Russia's Identity Relations with Europe, the EU, and the United States: 1991-2007

Ted Hopf, Ohio State University
August 2007
hopf.2@osu.edu

One can identify several waves of Russian identity relations with the world since 1991. These periods are 1992, 1993-2001 2001-5, and 2005-present. In the first period, there was, simply speaking, a Liberal identification with the West, in particular the United States. This was rapidly supplanted by a Centrist identification with the West, in particular with Europe, but also with an idealized Soviet past and an emerging Russian uniqueness. 911 cemented this Centrist identity, while simultaneously reinforcing a proto-Soviet identification with the US as the other superpower in the Global War On Terror (GWOT). Finally, since about 2005, a Russian dis-identification has occurred with both Europe and the US, and a growing stress on Russia as Russia has emerged.

Russia's Identities from 1991-911

There were three main discourses on Russian identity in the 1990s in Moscow: liberal, conservative, and centrist. The categorizations in Table One compare each discourse and its elements of identification. Each understood Russia with respect to internal, external, and historical Others.[1] Liberals identified Russia's future, at first with the American, and then with the European, present. They identified against the Soviet past and against the internal representation of that Other: the conservative discourse of communists and far right national patriots. They recognized the weakness of the Moscow federal centre vis-à-vis its 89 federal subjects, but felt economic prosperity within a democratic market economy would secure Russia from threats. Russia was understood as part of a universal civilization of modern liberal market democracy.

[1] I derive the discourses from 1991-2001 from popular novels, history textbooks, film reviews, and newspaper articles in Hopf, *Social Construction*, 153-210. For taxonomies of Russian foreign policy thought itself in the 1990s, see Richter, *Khrushchev's Double Bind*, 207-10; Richter, 'Russian Foreign Policy'; Bennett, *Condemned to Repetition*, 306-9; Matz, *Constructing a Post-Soviet Reality*; English, *Russia and the Idea of the West*; Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 220-68; Light, 'Post-Soviet Russian Foreign Policy'; Malcolm, 'Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making'; and Zimmerman, *The Russian People and Foreign Policy*. The rest of the paper is more "drafty." Those discourses, from 2001-7 are induced directly from Putin's public comments with foreign leaders. To make any valid claims about the societal roots of these discourses would require a thorough sampling of more popular mass texts.

Table 1
Three Discourses and the Identities that Make Them

	Liberal	*Conservative*	*Centrist*
Historical Other			
Soviet Past			
-Authoritarianism	**----**	**----**	**----**
-Corruption	**----**	**----**	**----**
-Individual Passivity	**----**	**----**	**----**
-Anti-Religious	**----**	**----**	**----**
+Great Power	**++++**	**++++**	**++++**
+Democracy	**++++**	**++++**	**++++**
+Culture	**++++**	**++++**	**++++**
+Youth	**++++**	**++++**	**++++**
+/-Economy	**-------**	**++++**	**-------**
+/-Moscow Center	**++++**	**-------**	**++++**
Essentialist			
+/-Nationalism	**-------**	**++++**	**++++**
+Religion	**++++**	**++++**	**++++**
+/-Orthodox Church	**-------**	**++++**	**-------**
+/-Orthodoxy	**-------**	**++++**	**++++**
External Others			
US			
+/-Economy	**++++**	**--------**	**++/----**
+/-Individualism	**++++**	**--------**	**++/----**
+/-Nationalities	**++++**	**--------**	**++++**
-Culture	**--------**	**--------**	
Europe			
+Economy	**++++**		**++++**
+Culture	**++++**		**++++**
+Democracy	**++++**		**++++**
Markets			
+/-Abstract Western	**++++**	**----/++**	**++/----**
-Real Russian	**-------**	**--------**	**--------**
Democracy			
+/-Western	**++++**	**--------**	**++++**
-Russian	**-------**	**--------**	**-------**

Internal **Other**			
+Strengthen Center	++++	++++	++++
+Center Responsible/ Regions Not	++++	++++	++++
+Chechnia to Blame	++++	++++	++++

Conservatives identified Russia's future with a Soviet past shorn of its Stalinist brutality and an ethnonational Russian past of great power status and strong centralised rule. Its domestic Other were the liberals who were understood as a fifth column of the United States and the West. The vulnerability of the Moscow federal centre to the growing autonomy of the republics was a major source of insecurity, necessitating a more forceful response from Moscow. Russia was understood as a unique, sometimes Eurasian, project to be differentiated from Western conceptions of freedom and economics.

The centrist discourse identified Russia with European social democracy, but against American wild west capitalism. It also identified with an idealised Soviet past, but its internal Other was neither liberal nor conservative, but rather the disintegrative processes occurring within the country, most graphically, in Chechnya. Centrists explicitly rejected an ethnonational conceptualisation of Russia, instead adopting a civic national 'Rossian' identity designed to capture the multinational character of the Russian Federation.[2] While Russia was unique, it was situated within a universal civilization of modern social democracy.[3]

In 1992, Russia was polarized between liberal and conservative identities, with liberals implementing their economic and political plans to make Russia into a liberal market democracy. The collapse of the Russian economy, the failure of the US, or the West more generally, to provide any significant aid, the rampant and rising crime, corruption, and violence associated with privatisation and democratisation, and the new issue of 25 million Russians living in the Former Soviet Union (FSU), discredited liberal discourse.[4] But conservative discourse did not take its place. Instead, a centrist discourse emerged, which over the 1990s, became at first, the main competitor with conservatives, and finally, by the late 1990s, the predominant representation of Russian identity.

One might speculate that the West might have made some difference. As Soviet President, Mikhail Gorbachev had begged Western leaders to invest in the new Soviet Union, a social democratic project. As Russian President, Yeltsin, perhaps less credibly, did the same. There was precious little response. One could imagine that some large and sustained commitment of financial support from the West could have, just perhaps, legitimized the Liberal experiment in Russian identity. Had this worked, the Conservative alternative would not have arisen, or the Centrist co-optation of both, become possible

Each of these three discourses had implications for Russian interests and foreign policy. Liberals desired a Russian alliance with the United States and the West. Conservatives desired a Russian alliance with anybody in the world who would balance against the United States and the West. Centrists preferred no alliances with anyone against any particular Other, but rather Russia as one among several great powers in a multilateral management of global affairs.

