

Russo-American Relations Through the Context of Russian Strategic Documents on  
Foreign Policy from 2000-present

Ever since the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia has been trying to find its balance between its identity as a fallen super power, and a new country reemerging into the international arena. Nowhere is the difficulty of this progress more visible than in relations with its formal rival, the United States of America. The turbulence of the 1990s in Russia itself, beginning with the attempted coup and ending in the collapse of the ruble in 1998 and the effect that this internal turmoil had on in its relations with the United States in particular left Russia in a weakened position at the start of the new millennium. A new, relatively unknown politician, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, was suddenly handed the reigns on New Years Eve 1999, and the campaign to make Russia a competent player in international relations again slowly emerged.<sup>1</sup> As Russia began to see itself once again as a strong nation with vital, profitable national resources, it once again started sparring verbally and diplomatically with the United States.

The foreign policy of Russia comes directly from the president. According to article 86 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, adopted on December 12, 1993, “The President of the Russian Federation: shall direct the foreign policy of the Russian Federation; shall hold negotiations and sign international treaties of the Russian Federation; shall sign instruments of ratification; shall receive letters of credence and

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<sup>1</sup> “Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, ”[http://eng.kremlin.ru/articles/presidents\\_eng.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/articles/presidents_eng.shtml).

letters of recall of diplomatic representatives accredited to his (her) office.”<sup>2</sup> The implications of this statement may not be realized at first glance. As with any country in the world, each election of its head of state comes with the understanding that the country will be run in a different way. However, this is especially true of the Russian Federation, because the president has no checks or limitations from any other branch of the government on how to run his or her foreign policy. Therefore, in the examination of the course of Russo-American relations in the past decade, focusing on how Russia related to the US, it is imperative to look through the lenses of individual presidential terms, focusing primarily on the words and documents from the head of state himself.

As mentioned before, Vladimir Putin was appointed acting president in 2000 and then elected in his own right.<sup>3</sup> According to Olga V. Pavlenko, deputy director of the Institute for History and Archives of the Russian State University for the Humanities in international activity, there were three distinct stages of US-Russian relations during Vladimir Putin’s presidency: the period of “high expectations” (2000-2003/2004), the “crisis period” (2003/2004-2005) and the “renaissance of the cold war” (2006-2008). Looking at the speeches made to the federal assembly during this time supports this hypothetical structural characterization, but the events contained in the periods are not what define relations. Rather, the way in which Russia reacts to the United States is based on how it perceives its own strength and place in the world.

In the period of “high expectations,” the rhetoric used to talk about the United States, or about relations with the United States is very mild. In the annual Address to the Federal Assembly made in April 2001 the US is not mentioned at all; there is only a

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<sup>2</sup> “The Constitution of the Russian Federation,” December 12, 1993, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/articles/ConstEng4.shtml>.

<sup>3</sup> “Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin,” [http://eng.kremlin.ru/articles/presidents\\_eng.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/articles/presidents_eng.shtml).

mention that NATO “ignores the opinion of the international community and the provisions of international legal documents in its decision-making process.”<sup>4</sup> Compared to later rhetoric, this is a relatively mild jab at the United States, who is the founder and most powerful member of NATO.

In Putin’s next Address to the Federal Assembly, delivered in April 2002 in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks against the US, he makes a commitment to the War on Terror, and states that the major goal of Russian foreign policy is “to ensure strategic stability in the world.”<sup>5</sup> In order to achieve this, he stresses continuing conversation with America and “working on changing the quality of our relations with NATO.”<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the very next month, May 2002, the US and Russia agreed to establish the Russia-NATO council, which would conquer threats to international security together.<sup>7</sup> These two years of very quiet relations can be considered continuing Boris Yeltsin’s very pragmatic foreign policy, because Russia had no choice. The state of the country economically, only a few years after the ruble collapsed in 1998-1999, made Russia reliant on foreign aid from the West, especially the United States.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, perhaps this was a period of “high expectations” and “strategic partnership” with the US, but more likely is that Russia had no other choice than to appease the Americans at that point in time.

The Address to the Federal Assembly of 2003, however, marks the beginning of the end of the warm manner with which the Russian Federation treated the United States

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<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” April 3, 2001 [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2001/04/03/0000\\_type70029type82912\\_70660.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2001/04/03/0000_type70029type82912_70660.shtml).

