would not give the lead then the United Kingdom, although weaker, could still use its influence to get Western nations to help–which might reap important benefits, notably in an extension of British influence, later.

Of course, Russia had been the main security threat to Britain, and to Europe in general, since the end of World War II; Many British people felt

that giving financial assistance to Russia would help stabilize the country. Their goal was to integrate the former enemy into European institutions (as had been done with Germany after World War II), lead it towards democracy and, thereby, hopefully, remove the U.K.'s predominant security risk. In this they were not alone for, in spite of the apparent indifference of the first Bush administration, many Americans felt the same way–most notably the former president, Richard Nixon. On 11 March 1992, Nixon gave a widely noticed speech in which he called for more assistance to Russia:

> Yeltsin is the most pro-Western leader in Russian history. Under those circumstances, then, he deserves our help. Charity, it is said, begins at home, and I agree. But aid to Russia, just speaking of Russia specifically, is not charity. We have to realize that if Yeltsin fails, the alternative is not going to be somebody better – it's going to be somebody infinitely worse. We have to realise that if Yeltsin fails, the new despotism, which will take its place, will mean that the peace dividend is finished, we will have to rearm, and that's going to cost infinitely more than would the aid that we provide at the present time.[5]

Here we see what will become one of the major themes of both American and British discourse in the 1990s: help Yeltsin or risk returning to the worst days of the Cold War with a new, even more expensive arms race and threats to western security. Nixon succeeded in his immediate goal: the Bush administration did propose an aid package. But interestingly enough, one of the persons who listened most carefully to this speech was the future Democratic candidate for president, Bill Clinton and stabilizing Russia became one of the major foreign policy goals of his administration. Not long after his election, on 1 April 1993, Clinton spoke at length about Russia to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, re-echoing Nixon's ideas:

> Nothing could contribute more to global freedom, to security, to prosperity than the peaceful progression of this rebirth of Russia. It could mean a modern state, at peace not only with itself but with the world… The success of Russia's renewal must be a first-order concern to our country… Our ability to put people first at home requires that we put Russia and its neighbors first on our agenda abroad.[6]

Put simply, you cannot have both guns and butter and, if Americans want a better life, they need to cut military spending. The greatest threat to American security since World War II had been the Soviet Union which had now disintegrated. Russia, the heart of the former empire remained,

though. Clinton's reasoning followed the same path as the British: stabilize Russia to remove it as a potential menace. Clinton proposed a "strategic alliance" not with Russia itself, significantly, but with "Russian reform": the heart of the nation itself still remains suspect but Russian reformers can lead it, if they have the necessary resources, to beat in harmony with the west. The symbol of this reform was Boris Yeltsin and very quickly this alliance took on the aspect of a personal relationship with virtually unconditional support for the Russian president. Yeltsin, it was argued, had to remain in power because, if he did not, worse was waiting.

In his April 1993 meeting with Yeltsin in Vancouver, Clinton promised extensive economic assistance and, at first, the U.S. Congress went along with this.[7] In that same year a $2.5 billion aid package to the ex-Soviet Union was voted with over $1.6 billion for Russia. But the money was not necessarily earmarked for the most important areas nor was it always well spent as corruption flourished. 1993 also saw Yeltsin's stand-off with the Russian Parliament that ended in the military shelling the building. Although Yeltsin called elections soon afterwards and had been firmly supported by both Major and Clinton, critical voices began to gain strength. The revelation, in February 1994, that CIA agent Aldrich Ames had worked as a spy for the Soviet Union and had continued to do so for Russia further soured relations, notably in Congress.

The lead-up to the 1994 congressional elections saw increasing criticism of Clinton by Republican leaders and polarisation between the parties. Clinton had made Russia one of the centrepieces of his foreign policy and so it was particularly vulnerable to attack–especially since the deficiencies of the new Russia were so obvious. Added to this, the Republicans especially had a long Cold War tradition of anti-Russian rhetoric which easily resurfaced. Senator Bob Dole, leader of the Republicans in the Senate, talked of "the reassertion of Russian imperialism" and called for "a fundamental reassessment of United States policy toward Russia."[8] According to Senator Richard Lugar, another Republican: "We are not partners with Russia. We are tough-minded rivals."[9] The confirmation hearings for Strobe Talbott as Deputy Secretary of State in February 1994 showed clearly the growing partisanship in the Senate. Senator Slade Gorton of Washington, for example, attacked Talbott saying: "But after the cold war was won, Mr. Talbott insisted that only the inherent weakness of the Soviet system was responsible for our victory and that President Reagan's military buildup was unnecessary."[10] Gorton appeared to be saying that Talbott should not be approved by the Senate because the Democrats did not accept the Republicans' interpretation for the fall of communism. Trent Lott of Mississippi, future

Senate majority leader, also attacked Talbott for having written against Reagan's policies and went even further. He saw Talbott as "soft on the former Soviet Union" and sung the virtues of American ideals and American strength:

> With the end of the cold war, America and her ideals should be triumphant. The international sphere has never been a Garden of Eden, but America, sure in its resolve and rightness, and steeled by its victory over communism, should now have a sturdier hand and influence in the world.
>
> Yet we are floundering. Part of the problem is that this administration is unsure of our country's rightness. Thus, you have this multilateralism fetish. The United States has been carrying water for the United Nations because we are not willing to play the quarterback ourselves. We have threatened force and not used it. We have promised intervention and then we have cowered… There is the danger that our allies and, even worse, our enemies think our resolve is only bluster and that we are weak and we are blind.[11]

Lott clearly saw foreign policy in Manichean terms with America cast as the personification of goodness. The United States' great virtue made it the proper leader of the world but Clinton had betrayed this by compromising American purity through multilateralism. For Lott, America must not corrupt itself by acting through the UN but maintain its independent purity and make others behave properly, if necessary through force. Lott insisted later in his speech that "the Soviet Union was an illegitimate regime and was an evil empire". Talbott, then was guilty of moral relativism and even of a betrayal of American ideals for, according to Lott, he "took the former Soviet Union to be legitimate and morally equivalent to our own system, which it was not."[12] In some sense, then the Russians deserved what they had got and the United States should not worry about their feelings or hesitate to assert its power on the world scene.

