

American-Russian Relations: Liberalist Influence on a Cooperative Approach

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Class of 2016

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188		
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-04-2016		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE American-Russian Relations: Liberalist Influence on a Cooperative Approach			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Gary R. Reidenbach United States Marine Corps			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Captain Wade D. Turvold			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. Please consider submitting to DTIC for worldwide availability? YES: <input type="checkbox"/> or NO: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (student check one) Project Adviser recommends DTIC submission? YES: <input type="checkbox"/> or NO: <input type="checkbox"/> (PA check one)					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 6,797					
14. ABSTRACT In an effort to avoid another bitter and costly rivalry like that of the Cold War years, it is of supreme consequence for America to re-examine its relations with Russia and craft an engaged and cooperative approach to the future. The purpose of this paper is to propose that America's relationship with Russia should strive in all possible contexts to promote and advance integration of Russia into the broader international political, economic, and security system. America's approach, policies, and actions with regard to Russia, similar to American approaches in relation to other states, should consistently rely on the tenets of cooperative liberalism for inspiration and guidance. This paper briefly discusses the history and current state of American-Russian relations, examines the international relations theories of realism and liberalism and the insights they hold for influencing and shaping America's approach to Russia, and analyzes key interests from both sides in search of areas for potential long-term liberalist inspired cooperation while identifying issues and interests likely to yield undesirable competitive friction or opposition.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS International Relations, Liberalism, Realism, Interests, Globalization					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 29	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)

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(6,797 words)

Abstract

In an effort to avoid another bitter and costly rivalry like that of the Cold War years, it is of supreme consequence for America to re-examine its relations with Russia and craft an engaged and cooperative approach to the future. The purpose of this paper is to propose that America's relationship with Russia should strive in all possible contexts to promote and advance integration of Russia into the broader international political, economic, and security system. America's approach, policies, and actions with regard to Russia, similar to American approaches in relation to other states, should consistently rely on the tenets of cooperative liberalism for inspiration and guidance. This paper briefly discusses the history and current state of American-Russian relations, examines the international relations theories of realism and liberalism and the insights they hold for influencing and shaping America's approach to Russia, and analyzes key interests from both sides in search of areas for potential long-term liberalist inspired cooperation while identifying issues and interests likely to yield undesirable competitive friction or opposition.

American-Russian Relations: Liberalist Influence on a Cooperative Approach

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the reunification of Germany in 1990, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 seemed to signal the end of the Cold War. American unipolar hegemony suddenly seemed to replace a previous bipolar world dominated by rival policies of containment, Mutually Assured Destruction, and global superpower opposition. The West visibly celebrated what many perceived as a clear triumph of democracy and capitalist principles, values, and power over failed authoritarian governance and communist social and economic policies. Following the dismantlement of the Soviet Union, many Eastern European states looked to the West for guidance and assistance and began a distancing march from life behind the Iron Curtain. Much of Europe, including many former communist states, reorganized into a cooperative union. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization expanded into areas previously depicted in operational plans and theater strategies as projected battlespace. Russia and former communist bloc states experienced a period of inner turmoil following the demise of the Soviet Union. Early transitions toward a market economy and a more democratic governing process proved extremely difficult and trying. The social chaos, lack of consumer goods, and poor standard of living produced by failed communist policies did not quickly improve. The pursuit of capitalism and democracy, for those states that truly embarked on such a journey, proved to be a long, tough, and winding road. In many cases, already difficult conditions worsened. Even the most optimistic could only hang on and hope for general progress. Nonetheless, by the late 1990s and early 2000s, many of these states emerged on a new and decidedly pro-Western trajectory. Unfortunately, Russia did not seem to be among them. In 2014, with the seizure and annexation of the Crimea from Ukraine, Russia returned to haunt the

collective Western psyche. Like a returning boogeyman, an aggressive and seemingly expansionist Russia re-emerged onto the European, Eurasian, and global stage. Since then, America and the West have desperately been trying to discern what comes next, while also trying to determine what policies to adopt and actions to take.

Among the myriad and pressing foreign policy and national security issues facing America in the early years of the twenty-first century, there is, arguably, none more important than the need to stabilize and improve relations with Russia. As the largest physical state on Earth (occupying nearly seventeen percent of the planet's inhabited landmass¹) and possessing a nuclear arsenal capable of annihilating the American nation-state and its very way of life, Russia can be an existential threat to America and is one of the few peer competitors of the United States on the global stage.

