

**CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN RUSSIA'S RELATIONS
WITH THE UNITED STATES IN EURASIA (2000-2005)**

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WITH THE UNITED STATES IN EURASIA (2000-2005)**

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN RUSSIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES IN EURASIA (2000-2005)

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This thesis seeks to analyze change and continuity in Russia's relations with the United States (US) in Eurasia under the leadership of Vladimir Putin between 2000 and 2005. The thesis argues that the fundamental change in Russia's relations with the US came immediately after Putin's presidency, rather than 9/11 terrorist attacks, as his foreign policy priorities required the establishment of close relations with the US as much as possible. The September 11 terrorist attacks have only facilitated the implementation of Putin's this pragmatic foreign policy. In fact, the continuation of differences between Russia and the US concerning bilateral and regional issues shows that their strategic partnership is mainly rhetoric driven by the short-term tactical considerations rather than shared global values and long-term interests. For this reason, Eurasia continued to be an area of confrontation in Russia's relations with the US in the post-9/11 era.

The thesis consists of four main chapters apart from introduction and conclusion. The first main chapter discusses the evolution of Russian foreign policy towards the US between 1991 and 2000. The following chapter deals with the sources of change in

Russian foreign policy towards the US before 9/11 events. The next chapter examines Russian-US bilateral relations after 9/11. Finally, the last chapter discusses the impact of 9/11 on the Russian-US relations in Eurasia.

Keywords: Pragmatism, Vladimir Putin, Russian foreign policy, the United States, September 11.

ÖZ

RUSYA’NIN AVRASYA’DA AMERİKA İLE OLAN İLİŞKİSİNDEKİ DEĞİŞİKLİK VE SÜREKLİLİK (2000-2005)

Dereli, Pınar

Yüksek Lisans, Avrasya Çalışmaları Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yard. Doç. Dr. Oktay F. Tanrısever

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Bu tezin amacı Vladimir Putin liderliğindeki Rusya’nın Avrasya’da Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ile olan ilişkisindeki süreklilik ve değişiklikleri incelemektir. Sonuç olarak, bu tez Rusya’nın Amerika ile olan ilişkisindeki temel değişikliğin, 11 Eylül terörist saldırıları sonrası değil, Putin’in dış politika önceliklerinin Amerika ile olabildiğince iyi ilişkiler kurulmasını gerektirmesi sonucunda Putin’in başa gelmesinden kısa bir süre sonra gerçekleştiğini ileri sürmektedir. Amerika’ya karşı düzenlenen terörist saldırılar, sadece Putin’in Amerika’ya yönelik yeni pragmatik dış politika yaklaşımının uygulanmasını kolaylaştırmıştır. Gerçekte, iki taraflı ve bölgesel konulara ilişkin farklılıkların devam etmesi gösteriyor ki 11 Eylül sonucu olduğu iddia edilen stratejik ortaklık sadece söylemsel bir içerik taşımakta, ortak çıkarlar ve evrensel değerler yerine kısa dönemli çıkarlar ve taktiksel amaçlara dayanmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, Avrasya bölgesi 11 Eylül sonrası Rus-Amerikan ilişkilerinde bir çatışma alanı olmaya devam etmiştir.

Tez, giriş ve sonuç dışında dört ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm, Rusya’nın Amerika’ya yönelik dış politikasının 1991-2000 yılları arasındaki gelişimini tartışmaktadır. İkinci bölümde, Rusya’nın 11 Eylül terörist saldırılarından önce

gerçekleşen Amerika'ya yönelik dış politika değişikliğinin kaynakları ele alınmaktadır. Bir sonraki bölüm, 11 Eylül sonrası Rusya ve Amerika arasındaki ikili ilişkileri incelemektedir. Son bölümde ise, Avrasya'da 11 Eylül sonrasında meydana gelen gelişmelerin Rus-Amerikan ilişkisine etkisi tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Pragmatizm, Vladimir Putin, Rus Dış Politikası, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, 11 Eylül.

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I have no proper words to express my indebtedness to my parents, who supported me in every aspect of my life. I express my sincere thanks for their morale support and patience. I am also grateful to my dear friends Sibelnur Arabacı and Esra Kızılbuğa, who consistently gave me the confidence and encouraging words that kept me motivated. I also owe my thanks to them for their enthusiasm and warm hospitality in Ankara. Finally, my thanks go to Gökhan Çapar for his invaluable assistance and encouragement during all phases of my thesis.

To My Parents

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ABM: Anti-Ballistic Missile
- APEC: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
- BTC: Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan
- CIS: Commonwealth of Independent States
- CRDF: Collective Rapid Deployment Forces
- CSCE: Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe
- CSTO: Collective Security Treaty Organization
- EU: European Union
- G-7: Group of Seven
- G-8: Group of Eight
- GTEP: Georgia Train and Equip Program
- IAEA: International Atomic Energy Agency
- IMF: International Monetary Fund
- NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- NMD: National Missile Defense
- NPT: Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
- OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organization
- START I-II: Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (I-II)
- UN: The United Nations
- US: The United States
- WMD: Weapons of Mass Destruction
- WTO: World Trade Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Scope of the Thesis

For many years, Russia, as a part of the Soviet Union, was a pole of attraction for the communist movement all over the world. Now, with the ideology abandoned, Russia is looking for a new role in international arena, while trying to achieve its own objectives. During this process, Russian foreign policy faces a dilemma. The contest between Atlanticism and Eurasianism continues to dominate Russian foreign policy debates. The Atlanticists maintain that “Russia’s democratisation, socio-economic transformation, and integration into Western civilization and international institutions depend on the West’s goodwill and support”. On the other hand, Eurasianists argue that Russia should embark on a development course apart from the West due to “its imperial heritage and distinctive civilization”.¹ Accordingly, they advocate a policy of defending the rights of Russians in the near abroad as well as close ties with countries such as Turkey, India, Iran and China.²

I opted for focusing on Russia’s relations with the US, which are very important for exploring Russia’s Atlanticist and Eurasianist poles of orientation towards the international system. While strongly opposing the US unilateralism and demanding a

¹ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, “Russia Adrift: Strategic Anchors for Russia’s Foreign Policy”, *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 22, No. 1, (2000), pp. 15-16.

² *Ibid.*, p.16.

high level of international prestige and influence, Russia has confronted the fact that it desperately needs the US help for achieving its economic and political objectives. Thus, considering the debate about Russia's Atlanticist and Eurasianist foreign policy orientations, how Putin would deal with the US became one of the subjects widely discussed after the beginning of his presidency. Most analysts expected that he would implement a tough foreign policy towards the US. However, as months went by, much to the surprise of observers, Putin began to pursue a policy of cooperation with the US, anchoring Russia firmly within the West.

Then came the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C. on 11 September 2001. This development led to the arguments that the US would reassert its dominance within the international system to counter these attacks. Under these conditions, Putin's reaction was a subject of concern: Would he continue the incipient cooperation with the US or put an end to it after 9/11? Much to the surprise again, he was the first foreign leader to express his condolences to the US president immediately after 9/11. Subsequently, he declared Russian support for the war waged by the US against international terrorism. Of the policies, the most dramatic change was Putin's acquiescence to the stationing of the US troops in the former Soviet states of Central Asia and Caucasus, signalling a reversal of the longstanding Russian foreign policy: preventing growing non-Russian engagement in Russia's backyard.

As a result of this development, a considerable level of academic attention has focused upon the political interactions between Russia and the US. Opinions have been divided about the roots of Putin's initiative to make Russia's foreign policy pro-US. The question of whether Russia's foreign policy is truly shifted from one of balancing to bandwagoning in the wake of 9/11, and this shift is durable (based on

shared, long-term interests with the US) or illusory (a pragmatic short-term coalition of convenience) also generated a debate among both Russian and Western analysts.

For example, William Tompson, in his article “Begging Ends”, attributes this transformation to 9/11, which, he claims, is a watershed in Russia’s relations with the US.³ In addition, Sergei Medvedev, in his article “Rethinking the National interest: Putin’s Turn in Russian Foreign Policy”, claims that 9/11 created the conditions for a long-term partnership based on mutually coinciding interests and increasingly shared values rather than an *ad hoc* marriage of convenience nor a policy of playing a weaker hand. According to him, Putin really wants to defy centuries-old imperial paradigm, and realign Russia with the West.⁴ In his book *World Challenged: Fighting Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, Yevgeny Primakov also argues that Putin’s support for the US troops in Central Asia and Caucasus was not tactical but a conscious and considered decision to help the US in the fight against international terrorism.⁵

Contrary to these arguments, Bobo Lo, in his book *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*; Celeste A. Wallander, in her article “US-Russian Relations between Realism and Reality”; James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, in their article, “George W. Bush and Russia”, and Rajan Menon, in his article “The New Great Game in Central Asia”, attribute this transformation to Putin’s pragmatism, not 9/11. They maintain that President Putin’s response to 9/11 did not

³ William Tompson, “Begging Ends”, *The World Today*, Vol. 58, No. 2, (2002), pp. 16-18.

⁴ Sergei Medvedev, “Rethinking the National Interest: Putin’s Turn in Russian Foreign Policy”, *Marshall Center Paper*, No. 6, (2004), pp. 1-71.

⁵ Yevgeny Primakov, *World Challenged: Fighting Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004).

launch a new Russian policy; instead it accelerated the transformation in US-Russian relations that was already taking root. They set forth an instrumental explanation for Putin's decision to support the US policies following 9/11. They maintain that the decision was the result of pragmatic approach of Putin to benefit from its cooperation with the US in the long term. For them, Russia has a set of fixed preferences and behaves in the international arena instrumentally in order to maximize the attainment of these preferences, such as getting economic benefits and the support for its military operations in Chechnya.⁶

Together with this instrumental explanation, some analysts also look at the transformation of Russian foreign policy from the international structure perspective. For example, Svante E. Cornell, in his articles "Entrenched in the Steppes: The U.S. Redraws the Map" and "America in Eurasia: One Year After"; Andrew Jack, in his book *Inside Putin's Russia*; and Lena Jonson, in her book *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia*, argue that Putin accepted the US military forces in Central Asia not due to a shared understanding of challenges posed by the 9/11 attacks but because he was powerless to prevent the US entry into Central Asia. They claim that the waning of Russia's economic and military power in Central Asia, the increase in the US engagement in this region, and the efforts by the Central Asian states to diversify their foreign policies to reduce their dependency on Russia, forced the Russian government to adopt this kind of policy.⁷ In addition, to prove that Russian foreign

⁶ Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, (London: Blackwell and The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003); James Goldgeier & Michael McFaul, "George W. Bush and Russia", *Current History*, Vol. 101, No. 657, (2002), pp. 313-324; Rajan Menon, "The New Great Game in Central Asia", *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 2, (2003), pp. 187-204.

⁷ Svante E. Cornell, "Entrenched in the Steppes: The U.S. Redraws the Map", *Foreign Service Journal*, April 2003, pp. 18-24; Svante E. Cornell, "America in Eurasia: One Year After", *Current History*, Vol. 101, No. 657, (2002), pp. 330-336; Andrew Jack, *Inside Putin's Russia*, (New York:

policy has not changed dramatically as a result of 9/11, Bridget Kendall, in her article “Look West”; and Tom Bjorkman, in his book *Russia’s Road to Deeper Democracy*, underline the continuation of Russian policies on the important issues. While Kendall points out Russia’s different interests regarding Iraq and Iran, Bjorkman underlines the undemocratic movements in Russia as an important signal for the lack of Russian foreign policy reorientation towards the US.⁸

In the context of analyzing Russian-US relations, these scholars and analysts, despite all the differences in their views, have much in common. In their opinion, the current Russian foreign policy is completely different from those at the end of the 1990s. In this sense, by focusing mainly on the Russian Federation’s side of the relationship, this thesis examines Putin’s foreign policy from 2000 to 2005 towards the US in order to answer how and why Russian foreign policy changed and whether this shift is durable or temporary. To this end, this thesis tries to find out whether Russian rhetoric after 9/11 is reflected in Russian policy development and implementation regarding important issues on which both sides have conflictual interests.

All in all, I think, a close examination of Putin’s policies after 9/11 demonstrates that the opinions of the second group of scholars reflect more truthfully the substance of Russian foreign policy under Putin.

Oxford University Press, 2004); Lena Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia: The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy*, (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2004).

⁸ Bridget Kendall, “Look West”, *The World Today*, Vol. 58, No. 5, (2002), pp. 19-20; Tom Bjorkman, *Russia’s Road to Deeper Democracy*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003)

1.2. Argument of the Thesis

This thesis argues that it is not 9/11 but Putin's pragmatic approach in the foreign policy agenda that brought about the fundamental change in Russia's relations with the US. When he came to power in 2000, this thesis claims, Putin's priorities were to provide a role on the world stage for Russia as a respected player, secure a place among the Group of Eight (G-8) as a full-fledged member, ensure speed entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), end condemnation of his policies in Chechnya, have a greater say in NATO and sign agreements on arms reductions. Sustaining the impressive record of economic performance and competing effectively in the international market would also require more economic reforms and investment in key sectors of the economy, which could come only from the West, especially from the US.

As a result, the establishment of close relations with the US was believed to provide the basis for the prosperity and international respect for Russia. So, before 9/11, this thesis claims, Putin abandoned the hostile rhetoric against the US and established a close personal relationship with President Bush. 9/11 terrorist attacks have only facilitated the implementation of Putin's new foreign policy approach towards the US. So, this thesis, introducing a comparison between the international developments and changes in Russian foreign policy after 9/11, claims that Putin's support for the US-led anti-terrorism coalition and the recent changes in Russian foreign policy towards the US should be considered as the results of Putin's pragmatism in foreign policy, not 9/11.

Although Bush and Putin announce their strategic partnership especially in every summit meeting, the continuity of differences on the important bilateral and regional issues underscores that Putin's foreign policy shift has not meant the reorientation of Russian foreign policy towards the US. Russia's undemocratic movements, the continuation of military campaigns in Chechnya, the Russian government's disapproval of Bush's designation of Iran, Iraq and North Korea as an "axis of evil", Russian determination to continue nuclear sale to Iran, its initial reaction to American war in Iraq and its efforts to prevent the US engagement in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) question the very basics of Russia's partnership with the US. In fact, Russian foreign policy has been based on the rational calculations and Russia's national interests.

Therefore, recent talk about Russia's reorientation to the US policymaking is here regarded as unfounded. Instead, this study argues that there has been no structural watershed in Russian foreign policy since 9/11, revealing that Russian-US partnership is a temporary coincidence of political preoccupation. Russia tries to exercise an increasingly pragmatic foreign policy designed to extract the greatest advantage out of the numerous opportunities presented to it on the world scene. Its relationship with the US is mainly driven by the short-term, tactical considerations rather than shared values such as human rights, democracy, rule of law, limits on the power of the state, opposition to terrorism and to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Because there has not been any change in interests toward each other and toward any other countries. As happened in the past, they are now unable to establish a real partnership, especially in Eurasia, due to problems arising out of divergent and, more importantly, clashing national interests. At this point, I would

like to emphasize “offensive realism”, a variant of realism outlined by John J. Mearsheimer in his book *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

Offensive realism, like realism, looks at states as “rational actors” that always act towards their own self-interests to maximize their power. Mearsheimer argues that what drives nations and what motivates their foreign policy is the will to “expand power to become the hegemon” of the international system, “eliminating any possibility of a challenge by another great power”.⁹ For him, this struggle for power may occasionally abate for practical reasons, but it never ends. In addition, one of the important features of Mearsheimer’s offensive realism is its stress on regional hegemony. He believes that states seek regional hegemony to keep and expand their power. Because if a country renders its territory secure from the sea and air attacks, then its security becomes related with the control and power it has over the adjacent land, from which invasions with much more success can be launched. As “land power is the dominant form of military power in the modern world”, he argues, the key to a nation’s security is regional hegemony.¹⁰

However, he maintains that states attempt to prevent other states from becoming regional hegemons. States which have achieved regional hegemony also interfere in other regions when the states in those regions are not able to prevent the rise of a hegemon. For this reason, Mearsheimer argues, regional hegemons will come into

⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), p. 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

conflict with each other, and with other nations anywhere in the world that aspire to regional hegemony.¹¹

So, given Russia's attempts to achieve supremacy in Eurasia, the US will continue to interfere in this region, and Russia as an aspiring great power will oppose these efforts, provoking other great and lesser powers to establish coalitions to balance the US, which threatens to achieve regional hegemony in Eurasia. So, Russian efforts to become either a regional or a great power will therefore naturally produce conflict with the US.

1.3. Methodology

In this thesis, official foreign policy positions and actions of Russia and the US are examined through their official statements and documents which are available on the internet. Putin's response to 9/11 is also examined through a discursive analysis. In addition to these primary sources, I also surveyed the secondary literature concerning the subject. This literature includes mainly the key books and articles on Russia's relations with the US. I also surveyed the archives of the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and other internet based news services in order to follow developments in Russian foreign policy towards the US.

Using Western-based resources in this thesis provides a critical point of view about Russia's policies. However, this situation may create the possibility for imposing biased beliefs regarding their relations. To prevent this situation and to understand

¹¹ *Ibid.*

the main reasons behind Russia's policies toward the US, Russian-based news and analysis are also used in this thesis.

1.4. Organization of Chapters

This study is composed of six chapters. After the introduction, Chapter 2 gives a brief summary about the evolution of Russian foreign policy towards the US from the collapse of the Soviet Union until the election of Putin as a new president of Russia. This chapter consists of three parts, each analysing the relations according to changing circumstances both in domestic and international arena. The first part deals with the honeymoon period that emerged immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It argues that Russian economic and military backwardness and inability to compete in world markets led Russia to seek development of partnership with the US, a country seen by Russia as the potential provider of large-scale economic and political assistance it urgently needed. However, by the end of 1992, pro-US policy was in retreat as a result of the demands in Russia for the establishment of coherent national interests.

So, the second part of the Chapter 2 focuses on these arguments and maintains that its different interests led Russia to recognize that Russia and the US would not develop an alliance. Russian foreign policy, then, shifted to balance the US power and seek to promote multipolarism. Russia, drawing upon Eurasianist thinking, reasserted its influence over the CIS. In addition, in four foreign policy areas, Russia was determined to follow its national interests despite engendering conflict with the US: continuation of military campaigns in Chechnya, arms sales to potential western adversaries, such as China, Iran and Syria; nuclear technology sale to Iran; and

finally, development of close ties with China. The final part, then, deals with the course of the Russian-US relations in the second half of the 1990s and argues that lack of economic assistance from the West, NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, and plans for the NATO expansion worsened the already soured relations between two countries.

Chapter 3 illustrates changes in Russian foreign policy towards the US with the advent of Putin as the new leader of Russia. It argues that Putin came to power with a new outlook in foreign policy. In place of an aggressive but futile competition with the US, this chapter argues, Putin wanted to focus on cooperation and integration with the West as his foreign policy priorities required the establishment of close relations with the US as much as possible. So, before the 9/11 attacks, this chapter claims, Putin has moved towards an increasingly pragmatic position on relations with the US in hopes of deriving economic and political gains in the short run and great power status in the long run.

Chapter 4 examines the developments in the bilateral relations between Russia and the US after 9/11. Initially, it explores Putin's response to 9/11 through a discursive analysis. Examining the political and economic motives behind it, this part concludes that the decision to support the US in its fight against international terrorism was the result of a pragmatic approach in Russian foreign policy, rather than Russian adherence to a common vision and a common system of values. To prove this, the following parts seek to find out whether there is a reorientation of Russian foreign policy. To this end, the second part deals with the Chechen issue to explore whether Russian military campaigns in Chechnya continue to be an area in which the US and Russia disagree or they have come to a mutual understanding following 9/11.