It was only a short trip from here to comparisons with another conflict frequently portrayed in terms of good and evil: the Second World War. Senator Gorton already used the word "appeasement" in the Talbott confirmation hearings and its use continued among Republicans. Many portrayed Bill Clinton as a modern Neville Chamberlain, leading the nation to the indignity of a new Munich. The comparison usually occurred in relation to the treatment of eastern European nations and of former parts of the Soviet Union. Representative Gerald Solomon of New York told the House of Representatives in September 1994: "the Clinton administration is preparing to sell out Russia's neighbors for the sake of appeasing Russia."[13] He went on to add:

> It is morally unthinkable that we would sell these people out again… In 1938, Munich. In 1945,Yalta. In the 1970's détente. Every time we have ceded Russia or Germany hegemony over these areas, disaster has followed.[14]

There is undeniably some truth here for Eastern Europe and former countries of the Soviet Union had legitimate security needs. They still smarted from earlier Russian domination and had no wish to see it return so they looked to the west for security and assistance. These concerns had to be addressed and Eastern Europe stabilized – preferably as democracies. The obvious way to do this was through NATO and the EU – but Russian opposition had to be dealt with. Added to this, many of these countries had large immigrant communities present in the United States who voted in elections and members of Congress would be highly sensitive to this. Still, it seems that many people found it difficult to break out of the traditional rhetoric of the Cold War. In fact, a close look at the rhetoric of those who supported aid to Russia and those who attacked it reveals few fundamental differences. Both see Russia as a major security threat; they disagree, however, about how to deal with it. The major divergence was that those who thought like Clinton believed that Russia could change for the better (that an alliance with Russian reform could transform that nation) while those who opposed his policies did not believe alteration possible. Furthermore, on the Republican side especially, the rhetorical links with the neo-conservatives and the justifications for the Iraq War are also obvious and one may wonder if years of listening to such oratory did not presuppose many members of Congress to vote in favour of that conflict.

Of course, the association with the Second World War did not work only one way and could be used to justify assistance to Russia. At the time of the financial meltdown, Representative Tom Lantos, Democrat from California, told the House:

> Not too many decades ago, in the bemired Republic of Germany, as hyperinflation took hold, fascism followed, and so did the Second World War. It is in our prime policy interests to attempt to stabilise the Russian economy.[15]

It was difficult to miss his message that a dictator like Hitler could come to power in Russia and that this could lead to war (or worse). Added to this were signs of rising anti-Semitism in Russia which, according to one Democratic Representative was "dangerously reminiscent of pre-Nazi Germany".[16]

Steve Horn from California saw parallels with World War I. He followed the principal interpretation that the Allies had won the war only to lose the peace through the injustices of the Versailles treaty:

> We must not assume that as victors of the cold war we can impose any conditions we wish on the losers. The allies made that mistake at the end of the First World War. We had won the war in 1918, and we lost the peace in 1919 by forcing on a vanquished Germany a Treaty of Versailles that every thoughtful person knew was completely unreasonable, harsh, and ultimately unsustainable. The result was not a lasting peace but a temporary truce between two great world wars. We must not repeat that mistake.[17]

Once again we see the logic of helping Russia now or facing worse later. Otherwise they might find themselves involved in another, worse conflict. Interestingly enough, Steve Horn was a Republican Congressman, albeit a moderate one, and this is one of the rare departures, in an increasingly partisan House, from party rhetoric.

For Horn, and others who thought like him, Russia had to become involved in the major western institutions. We have already seen that Major pushed for Russian participation in the G-7. That was settled relatively quickly and easily. The Russian relationship with European institutions and NATO was more complicated. In 1995, the European Union signed partnership and cooperation agreements with Russia and Ukraine. This accord required ratification by all member states, including, of course, Great Britain. The agreements sought to foster political dialogue at all levels between Russia and the EU and place their relations on the same level as those between the United States and the EU. They also purposed to establish closer trading links, with the possibility of free trade in the future. When first signed, the accords were relatively uncontroversial but the first Chechen war broke out in November 1994 and attitudes changed. David Davis, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, was quite clear about the impact of Chechnya:

> The agreement with Russia was signed amid great optimism about the prospects for Russia's relations with the west. Events in Chechnya have cast a cloud over that relationship. Some people have said that the west should punish the Russians by withdrawing co-operation. We believe that would be a mistake. The west cannot, and does not, turn a blind eye to what is going on in Chechnya, but we shall not help our powers of influence over the Russian Government by closing off all avenues of co-operation.[18]

Once again we see this idea that "punishing" Russia would only lead to disaster. Later in the debate, Davis made an interesting admission:

> We in the House have an objective: to ensure that our western institutions are used to engage Russia so that it acts according to internationally accepted norms of behaviour… Events in Chechnya show us all that Russia has a long time to go before meeting the standards that we expect, but my hon. Friends are wrong if they think that we do not take the position seriously. What we are debating, in fact, is not that, but the method whereby we can ensure that the Russian Government's behaviour improves.[19]

Note the dominant theme here: Russia must belong to western institutions not because it subscribes to western standards of behaviour and thus deserves to be there but because membership will push Russia towards these standards. Russia must not be punished but it must be educated. Like Germany and Japan after World War II, Russia is to be brought into these institutions, although not ready for them, in the hope that this will unite Russia to the western democracies, make it progress towards their standards and defuse it as a threat. There is something patronising about this attitude: to some extent, Russia was being spoken of as a naughty child who needed to be taught proper behaviour. It is perhaps not surprising to see that, while the European Parliament held up ratification of the agreements because of the Chechen war, they finally entered into force in 1997.

As in America one can also find a continuation of Cold War rhetoric. Christopher Gill, for example, argued against the agreements with Russia:

> I am opposed to agreements with the former Soviet Union because I do not share the evident view of the Foreign Office that the leaders of the former Soviet Union can be trusted. On the contrary, there is ample evidence to suggest that the Russians are pursuing a devious strategy that is designed to lock the western powers into complex arrangements and then to dominate them.[20]

Notice how he refers to "the former Soviet Union" instead of Russia. This rhetorical device reinforces his thesis that nothing has really changed and that hostility and reason for fear remain. Obviously, events like the Chechen war gave force to these arguments although they appear to have been less common in Britain than in the United States. This was possibly linked to the fact that such opinions tended to occur on the right. In Britain at this time the Conservatives were in power so it would have meant

criticizing their own party while in America Russian policy was used as an issue by Republicans in Congress to attack a Democratic president.

The Chechen War also had an impact on Russia's application to join the Council of Europe. Russia first applied in 1992 and in the following years made significant progress towards acceptance. David Atkinson, a British MP, headed the Non-member Countries Committee of the Council whose task was to evaluate candidates. He explained in Westminster, in the same debate cited earlier, that, although there were obvious problems with Russian democracy, the Council had been "prepared to turn a blind eye" and "invite it into full membership". Chechnya changed all this:

> Russia's action in Chechnya, however, put paid to that, and rightly so. We have now suspended our consideration of Russia's application until we are satisfied with the response to the terms of the resolution that we passed on 2 February… the principal concern behind our resolution was that Russia had demonstrated for all to see, even while it was pressing to join the Council of Europe, that it was prepared to ignore the entire purpose of the Council of Europe's existence – that never again should force be used to resolve disputes.[21]

According to Atkinson, Russia was acting against the basic direction of European history since the end of World War II by using force against Chechnya. Examination of Russian candidature was thus suspended and only restarted in September 1995 after meetings with both Russian and Chechen leaders. Finally, after the December parliamentary elections in Russia, the rapporteurs who included Atkinson, decided to recommend Russian membership to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council. His lack of enthusiasm was evident:

> Should we decide to invite Russia to join, for which it has been pressing since 1992, we know that that will be a political judgment, made in the clear realisation that Russia has not yet reached our standards of membership, but that it is more likely to achieve those standards as a full member than if we were to keep it out in the cold.
>
> Should we decide that we cannot compromise our standards to such an extent in the case of the largest country in Europe, we risk unknown consequences for Russia, Europe and the rest of the world.[22]

So here we return to the argument that punishing Russia would only hurt the west. Note the reference to Russia being "out in the cold" which contains clear reminiscences of the Cold War. In some sense he is implying that the Cold War had not really ended and would not end until Russia was fully integrated into Europe. Atkinson went on to state that:

"Full membership will encourage the forces of democracy and reform in Russia, both in Parliament and in government", which sounds very similar to many of the Clinton administration's pronouncements. Atkinson also talked, in terms that Russia probably would have found patronising, of encouraging its progress towards "our European standards"–echoing the idea that Russia had to learn proper behaviour. He also stressed the fact that Russian individuals would have the right to petition the European Court in case of abuses.