Understanding this reality and the fact that today's Russia is not simply yesterday's Soviet Union, it is paramount that America and Russia relate to one another and account for each other's interests and desires when contemplating and executing international actions and policies. Both countries possess such a large capability and capacity to inflict catastrophic damage on one another and the world that they must include each other in their foreign policy deliberations and calculus. In an effort to avoid another bitter and costly rivalry like that of the Cold War years, it is of supreme consequence for America to re-examine its relations with Russia and craft an engaged and cooperative approach to the future. The purpose of this paper is to propose that America's relationship with Russia should strive in all possible contexts to promote and advance Russia's integration into the broader international political, economic, and security system. America's approach, policies, and actions with regard to Russia, similar

to American approaches in relation to other states, should consistently rely on the tenets of cooperative liberalism for inspiration and guidance. While liberalism should always inform and direct America's long-term approach to Russia, realist interpretations of international behavior can help shape policies to manage and account for differences in national interest and values. A brief examination of American and Russian relations and their span along the range of early benign competition, World War II military cooperation, bitter Cold War ideological opposition, American hope for post-Soviet Russian moderation and reform, and today's exasperation and anxiety is the point of departure for developing a more productive and mutually beneficial future, cooperative relationship.

Headed in the Wrong Direction

During the early years of America's existence, in a time long before today's age of electronic information, transportation, industrialism, and global finance and commerce, America and Russia were states with little contact and limited interests in one another. Russia was a state with a long historical lineage focused on European and Eurasian affairs with relatively narrow commercial interests in North America based on the promise of revenues from the harvest and trade of furs. As America emerged from the revolution against English colonial rule and expanded through acquisition of additional territory from the British, French, and Spanish, the modern day United States began to take shape and America's interests became continental in nature. American and Russian relations first intersected in the Pacific Northwest and centered on the commerce associated with the region's lucrative fur trade. In these early years, from the late 1700s to the early 1800s, the countries found common ground in desiring unimpeded maritime commerce, economic cooperation in the not-yet American

northwest along the Pacific coast, and the balancing of European powers.² Ultimately, this period resulted in the acquisition of Alaska from Russia in 1867. The relationship was competitively cooperative and not defined by a confrontational, opposing manner. “From the earliest days, relations between Russia and America were businesslike, even amiable, notwithstanding deep differences in political philosophy and governmental structure. Not until the nineteenth century did rational calculations of interest give way to moralist reactions (to tsarist autocracy and Russian anti-Semitism) on the American side, reciprocated by communist demonization of capitalist democracy by the Soviet regime in the twentieth century.”³

The twentieth century was an era of tremendous strife and suffering. The world suffered through two cataclysmic global conflicts that brought enormous change. The collapse of tsarist Russia during the First World War and its replacement by Bolshevik communism was among the most significant of these changes. American alignment and multiple, direct involvements in European balance of power politics would be another. Even with the rise of the Soviet Union in 1922 and the diametrically opposed ideologies of capitalism and communism, America found common ground with Russia in the struggle against the Axis powers in World War II. Following the defeat of expansionist Germany and Japan in 1945, American and Russian relations deteriorated. Cooperation slid into confrontation and the Cold War began. The early history of American and Russian relations as benign commercial competitors in the Pacific Northwest and military allies in multiple world wars gave way to ideological and moral opposition. American and Russian interests were viewed more and more through rigid and incompatible political, social, and economic contexts. Two competing visions and

systems formed. One led by the United States and the other by the Soviet Union. This would last for nearly half a century until the Soviet Union disbanded amidst failed political, social, and economic policies in 1991.

With the Soviet collapse, American and Russian relations entered a period offering redefinition and change. Relations not based on moral and ideological confrontation were possible in this new era. However, as the world entered the twenty-first century, this potential opportunity for greater cooperation and less opposition seemed to be closing. From the Russian perspective, relations were deteriorating nearly from the start of this brief window. “European Union and NATO enlargement in the 1990s, NATO’s bombing campaign against Serbia in 1999, the color revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan in the early 2000s, the Russo-Georgian war of 2008, and American support for democracy movements in the Middle East and along Russia’s periphery convinced many...that Washington was trying to weaken Russia, exploit its natural resources, impose alien values and effect regime change.”⁴ The American perspective of this same period revolved around apparent Russian reluctance or inability to reform. “For many Americans, Russia after the collapse of communism was a Western democracy in the making, which rapidly devolved into a violent, mafia-dominated society....Russia’s defense of Serbs engaged in ethnic cleansing, its opposition to popular movements for political reform in the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] states and around the globe, its neo-imperial approach to the former Soviet space (most visibly in Georgia and Ukraine), the military modernization program initiated in Putin’s second presidential term, and increasingly belligerent

rhetoric from the Kremlin convinced many Americans that Putin was determined to restore an expansive Russian empire based on nationalism...and autocracy....”⁵

