

EVOLUTION OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND USA (SOME ASPECTS): ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF SOME RUSSIAN AND AMERICAN SCIENCE-POPULAR AND POLITICAL JOURNALS

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In modern history the theme of relationships between Russia and USA always was interesting for politicians and journalists and it is very topical now. This problem touches not only the residents of two countries, but also the majority of world societies.

In Russian historiography there are a lot of works dedicated to this issue. Particular attention has to be made on: —Russia American dialogue on the regional problems¹, written by Batuk Vladimir Igorevich – Historical Sciences Doctor, Head of the USA Military Policy’s Regional Aspects Center; the articles —USA in the search for a new formula of relations with Russia² and —Lessons of the past and hopes for future³, written by Podlesnyji Pavel Terentjevich – Historical Sciences Candidate, Head of the Russia – American Relations Center; article —Results of the USA international activities and outlook of its relations with Russia⁴, written by Shakleina Tatjana Alekseevna – Policy Sciences Doctor, Head of the Western analysis of international problems department; article —About some kinds of Russian perception of America⁵, written by Kustanovich Konstantin Vulfovich - Vanderbilt University’s associate professor.

In American historiography there are also a lot of analytical works, dedicated to this issue. Particular notable articles are:⁶ The Foreign Policy of Russia : Changing Systems, Enduring Interests USA⁷ written by DONALDSON, ROBERT H. NOGEE, JOSEPH L.; The New Putin Profile, written by Konstantin Gaaze and Mikhail Zygar; Losing Russia, written by DIMITRI K. SIMES.

After the end of the World War the Second, both of the states had their own ways of development: United States declared their adherence to the principals and ideals of democracy, and the USSR held their course for socialistic development. Beginning from this very period till the 1980’s the relationships between states were complex and tense, this period was also named as Cold War. During this period two superpowers divided the world into the spheres of their influence and tried to surpass one another. And that’s why the breath-taking arms-race, propagation of their

ideologies, clash of interests of these countries in third state had place, but it had to be noticed, that there weren't the open military conflict between them.

The end of the Cold War gave the United States and Russia new opportunities to cooperate. Russia took over the permanent seat (with full veto power) previously held by the Soviet Union at the United Nations Security Council. The Cold War had created gridlock in the council, but the new arrangement meant a rebirth in U.N. action. Russia was also invited to join the informal G-7 gathering of the world's largest economic powers making it the G-8. The United States and Russia also found ways to cooperate in securing "loose nukes" in former Soviet territory, although there is still much to be done on this issue.

And only after 80's has begun the relative discharge in relations of two countries. The higher State post during this period of relations warming was occupied with Gorbachev. He entered office in 1985 with the goal of eliminating problems that Leonid Brezhnev's administration had already recognized—namely, military overstretch in Afghanistan and Africa and excessive defense spending that was crippling the Soviet economy—and with a desire to enhance the Soviet Union's power and prestige. [7] Then Gorbachev began the reforming process, which had also received the name Perestroika, or reorganization. But the effect from a policy Reorganization was as from the reboot, as this policy touched all aspects of a state system of the USSR. [7] It was the beginning of the shift towards democracy and liberalization. The weak "wind of freedom" blown in the USSR countries, but this whiff it had appeared to be enough to start the process of disintegration of the Soviet union and to end it.

After the USSR disintegration Russia became its legal successor and therefore Russia wasn't the ordinary country. Russia has inherited huge military potential, arms, energy resources. At the beginning of 90's Gorbachev left his post and Boris Yeltsin became president of Russian Federation. Yeltsin's the foreign policy had strong pro-American character. [3]

From the very first day of independence Russia had appeared to be in position of US's Junior partner. Yeltsin's policy started in a —liberal Westernizing direction (now sometimes termed —the romantic phase). This featured an effort to go beyond rapprochement with the West to outright partnership. Highest priority was given to achieving integration with Western political and financial institutions; militarily, the goal of strategic parity with the West was abandoned. USA promised help, Russia – was essential in it; US offered its conditions of disarmament and trade relations Russia – accepted; US were undertaken unexpected steps to various points of the Earth, Russia - supported. [9]

Russia's interests were clearly ignored by the West during the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, and the expansion of NATO's membership and responsibilities, culminating in the NATO war in Kosovo, was downright humiliating for Russia. [1]

Concerning to economic policy of the USA towards Russia there were the amendment of Jackson-Vennik, which had established very serious restrictions on trade with Russia. The preference status in foreign trade wasn't given to Russia, although this status has all countries of the world, except the countries where the USA doesn't recognize the government, considering it as dictatorial, or are at war. [9]

So, the aggressive privatization/free market reforms implemented by Russian President Boris Yeltsin during the 1990s were strongly encouraged and supported by the U.S. administrations of George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, and by American economists and corporations. However, the reforms, known as "shock therapy", produced a major economic crisis in Russia, resulting in skyrocketing poverty, and the rise of corrupt "oligarchs" who amassed power and tremendous wealth after acquiring control of the former Soviet state industries. Public order and stability deteriorated greatly.