---

[2] Kolsto, *Political Construction Sites*, 203-27 and Anno, 'Nihonjiron and Russkaia Ideia,' 344-7.
[3] Matz, *Constructing Post-Soviet Reality*, 169 and English, *Russia and the Idea of the West*, 237.
[4] Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 222-47.

Russia's liberal identity was institutionally privileged in 1992.[5] The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) under Andrei Kozyrev was initially the only coherent foreign policy institution in Russia, and Kozyrev purged it of Soviet holdovers. But the MFA's monopoly did not go unchallenged. The Russian Ministry of Defence (MOD) and presidential Security Council (SC) were created in the spring. The defence and international relations committees in parliament became sites of conservative and centrist attacks on the liberal MFA. The 'power ministries,' the different intelligence and security branches of the federal government, also institutionalised centre-conservative discursive renderings of Russian identity.

The conservative Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF) was the only mass national political party. By early 1993, the MFA had become a policymaking arm of the increasingly centrist Yeltsin government, and so liberal identity was to be found mostly in national daily newspapers such as *Kommersant* and *Izvestiia*, as well as in the research institutions revived under Gorbachev.[6] In October 1993, Yeltsin crushed a primary institutional carrier of conservative identity, the parliament, replacing it in December 1993 with a no less conservative collection of legislators in the Duma, but in a constitutionally subordinate position to the centrist president. The national TV networks came increasingly under centrist control, although the weekend evening 'analytical news' programs, such as *Namedni, Svoboda Slova, Vremena, Zerkalo*, and others remained national free-for-alls, with all discourses represented. Newspapers also reflected the widest range of Russian identities, and regional TV stations, the instruments of local governors, reflected the political coloration of that particular region. The dominance of the Russian economy by 'oligarchs' also institutionalised that part of the centrist-liberal discourse that identified the recovery of Russian great power status in the world, and the strengthening of the federal centre in Moscow, as best achieved through economic growth and development.[7]

We can see the three discourses of Russian identity in relations with Belarus, the FSU or near abroad, NATO, and NATO's war against Yugoslavia in April 1999.[8] Conservative construction of Russian interests in Belarus and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) more generally was the restoration of the Soviet Union in these former Soviet republics. This included the advocacy of the forceful defence of ethnic Russians in these places, and the use of coercion to return these republics, excepting the Baltic, to Moscow's rule. Both the expansion of NATO to the east, and NATO's war against Yugoslavia on the behalf of Kosovo's Albanian majority, were construed as a direct US threat to Russian security, necessitating a Russian military response. Conservatives identified with their Slavic brethren in Belarus and Serbia, generating an ethnonational Russian interest in these countries absent in the other two discourses.

---

[5] My discussion of institutions relies on Bennett, *Condemned to Repetition*, 306-10; Matz, *Constructing Post-Soviet Reality*, 40-143; and Hopf, *Social Construction*, 153-210.
[6] Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy*, 241.
[7] Baev, 'Russian Policies,' 129.
[8] Hopf, *Social Construction*, 211-57.

Liberal constructions of Russian interests could not be more different. Understanding the Soviet past as something to be avoided, they were against its restoration in the form of reunification with Belarus or a centralised CIS under Moscow's management. Interests in the FSU should be the product of market economic calculations, not ethnonational fraternity or an atavistic Cold War competition with the US. Liberals did not oppose the expansion of NATO because they saw no threat from the US, but did so for its domestic political empowerment of conservatives.[9] While liberals did not support NATO's war against Yugoslavia, they also saw no security implications for Russia, except for its energising of conservative discourse at home.

Russian foreign policy was neither liberal nor conservative, but centrist, at least after 1992. Integration with Belarus was neither spurned nor accelerated, but rather treated as an issue of economic efficiency.[10] The creation of the CIS was neither treated as trivial nor understood as a way to restore the Soviet Union, but was instead cobbled together to coordinate defence and economic policy among its 12 very different members.[11] NATO expansion was neither welcomed, nor opposed by arming or allying with other states against it. Instead, it was opposed, with the expectation that Russia's interests would be taken into account as much as was politically feasible as the expansion unfolded. NATO's war in Kosovo was opposed vigorously, but once begun, Russian efforts were aimed at getting Slobodan Milosevic to sue for peace as quickly as possible, not at arming him, or encouraging him to resist.[12]

The common centrist thread throughout the 1990s was to maintain or restore Russia's great power status through economic development at home and the empowerment of multilateral international institutions abroad. These main themes were evident in Russian foreign policy toward the diaspora. Despite incessant conservative calls to use military force to rescue Russians from discriminatory citizenship laws in the Baltic states, Moscow consistently worked through multilateral institutions, such as the Council of Europe and the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe.[13] Meanwhile, Russian multinational companies, such as Iukos, Lukoil, and Gazprom, cemented a Russian presence in the FSU through direct investments and debt for equity swaps to amortize local energy arrears.[14]

The Effects of 911, Discursively Speaking

Putin's ascension to power in December 1999 changed little, except to emphasize still more the need to strengthen the Federal Center, against Chechnia, and independent Republics. This is the discursive terrain leading up to the catalytic moment of 911.

---

[9] Ekedahl and Goodman, *Wars of Shevardnadze*, 169-76; Goldgeier, *Not Whether but When*, 15-16; Kvitsinskii, *Vremia i Sluchai*, 39-43, 67-9; Chernyaev, *My Six Years*, 272-3; Kornienko, *Kholodnaia Voina*, 264-7; and Primakov, *Gody v Bolshoi Politike*, 232-3.

[10] Paznyak, 'Customs Union of Five,' 66-79.

[11] Olcott, Aslund, and Garnett, *Getting it Wrong*; Matz, *Constructing Post-Soviet Reality*; and Jonson, 'Russia and Central Asia.'

[12] Primakov, *Gody v Bolshoi Politike*, 174-6, 305. See also Lynch, 'The Realism of Russia's Foreign Policy,' 7-31.

