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THESIS

**RUSSIA'S INTERESTS IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON
TERRORISM: IMPLICATIONS FOR A
CONTINUING US-RUSSIAN PARTNERSHIP**

by

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IMPLICATIONS FOR A CONTINUING US-RUSSIAN PARTNERSHIP**

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ABSTRACT

The September 11th terrorist attacks triggered an unexpected rapprochement between the United States and the Russian Federation. Russia joined the US-led coalition and supported Operation Enduring Freedom. US-Russian collaboration in Afghanistan surpassed most previous efforts in terms of the level of cooperation attained, especially in traditionally inviolable areas such as intelligence-sharing; however, disagreements over the invasion of Iraq confirmed that the US and Russia have not yet achieved a strategic partnership. This study uses Russia's decisions during the war on terrorism to discover the motives driving Russian foreign policy. Analysts offer three dominant rationales regarding Russia's behavior: 1) the desire to balance US unilateralism, 2) to gain support for "anti-terrorist" action in Chechnya, or 3) to advance the nation's economic interests. Each variable is individually assessed to see if expected gains in that sphere covary with Russia's decision to support and potential losses correlate with Russia's decision to oppose the war on terrorism. The study also reveals the true nature of the US-Russian relationship and exposes challenges and future possibilities for US-Russian relations. The last section makes policy recommendations and suggests how to build a stronger US-Russian partnership.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	RUSSIAN DECISIONS AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM	1
B.	BACKGROUND	2
	1. US-Russian Relations.....	3
	2. Sources of Russian Foreign Policy.....	8
C.	METHODOLOGY	11
II.	ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN ECONOMY IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM	13
A.	TRANSITION TO A MARKET ECONOMY	13
B.	CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION	15
C.	RUSSIAN ECONOMY AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM	18
	1. Operation Enduring Freedom	18
	2. Operation Iraqi Freedom.....	21
D.	CONCLUSION	23
III.	RUSSIAN-CHECHEN CONFLICT AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM.....	25
A.	EVOLUTION OF THE RUSSIAN-CHECHEN CONFLICT	25
B.	CHECHNYA AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM.....	31
	1. Operation Enduring Freedom	31
	2. Operation Iraqi Freedom.....	34
C.	CONCLUSION	35
IV.	BALANCING AND POWER IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM	37
A.	GLOBAL POWER, GLOBAL THREATS	37
	1. Balance in International Affairs.....	37
	2. Rise of US Unipolarity	39
B.	BALANCING POWER IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM.....	40
	1. Operation Enduring Freedom	41
	2. Operation Iraqi Freedom.....	44
C.	CONCLUSION	45
V.	LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE	47
A.	RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY.....	47
B.	NATURE OF THE US-RUSSIAN RELATIONSHIP	50
C.	THE FUTURE OF US-RUSSIAN RELATIONS	52
	1. Why the US Needs Russia	52
	2. Path to a Better Partnership	53
	a. Transition to Democracy	54
	b. Economic Cooperation	56
	c. Subtle Hegemony	58
D.	CONCLUSION	59
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	61
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	71

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. RUSSIAN DECISIONS AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

US-Russian relations took an unforeseen, positive turn following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States. Unexpectedly, Russia pledged and delivered support to the United States in very concrete and real ways. US-Russian collaboration in Afghanistan surpassed most previous efforts in terms of the level of cooperation attained, especially in traditionally inviolable areas such as intelligence-sharing; however, disagreements about the invasion of Iraq confirmed that there is still a long way to go before the US and Russia have a genuine, enduring partnership. This study of Russia's decisions during the war on terrorism will expose the rationale behind those decisions and illuminate issues and concerns that factor into Russian foreign policy.

Although there are currently many different views on what drives Russian foreign policy, a few key issues stand out. Analysts offer three dominant rationales regarding Russia's behavior: 1) the desire to balance US unilateralism, 2) to gain support for "anti-terrorist" action in Chechnya, and 3) to advance the nation's economic interests. These motives are reflected in the Foreign Policy Concept signed by President Putin in July 2000. It states that the "uppermost priority of the foreign policy course of Russia is to protect the interests of the individual and society" by ensuring the "security of the country," preserving and strengthening "sovereignty and territorial integrity," and achieving "firm and prestigious positions in the world community." Further emphasis is placed on improving the economy, enhancing the standard of living, and eliminating existing and emerging "hotbeds of tension and conflicts in regions adjacent to the Russian Federation."¹

Beyond the broader context of general Russian foreign policy, Chechnya, the economy, and the balance of global power are particularly relevant when considering Russia's decisions to support the US in Afghanistan and not in Iraq. However, other rationales for Russia's decisions in the war on terrorism do exist. Some authors suggest

¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Information and Press Department, *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*, Moscow, (28 June 2000) [on-line]; available from <http://www.in.mid.ru>; Internet; accessed on 15 April 2004.

that support was based on the idea of *quid pro quo*. In other words, the US would reconsider its positions on the ABM treaty withdrawal, NATO expansion, and rescheduling and forgiving portions of the Soviet-era debt in return for Russia's cooperation in the anti-terrorist coalition.² Another explanation is that Putin "is following a predictable, pragmatic foreign policy, based on relatively clearly defined national interests."³ A more cynical view is that the decisions were based on a leader's whim.⁴ Although these views should not be entirely discounted, more detail is needed. If assistance is based on *quid pro quo*, what exactly is Russia looking to gain in return for its cooperation? If Putin is following a pragmatic foreign policy, how does he prioritize Russia's national interests? Focusing on the motivations and interests that drive Russian behavior will provide better insight into Russian foreign policy and a greater ability to predict future actions. For that reason, this thesis evaluates whether Russia is motivated by advancing national economic interests, gaining approval of action in Chechnya, or balancing US power. It concludes that the primary motive in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and in Russian foreign policy in general, is the desire to further national economic objectives.

B. BACKGROUND

US-Russian relations during the past one and a half decades can be characterized as a rollercoaster ride—reaching great heights in one moment, only to come crashing down in the next. From the initial euphoric optimism following the collapse of communism to the occupation of the Pristina airport by Russian troops during the Kosovo conflict, it has been difficult to predict which direction Russian foreign policy might turn next. One major shift in US-Russian relations followed the terrorist attacks on 9/11. In a televised address shortly after September 11, 2001, President Putin expressed his empathy for America, stating, "Russia knows directly what terrorism means." Later, in a joint statement, Presidents Bush and Putin "resolved to advance cooperation in combating

² Leon Aron, "Russia's Choice," *Russian Outlook*, Winter 2002 [on-line]; available from <http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/aei/aro/ar116>; Internet; accessed on 3 February 2004.

³ Jeronim Perovic, "Coming Closer or Drifting Apart? EU-Russia Partnership and EU Enlargement in Eastern Europe," May 2003 [on-line]; available from <http://www.ciaonet.org/casestudy/pej01/index.html>; Internet; accessed on 3 February 2004.

⁴ Aron, "Russia's Choice."

new terrorist threats” and announced the formation of a US-Russia Working Group to do so.⁵ These statements proclaiming cooperation and partnership between the US and Russia were indicative of a radical shift in Russian foreign policy, which had traditionally viewed the US as an actor with whom Russia had “serious” and “fundamental differences.”⁶ Relations continued to strengthen until the US began discussing the invasion of Iraq with or without United Nations (UN) Security Council backing. Once again US-Russian relations became strained and arduous. It is important to examine US-Russian relations over the past decade for a few reasons. It helps put the current relationship in context, depicts any trends that may be relevant to the discussion of Russian foreign policy, and exposes the significance of the Russian support provided to the US during the war on terrorism. The next section provides background information about US-Russian relations since the end of the Cold War and political affairs that may influence foreign policy.

1. US-Russian Relations

For decades, political scientists studied US-Russian relations in terms of a bipolar world with two superpowers balancing each others’ actions. After the collapse of the Soviet Union the geopolitical environment was transformed. For the US, the nineties were a time of cautious optimism as Russian began its economic and democratic reforms; meanwhile, Russia struggled to define its new role in international affairs.⁷ Relations cooled considerably toward the end of the nineties and remained low on the US priority list when the Bush administration took office.⁸ However, another surprising transformation began when President Putin declared his support for the US-led war on terrorism in the wake of the September 11th attacks. US-Russian relations changed dramatically with significant implications for both US and Russian foreign policy.

⁵ U.S. and Russian Presidents, Joint Statement, “Joint Statement on Counterterrorism by the President of the United States and the President of Russia,” 21 October 2001 [on-line]; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/20011022-11.html>; Internet; accessed on 4 March 2004.

⁶ *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation* (28 June 2000).

⁷ Peter Rutland, “Shifting Sands: Russia’s Economic Development and its Relations with the West,” in *Russia and the West at the Millennium*, eds. Medvedev, Kononov, and Oznobishchev (George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2003), 109.

⁸ Alexander A. Belkin, “Russian-US Relations and the Global Counter-Terrorist Campaign,” paper for the conference on “Russian Security and the Continuing War on Terrorism,” (Monterey, CA, 16-17 September 2003): 2.

After the collapse of the USSR, American policy focused on reconstructing Russia. This made Russia's development and transition to a capitalist market-based economy the central theme of US-Russian relations. There was more common ground for the two countries in economics than on security issues, such as Chechnya and NATO enlargement. This policy also fit well with President Clinton's aim of spreading market democracy, which he felt was good for American business and in limiting war.⁹ Russia desired American assistance, but at the same time wanted to maintain its great power role in the world based on its nuclear capabilities; Russia was not ready to accept the US as the world hegemon.¹⁰

Relations between the two nations waxed and waned as the nineties progressed. Both countries had underestimated the difficulties of creating a market democracy in Russia and were frustrated by overly idealistic hopes of success. Disagreements about Kosovo, Chechnya, Iran, NATO enlargement, and a rapidly declining Russian economy added additional strain to the relationship. "Hundreds of millions of dollars of US aid, and billions of dollars of IMF and World Bank loans, disappeared into Russia with few positive results to show for them."¹¹ The financial crisis in August 1998 further aggravated relations. The US-Russian relationship cooled even more as the nineties came to a close.

Russians were disillusioned with the Clinton administration's failed attempts at reform and the growing imbalance in power during Clinton's terms. As a result, when President Putin was elected in the spring of 2000, he chose not to focus on improving relations until the upcoming US presidential election. The Russian political elite were hopeful when they heard a Republican president had been elected; during the past few decades, relations were perceived to have been, in general, better under Republicans than Democrats. However, Russia was initially placed low on the new Bush administration's

⁹ Rutland, "Shifting Sands: Russia's Economic Development and its Relations with the West," 110.

¹⁰ Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, trans. Antonina Bouis (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 150-151.

¹¹ Rutland, "Shifting Sands: Russia's Economic Development and its Relations with the West," 110.

list of foreign policy priorities. As much as the Russians wanted to be viewed as equals, they were no longer a preeminent concern for the White House.¹²

Despite Russian optimism, the Putin and Bush administrations got off to a rocky start. Russia was unhappy with the United States' desire to withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty and its disapproval of the Chechen conflict. The United States' criticism on the lack of free speech and charges about Russia being unable to control the proliferation of its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were also points of contention. Russia accused the US of unilateralism, of "breaking down the structure of international treaties on strategic arms control and starting a new nuclear arms race, of interference in Russia's domestic affairs, and double-standards in the treatment of Russia."¹³ Many Russians felt Americans were intentionally trying to keep Russia weak by preventing its entry into international organizations seen as necessary for economic development, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), and by criticizing its policy of trade with countries such as Iran.¹⁴

These issues were all momentarily set aside on 11 September 2001, when President Putin called President Bush to offer his condolences. He went on to pledge his country's support saying, "in the name of Russia, I want to say to the American people—we are with you."¹⁵ A joint statement issued on 21 October 2001 reaffirmed Russia's condemnation of the terrorist attacks and the United States' and Russia's readiness to work together to "fight this deadly challenge through active cooperation and coordination."¹⁶ Subsequently, Russia joined the US-led coalition committed to fighting the global war on terrorism and US-Russian relations moved into a new phase.

When faced with a national tragedy, sympathetic rhetoric from foreign leaders is expected; the actual assistance Russia provided as part of the anti-terrorist coalition is a

¹² Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, 152-154.

¹³ Belkin, 3.

¹⁴ Celeste A. Wallander, "The Multiple Dimensions of Russian Threat Assessment," *PONARS Policy Memo 199*, April 2001.

¹⁵ Jill Dougherty, "9/11 a 'turning point' for Putin," 10 September 2002 [on-line]; available from <http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/09/10/ar911.russia.putin/>; Internet; accessed 4 March 2004.

¹⁶ "Joint Statement on Counterterrorism by the President of the United States and the President of Russia," 21 October 2001.

better gauge of Russia's sincerity. Russian contributions to the US-led war in Afghanistan were significant, even though no direct military support was supplied. Russian leaders began by standing down troops and canceling strategic bomber and missile exercises scheduled for mid-September in response to America's heightened state of readiness.¹⁷ They helped build relations between the US and Afghanistan's Northern Alliance and shared intelligence that was especially helpful due to their familiarity with fighting the Taliban.¹⁸ Russia increased support to the anti-Taliban United Front, equipping them with more arms—including tanks, armored personnel carriers, reconnaissance vehicles, and infantry fighting vehicles.¹⁹ It also allowed the US to ship American ammunition and other supplies via rail from ports in Northern Europe to Central Asia even though it meant having a large US contingent on Russian soil.²⁰

Russia also contributed to the effort by providing humanitarian assistance, leading reconstruction efforts, and manning hospitals. To date Russia has transported more than 420,296 tons of food commodities, 2,198 tons of medical supplies, and various other amounts of beds, heaters, tents, bedding, kitchen utensils, and detergents. Russia provided personnel to reconstruct the Salang tunnel, effectively reconnecting the northern and southern provinces of Afghanistan. They also provided the first coalition hospital in Kabul at the end of November 2001 and treated over six thousand patients before turning it over to the local population in January 2002.²¹ In a more indirect way, Russia contributed to coalition readiness by maintaining a stable and affordable supply of oil and gas to the international market when OPEC moved to reduce the supply of oil.²²

¹⁷ Rouben Azizian, "A Marriage of Convenience: Russia and US Foreign Policy," *Asian Affairs, an American Review* 30 (Summer 2003): 151.

¹⁸ Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, 207.

¹⁹ Thomas Withington, "The Other Allies: Russia, India, and Afghanistan's United Front," *Current History* 101 (January 2002): 43.