After Chechnya, the third part of this chapter deals with the security relations and examines Putin's reaction to US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. This part argues that Putin's acceptance of the US withdrawal is not the result of 9/11 as Putin continued to expend his energy on blocking the US withdrawal in the wake of the 9/11. His mild reaction, this part claims, arised out of necessity and in pursuit of Russia's broader interests. So, there is still no rapprochement between these two countries in the security field. Russia continues to oppose the NMD system of the US and is profoundly dissatisfied with the provisions of the new arms reductions agreement signed in place of the ABM Treaty.

Changing the focus from security to politics, the fourth part of Chapter 4 examines Russia's diplomatic relations with the US. In addition, as China and the EU are global powers, Russia's relations with these countries are discussed under this heading, not under the heading of regional issues. This part accordingly argues that 9/11 facilitated the establishment of close political relations with the US, which is symbolized in the rhetoric on their strategic partnership. However, behind this rhetoric, confrontation rules their relations due to deterioration of democracy in Russia. In addition, this part shows that Russian foreign policy has not centered only on the US. Russia developed its relations with China and the EU in order to constrain the US unilateralist tendencies as well as to improve its economy and extend its influence around the world.

Finally, Chapter 4 deals with the developments in the economic relations and argues that economic motives preserve their importance for Russia as a key factor for the continuation of Putin's rhetoric on the maintenance of close relations with the US. So, this chapter concludes that in view of bilateral issues, despite the strong rhetoric

about constructing a strategic partnership with the US, there is no Russian policy change in substance; instead Putin continues to embrace a pragmatic approach in bilateral relations, trying to get the best possible advantage to improve Russian economy and achieve Russia's national interests.

Taking into consideration international developments as well as regional ones in Eurasia, Chapter 5 discusses whether Russia's relations with the US in Eurasia is based on a pragmatic short-term coalition of convenience or it is truly shifted from one of balancing to bandwagoning in the wake of 9/11. The first part of this chapter focuses on the developments in Afghanistan, where Putin sought to get the US help to remove Taliban and its destructive role in the region before 9/11. This part, thus, argues that as Russian and US interests intersected in this country, Putin supported the US-led war in Afghanistan.

So, in this chapter, a special emphasis has been put on the countries where Russia have national interests that conflict with those of the US in order to find out whether Russia's foreign policy is truly shifted from one of balancing to bandwagoning in the wake of 9/11. The second part, therefore, tries to find out whether Russia's policy toward Iran became concordant with the US policies or it continues to be an area in which the US and Russia disagree. The third part also examines Russian foreign policy toward Iraq, a country which became a test case of the extent to which Russian foreign policy had changed in at least two regards. First, how did Russia handle an issue on which its own views radically diverged from the US views at a time when Russia wanted to improve its relations with the US? Second, how US-centric was Russian policy on an issue where different views existed between the US and its allies France and Germany? So, taking into account the answers to these

questions, the last part of Chapter 5 focuses on the impact of 9/11 on Russia's relations with the US concerning the CIS. Initially, it focuses on the reasons for Putin's acceptance of the stationing of the US troops in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and then seeks to find out whether the CIS emerged as a zone of cooperation after 9/11 or their geostrategic rivalry and conflicting economic goals in the region caused the continuation of confrontation between them.

As a consequence, Chapter 5 argues that Putin did not realign Russian foreign policy in the direction of greater cooperation with the US in Eurasia following 9/11 terrorist attacks. Russian policies towards Iran, Iraq and CIS have even added a disturbing and often acrimonious aspect to Russian-US relations, raising questions about the durability of the relationship rather than actually creating an opportunity for Russia and the US to put the disagreements behind them. So, a high degree of continuity of differences between these two countries in Eurasia, this chapter claims, reveal the fact that Russian-US strategic partnership is only rhetoric.

CHAPTER 2

EVOLUTION OF RUSSIAN-US RELATIONS UNDER BORIS YELTSIN

This chapter is a brief overview of bilateral relations between Russia and the US from 1990 to 2000. Initially, it deals with the period of an overt, idealistic pro-Western orientation in Russian foreign policy. In this period, it is argued, Russian foreign policy was seen as an instrument to support and facilitate the process of economic and political transformation taking place inside Russia. Russian leadership hoped that in return for backing the US policies, the US would provide Russia with aid and investment, and treat Moscow as a privileged partner in world affairs.

However, this honeymoon period was very short-lived. Russia's weakness, combined with Western unwillingness to see Russia as an equal ally as well as the deterioration of economy and disillusionment with the US aid, dashed Russian expectations and the attitudes towards the US began to deteriorate rapidly. In this period, it is argued, Russia sought to balance the US power and to promote multipolarism by developing close ties with China. The Russian government also continued its arms sales to China, Iran and Syria, along with its nuclear technology sale to Iran. In the second half of the 1990s, lack of economic assistance from the US, the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, and plans for the NATO expansion deteriorated the situation further. The harsh US criticism concerning the democratic situation in Russia and its military campaigns in Chechnya was another sign that a new era dominated by antagonism had begun in their relations. Thus, by the time Putin came to power, this chapter

concludes, both nations were preparing for a disengagement, or even for another round of confrontation with each other.

2.1. Honeymoon Period (1991–1993)

During the Cold War era, the Soviet Union and the US were hostile to each other, regarding each other's political and economic system as a serious "threat" both to their survival and to their global goals. So, international politics at this period were heavily shaped by the intense rivalry between socialism/communism led by the Soviet Union, and capitalism/democracy led by the US as both states wanted to impose their model on other countries.¹²

"The turning point" was reached in the US-Soviet relations when the important changes took place in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev. His domestic reforms- introduction of *Perestroika* (restructuring), *Demokratizatsiya* (democratization) and *Glasnost* (openness) in the second half of the 1980s, which entailed a "major relaxation of the international tension"- launched a new period in their relationship.¹³ The Soviet Union gave up "the role of the communist empire" and started the process of "rapprochement" with the West.¹⁴

¹² Michael McFaul, "Realistic Engagement: A New Approach to American-Russian Relations", *Current History*, Vol. 100, No. 648, (2001), p. 314.

¹³ Andrzej Korbonski, "US Policy Toward Russia and Eastern Europe", in P. Edward Haley (ed.), *United States Relations with Europe*, (Claremont, Calif.: Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies, 1999), pp. 72-73.

¹⁴ J. P. Bazhanov, "Evolution of the Russian Foreign Policy in the 1990s", *Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 1089, (1998), p. 15.

On the other hand, Gorbachev's domestic reforms brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had a profound effect on both Russia and the US. With the end of the Cold War, as Brezinski puts it, the US became "a global superpower militarily, economically, technologically and culturally".¹⁵ Russia, however, lost its "great power" status and was faced with many problems that were critical to its "survival as a coherent society".¹⁶ Its territory and resources decreased considerably. It also lost its "major strategic assets" such as "important ports on the Baltic, Caspian, and Black Seas".¹⁷ So, at the end of the 20th century, Russia had both "very weak military and economic instruments of foreign policy" and "very few resources" to support its policies toward other regions.¹⁸

So, these global and domestic changes affected Russia's perception of the US. During this period, actively supporting the "Atlanticist position",¹⁹ the new Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, repeatedly emphasized that "rich, developed, civilized states were of vital importance to the economic, spiritual and political rebirth of Russia".²⁰

As Paul J. Marantz puts it,

¹⁵ Svante E. Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*, (Richmond, Surrey, England: Curzon Press, 2001), p. 386.

¹⁶ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "The United States and Russia: From Rivalry to Reconciliation", in Marsha Siefert (ed.), *Extending the Borders of Russian History*, (New York: Central European University Press, 2003), p. 497.

¹⁷ Sergei Rogov, "Military Interests And The Interests of The Military", in Stephen Sestanovich (ed.), *Rethinking Russia's National Interests*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1994), p. 68.

¹⁸ Robert O. Freedman, "Russian Policy toward the Middle East: The Yeltsin Legacy and the Putin Challenge", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 1, (2001), p. 64.

¹⁹ Robert H. Donaldson & Joseph L. Noguee, *The Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, (New York & London: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), p. 219.

²⁰ J. P. Bazhanov, *op.cit.*, p. 16.

In his (Yeltsin's) eyes, the central objective of Russian foreign policy should be to support and facilitate the process of economic and political transformation taking place inside Russia. He saw the highly industrialized nations of the West as the main source of economic assistance that Russia so desperately needed to make the difficult transition to a market economy. Only the West could provide the large-scale foreign aid, loans, trade, investment capital, advanced technology and entrepreneurial expertise that Russia required.²¹

The US, "as the world's major economic power with the greatest influence in the multilateral institutions", was conceived as the fundamental country that would "lobby for Western economic assistance". Additionally, Yeltsin and his Foreign Secretary Andrei Kozyrev wanted to get the US support in the field of "arms cuts, preventing nuclear proliferation, and defending the rights of Russians in the former Soviet republics". At the same time, Kozyrev claimed that establishment of "the closest possible partnership" with the US would contribute to Russia's relations with the Group of Seven (G-7) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) and strengthen Russia's standing in the Asia-Pacific region as the US had "a powerful position in all three".²²

So, Yeltsin and Kozyrev continued the process of cooperation with the US. Yeltsin even wanted to elevate Russia's relations with the US from "rapprochement" to "partnership" with the US. At the session of the UN Security Council on 31 January 1992, Yeltsin proclaimed,

²¹ Paul J. Marantz, "Neither Adversaries Nor Partners: Russia and the West Search for a New Relationship", in Roger E. Kanet & Alexander V. Kozhemiakin (eds.), *The Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 78-79.

²² Peter Shearman (ed.), "Russian Policy toward the United States", *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 113, 120, 129.

Russia sees the US and the West not merely as partners but as allies. This is a highly important prerequisite for, and I would say, a revolution in, peaceful cooperation among the states of the civilized world. We rule out any subordination of foreign policy to ideological doctrines or a self-sufficient policy. Our principles are simple and understandable: the supremacy of democracy, human rights and liberties, legality, and morality.²³

Like Gorbachev, the Yeltsin administration believed that the US posture toward Russia would be constructive as a result of these “radical domestic reforms”, which would generate “a basis for common values” and eliminate the previous “ideological conflicts”. The West, especially the US, was believed to “respect Russia’s interests” and embrace Russia “as a great power and a full partner in the international community”.²⁴ So, Russia abandoned communism and put an end to its attempts to “counterbalance the US interests abroad”.²⁵ Although Russia was “traditionally an ally of Serbia”, for example, Yeltsin sided with the US in the fighting in Bosnia. At the meeting of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki in July 1992, Yeltsin voted to “suspend Yugoslavia’s membership” due to its help to Bosnian Serbs who were charged with “aggressive actions”.²⁶ At the UN Security Council, Russia also did not use its veto power; instead it joined the US to enforce sanctions against Yugoslavia.²⁷

²³ Robert H. Donaldson & Joseph L. Noguee, *op.cit.*, p. 219.

²⁴ Leo Cooper, *Russia and the World: New State-of-Play on the International Stage*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), p. 133.

²⁵ Michael McFaul, *op.cit.*, p. 314.

²⁶ Robert H. Donaldson & Joseph L. Noguee, *op.cit.*, pp. 223-224.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

2.2. Retreat of Pro-US Policy (1993-1995)

Despite these developments, the honeymoon period following the collapse of the Soviet Union was very short. By the end of 1992, questions were raised about Russia's pro-US foreign policy. Most opponents to Yeltsin and even his supporters called for the development of a coherent definition of Russia's national interest by arguing that Russia was not acting in the international arena "as a proud and independent great power" anymore.²⁸ Especially, Yeltsin's pro-US policy in Yugoslavia was criticized toughly by the conservatives. Even Vladimir Lukin, Russia's ambassador to the US, claimed that "preserving friendship with the US did not require servile imitation of its policies and the atrophy of independent thought and action".²⁹

In the face of these growing criticisms, Yeltsin told Russian foreign ministry officials in October 1992 that Russia was "a great world power", which did not hesitate to "defend its own interests", even it was perceived as "imperialistic".³⁰ He also said:

I am disappointed with the attitude of the West, particularly the US, which often sees Russia as a state that always say yes, forgetting that Russia is a great power, albeit with temporary difficulties. The only ideology the foreign ministry should follow is to defend Russia's interests and security.³¹

²⁸ Paul J. Marantz, *op.cit.*, p. 81.

²⁹ Robert H. Donaldson & Joseph L. Noguee, *op.cit.*, pp. 224, 127.

³⁰ Peter Truscott, *Russia First: Breaking with the West*, (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1997), p. 37.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

So, it was believed in Russia by the end of 1993 that Russia and the US would not “develop an alliance” due to their divergent interests.³² The continued deterioration of economy from 1993 onwards affected this decision. The belief that pro-Western foreign policy was ineffective to improve the economy and that “economic welfare and living standards were at least guaranteed in the Soviet Union” contributed to the establishment of “a sentiment of nostalgia” for the Soviet Union. This feeling led to the belief that “economic interests” and “relations with the former Soviet republics” had to be placed at the center of Russian foreign policy.³³

In such an environment, Russia adopted the Eurasianist orientation in its foreign policy, which brought about the development of Russia’s “Near Abroad policy”. Since the adoption of Russia’s “foreign policy concept” in April 1993, top priority was given to the “near abroad”, underlining the “actual and potential conflicts of interests with the West” and stipulating the restoration of Russian domination in the CIS.³⁴ So, in late 1992 and early in 1993, Russia regained its interest in this post-Soviet space and sought to reassert its control over it.³⁵ Russian leaders increasingly began to emphasize “their independence” and shifted Russian foreign policy from the strategy of bandwagoning with the US toward promoting a “multipolar international system”, in which “Russian interests would be respected” and the US unilateralist

³² Peter Shearman, *op.cit.*, p. 131.

³³ Rosaria Puglisi, “The Normalisation of Russian Foreign Policy: The Role of Pragmatic Nationalism and Big Business”, in Graeme P. Herd & Jennifer D. P. Moroney (eds), *Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc*, (London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 67.

³⁴ Kamer Kasım, “Turkey’s Foreign Policy Towards the Russian Federation”, *Yönetim Bilimleri Dergisi (Journal of Administrative Sciences)*, Vol. 1, No. 1-2, (2003), available at <http://www.turkishweekly.net/articles.php?id=10> (accessed on 23 December 2005)

³⁵ *Ibid.*

tendencies would be restrained.³⁶ Russia was, in fact, adopting “Russia First Strategy”.³⁷ The US remained important for Russia but it was increasingly placing its own national interests before its desire to develop close relations with the US. This was clearly displayed in the case of Chechnya, where Russia continued its military operations despite the US opposition. In addition, Yeltsin started “a strategy of increasing arms sales” to support the military-industrial complex, signing arms agreements with China, Iran and Syria. Russia provided China with “missile guidance systems, S-300 surface-to-air missiles and SU-27 fighters”. It also exported “submarines, SU-24 and MIG-29 aircraft to Iran, and T-72 tanks to Syria”. Despite the US opposition, Russia also signed an agreement with Iran in August 1995 to supply nuclear fuel for the Bushehr plant.³⁸

So, “Russia First Strategy” caused strains in Russia’s relations with the US. After meeting Warren Christopher in April 1995, Kozyrev said, “The honeymoon had come to an end, the US and Russia had entered a sobering period, and their post cold-war honeymoon had ended not in divorce, but in a growing inability to resolve the problems that they faced”.³⁹

³⁶ Thomas Ambrosio, “From Balancer to Ally? Russo-American Relations in the Wake of 11 September”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 24, No. 2, (2003), pp. 6, 11-12.

³⁷ Peter Truscott, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 54-56.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

2.3. Deterioration of Relations (1995–1999)

In the second half of the 1990s, the already soured relations worsened as a result of the increase in the anti-Western feeling in Russia. One of the main causes of this situation was the “continuation of a severe economic crisis” that deteriorated by the default on loans in August 1998. The negative effects of shock therapy deepened as hopes for the long-expected large-scale economic assistance to Russia from the US, did not materialize.⁴⁰ According to polls conducted at the end of 1993, 1 out of 2 Russian people thought that “the West’s economic advice” was “a deliberate effort to weaken Russia”. This ratio heightened in 1995 and 1996.⁴¹

Another reason for the anti-Western feeling in Russia was related with the several steps taken by the West such as “NATO expansion”, which was among Clinton’s extensive “foreign-policy initiatives”.⁴² In July of 1997, three former communist countries, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland were “invited” to become members of this alliance. This move, expanding the alliance to its borders, worried Russia. Because Russians believed that NATO expansion was displaying the West’s hostile attitude towards Russia, increasing the US political influence and military power while decreasing the area of Russian influence. For these reasons, Russia proposed its formula for a mutual agreement: “either Russia becomes a member of

⁴⁰ Ludmilla Selezneva, “Post-Soviet Russian Foreign Policy: Between Doctrine and Pragmatism”, in Rick Fawn (ed.), *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), pp. 15-16.

⁴¹ Robert H. Donaldson & Joseph L. Noguee, *op.cit.*, p. 228.

⁴² Jonathan S. Landay, “Walls Falling to Bigger NATO”, *Christian Science Monitor*, Vol. 90, No. 72, (1998), p. 1.

NATO with voting power, or NATO should be disbanded”.⁴³ However, the US and other NATO members rejected this Russian proposal.⁴⁴ For this reason, as Bazhanov argues,

Plans for NATO’s expansion were received in Russia as betrayal, demonstration of a lack of confidence, even as animosity towards Moscow, an attempt to shut the Russians in, to isolate them by a new iron curtain and, finally, as a threat to Russia’s security.⁴⁵

In addition to these concerns over NATO expansion, NATO operation in Kosovo also created great aggression and outrage in Russia, which found its expression in the “rhetoric about NATO genocide”.⁴⁶ While NATO expansion aroused the belief that NATO is “an instrument of the US foreign policy to achieve unipolarity”, NATO bombing of Kosovo strengthened it.⁴⁷ It was argued that the West severely undermined Russia’s “great power” status and its national interests by taking these steps.⁴⁸

So, Russian people began to think that the US was “an unreliable ally” and that many policy-makers in the US wanted to keep Russia “weak and impoverished”.⁴⁹

⁴³ Chris Hart, “Plan for Peace: NATO Expansion and US-Russian Relations”, *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 19, No. 4, (1997), pp. 44, 46.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁴⁵ J. P. Bazhanov, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

⁴⁶ Anatol Lieven, “Ham-Fisted Hegemon: The Clinton Administration and Russia”, *Current History*, Vol. 98, No. 630, (1999), p. 307.

⁴⁷ Margot Light; John Löwenhardt & Stephen White, “Russia and the Dual Expansion of Europe”, in Gabriel Gorodetsky (ed.), *Russia between East and West: Russian Foreign Policy on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 70.

⁴⁸ Jiemin Yang, “Communication: The Quadrilateral Relationship between China, the United States, Russia and Japan at the Turn of the Century-A View from Beijing”, *Pacifica Review*, Vol. 13, No.1, (2001), p. 110.

⁴⁹ J. P. Bazhanov, *op.cit.*, p. 18.