The disillusionment, mistrust, and suspicion that characterize much of the current state of American and Russian relations stem from these differing perspectives of the run-up to Crimean annexation. While America and Russia have not entered a new Cold War, the relationship is clearly heading in a less than desirable direction. The post-Soviet relationship is now strained to a degree not seen since the superpower rivalry of the latter half of the twentieth century. The hope for a collaborative and cooperative relationship appears at great risk of re-fracture into sustained confrontation and opposition.

However, as the history of American and Russian relations shows, the two countries have at times cooperated on multiple issues. Even during the Soviet era, the two countries cooperated extensively to defeat the Axis powers and worked to restrain the proliferation of nuclear weapons. While these cooperative efforts were not the product of shared political values and moralistic principles, they illustrate the fact that even competing powers with marked structural, procedural, cultural-historic, and, at times, ideological differences can find common purpose in service of respective national interests. This is as true today as in previous eras. A return to framing national interests outside the moral prism so characteristic of twentieth century American and Russian relations may help the countries to once again cooperate and partner effectively.

Liberalist and Realist Theories of International Relations

As part of a larger examination of American and Russian interaction, it is important to understand how different theories of international relations provide various perspectives on state action and behavior. Realism and liberalism are the focus here as

both theories offer insights useful to influencing and shaping an overall approach to American and Russian relations. However, whether that approach should primarily emphasize, and thus seek, cooperation or competition is a distinction that requires decision. Constructivism is not part of this examination as it fundamentally revolves around cultural and societal perspectives subject to significant change over time. The systemic aspects of the realist and liberalist conceptual models are less temporal by nature and thus are more useful, though imperfect, for shaping long-term policies and actions.

Realism hinges on self-interest and power politics. "Realism presumes that the nation-state is the primary actor in the international system, that it will act rationally and as a unitary actor, that states are sovereign entities with sole responsibility to act within their borders, and that they will act to maximize their power."⁶ Through the realist lens, both America and Russia seek to accumulate power in order to more successfully secure their interests. The paradigm further holds that states will struggle with each other for power and that such conflict is in fact inevitable.⁷ Neorealism, or structural realism, goes on to stress that systemic principles dominate and "...that power within the international system will vary, and that states will seek to balance that distribution of power."⁸ In this nuanced realist approach, the system, more than the individual states themselves, is key. In either case, states and the system in which they exist are defined competitively and in a zero-sum game. The growth of power by one (or an allied group) is offset by the loss of power by another or a competing group. Realists see state relations, not to mention the international system of states, as an intrinsically competitive arena. Realists recognize mutual interest and potential cooperation but see

it as a transitory and self-interest dominated action meant to balance a greater power somewhere else. This cooperation makes sense until the individual state can seize a future opportunity to unilaterally acquire more power and divest itself of complicating group dynamics. The realist and neorealist views accurately describe much of the relational approach between the United States and the Soviet Union during their necessary cooperation in World War II and in the Cold War ideological struggle that evolved after the defeat of the German and Japanese Axis powers. Cooperative efforts in this period were temporary in nature while both America and Russia were locked in an unlimited war against other hostile great powers. When that threat was defeated, America and Russia almost immediately parted company and began a half century of direct and indirect opposition. America's strategy of containment as articulated by George Kennan in National Security Council Memorandum # 68 became the heavily realist inspired Cold War approach to erode Russian and Soviet power while increasing American power and global influence. Nearly all relations were contrived in terms of competition and opposition with little common interest beyond nuclear non-proliferation since the spread of such weapons would tend to decrease both states' power in the post-World War II environment.

