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Cultural Dialogue in International Security: The Case of Russia and the Euro-Atlantic Community

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CHATHAM HOUSE

In collaboration with the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House

With the generous support of the Yeltsin Presidential Center

On the fifteenth anniversary of the 1997 Russia-NATO Founding Act

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Cultural Dialogue in International Security: The Case of Russia and the Euro-Atlantic Community

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Introduction

In November 2012, on the fifteenth anniversary of the 1997 Russia-NATO Founding Act, and with the support of the Yeltsin Presidential Center, thirty-five leaders from the diplomatic corps, defense communities, academia, think-tanks, media, and international organizations across Europe, North America, and Russia came together at Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg to explore the cultural values, concepts, and mind-sets which underlie the relationship between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic Community and which fashion mutual understandings – or misunderstandings.

Our purpose was to identify ways in which dialogue between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic Community could be enhanced, or, at least, approached with greater awareness of its fundamental premises. This discussion was part of a global project which has been undertaken by one of our partners for the seminar, the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House, on Cultural Dialogue in International Security. It drew on the efforts of the Yeltsin Presidential Center and the Yeltsin Foundation to promote a more nuanced version of Russian culture and history both at home and abroad. And it was a seminar which tapped very directly into the historic mission and practice of SGS, from its founding purpose in 1947 in re-building intellectual bridges across Europe and North America, to its work in the 1990s and beyond in healing divisions left by the Cold War. Our meeting in November was a reminder that there has been no ‘end of history’, that intellectual bridge-building and the exploration of differing values as well as interests remain as important and urgent as ever.

“There has been no ‘end of history’... intellectual bridge-building and the exploration of differing values as well as interests remain as important and urgent as ever”



The Brandon Lecture was named in memory of Henry Brandon, a great supporter of the Salzburg Global Seminar, who was a Czech-born journalist known for his transatlantic focus and enthusiasm for civil society.

The Henry Brandon Memorial Lecture 2012: How can we best enhance relations between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community?

Wolfgang Schüssel

Austrian Chancellor 2000 to 2007; Board Member, DER-Dialog-Europe-Russia, Vienna, Austria

Key Points and Suggestions

- Starkly contrasting common views of Russia's future see it with either a diminished global role or strong economic potential.
- New forums for international engagement (the WTO, OECD, and G20) could be opportunities for Russia to make long-term improvements.
- Relations with the EU, especially the 1997 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the current visa regime with the Schengen zone, receive too little attention or resources.
- Modeled on the experiences of the OSCE and European Economic Area, trust-building initiatives are needed to develop cooperation on common interests between Russia, the USA, the EU and countries in the Middle East and nations of the former Soviet Union.

Wolfgang Schüssel, Austrian Chancellor from 2000 to 2007, and the 2012 Brandon Lecturer, began by outlining two starkly contrasting but potentially valid views of the Russian Federation: Russia's step down from a global to a regional player, and the Russia of great potential.

<i>Russia's likely decline is based on its...</i>	<i>Russia's great potential lies in its...</i>
• Slowing economy • Economy tied to carbon and decreasing oil price • Lack of overall economic diversity • Massive flight of investment • Large account surplus to sink to deficit by 2015 • Population shrinking • 10-20% of population want to emigrate	• Growth projected at 4% (fastest rate in Europe) and consumer confidence is up • Enormous potential for additional carbon wealth • Impressive educational and research facilities • Only BRIC country with substantial middle class • Holds over \$500 billion in hard currency reserves • Mortality rose from 57 to 63 in the past decade • Largest population in Europe



Former Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel delivers the annual Henry Brandon Memorial Lecture in Parker Hall

International cooperation with Russia could play a key role in helping to foster the more benign of these scenarios:

- Russia's new membership in the WTO and OECD can help improve transparency, reduce corruption, and establish new legal standards.
- As upcoming chair of the G20, Russia could concentrate on developing projects of long term significance such as infrastructure, energy, and research and development.
- The 1997 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the basis for relations with the European Union, needs renewal and both sides should promote cultural dialogue to encourage this. The amount currently budgeted by the EU to this end is a mere €500,000.
- The current visa regime with the Schengen area must also be improved.
- Reforms are also needed in Russia but they must originate from inside Russia itself. The country has typically seen change as a top-down process, but in a country of its size, this cannot be the formula for the future. This is understood in Russia but it is the energy and results that are lacking.