On the other hand, Russia's sending troops to Pristina after the air war's end without consulting NATO in order to assert its independence,⁵⁰ created great doubts in the US about the "reliability of Russia as a partner".⁵¹

In addition to these unsatisfied expectations in both the US and Russia of each other, the developments in Russia regarding human rights, civil society and democratic governance were important sources of irritation in their relations. In the middle of the 1990s, it was increasingly believed that the democracy in Russia was taking a different path from that of the US.⁵² Furthermore, Russia's military campaigns in Chechnya and its military and nuclear ties with those states the US administration defined as "rogue states" continued to sour Russian-US relations.⁵³ At the end of the 1990s, Yeltsin was complaining about the US unilateralism and insisting on a multipolar world. After the US pressure on Russia to stop its military operations in the renewed war in Chechnya in 1999, Yeltsin said:

Yesterday Clinton permitted himself to put pressure on Russia. He evidently forgot for a second, a minute, or half a minute just what Russia is, and that Russia possesses a full arsenal of nuclear weapons. He forgot that. It never has been and never will be the case that he alone dictates to the world how to live, how to work, what sort of recreation to have, and so on. No. I repeat, no! A multipolar world - that's what we agreed on with Jiang Zemin.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Anatol Lieven, *op.cit.*, p. 307.

⁵¹ Sherman W. Garnett, "A Nation in Search of its Place", *Current History*, Vol. 98, No. 630, (1999), p. 332.

⁵² Tom Bjorkman, "Russian Democracy and American Foreign Policy", *Brookings Policy Brief*, No. 85, July 2001, p. 1.

⁵³ Angela Stent & Lilia Shevtsova, "America, Russia and Europe: A Realignment?", *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 4, (2002), p. 122.

⁵⁴ Robert H. Donaldson & Joseph L. Noguee, *op.cit.*, p. 328.

As a result of these developments, Russian-US relations at this period were completely different from those in the early 1990s. During the honeymoon period, Yeltsin made the transformation of Russia's economic development his number one priority because when the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991, the Russian economy was in a profound crisis. So, Russia was compelled by its domestic conditions to seek outside assistance, and no country was better positioned to aid the Yeltsin administration than the US. So, for about two years, the Yeltsin administration maintained a pro-US orientation in the conduct of foreign policy. Russia perceived the US as its principal political ally, the main source of aid for its urgently needed reforms, and as a model of development. Then, Russia renounced communism and refrained from engendering conflict with the US while expecting to be treated as a great power.

However, Yeltsin was accused by the nationalists inside Russia of disregarding Russian national interests especially in Yugoslavia for the sake of supporting the US policies. These concerns were intensified as a result of the disillusionment with the US aid, as well as the NATO bombing of Kosovo and NATO expansion in the second half of the 1990s. These developments were conceived in Russia as conscious steps of the US to weaken Russia and establish its global hegemony, without taking into consideration Russian interests. In order to prevent this and establish a multi-polar world instead, Russia tried to form its sphere of influence in the CIS space by reasserting its control over the region, as well as to develop its economic and political relations both with China and the so-called "rogue states". Taken together, these factors signalled the end of the honeymoon period and the beginning of a new era dominated by antagonism. However, as Angela Stent and Lilia Shevtsova argues,

This created a paradoxical situation where, on the one hand, Moscow pursued integration with the West, but at the same time continued to view the US as a potential enemy. This situation of being both inside and outside the West became a source of conflict between Russian domestic and foreign policy goals. The attempt to pursue domestic liberal transformation and to reverse the economic collapse and, at the same time, support external Soviet ambitions, strained the country's limited resources. By the time Putin came to power, this hybrid policy was hampering Russia's domestic evolution and causing strains in its relations with the US.⁵⁵

In addition, Yeltsin's policy to transform Russia by the strategy of "shock therapy" caused a "reassessment" of Russia's role in the international arena and provided the basis for Putin's policies.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Angela Stent & Lilia Shevtsova, *op.cit.*, p. 122.

⁵⁶ Sergei Medvedev, *op.cit.*, p. vi.

CHAPTER 3

PRINCIPLES OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER VLADIMIR PUTIN

This chapter examines Russian foreign policy towards the US from the advent of Putin as a new Russian President on 26 March 2000 to the tragedies of 9/11. In this chapter, I will firstly analyse the main drives of Putin's foreign policy and discuss that realizing what Russia's interests are, the international policy of the new administration increasingly became more pragmatic. The challenges that confronted Russian foreign policy by the time Putin came to power led him to "evaluate international conditions realistically and take a pragmatic, rather than an ideological, approach to formulating aims and goals".⁵⁷ As Igor Ivanov explains,

The extremely contradictory international situation strengthened Russia's conviction that our only reliable foreign policy reference point was the consistent protection of its national interests. Only on this basis could we adequately respond to contemporary threats and challenges, consciously formulate positions on international issues, and forge purposeful relationships with other nations. One legacy bequeathed by Soviet foreign policy was a "superpower mentality", which induced post-Soviet Russia to participate in any and all significant international developments, often incurring a greater domestic cost than the country could bear. This approach was unacceptable, given Russia's enormous burden of unresolved domestic problems. Common sense dictated that, for the time being, foreign policy should first and foremost serve the vital interests of domestic development. This meant providing reliable national security; creating the best possible conditions for sustained economic growth; increasing the standard of living; strengthening the country's unity, integrity, and constitutional order. From all of this, another conclusion was reached: the need for an economical and focused approach, rejecting gratuitous or superfluous diplomatic efforts in favor of an active, multivector foreign policy that took advantage of anything that might produce real turns for domestic development.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Igor Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press and The Nixon Center, 2002), p. 13.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

As a consequence of this policy, Putin tried to end the dangerous deterioration of bilateral relations that occurred at the end of the 1990s and to change the course of Russian-US relations from a series of ups and downs to a mutually beneficial one. So, this chapter argues that Russian-US relationship began to change before 9/11 as a result of Putin's foreign policy priorities. However, the desire for putting an end to antagonistic relationship was instrumental to achieve Putin's goal of enhancing Russia's international status by ensuring domestic economic development.

3.1. Putin and Economization of Russian Foreign Policy

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Russian foreign policy has focused on economic development rather than military power as the key determinant of Russia's standing in the international arena. This move "from geopolitics to geoeconomics" gained speed with the 1998 economic crisis and finally took its place in Putin's foreign policy agenda.⁵⁹ His view of "Russia's economic weakness" as a major factor contributing to Russia's limited power on the international stage brought into focus the economy, "as opposed to ideology, in his foreign policy".⁶⁰ In his first state of the nation speech, he stated: "For the first time in the past 200 to 300 years, Russia is facing a real danger of sliding to the second, and possibly even the third, echelon of world states. We are running out of time to avoid this".⁶¹ He believes that "oil-and-gas based commerce" will not give Russia a stable economic growth that paves the way for "a strong and respectable position" in the international stage. For this reason,

⁵⁹ Rosaria Puglisi, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

⁶⁰ Samuel Charap, "The Petersburg Experience: Putin's Political Career and Russian Foreign Policy", *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 51, No. 1, (2004), p. 56.

⁶¹ John Lloyd, "Is Russia Closing in on Itself Again?", *New Statesman*, Vol. 132, No. 4622, (2003), p. 25.

Russian economy has to undertake “a fundamental transformation”. In a globalized world, this can be “achieved only through investment and technology inflow, primarily from the West”.⁶²

So, in the Foreign Policy Concept of 2000, the “fundamental task of foreign policy” is placed on the “creation of favourable external conditions for the progressive development of Russia” by cooperating and integrating with the leading developed states and international organizations.⁶³ Putin wrote:

Without [integration into international economic structures], we simply cannot raise ourselves to the level of economic and social progress, which developed countries have achieved. Only this path, as experience the world over shows, opens a real perspective for dynamic economic growth and improvement in quality of life. There is no alternative to it.⁶⁴

Russia then focused its foreign policy attention on becoming a fully integrated member of the G-8 and WTO.⁶⁵ As a “pragmatic” leader, Putin believes that the developed Western states will remain influential in world politics and that emergence of China as a country “capable of challenging this reality” is, for the time being, a remote possibility. This belief, as stated by Putin in his several speeches, increases

⁶² Dmitry Trenin, “Pirouettes and Priorities”, *The National Interest*, No. 74, (2003), p. 78.

⁶³ Bobo Lo, “The Securitization of Russian Foreign Policy under Putin”, in Gabril Gorodetsky (ed.), *Russia between East and West: Russian Foreign Policy on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 15.

⁶⁴ Vladimir Putin, “Rossiia na rubezhe tysiacheletii”, *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 30 December 1999, p. 22, quoted in Samuel Charap, *op.cit.*, p. 57.

⁶⁵ Caroline Kennedy-Pipe & Stephen Welch, “Russia And The United States After 9/11”, *Terrorism And Political Violence*, Vol. 17, No. 1-2, 2005, p. 282.

the importance of the “Western trade, investment and political support” to the Russian integration into the world economy.⁶⁶

3.2. Putin and Non-Isolationism in Russian Foreign Policy

To ensure Russia’s economic development and its integration into the global economy, Putin believed that he should follow a non-isolationist foreign policy, as apparent in his frequent visits to Western and Eastern countries in 2000. In that same year, Russia also attended 260 international meetings at the highest official level.⁶⁷ In fact, Putin had begun to implement such a policy before his presidency. “After becoming prime minister in August 1999, for example, he met with President Clinton five times”.⁶⁸ An active relationship with the US, especially in the “energy security” has been seen as an “opportunity” for Russia to be a great power.⁶⁹ Putin also believed that maintaining a good relationship with the US is a pre-requisite for Russia’s continuing quest for the WTO and G–8 membership.⁷⁰

Russian foreign policy toward the US, therefore, increasingly revolved around the economic considerations. Russia’s stake in maintaining close relations with the US led to the development of “a more pragmatic and realistic foreign policy” towards the

⁶⁶ Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 161.

⁶⁷ Ludmilla Selezneva, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

⁶⁸ Ariel Cohen, “Putin’s Foreign Policy and US-Russian Relations”, 18 January 2001, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/BG1406es.cfm> (accessed on 15 February 2005)

⁶⁹ Yuri Alexandrov, “Betting on the Racecourse”, *Russia and the Moslem World*, Vol. 127, No. 1, (2003), pp. 56-57.

⁷⁰ Celeste A. Wallander, “US-Russian Relations: Between Realism and Reality”, *Current History*, Vol. 102, No. 666, (2003), p. 308; Dmitry Trenin, “Pirouettes and Priorities”, *op.cit.*, p. 78.

US.⁷¹ However, Putin had delayed the implementation of such a policy until the new US administration came into office in January 2001.⁷² His expectation of establishing a more favorable environment to develop Russia's relations with the US found a chance to materialize when newly-elected US President George W. Bush, who adopted "tough realism toward Russia" during his election campaign, changed his rhetoric after the presidential campaign was over. Rather than focusing on "confrontation and neglect", Bush chose to follow the "policy of engagement with Russia".⁷³

3.3. Putin and End of Antagonism with the US

In such an environment, Russia and the US left antagonism behind themselves and opened a new period in their relationship. Putin announced that "the US is a principal partner for Russia" and that relations with the US would "remain a major priority".⁷⁴ Accordingly, both sides signed the Joint Statement on Cooperation on Strategic Stability on July 21, 2000 in Okinawa. They pledged to "search for new ways of cooperation to control the spread of missiles and missile technology".⁷⁵ On September 6, 2000, Putin and Clinton, thus, approved the Strategic Stability

⁷¹ Celeste A. Wallander, "Silk Road, Great Game or Soft Underbelly? The New US-Russia Relationship and Implications for Eurasia", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (2003), p. 100.

⁷² Lilia Shevtsova, *Putin's Russia*, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p. 152.

⁷³ James Goldgeier & Michael McFaul, *op.cit.*, p. 316.

⁷⁴ "Russian-American Economic Cooperation: Trade Representation of the Russian Federation", http://www.russianamericanchamber.org/newsletter/Rus-Amer_Econ_Coop.html (accessed on 13 July 2005)

⁷⁵ Text of Joint Statement on Strategic Stability Cooperation, signed by President Clinton and President Putin at the G-8 Summit in Okinawa, Japan, 21 July 2000, <http://www.ceip.org/files/projects/npp/resources/USRussiaG8Summit.htm> (accessed on 10 December 2004)

Cooperation Initiative to strengthen their relations and extend the existing initiatives in the field of arms control and non-proliferation.⁷⁶ After meeting Colin Powell in Paris in January 2001, Igor Ivanov stated, “with today’s talks, we demonstrated that we are prepared to turn the page and begin building constructive relations”.⁷⁷

In fact, “the turning point” was reached at the first meeting between Putin and Bush in Slovenia in June 2001. In contrast to vocal Western criticism of Bush, Putin disregarded “contentious issues” and both leaders developed a “close personal relationship” at this meeting.⁷⁸ Bush said: “I looked the man in the eye. I found him to be very straightforward and trustworthy. I was able to get a sense of his soul”.⁷⁹ Putin also said similar things about Bush: “A very trusting relationship developed immediately”.⁸⁰ Both leaders reiterated that Russia and the US are not “enemies” and that they “pose no threat to each other”.⁸¹ At their joint press conference after their meeting, the political scientist Vyacheslav Nikonov stated, “The presidents made comments about partnership, friendship, and even possible allied relations, which would have been difficult to imagine just a few months ago”.⁸²

⁷⁶ Text of Joint Statement on Strategic Stability Cooperation Initiative between the US and Russian Federation, signed by President Clinton and President Putin in New York on 6 September 2000, <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/detarget/news/70900.htm> (accessed on 10 December 2004)

⁷⁷ Dmitry Gornostayev, “America Decides It Wants Dialogue”, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 13 April 2001, pp. 1, 6, reproduced in *The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 53, No. 15, (2001), p. 22.

⁷⁸ Angela Stent & Lilia Shevtsova, *op.cit.*, p. 123.

⁷⁹ James Goldgeier & Michael McFaul, *op.cit.*, p. 317.

⁸⁰ Robert V. Daniels, “The Bush-Putin Pas de Deux”, *New Leader*, Vol. 84, No. 5, (2001), p. 4.

⁸¹ Ludmilla Selezneva, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

⁸² Robert V. Daniels, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

In such an atmosphere, the “binational working groups” were established to develop their economic ties. At their post-G-8 encounter on July 22, Putin also toned down his rhetoric on the development of the US National Missile Defense (NMD) system while Bush said that he would adopt a “consultative approach” toward this issue. At their joint press conference, Putin declared, “We are aiming at a partnership to look forward”.⁸³ In addition, at the Russian-Finnish summit in Helsinki in April 2001, Putin emphasized that “although the entry of Baltic states into NATO would not enhance regional stability, such a decision was a sovereign right of each individual nation”.⁸⁴ The week before the terrorist attacks, he reiterated that while disapproving of NATO expansion into the Baltic states, he would not oppose this move.⁸⁵

These policies illustrate that Russian foreign policy gained a new outlook with Putin, who is determined to make Russia strong and prosperous again. However, Russia does not have the resources to match its traditional global role. So, Putin saw the economic development as the key to Russia’s position in the international arena. Adopting non-isolationist foreign policy, he has believed that active relationship with the US can help Russia to achieve economic growth and national security and give it recognition as a major actor in the international politics. Therefore, Putin believed that Russia’s interests lay in cooperation, not confrontation with the US despite the cooling of Russian-US relations during the 1990s and increasing skepticism about the US intentions.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁴ Sergei Medvedev, *op.cit.*, p. 47.

⁸⁵ Alex Pravda, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

These beliefs prompted the development of a new, more pragmatic approach towards the US. As Alex Pravda argues, the lessons of the Gorbachev and Yeltsin era strengthened Putin's tendency to adopt a "dispassionate and pragmatic approach". His acceptance of Baltic states' entry into NATO signalled his reluctance to "protest or try to move against developments over which Russia has little leverage". As a leader who is determined to restore Russia's image as a great power and well aware of the "damaging consequences" of the ineffective Russian objections for Russia's prestige in the international arena, he avoids unnecessary confrontation with the US.⁸⁶ So, while Putin pursues continuity in the basic direction of Russian foreign policy, as will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, he brought a dramatic change in diplomatic and policymaking style.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

CHAPTER 4

RUSSIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE US AFTER 9/11

In this chapter, I will discuss the Russian-US bilateral relations after 9/11 to find out whether Russian foreign policy reoriented as a result of 9/11. Initially, this chapter examines Putin's policy response to the attacks of 9/11 through a discursive analysis. To see the effect of 9/11 on the Russian policies towards the US, this chapter, then, deals with the Chechen issue to explore whether Russia's military campaign in Chechnya keeps its position as one of the leading irritant factors in Russian-US relationship in the post-9/11 era. In this part, it is also underlined that the Chechen issue has become a sort of test case for Russia's future cooperation with the US both in confronting terrorism and in resolving other conflicts across Eurasia. In the following part of this chapter where the focus is on the Russian-US security relations, it is examined whether they have come to a common understanding in the security field in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks or a high degree of suspicion and hostility prevails in the two states. To this end, a special emphasis has been put on the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and on the Moscow Treaty signed in place of it.

Chapter 4 also discusses Russia's diplomatic relations with the US to find out whether their announcement of strategic partnership in May 2002 led Putin to change Russia's policies in terms of substance or they still have political problems behind this rhetoric. To this end, this part especially examines the internal developments in Russia concerning democracy and the rule of law in Russia. Great importance is also attached to Russia's desire to further develop its cooperation with China and the EU.

Finally, the last part of this chapter changes the focus from politics to economy and argues that economic motives, especially Russia's quest to join the WTO, continue to play a key role in determining the course of their relationship.

4.1. Putin's Response to 9/11

Putin used the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US as an opportunity to change the relations with the US to one of broad cooperation. He was the first foreign leader to call Bush on 9/11 to express his condolences, stating that Russia was sharing the trouble of the US as it was a "victim of terrorism" as well.⁸⁷ The next day, he made a telephone conversation with Bush again to talk about how they would cooperate in the fight against terrorism. That same day, Putin addressed the American people in a televised speech. He said:

The event that occurred in the US today goes beyond national borders. It is a brazen challenge to the whole of humanity, at least to civilized humanity. Addressing the people of the US on behalf of Russia, I would like to say that we are with you; we entirely and fully share and experience your pain. We support you.⁸⁸

In his following statements, Putin identified international terrorism "the plague of the 21st century", and portrayed the attacks as a "series of barbaric and inhuman acts", which had to be punished.⁸⁹ Accordingly, when the US signalled that it was planning a military operation against the Taliban, Putin declared on national television Russia's willingness to work closely with the US in the anti-terrorism struggle. He

⁸⁷ Ella Akerman, "September 11: Implications for Russia's Central Asian Policy and Strategic Realignment", *The Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, (2002), p. 3.

⁸⁸ Rouben Azizian, "A Marriage of Convenience: Russia and U.S. Foreign Policy", *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (2003), p. 152.

⁸⁹ "Russia Goes into High Alert, Putin Supports Tough Response", *Agence France-Press*, 11 September 2001, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/5438.html##2> (accessed on 20 December 2004)

“offered intelligence sharing, opening of Russian air space for US planes supplying humanitarian assistance, help in search and rescue operations in Afghanistan, enhanced military assistance to the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, and tacit endorsement for the offer made by the former Soviet Central Asian states of logistical support to the US military for Operation Enduring Freedom”.⁹⁰ Russia also did not use its veto power against the UN Security Council Resolution 1373, which authorizes the use of force as a means of combating terrorism. When some reservations were expressed by the other Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) members during the 15-21 October 2001, at the APEC summit in Shanghai, Putin strongly supported the US military campaign against Taliban, arguing that it was “proportional and measured”.⁹¹

Therefore, cooperation in dealing with the situation in Afghanistan and the related terrorist threat were added to Putin’s domestic agenda as the driving force for the closer relations with the US. Shifting Russian policy from balancing the US power toward supporting the US-led war on terrorism, Russia became one of the “strongest supporters” of the US.⁹² Senator Joseph Biden, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, proclaimed, “No Russian leader since Peter the Great has cast his lot as much with the West as Putin has”.⁹³

⁹⁰ Oksana Antonenko, “Putin’s Gamble”, *Survival*, Vol. 43, No. 4, (2001), p. 50.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁹² Thomas Ambrosio, “From Balancer to Ally? Russo-American Relations in the Wake of 11 September”, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

⁹³ Quoted in Robin Wright, “Ties That Terrorism Transformed”, *Los Angeles Times*, 13 March 2002, p. 4.