²⁰ Michael Moran and Robert Windrem, "New Russia-US War Ties Revealed," [on-line]; available from <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/6527-2.cfm>; Internet; accessed on 7 March 2004.

²¹ U.S. Central Command, "International Contributions to the War on Terrorism," [on-line]; available from <http://www.centcom.mil/Operations/Coalition>; Internet; accessed on 4 March 2004.

²² Oksana Antonenko, "Fighting Terrorism: For the US and Russia, One War but Two Agendas," [on-line]; available from <http://www.carnegie.org/reporter/04/backpage/russia.html>; Internet; accessed on 25 February 2004.

The Russians made an extremely important contribution when they overcame their reservations about allowing US troops within their traditional sphere of influence. Russia did not object when the Central Asian nations decided to support the US on various levels. All the governments in the region gave the coalition blanket overflight rights; some also provided emergency landing rights, while others, including Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan offered the coalition basing rights.²³ The assistance provided by each of the Central Asian nations proved to be invaluable to coalition efforts in Afghanistan and would have been challenging without Russian cooperation. The level of collaboration is especially impressive given Russia's usual reticence toward tolerating strong unilateral action, especially within its sphere of influence. US Secretary of State Colin Powell said it best when he praised Russian contributions to Operation Enduring Freedom, "stating that Russia had been 'a key member' of the international antiterrorist coalition and had played 'a crucial role' in the coalition's success 'by providing intelligence, bolstering the Northern Alliance, and assisting our entry into Central Asia.'"²⁴

On that note, US-Russian relations continued to improve through 2001 and the beginning of 2002. Meetings between Presidents Bush and Putin led to several positive developments, including cooperation on the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty and recognition of Russia as a market economy and full member in the G8.²⁵ As 2002 progressed and the US began seriously considering military action in Iraq, relations once again became strained. The US was concerned with Russia's resumption of trade negotiations with Iraq and expansion of nuclear assistance to Iran. Russia felt it was conceding on too many issues, including US presence in Central Asia, NATO enlargement, and ABM treaty withdrawal, and not getting enough deliverables in return. The lines of communication were open, but Russia remained suspicious of US action and unilateralism and no real effort was put forth to strengthen the strategic core of the relationship.²⁶

²³ US Department of State, Office of Central Affairs, "US Policy in Central Asia: Frequently Asked Questions," 20 November 2002 [on-line]; available from <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/eur/eurasia/centralasia-faq-112002.htm>; Internet; accessed on 7 March 2004.

²⁴ Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, 207.

²⁵ Belkin, 8-10.

²⁶ Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, 232-234, 247.

A new test for US-Russian relations emerged as the US solidified plans for action in Iraq. American and Russian foreign policy and economic interests openly diverged for the first time since September 11th. Russia opposed war without UN support; however, when the US invaded Iraq, Putin said that although Russia's position had not changed, US defeat was not in Russia's interest. At the same time, the United States was far less critical of Russia than it was of France or Germany with respect to the controversy over Iraq. The US and Russia still had to continue work on several other important issues in the realm of terrorism and non-proliferation. Russia's decision not to support US-action in Iraq and its continuing interest in strengthening bilateral ties left many analysts uncertain about Russia's strategic objectives.²⁷ Discovering the person or group that has the ability to make or influence foreign policy decisions is a critical part of understanding Russian objectives.

2. Sources of Russian Foreign Policy

Several factors affect how foreign policy is created; among those factors are the type of government or structure of the state, the various political groups in existence, and the strength of the state versus society. Political parties were and continue to be an underdeveloped part of the Russian government and thus, are not effective at elevating and representing the foreign policy positions of the public. In addition, the Parliament lacks mechanisms for influencing the foreign policy aspect of executive power. There is also an absence of well-established, influential organizations and interest groups. A system without strong political parties and interest groups often lends itself, as it has with Russia, to giving the president *carte-blanche* to conduct foreign policy.

During the nineties, the political elite did play a larger role in forming foreign policy. The elite included military leaders, influential members of Parliament, and the oligarchs; however, these people were more inclined to look out for their own interests rather than representing the citizens of Russia. Russian foreign policy appeared to complement the interests of whichever group within the elite held more sway in the

²⁷ Paul J. Saunders, "The U.S. and Russia after Iraq," *Policy Review* 119 (June/July 2003): 30-31.

president's circle at a particular time. This helps explain the often erratic shifts in policy—as the favored elite changed, so did the policies.²⁸

More recently and in line with the super-presidential system currently in place, the power to formulate foreign policy rests almost solely in the hands of the Russian president. The 2000 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation clearly states that “the President of the Russian Federation, in conformity with his constitutional powers, shall provide guidance of the country's foreign policy and as the Head of State shall represent the Russian Federation in international relations.” The other body's mentioned, such as the State Duma, the Security Council, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are there to “support,” “execute,” and “provide direct implementation” of the course set by the President of the Russian Federation.²⁹ In this case, high approval ratings in public opinion polls legitimize the president's actions and allow him to act as he desires in the realm of foreign policy.

After September 11th, President Putin made a choice to favor the West and support US action in Afghanistan; however, Russia's political class was ambivalent about his decision. Even those in his entourage expressed their lack of desire to join the anti-terrorist coalition or participate in the war in Afghanistan.³⁰ Most of the political elite felt that 9/11 had not transformed the world; all the old problems, from disagreements about the Balkans to the United States' desire to withdraw from the ABM treaty, still existed and the attacks were simply an “appalling outcome of America's own foreign policy.”³¹ The military also voiced opposition and was reluctant to endorse the presence of US troops in Central Asia.³²

Various levels of support and dissent toward a policy of assisting the US in Afghanistan were evident during the debates in the fall 2001 session of the State Duma.

²⁸ Alexei Salmin, “Domestic Actors and the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation,” in *Russia and the West at the Millennium*, eds. Medvedev, Konovalov, and Oznobishchev (George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 2003), 76.

²⁹ *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*.

³⁰ Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, 205-206.

³¹ Dmitri Trenin, “America's Anti-Terrorist Campaign and Russia's Choice,” 19 September 2001 [online]; available from <http://ceip.org/files/Publications/treninrussiachoice.asp?from+pubdate>; Internet; accessed on 7 February 2004.

³² Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, 206.

The Yabloko Party, a mainly pro-Western faction, was in favor of doing everything possible to cooperate with the US against international terrorists. The Union of Right Forces advocated close collaboration with the US. The pro-president centrist groups closely followed the official Kremlin position of a cautious approach toward cooperation. The Communist Party leader objected to any proposals about collaboration. The leaders of the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) opposed even sympathizing with the US and actually suggested cooperating with the Islamic world instead. But President Putin had made his decision; Russia would provide intelligence support and other aid to the coalition, but there would be no direct military participation. The Russian Parliament eventually reached a consensus in line with Putin's views and passed a resolution that gave the president moral and political support.³³ This was the first time President Putin acted against the advice of the political elite.

Even though there is a lack of political advocacy to accompany public opinion, it still plays a role in the Russian government. Part of the reason the president was able to act as he saw fit and without immediate support from the political elite was his extremely high public approval rating. The president's approval rating had been in the seventieth percentile since March of 2001.³⁴ In terms of public opinion directly related to the situation in Afghanistan, fifty percent of the population saw the Taliban as a threat to world civilization in October 2001. In a survey completed in September 2001, the majority of Russians preferred to stay neutral in the conflict between NATO and the Muslim world. In the same survey, of those people that did choose to support one side, twenty percent supported backing NATO and breaking ties with the Muslim world (Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan) and only five percent endorsed giving moral support to the Muslim world. Another survey done in October/November 2001 showed that slightly more Russians agreed with US and British military action in Afghanistan than opposed it.³⁵ Supporting the coalition in Afghanistan without engaging in direct military action

³³ Vladimir Rukavishnikov, "The Russian Perception of the American 'War on Terror,'" (Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, 2002) [on-line]; available from <http://www.copri.dk/publications/Wp/WP%202002/27-2002.doc>; Internet; accessed on 29 January 2004.

³⁴ "Putin's Performance in Office," [on-line]; available from <http://www.russiavotes.org>; Internet; accessed on 3 March 2004.

³⁵ "War in Afghanistan," [on-line]; available from <http://www.russiavotes.org>; Internet; accessed on 3 March 2004.

allowed President Putin to stay within the acceptable bounds of public opinion and keep his approval rating high.

September 11th provided the US and Russia with a common threat and an opportunity to cooperate. With a somewhat surprising shift in foreign policy, Russia expressed its support for America's proposed military action in Afghanistan. These changes in Russian foreign policy did not come without resistance, especially from the political elite; however, one of the most popular Russian leaders ever was able to transform policy and deliver much needed intelligence, humanitarian aid, and support in Central Asia to coalition forces without losing public support.

C. METHODOLOGY

US-Russian relations were on a decline prior to 9/11, and the majority of Russia's political elite were not in favor of actively supporting the US after the attacks. The obvious follow-on question is: what motivated Putin to make an unexpected shift to the West? This thesis answers that question by evaluating three likely explanations for Russia's decisions in the war on terrorism: the desire to balance US unilateralism, to gain support for "anti-terrorist" action in Chechnya, and to advance the nation's economic interests. The next three chapters examine the possible role each of these factors played. This is done using multiple within-case comparisons, where the dependent variables are Russia's decision to support OEF and its decision not to support OIF. The independent variables include advancing national economic interests, gaining approval of fighting in Chechnya, and balancing US power. These variables are individually assessed to see if expected gains covary with Russia's decision to support and potential losses correlate with Russia's decision to oppose the war on terrorism.

The analysis in chapters two through four evaluates Russian foreign policy and US-Russian relations within the context of the war on terrorism. The final chapter uses those results to draw conclusions about the national interests that are currently guiding Russian foreign policy and then applies them to the broader framework of general US-Russian relations. The study also exposes challenges and future possibilities for US-

Russian relations and reveals the true nature of the US-Russian relationship. The final portion of Chapter V suggests ways in which the US can build a stronger partnership with Russia.

II. ROLE OF THE RUSSIAN ECONOMY IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Russia's struggle to move from a state-planned economy to a market-based economy began with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although the economy has improved significantly over the past four years, the conversion is still not complete. The battle to stabilize and diversify the economy, while increasing the standard of living for Russian citizens continues today—two years after Russia was officially declared a market economy by the European Union (EU) and US in the summer of 2002.

President Putin has made it clear that the economy is one of his main priorities. With a quarter of the Russian population still living below the poverty line, low levels of foreign investment, and high levels of crime, corruption, capital flight and unemployment, it is obvious why. In his 2000 national address, Putin emphasized the persistent problem of “economic weakness [in] Russia” stating, “The growing gap between industrialized countries and Russia is pushing us into the ranks of Third World countries.”³⁶ With Putin's clearly declared goal of reviving the economy and a foreign policy concept that “stipulates the domination of internal goals over external ones,” the role the economy plays in the Russian decision-making process must be evaluated.³⁷ In particular, understanding how national economic priorities affect Russian foreign policy is critical.

A. TRANSITION TO A MARKET ECONOMY

When Russia first became an independent nation, Western advisors swept in to help start an extensive overhaul of the Communist economic system. The advisors encouraged Russia to pursue policies in line with the “Washington Consensus,” including price and trade liberalization, financial stabilization, and privatization. Unfortunately, many of these changes were implemented in a sudden and radical manner, in line with the notion of shock therapy, and did not account for the many underlying characteristics of

³⁶ Russian President, “Vladimir Putin's State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly: ‘The State of Russia: A Way to an Effective State,’” 8 July 2000 [on-line]; available from <http://www.ln.mid.ru/>; Internet; accessed on 5 February 2004.

³⁷ “Vladimir Putin's State of the Nation Address to the Federal Assembly,” July 2000.

both Russian society and institutions. In the early nineties, Russians had limited experience with creating and maintaining macroeconomic policies and no established central bank to manage interest rates. Subsidies in both enterprises and consumer goods were widespread and property rights were overwhelmingly underdeveloped. The Russian public may have grasped the physical benefits of a market economy, but did not understand what it would take to get there.³⁸ Another contributing factor in the overall economic situation was Russia's assumption of all Soviet era debt. These conditions of limited indigenous expertise, no groundwork for building lasting economic institutions, and rampant corruption were bound to make a rapid transition more difficult.

Looking back, it is apparent that the Western advisors underestimated the complexity of converting Russia's command-administered economy into a working market economy. Poor appraisals of the overall situation led to decisions that generated hyperinflation when prices were freed overnight, corrupt privatization with those in positions of power taking control of the most lucrative enterprises, and policies of deficit financing. Eventually things spiraled out of control and ended in the 1998 financial crisis.³⁹

Russia began on its path toward economic recovery in 1999. Two factors that contributed significantly in the beginning were the devaluation of the ruble and high energy prices; however, exchange rates and natural resource prices are, by nature, unpredictable and cannot be relied upon for long-term economic improvements.⁴⁰ This reliance on the export of raw materials to keep the economy afloat created a skewed export-import structure. Energy resource and metal exports increased, while technology and manufacturing exports decreased. The domestic market became saturated with foreign consumer goods, which made it more difficult for domestic manufacturers to break into the market. Russia also continued to experience other problems, such as capital flight and low foreign direct investment, due to the lack of emphasis on creating

³⁸ James Millar, "The End of Three Ideological Eras: What is Next for the Russian Economy?" *Demokratizatsiya* 11 (Winter 2003).

³⁹ Millar.

⁴⁰ Lazlo Csaba, "Russia's Political Economy," in *Toward an Understanding of Russia: New European Perspectives*, eds. Janusz Bugajski and Marek Michalewski (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 2002), 27.

and enforcing government policies and the rule of law.⁴¹ Although some positive changes occurred in the years immediately following the 1998 financial crisis, Russia still had a long way to go on the road to creating a market economy.

In a US National Intelligence Council report released in 2000, predictions about Russia's ability to reform its economic and political systems were far from positive. Managing the negative legacies of the Soviet period, in both Russia and the Eurasian states, was predicted to be a major factor. Economic challenges, such as "insufficient structural reform, poor productivity in agriculture as compared with Western standards, decaying infrastructure, environmental degradation...corruption and organized crime," were expected to cause these nations to fall further behind the West and major emerging markets, especially with the rapid pace of technological and scientific innovation and globalization.⁴² Russia's projected population decline of ten to fifteen million by 2015 was also cited as a significant problem with the capacity to stunt industrial growth. These factors together were expected to diminish the "centrality" of Russia and impede its ability to project power beyond the former Soviet republics to the South.⁴³

These sort of bleak predictions left Russians scrambling to identify ways to prevent the predicted decline of their global power. It has become increasingly apparent that President Putin views economic growth as the way to rebuild the country and maintain global power and influence. In 2000, Putin stated, "A stable economy is the main guarantee of a democratic society and the cornerstone of a strong and respected state." Over the past four years, Putin's emphasis on the economy has only grown stronger.

B. CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION

During his first term, President Putin laid out some ambitious economic goals in an effort to push reforms. He challenged the nation to work toward doubling the gross

⁴¹ Leonid Abalkin, "Some Notes on Current Problems of Foreign Economic Relations of Russia." *The World Economy* 25 (June 2002): 869-871.

⁴² "Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue about the Future with Nongovernment Experts," December 2000 [on-line]; available from http://www.odci.gov/nic/NIC_globaltrend2015.html; Internet; accessed 18 July 2004.

⁴³ Ibid.

domestic product (GDP) by 2012 and cutting poverty in half by 2007.⁴⁴ This was reinforced in his latest address to the Federal Assembly of Russia, when he stated, “Our main goal, I repeat, is to bring about a noticeable rise in our people’s prosperity.”⁴⁵ As of June 2004, Russia was “continuing on a path of brisk economic development.”⁴⁶ First quarter growth for 2004 was measured at 7.4 percent and economic activity has finally branched out from the natural resource sectors. For the first time in two years, the fuel and energy sector did not report the highest growth rates of the industrial production sub-sectors, making it apparent that production outside the core resource industries is growing. Fixed capital investment grew 12.8 percent from January to May 2004 and there were general improvements in investor sentiment about Russia. Macroeconomic policies appeared to be well-managed in the first months of 2004 as well.⁴⁷

However, Russian economic reform is far from finished and many difficulties have yet to be resolved. According to the World Bank’s “Russian Economic Report,” three major obstacles still exist: dependence on high export prices for oil and gas, a reform gap between statements and implementation in areas such as privatization, state monopolies, and public administration, and issues of governance, including setting and enforcing the rule of law. The report asserts that even with expansion in the industrial sector, the economy is not diverse enough to protect against oil price volatility. This drives further concerns about Russia’s balance of payments and the reliance on external factors, such as hydrocarbon prices, to maintain the current budget surplus. Thus, long-term investment in Russia’s real sectors is still considered very risky; this is reflected in the modest influx of foreign direct investment.⁴⁸ Russia’s share of global investment GDP is about twenty percent; other middle-income and low-income countries average

⁴⁴ “Russian Economic Report #8,” June 2004 [on-line]; available from <http://www.worldbank.org.ru>; Internet; accessed 18 July 2004.

⁴⁵ Russian President, “Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” 26 May 2004 [on-line]; available from http://president.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2004/05/26/1309_type70029_71650.shtml; Internet; accessed on 14 July 2004.

⁴⁶ “Russian Economic Report #8,” June 2004.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

higher shares, about twenty-three percent.⁴⁹ Capital flight also continues to plague the economy. Putin is intimately aware of these problems. During his May 2004 address, he focused on the actions needed to overcome them and reach the stated economic goals of doubling the GDP and reducing poverty. Some of the objectives laid out in that address include budget reform with set policy objectives and expected outcomes, creating a more effective tax system that prevents opportunities for tax evasion, and establishing a balanced macroeconomic policy capable of reducing inflation and making a fully convertible ruble. He also stressed the importance of building an effective system for using natural resources and a more modern infrastructure, including roads and oil and gas pipelines.⁵⁰

Economic reform is clearly one of Russia's top domestic priorities. It is important to uncover how this domestic matter may influence Russian foreign policy. If President Putin's recent rhetoric is any indication of the importance of economic concerns in foreign policy, then the relationship is quite close. In his address to the Federal Assembly, he emphasized the "need to use the tools of foreign policy for a more appreciable practical return in the economy, and in the realization of important national tasks."⁵¹ In another address to the Russian Federation ambassadors, Putin stated, "Russian diplomacy should help tackle national tasks more energetically than ever before."⁵² Raising economic competitiveness, integration into the world economy, raising investment attractiveness, and resisting discrimination in foreign markets are among the national tasks he stressed.⁵³

It is necessary to examine recent foreign policy decisions in order to determine if this rhetoric holds true and foreign policy decisions are being made based on national economic priorities. The next section will consider the decisions made with respect to

⁴⁹ Christof Ruehl, "Remarks by Christof Ruehl, Chief Economist of the World Bank's Moscow Office, on Current Economic Situation in Russia," 30 June 2004, World Bank Office, Moscow [on-line]; available from <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/8282-17.cfm>; Internet; accessed on 14 July 2004.

⁵⁰ "Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," May 2004.

⁵¹ "Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," May 2004.

⁵² Russian President, "Address at the Plenary Session of the Russian Federation Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives Meeting," 12 July 2004, Moscow Foreign Ministry [on-line]; available from http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2004/07/12/1323_74425.shtml; Internet; accessed on 18 July 2004.

⁵³ Ibid.

the war on terrorism to determine if economic considerations were a significant part of the decision-making process.

C. RUSSIAN ECONOMY AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

1. Operation Enduring Freedom

There is little doubt the economy was on President Putin's mind when he decided to side with the West in Operation Enduring Freedom. It was one of his main considerations in most national policy decisions. Just how economically beneficial a pro-West stance would be was probably questionable, but Putin could have been fairly certain that it would not hurt Russian economy. If nothing else, Afghanistan had been a source of instability in the region for years; if coalition troops could secure the source of instability, the long-term pay off could be substantial. Increasing stability in the region could improve Russia's economic situation in several ways, including opening new markets, reducing losses due to smuggling and black market activities, and decreasing the need for additional border security personnel.

A stable regional environment would allow the former Soviet Central Asian republics to put less emphasis on security and more energy into creating governments capable of enforcing the rule of law and building strong economies. The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs asserted that the steady and harmonious political and socioeconomic development of the Central Asian states will benefit Russia by opening new and growing markets.⁵⁴ The other potential market is in Afghanistan. With a shift from illicit to legal means of employment, the country has the potential to open up and eventually become a new market for Russian exports. The current coalition efforts to improve health care, education, and security will contribute to making Afghanistan a new, potentially lucrative market. On-going projects to expand roads and increase other infrastructure will also make trade more feasible. This new market is already starting to take shape. In 2002, Foreign Minister Ivanov and the Afghan interim government leader, Hamid Karzai signed seventeen memoranda on cooperation between the Russian and Afghan ministries, agencies, and business circles. These accords "concern mostly

⁵⁴ Igor Ivanov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, interview by ORT Television Channel's Vremya News Program, 1 November 2002 [on-line]; available from http://www.ln.mid.ru/Bl.nsf/arh/F1ECBDDEA0C8B2_D343256B4100586408?opendocument; Internet; accessed on 25 February 2004.

construction and restoration of Afghanistan's infrastructure facilities, oil and gas fields, energy facilities, as well as deliveries of Russian-made agricultural machinery, industrial equipment, and various types of hardware" according to Ivanov.⁵⁵

Increasing stability in the region may also benefit Russia and the Central Asian nations by decreasing smuggling. A 1997 study estimated the smuggling trade in the region, including Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Iran, and Pakistan, to amount to approximately five billion dollars. Black market trading has wreaked havoc on local industry in the affected states. Local factories are not able to compete with the price of smuggled, foreign-made, duty-free goods. This also generates huge losses in customs revenues and sales taxes. Creating a more stable environment and less porous borders will allow Russia and the Central Asian countries to decrease the resources required to protect their borders against drug and weapon trafficking and raids from Islamic fundamentalists.⁵⁶

Expediting entry into several key economic institutions may also have been at the forefront of President Putin's mind when he was considering supporting OEF. His decision did result in closer economic cooperation in many instances. It reopened discussions with the European Union, which had become frustrated with issues surrounding Chechnya.⁵⁷ In May 2002, President Bush verbally expressed a desire for Russia to enter the WTO, with the stipulation that Russia conform to the rules and continue to reform its economy.⁵⁸ Later that summer, both the EU and the US Commerce Department granted Russia market economy status. Although Russia's designation as a market economy is more of a political incentive, it will help with WTO entry negotiations and also allows the reduction of taxes on Russian exports to both

⁵⁵ "Russian, Afghan Leaders Sign Statement on Expanding Cooperation," [on-line]; available from http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200203/13/print20020313_92006.html; Internet; accessed on 26 February 2004.

⁵⁶ Ahmed Rashid, "The Taliban: Exporting Extremism," *Foreign Affairs* 78 (Nov/Dec 1999).

⁵⁷ Perovic.

⁵⁸ U.S. and Russian Presidents, "President Bush, President Putin Discuss Free Market Economy," Remarks by President Bush and President Putin to Students at St. Petersburg University, 25 May 2002 [on-line]; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/05/20020525-2.html>; Internet; accessed on 5 March 2004.

Europe and the US.⁵⁹ Being identified as a market economy should also help attract foreign investment into priority areas in the Russian economy. In addition, Russia was promised full membership in the G8 and in 2002, was granted the right to host the 2006 G8 summit. Russia has been a member of the G8 and part of political discussions since 1998; however, it was excluded from the financial meetings until full membership was granted.⁶⁰ There is no doubt that Russia's participation in the anti-terrorist coalition made its presence in all aspects of the G8 necessary—even though Russia has not yet attained a powerful, competitive economy.⁶¹

Another key economic issue is centered on oil. Russia assisted the coalition and also helped itself when it refused to acquiesce to OPEC demands to reduce production and export of oil. This act helped shield the US and Western economies from the negative effects of increased energy costs during the fall of 2001.⁶² When Moscow did finally submit to OPEC pressure, it was for the “token export reduction of 150,000 barrels per day for the winter quarter.”⁶³ This reduction reflected normal seasonal cuts due to winter port restrictions. This act of solidarity with the West gained Russia positive recognition and the hope of becoming an alternate source of oil for its coalition partners. In a November 2001 visit to Russia, US Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham remarked that Russia appeared to be “emerging as a separate nucleus of the energy equation.”⁶⁴ This was followed by a new US-Russian Energy Dialogue begun in May 2002 which “created a venue for cooperation and a means of reducing Western dependence on OPEC oil.”⁶⁵ Supporting the coalition provided President Putin with an opportunity to open new oil export markets and enhance relations with existing customers. Much of Russia's

⁵⁹ Alexander Koliandre, “US Calls Russia a Market Economy,” 7 June 2002 [on-line]; available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/2032498.stm>; Internet; accessed on 7 March 2004.

⁶⁰ “G8 Rewards Russia for Anti-Terror Role with Full G8 Membership,” *CDI Russia Weekly* #212, 27 June 2002; available from <http://www.cdi.org/russia/212-3.cfm>; Internet; accessed on 8 March 2004.

⁶¹ Yuri Filippov, “G8 and Vladimir Putin's Personal Result,” 10 June 2004 [on-line]; available from <http://www.cdi.org/russia/310-4.cfm>; Internet; accessed on 18 July 2004.

⁶² Leon Aron, “Russia, America, Iraq,” *Russian Outlook* Spring 2003 [on-line]; available from <http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/aei/aro/ar121/>; Internet; accessed on 21 February 2004.

⁶³ Fiona Hill and Florence Fee, “Fueling the Future: The Prospects for Russian Oil and Gas,” *Demokratizsiya* 10, no 4 (Fall 2002): 462.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Angela Stent and Lilia Shevtsova “America, Russia and Europe: a Realignment?” *Survival* (1 November 2002): 124.

GDP is based on the export of oil and other natural resources, so this was an important step in advancing Russia's economic interests.

2. Operation Iraqi Freedom

Economic factors were also an important consideration for President Putin when deciding whether or not to support an invasion of Iraq. Russia opposed the US draft UN resolution on Iraq and disagreed with military action against Saddam's regime. When Russia realized it was impossible to stop the US from pursuing its objectives in Iraq, it tried to secure guarantees that Russia's economic interests would be protected if it did not obstruct the US policy. Eventually, Russia agreed to support a revised resolution that required Iraq to declare all weapons of mass destruction and allow UN inspections.⁶⁶ Russia did not, however, support a second Security Council resolution to allow the use of force in Iraq.

Russia was obviously opposed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Its rationale for countering the US resolutions becomes clear when examining the potential monetary losses Russia would face as a result of Saddam's fall. Russia has maintained a major economic presence in Iraq, a Soviet client state in the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, Russia remained a major trading partner for Iraq, even under UN sanctions.⁶⁷ Iraqis purchased Russian exports, including Volga cars and grain harvesters, which could not be sold in any other markets. These exports equated to nearly \$187 million in 2001, and reached over \$61 million in the first quarter of 2002.⁶⁸ Russia was also Iraq's main supplier of weapons and military equipment. It is highly likely that numerous shipments of military equipment, including night vision goggles, anti-tank missiles, and GPS jamming devices, were sold in violation of UN sanctions. Russian technicians were often hired to run power plants, manage factories, and build railroads.⁶⁹ By the time the US decided to

⁶⁶ Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, 249.

⁶⁷ Aron, "Russia, America, Iraq."

⁶⁸ Celeste A. Wallander, "Russia's Interest in Trading with the 'Axis of Evil,'" *PONARS Policy Memo* 248 (October 2002): 2-4.

⁶⁹ Aron, "Russia, America, Iraq."

invade Iraq, Russia held \$8 billion in Iraqi debt. Russia was concerned the debt would not be repaid if the regime changed and was upset by suggestions about forgiving the debt after it did change.⁷⁰

The Russians were also worried about the monetary losses they would face with the end of the oil-for-food program. Under the program, proceeds from oil sales were restricted in how they could be spent. This benefited Russian businesses and helped them profit in two ways—by being exporters of Iraqi oil and by being authorized suppliers of goods under the program. By the beginning of 2003, Russian firms possessed \$4 billion worth of approved, but outstanding contracts under the oil-for-food program. It is highly unlikely that Russia will be able to obtain nearly as many or as profitable contracts after the war.⁷¹

Russian businesses also discussed, initialed, or signed numerous contracts with Iraq regarding the development of Iraqi oil fields; however, the contracts could not be recognized until UN economic sanctions against Iraq were lifted. Because these contracts were discussed under Saddam's regime and sanctions were not lifted until after the US invasion, Russian contracts do not have to be honored. The new Iraqi government has now been given the power to decide who gets contracts to develop their oil fields. This has led to a significant outcry by LUKoil who claims the contracts should be honored regardless of regime change.⁷² LUKoil purportedly negotiated a \$4 billion, twenty-three year contract to rehabilitate the West Qurna oil field.⁷³ This is obviously another potential source of financial losses for Russia and a reason it resisted OIF. An additional concern for Russia regarding oil is the possibility of Iraqi oil production capacity increasing now that UN sanctions have been lifted. Increased oil production could drive the price of oil down. This would be extremely bad for the Russian economy considering its dependence on oil prices. A one dollar decrease in the price of a barrel of oil results in approximately a .35 percent drop in the Russian GDP.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Mark Katz, "Playing the Angles: Russian Diplomacy Before and During the War in Iraq," *Middle East Policy* 10 (Fall 2003): 43, 49.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 44, 50.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 44, 48.