In contrast to realism's focus on self-interest and hard power politics, the liberalist theory of international relations includes economic, political, and institutional elements as key determiners of state behavior. It "...relies heavily on the confluence of economics and politics in its belief that everyone and all states will benefit from the flourishing of free markets and open exchange of ideas....[and] is tied heavily to a belief in the importance of both capitalism and democracy, and the notion that free trade will create

interdependence among states that will result in greater benefit for all.”⁹ Additionally, liberalism posits that these interdependent dynamics lessen the likelihood of state conflict by tying the interests of individual states to the interests of other states in the system. Liberalism recognizes the importance of individual actors within states and, unlike realism, draws upon a fundamental assumption that “...human beings are basically moral and good.”¹⁰ Taken together, liberalism advances the idea that a generally positive human nature coupled with the growing interdependencies of an increasingly globalized and networked world of self-determination, free will, economic ties, and readily accessible information tends to highlight the importance of cooperation and collective security over unilateral action rooted in narrow definitions of state self-interest. Neoliberalism, a more nuanced approach like neorealism, further recognizes the importance of non-state actors in international relations and postulates that “...even in an international system without a single central authority, states will work together cooperatively because it is in their best interest to do so....[that] security can best be achieved through the emergence of agreements, enhanced trade, and other cooperative ventures that will benefit all states involved.”¹¹ Furthermore, neoliberal institutionalism, an additional offshoot of neoliberalism, maintains that “...security and cooperation can best be achieved through the creation of international *institutions* [original emphasis]....[and] that these institutions, which states enter into voluntarily, provide the framework for cooperative and peaceful interaction even in an anarchic international system.”¹² These institutions stabilize behaviors through providing continuity, offering reciprocity, acting as information channels, and providing means, structures, and processes to resolve differences.¹³ Liberalism hinges on state and non-

state actors, as well as, individual perceptions that a growing interdependent world where traditional sovereign borders are continually marginalized by networks of complex and multi-vectored interaction offers greater advantage through cooperative effort than going it alone. Liberalism does not reject the idea or importance of power; rather, it sees power applied in more varied forms than the traditional military power on which realists focus. The liberalist view struggles mightily to explain American and Soviet relations in the post-World War II environment. Through the establishment of global institutions like the United Nations and processes like the Bretton Woods system of economic and monetary initiatives, the modern interconnected and ever-globalizing world had key and critical liberal foundations set. However, the ideological nature of the struggle between the American-led, democratically and capitalist inspired West and the authoritarian and communist Soviet Union led to a strict delineation of camps that did not share the same system. America with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Soviet Union with its Warsaw Pact were never truly part of the same system. While they shared the international venue of the United Nations, they lived in separate economic, monetary, social, and informational worlds. This observation, with its related second and third order effects, helps to explain why the post-World War II period saw American and Soviet relations dominated by realist interpretations of behavior and action. The cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships and advantages encouraged by a liberalist system could not effectively engage when the participants were so parochial in their individual system designs. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the following demise of the Warsaw Pact erased this alternative system and presented the opportunity for a liberalist inspired approach to American and, now, Russian relations to

begin anew. However, as described earlier, this opportunity was not without difficulty and challenge and was not fully realized. Over time and through this window of opportunity, there were fits and starts and progress was made. But the fact that there was no longer a complete alternative system to choose from did not eliminate the reality that both countries still had a variety of interests that were not always aligned. The liberalist view recognizes that states have differing interests of varying intensities. However, it maintains that these differences are likely to be less numerous and less intense for states acting in a unified system. There is a greater degree of system commonality between the United States and Russia today than during the Cold War years. The key to better and more productive relations with Russia lies in enhancing these system commonalities and focusing relations on the many shared interests offered via this commonality. Differences in American and Russian interests will continue to exist and must be managed but they should not preclude the many cooperative opportunities that are present.

The current struggle to define an appropriate approach to American and Russian relations must recognize that the realist and liberalist theories are not mutually exclusive. Trying to choose a single view to guide one's own behavior and actions in order to attain one's interests is a futile endeavor. Likewise, trying to ascribe a singular view to explain another state's actions and intent is fraught with error. Instead, realism and liberalism are lenses through which relations and interactions can be viewed, not rigid structures that preclude blended or multi-avenue approaches. In fact, a balanced approach accounting for interdependence and globalization coupled with acknowledgment of realist power politics is the needed solution.