<sup>5</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” April 18, 2002, [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2002/04/18/0000\\_type70029type82912\\_70662.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2002/04/18/0000_type70029type82912_70662.shtml)

<sup>6</sup> Putin, Address to the Federal Assembly, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> “Nato and Russia ‘bury’ cold war,” *BBC World News*, May 14, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/1986270.stm#story>.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Fisher, personal interview, April 29, 2010.

in the previous three years. Putin notes that “Certain countries sometimes use their strong and well-armed national armies to increase their zones of strategic influence rather than fighting the evils we face.”<sup>9</sup> Russia was feeling the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), an area it had always considered solely its sphere of influence, slip away from them as the US and the EU poured money into the former Soviet Republics financing educational institutions and making business deals.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, Putin provides veiled support for Russia’s refusal to support a resolution put forth to the UN Security Council by the UK and US lifting sanctions on Iraq and thereby justifying the new Iraq made by the unauthorized use of force: “Yes, decisions at the Security Council are not always easy to make. And sometimes they are not made at all. It can happen that the initiators of a certain resolution simply do not have enough arguments to convince the other parties that they are right.”<sup>11</sup> Russia backed France, who took a solid oppositional stance against the resolution, and the US was dissatisfied with this.<sup>12</sup> The rhetoric of both of these positions was soft, and chiding towards America: the US was not called out by name, and in the case of the UN Security Council decision, there followed a rather apologetic explanation about Russia sticking to its principles and being open to making the UN a more effective mechanism to better satisfy everyone.

Towards the end, also Putin tried to use the US-Russian relationship and the “strategic partnership” to help with some domestic problems. Russia had been struggling

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<sup>9</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” May 16, 2003, [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2003/05/16/0000\\_type70029type82912\\_44692.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2003/05/16/0000_type70029type82912_44692.shtml).

<sup>10</sup> Olga Pavlenko, Class Lecture, April 26, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Putin, “Address to the Federal Assembly,” 2003.

<sup>12</sup> “Blame, Aim, Fire: Off the hook: Turkey, Germany, Russia. But not France,” *The Economist*, May 1, 2003, [http://www.economist.com/world/united-states/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=E1\\_TSVPVNN](http://www.economist.com/world/united-states/displaystory.cfm?story_id=E1_TSVPVNN).

with several attacks by the Chechens, and in his Address, Putin connects the struggle with Chechnya to the international war on terror:

As we all know, quite recently [international terrorism] threatened the very territorial integrity of the Russian Federation... Russia values the anti-terrorist coalition. We value it as a tool to coordinate intergovernmental efforts in fighting this evil. Furthermore, successful co-operation within the coalition and within the framework of international law may become a good example of consolidation of civilised nations in fighting common threats.<sup>13</sup>

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin did not feel that the US ever answered this sufficiently, and this put a damper on the positive attitude towards America.<sup>14</sup>

In late 2003/early 2004 Russia began to have a series of domestic problems, and Putin turned his attention to bringing order to the country internally. There was only a single mention of the United States in the May 26, 2004 Address to the Federal Assembly, and it was a general one about dialoguing economically with various countries, of which the US happened to be one.<sup>15</sup> This general silence could mean two things: that Russia was preoccupied with Chechen problems, Yukos, and the Orange Revolution or that Russia had switched its focus and simply ceased talking about a “strategic partnership” with the US. Either way, the Russian attitude had changed.

The 2005 Address itself was quite strange; the regular structure was broken. The overall structure follows of each address up to this one and following it has a general structure: introduction, good things from the past year, economics, problem areas/focus areas for the next year (generally education, corruption, pensioners’ problems, expanding the military, the declining population) and the last section of the main body of the speech is usually dedicated to foreign policy. However, in the 2005 address, the entire speech

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<sup>13</sup> Putin, “Address to the Federal Assembly,” 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel Fisher, personal interview, April 29, 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” May 26, 2004, [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2004/05/26/1309\\_type70029type82912\\_71650.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2004/05/26/1309_type70029type82912_71650.shtml).

was dedicated to domestic business. There was no section on foreign policy. There was a vague statement about cooperating with “all countries” to find solutions to global problems, and a passing acknowledgment that new members were admitted to the EU and NATO, but nothing more than that.