In fact, this Russian approach was based on the pragmatic calculations of Russia's national interests. In an interview with *the Wall Street Journal*, Putin confirmed that his policies are "conscious steps stemming from a certain vision of the future."⁹⁴ In addition, in a report signed in early October 2001 by over one hundred members of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, including Aleksei Arbatov, Vladimir Lukin, Dimitry Rogozin and Yevgeniy Primakov, it was declared:

Russia fundamentally has two choices: join the hegemonic coalition or oppose it. While neither option is perfect, the negative consequences of the latter are too high to accept. It is, therefore, necessary to make a choice in favour of participation in a great military-political coalition of responsible states against any forms of international terrorism and the proliferation of nuclear and other types of mass-destruction weapons. Participation in such a coalition will cost Russia dearly. But attempts to sit on the sidelines will cost even more. We will objectively slide downhill, especially in public opinion, into the camp of the backward and dissatisfied, with no future, supporting radicalism and terrorism.⁹⁵

In an excerpt published in *Russia in Global Affairs* journal and taken from a report by the Foundation for Prospective Studies and Initiatives, which had Primakov, Arbatov and former Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar among the authors, it was also declared:

Russia's support for anti-terrorist efforts provides it with an important foreign policy resource. The US will remain the only superpower and world leader in terms of economic and military might for the foreseeable future regardless of Russia or any group of states. All of this means that Russia stands to benefit from maximum use of its opportunities for cooperation with the US.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Thomas Ambrosio, "From Balancer to Ally? Russo-American Relations in the Wake of 11 September", *op.cit.*, p.14.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁶ Lena Jonson, *Vladimir Putin and Central Asia: The Shaping of Russian Foreign Policy*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), p. 180.

It is in that sense that the Russian backing for the US efforts to combat terrorism, Putin believed, would provide consensus regarding the issues of missile defence and the ABM Treaty.⁹⁷ More importantly, this support could redress Russia's "post-Cold War marginality" in the international arena and justify Putin's "hard-line policy" in Chechnya.⁹⁸

4.2. Chechen Issue

The Chechen problem for Russia predates the 9/11 terrorist attacks. For the Russian Federation, the First Chechen war (1994–96) was a "military disaster" and "national humiliation".⁹⁹ Public opinion, that did not back the first campaign, was believed to be a serious hindrance to the government's competence to combat thoroughly and provide domestic and international legitimation of the war.¹⁰⁰ Thus, Putin has strongly committed himself to this issue and backed the military campaign completely, giving reassurance to the generals that there would be "no search for a political solution", which had been, according to military, the main reason for the lack of success in the first military campaign.¹⁰¹ To this end, Putin argued that the second Chechen war in 1999 was conducted in the name of struggle against

⁹⁷ Alex Pravda, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

⁹⁸ Caroline Kennedy-Pipe & Stephen Welch, *op.cit.*, p. 283.

⁹⁹ Graeme P. Herd, "The Russo-Chechen Information Warfare and 9/11: Al-Qaeda Through the South Caucasus Looking Glass?", in Rick Fawn (ed.), *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 111.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹⁰¹ Martin Nicholson, "Putin's Russia: Slowing the Pendulum without Stopping the Clock", *International Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 4, (2001), p. 874.

terrorism.¹⁰² Russia, however, faced severe criticism for human rights abuses connected with its military campaign against the Chechen rebels.¹⁰³ Especially, the US blamed Russia for applying “indiscriminate” and disproportionate use of force in Chechnya.¹⁰⁴ Condoleezza Rice even stated that the Russian war in Chechnya showed “the vulnerability of the small new states around Russia and the interest of America in their independence”.¹⁰⁵ So, Putin’s claim that his country was defending its territorial integrity from the terrorists made little apparent effect on the international reaction.

Then came 9/11. Rather than reorienting its foreign policy towards the US, and thus putting an end to its military campaigns in Chechnya, Putin used post 9/11 environment to implement such a policy more strictly as, for Putin, the terrorist attacks on 9/11 legitimized the military campaigns of Russia in Chechnya.¹⁰⁶ All Chechens who resist Russian policies in Chechnya have been persistently called “terrorists” and “bandits” by the Putin administration.¹⁰⁷ To support these claims, Putin made connections between the Chechens and al-Qaeda, and attributed the Moscow theatre siege in October 2002 (and also the ‘Black Widow’ suicide bombings throughout 2003 and the Beslan school siege in September 2004) to

¹⁰² Caroline Kennedy-Pipe & Stephen Welch, *op.cit.*, p. 284.

¹⁰³ Matthew Evangelista, “Chechnya’s Russia Problem, *Current History*, Vol. 102, No. 666, (2003), p. 314.

¹⁰⁴ Jamie Dettmer, “Reporter’s Notebook - Albright Praises Putin’s Pragmatism”, *Daily Insight*, 3 October 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Caroline Kennedy-Pipe & Stephen Welch, *op.cit.*, p. 284.

¹⁰⁶ Oksana Antonenko, *op.cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁷ John Russell, “Terrorists, Bandits, Spooks and Thieves: Russian Demonisation of the Chechens Before and Since 9/11”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, (2005), p. 110.

“international terrorism”.¹⁰⁸ Putin’s foreign policy on Chechnya then became more “aggressive” as a result of the “broad-scale, tough, and targeted operations” conducted under the rhetoric of “war against international terrorism”.¹⁰⁹

In return for the cooperation Putin has offered for the anti-terrorist struggle, Bush administration had curbed its criticism for a while concerning Russian actions in Chechnya. However, Bush again became highly critical of Russian policies in Chechnya, especially after the end of the military operation against Afghanistan.¹¹⁰ There has been a “growing belief” in the US that Russian military campaign in Chechnya is giving a damage to the anti-terrorist struggles since Russian “strategies and tactics” here are inflaming rather than mollifying the intensity of extremism.¹¹¹ So, the US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, declared:

We are trying to disassociate participation in the events in Chechnya of mujahedeen from participation of the Chechens themselves who operate on the territory that is part of the Russian Federation. As for the former category, we enjoy absolute understanding with the Russian authorities. There is a certain discord when the latter category is concerned. We have always thought that a political resolution offers the only way out and will actually be a blessing for Russia.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Matthew Evangelista, *op.cit.*, p. 313.

¹⁰⁹ Mary Buckley, “Russian Foreign Policy and Its Critics”, in Rick Fawn (ed.), *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 40.

¹¹⁰ Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.* p. 153.

¹¹¹ Sarah Mendelson, “Domestic Politics and America’s Russia Policy”, *Report to the Joint Task Force of the Century Foundation and the Stanley Foundation*, October 2002, p. 11.

¹¹² Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.* p. 153.

Putin, who rejects a political solution in Chechnya, considers the “revival of criticisms” as a “betrayal” to Russia’s contribution in the fight against terrorism.¹¹³ He also said in September 2004, “We faced double standards in the attitude towards terrorism. There continues to be attempts to divide terrorists into ours and others, into moderates and radical”. In his speech, he also accused the US of hypocrisy. He said that the US is granting sanctuary to Chechen leaders and calling for Russia to talk with them while at the same time declining to have a talk with Osama bin Laden.¹¹⁴

Despite these statements, US Secretary of State Collin Powell announced that he would have dialogues with “people who claim Chechen independence”. US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher also reaffirmed that Bush administration officials would be in contact with “Chechen moderates” in spite of strong “opposition” from Russia.¹¹⁵ For this reason, Russian leaders have warned the US that “criticism” of Russia’s military campaign in Chechnya or any “support for the Chechens” will lead to the disintegration of the anti-terror coalition, which makes the rhetoric on strategic partnership, especially in Eurasia, pointless.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

¹¹⁴ “Russia Criticizes ‘Double Standards’ in Combating Terrorism”, *Xinhua*, 20 September 2004, http://english.people.com.cn/200409/20/eng20040920_157650.html (accessed on 25 January 2005)

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Stephen J. Blank, “An Ambivalent War: Russia’s War on Terrorism”, *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 14, No. 1, (2003), pp. 127-128.

4.3. Security Relations

When Putin came to power, he believed that deterioration of Russian economy, especially “seriously weakened” military-industrial sector, was the major obstacle for Russia to sustain “numerical parity” with the US. So, he embarked on a “comprehensive plan” to enhance Russian military power and block the US achievement of “irreversible military-technological superiority”. What he regarded as an important element toward accomplishing those objectives was “arms control”.¹¹⁷ However, the US interest in withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and moving forward on NMD system became a threat for Putin’s arms control policies.

Russia considered the ABM Treaty as a “symbol of stability in strategic relations”, particularly since the Bush administration had announced its decision to go ahead with the NMD system.¹¹⁸ In the Foreign Policy Concept of 2000, Putin underlined that Russia would “seek preservation and observation” of the ABM Treaty.¹¹⁹ He strongly argued that “abandonment” of that treaty would create a “legal vacuum” in the area of “disarmament and non-proliferation”.¹²⁰

In fact, it is argued that the reason behind Putin’s emphasis on the nuclear weapons proliferation and the end of strategic stability was the “rapidly changing balance of power” between them, especially the concern that the US would far exceed “Russia’s

¹¹⁷ Andrei Shoumikhin, “Evolving Russian Perspectives on Missile Defense: The Emerging Accommodation”, *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 21, No. 4, (2002), pp. 313-314.

¹¹⁸ Alex Pravda, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

¹¹⁹ Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *op.cit.*, p. 505.

¹²⁰ Andrei Shoumikhin, *op.cit.*, p. 329; Robert H. Donaldson & Joseph L. Noguee, *op.cit.*, p. 336.

capacity to respond effectively”.¹²¹ The NMD system, providing a strategic advantage to the US, will have a direct impact on the effectiveness of Russia’s nuclear forces, which in time will cease to be any deterrent for the US. The only way Moscow could respond to the new challenge would be to develop its own missile defences. Russian economy, however, does not have enough financial power to afford such a system.¹²² In addition, Russian leaders see the NMD system as a “strategy” of the US to maintain its “hegemony”.¹²³ They also totally reject it on the grounds that it will demolish the international security system, in which Russia plays an “important” role.¹²⁴

So, Putin tried to get the support of China, India, North Korea, and the EU countries in order to prevent the development of the NMD system.¹²⁵ He also embarked on a campaign to “make renegotiation and revision” of the treaty “unnecessary” by presenting “alternative solutions” to the US program. Firstly, he called for “joint efforts to deploy theater missile defence in Europe and Asia”, utilizing Russian territory, as well Russian and US technologies to “deploy interceptors”.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking*, *op.cit.*, p. 170.

¹²² Nazim Cafersoy, “ABD-Rusya İlişkilerinin Ana Çıkmazı: Ulusal Füze Savunma Sistemi”, *Stratejik Analiz*, Vol. 2, No. 17, (2001), pp. 44-45.

¹²³ Maqbool Ahmad Bhatti, “Ballistic Missile Defence, China and South Asia”, *Islamabad Policy Research Institute Paper*, No. 6, (2003), p. 12.

¹²⁴ Lilia Shevtsova, *op.cit.*, p. 156.

¹²⁵ Nazim Cafersoy, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

¹²⁶ Celeste A. Wallander, “Russia’s New Security Policy and the Ballistic Missile Defense Debate”, *Current History*, Vol. 99, No. 639, (2000), p. 344.

Secondly, he tried to eliminate the leading US motive for the NMD by declaring North Korean leader Kim Jong-II's acceptance to end his country's missile program provided that other countries would supply it with missile launches. Additionally, at the G-8 meetings in 2000, Putin also offered to "include an intrusive verification system" to observe "North Korean compliance with any such agreement".¹²⁷ Meanwhile, on 14 April 2000, Duma approved the START II Treaty on the condition that the US complied exactly with the provisions of the ABM Treaty.¹²⁸ On the other hand, in his speech on 8 November 2001, Putin stated that the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty would not harm bilateral relations although it would not be welcomed.¹²⁹

President Bush's announcement on 14 December 2001 was, thus, an important moment for both countries. On that day, Bush, determined to alter the US "nuclear strategy and force posture" even before 9/11,¹³⁰ announced that the US would "unilaterally withdraw from the ABM Treaty", despite the strong opposition from Russia.¹³¹ As expected, Putin's reaction to this withdrawal announcement was not harsh. In his speech, made within hours of Bush's announcement,¹³² he declared that although the US decision is a "mistake", it does not pose "immediate threats to

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

¹²⁸ Andrei Shoumikhin, *op.cit.*, p. 314.

¹²⁹ Nikolai Sokov, "U.S. Withdrawal from the ABM Treaty: Post-Mortem and Possible Consequences", *Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) Report*, 14 December 2001.

¹³⁰ Richard Sokolsky, "Demistifying the US Nuclear Posture Review", *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 3, (2002), p. 133.

¹³¹ Dennis M. Gormley, "Enriching Expectations: 11 September's Lesson's for Missile Defence", *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 2, (2002), p. 22.

¹³² Avis Bohlen, "The Rise and Fall of Arms Control", *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 3, (2003), p. 7.

Russian security”.¹³³ He also emphasized, “the existing level of the bilateral relations between the Russian Federation and the US should not just be preserved, but also should be used for the early development of a new framework for a strategic relationship”.¹³⁴

These statements of Putin reveal the fact that he symbolizes a new pragmatism on arms control. While engaging the US, Putin is planning to get maximal advantages for Russia. As Bobo Lo argues, regardless of how much Russia feels affronted by the US unilateral actions, Putin knows that Russia’s interests require acting in a very close dialogue with the US, refraining from unnecessary confrontation. This is why he came to an agreement about the NMD issue after he had done everything to prevent it.¹³⁵ As Russia’s economy was requiring to decrease the number of nuclear warheads to lower levels, he specifically focused his efforts on forcing the Bush administration to agree on another agreement to reduce the nuclear stockpiles.¹³⁶ When Bush administration had persisted that there was no need for a formal treaty, Russian leaders found themselves in a close interaction with the US administration officials until the Bush administration accepted to sign one.¹³⁷

Finally, on 25 May 2002, they signed Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (Moscow Treaty), committing two sides to decrease their strategic nuclear warheads to a level of 1,700–2,200 by 2012. The treaty, however, contains no “schedule of

¹³³ Andrei Shoumikhin, *op.cit.*, p. 329.

¹³⁴ Quoted in Nikolai Sokov, *op.cit.*

¹³⁵ Bobo Lo, “The Securitization of Russian Foreign Policy under Putin”, *op.cit.*, p. 24.

¹³⁶ Andrei Shoumikhin, *op.cit.*, p. 314.

¹³⁷ Mary Buckley, *op.cit.*, p. 33.

phased reductions”.¹³⁸ It also says nothing about the warhead elimination. While Russian officials are calling for the destruction of the warheads removed from deployment, US officials insist on the storage of a large proportion of them.¹³⁹ As

Jon B. Wolfsthal and Tom Z. Collina argues:

This stance has raised major objections from Russian officials, especially within the Ministry of Defence, who are concerned that the US could quickly return its forces to START I levels, providing no long-term confidence in the irreversibility of the arms reduction process. This unpredictability, they argue, could lead to major instabilities and undercut international non-proliferation efforts.¹⁴⁰

These Russian objections, however, did nothing to reverse the US view on the warhead elimination.¹⁴¹ In the face of this uncompromising attitude by the US, Russian officials have stated that in order to determine the size and the capability of the US arsenal, they will take into consideration the counting rules of the START I rather than those of the Moscow Treaty.¹⁴² This Russian disappointment over the treaty intensified when the US formally withdrew from the ABM Treaty on June 13, 2002. Although Russia only left the nuclear arms reduction pact START II in return,¹⁴³ the “timing and style of the ABM withdrawal” annoyed the Putin

¹³⁸ George Perkovich, “Bush’s Nuclear Revolution: A Regime Change in Nonproliferation”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 2, (2003), p. 8. For the detailed examination of the treaty, see Jack Mendelsohn, “America and Russia: Make-Believe Arms Control”, *Current History*, Vol. 101, No. 657, (2002), pp. 325-329, and Steve Andreasen, “Reagan Was Right: Let’s Ban Ballistic Missiles”, *Survival*, Vol. 46, No. 1, (2004), pp. 117-130.

¹³⁹ Jon B. Wolfsthal & Tom Z. Collina, “Nuclear Terrorism and Warhead Control in Russia”, *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 2, (2002), pp. 72-73.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁴¹ Alex Pravda, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

¹⁴² Jon B. Wolfsthal & Tom Z. Collina, *op.cit.*, p. 73.

¹⁴³ Wade Boese, “Russia Declares Itself No Longer Bound by START II”, *Arms Control Today*, Vol. 32, No. 6, (2002), p. 16.

administration.¹⁴⁴ The US withdrawal, which affects adversely the security policies of Putin and damages Russian image in the international arena, led Russians to think that there has been no massive shift in the aftermath of 9/11.¹⁴⁵

However, Putin tries to avoid a break in the bilateral relations despite these concerns because he believes that Russian national interests, such as strengthening of national economy, providing national security, and deeper political and economic integration into the global community, require close diplomatic relations with the US.

4.4. Diplomatic Relations

Since Putin came to power, close political relations with the US have been one of the main priorities of Russian foreign policy. Bringing the issues of security once again to the fore in world politics, 9/11 paved the way for the achievement of that goal.¹⁴⁶ Since 2001, Putin and Bush have held 12 summit meetings both in a bilateral and multilateral level.¹⁴⁷ Their first summit meeting was in May 2002 in Moscow. The main product of the summit came in the form of a joint declaration on the strategic relations, in which Bush and Putin announced:

¹⁴⁴ Kara Bosworth, "The Effect of 11 September on Russia-NATO Relations", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (2002), p. 369.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Giragosian, "U.S. Foreign Policy and the War on Terrorism: Implications for the Caucasus", *Presentation at the Caucasus Media Institute (CMI)*, Yerevan, Armenia, 17 June 2004, <http://www.caucasusmedia.org/pdf/Giragosian%20Notes%206-17-04.pdf> (accessed on 12 January 2005)

¹⁴⁷ "Russian-American Relations", <http://www.russianembassy.org> (accessed on 20 November 2005)

We are achieving a new strategic relationship. The era in which the US and Russia saw each other as an enemy or strategic threat has ended, and we are now partners and will cooperate to advance stability, security, and economic integration, and to jointly counter global challenges and to help resolve regional conflicts. To advance these objectives the US and Russia will continue an intensive dialogue on pressing international and regional problems, both on a bilateral basis and in international fora, including in the UN Security Council, the G-8, and the OSCE. Where we have differences, we will work to resolve them in a spirit of mutual respect. The US and Russia reject the failed model of Great Power rivalry.¹⁴⁸

In the same month, 19 NATO members and Russia also decided to form Russia-NATO Council, which gave Russia an equal voice but not a formal vote in many key transatlantic policy issues such as “assessment of the terrorist threats, crisis management, non-proliferation, theater missile defence, arms control and confidence-building measures”.¹⁴⁹ In return for Putin’s support for the anti-terrorist campaign, Russia also obtained the full membership of the G–8 at the June 2002 meeting,¹⁵⁰ at which Bush described Putin as “a man of action when it comes to fighting terror”.¹⁵¹

The second summit meeting in St. Petersburg in June 2003, in Putin’s word, “confirmed the fact that there is no alternative for the cooperation between Russia and the US, both in terms of ensuring domestic national agendas and in terms of

¹⁴⁸ Text of US-Russia Joint Declaration, released by the White House Office of the Press Secretary, 24 May 2002, <http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/2002/10469.htm> (accessed on 10 December 2004)

¹⁴⁹ Ingrid Staudenmeyer, “Summary and Accomplishments of the Bush-Putin Presidential Summit, May 2002”, *Russian American Nuclear Security Advisory Council (RANSAC)*, 24 May 2002. However, it was argued that although it was designed to develop a qualitatively new relationship between NATO and Russia, it was in fact similar to those of the Founding Act, established in the Rome Declaration. (Robert E. Hunter, “NATO-Russia Relations after 11 September”, *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 2003, p. 44.)