[13] Kolsto, *Political Construction Sites*, 208-13.

[14] Olcott, Aslund, and Garnett, *Getting it Wrong*, 54-66.

Renewal of the Center

The Center's apprehension of 911 through Chechnia, through the discourse of strengthening the Federal Center, made a new discursive coalition with Liberals possible. The Conservative understanding of 911 as a blow against imperialism pushed them onto the discursive margins.[15] Already existing areas of discursive agreement with the Center (See Table 1) made Liberals available as allies. At the congress devoted to turning the Union of Right Forces (SPS) into a legal party in December 2001, its leaders Boris Nemtsov, Irina Khakhamada, and Anatolii Chubais each singled out the new foreign policy consensus in favor of supporting the US as a major achievement that might allow the electorate to respect Liberal foreign policy positions once again.[16]

Prior to 911 the Center and Liberal discourses were in agreement on the absolute centrality of economic revival to Russia's recentering, both at home vis-a-vis the regions, and globally vis-a-vis other great powers. Domestic economic liberalization, granting the Center more authority and institutional sway over the regions, recognizing and combatting the terrorist threat emanating from the Caucasus, and making the legal and judicial system more effective and less arbitrary were four broad aims of the Center which Liberals could now support wholeheartedly.

No one other than former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev expressed the consensual position in an interview in the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* on the 3-month anniversary of 911. He said that now that Russia under Putin was committed to domestic political and economic liberalization, it should be able "to count on the understanding and cooperation of Western countries," this while "preserving its own uniqueness and sovereignty."[17] Gleb Pavlovskii, Putin's personal "political technologist," advised the President publicly to "become the President of the Right majority and formulate a right national-liberal ideology." Otherwise, Pavlovskii warned, "it will be 100 years before we catch up with the West."[18]

The issues of Chechnia and re-centering are distilled in the issue of Moscow's relations with Georgia. While prior to 911 Liberal sympathies for Shevardnadze's Georgia were manifest, by October 2001 Liberals were in full agreement with the Putin government's condemnation of Georgia's complicity in providing refuge for Chechen rebels on Georgian territory. On 8 October 2001 a UN helicopter with observers of the ceasefire in Georgia's province of Abkhazia on board was shot down over Abkhazian territory by Chechen rebels who had infiltrated there across the Caucasus. The Russian Foreign Ministry blamed the Georgian government who "appeases and tolerates terrorists" on its territory, while the Georgian government renounced responsibility for

---

[15] Valerii Paniushkin, "Red and Brown. Communists and Fascists United against America," *Kommersant* 9 October 2001, 9.

[16] Siuzanna Farizovaya, "Congress of Dreamers," *Kommunist*, 15 December 2001, 2. See also Grigorii Yavlinsky, interviewed by Svetlana Babaeva, "On a Two-Hour Flight Everything Exists in Practice," *Izvestiia*, 17 December 2001, 4.

[17] Mikhail Gorbachev, "The President Makes a Choice," *Izvestiia*, 11 December 2001, 4. On continued Russian uniqueness, even while joining the new civilization, see Georgii Osipov, "In a Yoke," *Izvestiia*, 26 October 2001, 2 and Mark Zakharov, "Does Russia Deserve to be Called a Country with a Market Economy?," *Kommersant*, 13 November 2001, 16. Zakharov is the artistic director of the Moscow Lenin Komsomol theater.

[18] Reported by Andrei Kolesnikov, "The Russian Complex," *Izvestiia*, 20 November 2001, 2.

any military activities emanating from territory not under its control.[19] Shevardnadze's response to withdraw Georgia from the CIS was treated as attempted blackmail in Moscow.[20] In the Russian Duma, only Yabloko member Aleksei Arbatov voted against a resolution condemning Georgia. He alone observed that Shevardnadze's inability to control Georgia's border was not equivalent to supporting terrorism against Russia.[21]

Russia's role as the military center of the CIS had always had an anti-terrorist component focused on preventing the expansion of the Taliban into Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Russian borderlands in Stavropol, Krasnodar, Tatarstan, and Bashkortostan. Kazakh, Tajik, and Kyrgyz membership in the Tashkent Collective Security Treaty with Russia was aimed fundamentally at the threats emanating from Afghanistan. One effect of 911 was to deeply reinforce this view of a Russian anti-terrorist center. At the CIS Defense Ministers' meeting in Moscow in November 2001, Russia's centrality to this mission was reaffirmed.[22]

In interviews and conversations with representatives of the Liberal intelligentsia in Moscow and Petersburg in the autumn of 2001 I was repeatedly told that, unfortunately, Putin had been right about the threat from terrorism, and that Russia's role in defending against it had been underestimated by Liberals. Until 911, many Liberals had assumed that the war in Chechnia, and indeed the apartment house bombings in Moscow, were perhaps executed by political supporters of Putin to cement his authoritarian rule. 911 undermined these interpretations. Indeed, Secretary of State Colin Powell, in October 2001, laid a wreath of condolences in the Pushkin Square underground where a bomb had been exploded over a year before. Until then, no official US sympathies had been offered.

The Anti-Terrorist Route to Great Power Status

One route to great power status for Russia was to simply ally with the US against global terrorism. Shortly after Putin announced on prime time Russian national television his intentions to support, within clearly specified limits, the US war in Afghanistan, US NATO allies jokingly asked Russian policymakers to please tell them when precisely the US planned to mount its attack on the Taliban, signifying Moscow's new "special relationship" with Washington. Before the Crawford, Texas summit in November 2001, Putin's aides in the Kremlin told reporters that now Bush was going to make Putin the second "good sheriff" in the world, Russia was to become a US "partner" in the maintenance of international security.[23] President Putin's failure to address the UN

---

[19] Georgii Dvali and Gennadii Sysoev, "A UN Helicopter has been Shot Down in Abkhazia," *Kommersant*, 9 October 2001, 3.

[20] Iurii Chubchenko, "Edvard Shevardnadze Tries to Scare Moscow," *Kommersant*, 12 October 2001, 11.