⁷³ Aron, "Russia, America, Iraq."

⁷⁴ Katz, 51.

President Putin obviously knew the potential negative impacts of a US invasion and an Iraqi regime change on the Russian economy; this knowledge likely played a large role in his decision not to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Putin also recognized the potential political impacts. His public support and high public opinion ratings are largely a result of low inflation, a balanced budget, prompt payments, and an increased standard of living made possible by a growing economy. It is in Putin's direct political interest to ensure continued growth of a strong economy.⁷⁵

D. CONCLUSION

There is little doubt that President Putin evaluated the economic impact prior to his decision to support OEF and OIF. Although it would be impossible to anticipate the exact responses of coalition governments, Putin could be fairly certain that a pro-Western stance in OEF would help him attain or at least expedite certain economic objectives. The result is that Russian support for military action in Afghanistan did or will, in the future, benefit Russia economically. These benefits can be seen in the increased economic integration of Russia during 2002-03, the possible opening of new markets due to regional stability, and the prospect of becoming a stabilizing force in the oil market. President Putin also knew that a US invasion of Iraq would likely harm Russian economic interests. The loss of special trading relationships with Iraq, the loss of numerous lucrative oil contracts, and the possible politically-forced reduction of Iraqi debt would all lead to economic losses.

Russia has spent the last decade and a half striving to build a strong, viable market economy with the hope of being integrated into the international environment as a major industrial democracy. A strong economy is seen as the vehicle for achieving a better standard of living for Russian citizens and for assuming Russia's rightful place among the major powers. These sentiments have translated into the economy being elevated to a top national priority. More recently, the economy also appears to be driving more decisions in the foreign policy arena. Putin's rhetoric about Russian society being able to see the practical results of work in the international sphere certainly point to the idea that

⁷⁵ Wallander, "Russia's Interest in Trading with the 'Axis of Evil,'" 4.

the “line between domestic and foreign policy is becoming thinner.”⁷⁶ The intertwining of foreign policy decisions and national economic priorities is evident in the decisions made to support military action in Afghanistan and not in Iraq.

⁷⁶ “Address at the Plenary Session of the Russian Federation Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives Meeting,” 12 July 2004.

III. RUSSIAN-CHECHEN CONFLICT AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

The situation in Chechnya is complex with a multitude of actors and mixed agendas. Over time, the conflict has evolved from a purely separatist movement to one that incorporates Islamic extremist ideals and *jihad*. Initially, most of the international community failed to recognize this transformation. It was not until the attacks of September 11, 2001, that the rest of the world finally began to accept that Russia was dealing with more than just a nationalistic republic. Chechnya has caused tension between Russia and the West for some time, mainly due to the alleged human rights abuses by Russian troops. Thus, it is important to examine this very political issue to determine if obtaining support for the war in Chechnya and quieting international criticism played a significant role in Russian foreign policy decisions in the war on terrorism.

A. EVOLUTION OF THE RUSSIAN-CHECHEN CONFLICT

Relations between the Russians and Chechens have been infused with conflict for centuries. Russia first attempted to establish control over the North Caucasus in the sixteenth century by making the Chechens vassals of Muscovy.⁷⁷ The Chechens resisted Russian occupation of their territory throughout the eighteenth century, but were finally incorporated into the Russian empire in 1864 after losing the brutal, forty-seven-year Caucasian War (1817-1864).⁷⁸ The people of the North Caucasus continued their passive opposition until 1917, when they unsuccessfully attempted to reassert their independence following the October Revolution. In 1944, Stalin ordered the deportation of the entire Chechen nation to Central Asia for allegedly collaborating with the Germans.⁷⁹ Approximately 200,000 Chechens died from hunger and disease during this time.⁸⁰ This

⁷⁷ Vera Tolz, "The War in Chechnya," *Current History* 95 (October 1996): 316.

⁷⁸ Leon Aron, "Chechnya: New Dimensions of the Old Crisis," *Russian Outlook*, Winter 2003 [online]; available from <http://www.ciaonet.org/pbei/aei/aro/ar120/ar120.html>; Internet; accessed on 23 April 2004.

⁷⁹ Tolz, 316.

⁸⁰ Aron, "Chechnya: New Dimensions of the Old Crisis."

history of resistance, war, and persecution helps explain the rapid emergence of a Chechen separatist movement during the fall of the Soviet Union.

In late 1990, the Chechen National Congress convened and began discussing the secession of Chechnya from the USSR. In 1991, the congress officially announced that the Chechen portion of the Chechen-Ingushetia Republic would secede. A former Soviet general, Dzhokhar Dudayev, was elected president of Chechnya in October and immediately reconfirmed the earlier declaration of independence. In November, in response to the proclamation of independence, Russian President Boris Yeltsin issued a decree declaring emergency rule in Chechnya. Russian troops were sent to an airport near Grozny, but left soon after arriving because the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet refused to back Yeltsin's decision to take military action.⁸¹

In March 1992, all the autonomous republics of the former Soviet Union, except Chechnya and Tartarstan, signed a federation treaty. At this point, the Russian Federation decided to recognize the Chechnya-Ingushetia split, but still refused to accept Chechen independence. Without an effective governing body or police organization, Chechnya's internal problems grew throughout the early nineties.⁸² The illegal drug and arms trades thrived. Criminals fled into the republic, knowing they would not be extradited to Russia. In addition, the Chechen mafia grew into one of the largest and most violent elements in the Russian criminal underworld. Over time, Russia began to view Chechen rebels as a threat to its interests, which included preserving territorial integrity, preventing destabilization of the region, protecting oil pipelines and access to the Caspian Sea, and containing crime.⁸³ Yeltsin made the decision to support the anti-Dudayev opposition in 1994 after negotiations between the Chechen separatists and the Russian Federation repeatedly failed. When the opposition forces were unsuccessful in their quest to take Grozny, Yeltsin deployed Russian troops to reassert Moscow's power over the republic and restore "constitutional order."⁸⁴

⁸¹ "Conflict in Chechnya: Russia's Renegade Republic," *Online NewsHour* [on-line]; available from <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/europe/chechnya/>; Internet; accessed on 19 August 2004.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Michael Fredholm, "The Prospects for Genocide in Chechnya and Extremist Retaliation Against the West," *Central Asian Survey* 19 (2000): 317.

⁸⁴ "Conflict in Chechnya: Russia's Renegade Republic."

In the beginning of the war, the Russian military performed poorly and experienced heavy losses. This was due to improper planning, inadequate training, and an underestimation of the Chechens' determination to defend their homeland.⁸⁵ Eventually, Russian forces managed to gain control of Grozny, but not without considerable civilian casualties, extreme brutality, and the devastation of numerous Chechen cities and villages. As the war dragged on, Russian public support dwindled. By early 1996, the war was beginning to negatively affect Yeltsin's chances for reelection. As a result, Yeltsin announced a peace plan for Chechnya in a television address on March 31st.⁸⁶

The war finally ended in August 1996 with the signing of the Khasavyurt Accord.⁸⁷ Chechnya was allowed its own constitution and control over financial and natural resources with the understanding that a final political status for Chechnya would be decided upon in five years. By January 1, 1997, Russian troops had completely withdrawn from Chechen territory.⁸⁸

Although exact numbers are difficult to find, the losses experienced by both the Chechens and the Russians during the first war are staggering. The official number of Russian servicemen who died during the 1994-1996 war is 5,500; however, the Soldiers' Mothers of Russia argue that the actual number is closer to 14,000. It is unclear whether or not the official numbers include the soldiers that died of their wounds in hospitals outside of Chechnya.⁸⁹ Differing figures also exist for the number of Chechens killed during the war. Anatoly Kulikov, the Russian Interior Minister at the time, stated that less than 20,000 civilians were killed. Meanwhile, Secretary of the National Security Council Aleksandr Lebed claimed that between 80,000 and 100,000 Chechen people had

⁸⁵ Tolz, 318.

⁸⁶ Tolz, 318-319.

⁸⁷ Mark Kramer, "Guerilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Terrorism in the North Caucasus: The Military Dimension of the Russian-Chechen Conflict," [unpublished manuscript; final draft to be published in *International Security*, Winter 2004-2005], 1.

⁸⁸ Aron, "Chechnya: New Dimensions of the Old Crisis."

⁸⁹ "Casualty Figures," *CDI Russia Weekly #245*, 20 February 2003 [on-line]; available from <http://www.cdi.org/russia/245-14-pr.cfm>; Internet; accessed on 19 August 2004.

been killed and approximately 240,000 injured.⁹⁰ The war also took a large toll on Chechen businesses. One report estimates that eighty percent of Chechen industry was destroyed in the first war.⁹¹

The war-torn republic faced numerous challenges as the period of Chechen self-rule began. The newly elected government, led by Aslan Maskhadov, was unable to effectively manage the republic. Most Chechens became even more destitute as the power of warlords, radicals, and Islamic extremist groups increased. It was at this time, during the mid-nineties, that the generally conventional, secular separatist movement evolved into an increasingly Islamic extremist movement.⁹² The change came as Islamic missionaries and fighters preaching *jihad* and Wahhabist traditions arrived in Chechnya and began forming terrorist organizations.⁹³ These leaders came to Chechnya from places like Syria and Saudi Arabia and were interested in continuing the fight against the Russians that took place in Afghanistan during the eighties. They saw an opportunity to exploit the separatist movement and arrived offering Chechens a new purpose in life based on “a form of their traditional Islam rooted in fundamentalism and militancy.”⁹⁴ They used money and the miserable conditions of war-torn Chechnya to attract people to their mosques and recruit them into their organizations.

The Chechens had been struggling for independence for about five years by the time Islamic leaders began recruiting. They had already been through one war and still had no definite agreement for an independent state; furthermore, Chechnya was becoming increasingly anarchic during the mid-nineties. This left many Chechens searching for new solutions, and many turned to religion. “At Friday Prayers, the mosques are packed with young people who say that feeling persecuted by their own

⁹⁰ “Russian Withdrawal,” 10 May 2004 [on-line]; available from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/chechnya1-1.htm>; Internet; accessed on 18 August 2004.

⁹¹ Fehim Tastekin, “War Torn Chechnya: Chechnya Human Rights Report of the Caucasus Foundation,” October 2001 [on-line]; available from http://www.kafkas.org.tr/ajans/War_torn_Chechnya.htm; Internet; accessed on 18 August 2004.

⁹² Aron, “Chechnya: New Dimensions of the Old Crisis.”

⁹³ Sharon LaFraniere, “How Jihad Made its Way to Chechnya,” *Washington Post*, 26 April 2003, sec. A, p. 1.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

government only drives them deeper into Islam's embrace."⁹⁵ Some people were looking for a new way, while others just wanted to avenge their dead relatives and their ruined homes.⁹⁶ The Islamic leaders spouting *jihad* were able to claim success in Afghanistan against the Russians and sold their ideas under the guise that "holy war" could work for Chechnya as well.⁹⁷ The Islamic fundamentalist leaders also brought along certain resources that enabled them to further their cause. Russian intelligence officials estimate that approximately \$25 million was donated to the separatists by Osama bin Laden. Other reports indicate that al Qaeda also provided weapons and instruction at Afghan training camps.⁹⁸

One of the more well-known leaders to relocate to Chechnya was Amir al-Khattab, a fundamentalist who fought with bin Laden in Afghanistan. He was able to convert Shamil Basayev, one of Chechnya's best known militants, from a rebel Chechen freedom fighter to an Islamic fundamentalist fighting for freedom of the whole Arab world. This change in ideology was instilled in separatist followers as they were drawn into Islamic terrorist organizations led by Basayev. This shift in ideology became visible in 1999 when Khattab and Basayev led an incursion into Dagestan with the goal of driving out the Russians and merging Dagestan and Chechnya into a new Islamic state.⁹⁹

Shortly after the raids into Dagestan, a series of five bombings took place in Russia. The first occurred on 31 August in the Manezhnaya shopping complex in central Moscow. This was followed by an attack on a military housing facility in Dagestan. The next three bombings targeted apartment buildings, two in Moscow and one in Volgodonsk. Roughly three hundred people were killed and many more wounded in these bombings. Although the circumstances surrounding the bombings were never fully explained, the Russian government was quick to accuse Chechen rebels.¹⁰⁰ Vladimir

⁹⁵ Amy Waldman, "The Force of Islam: Stirrings in Russia," *New York Times*, 9 November 2001, sec. A, p. 8.

⁹⁶ Guy Chazan and Andrew Higgins, "How Credible is Russia's Claim to Antiterrorist Role in Breakaway Republic of Chechnya?" *Wall Street Journal*, 5 October 2001, sec. A, p. 12.

⁹⁷ Vinod Anand, "Export of Holy Terror to Chechnya from Pakistan and Afghanistan," *Strategic Analysis* 24 (June 2000).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ LaFraniere.

¹⁰⁰ Kramer, 4.

Putin, then Prime Minister, spoke of wiping out the “vermin” in Chechnya, while Russian military commanders wanted to “flatten the region.”¹⁰¹ In September 1999, the Russian military began a large-scale military campaign aimed at reasserting control over Chechnya. Putin’s decisive action and promises to “destroy” the terrorists boosted his popularity considerably among the Russian people. The hard line he took towards Chechnya helped him win the presidential election easily in 2000.¹⁰²

The second Chechen war has been just as brutal as the first. Reports indicate that over 80,000 Chechens have been killed since the autumn of 1999. The Soldiers’ Mothers of Russia estimate that 14,500 soldiers have died as a result of this war, although official numbers are much lower.¹⁰³ The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) during 2001 was approximately 430,000.¹⁰⁴ Although that number has decreased significantly, the EU still reports 60,000 Chechen IDPs living in Ingushetia, 10,000 IDPs in Dagestan, and another 150,000 IDPs within Chechnya.¹⁰⁵ Reports of human rights violations, including unlawful killings, abuse of civilians, and politically-motivated disappearances by both Russian troops and Chechen rebels, were prevalent during the second war.¹⁰⁶

Combat operations have officially ended and Russian officials claim the war is over, but the bloodshed continues on both sides. Russian military “sweeps” supposedly result in civilian deaths, casualties, and abductions and Chechen rebels continue with their guerilla and terrorists tactics. In October 2002, forty Chechen rebels seized a Moscow theater, taking eight hundred hostages and demanding that Russia withdraw its

¹⁰¹ Keith Moon, “Boris Yeltsin Enters the History Books,” *American Diplomacy*, Winter 2000 [on-line]; available from http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/AD_Issues/amdipl_14/moon_yeltsin2.html; Internet; accessed on 19 August 2004.