¹⁵⁰ Alex Pravda, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁵¹ James Goldgeier & Michael McFaul, “George W. Bush and Russia”, *op.cit.*, p. 321.

cooperation for the sake of enhanced international strategic stability”.¹⁵² At this meeting, Bush and Putin underlined their decisiveness to maintain their “strategic partnership”. Putin declared that although Russia and the US have “differences” regarding Iraq, they “managed to preserve and maintain” their “personal relationship”, along with their “mutual cooperation and interaction” between two countries.¹⁵³

Bush and Putin also held meetings at Camp David, Maryland, on 26-27 September 2003. They discussed the possible opportunities to “broaden and deepen cooperation and partnership” between their countries.¹⁵⁴ In the following year, Putin and Bush continued to meet with each other in the framework of the G-8 and APEC summits, at which they adhered to their commitment to strengthen their “strategic partnership”.¹⁵⁵

On the other hand, behind this rhetoric, Russian-US political relations have been soured since the early 2004, when the democracy and human rights problems of Russia, which de-emphasized in return for Putin’s support in the fight against terrorism, reappeared in Bush’s agenda. In a letter published in the Russian newspaper *Izvestia* on 26 January 2004, Powell criticized “Russia’s commitment to

¹⁵² Press Availability with President Bush and President Putin, St. Petersburg, Russia, 1 June 2003, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7204-3.cfm> (accessed on 21 February 2005)

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Text of Joint Statement, signed by President Bush and President Putin on 27 September 2003, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/09/20030927-11.html> (accessed on 10 December 2004)

¹⁵⁵ “Russian-American Relations”, <http://www.russianembassy.org> (accessed on 20 November 2005)

democracy”.¹⁵⁶ McFaul ascribes this US criticism to the “negative changes in the way Russia is governed”. As he wrote,

Since becoming president in January 2000, Putin has seized control of all national television networks, silenced or changed editorial teams at several newspapers,¹⁵⁷ removed candidates from ballots, harassed and arrested NGO leaders, and weakened Russia’s independent political parties.¹⁵⁸

Putin’s package of reforms designed to consolidate the federal power in Russia, including the abolition of direct popular election of regional governors,¹⁵⁹ and Russian government’s campaign against the oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who “financed opposition newspapers and organizations”,¹⁶⁰ also raised serious questions about the property rights and the rule of law in Russia. Eventually, in December 2004, Freedom House downgraded Russia to “Not Free” in its annual *Freedom in the World* survey.¹⁶¹

All these developments generated arguments that Russia is proceeding towards becoming a “personalized autocracy”.¹⁶² So, Bush administration officials charged Putin with “backsliding on democracy and basic freedoms”. In response, Russian

¹⁵⁶ “Russia and the West: The End of the Honeymoon”, *Strategic Survey*, Vol. 104, No. 1, (2003), p. 117; Sarah Mendelson, *op.cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁷ In 2005, Reporters Without Borders listed Russia’s media in 138th place (out of 167 countries) in terms of media freedom. (Reporters Without Borders, *Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2005*)

¹⁵⁸ Michael McFaul, “Reengaging Russia: A New Agenda, *Current History*, Vol. 103, No. 675, (2004), p. 307. Also see, Bill Nichols, “Putin’s Victory Clear; Russia’s Future Cloudy”, *USA Today*, 15 March 2004.

¹⁵⁹ Peter Lavelle, “What Does Putin Want?”, *Current History*, Vol. 103, No. 675, (2004), p. 318.

¹⁶⁰ Justus Leicht, “US-Russian Strains Dominate Bush-Putin Meeting in Bratislava”, 28 February 2005, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/feb2005/bush-f28.shtml> (accessed on 14 July 2005)

¹⁶¹ Freedom House, *Annual Report 2004*.

¹⁶² Olga Olikier & Tanya Charlick-Paley, *Assessing Russia’s Decline: Trends and Implications for the United States and the U.S. Air Force*, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2002), p. 47.

officials stated that the US is trying to “spread” what they perceive as “flawed, biased vision of democracy around the world”.¹⁶³

On the other hand, as many Western and Russian analysts argue, one of the important factors that determine the pace and success of Russia’s move toward integration with the US is the political order Russia builds. As Tom Bjorkman argues, “half-democratic Russia” will be regarded as a “half-ally” of the US.¹⁶⁴ So, this issue was one of the hot topics discussed at the meeting between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Condoleezza Rice before the Bush-Putin Bratislava summit in February 2005.¹⁶⁵ Prior to this summit, Bush also used a tough language in his speech:

For Russia to make progress as a European nation, the Russian government must renew its commitment to democracy and the rule of law. We recognize that reform will not happen overnight. We must always remind Russia, however, that our alliance stands for a free press, a vital opposition, the sharing of power, and the rule of law. And the US and all European countries should place democratic reform at the heart of their dialogue with Russia.¹⁶⁶

Despite such an environment, Bush and Putin continued to maintain their rhetoric on “strategic partnership”. Accordingly, during their summit meeting in Slovakia, and the subsequent meetings in Novo-Ogaryovo on 8 May 2005 and in Gleneagles on 7 July 2005, Bush and Putin pledged to increase their cooperation and joint efforts in a

¹⁶³ “Some Key Issues in Russia-U.S. Relations”, *Associated Press*, 24 February 2005.

¹⁶⁴ Tom Bjorkman, *Russia’s Road to Deeper Democracy*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), p 2.

¹⁶⁵ Vitaly Merkushev, “Relations Between Russia And The EU: The View From Across The Atlantic”, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (2005), pp. 364-365.

¹⁶⁶ Justus Leicht, *op.cit.*

number of areas, including nuclear security and counter-terrorism.¹⁶⁷ As a sign of this resolve, Putin announced his support for Bush's reelection in the US presidential election of November 2004, describing him as a "reliable partner".¹⁶⁸

On the other hand, Putin's rhetoric on Russian strategic partnership with the US has been expected to create a new political context, in which the US policy choices have greater reverberations within Russia's political leadership. Because this situation commits Russia more decisively to a thoroughgoing integration with the US, reaffirming its centrality in Russia's relations with the other countries. Nevertheless, Putin wants Russia to undertake the role of an active global power and to this end, he wants to follow an open-door policy, leaving Russia some room for choice.¹⁶⁹ Refusing to acknowledge that Russia should choose East or West, Putin emphasizes Russia's unique geopolitical position, and argues that the realities of world politics and economics dictate the necessity for Russia to look for its national interests "everywhere".¹⁷⁰ For this reason, Putin sees the EU as one of Russia's key political and economic partners and seeks to promote intensive, sustained and long-term

¹⁶⁷ "Russian-American Summit Meetings Since 2003", http://president.kremlin.ru/eng/events/details/2005/09/13_93729.shtml (accessed on 20 September 2005)

¹⁶⁸ Victor Yasmann, "Analysis: Russian-American Relations After US Elections", *CDI Russia Weekly*, 4 November 2004.

¹⁶⁹ Elnur Soltan, "Rusya: Süper Güç Şemsiyesi Altında Bölgesel Bir Büyük Güç", *Stratejik Analiz*, Vol. 3, No. 27, (2002), p. 78.

¹⁷⁰ Bobo Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking*, *op.cit.*, p. 165.

cooperation with it.¹⁷¹ In an interview made with the Italian press in November 2003, he said:

“For us, Europe is a major trade and economic partner and our natural, most important partner, including in the political sphere. Russia is not located on the American continent, after all, but in Europe. We are interested in developing relations with our partners in the US and the American continent as a whole and in Asia, but, of course, above all with Europe.”¹⁷²

On the other hand, although close relationship with the EU allows Russia greater flexibility in the formulation and conduct of its own foreign policy,¹⁷³ it has at the same time presented Russia with a challenge for improving its relations with the US. Because although the US and Europe share similar views on many issues, there are also many areas in which they differ both in terms of substantive disagreements over policies as well as differences over unilateralist and multilateralist decision-making processes.¹⁷⁴

For example, while both the US and Europe share a common interest in thwarting terrorism, they differ on how to reach that goal. While the US insists on using military force, Europeans reject this option, emphasizing the need to address the main reasons behind terrorism, such as “globalisation and poverty”. So, their emphasis on the “importance of international institutions and multilateral

¹⁷¹ Graham Timmins, “Coping with the New Neighbours: The Evolution of European Union Policy towards Russia”, *Perspectives on European Politics & Society*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (2004), p. 365.

¹⁷² Quoted in Dov Lynch, “Russia’s Strategic Partnership with Europe”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 2, (2004), p. 99.

¹⁷³ Aleksei Likhachev, “Russia’s Economic Interests in an United Europe”, *Diplomacy & International Relations*, Vol. 50, No. 5, (2004), pp. 75, 86-87.

¹⁷⁴ Angela Stent & Lilia Shevtsova, *op.cit.*, p. 121.

diplomacy”, and their resistance against the “use of force, particularly for pre-emptive purposes”, put the EU on a collision course with the US, especially concerning its policies towards the countries described by Bush as “axis of evil”.¹⁷⁵ It is in that sense that, as the Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis of the 2003 Iraq war demonstrated, Russia regards the EU as a counter-balance to the US unilateralist tendencies.¹⁷⁶

China is another major component of Russia’s strategy to promote multipolarism. Russian-Chinese relations have become more intense than before. At a press conference following Russian-Chinese talks, Putin stated, “We have now reached an entirely different qualitative level. Not only have we surmounted our differences in these years; we have become truly strategic partners and mapped out the prospects for the development of our relations”.¹⁷⁷

In fact, China and Russia are interested in creating a geopolitical counterweight to the US. Both countries are especially interested in a stable Central Asia beyond the US influence and so anxious about the long-term US military presence in the region.¹⁷⁸ In July 2001, the two countries signed the Treaty on Good-Neighborly Relations, Friendship, and Cooperation, which is the first new friendship treaty since 1950 and which promotes new world order based on multipolarism.¹⁷⁹ In August

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

¹⁷⁶ Mark Webber, *Russia & Europe: Conflict or Cooperation?*, (New York: Palgrave, 2000), p. 69.

¹⁷⁷ Remarks by Putin at Press Conference Following Russian-Chinese Talks in 2 December 2002, released by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Information and Press Department, http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/english/preconf2002 (accessed on 15 October 2004)

¹⁷⁸ Yevgeny Primakov, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁷⁹ Jiang Li, “Friendship Pact: a New Stage in Sino-Russian Relations”, 20 July 2001, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2001/Jul/16355.htm> (accessed on 20 September 2004)

2005, they also held their first joint military maneuvers, seen by the analysts as a message to the US and its military presence in Central Asia.¹⁸⁰

In addition, in July, two months later, the two heads of state signed a joint declaration regarding the international order of the 21st century. Highlighting their commitment to the supremacy of international law, multilateral approaches and an increased role for the UN in the global politics, they announced their opposition to any attempts to dominate the global affairs and interfere in the domestic issues of sovereign states, a veiled expression of their disapproval for the US policies.¹⁸¹ Dismissing the US concerns, Putin administration also continues Russia's arms deals with China, which help the latter to modernize its military and extend its power in Asia.¹⁸²

So, Russia's close relations with China, like those with the EU, are highly likely to generate frictions between Russia and the US. However, as Ariel Cohen argues, although "China alone offers Russia a large market where it can sell goods ranging from grain to nuclear reactors", it cannot provide Russia with "investment dollars or new technology".¹⁸³ For this reason, while Russia moves closer to China, Russian

¹⁸⁰ James M. Goldgeier & Michael McFaul, "What To Do About Russia", *Policy Review*, No. 133, (2005), p. 53.

¹⁸¹ Joint Russian-Chinese Declaration on the new world order in the 21st century, signed on 1 July 2005, <http://www.russia.org.cn/eng/?SID=22&ID=6> (accessed on 12 October 2005)

¹⁸² Herman Pirchner & Ilan Berman, "Russia Revived", *American Spectator*, Vol. 37, No. 7, (2004), p. 26; Pei Yuanying, "Arms Sales Blockade", [http://www.bjreview.com.cn/200426/World-200426\(D\).htm](http://www.bjreview.com.cn/200426/World-200426(D).htm) (accessed on 05 January 2005)

¹⁸³ Ariel Cohen, "Putin's Foreign Policy and U.S.-Russian Relations", 18 January 2001, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/RussiaandEurasia/BG1406.cfm> (accessed on 15 February 2005)

officials will persist in looking for the US investment.¹⁸⁴ Economic relations with the US, thus, constitute a very important part of the Russian-US dialogue.

4.5. Economic Relations

Increased economic cooperation is exactly what Putin has been looking for since the beginning of his presidency. With the opportunity created by 9/11, Putin partially realized his desire. In a Joint Statement on the New Russian-American Economic Relationship, the US president promised both to increase trade and investment links with Russia and to “accelerate” Russia’s entry into the WTO.¹⁸⁵ On 6 June 2002, the US also recognized Russia as a “market economy”, which enables Russia to “receive the same treatment as other major US trading partners in trade disputes”.¹⁸⁶ The move is also seen as an important step forward for Russia in its efforts to enter the WTO.¹⁸⁷

At the summit meeting in May 2002, Bush and Putin also committed themselves to a united effort to “reduce volatility in global energy markets” and encourage “investment in Russia’s oil industry”.¹⁸⁸ This was further developed with the

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Text of Joint Statement on the New Russian-American Economic Relationship, signed by President Bush and President Putin on 13 November 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011113-10.html#> (accessed on 10 December 2004)

¹⁸⁶ Thomas A. Dine, “Free Russian Economy Needs a Free Press; President Putin’s Media Crackdown a Major Problem”, *RFE/RL*, 16 July 2002.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ David G. Victor & Nadejda M. Victor, “Axis of Oil?”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 2, (2003), p. 47.

organization of the Russian-American Commercial Energy Dialogue whose priorities are to attract foreign investment into Russian fuel and energy industry and to help both sides increase their “commercial cooperation in the energy sector”.¹⁸⁹ At the June 2003 summit meeting, Bush also promised to exempt Russia from the Jackson-Vanik amendment,¹⁹⁰ a “necessary step” for the Russian entry into the WTO.¹⁹¹

As a result of these efforts, Russian-US trade and economic ties have developed significantly. As Igor Ivanov points out, “[their] trade volume has increased, business cooperation has spread and become more diverse, and regional contact has intensified”.¹⁹² The US investors who left Russia following the Russian financial crash in 1998 have also started investing in the Russian market again.¹⁹³ As far as the volume of investments accumulated, the US is the number one investor in Russia.¹⁹⁴ So, economy continues its importance as the most important factor for the continuation of close relations.

Consequently, 9/11 created the convenient conditions to transform the Russian-US relations to one of broad cooperation. Before 9/11, Putin was seeking partnership

¹⁸⁹ Text of Joint Statement on New US-Russian Energy Dialogue, signed by President Bush and President Putin on 24 May 2002, http://www.usembassy.it/file2002_05/alia/a2052405.htm (accessed on 10 December 2004)

¹⁹⁰ Press Availability with President Bush and President Putin, St. Petersburg, Russia, 1 June 2003, <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/7204-3.cfm> (accessed on 21 February 2005)

¹⁹¹ Daniel P. Fata, “Conditioning Russia’s Graduation from Jackson-Vanik: A Congressional Message for President Putin”, 22 February 2005, <http://politicom.moldova.org/articole/eng/372/> (accessed on 22 July 2005)

¹⁹² Igor Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy*, *op.cit.*, p. 115.

¹⁹³ “Pragmatism in Russian Foreign policy”, *CIS-Barometer*, No. 32, January 2003, (<http://www.cdi.org/russia/242-17.cfm> accessed on 25 December 2004)

¹⁹⁴ Igor Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy*, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

with the US to ensure Russia's domestic national agendas. He, therefore, seized this golden opportunity and declared Russian desire to work together with the US to fight international terrorism. The alliance with the US appeared to be more profitable for Putin. He has believed that Russia's policy goals- economic, social and political development, integration into the globalised international system and physical security- can be best served through a policy of engagement, rather than opposition.

As a result, during the year after 9/11, Russian-US relations were on an obvious ascent as the two leaders cheered each other up with rhetorical bolstering. Both presidents signed a joint statement on the new strategic relationship, reaffirming the two nations' partnership and commitment to meet together the challenges of the 21st century. Russia also obtained some awards in return for its support for the US-led anti-terrorist coalition. As well as having the opportunity to have a greater say in NATO through NATO-Russia Council, Russia became a full member of the G-8 with the US help. More importantly, the Bush administration lobbied Congress hard to grant Russia the status as a free-market economy and this was finally granted on 6 June 2002.

So, throughout the years 2000-2005, Putin, as a pragmatic leader, did not allow the domestic and international developments to deteriorate their relations above a certain point. Even at the critical moments, Putin continued to conduct a careful diplomacy and did not sever the high-level contacts with Bush. His pragmatism was most evident in his reaction to the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. Understanding that the US was determined to materialize its plans for the NMD system despite his complaints, Putin accepted the inevitable and reacted with equanimity to the US withdrawal decision. Avoiding from unnecessary confrontation, he chose to engage

with the US in pursuit of Russia's broader interests and to persuade the US to accept another strategic arms reduction agreement, which was finally signed in May 2002. However, the terms of this treaty, especially the section allowing the storage of the warheads, are not entirely agreeable to Russia. In addition, there is a total rejection of the NMD system, which is believed to abandon Russia's nuclear card while destroying Russia's role in providing the international security. There is still no rapprochement between Russia and the US on this issue, leading the Putin administration to concern about the unilateral decisionmaking by the US in matters of security. Today, the US weapons are still pointed at Russia.

Apart from this confrontation in the security field, there is also mutual mistrust and tension in the political relations as well. The US concerns about Russia's commitments in fulfilling the rule of law, protection of minorities, a free press and a viable political opposition, claiming that Russia is deviating from the democratic principles. Russia's military campaigns in Chechnya also raise questions about Putin's commitment to human rights. The demand of the US to stop the Russo-Chechen conflict is clearly a compromise that Putin does not want to accept. Rather than abandoning its military operations in Chechnya, he even intensified them in the post-9/11 era.

Moreover, contrary to expectations, there is more active engagement of Russia with the EU and China today. More importantly, Russia continues to see the establishment of close relations with these countries as a necessary step to counter the US unilateralist tendencies. So, Putin's pragmatism is underscored by the fact that he pursues different agendas with different parts of the world trying to get maximum tactical advantages on each side.

All in all, all these developments reveal most clearly the fact that old problems are still lurking beneath the surface despite the rhetoric on Russian-US strategic partnership.