Engaging with Russia in policy development has been difficult and sometimes unsuccessful depending on issues around values and interests. Boris Yeltsin's attempts to link Russia more closely to the West were ultimately left unfulfilled. Presidents Obama and Medvedev famously tried to 're-set' relations and gave START negotiations another chance. Though there has been a notable warming of relations, the success of this strategy should not be overstated. The missile defense issue is still especially touchy and the high level of trust needed for a resolution is currently lacking on both sides.

Closer relations with Europe and the USA are in Russia's interests, but, as issues from regime change in Syria to the promotion of human rights show, strengthening this partnership is certainly in the interests of the West as well. If anything will hold back this relationship it will be the tendency on the part of all parties to 'navel-gaze', i.e. to focus entirely on issues of domestic import and either neglect or fail to risk the necessary political capital to engage internationally.

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“We suffer blowback: the tendency for our actions intended to mitigate risk and threats today to cause future risk for our descendants,”

World of Risks, Competing Mindsets

We next discussed a fundamental shift in the way that international security is now perceived in general, with risk rather than threats at its core, making cultural dialogue both more important and more difficult.

Key Points and Suggestions

- Risks are unseen, unimagined, unknown, and unexpected. Therefore,
- Fear is a major factor in dealing with them and
- Overreaction is common. Due to this (and other factors),
- We suffer ‘blowback,’ the tendency for our actions intended to mitigate risk and threats today to cause future risk for our descendants.

The concept of security was at one point based on counts of things like nuclear and conventional forces. Combined with the concept of deterrence, this made us feel safe. In the face of today’s risks though, such deterrence is impossible. We can hardly interrogate suicide bombers or deter their efforts by the show of our strength since it is precisely this strength that incenses them. This is a problem which Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community have in common.

Rather than relying on experts alone in such a world of cascading effects and unintentionality, dialogue becomes extremely important for risk management. We need dialogue not to come to agreement but to improve our respective decision making processes that are often unthinking and culturally biased. Our perspectives create our narratives about the world and the risks in it, and we anchor our thoughts in our own culture.



The Prism of Literature: New Russian Writers

Unusually for a discussion of international relations, we also reviewed the cultural characteristics which underpin, or may obstruct, the understandings which underlie co-operation. The stimulus for this was the first public showing of the documentary, *The New Russian Writers*, followed by an interview with its directors. The film, sponsored by the Yeltsin Foundation and set to be released in the USA on the PBS network, discussed the works of six contemporary Russian authors (Zakhar Prilepin, Dmitry Bykov, Lyudmila Ulitskaya, Anna Starobinets, Mariam Petrosyan, and Vladimir Sorokin) and introduced both their works and the context from which those works arose. They illustrated creatively many of the stresses and dilemmas in national identity and social relations arising from the rapid and disorienting changes in Russia in the last 20 years. An understanding of a country's imaginary, its literary preoccupations, can be a way to appreciate more fully the values, concepts and mind-sets which underlie the play of interests.

Afghanistan in Russia-West Relations: Approaching 2014

Key Points and Suggestions

- After the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan, the USA will likely remain the strongest foreign influence in the country. Russia's role there, driven primarily by construction contracts awarded through the government sector, will be relatively modest.
- Russia's security concerns in the region over narcotics trafficking and spill-over instability are overshadowed by suspicion of the NATO presence there.
- Cooperation on common interests such as counter-narcotics and money laundering could serve to build bilateral trust.

In terms of the weight of history, on states and imaginations, Afghanistan in recent decades has had a profound effect on both Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community, and was the first of our case studies in problems faced, and the issues they give rise to, in international relations.

As the greatest military concern in the region, the conflict in Afghanistan, including the coming draw-down of foreign forces there and the absence of a political settlement, gives rise to a number of differences between Russia and the United States. This has been especially true since the US made clear its hopes that other countries in the region would help support stability there. These states, though, are primarily nervous about the consequences the pull out will have for them. The speaker proposed that for this and other reasons, the USA would remain a major

“ In terms of the weight of history, on states and imaginations, Afghanistan in recent decades has had a profound effect on both Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community ,”

“The opiate problem is an example of an area in which cooperation between the USA and Russia has the potential to be fruitful. But there needs to be considerable work done to enlarge the area of understanding ”

power in the region, even after its troop withdrawal, but she foresaw a set of three tiers of additional groups of states, immediate neighbours, countries in the broader region, and multilateral groups.