If unclear from the speeches how the Russia felt about the United States, the period from 2006 to 2008, the “Renaissance of the Cold War,” Putin made it quite clear what he thought of the United States and their partnership. President Putin’s gave his address on May 10, 2006, and just over a week later, the Moscow Times published a piece entitled “Relations With U.S. Lowest in 20 Years.” In it, the author asserts that the difference is fundamentally because Russia views itself in a position of power now: “Now, armed with an immense war chest of cash reaped from high oil prices, a newly assertive Russia is reestablishing its influence in Central Asia as the U.S. military sees its influence wane there, and Moscow seeks to coax Ukraine back into the fold using gas prices as leverage.”<sup>16</sup> Indeed, oil and gas prices were extremely high through the entire period from 2006 to 2008,<sup>17</sup> and this economic power is reflected in all of Putin’s speeches.

In his 2006 address, President Putin makes a statement about how much the US outspends Russia militarily, and then says that Russia should do the same, and adds that “The wolf knows who to eat... and is not about to listen to anyone, it seems.”<sup>18</sup> He also asserts that it is the US creating difficulties in the sphere of non-proliferation: “And meanwhile far from everyone in the world has abandoned the old bloc mentality and the

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<sup>16</sup> Catherine Belton, “Relations With U.S. Lowest in 20 Years,” *The Moscow Times*, May 19, 2006, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/relations-with-us-lowest-in-20-years/204928.html>

<sup>17</sup> Olga Pavlenko, Class Lecture, April 24, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” May 10, 2006, [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2006/05/10/1823\\_type70029type82912\\_105566.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2006/05/10/1823_type70029type82912_105566.shtml)

prejudices inherited from the era of global confrontation despite the great changes that have taken place. This is also a great hindrance in working together to find suitable responses to the common problems we face.”<sup>19</sup> As Edward Lucas, Central and Eastern European correspondent for *The Economist*, puts it rather crassly in his book *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces both Russia and the West*, “in 2006 Mr. Putin apparently decided that it was pointless to maintain a warm friendship with the West. Instead, Russia would have to gain respect by talking, and acting, toughly.”<sup>20</sup> Undeniably, beginning in 2006, President Putin’s rhetoric only grew stronger and more negative towards the United States in particular.

The pinnacle of the new “cold war rhetoric,” according to O. Pavlenko, was delivered in Putin’s speech to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Conference on Security Policy in Munich, Germany on February 10, 2007. From the very introduction, Putin laid out his intention to use direct language, “if my comments seem unduly polemical, pointed or inexact to our colleagues, then I would ask you not to get angry with me...I hope that after the first two or three minutes of my speech Mr. Testschik will not turn on the red light over there.”<sup>21</sup> For almost the entire speech, the President of the Russian Federation berates the US on its unipolar view of the world, and disregard for “principles such as openness, transparency and predictability.”<sup>22</sup> Putin counters Joe Lieberman’s posed question about appropriate response tyranny and authoritarian rule with the fact that the USSR made a peaceful transition, by itself, and that the United Nations exists to solve conflicts like

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<sup>19</sup> Putin, “Address to the Federal Assembly”, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Edward Lucas. *The New Cold War: How the Kremlin Menaces both Russia and the West*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2008) 260-261.

<sup>21</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Speech at 43<sup>rd</sup> Conference on Security Policy,” February 10, 2007, [www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/.../0407keeperfull.pdf](http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/.../0407keeperfull.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

that. He emphasizes that it is the UN, not the EU or NATO that has the authority to make such interventions. Further along, Putin makes a biting comment about the United States' lax efforts toward weapons reductions: "if the new American Defence Minister declares that the United States will not hide these superfluous weapons in warehouse or, as one might say, under a pillow or the blanket, then I suggest we all rise and greet this declaration standing. It would be a very important declaration."<sup>23</sup> In the video footage from the conference, the camera flashes to the American delegation at this point, and it is clear that they do not find any humor in these quips.