[21] Siuzanna Farizova, "Gosduma Condemned Edvard Shevardnadze," *Kommersant*, 12 October 2001, 2.

[22] Ivan Safronov, "Vladimir Putin Reminded Allies Who Pays for the Joint Struggle Against Terrorism," *Kommersant*, 22 November 2001, 11. A week later Putin described the CIS at its presidential summit as an Anti-Terrorist Center. Iurii Chubchenko, "The President will Return to the Commonwealth," *Kommersant*, 1 December 2001, 2. Belarussian and Armenian participation in the collective security treaty of course have other motivations.

[23] Leonid Galkin, "They Will Give Vladimir Putin a Star as a Good Sheriff of the World," *Kommersant* 13 November 2001, 2. See also Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov's speech to the Royal Belgian Military Academy, in which he stressed the importance of "international legal norms" multilateral security institutions, and the "sovereign right" of Baltic states to join NATO as the principles underlying Russia's new alliance with the West. Reported by Svetlana Babaeva, "Sensible Decision," *Izvestiia*, 20 December 2001, 4.

General Assembly while in the US for the Crawford, Texas summit with Bush was interpreted as a new Russian turn toward a bilateral alliance with the US.[24]

Russian expectations for its new alliance with the US, however, went far beyond the issue of terrorism because Russia already understood itself as a member of Western civilization. From the very beginning of the new relationship, Russians reported in great detail every word of key Bush Administration officials with respect to just what kind of alliance was going to be forged beyond the narrow issue of terrorism itself. The fact that such Bush Administration hardliners as Condaleeza Rice and Richard Armitage had made public pronouncements in favor of a new relationship with Russia was treated as front page news.[25] But the question was whether this was a "turning point" in relations, or just a tactical alliance.[26] US Secretary of State Colin Powell's December 2001 meetings with Putin in Moscow were followed only with the narrowest of interpretations of the alliance by Powell: "Russia and the US are now on the same side of the barricades and united in their struggle with a common evil—terrorism."[27]

Most important from the standpoint of the discursive coalition in Moscow were the fears expressed by Liberals that this is merely an "alliance for the resolution of a tactical task, after which each goes its own way."[28]

The Economic Route to Great Power Identity

One critical consequence of 911 was to visibly accelerate Russia's prospective timetable for integration into the world capitalist economy, and the WTO and EU in particular. Liberal discourse had been advocating this identification with the West all along, but for the Center 911 gave its alliance with Liberals on this issue strong impetus. Meanwhile Conservatives reacted with renewed horror to the prospect of rapid and real Russian sublimation of itself in the West. There were two discursive dimensions to this contestation. The first was a debate about the economic plusses and minuses of Russian exposure to international economic forces. The second, and crucial, from the point of view of a potential alliance of identity, was a debate about Russia's new civilizational identity, and how the latter was both exemplified and advanced by Russia's economic integration with the world economy.

It was expected in Russia that Putin's efforts to liberalize trade and reduce state involvement in the economy, part of his reform agenda before 911, would now pay off politically, as Western states would appreciate these moves in a new light. Exxon/Mobil's announcement in November 2001 of a $12-15 billion investment in Sakhalin energy reserves was cited as one concrete economic payoff of the new alliance. The economic route to the center had been partially vindicated by Russian economic performance since the August 1998 currency crisis. Three years of GDP growth averaging six per cent a year, fuelled by robust world oil prices, allowed Russia to think of itself as a "deserving country pretending to be No. 8 in the G7."[29]

---

[24] Boris Volkhonskii, "Vladimir Putin Ignores the UN," *Kommersant,* 12 November 2001, 8.
[25] Evgenii Bai, "Absolutely New Relations. Condaleeza Rice Considers Russia an Ally," *Izvestiia*, 10 October 2001, 1 and Evgenii Bai and Mikhail Kozhokin, "The Struggle with Terrorism will Show How We Will be Allies," *Izvestiia*, 11 October 2001, 1.
[26] Aleksandr Shumilin, "Peculiarities of the Present Moment," *Izvestiia*, 13 October 2001, 4.
[27] As reported by Gennadii Sysoev, "US Secretary of State Completes his Inspection of his CIS Partners," *Kommersant*, 10 December 2001, 3.
[28] Yavlinsky, "On a Two Hour Flight," 4.
[29] Nikolai Vardul, "Russia will Pay its Old Debts in Advance," *Kommersant*, 24 October 2001, 2.

Russian associations of economic integration with civilizational identity were reinforced in interactions with high-ranking European diplomats like Italian foreign minister Renato Ruggiero who came to Moscow with a letter in the name of Italy, Germany, and Britain, inviting Russia to accelerate its entry into the WTO. According to Ruggiero, this would "only be the beginning of the acceptance of Russia into the civilized community. Next will come integration into the EU and NATO and, as a result will appear some kind of Euroatlantic community."[30]

Anti-globalization demonstrators, representative of Conservative discourse, at the November 2001 World Economic Forum were regarded as "opposing the introduction of civlization in Russia." Russia's adherence to international standards, whether in accounting or in judicial reforms, were treated in the predominant discourse as ends in themselves, not as means to achieve any material rewards, whether economic or strategic.[31]

The New Bipolar World: Civilization and Barbarism

US recognition of Russia's legitimate right to use military force against terrorism in Chechnia was accompanied by Russia's understanding of itself as part of the hegemonic coalition against international barbarism. In fact, a new binarization of the world into civilized states and the rest emerged quickly after 911. Instead of the Conservative poles of US imperialism and everyone else, there were the poles of barabaric terrorism and civlization. Conservative discourse discredited itself by rejecting an alliance with the US, being one of only two parties to vote against a Duma resolution supporting Putin's cooperation with the West against terrorism.[32]

CentristDuma members voted down the Conservative resolution introduced by Zhirinovskii's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the Agrarian Party condemning US aggression against CIS members, as US basing rights in Central Asia were termed.. The Duma also voted down Zhirinovsky's resolution calling for the "Moslem world to resist the global aggressor—the United States."[33]

In general, Russians profoundly disagreed with continued Conservative identification of the US as Russia's primary Other, as if the Cold War had never ended, and the USSR had never collapsed, instead of identifying against radical Islam, terrorism, premodernity, and barbarism. Talk of multipolarity, and its periodic references to a potential alliance with China or India, completely disappeared, replaced by a discourse of bipolar struggle between civilization and barbarism.[34].