The future approach to America's relations with Russia should rely heavily on a firm and steadfast commitment to the view that liberalist globalization and market trends will further promote moderation of Russian behavior in the international system. Key to such an approach is increased involvement of Russia in international structures, processes, dialogues, and mechanisms. To facilitate desired change and reform in Russia, America and the Western world must maximize wherever possible its engagements with Russia. Pulling Russia toward the West through moral lecturing on the desirability of universal values has not worked to date. Compelling, threatening, or forcing Russia toward the West through militaristic power politics is not feasible and frighteningly dangerous. Instead, America and the West must identify opportunities to include Russia in future cooperative efforts while maintaining a healthy respect for the realist lens with regard to differences. Taken together, this will aid the future approach from neglecting real differences when considering the potential confluence of American and Russian interests and aid in targeting those areas that are most appropriate for sustained engagement and involvement.

In order to identify these potential areas of cooperation and friction, it is necessary to analyze the key interests of both states. While there are American and Russian interests that diverge significantly, there are numerous issues of common interest to both states. These potential cooperative interests are not often identical and defined the same way, but they do exist and transcend the pure realist approach of zero sum power politics.

In Search of Cooperative Opportunity

Generally and broadly stated, core American national security interests include: support for democracy and self-determination; transparent political structures; capitalist

economic vibrancy and free trade; maintenance of international norms, rules, and processes; peaceful and diplomatic resolution of differences; unimpeded access to global commons; and international stability. As core American interests, they are drawn from the very fabric of the American system and philosophy. They stem from our earliest days and originate in great part from our founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. They populate key strategic policies like the national security and national defense strategies. They act as general signposts for American strategic approaches to nearly any issue.

Russian core interests, and again in a broad sense, generally include: the acquisition and maintenance of strategic depth to mitigate a historically vulnerable geographic position¹⁴; international and Western recognition of Russia as a continuing major-great power with the respective standing and international clout¹⁵; a desire for a sphere of influence along the Russian periphery and in post-Soviet space¹⁶; economic prosperity and international-regional influence as an energy superpower¹⁷; and promotion of multipolarity to balance post-Cold War American dominance and power¹⁸.

In these broad, core American and Russian interests, there are both tensions and synergies. Russia's recent choices to use force to satisfy desires for strategic depth and special interest along its boundaries in Georgia and the Ukraine have conflicted with America's interest in international stability and the systemic norms, rules, and processes that help maintain such stability. Similarly, Russia's support to the Assad regime in Syria is concerning as it generally conflicts with America's desire to see authoritarian and repressive governments transition to representative political systems committed to human rights and restrained behavior.

However, as much as there are competing interests between America and Russia, there are also shared interests that would mutually benefit from collaboration and cooperation. Such interests include: "...combatting the threat of global terrorism, containing Islamic radicalism, restricting nuclear proliferation, developing the petrochemical resources of Central Asia and the Caucasus, [and] addressing climate change...."¹⁹ Additional common interests may include cooperative development of the Russian Far East to offset growing Chinese influence and power accumulation²⁰, cyber cooperation to develop norms and rules of behavior²¹, and Arctic development to better posture both states to capitalize on potential trade routes and resources becoming available with the retreat of ice caps.²²

To better narrow and understand potential areas of cooperative effort, America's desires vis-à-vis Russia's role in the international system must be understood. America wants to promote Russian maturation and development in the modern system as an engaged and responsible state actor that works within established international norms and processes; further integrates into existing economic and financial structures; acts as a balance to growing Chinese influence in Asia; cooperates globally (and regionally) to resolve common issues; recognizes the legitimacy of sovereign territory; and continues on a journey to greater political and social transparency with more meaningful democratic and capitalist reform. How best to accomplish this is the question.

The Way Forward

America's approach to redefining relations with Russia must stem from a realization that the brief period of American unipolarity experienced after the end of the Cold War is rapidly coming to an end. Russia's economic upturn in the first decade of the 2000's, built heavily on the sale of oil and natural gas to Europe for hard cash,

enabled a much more dynamic post-Soviet Russian foreign policy than in the lean years immediately after Soviet dissolution. “In the years after Putin came to power, Russia experienced an economic resurgence, fueled by high oil prices and effective macroeconomic and fiscal policies. As the first decade of the twenty-first century wore on, the United States found itself dealing with two different Russias, the political and the economic. The political Russia pursued a more assertive foreign policy while...economically rising Russia added a new, more complex dimension to the U.S.-Russian relationship.”²³ Even though Russia suffered economic setbacks in the global recession of 2008, it still maintained improved economic clout and influence relative to the years immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union. “...Russia...responded quickly and effectively to the financial crisis, and in the medium-term it weathered the crisis better than many other countries and was in a much better position to survive the storm than it had been a decade earlier in 1998.”²⁴ Fluctuations in the prices of global energy commodities continue to have an ebb and flow effect on Russian means, but there is little doubt that Russia has significantly used its energy largesse to climb back onto the world stage.