Certainly, at the back of Atkinson's mind was the rise of Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the ultra-nationalist whose party, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, came first in the 1993 parliamentary elections. Atkinson believed that:

> Should a reactionary, fascist or ultra-nationalist candidate be elected as Russia's next president in June, it will not be so easy for Russia to withdraw from the clear international legal commitments of full membership, amid all the publicity that such an unprecedented move would encourage. I would expect such a withdrawal to end Russia's association agreement with the EU and its partnership agreement with NATO, as well as to create problems for itself within the OSCE.[23]

In other words, a clear movement backwards and towards hostility and fear. So, once again, the main argument is not enthusiasm or praise of Russia but fear of what Russia might become. Atkinson emphasized this further by saying that a rejection of Russia's application would be "a slap in the face" for Yeltsin and other reformers. Here again we see the focus on specific personalities and on maintaining them in power. Like the Clinton administration, Atkinson and those who think like him in Europe want to do everything possible to strengthen Yeltsin for the June 1996 election from fear of the alternative. In the end, Russia became a member of the Council of Europe in February 1996, just a few months before the election but, as we shall see, Russia has had a rocky relationship with the Council.

Even more controversial were all the questions involving the future of NATO. Although some argued that the end of the Cold War made NATO unnecessary, most political leaders in the west wanted to keep it alive. In terms of the Russian debate, we shall consider two issues that dominated NATO: first, its enlargement towards eastern Europe (which Russia obviously opposed) and, second, the need to establish a peaceful working relationship with Russia.[24] The two are obviously related to each other. United States Senator Sam Nunn pointed out how difficult it would be to reconcile these two objectives: "Are we really going to be able to convince

the East Europeans that we are protecting them from their historical threats that usually boils down to Russia – while we convince the Russians that NATO enlargement has nothing to do with Russia as a potential military threat?"[25] Not surprisingly, the main argument against NATO enlargement, in both Great Britain and the United States, was the potential hostility it might cause in Russia. In the same speech, Nunn asserted that, although Russia might not be able to respond by seriously increasing its conventional forces over the next few years, the danger was still real:

> If, however, the more nationalist and more extreme political forces gain the upper hand by election or otherwise, we are likely to see other responses that are more achievable, and also even more dangerous to European stability. For example, while Russia would take years to mount a sustained military threat to Eastern Europe, it can within weeks or months exert severe external and internal pressures on its immediate neighbors to the west, including the Baltic countries, and including the Ukraine. This could set in motion a dangerous action-reaction cycle… We will not be doing anyone in Europe a favour if, by taking certain action regarding NATO expansion, we end up giving an edge in the political process to the most extremist elements in Russia.[26]

At the same time, it did not seem fair to allow Russia, as many people put it, to have a "veto" over NATO expansion. Many argued that not extending NATO because of Russian opposition might be interpreted, as Senator Lugar put it, as encouraging the Russians in "any empire-restoration tendencies".[27] Others emphasized that it was wrong to focus on Russia and forget Eastern Europe and the other parts of the former Soviet Union. Senator John McCain complained that the Clinton administration aid programmes left "other former Soviet Republics waiting for the table scraps left over from our generous assistance to Russia."[28] Senator Gorton went even further:

> Our current policy not only ignores the security of nations clearly dedicated to democracy, free markets and the West; it encourages Russian nationalism. In effect, we have given Russian nationalism a veto on the enlargement of NATO membership. Given this deference, what else will Russia soon be demanding?[29]

Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics had their own legitimate security needs and these had to be taken into account and not just subjugated to America's Russian policy.

For this reason the Clinton administration and the British governments of the time decided to proceed with NATIO enlargement, although slowly

and with constant reassurances to Russia. The first step was the North Atlantic Cooperation Council which was created in 1991. In 1994 the Partnership for Peace was launched which developed individual bilateral relations between NATO and its "partners" which included Russia. Senator Claiborne Pell, a Democrat, hailed this as "another significant milestone in the dismantlement of the Iron Curtain".[30] Pell went on to explain that Partnership for Peace seeks to avoid drawing new lines in Europe" with the goal of an "undivided Europe". Senator Lugar, however, derided this as "not a sustainable premise, unless the West is willing to accept both the Russian definition of 'partner' and their definition of 'Russian geographical space'". He saw something more sinister in Russian participation:

> For the Russians, participation in Partnership for Peace is a means of derailing NATO enlargement and revitalization of solidifying their interpretation of Russia's rights and interests in the "Near Abroad".[31]

In 1997 the North Atlantic Cooperation Council was succeeded by the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council established. For Clinton this was a major step forward: "The NATO-Russia Founding act we have just signed joins a great nation and history's most successful alliance in common cause for a long-sought but never before realized goal: a peaceful, democratic, undivided Europe."[32] He went on to summon up the ghost of World War II and the alliance between Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom:

> Half a century ago, on a continent darkened by the shadow of evil, brave men and women in Russia and the world's free nations fought a common enemy with uncommon valor. Their partnership forged in battle, strengthened by sacrifice, cemented by blood, gave hope to millions in the West and in Russia that the grand alliance would be extended in peace. But in victory's afterglow, the freedom the Russian people deserved was denied them. The dream of peace gave way to the hard reality of Cold War, and our predecessors lost an opportunity to shape a new Europe, whole and free.
>
> Now we have another chance. Russia has opened itself to freedom. The veil of hostility between East and West has lifted. Together we see a future of partnership too long delayed that must no longer be denied.[33]

Not everyone shared Clinton's idealistic belief that the dream of World War II had come true and this led to criticism that he was giving Russia a "veto" over NATO. Madeleine Albright, the Secretary of State, denied this

in considerably less optimistic terms: "The NATO-Russia Founding Act gives Russia no opportunity to dilute, delay or block NATO decisions." She went on to say that "NATO's allies will always meet to agree on every item on their agenda before meeting with Russia" and that "the relationship between NATO and Russia will grow in importance only to the extent Russia uses it constructively."[34] This went forward at the same time as NATO expansion into Eastern Europe with the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary accepted as members. While some worried that Russia was getting too much power, others sought to reassure Russia about enlargement–and even to assert that it could help Russia. Senator Alfonse D'Amato, Republican of New York insisted that:

> An Eastern Europe without NATO could become a black hole of unrest, poverty, ethnic conflict, and extremism of the worst kinds. This would likely attract overt and covert Russian intervention in the affairs of the states in this area, pulling Russia into rebuilding its military machine and deploying it westward, and triggering United States and allied reaction… An eastern Europe without NATO would threaten Russia's security by preventing Russia from changing its thinking about NATO and about European political and economic relations, preventing constructive changes in Russian policy, and delaying or blocking Russia's full integration into the community of nations.[35]

The Kosovo crisis, however, caused Russia to suspend its participation in these NATO groups until 1999, then resumed slowly over the next few years. Relations worsened, however, over problems with Georgia and Ukraine, especially in 2008.