¹⁰² Gennady Chufrin, “Putin’s Domestic Policy: Its Implications for National Security,” *The Quarterly Journal* 2 (April 2002): 9.

¹⁰³ Zhanara Nauruzbayeva, “Towards Peace in Chechnya,” Summary of a presentation given by Ivan Rybkin, former Speaker of the Russian State Duma and former Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Washington DC, 23 October 2002 [on-line]; available from <http://www.ceip.org/files/events/events.asp?p=38&EventID=525>; Internet; accessed on 19 August 2004.

¹⁰⁴ Letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell Regarding Human Rights Violations in Chechnya [on-line]; available from http://www.refugees.org/news/powell_021601.cfm; Internet; accessed on 19 August 2004.

¹⁰⁵ “EU Humanitarian Aid for Victims of Conflict in Chechnya,” May 18, 2004 [on-line]; available from http://europa-eu-un.org/articles/fi/article_3513_fi.htm; Internet; accessed on 19 August 2004.

¹⁰⁶ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *Russia Country Report on Human Rights Practices—2003* (25 February 2004).

troops from Chechnya. Two months later, two truck bombs were used to strike a main administration building of the pro-Moscow Chechen government, killing eighty people and wounding many others.¹⁰⁷ Prior to Beslan, the last major attack by Chechen rebels occurred on June 21, 2004 when an estimated two hundred fighters launched well-coordinated attacks on twenty official facilities in the Russian region of Ingushetia. The rebels, some of whom shouted “Alahu Akbar” (God is great) as they attacked, left at least fifty-eight people dead.¹⁰⁸

The latest round of attacks in the Russian-Chechen conflict is just another testament to the complexity of the situation. It raises more questions about whether the fighting is still primarily a separatist movement or if the original purpose has been eclipsed by the greater international Islamic extremist movement. The Chechens’ use of tactics employed frequently by *jihadists*, such as suicide bombings and extremist religious rhetoric, certainly lends credence to President Putin’s argument that Russia is waging war on international terrorism in the Caucasus; nevertheless, prior to September 11, 2001, Putin had a difficult time convincing the West that the conflict was anything other than an ethno-political struggle.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, it is important to consider whether or not Putin’s overtures after the terrorist attacks on the US were a way to gain support for Russia’s own battle against terrorism. The next section will explore Russia’s involvement in the global war on terrorism to ascertain if the situation in Chechnya played an important role in the related foreign policy decisions.

B. CHECHNYA AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

1. Operation Enduring Freedom

President Putin insisted for quite some time that the conflict in Chechnya was an anti-terrorist war. Since the beginning of his presidency, he had often called for other countries to join in the effort to fight terror. After the attacks on the US, Putin cited

¹⁰⁷ Stuart D. Goldman, “Russia,” *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, Order Code IB92089 (20 August 2003): 3.

¹⁰⁸ Scott Peterson, “Chechen Rebels’ Deadly Return,” *The Christian Science Monitor* (23 June 2004): 6.

¹⁰⁹ Gail W. Lapidus, “Central Asia in Russia and American Foreign Policy After September 11, 2001,” Presentation from “Central Asia and Russia: Responses to the ‘War on Terrorism,’” a panel discussion held at the University of California, Berkeley on October 29, 2001.

September 11th as proof that the West had failed to place the appropriate emphasis on the new threats of the modern world.¹¹⁰ He also began drawing parallels between the American and Russian struggles to battle terrorism. President Putin was then able to enhance credibility in his views by signing onto the anti-terrorist coalition in support of OEF.¹¹¹ Putin was able to further legitimize the war in Chechnya by making links, which the American government has acknowledged, between the Chechen rebels and al Qaeda.¹¹²

Russia had more to gain by supporting Operation Enduring Freedom than just political legitimacy. President Putin was also able to effectively decrease criticism from US and European leaders on human rights violations in Chechnya. The Chechnya issue has been a source of conflict between Russia and the West for a while. The military invasion of Chechnya in 1999 was initially strongly supported by the Russian public, but faced intense international criticism for purportedly killing tens of thousands of civilians and driving hundreds of thousands of Chechen refugees out of their homes. Although the UN and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) acknowledged Russia's right to resist separatism and terrorist threats on their territory, they disagreed with what appeared to be "disproportionate" and "indiscriminate" use of force.¹¹³ Europe's view of the situation was also evident in Russia's delayed accession to the Council of Europe. Russia's membership was postponed until 1996 due to the first Chechen war; then, in 1999, when Russia invaded Chechnya again, Russia's voting rights were revoked.¹¹⁴ The US was also extremely critical of Russian action in Chechnya prior to 11 September 2001. In an interview in February 2000, then Governor George Bush stated that Russia was "handling the Chechnya situation in a way that's not acceptable to peaceful nations" and that economic sanctions should be imposed until "they understand they need to resolve the dispute peacefully and not [by] bombing women and children."

¹¹⁰ Russian President. "Interview with the Greek Media," 5 December 2001 [on-line]; available from <http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/priorities/events21888/2001.shtml>; Internet; accessed on 27 July 2004.

¹¹¹ Lapidus.

¹¹² Stent and Shevtsova, 124.

¹¹³ Goldman, 3.

¹¹⁴ Jens-Jorgen Jensen, "EU's Relations with Russia—Issues—Pillars—Levels," delivered at a workshop in Grenoble, France on 6-11 April 2001 [on-line]; available from <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/grenoble/ws23/jensen.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 28 February 2004.

He suggested cutting off International Monetary Fund aid and export/import loans to Russia “until they heard the message loud and clear.”¹¹⁵

By joining the US-led coalition and supporting OEF, “Putin managed to fold Chechnya into the US-led war on terrorism and largely escaped US government scrutiny and criticism for the Russian federal forces’ behavior in the rebellious province.”¹¹⁶ Evidence of this is visible in President Bush’s comments in 2002. Rather than advocating a cut in international aid and economic sanctions, Bush encouraged Putin to find a peaceful resolution while acknowledging that terrorists still needed to be held accountable.¹¹⁷ The United Nations and European Union also vacillated on Chechen human rights issues after September 11th. The UN Human Rights Commission condemned Russia for violations in Chechnya by adopting resolutions in both 2000 and 2001, but actually voted against a similar resolution on Chechnya in April 2002.¹¹⁸ The EU drastically cut public criticism of Russia during this time as well. Chechnya was reportedly discussed behind closed doors during two EU-Russia summits, but was not mentioned in any public statements. Instead, leaders from both the UK and Germany praised President Putin’s leadership, while ignoring Russia’s failure to comply with previously approved EU and UN resolutions. German Chancellor Schroeder went as far as to call for a “‘reevaluation’ of world opinion on the Chechnya conflict.”¹¹⁹

Russia also benefited when Colin Powell designated three Chechen organizations as terrorists groups on February 14, 2003. The Islamic International Brigade, the Special Purpose Islamic Regiment, and the Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs were categorized as violent groups responsible for numerous terrorist acts in Russia and placed on the Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) list. After being placed on the SDGT list, the groups became subject to

¹¹⁵ Dmitri V. Trenin, “The Forgotten War: Chechnya and Russia’s Future,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief 28* (November 2003): 6.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹⁸ “Human Rights Situation in Chechnya,” *Human Rights Watch* 7 April 2003 [on-line]; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/a8efe5423816bbf585256d0400584ccd?OpenDocument>; Internet; accessed on 28 July 2004.

¹¹⁹ “World Report 2002: Russian Federation,” *Human Rights Watch* [on-line]; available from <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k2/europe16.html>; Internet; accessed on 28 July 2004.

Executive Order 13244. This executive order blocks all assets, located in the US or held by US citizen regardless of location, of those people or organizations listed. It also prohibits any US citizens from making or receiving any contributions that would benefit those groups.¹²⁰ The three Chechen organizations were also added to the United Nations' 1267 sanctions list in March 2003. All UN member states were subsequently obliged to impose arms and travel sanctions on and freeze assets of those three organizations.¹²¹ These actions helped reduce outside funding to Chechen rebels.

Russia also gained when the US physically attacked Afghanistan. The United Front foreign minister provided Russia with evidence that Chechen rebels were using Afghanistan to train and resupply; the rebels had also established an embassy in Kabul and consulate in Kandahar.¹²² When coalition forces invaded Afghanistan, those training camps and terrorist links to the al Qaeda network were destroyed and could no longer produce new Chechen fighters.

2. Operation Iraqi Freedom

In contrast to the returns the Russians received regarding the Chechen situation by supporting OEF, they did not reap any benefits with their stance toward Operation Iraqi Freedom. Rather than siding with the US, Russia supported France and Germany in their quest to oppose US action in Iraq. Although the two Western European countries appreciated Russia's backing, they were not willing to provide any special concessions in return. Their condemnation of the situation in Chechnya certainly did not decrease; in fact, the EU became even more critical. The EU tabled a resolution to the UN Human Rights Commission accusing Russia of violating human rights in Chechnya in April 2003, in the midst of the war in Iraq.¹²³

Relatively little changed in the United States' stance toward Russia. The US decided not to co-sponsor the UN human rights resolution tabled by the EU; however,

¹²⁰ Richard Boucher, "Terrorist Designation Under Executive Order 13224," Press Statement (28 February 2003).

¹²¹ "The Consolidated List of Individuals and Entities Belonging to or Associated with the Taliban and Al-Qaida Organization as Established and Maintained by the 1267 Committee," [on-line]; available from www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/tablelist.htm#alqaedaent; Internet; accessed on 5 March 2004.

¹²² Withington, 42.

¹²³ Katz, 45, 52.

President Bush has stated on several occasions that he is encouraging President Putin to seek a political solution to the Chechen conflict and prevent further human rights violations. In one interview, the US president stated, “I think that Russia should be able to—or hope that Russia should be able to solve their issue with Chechnya peacefully. That’s not to say that Vladimir shouldn’t do what it takes to protect his people from individual terrorist attacks.” He also said that the war on terrorism should be conducted “with respect for the human rights of minorities within countries.”¹²⁴ Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed similar concerns about Russian policy in Chechnya in a January 2004 article printed in *Izvestia*, a Russian newspaper. He stated, “We recognize Russia’s territorial integrity and its natural interest in lands that abut it. But we recognize no less the sovereign integrity of Russia’s neighbors and their rights to peaceful and respectful relations across their borders as well.”¹²⁵ Russia did not “lose” by disapproving the US position towards Iraq, but critical remarks about Chechnya did appear to increase. Condoleeza Rice may have stated the US position regarding the opposition to OIF best. The US National Security Advisor reportedly urged the Bush administration to “punish France, ignore Germany, and forgive Russia.”¹²⁶ This comment clearly points to the fact that even though Russia did not play by the US rules leading up to OIF, they were not punished.

C. CONCLUSION

Russia benefited by supporting OEF. Not only did the amount of criticism regarding Russian actions and human rights violations in Chechnya decline, but Afghan training camps were destroyed and funding to rebels was cut off. The war in Afghanistan also increased the potential for regional stability, while, at least temporarily, subduing the strong Islamic fundamentalist movement in Central Asia. On the other hand, President Putin’s decision to oppose Operation Iraqi Freedom, did not necessarily help or hinder his cause in Chechnya. The idea of gaining support for Russian action in Chechnya and a

¹²⁴ US President. “Interview of the President by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty,” 8 November 2002 [on-line]; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/11/20021118-7.html>; Internet; accessed on 18 March 2004.

¹²⁵ Colin L. Powell, “Partnership, Under Construction,” *Izvestia*, 26 January 2004.

¹²⁶ “Which Way Now for French Policy?” *The Economist* 368 (24 July 2003): 35.

partner in combating “terrorism” was surely a consideration when President Putin chose to support Operation Enduring Freedom; however, since the attention Putin sought for war against international terrorists had already been secured, the effect of his position in OIF on the Chechen situation was probably not a significant concern.

The interactions between the United States and Russia during the war on terrorism may also help glean insight about US policy objectives. The current US National Security Strategy (NSS) envisages several actions that will contribute to the overall NSS aim of making the world “not just safer but better.”¹²⁷ Two of the objectives are to “champion aspirations for human dignity” and “strengthen alliances to defeat global terrorism.”¹²⁸ These two US aspirations pose an interesting dilemma for American policymakers when addressing the present Chechen conflict. As discussed, the US drastically decreased any criticism regarding human rights violations after Russia made the decision to support OEF. Even more interesting is the fact little changed in the US attitude towards the Chechen situation when Russia opposed OIF. If US actions in handling the Russia-Chechnya problem are any indication of actual hierarchy of policy objectives, then strengthening alliances for the global war on terrorism definitely outweighs “champion[ing] the cause of human dignity and oppos[ing] those who resist it.”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ U.S. National Security Council, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (September 2002), 1.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

IV. BALANCING AND POWER IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

During the Cold War era, the Soviet-US relationship could be accurately described using the realist notion of balance of power. However, world politics and international relations were redefined when the Iron Curtain fell. Many international relationships, including the US-Russian relationship, were transformed again after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Americans and Russians were soon united in their efforts to combat terrorism. The two nations cooperated in an unprecedented fashion during Operation Enduring Freedom, but disagreed about how to proceed with the threat of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Russia even appeared to be balancing against US power when it joined Germany and France in opposing Operation Iraqi Freedom. It is necessary to understand how far Moscow is willing to go to counteract US hegemony and whether balancing against US unipolarity is a standard response in Russian decision-making. Examining Russia's actions during the US-led war on terrorism will help deduce whether or not counterbalancing the US is a continuing priority reflected in Russian foreign policy.

A. GLOBAL POWER, GLOBAL THREATS

1. Balance in International Affairs

Policymakers and international relations experts have been trying to understand the way the world works and more specifically, what causes nations to align with each other for centuries. One of the most widely recognized and thoroughly debated theories is that of realism. The realist theory of international relations “depicts international affairs as a struggle for power among self-interested states.”¹³⁰ In particular, the behavior of major powers can be understood as a function of the global power structure and how they can best preserve or enhance their relative position in the overall distribution of power.¹³¹ The notion of balance of power evolved from these ideas to explain alliances in the international environment. “The proposition that states will join

¹³⁰ Stephen M. Walt, “International Relations: One World, Many Theories,” *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1998): 31.