Russia is a second tier country in this context and as such her role is not negligible but limited. However, Russia does have genuine security concerns in Afghanistan, especially in counter-narcotics and the general spill-over of instability, but these are outweighed by suspicion of US and NATO power in the region. This may have spurred Russia's own action in the region which has included building hydroelectric and other energy infrastructure as well as military investment in Kyrgyzstan.

The opiate problem on the other hand, is an example of an area in which cooperation between the USA and Russia has the potential to be fruitful. But there needs to be considerable work done to enlarge the area of understanding. Because the increase in opium production came during NATO operations, there is a misperception in some camps that the increase is due to the NATO occupation. Also Russia is overwhelmed by Afghan heroin whereas European drug markets are more diversified and the US is not directly threatened (though Afghanistan dominates Canada's heroin market). However, these differences do not preclude some convergence. Money laundering is a global problem and there are obvious links to global organized crime. Cooperation on these issues has helped build trust in the transatlantic relationship, and can continue to do so.



Counter-Terrorism: Room for Improvement in Jointly Managing Risks

Key Points and Suggestions

- The lack of a clear definition of terrorism along with US/UK-centric popular usage of the term has led to friction between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community about how to address the threats posed by such non-state forces.
- Having itself become the target of terrorism in recent years, the USA (and the West more generally) has found itself in the difficult position of wanting to promote high moral standards while also desiring flexibility to deal quickly and assertively with such attacks.

The discussion of counter-terrorism followed closely on a number of themes begun in the case study of Afghanistan. Beginning with a question about how ‘terrorists’ are perceived differently in different locales, it was pointed out that historically the classic distinction between ‘terrorist’ and ‘freedom fighter’ was made from the perspective of UK and US authors. This has given rise to great scope for cross purposes between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community during ‘the War on Terror’.

In promoting its own counter-terrorist goals, Russia understood the need to share sensitive info with the West. The Federal Security Service (FSB) does have an International Office, but to date it has only had one (unsuccessful) instance of cooperation with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, connected with the 2005 attack on the city of Nalchik in Kabardino-Balkaria in Southern Russia. Today Russian security cooperation consists primarily of requests for extradition of Chechens living abroad.

The question of values and norms is raised sharply in the context of terrorism. For years the West has criticized other states for their dealing harshly with those internal opponents whom they termed terrorists. Today the West finds itself in the same difficult situation and is struggling with questions of how to implement the cosmopolitan and deontological standards it has typically promoted. As one participant pointed out, while no one doubts the difficulty of having to make these moral decisions, the West needs to be more careful in its actions to avoid undermining its credibility. As an example of what appeared to be more hypocrisy than moral uncertainty, it was pointed out that the US decried the potential use of drones as assassination tools as abhorrent only months before putting them to precisely this use.

In this discussion a crucial theme emerged – that there are trade-offs for each side, and unresolved ambivalences in understandings and in values in their interplay with interests, rather than clearly defined, enduring value sets. For instance, Russia needs NATO to counter Taliban influence in what it sees as its region but is uncomfortable having the US in that region. At the same time, the US does not want to be entangled in Central Asia but feels the need to maintain a geopolitical presence there to protect its interests.

“For years the West has criticized other states for their dealing harshly with those internal opponents whom they termed terrorists. Today the West finds itself in the same difficult situation,,

“Iranians think pro-Western governments in the region will eventually fall, either by the ballot or the bullet ”

Cooperation with Syria and Iran: Balancing Short Term Manoeuvring and Longer Term Risks

Key Points and Suggestions

- Iran’s strategic vision of relations in the Middle East is based on its expectation of political Islam’s victory over current regimes. The course of Arab Spring justified this vision in Iranian eyes up until the outbreak of civil war in Syria.
- The current stalemate between the West and Russia (with China) over action in Syria, masks the fact that neither side wants to intervene there. Instead, a new constellation of countries such as Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and even Iran might step in to help negotiate a cessation of the violence there.
- Though formally accepted by both countries, objections by Russia and China to the use of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine in Libya showed how contentious its implementation remains.

In looking at case studies where co-operation is both desirable and problematic, we also examined the current conflict in Syria and the continued pressure resulting from relations with Iran. We began with a discussion of Iran’s strategic vision on the region, then the Syrian stalemate, and then a potential way out.