Another major subject of discussion with regard to Russia was the dread of nuclear proliferation. The dissolution of the Soviet Union left a number of former republics in possession of nuclear weapons and the goal of both Britain and the U.S. was to destroy as many as possible and centralise the rest in Russia. Even if this were achieved, many commentators pointed out, it would not guarantee security for the situation in Russia itself was highly volatile. The British Defence Minister, Tom King, signalled his worries on the subject as early as January 1992:

> When we debated related issues in November, the Soviet Union existed – now it does not. There was then a central control over the nuclear arsenal and assurances by President Gorbachev, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, who had returned to government, and Marshal Shaposhnikov. We were also given what I suppose must be the shortest lived assurance of all time by General Lobov when he visited this country. When asked who was in

> charge of nuclear weapons, he said that he was, and two days later he was sacked. All those personalities and figures have gone.[36]

The painful death of the Soviet Union left its once all-powerful military-industrial complex in a terrible crisis. King explained that many in the army found themselves homeless and without regular food supplies–to such an extent that they were trading fuel for food. King summarized the situation, saying: "The sense of alienation and desperation that exists not only in the officer corps, but throughout the armed forces, represents a very serious development."[37] The Labour spokesman, Gerald Kauffman, stated the problem even more clearly:

> A world power balance which lasted for 46 years has ended. A superpower has vanished. Alarming incertitudes have arisen. The danger of nuclear proliferation through the seepage of weapons and of scientists is immensely disturbing.[38]

Everyone agreed that the current leaders of Russia were not a threat but that they did not have full control over the situation. David Howells, another member of the British Parliament spelled out the consequences of this development even more plainly:

> We have no guarantees at all of the huge complex which has to lie behind an effectively maintained system of control over a vast arsenal of nuclear weapons, some new, some old, some well maintained, some deteriorating, some under close guard near Moscow, and some perhaps lost away under guard or perhaps not under adequate guard in faraway places. We have no guarantee that the politico-technical system required to control all that exists any more. In fact, it is almost certain that it does not exist.[39]

Added to this was the fear that economic penury would lead scientists and military to sell their knowledge and weapons to the highest bidder–probably either a so-called "rogue state" like, Iran, Libya, Iraq or North Korea, or a terrorist group. One member of Parliament worried about an "Islam bomb", as he called it, coming about.[40]

This worry was even more pronounced in the American Congress. Action had been taken to deal with this problem fairly quickly. In 1991 attempts were already being made by people in both houses of Congress to attach an aid programme for the Soviet Union to the yearly defense authorization bill. The initial attempt failed but in December of that year Bush signed a bill authorizing the president to use up to $100 million in defence funds for humanitarian assistance and up to $400 million for denuclearization. The latter provision is known as the Cooperative Threat

Reduction Initiative (CTRI) or, more popularly, the Nunn-Lugar program. In February 1993, the United States and Russia agreed to the Megatons and Megawatts Agreement whose goal was to convert highly enriched uranium (HEU) from Russian nuclear warheads to low enriched uranium (LEU) for commercial nuclear reactors in the United States.[41] The START II Treaty, which limited nuclear weapons in both nations, was signed by the first President Bush, was ratified by both the U.S. Senate and the Russian Duma but never went into effect and was superseded by the SORT Agreement of 2002.

But despite these efforts, which achieved some notable successes, fears remained and they centred on two main areas. First, worries about the lack of central control over Soviet-era weapons and scientists continued. In 1995, Senator Sam Nunn, chairman of the powerful Armed Services Committee and one of those responsible for the CTRI, warned:

> Russia is a vast reservoir of weaponry, weapons material, and weapons know-how, thousands of people in Russia and throughout the former Soviet Union have the knowledge, the access, and the strong economic incentives to engage in weapons traffic… there are literally thousands of scientists in Russia that know how to make weapons of mass destruction, that know how to make high technology weapons that can shoot down aircraft in the air including passenger liners, that know how to make missile technology to deliver these weapons of mass destruction across borders, and even across continents. They have this knowledge, but several thousand of them at least do not know where their next paycheck is coming from. They do not know how they are going to feed their families, and they are in great demand around the world from both terrorist groups and from rogue Third World countries.[42]

Reasoning like this tended to lead the speaker to support continued aid to Russia. But as mentioned earlier, there was another source of anxiety and that was Russia's sales of nuclear reactors and other potentially dangerous products such as fighter aircraft and submarines, to Iran. As the moderate Republican Senator Olympia Snowe said:

> I am submitting a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the Russian Federation should be strongly condemned for continuing with a commercial agreement to provide Iran with much technology which would assist that country in the development of nuclear weapons, and that such an agreement would make Russia ineligible for United States assistance under the terms of the Freedom Support Act.[43]

As we can see, emphasis on this tended to lead the speaker to oppose continued aid to Russia. It is interesting to note that, in the end, the Clinton administration did sanction a number of Russian companies in 1998.

Fears only grew after it was learned that in 1995, the routine launching of a Norwegian weather rocket to study the Northern lights–about which Russia had been informed according to standard procedure–had provoked a nuclear war scare in the latter country that had placed the country in combat mode.[44] The letter from Norway on the rocket had been misplaced in Russia and had never reached the radar crews. Yeltsin, without appropriate information, decided on his own that the Americans were not attacking and so refused a counter launch. The episode, once the Americans discovered it, reinforced doubts about the control and command of Russian nuclear weapons. Republican Curt Weldon, a Russian studies specialist, expressed genuine panic in his analysis of the episode:

> Russia is in such a paranoid state that it put its entire strategic offensive force on alert because of Norway's launch of a weather rocket meant that Russia was within 60 seconds of an all-out attack in response to a Norwegian weather rocket which they had been previously notified of.[45]

Russia's economic meltdown in the summer of 1998 further increased worries. The Democratic Senator, Joseph Biden of Delaware, explained at the time:

> The reason that an economy only the size of Holland is having such a profound impact on the rest of the world is because of the military danger that its collapse would cause. If the Russian economy collapses and causes societal and political instability, there are 15,000 nuclear weapons there that could fall into the hands of unreliable and perhaps unstable leaders in a fractured country.[46]

Indeed, one might, once again, wonder if years of listening to debates and warnings about the danger of nuclear proliferation, in particular to certain Islamic countries, did not predispose the U.S. Congress and the British Parliament to believe that Saddam Hussein still had weapons of mass destruction in 2003 and so make them more inclined to vote in favour of the invasion of Iraq.