CHAPTER 5

RUSSIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE US IN EURASIA AFTER 9/11

The US war on terrorism is not a sufficient basis for the lasting relations between Russia and the US. In moving forward, a new Russian-US relationship requires rapprochement on the important regional issues, especially in Eurasia. So, this chapter of the thesis seeks to understand whether Putin is simply exploiting the Russian-US close dialogue for the Russia's short or long-term advantage, or he is seizing upon the post 9/11 environment to carry forward an ambition to link Russia's destiny with the US. To this end, I analyze Russian foreign policy towards Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and the CIS to discuss change and continuity in Russian foreign policy towards the US after 9/11.

The first part of this chapter focuses on the developments in Afghanistan, where Russia and the US have been cooperating in their policies since well before the tragedy of 9/11. This part argues that as Russian and US interests overlapped in removing the Taliban threat in the region, Putin supported the US-led war in Afghanistan. So, in this chapter, a special emphasis has been put on the countries where Russia have national interests that conflict with those of the US. The second part, therefore, tries to find out whether 9/11 ultimately led to a rapprochement between Russia and the US on Iran or it is still a source of irritation in their relationship. The third part also examines Russian foreign policy toward Iraq to find out whether Russia continued to oppose the US military actions against Iraq or supported the US efforts to bring down Saddam Hussein despite its vested strategic and economic interests in that country.

Taking these results into consideration, the last part of this chapter turns the focus to the CIS and argues that just like before 9/11, the CIS has become a zone of conflict rather than cooperation due to their geostrategic rivalry and conflicting economic goals in the region. This is because there is no change in the substance of the Russian foreign policy itself. As the policies towards the regional countries demonstrate, Putin has improved Russia's tactics, not changed its strategic thinking or objectives. The terms "zero-sum", "balance of power" and "spheres of influence", though less apparent in Putin's statements, still preserve their importance in Russian foreign policy. The competing interests of Russia and the US and so continuation of old problems regarding the regional issues, this chapter claims, reveal the fact that the establishment of strategic partnership is just rhetoric.

5.1. Afghanistan

Long before 9/11, the instability in Afghanistan was a major concern for Russia. Since the Taliban took over Kabul in the fall of 1996, Russia was under the threat of "spillover from Afghanistan through Central Asia of Islamic militancy, terrorism, and drug trafficking".¹⁹⁵ Russia was also worrying about the possible installation of "regimes sympathetic to the Taliban in its southern neighbours" as a result of the "coups by Islamist elements".¹⁹⁶ So, Putin acted quickly to warn about the danger of the terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.¹⁹⁷ Especially, since the beginning of the

¹⁹⁵ Fiona Hill, "The United States and Russia in Central Asia: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran", *Presentation at the Aspen Institute*, 15 August 2002. <http://www.brookings.edu/views/speeches/hillf/20020815.htm> (accessed on 18 June 2005)

¹⁹⁶ Thomas Withington, "The Other Allies: Russia, India, and Afghanistan's United Front", *Current History*, Vol. 101, No. 651, (2002), p. 42.

¹⁹⁷ Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, p. 152.

second Chechen war in 1999, Russia has constantly claimed that the Taliban spreads terrorism to Central Asia by providing the Chechen rebels with “arms, funds and training”.¹⁹⁸

To eliminate this threat, Russia actively supported anti-Taliban forces, especially the Northern Alliance, by providing it with “AK-47 Kalashnikov assault rifles, tanks, and other assorted military equipment since 1995”.¹⁹⁹ In 2000, officials of the Russian Security Council even discussed the bombing of Taliban positions in Afghanistan. But no action was taken because of the fact that the states in Central Asia were not powerful enough to stand against “serious counter-attacks and that the Russian troops in the region were overstretched”.²⁰⁰ Putin, thus, offered American as well as European officials to take a joint action against Taliban.²⁰¹

For this reason, the US military operations in Afghanistan were fully consistent with Russia’s attempts to remove the Taliban and contain the rise of Islamic extremism in its southern borders. So, although Russia did not take part directly in the US-led military activities,²⁰² it cooperated closely with the US in intelligence gathering and information sharing about the Taliban’s military capabilities and al-Qaeda activities.²⁰³ Russia also sent experts to Afghanistan, contributing to the fulfillment

¹⁹⁸ Ella Akerman, “September 11: Implications for Russia’s Central Asian Policy and Strategic Realignment”, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁹⁹ Thomas Withington, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

²⁰⁰ Alex Pravda, *op.cit.*, p. 48.

²⁰¹ Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, p. 152.

²⁰² Vladimir Rukavishnikov, “The Russians and The American War on Terrorism: Lessons Learned After September 11”, *International Problems*, Vol. 54, No. 4, (2002), p. 60.

²⁰³ Graeme P. Herd, *op.cit.*, p. 114.

of “specialized tasks such as mine clearing”, and continued its arms supply to the Northern Alliance, on which the US had to rely for ground forces.²⁰⁴

In fact, by supporting the US-led anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan, Putin furthered Russia’s own agenda, materializing an important security goal that Russia had been unable to achieve alone. Regarding this issue, Chairman of the Federation Council Foreign Affairs Committee Mikhail Margelov claimed on 22 December 2002:

For the first time in many decades, Russia enhanced its national security without sacrificing the lives of its soldiers. I am absolutely certain that if the US had not come into Afghanistan, then we would have had to do so ourselves in order to defend our security from the Taliban.²⁰⁵

On the other hand, the Putin administration has concerns about the US stay in the region. About the nature of the new Afghan government, Moscow repeatedly announced that it had wanted a “centralized system of government with provinces enjoying only a measure of sovereignty” in Afghanistan. The reason for this is believed to be the concern that the US could use the “possible tensions in the autonomous northern provinces of Afghanistan” as a pretext for its presence in the region.²⁰⁶ When Bush turned his attention to Iraq after Afghanistan, it also became clear that Russia and the US have different understanding about the nations that support terrorism. Rather than Iran and Iraq, Russia regards Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as the key supporters of terrorism and claims that the US should deal with

²⁰⁴ Council on Foreign Relations, *Terrorism Q & A: Russia*, (2004), http://cfrterrorism.org/coalition/russia_print.html (accessed on 20 January 2005)

²⁰⁵ Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, pp. 152-153.

²⁰⁶ Ella Akerman, “September 11: Implications for Russia’s Central Asian Policy and Strategic Realignment”, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

these countries to put an end to their involvement in the terrorist activities.²⁰⁷ So, although Moscow and Washington had broad interests of the same kind in Afghanistan, the two countries have different and, more importantly, clashing foreign policy agendas in Iraq and Iran.

5.2. Iraq

Iraq, Russia's a long-time partner, is one of the countries with which Russia has consistently maintained a perspective in contrast to that of the US. In the late 1990s, its refusal of the US military action against Iraq made Russia an important element in the US policies towards Iraq.²⁰⁸ Madeleine Albright even charged Russian diplomats with behaving at the UN as "Saddam's lawyers".²⁰⁹ Bush's axis-of-evil speech of January 2002 again put the US policy on a collision course with Russia. After 9/11, the Bush administration intensified its rhetoric against Iraq, identifying it as one of the countries that sponsor terrorism and labeling its weapons capabilities as a "direct threat to US national security".²¹⁰ In response, Putin made efforts to persuade Iraqi government to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions, and cooperate with the UN arms inspectors in an effort to keep the conflict within the UN framework.²¹¹ Nevertheless, when the Bush administration intensified its rhetoric of using military force against Iraq, "Russian Foreign Ministry was the first" to express its disapproval

²⁰⁷ Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, p. 154.

²⁰⁸ Sarah Mendelson, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

²⁰⁹ Stephen Sestanovich, "At Odds with Iran and Iraq: Can The United States And Russia Resolve Their Differences?", *Century Foundation & Stanley Foundation Paper*, February 2003, p. 7.

²¹⁰ Christopher Dickey & John Barry, "Next Up: Saddam", *Newsweek*, Vol. 139, No. 1, (2001), p. 16.

²¹¹ Lena Jonson, *op.cit.*, p. 179; Paul J. Saunders, "The US And Russia After Iraq", *Policy Review*, No. 119, (2003), p. 28.

of such measures. Speaking to the parliament in his annual address on 16 May 2003, Putin also used the strongest language regarding this issue: “strong, well-armed national armies are sometimes used not to fight this evil (international terrorism) but to expand the areas of strategic influence of individual states”.²¹²

Foreign policy analysts put forward several reasons for the Russian opposition to the US policy against Iraq. The most mentioned was the economic reasons. Because, with the advent of Putin, Russian foreign policy agenda focused on three principal objectives: getting more than \$8 billion dollars owed by Iraq to Russia; pursuing “Russian business interests in Iraq, especially for Moscow’s oil companies and Gasprom”; and providing the removal of the UN sanctions against the Iraqi regime in order to enable Russian firms to start to operate in Iraq. However, these Russian goals could be a pipe dream as a result of the US attack against Iraq.²¹³

Putin’s stance on the Iraqi war was also closely related to the “issue of principle” because the Bush administration was prepared to attack Iraq by “sidestepping” the UN Security Council,²¹⁴ the only place where Moscow has an “equal status” with the US, and where it is treated as a “superpower”.²¹⁵ In Russia, there was a strong opposition of domestic public, along with the military and security organs, to the war

²¹² Alexander A. Belkin, “US-Russian Relations and The Global Counter-Terrorist Campaign”, *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (2004), p. 20.

²¹³ Robert O. Freedman, “Russian Policy toward the Middle East under Putin: The Impact of 9/11 and The War in Iraq”, *Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (2003), p. 69.

²¹⁴ Lena Jonson, *op.cit.*, p. 179.

²¹⁵ Galia Golan, “Russia and the Iraq War: Was Putin’s Policy a Failure?”, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 4, (2004), p. 431.

waged without the UN authority.²¹⁶ Many Russians saw the US attack against Iraq as part of the US effort to control the world oil markets and enhance its political and economic domination of the world. This situation renewed questions about the status of Russia in the international system. Because the unilateral action by the US against Iraq would convert Russia from a great power into a minor one.²¹⁷ Last but not least, a war in Iraq also carried with it the danger that it could infuriate the Muslim world, creating instability in Russia and its southern borders.²¹⁸

In the face of these concerns, the Putin administration reiterated that Russia would continue to cooperate with Iraq. Accordingly, Russia signed a \$40 billion trade deal with Iraq in 2002, which was perceived as a “direct challenge” to the US policy against Iraq.²¹⁹ Meanwhile, another clear indication of a growing schism between Russia and the US arised when the term “multipolarity”, which had not been seen in Putin’s statements since 9/11, re-appeared in a joint Russian-Chinese statement signed in December 2002. This term continued to show itself in the following Delhi and Bishkek Declarations, signed with India, and Kyrgyzstan respectively.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Alexander A. Belkin, *op.cit.*, p. 20. Putin’s wish to strengthen his domestic political standing in the December Duma elections and the Presidential elections scheduled for March 2004, therefore, played a significant role in Putin’s decision to oppose the US. (Galia Golan, *op.cit.*, p. 430.)

²¹⁷ Thomas Ambrosio, “The Russo-American Dispute Over the Invasion of Iraq: International Status and the Role of Positional Goods”, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 57, No. 8, (2005), pp. 1200-1201.

²¹⁸ The Muslims constitute 18 per cent of Russia’s population. There are also six post-Soviet Muslim states on Russia’s southern border: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. (Alexander A. Belkin, *op.cit.*, p. 22.)

²¹⁹ Thomas Ambrosio, *op.cit.*, p. 1197.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 1199-1200.

Already soured Russian-US relations deteriorated further by February 2003, when Putin decided to side with France and Germany against the US and Britain.²²¹ The situation was to worsen once the war broke out. When the US-led military invasion of Iraq was launched on 17 March without seeking a UN resolution, Putin's reaction was harsh. He called it a "major political mistake" and said, "Nothing can justify this military action. The desire to change the political regime in that country is in direct violation of international law". He also declared that the US was trying to destroy "the established international security system" and replace the "international law by the law of might makes right, whereby the strong are always right".²²² Meanwhile, Russian-US relations were hurt further by the reports that Russia had secretly sold arms and military equipment to Iraq such as "anti-tank missiles, night vision devices, and electronic jamming equipment".²²³

It was only when the war came close to a speedy end that Russian foreign policy underwent a dramatic change. Regarding this issue, Sergei Karaganov, a leading Russian foreign affairs analyst of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy wrote in *Moscow News* (23-29 April 2003) that "our intelligence services misled us or we deluded ourselves about the Iraqis' ability and readiness to resist the US forces".²²⁴ Then, Putin said, "For political and economic reasons, Russia does not have an interest in a US defeat. Our interest is in shifting efforts to solve this problem to the

²²¹ Lena Jonson, *op.cit.*, p. 181.

²²² Leonid Gankin, "All Quiet in Moscow - Russian-American Relations Are Still Afloat", *Kommersant*, 10 April 2003, pp. 1, 10, reproduced in *the Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 55, No. 14, (2003), p. 8.

²²³ Peter Slevin, "Three Russian Firms' Deal Angers US: Iraq Purchased Jamming Gear, Missiles, Night Vision Goggles", *Washington Post*, 23 March 2003, p. 19.

²²⁴ Paul J. Saunders, *op.cit.*, p. 30.

floor of the UN”.²²⁵ As such statements show, the shift in Russian foreign policy was the result of Putin’s pragmatic approach. As Georgy Bovt argues:

He understands the futility of protesting the inevitable, preferring instead to extract from the inevitable the greatest possible dividends. And if war in Iraq was inevitable, then the thing to do was to extract guarantees that the US would be mindful of Russia’s interests in Iraq.²²⁶

So, it did not make sense for Russia to have a radical break in relations with the US and risk losing everything in Iraq. Therefore, Putin pursued a “careful diplomacy” toward the US and did not close Russia’s communication lines with that country.²²⁷

In addition, Russia did not veto the UN Security Council Resolution 1483, which authorizes the US to control Iraq and its oil until there is an internationally recognized Iraqi government.²²⁸ On 16 October 2003, Russia also agreed to the UN Security Council Resolution 1511, which legitimizes the Iraqi government backed by the US.²²⁹

On the other hand, the Putin administration did not completely give up its anti-American rhetoric on Iraq. Top Russian officials have frequently made verbal attacks against what they see as “unjustified US interference in foreign affairs”. In December

²²⁵ Aleksandr Arkhangelsky & Semyon Novoprudsky, “Guided by Intellect and Conscience: Vladimir Putin Sets Forth Russia’s Position on the Iraq War”, *Izvestia*, 4 April 2003, p. 1, reproduced in *the Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 55, No. 13, (2003), p. 8.

²²⁶ Georgy Bovt, “A Gentlemen’s Agreement with Specifics”, *Izvestia*, 23 November 2002, p. 2, reproduced in *the Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 54, No. 47, (2002), p. 3. Stephen Sestanovich, also says the same thing in his article “Dual Frustration: America, Russia and the Persian Gulf”, *The National Interest*, Vol. 70, (2003), p. 158.

²²⁷ “Testing Putin’s Pragmatism”, *Strategic Survey*, Vol. 103, No. 1, (2002), p. 124.

²²⁸ Robert O. Freedman, “Russian Policy toward the Middle East under Putin: The Impact of 9/11 and The War in Iraq”, *op.cit.*, pp. 72-73.

²²⁹ Middle East Historical and Peace Process Source Documents: *UN Security Council Resolution 1511*, <http://www.mideastweb.org/1511.htm> (accessed on 12 September 2005)

2004, Putin also accused the Bush administration of seeking to establish “dictatorship of international affairs”.²³⁰ Accordingly, throughout 2005, he repeatedly said that the US had to clarify the date when the US troops would leave Iraq. He also made claims that Iraqi public views the coalition units as the occupying forces. This statement, which led to confusion in the Bush administration, came shortly after the common military exercises made by Russia and China.²³¹

5.3. Iran

Iran is another country that has created recurrent dispute between Russia and the US in the post-Cold War era. The Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement of 1995 to build an \$800 million nuclear plant at Bushehr on the Gulf coast is one of the major sources of friction in the Russian-US relations. Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham reiterated in Moscow on 1 August 1 2002:

Iran is aggressively pursuing nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles. The technology and know-how Russia is providing to Iran could be used for destructive purposes. For that reason we have consistently urged Russia to cease all nuclear co-operation with Iran, including its assistance to the reactor in Bushehr.²³²

From Russia’s perspective, however, the nuclear cooperation with Iran is both “financially lucrative”, and emphasizes Russia’s role in the Near East, showing the West that Russia plays an important role in ensuring “global security”, especially in

²³⁰ Andrew F. Tully & Jeremy Bransten, “Ukrainian Crisis Strains US-Russian Relationship”, *RFE/RL Reports*, Vol. 6, No. 45, (2004).

²³¹ “Rusya ABD’ye Dişlerini Gösterdi”, *Akşam*, 22 August 2005, p. 16.

²³² *CNN*, “Anger at Russia-Iran Nuclear Ties”, 1 August 2002, <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/08/01/russia.iran/> (accessed on 22 February 2005)

the area of preventing proliferation of the WMD.²³³ Russia also does not want to damage its relations with Iran because Russia sees that country as an important player in Central Asia and the Caucasus, where they cooperate with each other to prevent the US influence over these regions, while opposing the US policies to consolidate its hegemony and establish a unipolar world order.²³⁴ Russia also seeks to continue to develop its bilateral cooperation with Iran in preventing Azerbaijan from getting stronger and in sustaining peace in Tajikistan, as well as in providing stability in Afghanistan.²³⁵

So, the US accusations have been rejected by Putin on the grounds that Russian nuclear cooperation with Iran is purely civilian.²³⁶ He also claims that the Bush administration pursues “double standards” regarding this issue, underlining the US pledge to build a nuclear power plant in North Korea.²³⁷ The US efforts so far have, thus, prompted no change in Russia’s Iran policy. On the contrary, in order to resume arms sale to Iran, Putin unilaterally abolished the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement in the fall of 2000, which committed Russia to cease all deliveries of military arms and equipment to Iran by the end of 1999.²³⁸ So, Russia continued to provide Iran with a

²³³ Bobo Lo, “The Securitization of Russian Foreign Policy”, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

²³⁴ Hooman Peimani, “Russian-Iranian Relations and American Military Presence in Central Asia”, 27 February 2002, http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=42 (accessed on 10 March 2006)

²³⁵ Robert O. Freedman, “Russian Policy toward the Middle East: The Yeltsin Legacy and the Putin Challenge”, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

²³⁶ CNN, “Anger at Russia-Iran Nuclear Ties”, *op.cit.*

²³⁷ Alex Pravda, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

²³⁸ Robert O. Freedman, “Russian Policy toward the Middle East under Putin: The Impact of 9/11 and The War in Iraq”, *op.cit.*, p. 76.

nuclear reactor and sophisticated military equipment, along with the political support against the US policies to “isolate” it.²³⁹

In this context, Putin told the US after 9/11 that he would go ahead selling arms to Iran and complete there construction of a nuclear power plant. So, dismissing the US concerns, on 2 August 2002, Rajab Safarov, a political adviser to Putin and director of Russia’s Iranian Studies, disclosed preparing an agreement with Iran to sell \$5 billion worth of advanced weapons and to increase their annual trade to \$5 billion. He also declared Russia’s willingness to sell six more nuclear power reactors to Iran. At the same time, in his announcement, Safarov underlined that the Russia’s aim to develop its relations with the West should not be seen as “readiness to follow the US policy regardless of direction”. He told that Russia would follow “its own interests even if they did not coincide with those of Western countries”.²⁴⁰

As a sign of this policy resolve, Russia and Iran signed an agreement to speed up the completion of the nuclear power plant in Bushehr in December 2002.²⁴¹ In addition, although Putin increased his calls that Iran should sign an additional protocol to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to allow International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect all suspect sites, not just those declared by Tehran,²⁴² his administration made it clear that Russia would not halt its construction of the

²³⁹ Robert O. Freedman, “Russian Policy toward the Middle East: The Yeltsin Legacy and the Putin Challenge”, *op.cit.*, p. 66.