The aim, according to Putin, speaking in Shanghai in October 2001, was to "construct new relations based on the common aims of world civilization."[35] As Mikhail Margelov, then chairman of the International Affairs Commitee of the Federation Council

---

[30] Konstantin Smirnov, "Aleksei Kudrin Fears Sleeping Through Russia's Entry into the WTO," *Kommersant*, 19 December 2001, 1 and 2.

[31] For example, Georgii Osipov, "Horst Keller Presented Russia with Courtesies," *Izvestiia*, 13 October 2001, 2.

[32] "Communists have Rejected the Struggle with Terrorists," *Kommersant*, 18 October 2001, 2.

[33] As reported by Farizova, "Gosduma Condemned Edvard Shevardnadze," 2.

[34] Svetlana Babaeva, Andrei Lebedev, and Aleksandr Chuikov, "Base Value," *Izvestiia*, 18 October 2001, 1. The authors proclaim that "the multipolar world has ended."

[35] Putin's comments at the Shanghai Asian Pacifice Economic Council summit, *Izvestiia*, 22 October 2001, 1.

put it, "Russia should join not NATO, but some new world alliance...some kind of Union of Civilized States."[36]

Civilization, Civil Rights, and Chechnia

The clearest disagreement between Liberals and Putin was on his managed construction of civil society, but even here 911 worked to strengthen the Center against those who identified with the US.[37] Because of the alacrity with which the Bush Administration sacrificed liberal values on civil rights and criminal procedure in order to fight terrorism, Centrists in Russia had external validation against their Liberal critics.

911 deepened and widened the discursive coalition in Moscow in favor of Putin's course in Chechnia, whatever it might turn out to be. *Kommersant Vlast*, one of the most liberal news magazines in Russia, named Donald Rumsfeld its "Hero of Russia" for the week of October 23 2001. Why? Because at a Pentagon briefing, he

> found the words that even the Russian military could not find in its conversations with Council of Europe representatives..."Always we should know that people suffer in air and ground operations. In the majority of cases, the people who suffer, in our opinion, are the ones who should suffer. But sometimes those who shouldn't have. But there's no way to avoid this." These words are worth Russian military leaders learning by heart for future use in conversations with foreign defenders of human rights.[38]

The Beginning of the End of 911

The most profound effect of 911 was to raise the possibility of a Russian-US alliance against terrorism that would promise a renewed status for Russia as the other Great Power in the world. But US actions in the world, and with respect to Russia, would rapidly put paid to that idea, instead, resurrecting Russia's pre-911 understanding of itself as a European Great Power in a multipolar world struggling against US unipolarity.

US Unilateralism

Many Russian elites saw 911 as an unprecedented opportunity to overcome the disappointment of the 1980s and 1990s when, in their view, Russia made itself available as an ally of the West, but was spurned. If the US didn't recognize the possibilities of this moment, a time when countries otherwise hostile to the US have rallied to its cause, then at a minimum, "the coalition will collapse."[39] As Gorbachev went on to observe, "even Europe—the most reliable ally of Ameica—refuses to accept...." American unilateralism. While such a fantasy "can be realized by force, pressure, sanctions and blackmail, it would be an immense error."[40].

BMD/Strategic Affairs

---

[36] Andrei Kolesnikov, "The Russian Complex," *Izvestiia*, 20 November 2001, 2.

[37] Ironic treatment from Liberals on Putin's construction of civil society from above include: Konstantin Smirnov and Andrei Bagrov, 'They Came to Putin," *Kommersant* 24 November 2001, 1. Liberal SPS leader Yavlinsky distinguishes between support for the Center's foreign policy alliance with the West from continued wariness over the "Potemkin village of managed democracy." In Babaeva, "Two Hour Flight," 4.

[38] "Hero of Russia. Donald Rumsfeld, US Defense Minister," *Kommersant Vlast* 23 October 2001, 38.

[39] Gorbachev, "The President Makes a Choice," 4. A gathering of the Russian diaspora in Moscow also warned against future US unilateralism. Pavel Korobov, "The Assembly Condemned the Forces of Darkness," *Kommersant* 15 December 2001, 2.

[40] Gorbachev, "The President Makes a Choice," 4.

While Russians believed 911 had finally convinced the US of its vulnerability, and hence promised a shared understanding of international terrorism, the US immediately chose instead to make itself invulnerable, through anti ballistic missile defenses and preventive wars against perceived threats. In Putin's phone call to President Bush in the immediate aftermath of 911, in the pages of Russian newspapers, and in conversations with Russian policymakers, intellectuals, and ordinary people on the street, there was a thread that somehow fused US and Russian identities: now you know, as we have always known, how vulnerable we all are.[41] This shared vulnerability or linked fate, was a foundation for deep sympathy for the US after 911, and was expected to cement US-Russian relations on a basis of shared understanding of security interdependence. If during the Cold War, peaceful coexistence and detente were made possible by the recognition that Moscow and Washington held the fate of the other in its nuclear arsenal, then after 911, both understood that the fate of both was in the hands of a common threat: international terrorism.

Arms Exports

One important way of maintaining its great power status Russia sees in sustaining its military capabilities. Given the scarcity of capital to invest in the "defense-industrial complex", and a preference to not allow foreign investments in these sensitive areas, the major source of financing is earnings from arms sales abroad.

The defense-industrial complex exported almost $4 billion of weaponry in 2000.[42] In 2002, Russia sold $5b, becoming the second largest arms exporter in the world, after the US. Ninety percent of Russia's arms exports are to the developing world, as are 81% of US exports. Russia was the second largest arms exporter to the developing world from 2002 to 2005, but first in new arms agreements with the developing world in 2005, concluding $7 billion in new agreements (23.2 percent of the world total). From 2002-5, Russia reached $22b in arms transfer agreements to the developing world. Russian arms sales to Iran and Venezuela were most irritating to the US. Russian arms to Iran have increased from $300m from 1998-2001 to $1.7b from 2002-5.