In regard to international affairs, Russia largely stayed on the sidelines during this period. Although lending tactical support to its historical ally, Serbia, Russia stood aside and did not attempt to block the 1999 Kosovo War in Serbia, even though both Russia and China had strongly condemned it.

So, this part of the Russian history became the continuation of losses and acquisition of politically unprofitable image. [4] President Yeltsin's primary foreign policy aim, like Gorbachev's one before him, was to create a non-threatening international environment that would be most conducive to the country's economic and political development. Given Russia's economic weakness and its declining military strength, this originally resulted in a foreign policy of accommodation, retrenchment, and risk-avoidance, particularly in relations with states beyond the old Soviet borders. While US has turned into a dominating superpower on political, military, economical Olympus. Influence of the USA during this period was high more than ever. This state of things remained before Putin came to power in Russia, spending deep internal transformations Putin also made a particular attention to Russia's foreign policy, its overall objective became – to restore Russia's status as a great power. And he was raving about America trying to become —the one single master of the world and blasted NATO for —creeping up to Russia's borders.

Speaking about NATO, we have to notice that in the frame of US-Russian relationships this issue was very sharp. Broken during the Kosovo crisis, Russia's relations with NATO were resumed in February 2000. Nevertheless, as the foreign policy concept made clear, Russia strongly disagrees with NATO's current strategic doctrine, which permits future out-of-area operations pursued without UN authorization, as in Kosovo. [1] Russia is also opposed to further expansion of NATO, especially into the Baltic states. Already it is contemplating with distress the future of a Kaliningrad oblast surrounded by members of the EU. If those states were also NATO allies, the complications for Kaliningrad's defense would be immense.

But despite all this contradictions after the events of September 11, 2001, Putin reiterated his long-standing offer of support against al Qaeda and the Taliban; he granted overflight rights across Russian territory, endorsed the establishment of US bases in Central Asia, and, perhaps most important facilitated access to available Russian-armed and Russian-trained military force in Afghanistan. [1] But Russia had its own interests in mind; to Putin it was blessing that the United States had joined the fight against Islamist terrorism. Like many other alliances, U.S.-Russian cooperation on counterterrorism came into existence because of shared fundamental interests, not a common ideology or mutual sympathy.

Most basic, Putin's attempt to repair relations with the West reflects the fact that Russia badly needs foreign cash. Russia's Putin-era boom was founded on oil money, sure and Russia —90 percent of Putin's démarche to the West is because Russia cannot modernize without Western specialists and technologies. The other 10 percent is driven by the fact that —Putin needs the West to fight the threat of radical Islam that Russia is facing both inside its own borders in the form of ongoing insurgencies in the North Caucasus and Islamist radicals in Central Asia. [8]

In his term as president Putin also fought to defend what he regarded as Russia's rightful sphere of influence, along the length of what used to be Soviet territory. Poland was seeking to become a base for U.S. antimissile defenses. Ukraine was determined to join NATO and so was Georgia, which also sought to throw Russian troops out of its breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Now the Obama administration has backed off plans to station missile-defense batteries in Poland and the Czech Republic; NATO membership is off the table in Ukraine thanks to the victory of a pro-Moscow president; and Russia has effectively annexed the northern territories of Georgia as a result of its 2008 invasion. NATO has even offered to include Russia in European missile-defense plans. [8]

Inside the principal reasons of Western distant policy towards Russia are (Russia's) charge in authoritativeness, concentration of State power in one hands, in imperial plans towards near abroad countries, and also pressure upon Eastern Europe countries by means of energy recourses supplying. [2]

Another factor which complicates relations is an artificial inflating of relationships problem between Russia and USA and forcing of negative attitude to Russia from political scientists of the leading EU countries and USA. The deeper reason is that Russia and West have different notion about the democracy. [2]

Americans, for example, are liberal from the birth, they since the childhood know their rights and they jealously follow them, they are proud of their nation and their American exclusiveness. Also the liberal ideology has played an important role in formation of the American mentality - the American's critical ratio to the state and an aspiration to carry out their rights with the maximum freedom. All aforesaid strongly influences on perception of Russia which is represented like an authoritarian and despotic one. [5]

So, we can conclude that during the presidencies of Vladimir Putin and George W. Bush, the U.S. and Russia began to have more serious disagreements. Under Putin, Russia became more assertive in international affairs than it had been under his predecessor; under Bush, the U.S. took an increasingly unilateral course in its foreign policy, particularly in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

In 2002, Bush withdrew the United States from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in order to move forward with plans for a missile defense system. Putin called the decision a mistake. Russia strongly opposed the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, though without exercising its veto in the United Nations Security Council. Russia has regarded the expansion of NATO into the old Eastern Bloc, and U.S. efforts to gain access to Central Asian oil and natural gas as a potentially hostile encroachment on Russia's sphere of influence.