The Norwegian weather rocket and the economic meltdown in Russia also reinforced the arguments of those who wanted an anti-missile defence in the United States. The National Missile Defense Act of 1999 called for the deployment of such a system. The main arguments put forward in its

favour, however, focused on nuclear proliferation rather than on Russia. Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut went so far as to insist that:

> The countries we are developing this defense against are rogue nations, subnational groups that may attempt to inflict harm, intimidate us, leverage us to extract compromises on our national security from our leadership–not Russia.[47]

Opponents to the anti-missile defence pointed out that it would demand U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty of 1972 or at least a substantial modification of it. Sandy Berger, Clinton's National Security Adviser at the time, stated his belief that: "The ABM Treaty remains a cornerstone of strategic stability, and Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin agree that it is of fundamental significance to achieving the elimination of thousands of strategic nuclear arms under these treaties."[48] In other words, it would send the wrong message to the Russians and give a bad impression about American sincerity in its relations with that country. The Duma, had not yet ratified the START II Treaty and the administration and its supporters worried that this would give them a further excuse for delaying ratification.

Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina dismissed these arguments in characteristic fashion:

> The United States has already paid a dozen ransom notes to Russia in an effort to secure START II's ratification – to no avail. This latest price demanded by Russia is simply too high… The truth is that Russia's strategic force level are going to plummet far past the levels mandated by START II regardless of whether there is any agreement in force. The strategic missiles Russia (then the Soviet Union) deployed in the 1980s are reaching the end of their useful life, and cannot be replaced. Russia has neither the money nor a reason to replace them.[49]

This represents a somewhat different assessment for Helms considers Russia to be of little interest since, he feels, it can no longer seriously threaten the United States. It can, therefore, be disregarded. This is one aspect of the humiliation of Russia that the British so worried about. In the end, citing the effect of the September 11th attacks, George W. Bush's government announced the withdrawal the United States from the ABM Treaty in December 2001.[50]

In 2000 George W. Bush became president of the United States and he and his advisers had a less friendly attitude towards Russia. During the campaign, Bush did not show a great deal of interest in foreign policy. His then foreign policy adviser, Condoleezza Rice, wrote an article in early

2000 in *Foreign Affairs* in which she talked of "Russia fatigue" and argued that there was "no longer a consensus in America or Europe on what to do next with Russia". She believed that: "Russia's economic future is now in the hands of the Russians… In the meantime, U.S. policy must concentrate on the important security agenda with Russia."[51] For her, this seemed to mean primarily changing or getting rid of the ABM Treaty. Like many Republicans, Rice also heavily criticized the Clinton administration's policy of large amounts of monetary aid to Russia. Both Rice and Bush felt that this had done little good for the economy and had, indeed, stimulated corruption. When Bush became president he downgraded Russian questions, continued the expansion of NATO, showed some support for the Chechens and talked about cutting funds for the dismantling of nuclear weapons. In line with Rice's article, he also sought a revision of the ABM Treaty.

The year 2000, of course, also saw the election of Vladimir Putin as president of Russia. Interestingly enough, Tony Blair moved quickly to establish close relations with him. He was the first western leader to meet Putin in March 2000, although Putin was still only acting president. The Russian president repaid Blair's early attention in 2003 by becoming the first Russian leader to pay a state visit to Britain since 1874. Blair's government held an initially positive impression of him. One of the Foreign Secretary's advisers said of Putin:

> He was essentially a liberal moderniser by instinct who may at times be inclined to use slightly authoritarian methods to restore order at the end of what had been a pretty chaotic period of Russia's history under Boris Yeltsin.[52]

On the other hand, it was only in June 2001 that Bush and Putin met for the first time. The day before, in a speech at Warsaw University, Bush gave a preview of what he would tell Putin. There was little original in his rhetoric for he called on Russia to move closer to Europe and stressed that, while NATO expansion would continue, it was no threat to Russia:

> Tomorrow I will see President Putin, and express my hopes for a Russia that is truly great – a greatness measured by the strength of its democracy, the good treatment of minorities and the achievements of its people. I will express to President Putin that Russia is a part of Europe and, therefore, does not need a buffer zone of insecure states separating it from Europe. NATO, even as it grows, is no enemy of Russia… America is no enemy of Russia. We will seek a constructive relationship with Russia, for the benefit of all our peoples.[53]

He went on to talk about the importance of freedom, notably of speech, press and religion, asserting that "greater prosperity and greater security lies in greater freedom". When Bush and Putin did meet, Bush found that he liked the Russian leader, making this rather strange comment about him:

> I looked the man straight in the eye. I found him to be very straightforward and trustworthy. We had a very good dialogue. I was able to get a sense of his soul.[54]

Interestingly enough, Bush found Putin showed some flexibility on the ABM Treaty which may have increased his positive impression.

The attacks of 11 September 2001 brought Great Britain and the United States closer to Russia and the rhetoric of both countries noticeably warmed towards their former Cold War rival at this time. Putin immediately called Bush to offer his help and, indeed, provided a great deal of assistance in Afghanistan as well as supporting anti-terrorism resolutions in the U.N. Nor did Russia object to the establishment of American bases in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The British talked of "a sea change" in relationships between NATO and Russia since 11 September and the tone became somewhat more nuanced on Chechnya: "We talk to the Russians at every opportunity about human rights, but we recognise they have a legitimate right to protect their citizens against a terrorist threat which we know is linked to Osama bin Laden.[55] As Putin would wish, the campaign against bin Laden and the Russian campaign in Chechnya were being linked together. Later, the Minister for Defence, Geoffrey Hoon, praised Russian support as "exceptional" and argued that there was "a unique opportunity to enter into a new security relationship with Russia".[56] In the United States much appreciation was expressed for Russian assistance. Congressman Weldon even talked of buying more Russian oil so as to make America less dependent on Middle Eastern sources.[57]

Of course, not everyone was convinced that Russia had truly changed and become an ally. There was much debate about Russia's motives and many felt that Putin's new friendliness was simply a cynical attempt to escape criticism over Chechnya. Rice herself remained rather noncommittal in her appraisal of the situation:

> I do think that all of the time that we've spent in discussions with the Russians, all of the time that they've spent with us, that we are understanding better each other and what our constraints and demands

> are. But I would not jump to any conclusions about precisely how this is all going to come out or when there's going to be an agreement.[58]

The administration did, however, move toward Russia's position on Chechnya and decided to maintain aid but they proceeded with plans to amend or withdraw from the ABM Treaty. Although Putin expressed his displeasure, he agreed to live with it and the United States withdrew in December 2001. Perhaps the high point of good relations came in May 2002 when Bush and Putin signed a major new arms control treaty and the NATO-Russia Council was created. Bush told the German Parliament, the Bundestag, at the time:

> The Council gives us an opportunity to build common security against common threats. We will start with projects on on-proliferation, counterterrorism, and search-and-rescue operations. Over time, we will expand the cooperation, even as we preserve the core mission of NATO. Many generations have looked at Russia with alarm. Our generation can finally lift this shadow from Europe by embracing the friendship of a new democratic Russia.[59]

In November of that year, Bush even talked of "my friend, Vladimir Putin".[60]

Of course, the warm attitude did not last very long. Russia did not support the United States and the United Kingdom on Iraq, and, indeed, expressed strong opposition to the invasion, threatening a veto in the U.N. Security Council. In private, Putin showed great hostility to the Americans, according to Alastair Campbell:

> He said the US had created this situation. In ignoring the UN they had created danger. They were saying here may be rules, but not for us. Time and again he made comparisons with the situation he faced in Georgia, used as a base for terrorists against Russia. "What would you say if we took out Georgia or sent in the B-52 bombers to wipe out the terror camps?" And what are they planning next–is it Syria, Iran or Korea? "I bet they haven't told you," he added with a rather unpleasant curl of the lip… He said the Americans' enemy was anyone who didn't support them at the time.[61]

Interestingly, though, both the British and the Americans tended to concentrate their attacks on the French rather than on the Russians. Blair gave a major speech to Parliament on 18 March 2003 in a bid for support (which he received) and put the blame for the failure to get a UN resolution squarely on the French:

> Last Monday, we … very nearly had the majority agreement. … Yes, there were debates about the length of the ultimatum, but the basic construct was gathering support. Then, on Monday night, France said that it would veto a second resolution, whatever the circumstances. Then France denounced the six tests. Later that day, Iraq rejected them. Still, we continued to negotiate, even at that point.
>
> Last Friday, France said that it could not accept any resolution with an ultimatum in it. On Monday, we made final efforts to secure agreement. However, the fact is that France remains utterly opposed to anything that lays down an ultimatum authorising action in the event of non-compliance by Saddam.[62]

Blair uses the word "France" four times in this short extract, always in relation to negative words: "veto", "denounced", "not accept", and "utterly opposed". By putting the blame on the French meant that Blair could avoid any harsh criticism of Russia or China–nations which he obviously considered more threatening.

Relations worsened after the "colour revolutions" that took place, first in Georgia (the "rose revolution" of late 2003), then in Ukraine (the "orange revolution" in 2004) and finally in Kyrgyzstan (the "tulip revolution" of 2005). These events brought to power pro-western governments in all these countries. In particular the United States enthusiastically supported them and Russia opposed them, often giving support to anti-western parties in those countries. Bush welcomed the new Georgian president, Mikheil Saakashvili to the White House only a month after he took office and praised the rose revolution enthusiastically:

> The Rose revolution? It was an historic moment. It was a moment where the people spoke. It was a moment where a government changed because the people peacefully exercised their voice and raised their voice. And Georgia transitioned to a new government in an inspiring way…. The possibility of people taking charge of their own lives and transforming society in a peaceful way is a powerful example to people around the world who long for freedom and long for honest government.[63]

Senate Resolution 472 congratulated the people of Georgia for "their commitment to democracy, peace, stability, and economic opportunity" and affirmed their support for "the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and democratic government of Georgia."[64] Even more enthusiasm was expressed for the other colour revolutions, particularly in Ukraine. Since 2003, Georgia and Ukraine have become the focal point for tensions between Russia and the West.

In particular, Anglo-Russian relations have declined precipitously since 2003. The *Second Report on Global Security: Russia* by the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs of the U.K. Parliament outlined three reasons for this: Britain's attempts to promote democracy and human rights in Russia; its close relationship with the U.S. and, most importantly, the existence of a large Russian émigré community there.[65] The report states quite clearly that:

> The most serious source of tension in the UK-Russia bilateral state-to-state relationship arises from the growing Russian émigré community in the U.K., now thought to number perhaps 400,000. The Russians who live in the U.K. include a number of individuals who left Russia for political reasons or who are otherwise at odds with President Putin's rule. The continued protected presence of these individuals in the U.K. acts as a permanent irritant to the bilateral relationship.[66]

These émigrés include Akhmed Zakayev, a Chechen separatist leader who since November 2007 has claimed to be Prime Minister of the Chechen government in exile. Although Moscow requested his extradition, British courts refused it and he was granted asylum in Britain. Boris Berezovsky is another high profile figure, one of the so-called "oligarchs" who enjoyed a privileged position in Yeltsin's time. In 2000 he quarrelled with Putin and moved to the U.K. Three years later Russia demanded his extradition for fraud but he was granted political asylum. A number of executives from the Yukos oil company have also taken refuge in Britain in spite of Russian demands for extradition. The most famous case, however, is that of Alexander Litvinenko, a former KGB agent who took refuge in the U.K. in 2000 where he attached himself to the circle around Berezovsky. On 1 November 2006 he fell ill after meeting with two Russians, Andrey Lugovoy and Dmitry Kovtun. Over the next three weeks the world watched the dramatic decline and death of Litvinenko from poisoning by polonium-210. In a deathbed statement Litvinenko accused Putin of being responsible for his murder. British police eventually charged Lugovoy with involvement in his murder but Russian authorities refused to extradite him. In July 2007 David Miliband, the Foreign Secretary, announced a number of measures in response, including the expulsion of four Russian diplomats. The Opposition fully supported these measures as did most members of Parliament, although a few, such as Andrew MacKinlay of the Labour Party protested, saying: "I am deeply concerned about the House's mood which sems to be anti-Russian, regardless of the fact that we sometimes treat the Russians very arrogantly, and that they have people who they perceive should be facing their courts in London, protected by

our system."[67] Most, however, agreed with Denis MacShane, also of Labour, who praised "the first fight back by any European Foreign Minister against Russia's bullying".[68]

Lugovoy's election to the Russian Duma later only worsened relations as did Russian moves against the British Council. In January 2008 Miliband lashed out against Russia:

> Russia has failed to show any legal reasons under Russian or international law why the British Council should not continue to operate. It has also failed to substantiate its claims that the British Council is avoiding paying tax… Instead of taking legal action against the British Council, the Russian government have resorted to intimidation of its staff. I am confident that the whole House will share the anger and dismay felt by this Government at the actions of the Russian Government. We saw similar actions during the cold war but thought, frankly, they had been put behind us… We are in a Catch 22, because although the Russian authorities keep on denouncing what they call the "illegal activities" of the British Council they never say what the illegal activities are, and it is very difficult for someone to prove that they are not doing something illegal if they are not charged with doing something illegal.[69]

Once again we see a reference to the Cold War and the fear that it was returning. Miliband also stated that the Russian government had made clear that these attacks were linked to the Litvinenko affair. The conflict spread to the United States in March when two brothers with dual Russian and American citizenship were charged with industrial espionage, although this was not the first case of American citizens being so accused. In July, after a BBC report about the Russian government's involvement in the Litvinenko murder, a British diplomat was also accused of spying. Far from having gained the gratitude of Russia, as she had hoped earlier, Britain found herself having extremely poor relations with that nation.