Overall, Russian arms sales account for almost half the value of all of Russia's non-raw material exports. Moreover, its research and development is intimately related to Russia's strategy to regain its leadership in technology and knowledge-intensive industries in coming years. Almost 70% of Russia's arms production is exported, accounting for two-thirds of the financing of the defense industry in 2000.[43]

Post-Afghanistan targets

Obviously, the most flagrant demonstration of US unilateralism after the war in Afghanistan in 2001 was the decision to invade Iraq. This manifestation of unfettered US power, more than anything else, convinced Russia that being a partner with the US did not mean being an equal great power, as in the good old days of the Cold War. Instead, it reinforced Russian identification with Europeans, France and Germany in particular, as a great power in a multipolar world trying to moderate the behavior of the unipolar hegemon.

---

[41] At the highest level, this expectation of mutual vulnerability was expressed by Iulii Vorontsov, UN Deputy General Secretary, former Soviet Ambassador to the US, and former Russian UN representative, in an interview with Maria Kiselevaya, "NATO Will Die in Five Years," *Izvestiia*, 17 December 2001, 6.
[42] Timur Khikmatov, "Sunny Exit. Arms exporters are Making Up for what has been Lost," *Izvestiia*, 18 December 2001, 6.
[43] "The State goes on the Defense," *Kommersant*, 30 October 2001, 8.

European Identification

The Center-Liberal discursive identification of Russia with Europe became more attractive the more unilaterally the US acted in world affairs after 911. This alternative impliesdcooperation with Europe on a host of issues where European and Russian preferences appear to be more compatible than with the US.[44] During the run up to the war in Iraq, Russia found itself closely allied with France and Germany in opposition to the US. Both Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov's grandson, Vyacheslav Nikonov, now president of the Politika Foundation, and Dmitrii Trenin, a senior researcher at the Carnegie Center in Moscow, compared Putin's opportunity to that of Peter the Great's; his mission, according to Trenin, "should be to complete the cause of Peter—and turn Russia toward Europe."[45]

As far as China and the US are concerned as models, Nikolai Ryzhkhov has said that "we are far away from China, like the Earth and the Moon, and the US is two oceans away from us....Even our legislation now is closer than anything to European and every new law, every new reform—pension, taxation, or land—is pursued precisely according to the European model...." "Belonging to Europe is a condition for the existence of Russia."[46]

What emerges as a result of US unilateralism is at least two Russian understandings of itself as a Great Power: one constructed in relationship with Europe, and a second constructed in relationship with the United States. In order to assess this hypothesis I collected the transcripts of 38 meetings President Putin has had with US President Bush and European leaders from May 2000 to May 2005.[47] I analyzed them in terms of what topics were discussed, how these topics were discussed, and which identities were present in the conversations. These appear in Table Two.

[44] British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott even invited Moscow to join London in pressuring Washington to rejoin the Kyoto global warming treaty process. See Sergei Strokan, "Moscow and London Have Spoken a Bit about the Weather," *Kommersant*, 17 October 2001, 10.
[45] Georgii Ilyichev, "Unforgiven Partners," *Izvestiia*, 15 October 2001, 4.
[46] Georgii Ilyichev, "Old World Strategy," *Izvestiia*, 10 November 2001, 4.
[47] All these documents may be downloaded at http://kremlin.ru Last accessed 1 June 2005

Table Two
Constructing Russia in Conversation, May 2000-May 2005

	Terrorism	Economics	Proliferation	Partners	Democracy
	9	7	6	4	4
	Civilization	Terrorism & Human Rights	Allies v. Terrorism	Roots of Terrorism	Chechnia & Terrorism
US	3	2	2	1	1
N=15	UN Central	Friends			
	1	1			
	Partners	**European Identity**	Terrorism	**UN Central**	Democracy
	11	11	10	10	7
	International Law	Civilization	Proliferation	**Mulitlateralism Multipolarity**	**Racism/ Xenophobia**
	6	6	6	4	4
Europe	Chechnia & Terrorism	Terrorism & Human Rights	Roots of Terrorism	CTBT	Economics
N=23	2	2	2	2	17

One each space weapons ban, BCW ban, light weapons ban, world order

In Table Two, the major differences between conversations with Bush and conversations with European leaders are highlighted in **bold.**

What kind of great power emerges from Putin's conversations? When interacting with the US, Russia is a partner with the US in a global war on terror and against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, period. When interacting with Europe, on the other hand, Russia is a European great power, who, along with other European powers like Germany, Italy, and France, fights terrorism under the authority of the United Nations and international law.

While not surprising that interacting with Europe evokes Russia's European identity, it is critically significant. Unlike identity relations with the United States, which do not have broader and deeper resonance in mass Russian society, European identity is a natural part of the daily identity terrain of Russian society.[48]

The average Russian understands herself as European, as part of European culture and civilization, and as engaging in European daily practices. This implies Europe has a greater capacity to more profoundly affect how Russia understands itself than the United States. In fact, the latter, to the extent its identity relations are restricted to that of great power partners in terrorism and nonproliferation, evokes a Soviet identity for Russians, reminding them of the time when the USSR and the US bilaterally negotiated the level of in/security in the world for everyone else. Europeans should therefore be a more effective conduit for socializing Russia into legitimate great power conduct than the United States, since Russia's European identity is more deeply embedded in the daily practices of Russian life.

Putin, for example, has referred to Russia's "European calling," or prizvanie.[49] An "American calling" is simply unthinkable in Russia, except for a narrow slice of the already vanishingly small Liberal discourse. Similarly Russia's place in the "common European home" is never matched to any comman space with America.[50] Putin also referred to the deep roots of leftist ideas...communism and social democracy," in Europe and Russia.[51] It is inconceivable for Russia and the United States to share deep Lockean or republican roots, let alone roots farther to the left.