Unsurprisingly, the Address to the Federal Assembly a few months later continues the "cold war rhetoric" and brings up the same issues. Among them, he especially protests the proposed US strategic missile shield, and calls for the rest of Europe to protest it too:

It is clear that the U.S. plans to deploy a missile defence system in Europe is not just an issue for bilateral Russian-American relations. This issue... affects the interests of all European countries, including those in NATO.... and I would even say must be, discussed in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe as part of this organisation's political and military dimension.<sup>24</sup>

Employing the technique of carrot and stick, Putin also mentions discussion with President George W. Bush in regards to a comparatively trivial matter of creating "cooperation with the world's major library centres."<sup>25</sup> Characteristically, Putin's speeches are also filled with references not only to great Russian literary figures, but he also frequently quotes former US president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as he did in the Munich speech. This direct criticism of the United States, accompanied with a slighter

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<sup>23</sup> Putin, "Speech at 43<sup>rd</sup> Conference on Security Policy," 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," April 26, 2007, [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2007/04/26/1209\\_type70029type82912\\_125670.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2007/04/26/1209_type70029type82912_125670.shtml)

<sup>25</sup> Putin, "Address to the Federal Assembly, 2007.

complimentary acknowledgment or working together gives Putin room to insult freely while still under the guise of friendly terms.

Reviewing Putin's presidency as a whole, it may appear at first that he follows another trend expressed by O. Pavlenko to have been true for both Gorbachev and Yeltsin: each of them started with a positive attitude towards the United States, which then declined as they became disillusioned and "realized" the US would never view them as an equal.<sup>26</sup> However, an alternative view, that the period of quiet relations represented simply Putin biding his time to reassert Russia into a position of power in the sphere of international relations, seems much more probable based on the timing.<sup>27</sup> The early period from 2000-2003, Russia was still weak and dependent on Western funding, and the US had the world's sympathy from the 2001 terrorist attacks, so naturally Putin's Russia showed support and made more compromises. The "crisis" period demonstrated an end to the gentle handling of the US relations and foreign policy in general held a lower priority than getting domestic affairs in order. The final period of Putin's presidency, and his reemergence as a "cold warrior," was marked by a more daring rhetoric and attitude towards relations with the United States because Russia considered itself in a better position especially due to the influx of energy money.

The change, or lack thereof, in Putin's foreign policy over the course of his presidency is mirrored in the "Foreign Policy Concept" from 2000 and then newly elected president Dmitri Medvedev's "Concept" in 2008. Two overall trends are visible. Firstly, the difference between how the US is treated in the two Concepts is not a very big one. At the beginning of Putin's presidency, as previously noted, the rhetoric should be

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<sup>26</sup> Olga Pavlenko, Class Lecture, April 26, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Fisher, personal interview, April 29, 2010.

softer, because the economic and political conditions rendered Russia reliant on positive relations with the West. However, his concept criticizes the United States by name on several points. O. V. Pavlenko points out that Putin's foreign policy statement primarily differed from Yeltsin's on this point: "The fundamental principle of "strategic partnership," that formed the foundation of the former Foreign Policy Concept, signed 1993, was exposed to reexamination."<sup>28</sup> Secondly, examining the 2008 Conception of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation and his Addresses to the Federal Assembly, Dmitri Medvedev's foreign policy is visibly just a continuation of Putin's foreign policy during his second term.

President Medvedev's "Concept" differs from Putin's in several ways, which are both seemingly inconsequential and fundamental. In the first section, "General Provisions," the document reads with very little alteration for the first several paragraphs. When the list of objectives for the main foreign policy efforts begins, there is one small addition to whose interests should be protected: the state. In the 2000 version, only the "interests of the individual and the society"<sup>29</sup> are enumerated as those the foreign policy is trying to preserve. The list of objectives itself has some noteworthy additions as well.

Medvedev's "General Provisions" includes an entirely new objective. It enumerates that Russia is dedicated to forming a world order based on international law and with the United Nations "as the key organization governing international relations and possessing a unique legitimacy."<sup>30</sup> This added emphasis in the introduction of the

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<sup>28</sup> Ольга Вячеславовна Павленко, «Внешняя Политика России в 1992-2008 гг.», *Отечественная История Новейшего Времени 1985-2008*. (Москва: Российский государственный гуманитарный университет, 2009) 589.