Of course all of this is related to the more general denunciation of the deteriorating human rights situation in Russia. In 2004 Andrew Tyrie of the Conservative Party said of Putin:

> Domestically, he is taking powers to control the judiciary. He is crushing democracy in the provinces by removing elections for provincial governors, confiscating assets and eroding property rights. Free speech is being suppressed in parts of Russia and, in the name of anti-terrorist measures, we now have a sanction for the widespread and systematic use of torture, particularly in Dagestan and Chechnya.[70]

He went on to cite Churchill's "iron curtain" speech–another example of the returning (if it had ever really disappeared) Cold War dimension to rhetoric.

A few months later David Atkinson, still reporting on Russia for the Council of Europe, although it was now a member, revealed his exasperation:

> I am under considerable pressure from our Russian colleagues to recommend that Russia should no longer be subjected to the humiliation of such detailed scrutiny, or "outside interference" as the ultra-nationalists describe it. I am told that… I should now recommend the end of my detailed monitoring of its commitments to encourage President Putin to pursue his reforms against the darker forces that threaten Russia today and it is also said, encourage him to attend the Council of Europe's third summit on 16 and 17 May in Warsaw.[71]

Atkinson refused to recommend the end of the monitoring of Russia. Relations were also tense with the European Court of Human Rights with nearly a quarter of the complaints it received coming from Russian citizens. Atkinson went on to condemn Russian conduct in Chechnya and the "near abroad":

> Russia continues to interfere in the internal affairs of other member states that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, contrary to its commitment to abandon a policy of having a zone of special influence… The personnel, arsenal and equipment of the 14th Russian army remains in Transnistria, thus contributing to a divided Moldova. Russia maintains an active presence in Abkhazia in Georgia and encourages separatism by issuing dual passports to its citizens. That is not peacekeeping, but a long-standing policy of divide and rule, which is unacceptable in today's Europe… We continue to make it clear to our Russian colleagues that as long as civilians disappear or are kidnapped and the military act with impunity, without being held to account we cannot accept the claim that life in Chechnya is returning to normal.[72]

Furthermore, numerous human rights groups as well as British MPs and members of the U.S. Congress signalled the increasing loss of religious liberty in Russia. Signs of anti-Semitism in Russia were also attacked in all these forums. In particular, the repeated assassinations of journalists outraged opinion in western countries. In July 2004 the U.S. citizen, Paul Klebnikov, editor of the Russian version of *Forbes* magazine was shot to death while investigating corruption and suspect business practices in Russia. In 2006 Anna Politkovskaya was murdered after numerous articles

criticizing human rights abuses by the Russian government especially in Chechnya and there were many other cases which either did not come to trial or had secret, often suspended trials or reached the verdict of suicide. In June 2007 the House of Representatives tabled a resolution condemning this situation. Congressman Chris Smith, Republican of New Jersey, who co-sponsored the resolution, explained:

> My resolution addresses the violence of the murder of independent journalists, and the lie in the claim that their murders have been seriously investigated. Solzhenitsyn said of Communist Russia, in our country, the lie has become not just a moral category, but a killer of the state. We have to ask ourselves and ask Mr. Putin, was this terrible statement also true of post-Communist Russia?[73]

Once again we notice the return of references to Russia in the Cold War. His implication was clear: Russia was moving back towards the authoritarianism it had had under communism. Senator Barack Obama of Illinois shared these worries and strongly condemned irregularities in the Russian parliamentary elections of 2007:

> Well before the campaign even began, several Russian political parties and politicians were banned from participating in the election. During the campaign, President Putin and his party, United Russia, enjoyed virtually unlimited positive television air-time on Kremlin-controlled networks, while opposition parties had their ads removed and their campaign materials confiscated. The Russian authorities have prevented opposition parties from campaigning fairly, imprisoning opposition leaders, intimidating activists, and preventing them from making their case to Russia's voters. Russian voters have reported that they have been pressured to vote for the Kremlin's party, United Russia, by employers and local officials. In Chechnya, 99.2 percent of voters allegedly turned out to vote and 99.3 percent of these voters allegedly cast their ballot for United Russia. Several other regions have reported similar results for Putin's party, making a mockery of this vote as a free and fair election. Yesterday's elections were the least free and fair in the 16 years of Russia's modern history as an independent country.[74]

In the last sentence we see, once again, this idea of regression: Russia is returning to authoritarianism.

Perhaps even more important to the western powers was that Russia, which has one of the world's largest reserves of oil and gas, increasingly seemed a threat in the energy domain. At the end of 2005 Russia demanded that Ukraine should pay market prices for gas as of 1 January 2006 which would have meant a massive and sudden increase. Ukraine

insisted that the country would need a phase in period as it could not, overnight as it were, pay such a large augmentation. Since the two countries failed to reach an agreement, Russia cut off gas to Ukraine in the new year and Ukraine, then, siphoned off gas from Russian pipelines to the E.U. causing drops in supply there. A year later a second incident occurred involving Belarus. Both episodes were widely interpreted as politically motivated and a Russian assertion of power in the "near abroad". They shook confidence in the west about Russia's reliability as an energy supplier. Although the United States was not immediately concerned by events, the House of Representatives voted a resolution stating, among other things, "Russia has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to use its role as supplier of oil and gas to exert political pressure on other countries, such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus, among others"[75] Britain, although not very dependent on Russian energy, was, as a European power, more directly concerned. Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, insisted that: "We need to ensure not just in this country but throughout the European Union, that the dominance of Russia does not become a real problem in future, as it was for Ukraine over Christmas."[76] Like many in Congress, other British MPs, not only the unrepentant cold warriors, drew more ominous conclusions from the episode. The distinguished barrister Vera Baird of the Labour party said:

> The whole of Europe, which relies on Russia for a quarter of its supply, was forced to realise that there are serious limits to the length of the spoon that can be used when supping with President Putin. Clearly he will readily use his abundance of hydrocarbons for political purposes, in this instance to punish the western-leaning Ukraine for considering joining NATO and the EU and to force them back into Russian hegemony.[77]

Few tried to defend Russia or mentioned that the dispute was over raising prices to market levels.