In addition to a resurgent Russia, the rise of China is evidence of a world quickly becoming more multipolar than in the late 1990s. This reality demands an adjustment of American foreign policy style and argues for greater use of soft, smart, and sticky power as opposed to what many have considered an over reliance on hard power during the post-Cold War period, particularly after Al Qaeda’s attacks on September 11, 2001. Even “...allies of the United States, such as France and Germany, talk openly of the emergence of a more multipolar world not as an outcome to be avoided, but as one...to

which the United States should adapt. There is no desire now to return to a new period of US hegemony....”²⁵ With regard to Russian relations in particular, a highly nuanced and considered policy that effectively employs all instruments of national power but favors economic, diplomatic, and information over military power is necessary. This is not an argument for a weaker foreign policy, rather it is an argument for a highly thoughtful and long term approach that maximizes economic interconnectedness and diplomatic interaction to generate lasting connectivity. “Despite moments of deliberate or accidental US heavy-handedness....allies might wish that the United States were wiser, but they rarely have wished it to be weaker.”²⁶ America’s ability to compel Russia with hard power is limited at best. An approach that blends judicious use of soft power with rare and closely calculated use of military or economic hard power will best produce smart power. This, in addition to encouraging and fostering the economic interconnectedness of the ever-globalizing world to generate sticky power, best serves the American aim to further encourage and facilitate Russia’s incorporation into the modern world system. In a relationship with a peer competitor in possession of a massive nuclear arsenal, hard power’s ability to compel and induce are less useful than soft power’s ability to attract and co-opt. As the common witticism states, honey captures more flies than vinegar. In Joseph Nye’s classic three-dimensional chess example involving military, economic, and transnational issues, “...many political leaders still focus almost entirely on military assets and classic military solutions—the top board. They mistake the necessary for the sufficient. They are one-dimensional players in a three-dimensional game. In the long term, that is the way to lose....”²⁷

The liberalist view of an interconnected system where states get mutual benefit from cooperation rests on the commonality of system processes and linkages vice a single, dominant state power. What is of importance is accepting the system. As Russia continues to modernize and as the information age and its associated technologies continue to work toward greater transparency and sharing of information, Russian reliance on being a part of the world's system will only grow in importance in order to achieve its goals of economic prosperity and international standing. Increased multipolarity in the ever globalizing and interconnected world in many ways means an increased role and stake in seeing that system succeed. American actions or efforts to directly oppose or prevent increasing wealth and or power in world actors runs contrary to the liberalist view that an efficient and effective internationally connected system is in fact working to the benefit of all. America should strive to maximize the benefits this system allows for the United States without opposing the right of other states to seek such benefits as well. The critical consideration lies in how states act to accumulate these benefits. If they are within the processes and norms of the system then they are fair game. Promoting such activities with Russia is crucial as the more the world system can support achievement of Russian desires and interests within these rules the less likely Russia is to act counter to the conduct of the system, and the interests of the other states in the system.

Additionally, the approach to American and Russian relations must minimize competition and opposition as much as possible without abandoning American values and principles or regional and international allies and partners. To accomplish this, America and Russia must strike a difficult balance between no further expansion of

NATO into the Russian periphery with Russian respect for the territorial and political sovereignty of other nations. This will be particularly difficult to navigate in Georgia given America's historical aid and Georgian contributions supporting U.S. policies and actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, America must restrain from contributing to offensive Georgian capabilities that could threaten Russian interests in the region while asserting the right to assist a fellow sovereign nation's efforts to mature its ability to defend itself, develop democratically, and seek economic prosperity. With regard to Russian intrusions in Ukraine, this balance is even more delicate. Yet it must be struck. The key lies in achieving an effective balance between Russian, Ukrainian, European, American, and international interests. Balance implies compromise in this context. Creating a clear off-ramp strategy for removal of economic sanctions against Russia for annexing Crimea and providing military support to separatists in eastern Ukraine is extremely important as sanctions act as barriers to the desired commercial linkages with Russia. Such an off-ramp strategy must include diplomatic efforts to secure internationally acceptable, verifiable, and enforceable commitments that preclude further Russian aggressive expansion. America and the European Union should diplomatically work to broker an international agreement with both the Ukrainian and Russian governments. The agreement should mandate Russian compensation to Ukraine for acquisition of Crimea (fait accompli at this point), end Russian military support to other Ukrainian separatists, physically remove Russian forces and equipment (regular or irregular) from Ukraine, allow Western military assistance to enhance Ukrainian self-defense capabilities, allow a structured emigration of ethnic Russians out of Ukraine and into Russia proper, incorporate a multinational United Nations