²⁴⁰ Hooman Peimani, “Russia Goes its Own Way on Iran”, *Asia Times*, 8 August 2002.

²⁴¹ Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, p. 155.

²⁴² “Putin Sees No Reason for Iran not Signing IAEA Protocol”, *People’s Daily Online*, 21 September 2003, http://english.people.com.cn/200309/21/eng20030921_124610.shtml (accessed on 16 February 2004)

Bushehr plant even if Iran did not sign it.²⁴³ Putin even pledged to continue to supply nuclear materials, including fresh uranium fuel, to the Bushehr site.²⁴⁴ Nikolai Shingarev, spokesman for Russia's Ministry of Atomic Energy, reaffirmed that Russia will "do its best to expedite the process".²⁴⁵

Accordingly, in February 2005, dismissing the US concerns about Iran's nuclear ambitions again, Russia signed a deal to provide nuclear fuel for the Bushehr plant.²⁴⁶ In that same month, Putin reiterated at the Kremlin meeting with Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Hasan Rowhani: "The latest activities of the Iranian side are convincing Russia that Iran really has no intention of producing nuclear weapons. That means we will continue our cooperation with Iran in all spheres, including the nuclear energy sphere".²⁴⁷ With this announcement, he signalled that Russia would reject any US initiative to abate Iran's nuclear program through the UN Security Council.²⁴⁸ In July 2005, Russia also showed this resolve by starting to discuss with Iran how Russia could contribute to Tehran's efforts to build

²⁴³ "Foreign Ministry Says Russia Will Go Ahead With Nuclear Fuel For Iran", *RFE/RL Reports*, Vol. 4, No. 23, (2003); David R. Sands, "Moscow To Keep Helping Tehran", *Washington Times*, 6 June 2003.

²⁴⁴ Lawrence Scheinman & Jean du Preez, "Iran Rebuked for Failing to Comply with IAEA Safeguards", *Center for Nonproliferation Studies*, 18 June 2003, <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/week/030618.htm> (accessed on 16 February 2004)

²⁴⁵ "Russia Rejects U.S. Claim on Blocking Bushehr Nuclear Energy Project", *Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)*, 6 November 2003, available at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/news/iran/2003/iran-031105-irna03.htm> (accessed on 16 February 2005)

²⁴⁶ Scott Peterson, "Russia Fuels Iran's Atomic Bid", *Christian Science Monitor*, 28 February 2005.

²⁴⁷ "Russia Convinced Iran Will Not Produce Nuclear Weapons", *Moscow News*, 18 February 2005.

up to 20 additional nuclear power plants.²⁴⁹ In fact, this Russian strategy based primarily on engagement with Iran, rather than confrontation, is the reflection of Russia's desire to reassert itself as the main geopolitical player in Eurasia.

So, despite Russia's desire to allay the US concerns by announcing that Iran would transfer the spent fuel back to Russia for reprocessing and storage,²⁵⁰ Russian support for Iran continues to harm the Russian-US relations. The US Congress has already prohibited various forms of cooperation with Russia due to this continued cooperation with Iran. These ties also impede the US support for Russia's possible construction of an International Spent Fuel Storage Facility.²⁵¹ However, for Russia, the real problem in Russian-US relations lies in the area which it regards as its backyard.

5.4. CIS

Since his election, Putin has put the CIS high on Russia's strategic agenda with an aim to reinforce Russia's power and influence in the region. To this end, he used growing concern about the "Islamic terrorism" in the region, triggered by the terrorist acts in Dagestan, Chechnya and Kyrgyzstan, as a "platform" for the development of a wide range of military and security cooperation initiatives.²⁵² He especially

²⁴⁸ "Bush-Putin Meeting Takes a Different Tone", *USA Today*, 18 November 2005.

²⁴⁹ Richard Weitz, "Towards Better Russia-US Security Relations" *The Adelphi Papers*, Vol. 45, No. 377, (2005), p. 77.

²⁵⁰ Weapons of Mass Destruction: *Bushehr*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/iran/bushehr.htm> (accessed on 10 January 2005)

²⁵¹ Richard Weitz, *op.cit.*, p. 77.

²⁵² Roy Allison, *Central Asian Security: The New International Context*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), p. 101.

emphasized the need to build up collective defence, a CIS anti-terrorist centre and a CIS rapid deployment force.²⁵³ In this sense, Putin's focus on terrorism in the region after 9/11 is not a new phenomenon. What is surprising is the change in Russian attitude toward the US involvement in the region. In fact, by accepting the US military presence in Central Asia, Putin was contravening one of the basic tenets of Russian post-Soviet military doctrine: "denial to any third party, particularly the US, of a permanent military presence in, or a military alliance with, any member of the CIS".²⁵⁴

This policy turn is, in fact, the result of Putin's pragmatic approach in foreign policy. Because when the US requested bases in Central Asia in early October 2001 for the operations against the remaining Taliban and Al-Qaeda operatives in that region, Russian military and government officials put greater pressure on the regional governments to hinder the US entry into region. However, when the presidents of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan insisted on allowing the US to establish its military bases in their borders, Putin gave its open support to the opening of the US bases in the region.²⁵⁵ Bobo Lo argues that Putin learned a lesson from the Yeltsin's experience that trying "to dictate to the former Soviet republics" leads them to "court" the Western powers "more enthusiastically", while intensifying the US efforts to protect their independence from Russia.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Margot Light & Stephen White, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

²⁵⁴ Dmitry Trenin, "A Farewell to the Great Game? Prospects For Russian-American Security Cooperation in Central Asia", *European Security*, Vol. 12, No. 3-4, (2003), p. 23.

²⁵⁵ Svante E. Cornell, "America in Eurasia: One Year After", *Current History*, Vol. 101, No. 657, (2002), p. 334.

²⁵⁶ Bobo Lo, *Vladimir Putin and the Evolution of Russian Foreign Policy*, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

Besides, all regional governments were expecting benefits in one form or another from their different levels of participation in the US-led anti-terrorist coalition. So, in view of its decreasing power and influence in Central Asia, Russia would not have received any support from the Central Asian countries if it had tried to prevent the security cooperation between the US and Central Asian states. By doing so, Russia would also “risk alienation abroad” at a time when the anti-terrorist rhetoric was bolstering everywhere.²⁵⁷ More importantly, the war on terrorism was believed to promote Russian policy goals as well. To end Islamic radicalism in the region is a “task beyond Moscow’s abilities but an outcome very much in its interests”. Putin also expected that Russia’s closer cooperation with the US could ultimately bring rewards in “arms control, economic assistance, better relations with NATO, and a more understanding about the war in Chechnya”.²⁵⁸ So, he found it more advantageous to support the US military involvement in the region, at least at this stage.

However, Russia’s armed forces, the intelligence services, the military industrial complex, and the majority of the Russian parliament and society did not welcome Putin’s pro-US policy in Central Asia.²⁵⁹ Russian mass media expressed great concerns about the negative consequences of the US presence in the region: the expansion of the US influence in the region and the drift of the regional countries away from Russia. In such an environment, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Ivanov called for the withdrawal of the US troops as soon as they have achieved their goal of

²⁵⁷ Andrew Jack, *op.cit.*, p. 259.

²⁵⁸ Rajan Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 194.

²⁵⁹ Michael McFaul, “US-Russia Relations after September 11, 2001”, *op.cit.*

“defeating terrorism”.²⁶⁰ Although many American military and civilian officials underlined in 2001 the short-term nature of the US military presence and argued that the US did not want to throw Russia away from Central Asia, later they indicated that the US was planning to stay longer.²⁶¹ So, under the rhetoric of fight against terrorism, the US administration began its military opening toward the region, a policy goal that the US had sought since the second half of the 1990s.²⁶²

Domestic criticisms of Putin’s support for the US war on terrorism by allowing the US presence in Central Asia intensified due to spread of the US military presence into Georgia.²⁶³ In fact, Putin had been strongly opposed to President Eduard Shevardnadze’s demand to “invite the US troops” to assist to take action against Abkhazia and to “train and equip Georgian forces” to end the “terrorist” activities in the Pankisi Gorge region.²⁶⁴ However, in February 2002, it was the US government, which declared that the US forces were to be in Georgia in one month’s time to help

²⁶⁰ Shahram Akbarzadeh, “Keeping Central Asia Stable”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4, (2004), p. 700.

²⁶¹ Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, p. 154. Colin Powell made a statement during his December 2001 visit to Tashkent that the US interests in Central Asia far exceed the conflict in Afghanistan. (Boris Rumer, “The Powers in Central Asia”, *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 3, (2002), pp. 57-58.) In addition, General Tommy L Franks, Commander of the American forces in Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, announced that the American military presence in Central Asia and Afghanistan would increase, the Americans would expand their military relations with the Central Asian countries and the American forces would stay longer than expected in Afghanistan. (Hooman Peimani, “Military Buildup Ends US-Russian Honeymoon”, *Asia Times*, 29 August 2002.)

²⁶² Çağrı Erhan, “ABD’nin Orta Asya Politikaları ve 11 Eylül’ün Etkileri”, *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 1, No. 3, (2004), p. 123.

²⁶³ Thomas Ambrosio, “From Balancer to Ally? Russo-American Relations in the Wake of 11 September”, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

²⁶⁴ Jennifer D. P. Moroney, “Western Approaches to Security Cooperation with Central Asian States: Advancing the Euro-Atlantic Security Order in Eurasia”, in Graeme P. Herd and Jennifer D. P. Moroney (eds), *Security Dynamics in the Former Soviet Bloc*, (London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 179.

the training of special Georgian forces to fight terrorism under the “Georgia Train and Equip Program” (GTEP).²⁶⁵ Realizing that the US was determined to dispatch its troops to Georgia irrespective of Russia’s wishes, Putin tried to accommodate the US, and get the best possible deal in return. So, he put an end to speculations about Russia’s reaction by declaring the US military presence in Georgia would be “no tragedy” for Russia and “if this is possible in Central Asia, why not in Georgia?”²⁶⁶

On the other hand, he was aware that the US presence would undermine the Russian hegemony in Central Asia and South Caucasus, the regions which became priority for the US security interests after 9/11.²⁶⁷ Because the regional governments have perceived the US involvement in the region as a “counterweight and safeguard against Russia”.²⁶⁸ Uzbekistan immediately used the opportunity to establish a strategic partnership with the US, an objective sought by the Uzbek president since the mid-1990s. Although Kazakhstan seeks good relations with Russia, upon which it is economically dependent, it developed military-technical cooperation with the US in a significant manner as well. Even Tajikistan, conceived as “Russia’s proxy in the region”, has resisted the wishes of Russia and cooperated with the US while being “more assertive” against Russia.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ Rick Fawn (ed.), “Russia’s Reluctant Retreat from the Caucasus: Abkhazia, Georgia and The US after 11 September 2001”, *Realignments in Russian Foreign Policy*, (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 137.

²⁶⁶ “Bush: War on Terror Will Expand to Yemen”, 02 March 2002, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,46904,00.html> (accessed on 14 December 2004)

²⁶⁷ Richard Giragosian, “The US Military Engagement in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus: An Overview”, *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (2004), p. 51.

²⁶⁸ Rajan Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 191.

²⁶⁹ Annette Bohr, “Regionalism in Central Asia: New Geopolitics, Old Regional Order”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 3, (2004), pp. 490-492.

Azerbaijan and Georgia, demanding “economic and political freedom and independence from Russia”, also perceived the US as an instrument to achieve their objectives.²⁷⁰ They are one of the first countries to give assistance to the US in the wake of 9/11. Declaring support within 48 hours for the US in its effort to combat terrorism, Georgia and Azerbaijan proposed overflight rights, along with the intelligence sharing, refuelling facilities and bases.²⁷¹ During the military operations in Afghanistan, almost all US aircraft used the airspace of Georgia and Azerbaijan.²⁷² The US Congress then renounced Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act, which bans the direct US assistance to the government of Azerbaijan since 1992. This move paved the way for the establishment of broader cooperation between Azerbaijan and the US. For example, their bilateral military cooperation was developed on a large scale during a meeting between US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku in December 2003.²⁷³ At this meeting, Rumsfeld also indicated a US desire to set up an air base on the Apsheron peninsula outside Baku.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Svante E. Cornell, Mamuka Tsereteli & Vladimir Socor, “Geostrategic Implications of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline”, in Frederick Starr & Svante E. Cornell, (eds), *The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Pipelin: Oil Window to the West*, (Washington and Uppsala: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2005), p. 25

²⁷¹ Svante E. Cornell, “America in Eurasia: One Year After”, *op.cit.*, p. 333.

²⁷² Svante E. Cornell, “America in Eurasia: One Year After”, *op.cit.*, p. 333. Iran did not want the US planes to use its airspace on their way to Afghanistan. Although Russia permitted the use of its airspace for “humanitarian and logistical flights”, it also declined to allow the US warplanes to cross its airspace. (Svante E. Cornell, “The United States and Central Asia: In the Steppes to Stay?”, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 2004, p. 243.)

²⁷³ Svante E. Cornell, “Security Threats and Challenges in the Caucasus After 9/11” *op.cit.*, p. 56.

²⁷⁴ Svante E. Cornell, “US Engagement in the Caucasus: Changing Gears”, *Helsinki Monitor*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (2005), p. 114

However, the direct cooperation of the US with these regional countries omitting Russia annoyed the Putin administration. Russian officials wanted the regional countries to support the US within the scope limited by Russia. Nevertheless, Russian indoctrination in these countries did not give results and the US continued to take steps reinforcing its presence in the region.²⁷⁵

This situation increased Russia's fear of the US "long-term strategic designs in Eurasia", including gaining access to its vast oil and gas reserves.²⁷⁶ Because Russia is itself interested in the region's oil and gas reserves and seeks to direct the export routes and pipelines through its territory, not only for acquiring the moderate volumes of oil and gas in the Caspian but also for keeping power and domination over the CIS countries.²⁷⁷ Besides the Baku-Supsa pipeline, which ends at the Georgian Black Sea coast and has a limited capacity, Caspian oil currently reaches the West through the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline via Russia.²⁷⁸ If Russia maintains its monopoly, the Azeri and Kazakh oil and Turkmen gas will be transported to the markets only through Russian pipelines with a limited amount and under the conditions determined by Russia.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁵ Çağrı Erhan, *op.cit.*, pp. 144-145.

²⁷⁶ Boris Rumer, *op.cit.*, p. 58.

²⁷⁷ Brenda Shaffer, "From Pipedream to Pipeline: A Caspian Success Story", *Current History*, Vol. 104, No. 684, (2005), pp. 343-344; Khatuna Giorgadze, "Russia: Regional Partner or Aggressor?", *Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1, (2002), p. 69.

²⁷⁸ Gulmira Kurganbayeva, "Energy Potential of Central Asian Countries: Oil-And-Gas Complex", http://www.cimera.org/files/CP/CP4/CP4Dushanbe_Oct02_Kurganbaeva.pdf (accessed on 14 March 2005)

²⁷⁹ Ömerserik T. Kasenov, "Orta Asya: Tehdit Algılamaları ve Bölgesel Güvenlik", *Stratejik Analiz*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (2000), p. 59.

For these reasons, Russia is against alternative pipeline buildings it sees as a potential for both the erosion of its geopolitical position and the loss of important economic resources in the region. Especially, it regards the development and sale of Caspian oil and gas under the Western control as a menace to its energy sales to the European markets.²⁸⁰ However, it is argued that the continued reliance of the regional republics on Russian pipelines for their exports is leaving most of the profits in Transneft or Gazprom hands, forcing the republics to accept the Russian demands for Russian companies to take high stakes in the region's field development projects, giving export priority to Russian oil and gas, and generally leading the republics to submit to Russian pressure.²⁸¹

All these factors led the US administration to see Caspian oil flow through Russia as problematic as long as the state-controlled monopolies like Transneft and Gasprom continue to promote this pattern. So, while Russia emphasises "the integration of Russian and other Caspian energy resources", the US officials insist on "the private-sector involvement" and "enhanced competition among the Caspian transport routes".²⁸² For this reason, the Bush administration has focused on providing the expansion of the US companies involvement in the transport projects regarding Caspian energy and on finishing the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC)

²⁸⁰ Amy Myers Jaffe & Robert A. Manning, "Russia, Energy and the West", *Survival*, Vol. 43, No. 2, (2001), p. 141.

²⁸¹ Temel İskit, "Turkey: A New Actor in the Field of Energy Politics?", *Perceptions*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1996), p. 63.

²⁸² "The Strategic and Geopolitical Implications of Russian Energy Supply, Security, and Pricing", US-Russia Energy Summit Executive Seminar (2003), http://bakerinstitute.org/Pubs/study_23.pdf (accessed on 14 July 2005)

pipeline as an alternative to the existing Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline.²⁸³ In fact, the US wants the construction of “multiple pipelines” in the region.²⁸⁴ Because one of the important political goals of the US in Central Asia and the Caucasus is to secure the West’s access to oil and gas reserves of the region without restriction.²⁸⁵ For this reason, there is a growing contention between Russia and the US over the Caspian Sea basin.

In addition to this competition for the energy resources, the shift in the regional geostrategic balance cast a shadow on the relevance of Russian-led organizations as the frameworks for the economic cooperation and regional security. For example, the US “rapid victory” in Afghanistan undermined both Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Tashkent Collective Security Treaty, leading Central Asians to argue that only the US has the ability to solve their problems.²⁸⁶

As a result of these developments, although Presidents Bush and Putin pointed out Central Asia and Caucasus “as an area of common interest” at the US-Russia summit of May 2002,²⁸⁷ Russian foreign policy increasingly became focussed on the

²⁸³ Michael T. Klare, “Global Petro-Politics: The Foreign Policy Implications of the Bush Administration’s Energy Plan”, *Current History*, Vol. 101, No. 653, (2002), pp. 102-103.

²⁸⁴ Ayşegül Aydıngün, “Ahıska (Meskhetian) Turks: Source of Conflict in the Caucasus”, *The International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 6, No. 2, (2002), p. 52.

²⁸⁵ Kamer Kasım, “Orta Asya ve Kafkasya Enerji Politikaları: ‘Büyük Oyunun’ Parametreleri”, *Panorama Dergisi*, No. 5, (2004), p. 10.

²⁸⁶ Mikhail Khodaryonok, “Unnecessary Alliance-The Tashkent Collective Security Treaty’s 10th Anniversary Could Be Its Last”, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 January 2002, p. 2, reproduced in *the Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press*, Vol. 54, No. 3, (2002), p. 7; Svante E. Cornell, “America in Eurasia: One Year After”, *op.cit.*, p. 332.

²⁸⁷ NATO-Russia archive Official Documents and Declarations: *Russia and Central Asia* <http://www.bits.de/NRANEU/CentralAsia.html#II> (accessed on 29 March 2005)

potential of the US military presence in these regions to undermine Russia's strategic and commercial interests.²⁸⁸ So, in order to stop the deterioration of its security and economic ties and geopolitical influence in the region, as well as to create a system of counter-balance to the US presence in Central Asia, Russia began to upgrade the regional structures. Putin is especially trying to make the SCO the "only long-term stabilizing factor in Central Asia, implying that the US military presence in the region should be temporary".²⁸⁹

Consistent with these attempts, in April 2003, the CIS countries comprising Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan formally turned the 1992 Collective Security Treaty into a regional security apparatus, making it Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) dealing with the political and military-technical issues. Under the Collective Security Treaty, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan also created Collective Rapid Deployment Forces (CRDF) through the battalions from the national armies of the member states. Putin is planning to make the CSTO "a macroregional platform to support Russia's standing as a security manager for Central Asia and to confirm the recognition for the CSTO as, at least, a coequal security actor in the region with NATO".²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ Roy Allison, "Strategic Reassertion in Russia's Central Asia Policy", *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 2, (2004), p. 278.