In February 2008, Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama, made a list of all the ominous signs coming from Russia: its cutting off of gas supplies; cyber attacks against Estonia; its support for Georgian separatists and anti-western elements in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan; its increasing military budget; its testing of new nuclear weapons and its continuing sale of enriched uranium to Iran. In particular he attacked Russian opposition to the construction of a missile defence system in Poland and the Czech Republic, which he stated, did not threaten Russia. Instead he warned that America "has to wake up and be able to understand that Russia, fuelled by all this new oil money and an increasingly autocratic regime under Mr

Putin, is not a healthy partner."[78] Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State, was more nuanced in her evaluation of Russo-American relations:

> Our relationship with Russia has been sorely tested by Moscow's rhetoric, by its tendency to treat its neighbors as lost "spheres of influence," and by its energy policies that have a distinct political tinge. And Russia's internal course has been a source of considerable disappointment, especially because in 2000 we hoped that it was moving closer to us in terms of values. Yet it is useful to remember that Russia is not the Soviet Union. It is neither a permanent enemy nor a strategic threat. Russians now enjoy greater opportunity and, yes, personal freedom than at almost any other time in their country's history. But that alone is not the standard to which Russians themselves want to be held. Russia is not just a great power; it is also the land and culture of a great people. And in the twenty-first century, greatness is increasingly defined by the technological and economic development that flows naturally in open and free societies. That is why the full development both of Russia and of our relationship with it still hangs in the balance as the country's internal transformation unfolds.[79]

In the period since the end of the Cold War, rhetoric about Russia has not changed fundamentally, with fear and hostility still dominating. Although both Britain and the United States initiated a policy of economic assistance to Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and spoke favourably of certain Russian leaders, they did so to a large extent from fear of more antagonistic forces gaining power there. Few people spoke positively about Russia itself or of Russian culture. The dominant attitude expressed was rather patronising, insisting that Western values were superior and that Russia had to learn proper behaviour. Certainly, as the war in Chechnya shows, there was a great deal of justification for this mind-set. But Putin was not entirely wrong in pointing out a very real hypocrisy in both Britain and America, for while they criticized Russian actions in Chechnya they later invaded Iraq without UN authorization. After the 9/11 attacks, Putin did provide important support to both nations, notably in Afghanistan (although he undoubtedly did so from calculations of Russian advantage). It was only after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 that his rhetoric towards the West became more aggressive–and this in turn provoked more hostility against Russia in the West. The democratic deficiencies of Russia and its human rights abuses are indisputable (notably the repeated assassinations of journalists and other opponents of the regime) and its behaviour in the Caucasus region more than alarming. Much of the rhetoric in the West is, therefore, justifiable. yet, one is tempted to wonder if the patronising attitude of both the U.S. and the U.K. since the end of the Cold War–their conviction in the superiority of their

values–did not provoke a real hostility in Russia–especially after the Iraq War convinced many in that nation that much of it was hypocrisy.

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Notes

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[3] John Major, *John Major: The Autobiography* (London: Harper Collins, 1999) 501
[4] Kauffman, *op.cit*.
[5] Quoted in Bill Clinton, *The Clinton Foreign Policy Reader*, ed. Alvin Rubinstein, Albina Shayevich and Boris Zlotnikov (London: M E Sharpe, 2000), 44.
[6] Bill Clinton, Address to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1/4/1993, in *Presidential Public Papers: Bill Clinton, 1993, Book 1, January 20 to July 31 1993* (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1994) 375
[7] For more information on this see James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul. *Power and Purpose: US Policy toward Russia after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 2003)
[8] Bob Dole, *Congressional Record*, 17/3/1994, S3128
[9] Richard Lugar, Speech at American Spectator Washington Dinner Club,, 7 March 1994, in *Congressional Record*, 17/3/1994, S3129
[10] Slade Gorton, *Congressional Record*, vol. 140, 22/2/1994, S1563
[11] Trent Lott, *Congressional Record*, vol. 140, 22/2/1994, S1580
[12] *Ibid*
[13] Gerald Solomon, *Congressional Record*, 16/9/1994, H24678
[14] *Ibid*.
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[16] Jan Schakowsky, *Congressional Record*, 23/3/1999, H 1537
[17] Steve Horn, *Congressional Record*, 18/3/1997, H1109
[18] David Davis, *House of Commons Debates*, 8/6/1995, vol. 261, col. 357
[19] *Ibid*., col. 373

[20] *Ibid*. col 368
[21] David Atkinson, *House of Commons Debates,* 8/6/1995, vol. 261, cols. 363-4
[22] Atkinson, *House of Commons Debates,* 10/1/1996, vol. 269, col.
[23] *Ibid*., col 175
[24] A third question, that of the ex-Yugoslavia, will not be considered in any detail here as there is a separate chapter on it.
[25] Nunn, *Congressional Record,* 10/10/1995, S14846
[26] *Ibid*., S14847
[27] Lugar speech *op. cit.*
[28] McCain, *Congressional Record,* 22/2/1994, S1561
[29] Gorton, *op. cit.*
[30] Claiborne Pell, *Congressional Record,* 23/6/1994, S7482
[31] Lugar speech, *op cit*. "Near Abroad" is the translation of a Russian term for the other republics of the former Soviet Union
[32] Bill Clinton, "Remarks at a Signing Ceremony for the NATO-Russia Founding Act", Paris, 27 May 1997, *Presidential Public Papers, Bill Clinton: 1997*, Book 1, January 1-June 30, 1997 (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 1998) 657
[33] *Ibid* p. 658
[34] Madeleine Albright, statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 7/10/1997, *Congressional Record,* S 10784
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[37] *Ibid*., col 820
[38] Gerald Kauffman, *House of Commons Debates* , 14/1/1992, vol. 201, col. 829
[39] David Howells, *House of Commons Debates* 14/1/1992, vol. 201, col. 858
[40] Sir Patrick Duffy, *House of Commons Debates*, 14/1/1992, vol. 201, col. 844
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[42] Sam Nunn, *Congressional Record,* 10/10/1995, S 14846
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[46] Joseph Biden, *Congressional Record, Senate*, 10/9/1998, S10191
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[49] Jesse Helms, *Congressional Record,* 15/3/1999, S2633
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[56] Geoffrey Hoon, *House of Commons Debates*, 14/1/2002, vol. 378, col. 9
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[60] George W. Bush, speech at the NATO summit, Prague Hilton, Prague, 20 November 2002, in *Public Papers: George W. Bush, 2002, Book 2, July 1-December 31 2002* (Washington, D.C.: USGPO, 2005) 2102
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[62] Tony Blair, *House f Commons Debates*, 18/3/2003, vol. 401, col. 764
[63] George W. Bush, joint press conference with Mikheil Saakashvili, 25 February 2004 at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040225-1.html
[64] *Congressional Record*, 18/11/2004, S 11512
[65] *Op.cit*. See chapter 4, paragraph 96. Dr. Alexander Pravda told the committee that "Moscow sees Britain as very close to the U.S. yet of little use as a source of influence on Washington."
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[67] Andrew MacKinlay, *House of Commons Debates*, 16/7/2007, vol. 463, col. 29
[68] *Ibid*., col 30
[69] David Miliband, *House of Commons Debates*, 17/1/2008, vol. 470, col. 1095
[70] Andrew Tyrie, *House of Commons Debates*, 24/11/2004 vol. 428, col. 161
[71] David Atkinson, *House of Commons Debates*, 24/3/2005, vol. 432, col. 1056
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