¹³¹ William D. Jackson, “Imagining Russia in Western International Relations Theory,” [on-line]; available from <http://casnov1.cas.muohio.edu/havighurstcenter/papers/Jackson.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 8 August 2004.

alliances in order to avoid domination by stronger powers lies at the heart of traditional balance of power theory.”¹³² Within this theory, alliances may be based on two different strategies—balancing or bandwagoning. States that balance align with the weaker side to escape subjugation by the stronger power. On the other hand, states that bandwagon join the stronger nation.¹³³ This realist view of the world is structured solely in terms of power and expects the outcome of uncoordinated actions between states to be a balance of power in the international environment.¹³⁴

In “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,” Stephen Walt argues that the balance of power notion is flawed “because it ignores the other factors that statesmen will consider when identifying potential threats and prospective allies.”¹³⁵ He asserts that a more accurate assessment is that states align with or against the most *threatening* power. This idea formed a new theory in which aggregate power is only one element of the threats that nations balance against. In other words, a weaker power may be considered more dangerous or threatening for reasons other than its power capability. Factors other than aggregate power that must be considered include physical closeness, ability to attack, and aggressiveness. Nations can respond to the threats by either balancing or bandwagoning.¹³⁶ According to Walt, “for states that matter, balancing is the rule: they will join forces against the threats posed by the power, proximity, offensive capabilities and intentions of others.”¹³⁷

The idea of balancing against threats instead of power is particularly relevant today in the face of international terrorism. “The events of September 11, 2001, taught us that weak states, like Afghanistan, can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states.”¹³⁸ Another quote from the US National Security Strategy reinforces the idea that factors other than aggregate power have become increasingly important.

¹³² Stephen M. Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,” *International Security* 9 (Spring 1985): 5.

¹³³ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1979), 126.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 118-122.

¹³⁵ Walt, “Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power,” 8.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹³⁸ U.S. President, Cover Letter, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (September 2002).

“Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America. Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank.”¹³⁹ In the war on terrorism, offensive capability and intentions of state and non-state actors appear to be far more significant than national industrial and military power. The nations of the world are no longer necessarily aligned against other states’ power because the threats to national security have changed. That is not to say that the relative position of a nation in the global power structure has become completely insignificant. For this reason it is necessary to understand the dynamics of the current international system and the changes that took place after the end of the Cold War.

2. Rise of US Unipolarity

When the Soviet Union collapsed, many observers predicted that a new multipolar international system would emerge with centers of power in Asia, America, and Europe. This, however, is not what occurred; instead, the world’s only superpower, the United States, grew stronger. From 1990 to 1998, the United States’ GDP increased twenty-seven percent. Growth rates for other industrialized areas, including Europe and Japan, during the same time were much lower.¹⁴⁰ America has kept its leading economic position. In 2003, the US GDP was greater than Japan’s, Germany’s, the United Kingdom’s, and France’s combined.¹⁴¹ The US has also maintained a high level of defense spending. According to statistics from 2002, the United States allocated more money to defense spending than the next twelve nations combined.¹⁴² Without the constraints of a bipolar rivalry, America was able to advance and become the sole superpower in a unipolar world.

The current global power structure is unique. Never before has one country been so powerful and unrivaled. The rise of a global hegemon that has shown it is willing to

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ G. John Ikenberry, “Strategic Reactions to American Preeminence: Great Power Politics in the Age of Unipolarity,” [on-line]; available from http://www.odci.gov/nic/confreports_stratreact.html; Internet; accessed on 10 August 2004.

¹⁴¹ *Total GDP 2003*, from the World Development Indicators Database, World Bank, July 2004 [on-line]; available from www.worldbank.org/data/databytopic/GDP.pdf; Internet; accessed on 10 August 2004.

¹⁴² Jeffrey Chamberlin, “Comparison of US and Foreign Military Spending: Data from Selected Public Sources,” *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RL32209 (28 January 2004): 5.

act unilaterally if necessary has unsettled world politics and raised concerns about the “unprecedented disparities of power.” The physical displays of American power in both Afghanistan and Iraq added to the existing concerns and raised new questions about the use of force, alliances, sovereignty, and weapons of mass destruction.¹⁴³ In addition, it has caused many nations to reconsider their relations with the United States and how they may be able to influence the international actions of the most powerful nation.

Russia, with its long tradition of balancing against US power, is one of the nations most concerned with American unipolarity. Despite the fact that more than a decade has passed since the end of the Cold War, many of Russia’s political elite still view US actions with deep-seated suspicion. They are particularly sensitive about the growing Western presence and influence in Russia’s traditional sphere of influence, including Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Baltic states. Some theories go as far as to depict US bases in Central Asia as part of a larger effort to encircle Russia.¹⁴⁴

The world is a different place than it was during the Cold War. New threats have emerged and the power structure has changed. It is important to ascertain how Russia is responding to these changes. The next section assesses Russian actions leading up to and during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom to see if Russian decision-makers view the US as a major threat and if balancing against American power is still a priority as it was during the Cold War. If not, it is necessary to comprehend what the Russians view as threats to their national security and how willing they are to bandwagon with the US in balancing against those common threats. The answers will help better formulate US policy towards Russia.

B. BALANCING POWER IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Based on the rhetoric in the Russian Foreign Policy Concept (FPC), one could reasonably assume that the US is still viewed as a significant threat by the Russian political elite and that their tendency would be to continue the zero-sum game begun during the Cold War. This FPC refers to the Russian Federation as “a great power” and

¹⁴³ Ikenberry.

¹⁴⁴ Dmitri Trenin, “Southern Watch: Russia’s Policy in Central Asia,” *Journal of International Affairs* 56 (Spring 2003): 119-132.

“one of the most influential centers of the modern world.”¹⁴⁵ The document also discloses Russian disdain for an increasingly unipolar international environment. The concept refers to “domination of the United States” in the “establishment of a unipolar structure of the world” as a threat to Russia’s national interests.¹⁴⁶ This rhetoric and the formation of the Sino-Russian strategic partnership led many Washington pundits to warn of a new alliance rising to balance against US predominance.¹⁴⁷ Although challenging US domination of the international arena is clearly one of Russia’s interests, it is necessary to take a closer look at Russia’s changing stance in the US-led war on terrorism to better understand how this interest affected decision-making. It did not appear to be a pressing concern when choosing a pro-Western position in Operation Enduring Freedom. However, the desire to form a multipolar world did resurface when it came to decisions about Operation Iraqi Freedom.

1. Operation Enduring Freedom

Russian leaders were presumably not trying to balance against US power when they made the decision to cooperate with the United States during Operation Enduring Freedom. Perhaps the best way to explain Russia’s decisions to join the US-led coalition and endorse US troops in Central Asia is to refer back to Walt’s concept of balancing against the most threatening power. Growing Islamic extremism and regional instability within Central Asia and the Caucasus had troubled Russia for a decade prior to 9/11. Although none of the nations in Russia’s “soft underbelly” had much power in the traditional sense, they were considered dangerous because of their weakness and inability to regulate activity within their borders. By using terrorist methods, Islamic fundamentalists based in those nations were able to use their proximity, offensive capability, and offensive intentions to become a threat to Russian national security despite their limited aggregate power.

Russian concerns about Central Asia grew throughout the 1990s. In particular, Russia was concerned about the proximity of several former Soviet republics to Afghanistan. The still nascent nations had porous borders, slow economies, and weak

¹⁴⁵ *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation* (28 June 2000).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Sherman Garnett, “Challenges of the Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership,” *The Washington Quarterly* (Autumn 2001): 41.

security that were particularly susceptible to threats like radical Islamic movements. These potential threats to stability were realized on several occasions during the nineties.¹⁴⁸ In 1992, Russia felt compelled to intervene in the Tajik civil war against rebels based across the border in Afghanistan because of concerns about regional instability and the spread of Islamic extremism.¹⁴⁹ February 1999 bombings in Tashkent, Uzbekistan reinforced apprehension about growing Islamic radicalism.¹⁵⁰ In August 1999, approximately 800 members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) raided and seized several villages in Kyrgyzstan with the intent to establish bases from which they could launch attacks into Uzbekistan. At least one press report linked IMU funding to bin Laden.¹⁵¹ Russian concerns about these events in Central Asia plus unrest and spreading Islamic fundamentalism in Chechnya were manifested in national policies. In 1997, the bill “On Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Associations” was signed into law. This law was designed to prevent the formation of radical religious sects by limiting the rights of organizations in existence for less than fifteen years and including provisions to liquidate organizations for undermining security or destroying unity in the Russian Federation.¹⁵² The expansion of religious extremism was also included as a threat in the Russian Federation National Security Concept approved in 2000.¹⁵³

Religious extremism is not the only threat to Russia emanating from the Central Asian region. “The growth of international terrorism, transnational crime, as well as illegal trafficking in drugs and weapons, are beginning to exert significant influence on global and regional stability.”¹⁵⁴ With few border security measures in place and no natural physical boundary to separate the old Soviet and current Russian borders, there is

¹⁴⁸ Rashid.

¹⁴⁹ Goldman, 8.

¹⁵⁰ Rashid.

¹⁵¹ Kenneth Katzman, “Afghanistan: Connections to Islamic Movements in Central and South Asia and Southern Russia,” *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RS20411 (7 December 1999): 3-4.

¹⁵² Derek H. Davis, “Russia’s New Law on Religion: Progress or Regress,” *Journal of Church and State* 39 (Autumn 1997): 645-655.

¹⁵³ Security Council, *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation*, 10 January 2000 [on-line]; available from <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/gazeta012400.htm>; Internet; accessed on 18 August 2004.

¹⁵⁴ *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation* (28 June 2000).

little to prevent Central Asian troubles from becoming Russian problems.¹⁵⁵ Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles is another major concern made worse by porous borders.

Russia was facing a myriad of problems stemming from the situations in Central Asia and the Caucasus by the late nineties and began calling for international efforts to address certain issues, such as terrorism. The 2000 National Security Concept of the Russian Federation states, “The problem of terrorism is transnational in nature and threatens stability in the world [and]...calls for pooling the efforts of the international community.”¹⁵⁶ However, it was not until after the attacks of September 11th that the US and Russia joined together to battle a common threat, terrorism. As part of the global war on terrorism, the United States was soon granted basing rights in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan and US troops deployed to Central Asia.¹⁵⁷

This was the first time in recent history that Russia welcomed another great power in what Russians commonly refer to as their “near abroad.”¹⁵⁸ Russians view the CIS nations as part of their vitally important interests and have stated desires to preserve their political, cultural, economic, and security influence in that area.¹⁵⁹ By accepting US troops in its backyard, Russia essentially admitted that it was incapable of maintaining stability within its sphere of influence and needed the US to “do [the] dirty work” of dislodging the Taliban. This was obviously a concession Russian leaders were willing to make for a net gain of dampening some fundamentalist sentiment and restoring order in the region.¹⁶⁰ Russia’s decision to join the US coalition and endorse US troops in its traditional sphere of influence suggests that bandwagoning to fight threats in the region was more important than balancing against US unipolar power.

¹⁵⁵ Celeste A. Wallander, “Russian Foreign Policy: The Implications of Pragmatism for U.S. Policy,” Congressional testimony presented to the Europe Subcommittee of the House Committee on International Relations in Washington, DC on 27 February 2002.

¹⁵⁶ *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation* (10 January 2000).

¹⁵⁷ Daniel Kimmage, “Interview: The U.S. Military Presence in Central Asia,” *RFE/RL*, 24 May 2004 [on-line]; available from <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2004/05/4d5e4bbb-d806-441d-9d67-168403a8e65a.html>; Internet; accessed on 28 July 2004.

¹⁵⁸ Shevtsova, *Putin’s Russia*, 207.

¹⁵⁹ Lapidus, 2.

¹⁶⁰ “Afghanistan and Regional Geopolitical Dynamics after 11 September,” Conference Proceedings sponsored by the National Intelligence Council on 18-19 April 2002.

2. Operation Iraqi Freedom

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia has viewed the UN Security Council as an important vehicle for retaining influence in world affairs. This was evident in President Putin's strong statement about preserving the UN in his 2003 annual address to the Russian Federal Assembly. He stated, "It is extremely important that if a certain threat intensifies...an understandable, transparent and universally acknowledged decision-making mechanism exists. Undoubtedly, the most important such mechanism we have is the United Nations and its Security Council."¹⁶¹ It is through the UN Security Council that Russia attempted, along with France and Germany, to oppose what would become known as Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A large number of the Russian elite and their French and German counterparts especially welcomed this opportunity to "demonstrate that former superpowers can 'stand up to' and thwart the world's 'hyperpower.'"¹⁶² Despite the rhetoric about standing up to a hyperpower, Russia's stance in OIF is not indicative of a change in strategy that would have Russians consistently pursuing anti-US policies. Russia's position leading up to OIF was more about the pursuit of pragmatic interests. The Russians did not see Iraq as a serious threat to their national security. Unlike Afghanistan, it does not share a border with any former Soviet states, no anti-Russian rebel fighters were training there, and it was not known to be a breeding ground for religious extremism. In fact, Russia actually had strong economic ties with the Hussein regime. Without proof of weapons of mass destruction or linkages to Islamic terrorists, Russia did not view Saddam's regime as threatening. Instead, it was considered a valuable economic partner.

Russia's interest in "reinforcing the key mechanisms of multilateral guidance of global political and economic processes" was also an important part of their opposition to OIF.¹⁶³ According to the Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept, "only the UN Security Council has the authority to sanction use of force for the purpose of achieving

¹⁶¹ Russian President. "Annual Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," Moscow, the Kremlin, 16 May 2003 [on-line]; available from http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches /2003/05/160000_44692.shtml; Internet; accessed on 10 March 2004.

¹⁶² Aron, "Russia, America, Iraq."

¹⁶³ *National Security Concept of the Russian Federation* (10 January 2000).

peace.”¹⁶⁴ Any use of force outside the UN Charter is “unlawful and poses a threat to the stabilization of the entire system.”¹⁶⁵ Russia’s uneasiness with Western nations acting outside UN convention can be traced back to the Kosovo conflict. In executing Operation Allied Force, NATO acted without a UN mandate. Russia subsequently labeled the action illegal because it was not authorized by the UN Security Council. A statement issued by Yeltsin on the day NATO launched its attack summed up the Russian position. “The whole contemporary international legal order has been put under threat.”¹⁶⁶ The United States’ decision to proceed with the invasion of Iraq prior to UN approval was seen as another example of non-sanctioned use of military force similar to the situation in Kosovo. It countered the Russian vision of a multipolar world using international institutions to maintain stability.