<sup>29</sup> Vladimir Putin, "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation," June 28, 2000, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm>

<sup>30</sup> Dmitri Medvedev, "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation," July 12, 2008, <http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>.

document signifies that Russia places more importance on this in recent years than it did eight years ago. The same thread is discussed later in more detail in the “Concept” itself and reflected in many of the Addresses to the Federal Assembly.

The second section of Vladimir Putin’s “Concept,” (“The Modern World and the Foreign Policy of Russia”) is harsher toward the United States and follows Evgeny Primakov’s line of foreign policy, citing unipolarity first as a challenge or threat to the national interests of Russia: “There is a growing trend towards the establishment of a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination of the United States.”<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, in the same spot that Putin derides the unipolarity of the United States, the 2008 “Concept” enumerates instead “international terrorism, narcotraffic, organized crime, spread of weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery, regional conflicts, demographic problems, global poverty, including energy poverty, as well as illegal migration and climate change”<sup>32</sup> as the primary threats to Russia’s national interests. This does not mean that Medvedev’s “Concept” has any more tolerance for the unipolar tactics of the United States; it simply means that the language in the 2008 “Concept” is less straightforward.

The most poignant example of this, and consequently, the most obvious difference between the “Concept” of 2000 and 2008 is found in the third section, “Priorities of the Russian Federation in Resolving Global Problems.” Putin lists five priorities; Medvedev lists six. The five they share in common are, in order they appear: the formation of a new world order (which appeared with added emphasis in Medvedev’s introduction), strengthening international security, international economic relations,

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<sup>31</sup> Putin, “Foreign Policy Concept,” 2000.

<sup>32</sup> Medvedev, “Foreign Policy Concept,” 2008.

human rights, and information dispersal as support for foreign policy. The 2008 “Concept,” however, adds a new priority in the second position, right after the formation of a new world order: “the primacy of law in international relations.”<sup>33</sup> Under this heading, Medvedev makes an indirect swipe at the US:

Arbitrary and politically motivated interpretation by certain countries of fundamental international legal norms and principles ... as well as the attempts to portray violations of international law as its ‘creative’ application, are especially detrimental to international peace, law and order.<sup>34</sup>

While it may not be evident from the text to whom the text is referring, similar thoughts expressed more flagrantly by Vladimir Putin at the aforementioned 43<sup>rd</sup> Conference on Security Policy in Munich in the year before make the connection clear:

We are seeing a greater and greater disdain for the basic principles of international law. And independent legal norms are, as a matter of fact, coming increasingly closer to one state's legal system. One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations.<sup>35</sup>

The fact that the biggest change in Medvedev’s “Concept” primarily constitutes a chastisement of actions taken by the US certainly indicates a cooling of relations between the two countries rather than a hopeful beginning.

The US is not referenced favorably or any less strongly in Putin’s “Concept,” though relations during that period were supposedly better. In addition to the examples already given, in the section, under the heading of strengthening international security, which Putin lists second, he makes a direct reference to US policy and accompanies it with a threat for response: “The implementation of the plans of the United States to create a national missile defense system will inevitably compel the Russian Federation to adopt

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<sup>33</sup> Medvedev, “Foreign Policy Concept,” 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Putin, “Speech at 43<sup>rd</sup> Conference on Security Policy,” 2007.

adequate measures for maintaining its national security at a proper level.”<sup>36</sup> Medvedev makes similar statements under the same heading of international security, but never mentions the US by name. He writes that Russia, “opposes unilateral actions in the field of strategic anti-missile defense that are destabilizing international situation,” but then states in the next paragraph that nuclear issues can no longer be worked out in the context of the US-Russia relations alone.<sup>37</sup> That is the only time the US is formally mentioned, and it is not attached to the negative statement that precedes it. From these examples, it is clear that the attitude itself towards US decisions in the nuclear field, as well as in general, has not changed between 2000 and 2008; the rhetoric has simply become more elaborate.