Putin repeatedly refers to the great contributions Russia and other countries, such as Germany and Italy, have made to the "enrichment of European civilization."[52] In a joint statement with Berlusconi, Solana, and Prodi in Rome, they spoke of "our common intellectual heritage and possessions."[53] Putin once told Berlusconi that "the unique national traditions of our countries have absorbed the best features of European civilization."[54] Putin observed that "the value of the spiritual legacy of Russia and

---

[48] This is evident from the high school textbooks, crime novels, and other mass texts sampled to arrive at the domestic discourses on Russian identity. See, Hopf, *Social Construction*, 153-210. At least, as I cautioned earlier, through 2001. I havent executed a discourse analysis on the subsequent period…yet.
[49] 29 May 2000 meeting in Moscow with EU representatives Guterresh, Solana and Prodi.
[50] 2 April 2002 interview with German and Russian media in Moscow. The idea of the Soviet Union in the "common European home" was, significantly, Gorbachev's formulation.
[51] 2 April 2002.
[52] 11 April 2003 meeting in St. Petersburg with Schroeder. See also 29 August 2003 meeting with Berlusconi in Sardinia.
[53] 6 November 2003.
[54] 3 November 2004.

Germany has global significance, and for many centuries has been a kind of cultural beacon...for the entire world, for all of Europe."[55]

Contrast this to the following excerpt from the "Joint Statement on Russian-American Contacts between People," in which the development of future US-Russian relations at the societal level were elaborated. "For centuries, the great poets, writers, artists, composers, and scholars of Russia have made outstanding contributions to world civilization. The study of this cultural legacy spiritually enriches the lives of Americans." Consistent with a conversation with Europeans, the statement might have gone on to speak of the similar contributions and shared achievements of the French, or Dutch, or Italians. Instead, "For their part, Rossians (not ethnic Russians, or narod, of which more about below), show genuine interest in getting to know the American contribution to art and science."[56] Russians need not "get to know" European contributions; they live them, and live with them every day. But they have to familiarize themselves with the heretofore unremarked Americans.

In a very real sense, Russia's partnership with the United States is based almost exclusively on tactical interests in fighting terrorism. There is no deeper identity relationship between the two states. There is no social foundation that could create a stable intersubjective reality that could go beyond mere policy preferences. There are no discursive hooks on which normative legitimizing claims could be connected in advancing arguments about Russian foreign policy conduct. In the "Moscow Declaration on New Strategic Relations between the Russian Federation and the United States," a document borne out of the closer relationship developed between Washington and Moscow after 911, there was not a single reference to any shared identity between Russia and the United States.[57] Instead, it is a long list of common threats and interests. Even in the section on "contact between peoples," there is a set of instrumental goals in education, health care, tourism, combatting AIDS, etc, but not a word about common values, traditions, norms, identities. As Putin put it at his press conference with Bush in Bratislava, "What unites the US and Russia are longterm interests and strategic goals...."[58]

It is also very significant that Putin, referring to the peoples of Russia and Europe, uses the word narody, while using liudi when referring to the peoples of Russia and the United States.[59] This is not a trivial semantic issue, but one of profound significance for identity relations. Narod, in Russian prefers to kinship or blood ties, ethnicity, loosely speaking, while liudi are simply a collection of unrelated people.[60] In other words, Russians and Europeans are relatives in the same family, while Russians and Americans are just part of the human race with no particular closeness or similarity.

During Bush's summit visit to Moscow in May 2002, for example, a joint statement on Russian-American contacts between people was issued. The word for

---

[55] 14 January 2005 speech in St. Petersburg with German President Horst Kohler.
[56] 24 May 2002.
[57] 24 May 2002.
[58] 24 February 2005.
[59] 6 November 2003 joint statement with Berlusconi in Rome and 9 May 2005 meeting with Schroeder in Moscow.
[60] Narod is formed around the root rod, which by itself means family, kin, clan, birth, origin, stock, and in science, genus. It gives rise to words, such as, roditeli/parents, rodina/Homeland or Motherland, rodit/to give birth, etc.

people, is liudi, not narod. In the "Moscow Declaration," issued at the same summit, Russians become Rossians, i.e., rossisskie, citizens of the Russian Federation. Often in conversations with European leaders, Putin uses the ethnonational word, russkie, to refer to the Russian narod, and their ties to other Europeans. In other words, relations with America are official and instrumental, not rooted in history, culture, family even.

In going forward however, it is evident that Russia's great power identity is partly the product of interaction with other great powers. The survey of Putin's conversations with Western leaders appears to show that a Russian foreign policy that respects international norms of legitimacy is more likely to develop in interaction with European, rather than American, leaders. Not only is the substance of the two broad conversations different, but interactions with Europeans easily evoke a common European identity that resonates deeply in daily Russian life. In this sense, talk is hardly cheap, but rather an unsually important power resource in the construction of a more European Russia which more commonly adheres to the rules of great power conduct in international affairs.

The Emergence of New Russia: 2005-7

In a content analysis of 66 Putin press conferences and meetings with foreign leaders from May 2005-August 2007, a New Russia is clearly emergent. While the raw numbers are presented in Table Three, the interesting story is the trajectory and the absences. As we can see in (the increasingly rare) meetings with US President Bush, Russia is moreoreless done considering itself as a partner in the global war on terror. Instead, as I will discuss in more detail below, it is economics, economics, economics, 24/7.

Table Three

Constructing Russia in Conversation, June 2005-August 2007

	Democracy	Economics	Terrorism	Partners	Friends
	2	2	1	1	1
US					
N=4	Soviet Legacy				
	1				
	Economics	Democracy	Soviet Legacy	Partners	Terrorism
	15	5	3	3	2
Europe					
N=21					
	International Law	Multipolarity			
	2	2			

One each: European identity; UN; Civilization; Chechnia & Terrorism; Islam

If we turn to interactions with Europe, then economics dominates again. In fact, in almost every single meeting Putin has with any foreign leader, whether European, South American, African, or Chinese, he begins with a statement of how much foreign investment and trade there is between them, the trajectory of that commerce, a judgement as to whether it is "normal," and then a conclusion that it must go up. Although it has become almost formulaic, it underscores the centrality of Russia's identity as an economic player in the world economy.