²⁸⁹ Rouben Azizian, *op.cit.*, p. 154.

²⁹⁰ Roy Allison, "Regionalism, Regional Structures and Security Management in Central Asia", *International Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 3, (2004), pp. 471-472.

To protect its strategic influence in the region, Russia also made a major initiative in October 2003 with the establishment of the permanent military air base at Kant in Kyrgyzstan. It is only nineteen miles from the US military base in Manas.²⁹¹ In response to Russian desire to increase the troops in Kant, Ivan Safranchuk, director of the Center for Defense Information in Moscow said:

In order to reject its US base, Kyrgyzstan needs to be sure that Russia is ready to take over the mission to provide security in Kyrgyzstan. Russia's statement about its readiness to increase troops in Kant has to be understood as a statement that it is ready to completely replace the US in the Central Asian region.²⁹²

In the following years, Russia did not slow down its efforts to increase its influence in the region. On 17 June 2004, Russia signed a strategic partnership agreement with Uzbekistan, covering economic, military and political aspects of cooperation between the two countries, while weakening the US influence in the region.²⁹³ Additionally, on 5 July 2005, at the SCO summit in Kazakhstan, Putin and his Chinese counterpart Hu Jintao called for the closure of the US bases in Central Asia. The SCO statement claimed, "As the active military phase in the anti-terror operation in Afghanistan is nearing completion, it is time to decide on the deadline for the use of the temporary infrastructure and for their military contingents presence".²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Andrew Jack, *op.cit.*, p. 268.

²⁹² Quoted in Antoine Blua, "Central Asia: Russia Could Double Troops at Kyrgyz Base; Future of US Base in Doubt", *RFE/RL*, 14 July 2005, <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2005/07/96f73a06-c40a-4164-ae5b-1df63e05ccad.html> (accessed on 13 September 2005)

²⁹³ Roger Mcdermott, "Russia Signs Strategic Partnership with Uzbekistan", *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 1, No. 37, (2004).

²⁹⁴ Ahmed Rashid, "Great Game Reloaded", 26 July 2005, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display.article?id=6060> (accessed on 14 October 2005)

At the same time, Russian government made statements to force the Central Asian states to behave accordingly. In the aftermath of the SCO summit, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have asked the US to go over the base agreements. However, Kyrgyz leaders made it known that Russia “forced” them to do so.²⁹⁵ In fact, these Russian policies are in contradiction with the Russia’s claims that President Hamid Karzai and the US forces have failed to “stabilize the situation” in Afghanistan and that the “Afghans are giving sanctuary to Islamic extremists”. This situation led the analysts to argue that in order to throw the US out of Central Asia, Russia was ready to “live with the threats still emanating from Afghanistan”.²⁹⁶

In view of the Caucasus, Russian policy towards Georgia also contradicts with the global attempts to strengthen “the territorial sovereignty in the regions inhabited by the terrorists”.²⁹⁷ Because, rather than helping to settle the internal conflicts, Russia tries to keep them to exert “influence” and to block the construction of the pipelines that are contrary to “Russian interests”.²⁹⁸ However, this policy choice directly puts Russia on a collision course with the US. Russia’s support for the autonomist and separatist demands from Ajaria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia is incompatible with the US backing for the “consolidation” of Georgian state power under its new pro-Western leadership.²⁹⁹ It also jeopardizes the US interests

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.* Today, the US base in Kyrgyzstan is now the only one in the region which the US can use to send troops and material to Afghanistan. (Barbara Slavin, “Kyrgyzstan Will Allow U.S. to Keep Using Air Base”, *USA Today*, 12 October 2005.)

²⁹⁶ Ahmed Rashid, *op.cit.*

²⁹⁷ Caroline Kennedy-Pipe & Stephen Welch, *op.cit.*, pp. 285-286.

²⁹⁸ Kamer Kasim, “The Transportation of Caspian Oil and Regional Stability”, *Journal of Southern Europe and The Balkans*, Vol. 4, No. 1, (2002), p. 39.

²⁹⁹ Caroline Kennedy-Pipe & Stephen Welch, *op.cit.*, p. 285.

regarding the transit of Caspian oil and gas. Because instability in Georgia is a great threat to the flow of oil and gas from the Caspian Sea basin via Georgia, especially through the BTC pipeline.³⁰⁰

In addition, it is argued that by declining to remove its military bases from Georgia, and cutting gas supplies in that republic by using its control over the natural gas pipelines that supply most of the Georgia's heating capacity, Russia wants to prevent the closeness between Georgia and the US, and to demonstrate Georgia its "vulnerability" and "level of dependence on Russia".³⁰¹ So, Russian policies toward Georgia have become a significant irritant to the Russian-US relations in terms of the US-led efforts to fight international terrorism, as well as of the Western direct access to the Caspian energy. As long as these policies continue, the US seems determined to preserve its interest and involvement in the CIS, and to continue its efforts to decrease the Russian influence in the region by strengthening the sovereignty of the regional states.³⁰²

The US administration especially persists to support the democratic changes in these states. In October 2005, top Bush administration officials emphasized that the US will keep its presence in the region as they "need to expand" their "ongoing support for the democratic political institutions, local nongovernmental organizations, and independent media".³⁰³ In a speech, Bush also expressed his pleasure over the US-

³⁰⁰ Ayşegül Aydıngün, *op.cit.*, p. 53.

³⁰¹ Svante E. Cornell, Mamuka Tsereteli & Vladimir Socor, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

³⁰² Zeyno Baran, "The Caucasus: Ten Years After Independence", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (2002), p. 225.

³⁰³ Stanislav Chernyavsky, "Central Asia in an Era of Change", *Russia in Global Affairs*, Vol. 4, No.1, (2006), p. 96.

supported “democratic revolutions” in Georgia and Ukraine, which brought to power the pro-US governments in place of the pro-Russian ones. At the same time, he emphasized the need for the “similar democratic changes” in Moldova and Belarus.³⁰⁴ In his speech made on 5 May 2005, Bush especially described Belarus as “the last dictatorship in Europe”. So, to ensure “a regime change” in Belarus, the US backs the pro-Western Belarusian dissidents and social movements in that republic.³⁰⁵ However, Russia is strongly against a “regime change” in Belarus because President Alexander Lukashenko strongly displays a pro-Russian attitude. Today, Belarus is one of the chief defence partners of Russia and a “vital” part of the Russian gas pipeline system.³⁰⁶

So, Russia feels uncomfortable following a series of popular revolts that bring to power governments that have an obvious pro-European and pro-US orientation. This problem was most obvious in the Ukrainian presidential election in November 2004. Two of the most leading politicians in that country competed against each other. Viktor Yushchenko, pro-Western opposition leader, campaigned for getting rid of Russian influence and integration into the West while his opponent Viktor Yanukovich promised to take Ukraine closer to Russia.³⁰⁷ Putin, who wants to reassert Russian influence in Ukraine and other nations of the so-called near abroad, interfered openly in the election campaign to back his candidate Yanukovich, while

³⁰⁴ Justus Leicht, *op.cit.*

³⁰⁵ Federico Bordonaro, “The Poland-Belarus Controversy and The Battle for Eastern Europe”, *The Power and Interest News Report*, 08 August 2005.

³⁰⁶ “Belarus Thanks Putin For Support”, *BBC News*, 22 April 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4471885.stm> (accessed on 18 June 2005)

³⁰⁷ Yevgeny Bendersky, “Ukrainian Presidential Elections: To East or West?”, *Power and Interest News Report*, 15 November 2004.

accusing the West of meddling in Ukraine's affairs.³⁰⁸ He is especially uneasy about the Ukraine's movement towards the European Union and NATO,³⁰⁹ a move that accelerated with the election of pro-Western candidate Viktor Yushchenko. As Mark Almond argues, "if Ukraine falls into the NATO orbit, Russia will lose its access to Black Sea naval bases and Russian oil and gas export routes will have to pass an American stranglehold".³¹⁰ It is also argued that Putin's long-desired project to establish Common Economic Space, an economic union of post-Soviet states dominated by Russia, was put at risk with the defeat of Yanukovich.³¹¹

As a result of these concerns, Putin saw the US efforts in Ukraine as an "intentional operation" of the US to "replace the current regime in Ukraine with a pro-US regime, splitting Ukraine away from Russia and turning it into a Western foreign policy staging base at Russia's very border".³¹² So, he repeatedly emphasized in his speeches that the US was meddling in the post-Soviet states to "isolate" Russia from these countries.³¹³ On the other hand, according to the US, it is Moscow that meddled, not the West. So, before meeting Putin in Moscow in May 2005, Bush openly urged him to stop the Russian interference in the internal affairs of the former

³⁰⁸ Richard Pipes, "In the Borderland: the Struggle for Ukraine", *National Review*, Vol. 56, No. 24, (2004), p. 20.

³⁰⁹ "Ukraine & Russia: Prickly", *Transitions Online*, 31 January 2005.

³¹⁰ Mark Almond, "It's Now or Never for Washington", *New Statesman*, Vol. 133, No. 4717, (2004), p. 30.

³¹¹ Michael Hirsh; Frank Brown; Eve Conant; John Barry, "Putin's Pratfall", *Newsweek*, Vol. 144, No. 24, (2004), p. 35; Jason Bush & Roman Olearchyk, "Ukraine: Putin's Biggest Blunder", *Business Week*, No. 3912, (2004), p. 54.

³¹² Andrew F. Tully & Jeremy Bransten, *op.cit.*

³¹³ "Putin Accuses US of Trying to Isolate Russia", *Xinhua*, 24 December 2004

Soviet republics.³¹⁴ Russian-US relations, thus, strained by the disagreements over Ukraine and deteriorated further when Putin gave his explicit approval to the “bloody suppression of democracy protests” in Uzbekistan in May 2005.³¹⁵

Taken together, all these Russian policies reveal the fact that there has been no Russian policy turn in Eurasia in the aftermath of 9/11. Russian support for the US in Afghanistan was based on a recognition of the common interests with reference to Russian national interests rather than to shared global values and concerns. The US and Russian interests intersected as the Taliban and its destructive role in the Russia’s southern flank was a great problem for Russia, which increasingly dominated Russian security concerns in the 1990s, but Russia was unable to eliminate. After 9/11, as Andrew Jack argues, the US was willing “to take the risk, provide the technology, fund the fighting, and do a better job than Russia’s own ill-equipped and over-stretched army”.³¹⁶ So, the Putin administration was willing to support the US temporary military buildup in Afghanistan.

However, when we look at the regional issues on which Russia and the US have clashing interests, we see that the Putin administration maintains its uncompromising attitude towards the US. Iran continues to be a source of irritation in the Russian-US relations. Instead of shutting down the Bushehr plant and putting an end to Russia’s arms sales, Putin underlines in his speeches that Russia will continue to embrace arms sales with Iran and help build several more nuclear reactors there. During the Iraq crisis in 2003, Putin also gave up the post-9/11 strategic partnership with the US

³¹⁴ “Bush-Putin Meeting Takes a Different Tone”, *USA Today*, 18 November 2005.

³¹⁵ “Hindrances or Help?”, *The Economist*, Vol. 377, No. 8455, (2005), p. 11.

³¹⁶ Andrew Jack, *op.cit.*, p. 259.

by joining France and Germany in opposition to the use of military force against Iraq. This represented a distinct shift away from bandwagoning with the US towards the previous policy of promoting multipolarity. So, Russian opposition to the US policy towards Iraq, where Russia has vested interests, is another clear indication of both the growing schism between Russia and the US and the reversible nature of the the post-9/11 rapprochement between them.

In fact, Russia's relationship with the US in Eurasia is a reflection of these policy differences. From the very beginning, Russia was against the expansion of the US military presence into Central Asia and the Caucasus, the regions that Russia sees as its backyard. Russian acceptance of the US troops stationed in these regions was the result of an overall pragmatic approach adopted as the official policy line, based on the understanding that Russia had to adjust its foreign policy to the geopolitical realities and make the best of a difficult situation.

However, like Iran and Iraq, the clash of competing economic and strategic interests of Russia and the US in the region made the CIS a zone of conflict rather than cooperation. The Caspian energy resources already became a point of tension in their relationship. Russia desires preferential access to the Central Asian oil and gas and prices below those of the world market, as well as preferential transit fees. In addition, Moscow has an interest in controlling Caspian and Central Asian oil and gas exports to have a political leverage in the region and to improve its bargaining position with the Western oil investors. However, the US support for BTC pipeline is a direct challenge for those Russian desires. The US policy to support the territorial integrity and political and economic independence of these states is also seen as a challenge for Russia's continuing geopolitical ambition to maintain its dominance in

the CIS. Russia is also uneasy about the US meddling in the conflicts near Russia's borders. Putin sees these policies as efforts to split the republics of the former Soviet Union away from Russia. The heavy-handed Russian approach adopted against Georgia and during the Ukrainian presidential election highlights the divergence of Russian interests in Eurasia from those of the US. The changed geopolitical environment already raised concern among a large part of the Russian elite which perceives the US military presence in the region as a substantial threat to Russian interests.³¹⁷

So, Russian foreign policy became more assertive with an active policy in the CIS to promote and defend the Russia's interests, and to show the US and regional countries that it would not allow these regions to turn away from its sphere of influence. To this end, the Putin administration tries to counter the growing US presence, leading to arguments about the "re-enactment of the Great Game".³¹⁸

All in all, Russian policies reveal the fact that Russia still has imperial ambitions, although they became less apparent in Russian foreign policy discourse. Persistence of Russian-US disagreements over the regional issues, especially in Eurasia, demonstrate the desire of Russia to seek its own national interests even if they do not coincide with those of the US, a country that wants to prevent Russia from re-establishing its hegemonic control over the region by both blocking its monopolization of the regional energy supply and transferring democratic and liberal norms to the regional countries. So, as a regional power, Russia will continue its attempts to exclude the US as much as possible from its spheres of influence. Under

³¹⁷ Shahram Akbarzadeh, *op.cit.*, p. 700.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 703.

these circumstances, a meaningful cooperation in Eurasia, not to speak of real partnership, could not be expected to last long.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this thesis was to explore Russian foreign policy under Vladimir Putin, who embarked on an intense effort to enhance Russia's international status and return it to the ranks of the world's great powers. The conclusions of this thesis contribute to the debates on the nature of Vladimir Putin's new approach to Russian foreign policy, especially to the relations with the US.

This thesis identified that Vladimir Putin's presidency marks a new phase in Russian foreign policy. Like in the early years of Yeltsin period, Putin emphasized the primacy of internal goals over the external ones. However, Putin, rather than promoting a larger reform agenda at home, wanted to achieve other policy goals such as enhancing Russia's international status by returning it to the ranks of the world's great powers. Along with traditional parameters of power such as military might and territorial size, Putin has repeatedly emphasized the Russia's integration into the world economy and the flow of foreign investment as the important indicators of Russia's great power status. In this context, the concept of economizing foreign policy has increasingly come to the fore. An active relationship with the US has been seen as an opportunity for Russia to achieve economic growth and national security as well as to gain recognition as a major actor in the international politics. So, Russia sought to establish close relations with the US as much as possible. During this period, Putin, however, did not abandon Russia's policies that were conflicting with those of the US. In fact, as a pragmatic leader, he was trying to find a third way

between Yeltsin's extreme pro-US policies in the early 1990s and extreme geopolitic policies at the end of the 1990s. While doing so, he tried to use the best means and diplomacy at Russia's disposal to secure power for Russia. His acceptance of the Baltic states' entry into the NATO signalled that he would avoid unnecessary confrontation with the US, especially on the issues that Russia had little or no leverage.

These warm relations between Russia and the US grew with the Russia's support for the US in its fight against international terrorism. However, this Russian rapprochement was pragmatic in nature. It was not based on the shared values, as happened in the early 1990s. It was less about a willingness to reconcile Russia's interests to those of the US than the efforts to receive more US attention to Russia's interests. So, this policy choice brought about no change in Russia's policies that had strained the Russian-US relations at the end of the 1990s. Especially, Russia's insistence on military solution in Chechnya, which runs counter to the US concentration on human rights abuses reveals the continuation of divergent core values and perceptions between both countries. The Russian-Chinese treaty and joint statement on multipolar world are also Putin's strongest challenge to the world order envisioned by the Bush administration.

So, Putin's policy implementations during 2000-2005 were less a sign of a shift in Russian foreign policy. Instead, they confirmed the policies already enacted. Both Russia and the US continue to adhere to the official position of strategic partnership but the gap between rhetoric and reality is increasingly apparent. Because there have been few radical shifts in Russian foreign policy in terms of substance. In fact, Russia has two mutually contradicting goals. The first goal to provide Russia's

strategic safety and economic development strongly requires the US help. The other goal to play a leading role in the world, however, puts Russia on a collision course with the US. Putin's pro-US rhetoric, which also becomes anti-US frequently, reflects his attempts to find a balance between them. While maintaining the essential features of the new Russian-US partnership, he is seeking opportunities to achieve Russia's national objectives even at the expense of the US. So, Putin symbolizes a new pragmatism in Russian policy. Rather than attempting to dominate the world affairs the way the the Soviet Union once did, Russia tries to exercise an increasingly pragmatic foreign policy designed to extract the greatest advantage out of the numerous opportunities presented to it on the world scene. As he promised to restore his country to its position as a great state, Putin's plan is to gain maximum advantages for Russia while engaging the US. His policy is not pro-Western as Russia had in the early Yeltsin period. Because he believes that Russia has to stand up to the US where its interests are involved. For this reason, as different from the early Yeltsin period, Putin adopted a more independent and nationalist attitude towards the US. As Putin clearly stated, the fundamental task of his foreign policy is the implementation of Russia's national interests.³¹⁹

For this reason, his policies are pro-Russian, of a pragmatic variety. In this context, his policy to establish close ties with the US is driven by Russian self-interest: to improve Russian economy and succeed in a globalizing world. His policies reflect the fact that Russia's relationship with the US is tactical, rather than structural. This is a context of shared interests, not shared values. The slide toward autocracy inside Russia, Putin's indifference to human rights, especially in Chechnya, his interference

³¹⁹ Margot Light & Stephen White, "Wild Theories", *The World Today*, Vol. 57, No. 7, (2001), p. 11.

in Ukraine's presidential election, and his support for the separatism in Georgia and for the dictatorship in Belarus confirm this fact. The consequence of this situation is that although the US and Russia will continue to seek cooperation with each other where their interests coincide, the likelihood of recurrent political tension is high. Because keeping up good relations with the US while still maintaining the policies that directly clashes with those of the US seems impossible.

In addition, Russia still suspects that the US is seeking to undermine Russia's interests and erode its power. The proof, to Russian policy-makers, is the expansion of NATO, the US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and the launching of the NMD system, the war against Iraq, the US support for the BTC pipeline, and the projection of the US power into Russia's southern border. These examples demonstrate that Russia's attitude toward the the US has shifted from one of optimism and partnership to one of suspicion and even distrust. Today, Putin's core priority for economic development underpins Russia's relations with the US. If that economic opportunity is erased and right opportunity presents itself, Russia may end up its close dialogue with the US. Only a commonality of values would quarantee the long-term partnership between Russia and the US.

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