peacekeeping presence to assist in monitoring, verifying, and enforcing the agreement, and include a public Russian commitment to no further territorial expansion via force of arms. Such an agreement involves compromise on all sides and thus is not a perfect solution for any party. However, it reinforces a systemic resolution of the issue and limits the likelihood of further Russian action in violation of international norms and processes. Ukrainian agreement to such a strategy should result in increased economic foreign aid and development. Russian concurrence should result in the phase-out of current sanctions via a scheduled, stair-step timeline that coincides with Russian implementation of the agreement. Similarly, diplomatic efforts must also work to secure Russian commitments to the territorial and political sovereignty of other border nations to include the Baltic states, newly emerged Central Asian states, and with regard to ongoing disputes in the Pacific with Japan. Such agreements and commitments, if forthcoming, should then be rewarded with Russia's reintroduction to international leadership bodies like the G7 and inclusion in favorable economic agreements like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

As for European security writ large, America must continue to stand with European allies and partners in collective defense of European democracy and capitalism while continuing to shift primacy of leadership and support for this role to European leaders and institutions. The U.S. must encourage diversification of European energy sources to the continent while recognizing Russia's reliance on European markets for economic stability and development. Efforts to promote the diversification of Russia's economy away from over reliance on oil and gas revenues must recognize the reality of Russia's abundant resources in this regard and the high demand for these

commodities. Potential further investment and cooperative ventures to develop Siberian mineral wealth and infrastructure, information technologies, manufacturing, and agricultural exports could aid this diversification. Taken together, these efforts could help lessen the likelihood and severity of Russia's use of energy as a hard power tool of foreign policy while promoting European resilience to such efforts. This should also help better integrate Russia into the global economic system and produce greater stability through mutual interest. These actions would also decrease the current Russian impetus for establishing and participating in a separate system to the Bretton Woods process with other developing countries and thus lessen the likelihood of conflict or severe opposition. Competition within a common system is not bad; opposition and conflict through illegitimate means or retreat and isolation via an alternate system is to be avoided.

To accomplish this American-Russian relational approach, the United States must continue to invest in robust global military power projection forces coupled with a limited forward presence in Europe. Additionally, strategic and tactical nuclear deterrence must be maintained. Military to military engagements with Russia should be encouraged in areas such as developing cyber norms for conflict and in continued efforts to combat radical extremism, nuclear proliferation, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Traditional multinational military co-training opportunities should be sought in the Pacific. Given the residual effect of former Soviet occupations in Europe and Central Asia, as well as recent Russian behavior in Georgia and Ukraine, large Pacific training venues such as Cobra Gold in Thailand and Rim of the Pacific exercises should be mined for opportunities to increase interactions with Russian observers and

forces. Increased exposure to one another and our associated partners helps promote greater understanding and integration.

America's lack of a capable and effective strategic information coordinator and overseer, as once resident in the US Information Agency, needs enhancement. Either the State Department's ability to do this function should increase or a separate and independent department should be re-established. Russia's current less-than transparent political and information system presents a challenge to other nations communicating effectively with Russia. The observed Russian tendency to manipulate basic facts and stymie international efforts to use public diplomacy requires a robust, centralized effort to wield effective informational power with Russia. Reinvigorating America's information instrument of power is a wise investment in soft power that can be used to better shape relations with Russia and work in concert with the other instruments of national power to achieve synchronized results.

Diplomatically, the United States should continue emphasis on revitalizing and investing in Russian, Central Asian, and Russian Far East expertise. America must continue to grow and maintain diplomatic engagements with European allies and partners while also continuing to develop relations with former Soviet Central Asian states. In Central Asia, it is critical that American engagements refrain from military activities that might threaten Russian interests or support any appearance of Russian encirclement or containment. Additionally, the United States should be reserved and cautious in its advocacy of democracy and human rights in these former Soviet republics in order to not alienate them or seem supportive of regime change.