From the Address to the Federal Assembly on November 5, 2008 it is further apparent that Dmitri Medvedev’s foreign policy towards the United States picks up right where Vladimir Putin’s left off. It should also be noted that Medvedev’s 2008 address mentions the US several more times than any of Putin’s annual addresses. One of the most important topics he accentuates with fairly strong words first in the introduction and then expands later on, is the Russian objections to the planned American missile shield in Europe: “The conflict in the Caucasus was used as a pretext for NATO naval vessels to enter the Black Sea and then to speed up the imposition of an American missile defence system on Europe. This situation forces Russia to take measures in response”<sup>38</sup> These measures consist of abandoning plans to decommission three missile regiments,

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<sup>36</sup> Putin, “Foreign Policy Concept,” 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Medvedev, “Foreign Policy Concept,” 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Dmitri Medvedev, “Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” November 5, 2008, [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2008/11/05/2144\\_type70029type82917type127286\\_208836.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2008/11/05/2144_type70029type82917type127286_208836.shtml)

deploying a missile system to the Kaliningrad region, and electric jamming of the defense system. These threats sound suspiciously like a return to an arms race.

Additionally, in response to the world-wide financial crisis, he lays the blame on America's arrogance and uses very pointed language:

I think that this idea that emerged in the United States after the Soviet Union collapsed that its view is the only indisputably correct view led the U.S. authorities also into making serious economic miscalculations. They let this currency bubble grow in the interests of stimulating domestic growth but did not bother coordinating their decisions with the other players on the global markets and neglected even the most basic sense of measure. They did not listen to the numerous warnings from their partners (including from us). As a result they have caused damage to themselves and to others.<sup>39</sup>

After this, he discusses Russia's part in building a better and more stable world and assures "I am sure that we can achieve this because our country is economically and politically strong."<sup>40</sup> This echoes again, that because Russia is in a better economic situation and "politically strong" they now have the ability to sharply criticize their "partners," especially the US.

One more poignant example of direct criticism of the United States, and perhaps its allies as well, Medvedev highlights the war with Georgia and the international response to it:

The reaction to the events of August 8th and Russia's recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia once again showed that we live in a world of double standards. ... In light of this the position of our partners, who recently made every effort to circumvent international law to achieve the secession of Kosovo from Serbia and recognise the self-proclaimed country as a subject of international law, seems obviously biased, for they now criticize Russia as if nothing had happened.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Medvedev, "Address to the Federal Assembly," 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

But again, he seeks to establish this as a friendly chide two paragraphs later by assuring the Federal Assembly, and the world, though relations with the United States “are not the best... we have no issue with the American people... And we hope that our partners, the new administration of the United States of America, will make a choice in favour of full-fledged relations with Russia.”<sup>42</sup> As Putin did, Medvedev asserts that Russia is interested in having good relations with the United States, and almost in the same breath as they sharply criticize them.

In Medvedev’s 2009 Address, after President Obama shelved plans for the Europe-based missile shield system, the only mention of the United States by name is in reference to how well it functions with so few time zones.<sup>43</sup> However, Medvedev does make a few veiled comments that apply to the United States, including “We know that our partners are counting on a rapprochement with Russia to realise their own priorities. Therefore, our foreign policy must be extremely pragmatic.”<sup>44</sup> He goes on to say that in his last address he explicated thoroughly his foci for foreign policy, the priorities remain the same, and that Russia still promotes multipolarity.

It should be noted that the examples given do not and cannot represent the entirety of the Russian rhetoric towards the United States, but provide a sufficient view of how the Russian Federation has acted towards the United States in the past decade. Beginning in unstable political and economic conditions, former President Putin began his relations with the United States in seemingly quiet, mostly agreeable terms. Nevertheless, his Concept of Foreign Policy demonstrates a decidedly critical tone towards America, which

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<sup>42</sup> Medvedev, “Address to the Federal Assembly,” 2008.

<sup>43</sup> Dmitri Medvedev, “Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation,” November 12, 2009, [http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/11/12/1321\\_type70029type82912\\_222702.shtml](http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/11/12/1321_type70029type82912_222702.shtml).

<sup>44</sup> Medvedev, “Presidential Address,” 2009.

only appears outright in his annual addresses to the federal assembly in his second term as president. His presidency marked by “high expectations,” then domestic “crisis,” and finally the “Renaissance of the Cold War” represent a pragmatic politeness turned to outright expression of disapproval towards the United States as Russia recovered its political and economic stability. Both Dmitri Medvedev’s Concept of Foreign Policy and his annual addresses from the past two years demonstrate a continuation of his predecessor’s tone and technique. There is no reason to assume that this competitive streak with the United States will disappear while Russia feels it deserves a higher place in the world arena.