As important, however, is Russia's understanding of itself as a democracy in the making. What is truly striking is the persistent commitment to declaring that Russia is never going back to any authoritarian past, Soviet or otherwise, but that it is still a developing project in a transition to a full-fledged democracy. And not any kind of "Russian" democracy, but a democracy of universal values. This commitment has been increasingly frequently accompanied by a demand that Russia be treated as an equal to European or Western democracies, given all their many flaws. If granted, then Russia is more than happy to have open robust discussions of what is wrong with Russian democracy, and exchange advice on how to improve matters.

Three newer aspects of Russian identity have emerged over the past two years. The first is really a return to pre911 understandings of the US as an aspirant unipolar hegemony, thus situating Russia as one of several great powers engaged in constructing a multipolar war to constrain American power. The second, and related, is the invocation of international law as the basis for any just and democratic international order. Last, and perhaps most interesting, as it may mark the beginning of the end of the post-Soviet period, is a recognition that Russia is the heir of the Soviet Union, but the Soviet Union's legacy is mostly bad.

The Material Basis of New Russia

All these identities are fuelled materially literally by fuel, but are made meaningful by Centrist identity of a unique Russian Self, already visible in 1991-2. The Russian economy has averaged 6.5% annual growth over the last 8 years, real personal incomes increasing by 12% a year. Per capita GDP has reached from $5-11k, depending on whether one uses the official exchange rate or PPP.

A Developing Democratic Russia

In response to Fox News's Chris Wallace in September 2005, Putin acknowledged that Russia's legal system "is still in its dynamic process of development and we will be pleased to listen to the good advice of our partners. We arent prepared to listen to teaching, of course, or tutoring." In January 2006, in a Moscow press conference with Germany's chancellor, Angela Merkel, Putin again stressed that "our country is in a transition period—both our political and economic systems reflect this.…There are a great many questions that remain open and we are interested in a constructive, friendly discussion between partners on any of these questions.…We will listen to the opinions of our partners….And in the event that a proposal we discuss corresponds to our national interests, we will be ready to implement it." He went on to point out, however, that democracy and human rights arent yet perfected in the West either.[61]

In Luxembourg in May 2007, Putin explained to his audience that the West has spent hundreds of years developing democracy, and they still have problems. Russia has endured the collapse of the state, a crisis in the Caucasus, "the complete impoverishment of its people," and oligarchical rule. So, "of course we need time to build and develop our democratic institutions and for society to adapt to the new conditions. It takes time to form the middle class which is the backbone of democratic institutions.…" But, as Putin said a few days later in Portugal, "lets not see the situation as one side being white, clean, and pure, while the other side is some kind of 'monster' that has only just crawled out of the forest, with hoofs and horns instead of a normal human appearance."

[61] He expressed similar sentiments at the July 2006 G8 press conference in St. Petersburg, at the EU-Russia summit in Helsinki in November 2006,

Putin still rejects (the Eurasianist) idea of a "third way" or a unique Russian democracy. At the most recent G8 meeting in Germany, Putin was handed a leaflet from a demonstrator in which Russia was accused of tyranny. Putin seized the opportunity to enumerate the many obstacles Russia had overcome and the pernicious Soviet legacy it was still fighting. "But this does not mean that we will come up with some kind of specifically Russian form of existence or invent some kind of particularly Russian democracy. We will develop according to the common principles that apply to all civilized countries."

The US Unipolar Threat, Multipolarity, and International Law

Putin first articulated Russia's position on the threat posed by US unipolarity, and the critical role that a multipolar system based on international law in his press conference with Angela Merkel in Sochi in January 2007. "Filled with a sense of their infallibility and strength, the victors in the Cold War want to divide everything up anew. The temptation is great, but the results are hard to predict….The problem in international relations today is that there is increasingly less respect for the basic principles of international law." In this case, Putin cited the efforts to resolve the issue of Kosovo at the expense of Serbia.

Just two days later in Sochi with Italy's prime minster Romano Prodi, Putin continued the theme, declaring that "Russia will find its own place in the world…and will strive for a balanced and multipolar world…" These dry runs were followed by Putin's lengthy address at the Munich conference on security policy in February 2007, where he elaborated the dangers of unipolarity, linking US unilateralism and disregard for international legal constraints with both the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. What a stark difference from the post-911 period, when Russia was seen as America's closest ally on both these issues. Now, the US stood accused of indirectly causing the very threats it claimed it was committed to fighting. By the end of May, Putin was referring to US unipolarity as a "dictatorship" and "imperialism" at a press conference in Greece.

The Soviet Other

Signalling the virtual death of the New Soviet Russian discourse in Russia itself, Putin, in his meetings with Bush and Europeans, treats the Soviet past ironically, regretfully, and disdainfully. At the Gleneagles G8 summit in July 2005, Putin answered a question about what kinds of disagreements emerged among the world's leaders by saying "it wasn't at all like the old days of Communist Party congresses where everyone was unanimous." In his September 2005 meeting with Bush in the US, Putin took the opportunity to differentiate Russia's current economic strategy with that of the Soviet past, when "we lived for many decades….with the credo that rather than thinking of the present generation, we must think of the future one. In the end, by not thinking of the people living today, we destroyed the country."

Three times in the past two years, Putin has apologized, accepting "moral responsibilty" for Soviet interventions in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. (February 2006 in Budapest, March 2006 in Prague, and with Czechoslovakia's president Vaclav Klaus in Moscow in April 2007) In his meeting with the general secretary of the League of Arab States, Amr Moussa, in Moscow in February 2007, Putin expressed relief that the Soviet legacy of ideological differences with the Arab world has passed.

In sum, a New Russia is emerging, materially fuelled by energy and raw material exports, and internationally constructed by US unipolarity and the EU's assimilationist project toward the East. But significantly, the New Russia has many of the very same elements of identity characteristic of Centrist discourse from 1992-99. The difference today is that the field has been cleared of both Liberals and Conservatives, who have both discredited themselves in their own unique ways.