The French-German-Russian “alliance” against the US was ultimately only symbolic because none of the countries were prepared to act against America. In fact, throughout the time leading up to the US invasion of Iraq, Russia made overtures that indicated US-Russian cooperation was still possible. The last thing Russia wanted to do was lose too much ground in US-Russian relations. This was clearly stated by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov when he remarked, “Regardless of what happens with Iraq, Russia hopes that Moscow and Washington will allow their actions to be guided by the spirit of Russian-American cooperation.”¹⁶⁷ In the end, Russia spoke out against American unilateral action, but did not try to impose any serious consequences when the US proceeded to invade Iraq without UN approval.

C. CONCLUSION

Several conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of Russian actions leading up to and during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. First and foremost, it is obvious that Russian decision-making is not predominantly driven by

¹⁶⁴ *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation* (28 June 2000).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Rebecca J. Johnson, “Russian Responses to Crisis Management in the Balkans: How NATO's Past Actions May Shape Russia's Future Involvement,” *Demokratizatsiya* 9 (Spring 2001): 292-310.

¹⁶⁷ Igor Ivanov, “A Russian Resolve for Peace and Partnership,” *Washington Post*, 15 March 2003 [on-line]; available from <http://www.drumbeat.mlaterz.net/Op-Ed/Igor%20Ivanov%20A%20Russian%20Resolve%20031503a.htm>; Internet; accessed on 18 March 2004.

balancing US power. “In 2001, in joining an alliance against terrorism formed by the United States, Russia for the first time in history recognized the hegemony of another state and voluntarily chose to play junior partner.”¹⁶⁸ In this case, President Putin was willing to make certain concessions that would allow Russia to bandwagon with the US to defeat a common threat—terrorism. President Putin joined the French and German leaders in speaking out against US unilateralism when it came to the conflict in Iraq, but did not make any moves to counter the United States’ ability to act. President Putin’s desire to create a multipolar world in this instance can be seen in his comments about allowing the mechanisms within the UN Security Council to work; however, Russia realized the advancement of US-Russian relations was ultimately more important.

Although no serious negative consequences resulted from the Germans, French, and Russians banding together to oppose OIF, the simple fact that an anti-US group was created by major nations should be a lesson for US policymakers. Much of the world is intimidated by US hegemony. Increasing reservations about United States’ policies and role in the world has led to a dramatic shift in domestic public opinion against the US in many major countries.¹⁶⁹ If it is true that states balance against threats, the US needs to remain mindful about being perceived as too threatening or new balancing alliances may emerge. Plus, US policymakers should remember that the United States needs other nations to achieve its goals.¹⁷⁰ A renewed interest in leading international institutions and multilateral forums to solve international problems may be a good place to start.

¹⁶⁸ Shevtsova, *Putin’s Russia*, 205.

¹⁶⁹ Ikenberry.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

V. LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

The attacks on September 11, 2001 resulted in unprecedented global cooperation and the formation of an international coalition to fight the war on terrorism. For the first time in NATO history, the alliance invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and committed to collectively respond to the attack on the United States.¹⁷¹ However, the nations that joined the anti-terrorist coalition included far more than just NATO allies. Each country contributed to the war on terrorism in its own way—either militarily, diplomatically, economically, or financially.¹⁷²

In a very surprising and unexpected move, Russia joined the US-led coalition and began contributing to Operation Enduring Freedom, the mission against al Qaeda and the Taliban. Russia's assistance in the global war on terrorism amounted to far more than just verbal support. By May 2002, President Putin and President Bush announced that the two nations were "achieving a new strategic relationship."¹⁷³ This remarkable rapprochement soon faltered as the US announced its intentions to invade Iraq with or without UN Security Council approval.

The previous three chapters examined the relationship between various Russian national interests and Russia's decisions to support Operation Enduring Freedom and oppose Operation Iraqi Freedom. This final chapter uses those analyses to identify the national interest currently guiding Russian foreign policy, to determine the true nature of the US-Russian relationship, and make relevant suggestions about how to proceed in future relations with Russia.

A. RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Russian foreign policy proved to be very inconsistent throughout the nineties. The contradictions in strategy often resulted in considerable confusion at home and abroad and led to uncertainty about what direction Russian foreign policy would take

¹⁷¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO and the Scourge of Terrorism," [on-line]; available from <http://www.nato.int/terrorism/five.htm>; Internet; accessed on 29 August 2004.

¹⁷² U.S. Central Command, "International Contributions to the War on Terrorism."

¹⁷³ U.S. and Russian Presidents. Joint Declaration. Moscow. 24 May 2002 [on-line]; available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/05/20020524-2.html>; Internet; accessed on 27 August 2004.

next. This was often a result of Russian leaders pursuing “policy without a solid conceptual foundation.”¹⁷⁴ Many felt that President Putin was continuing this legacy of ambiguity in foreign policy by supporting OEF and not war in Iraq. One expert stated, “Although the character of Putin’s regime now seems clear, what he intends to do with this power in his second term in office remains maddeningly opaque.”¹⁷⁵

After examining Putin’s choices in the war on terrorism while taking into account Russian national interests, there does appear to be sound reasoning and consistent logic behind his decisions. An analysis of the data presented in the previous three chapters begets the conclusion that Russian foreign policy really is based on “mutually advantageous pragmatism” as stated in the 2000 Russian Federation Foreign Policy Concept.¹⁷⁶ More specifically, Russian foreign policy can best be understood by taking into consideration Russia’s economic goals.

This study evaluated three prevalent arguments about the motivation behind Russian foreign policy decisions, including the desire to balance US unilateralism, gain support for “anti-terrorist” action in Chechnya, and advance national economic interests. Of the three, advancing economic development appears to have the strongest correlation with the decisions made in the war on terrorism. The other two variables seem to play a role in foreign policy decisions as well, but are lower priorities.

Russia joined the US-led coalition in OEF because it had the potential to benefit the nation economically. By declaring its support for the US, Russia was able to gain entrance to several international economic institutions and was declared a market economy. Russians were also able to open up a new energy dialogue with the US. Their economy will also benefit when the instability in Central Asia is quelled. New markets will open up and monetary losses due to the black market and smuggling will decline. On the other hand, the Russians opposed OIF, knowing economic losses would be unavoidable should the Hussein regime fall. Billions of dollars would be lost due to the invalidation of numerous contracts.

¹⁷⁴ Robert Levgold, “Russia’s Unformed Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 80 (Sep/Oct 2001).

¹⁷⁵ Peter Rutland, “Russia in 2003,” *Transitions Online* (February 2004): 14.

¹⁷⁶ *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation* (28 June 2000).

The other two variables, obtaining support for the war in Chechnya and balancing against US unilateralism, did not correlate as convincingly with Russia's decisions in OEF and OIF. Gaining recognition for Russia's war against "terrorists" in Chechnya could definitely be seen as an interest that would drive Russia's decision to participate in OEF; however, Russia's decision not to support action in Iraq would do little to build Western support for the Chechen conflict. Finally, balancing against US power is an unlikely explanation for Russia's choices in the war on terrorism. Rather, Russia's decisions to bandwagon with the US in Afghanistan and not in Iraq are indicative of balancing against threats, not power.¹⁷⁷ Thus, economic development appears to be the most significant of the three factors currently shaping Russian foreign policy. This conclusion is consistent with President Putin's statement to the Russian ambassadors in July: "Russian diplomacy should help tackle national tasks more energetically than ever before. These tasks include raising economic competitiveness, a radical increase in GDP, and the integration of Russia into the world economy."¹⁷⁸ US policymakers need to recognize this inclination in Russian decision-making in order to devise coherent and prudent policies concerning Russia.

Russia's economic weakness is seen as the biggest threat to Russia, undermining its capacity to effectively manage national and regional affairs and achieve great power status. A stable Russian economy is clearly in Russia's best interest, but it is also advantageous for the United States. An economically-sound Russia will be able allocate more resources to modernizing the country.¹⁷⁹ This includes dedicating more assets to prevent the proliferation of WMD. It will also allow for true military reform, including the move away from conscription and toward a more professional military. A more professional army should result in less border control problems and will help manage the situation in Chechnya in a more humane manner.

Some realists believe a strong Russia will become a threat to the United States; however, this fear seems overrated considering President Putin's orientation to the West.

¹⁷⁷ Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power."

¹⁷⁸ "Address at the Plenary Session of the Russian Federation Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives Meeting," 12 July 2004.

¹⁷⁹ Belkin, 31.

He has shown his desire to be integrated with the West in his foreign policy and through his desire to become a part of western institutions. This is evident in the creation of the NATO-Russia council and the subdued objections to NATO expansion.¹⁸⁰ It is also apparent in Russia's cooperation in allowing US bases in Central Asia.

B. NATURE OF THE US-RUSSIAN RELATIONSHIP

The global war on terrorism brought about a whole new level of cooperation between the United States and Russia. Top political leaders began referring to the new relationship as a "strategic partnership" and calling the two nations "allies."¹⁸¹ Even after sharp differences over Iraq exposed limitations in the US-Russian partnership, Putin reiterated that he had made a "strategic choice" in favor of the US.¹⁸² Although collaboration between the two nations did increase considerably, the rhetoric is misleading; in reality, the partnership is far more pragmatic than strategic.

Neither the US nor Russia was willing to allow disagreements over Iraq to completely destroy the partnership they had built. But the relationship is hardly based on true strategic cooperation, if that is defined as "relations...motivated by underlying agreement regarding the overall nature of international relations, the sources of potential and actual security threats and the most appropriate means of responding to such threats."¹⁸³ "Trust, concurrent views and the closeness of interests and ideals are essential" for a strategic partnership.¹⁸⁴

It is clear from these definitions that Russia and the US are incapable of being strategic partners at this point in time. To begin with, the two nations do not agree on the sources or priority of security threats. As discussed in Chapter IV, Russia did not view

¹⁸⁰ Andrea Gabbitas, "Prospects for U.S.-Russian Nonproliferation Cooperation Under Bush and Putin," BCSIA Discussion Paper 2002-16, (Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, December 2002): 31-32.

¹⁸¹ Nikolai Zlobin and Michael McFaul, "A Half-Democratic Russia will Always be a Half-Ally to the United States," 15 November 2001 [on-line]; available from <http://www.cdi.org/friendlyversion/printversion.cfm?documentID=1447>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 2004.

¹⁸² Rutland, "Russia in 2003," 32.

¹⁸³ Martin A. Smith and Graham Timmins. "Russia, the European Union and NATO: Strategic Partnership in a Changing Europe?" Paper presented at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA 28-31 August 2003: 24.

¹⁸⁴ Zlobin and McFaul.

Iraq and its WMD potential as imminently dangerous and decided not to bandwagon with the US to oppose the Iraqi “threat.” The US and Russia also continue to be at odds regarding Russia’s nuclear cooperation with Iran.¹⁸⁵ In both cases, Russian leaders placed short-term economic interests above safeguarding nuclear technology, which has a high probability of becoming a future threat. In addition, Russian leaders’ attitudes about recent expansion of NATO to include the Baltic states remain “reserved and negative.”¹⁸⁶ It is even debatable whether the US and Russia define terrorism the same way, especially in Chechnya and the Caucasus.¹⁸⁷ Next, the United States and Russia do not agree on the nature of international relations. Russia desires a multipolar world where it plays a polar role, while the US has shown its ability and willingness to act unilaterally as the global hegemon. A true US and Russian strategic partnership is also thwarted by a large values gap that prevents the cultivation of trust. The Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov summed up the relationship by saying that US and Russia are “certainly not enemies, but probably not allies yet.”¹⁸⁸

The current partnership between the United States and Russia is best characterized as pragmatic. Pragmatic cooperation is “motivated by traditional concerns of national interest.”¹⁸⁹ Both the Americans and Russians have found ways to effectively collaborate when it benefits their nations or aids them in reaching national objectives. Clearly, pragmatic concerns about advancing Russia’s economic interests were at the forefront of President Putin’s mind in calculating his choices in the United States’ war on terrorism. The problem with pragmatic cooperation is that it has a high likelihood of being “tactical and temporary rather than significant and enduring.”¹⁹⁰ At a time when the US needs allies in order to succeed in the fight against terrorism, prevent proliferation

¹⁸⁵ Andrew Kutchins, “Summit with Substance: Creating Payoffs in an Unequal Partnership,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief 16* (May 2002): 4.

¹⁸⁶ “Press Briefing: By US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Ivanov,” 14 August 2004 [on-line]; available from http://moscow.usembassy.gov/embassy/transcript.php?record_id=82; Internet; accessed on 24 August 2004.

¹⁸⁷ Wallander, “Russian Foreign Policy: The Implications of Pragmatism for U.S. Policy.”

¹⁸⁸ Breffni O’Rourke, “U.S.-Russia: ‘Not Enemies, Not Yet Allies’ – Ivanov, Rumsfeld Work at Intensifying Relations,” 16 August 2004 [on-line]; available from <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2004/08/0e573287-9de2-4a51-a5ac-b75dc8ce179a.html>; Internet; accessed on 27 August 2004.

¹⁸⁹ Smith and Timmins, 24.

¹⁹⁰ Smith and Timmins, 24.

of WMD, and manage the rise of China as a global power, it may behoove the US to work towards creating a more strategic relationship with Russia.

C. THE FUTURE OF US-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

1. Why the US Needs Russia

Regardless of whether the current partnership is classified as strategic or pragmatic, it is important for the United States to recognize that Russian cooperation in the present international environment is a valuable asset. “Russia occupies geopolitical and policy space crucial to the conduct and success of the long-term counterterrorist mission that President Bush has placed at the center of American policy.”¹⁹¹ The Russians also have stronger ties and more influence than Americans in many Middle Eastern nations.¹⁹² In addition, they maintain well-developed intelligence agencies that provide them with greater access to certain key regions.¹⁹³ Thus, Russia has the potential to affect important American interests.

A strong US-Russian relationship will help the US achieve numerous foreign policy and security goals. In particular, Russia can assist the US in meeting its goals in the war on terrorism as presented in the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (NSCT). This document consistently stresses the importance of renewing the United States’ emphasis on its intelligence capabilities, repeatedly stating that good, accurate intelligence is essential to disrupting terrorist plans and operations. It also highlights the value of denying terrorist groups the things they need to survive, including safe havens, financial resources, and access to targets.¹⁹⁴ Robust international cooperation is necessary to achieve these objectives. The US acknowledges that “success will not come from acting alone, but through a powerful coalition of nations maintaining a strong

¹⁹¹ Celeste Wallander, “Russian Foreign Policy: The Implications of Pragmatism for U.S. Policy.”