Economically, the United States must heavily encourage American and international investment in developing the hydrocarbon reserves in Central Asia and the Russian Far East for market. Investors are understandably concerned with the current state of Russian rule of law and property rights and it may be necessary to implement some incentive basis to offset their potential risk. Energy developments with Russia should include balanced interest in the Russian Far East and the former Soviet Central Asian republics. Whereas developments in Russia's Far East may reinforce Russia's ability to use energy for international leverage, the development of Central Asian resources routed outside Russian territory should help offset the impact of this tendency. While this may seem counter-productive to diversifying Russia's current petrochemical economy, it simply is recognition that Russia has vast hydrocarbon wealth that cannot be ignored. Trading aid and investment to develop Russian Far East deposits for less Russian opposition to the routing of alternative reserves to traditional Russian customers seems a possibility. New Russian Far East deposits aimed at meeting China's insatiable demand for energy will help diversify Russia's clientele while any ability to route non-Russian energy sources to Europe helps lessen European reliance on Russia. Identifying cooperative American and Russian economic opportunities in the Arctic for infrastructure, transportation, and commerce development can aid the diversification of the Russian economy as well. Any increased diversification resulting from these efforts as well as the potential to secure favorable loans from the current economic and monetary system can help better integrate Russia into the existing system and help dilute Russia's enthusiasm for an alternative model.

This approach to American and Russian relations is feasible in that the United States has or can secure the means to achieve the desired objectives. The approach will be financially costly but this can be partially offset by European Union and NATO cost sharing. The financial costs associated with increased foreign aid and development in Ukraine, Georgia, and other former Soviet territories; more robust and diversified investments in Russia's economy; and the continued development and maintenance of adequate military deterrence equates to continued significant monetary commitments in the future. However, this soft, smart, and sticky power approach will be no more expensive than drastic increases in military expenditures needed by a hard power strategy. And given the potential existential threat of Russian nuclear capabilities, hard power means are much less likely to be employable, and therefore useful, no matter how great their quantity or quality. Additionally, the United States and the European Union possess two of the very largest economies on the planet and thus are extremely capable instruments of power for initiating and sustaining investments crafted to attain desired objectives. The approach is acceptable in that coincides with traditional American core interests and values as well as international norms and rules. It will strain relations and increase anxiety in some Eastern European and former Soviet bloc countries but it tries to offset such concerns with the use of effective soft and smart power applications to achieve long term stability with Russia across European, Eurasian, and Pacific fronts. This approach requires a long-term view and is certainly subject to Russian willingness to participate, but in the end, promises great potential to cooperatively and peacefully change the nature of current American, European, and international relations with Russia by fostering a global partner vice a global opponent.

Coercion and attraction is the key vice use of more compelling ways. The approach is also suitable. It supports attainment of desired American interests, or objectives, with regard to Russia and offers a reasonable probability of maximizing cooperation and interconnectedness while minimizing the likelihood, frequency, and level of risk inherent in opposition. The risks to this approach include potential alienation of partners in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, potential for Russian perceptions of American weakness by emphasizing soft over hard power, and the possible loss of primacy and control over the European security narrative. These risks require mitigation through close diplomatic and information cooperation with partners and Russia as well as effective and meaningful soft power enhancements and maintenance of critical hard power capabilities.

Conclusion

Neither a purely realist or liberalist lens will sufficiently inform and guide future American-Russian relations toward a more cooperative effort. Realism does not adequately take into consideration the growing interdependence of a globalizing world and the cooperative advantage frequently generated by such interaction; liberalism does not sufficiently explain Russian power politics in Georgia, Crimea, and eastern Ukraine. However, blended together, the two prisms enable a broader conceptualization of American-Russian relations. Liberalist views and actions can help provide the desired information exchanges, robust economic and financial ties, and recognition of Russian historical contributions and future potential as a continuing major power in the international system. Realist perceptions and actions can help American, European, and international efforts to determine and communicate clear redlines with regard to Russian desires for increased influence and depth on their periphery. Most importantly,

actions that isolate Russia from America, the West, and the international system will only exacerbate friction and potential conflict. Continued focus on a liberalist inspired approach fused with elements of realism will help inform and shape future American and Russian relations and position them for significant improvement over the current state of distrust and suspicion. This will, in turn, better position both America and Russia, as well as the international system, to cooperate in multiple areas to mutual benefit.

Endnotes

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