Officials in the United States expressed concern over their perception of Putin's increasingly authoritarian rule and reversal of democratic reforms, human rights violations in Chechnya, suppression of free speech, alleged murder of political dissidents, attacks on journalists in Russia, and support for highly authoritarian regimes in other former Soviet republics.[citation needed]

Moscow has also been accused of using its natural gas resources to blackmail neighboring countries like Ukraine and Georgia to gain concessions on matters of concern to the Kremlin

Another big problem in Russian-American relations is the Anti ballistic missile issue.

In March 2007, the U.S. announced plans to build an anti-ballistic missile defense installation in Poland along with a radar station in the Czech Republic. Both nations were former Warsaw Pact members. American officials said that the system was intended to protect the United States and Europe from possible nuclear missile attacks by Iran or North Korea. Russia, however, viewed the new system as a potential threat and, in response, tested a long-range intercontinental ballistic missile, the RS-24, which it claimed could defeat any defense system. Russian president Vladimir Putin warned the U.S. that these new tensions could turn Europe into a "powder keg". On 3 June 2007, Putin warned that if the U.S. builds the missile defense system, Russia would consider targeting missiles at Poland and the Czech Republic.[1].

On 16 October 2007, Vladimir Putin visited Iran to discuss Russia's aid to Iran's nuclear power program and "insisted that the use of force was unacceptable." [2] On 17 October Bush stated "if you're interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon," understood as a message to Putin.[3] A week later Putin compared U.S. plans to put up a missile defense system near Russia's border as analogous to when the Soviet Union deployed missiles in Cuba, prompting the Cuban Missile Crisis.[4]

On 14 February 2008, Vladimir Putin again announced that Russia might have to retarget some of its rockets towards the missile defense system, claiming that "If it appears, we will be forced to respond appropriately - we will have to retarget part of our systems against those missiles." He also said that missiles might be redirected towards Ukraine if they went ahead with plans to build NATO bases within their territory, saying that "We will be compelled to aim our missiles at facilities that we consider a threat to our national security, and I am putting this plainly now so that the blame for this is not shifted later,"[5]

On 8 July 2008, Russia announced that if a US anti-missile shield is deployed near the Russian border, they will react militarily. The statement from the Russian foreign ministry said "If a US strategic anti-missile shield starts to be deployed near our borders, we will be forced to react not in a diplomatic fashion but with military-technical means." Later, Russia's ambassador to the United

Nations Vitaly Churkin stated that "military-technical means" does not mean military action, but more likely a change in Russia's strategic posture, perhaps by redeploying its own missiles.[6]

On 14 August 2008, the United States and Poland agreed to have 10 two-stage missile interceptors - made by Orbital Sciences Corporation - placed in Poland, as part of a missile shield to defend Europe and the US from a possible missile attack by Iran. In return, the US agreed to move a battery of MIM-104 Patriot missiles to Poland. The missile battery would be staffed - at least temporarily - by US Military personnel. The US also pledged to defend Poland - a NATO member - quicker than NATO would in the event of an attack. Additionally, the Czech Republic recently agreed to allow the placement of a radar-tracking station in their country, despite public opinion polls showing that the majority of Czechs are against the plans and only 18% support it.[7] The radar-tracking station in the Czech Republic would also be part of the missile defense shield. After the agreement was announced, Russian officials said defences on Russia's borders would be increased and that they foresee harm in bilateral relations with the United States[8]

On November 5, 2008, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in his first annual address to the Federal Assembly of Russia promised to deploy Iskander short-range missiles to Kaliningrad, near the border with American-backed Poland[9].

"Reset" of relations starts under Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev, when despite U.S.-Russia relations becoming strained during the Bush administration, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama struck a warm tone at the 2009 G20 summit in London and released a joint statement that promised a "fresh start" in U.S.-Russia relations. The statement also called on Iran to abandon its nuclear program and to permit foreign inspectors into the country.

In March, 2009, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov symbolically pressed a "reset" button. The gag fell short as the Russian text on the button was wrongly translated by the State Department as "overload" instead of "reset". After making a few jokes, they decided to press the button anyway.

On March 24, 2010 the United States and Russia reached an agreement to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons. The new nuclear arms reduction treaty (called New START) was signed by President Obama and President Medvedev on April 8, 2010 in Prague. The agreement cut the number of long-range nuclear weapons held by each side to about 1,500, down from the current 1,700 to 2,200 set by the Moscow Treaty of 2002. The New START replaced the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which expired in December 2009.

In 2010, it was acknowledged that the "rapprochement" with Russia was one of the biggest foreign policy achievements of Barack Obama's presidency so far. Obama's approach to Russia has been described as "pragmatic", and "he refuses to cast Russia as an enemy".

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