¹⁹² Alexander Vershbow, “Prospects and Challenges in U.S.-Russian Relations,” Speech given at the Moscow School of Political Studies on 4 June 2004.

¹⁹³ Saunders, 36.

¹⁹⁴ *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (February 2003).

united, international front against terrorism.”¹⁹⁵ Russia specifically can aid the US because of its unique geographical position, experience in Afghanistan, and human intelligence capabilities.

The US will also benefit from working closely with Russia on preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Both Iran and North Korea continue to develop nuclear weapons and terrorist groups have made known their intentions to acquire these weapons.¹⁹⁶ Cooperation between the United States and Russia is required to develop new, updated non-proliferation agreements that address the evolving WMD threats of the twenty-first century. Fighting instability and extremism in Central Asia is another area where collaboration with Russia may benefit the US. It certainly would be in the best interest of both nations to prevent countries like Uzbekistan from becoming failed states and breeding grounds for terrorism.¹⁹⁷ Finally, Russia can also contribute to “peacefully managing the rise of China as a great power” and helping the US achieve “a stable global energy supply.”¹⁹⁸ The US must realize that Russia can provide vital assistance in the war on terrorism as well as other policy areas and should make efforts to create a durable, mutually beneficial relationship.

2. Path to a Better Partnership

There are certainly some challenges inherent in building a strong, lasting relationship between two recent enemies, especially when one nation is still in the process of transitioning to a democratic government and market economy. The current relationship between the US and Russia is one of pragmatic cooperation, fueled only by limited mutual interests and a common enemy.¹⁹⁹ While this relationship is seemingly helping each side to meet some of their national goals, history is full of examples where alliances fell apart in the midst of fighting a presumed common enemy.²⁰⁰ This tendency

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 19.

¹⁹⁶ Vershbow.

¹⁹⁷ Stephen Blank, “The Future of Russo-American Partnership” *Demokratizatsiya* 11 (Spring 2003): 183-197.

¹⁹⁸ Andrew Kutchins, 3.

¹⁹⁹ Smith and Timmins, 24.

²⁰⁰ Yuri Baluyevsky, “A Common Agenda for Russia and the United States,” *Russia in Global Affairs* October-December 2003 [on-line]; available from http://eng.globalisation.ru/live/article.asp?rubric_id=1619&id=4687&issue_id=4678; Internet; accessed on 10 May 2004.

exposes the fragility of the current US-Russian relationship. The United States' desire to maintain its ability to act unilaterally has definitely stressed the relationship. Continued unilateral action has a high probability of further harming the relationship, considering that "Russia believes that the settlement of international problems on a collective basis in strict accordance with the rules of international law should become a fundamental principle of this system."²⁰¹ Another obstacle in building a strong partnership is Russia's continuing transformation from a communist state to a democracy. Russia has on several occasions strayed from its path of establishing democratic principles within its borders. This does not bode well for an equal partnership, especially since most experts agree "that a country cannot become a complete partner of the Western alliance until it becomes fully democratic."²⁰² These challenges make creating a lasting partnership more difficult, but they are not insurmountable. The US simply needs to be realistic and build a strategy that takes into account both these challenges and Russian views on international relations.

Moving from a pragmatic to a more strategic level of cooperation will not happen immediately; it requires building a common understanding of the nature of international relations.²⁰³ However, there are several things the US can do to help expedite the process, or at least keep it moving in the right direction. Emphasizing and assisting Russia's transition to a true market democracy is a good place to start. Building trust through open dialogue, transparency in actions, and people-to-people exchanges will also help. Decreasing the emphasis on unilateralism and US' ability to act outside established rules of international organizations is another step in the right direction. Finally, the US can create incentives for cooperation based on one of Russia's key national interests, economic development.

a. Transition to Democracy

Russia's conversion to a democracy is far from complete. A survey completed in June 2003 asked Russian citizens where they could place their country on a

²⁰¹ Igor Ivanov, "The New Russian Identity: Innovation and Continuity in Russian Foreign Policy," *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 2001): 12.

²⁰² Timothy J. Colton and Michael McFaul, "America's Real Russian Allies," *Foreign Affairs* 80 (November/December 2001): 46.

²⁰³ Smith and Timmins, 24.

scale from one to ten, one meaning a complete dictatorship and ten indicating a complete democracy. Prior to *perestroika*, a majority of Russians considered Russia to be between a three and a five with the largest percentage at three. In the latest survey of the current conditions, the majority believe Russia is between a four and a six with the largest percentage at five.²⁰⁴ It has been over a decade since the end of communism and Russia has failed to make enough progress to be considered a true democracy.

Russia is failing to abide by several democratic principles. According to Secretary of State Powell, the essential balance between the branches of government is missing. “Political power is not yet fully tethered to law. Key aspects of civil society—free media and political party development, for example—have not yet sustained an independent presence.”²⁰⁵ Other obstacles in building democracy are the lack of social capital and trust. Truly free and fair elections remain elusive, and it is difficult for citizens to organize adequate political opposition. Only seven percent of Russians place full trust in Parliament and most are cynical about its role, since the members of Parliament do not have control over the ministries and the president can issue unilateral decrees. Russians question the value of electing officials who have no power to impose the opinions of their constituents. The rule of law continues to be weak. In lieu of expecting the law to work or public officials to act as they should, the use of connections, informal favors, patron-client relations, and monetary bribes is common.²⁰⁶

The US has cooperated and even entered into alliances with non-democratic nations, but only democratic allies have proven to be trustworthy over the long run.²⁰⁷ Thus, Russia’s partial democracy could be an acute obstacle in building a lasting US-Russian partnership. Therefore, the United States should implement policies that will foster democracy in Russia. Discussions on democracy should be placed on

²⁰⁴ “The State of the Nation,” [on-line]; available from <http://www.russiavotes.org/>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 2004.

²⁰⁵ Powell, “Partnership, Under Construction.”

²⁰⁶ Archie Brown, “Introduction,” in *Contemporary Russian Politics*, ed. Archie Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 290.

²⁰⁷ Zlobin and McFaul.

state-to-state meeting agendas and given a higher priority in talks between the nations' leaders. Another essential part of helping Russia's transition is placing more emphasis on the rule of law.

The US also needs to find ways to empower Russia's pro-democratic citizens and society. The US should encourage Russia to set up public-interest clinics, civil liberties unions, and education programs at Russian universities. Increasing the number of exchanges, such as military-to-military, sister city, and internship programs, will also help in spreading both the democratic ideals and the rule of law.²⁰⁸ Over the last decade Congress provided generous support for US-Russian exchanges in order to aid in Russia's transition from a communist state; however, that funding is scheduled to decline drastically in the next few years.²⁰⁹ Congress should reconsider this budget decrease based on the new international situation and the war on terrorism. "Public diplomacy—exchange programs and cultural activities—help create mutual understanding, which leads to mutual respect." These programs are a "long-term investment in homeland security."²¹⁰ Because democracy is a huge part of Russia becoming an authentic US ally, the United States should continue to support and augment programs that foster democratic principles within Russian society at the grassroots level and reinforce the importance of those values with Russian political leadership.

b. Economic Cooperation

To build a lasting relationship, the US must help Russia get past the feeling that the relationship is a one-way street in favor of the US. The US can begin "structuring Russian choices by providing sufficient benefits through cooperation to outweigh the costs imposed by necessary and inevitable US actions at variance with Russian preferences."²¹¹ This requires identifying convergent interests and pursuing them, while looking for creative solutions in areas where interests diverge. Realizing that

²⁰⁸ Colton and McFaul, 46.

²⁰⁹ "Preparing for the Next Decade of U.S. Exchanges with Russia," Final Report from a Symposium held in Moscow, Russia on 25 March 2004 [on-line]; available from <http://www.usembassy.ru/files/Symposium.pdf>; Internet; accessed on 26 August 2004.

²¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Cultural Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs," [on-line]; available from http://www.911exhibit.state.gov/about_eca.cfm; Internet: accessed on 27 August 2004.

²¹¹ Saunders, 35.

one of Russia's main national interests is economic development, the US can provide support to help Russia advance economically.

Numerous reforms need to occur in order for Russia to establish a stable and prosperous economy while reaching President Putin's stated economic goals of doubling the GDP and reducing poverty. Russia needs to open its markets, eliminate trade and investment barriers, create a predictable investment and entrepreneurial environment, increase transparency, and craft clear and fair laws regarding property and contractual rights.²¹² The US has the ability to help Russia in several of these areas. American experts can work with Russian lawmakers on developing policies that regulate property rights. The US can further expand ties in the energy sector by reaching mutually beneficial agreements on developing Russian oil fields.²¹³ With respect to trade issues, US lawmakers should repeal the Jackson-Vanik amendment and eliminate any other remaining laws or limitations aimed at the Soviet Union.²¹⁴ The US can also help Russia secure entrance into international economic organizations that it has not yet been allowed to join. Finally, the US can provide economic assistance to Russia through projects that benefit both nations, such as cooperative programs for nuclear nonproliferation. The US and the international community should continue to support initiatives like the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program's highly enriched uranium purchase agreement and the G8 Global Partnership's pledge to raise \$20 billion over 10 years to prevent the spread of WMD.²¹⁵ The US needs to realize that Russia will respond well to economic incentives; for example, if the US wants to continue on a path of unilateralism, economic compensation can help smooth over the discord and maintain a viable relationship with Russia.

Another approach the US can take in assisting Russia is to tie financial support to the development of democratic principles and civil society. Some Russian debts could be written off or restructured with the understanding that those funds would

²¹² Vershbow.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Zlobin and McFaul.

²¹⁵ Maurizio Martellini, "On the G8 Global Partnership Initiative: Is Any Nonproliferation and Security Concern Equally Pursued?" Presentation at the "Assessing the G-8 Global Partnership After One Year: Status Report and Future Challenges" meeting in Rome on 5 May 2003.

then be reinvested in development programs that build democratic institutions or organizations that support an independent press, human rights, the environment, civil society, or exchange programs.²¹⁶ Further debt reduction would then depend on Russia's progress in successfully establishing certain democratic principles such as rule of law and human rights. These are examples of how the US may gain valuable ground in compromising with Russia, while preventing Russians from feeling like the relationship is one-sided. Plus, these actions can help Russia develop a stable economy and a more prosperous society which will, in turn, make Russia a stronger US partner in the fight against common threats.²¹⁷

c. Subtle Hegemony

One of the biggest obstacles to increased US-Russian cooperation is the emphasis America has placed on unilateral action. Russia's frustration with United States acting outside established international rules and institutions was obvious in 1999 and again in 2003 as the US prepared for and executed Operation Iraqi Freedom. The German-French-Russian partnership that formed as a result of this frustration never amounted to much, but it clearly indicated that certain nations object to US unilateral policy. Although America is "not sufficiently threatening to provoke a [true] counterbalancing response," US power does alarm other major nations.²¹⁸

As stated in the US National Security Strategy, "The US possesses unprecedented—and unequalled—strength and influence in the world."²¹⁹ Many nations have begun questioning what America will do with its overwhelming power after Iraq and how they should proceed in relations with the US. The two main strategies that have emerged thus far are resistance and engagement. Nations that resist will "seek to loosen ties and undercut or block American power and policy," while those that engage will build "cooperative ties in the hope of gaining opportunities to influence how American power is exercised."²²⁰

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Vershbow.

²¹⁸ Ikenberry.

²¹⁹ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (February 2003).

²²⁰ Ikenberry.

The United States has the ability to affect which path nations will choose by indicating how it plans to flex its power in the future. America can either pursue a policy of liberal hegemony or hegemony with imperial characteristics. The former indicates that America will use its power to “promote order organized around multilateralism, close alliance partnerships, strategic commitment and restraint, and extensive jointly agreed upon institutions and rules for managing relationships.” The latter option is indicative of an America that “acts unilaterally against the goals and interests of other states, engages in coercive domination to get its way, and degrades global rules and institutions.”²²¹ States have greater incentives and will therefore engage rather than resist the US if the US leans more toward the model of liberal hegemony. On the other hand, the US will be increasingly viewed as a threat if it chooses to adopt a policy of hegemony with imperial ambitions; nations will then have a tendency to resist and may even balance against what they see as an emerging threat.²²²

The US requires active cooperation from Russia and other nations to reach many of its national objectives. “The US may be preeminent but it is not omnipotent.”²²³ Therefore, the US must use its power wisely to encourage cooperation and to avoid being seen as a threat. The US should eliminate rhetoric about reserving the right to act alone and try to stay within the framework of established international institutions. This will help the US gain valuable ground when dealing not only with Russia, but other nations. Had the US stayed within the UN framework when it came to Iraq, Russia probably would have supported US action; if nothing else, the US would have gained some legitimacy.²²⁴ The key here is realizing that compromise is a necessary part of international relations.

D. CONCLUSION

A more strategic US-Russian relationship will help the United States achieve various national security objectives. The analysis here suggests that economic

²²¹ Ikenberry; Walt, “Alliance Formation and Balance of World Power.”

²²² Ikenberry.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Saunders, 29.

development is the primary interest driving Russian foreign policy. By recognizing the significance of this interest, the US can act accordingly to develop a stronger rapport with the Russian Federation by assisting Russia in its continuing transition to a true democracy, increasing economic cooperation, and avoiding unilateral international policies. Russia also stands to gain from a solid partnership with the US and should make efforts to build upon existing cooperation in matters other than the global war on terrorism. Russia should take a longer-term approach when forming its national interests and reprioritize accordingly. For example, the nuclear proliferation threat that the US envisions emerging from places like Iran and North Korea will most likely translate into a threat for Russia as well. The US would certainly appreciate it if Russian foreign policy objectives focused less on making economic gains by selling nuclear technology and more on the potential threats that may result from having more nuclear nations in the world. Building stronger US-Russian relations is a goal both nations must want and be willing to work toward.

When the US and Russia united under the auspices of an anti-terrorist coalition and began working to improve bilateral relations it was a step in the right direction, but there is still a long way to go. Cooperation in the war on terrorism provided the US with valuable information about Russian foreign policy and gave US policymakers the ability to understand the true nature of US-Russian relations. The United States can learn from this information and form policies that will help Russia develop into a nation capable of being a true US ally. Then, over time, as Russia becomes more democratized and American and Russian norms and values begin to align, the currently pragmatic relationship may begin to develop into more of a strategic partnership.

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