Iran has published widely on their strategic vision, but to get a valid understanding of this, one must interpret a great deal from the constitution, debates in Tehran, and statements from the Supreme Leader. The biggest problem with this vision is its implicit anti-imperialist nature. Iranians do think pro-Western governments in the region will eventually fall either by the ballot or the bullet. Some of this is based on materialist reasons, but more is based on what they see as an untenable cultural rift between pro-western elites and the rest of the population who will more strongly support political Islam. Iran therefore expects greater pressure



on world leaders to renegotiate contracts regarding military presence in the region. There are then similarities and differences in the way this plays out in the triangulation with Russia and the Euro-Atlantic countries, intensely so given the Iranian push for nuclear technology.

In connection with Syria, the potential way out of the current stalemate depends on the objectives for the region as a whole. The West likely wants to diminish Iranian influence in the region without destabilizing the footholds they already have. At the same time, however, no one wants to send troops into Syria due to the military difficulties involved. Instead, they have the excuse of blaming Russia (and China) for their vetoes holding back progress. One potential way forward could be to allow Turkey to play the larger role it desires in the region. The West simply cannot handle this problem on its own, with or without the UN, let alone given Russia's continuing investment in the Assad regime. And misunderstanding may be complicating the situation further. One view was that while Russia is a strategic partner of Syria, it is also very reluctant to project power. The story in the West, however, is that Iran, Russia, and China back Syria. Though this is far too simplistic, it was asserted, such a narrative could become a self-fulfilling policy.

The following debate around the role that Russia might play in both these situations reviewed the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine and the betrayal that Russia (and China) felt had happened when this was invoked in the case of Libya. Russia fears that R2P in fact walks over international law and national sovereignty. Though R2P was formally agreed upon in 2005, its practical implementation is still hotly debated. Libya was seen as a test case for R2P but one that perhaps went too far for its own good, making it unlikely that it will be used again anytime soon. It looks like an outstanding case where much more work in the area of cultural dialogue was necessary preparatory to any further implementation of the R2P doctrine.

“The escalating inequalities of life between the rich and the poor, and the increasing connectivity of global businesses, make sustainability a macroeconomic topic rather than an isolated discipline of one department in a company”

The Nuclear Issue: How Could Dialogue be More Effective?

Key Points and Suggestions

Despite an Obama era ‘re-set’ and significant scope for progress, nuclear disarmament talks have made little headway since the declaration on a new START treaty.

- Though arguably of limited practical value, ‘new’ and ‘old’ EU members hold divergent view on the symbolic value of hosting US nuclear weapons or missile defence installations.
- Progress on disarmament is being slowed to levels that undermine faith in international institutions to control nuclear proliferation. Current levels of emotion and symbolism seem to be the main blocks of such progress.
- Exchange, both formal and informal, and especially of the younger generation of practitioners, academics, politicians, etc., is needed to create common aims and allow negotiators the opportunity to speak with one another outside their official remits.

“Were the level of emotion and symbolism not present, the current situation could actually be a chance for cooperation between the two in achieving arms reductions. ”

Nuclear disarmament has long been a marker for the status of the transatlantic relationship. A great deal was achieved in the 1980s and 1990s in terms of nuclear disarmament, and both Russia and the United States committed to disarm not only nuclear but also chemical weapons. However, since this agreement there have been high expectations but little actual disarmament. President Obama initially used promising rhetoric on the issue but little action has been seen since 2009. The new START treaty was followed by uncertainty about next steps. The paralysis with regard to nuclear disarmament is a fitting parallel to Russian relations with the US and Europe as a whole.

Interestingly, there are a host of tactical nuclear weapons, left over from the Cold War, that are not needed and could be disposed of quite easily. Holding US weapons on your territory is seen as a proof of the US commitment to European defense and the importance of these countries, but in military terms it is close to meaningless. In the case of ballistic missile defense in parts of Europe, what has been proposed would only take down a very minimal number of nuclear missiles (and nowhere near Russia's full arsenal). The debate over such missiles is not about what would actually work best but rather the relationship between Russia and the US.

Were the level of emotion and symbolism not present, the situation could actually be a chance for cooperation between the two in achieving arms reductions. Instead, today Russia wants to pull out of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program which engaged primarily American contractors to assist with the dismantling of old nuclear facilities. The US provided funds for this project as well. Russia now claims it is not needed and that Russia can take care of such work itself. This move will have consequences for trust.

In NATO there is a rough divide between the old and new members in their stances toward nuclear weapons. Old members are more skeptical about the value of nuclear weapons while new members find them highly desirable. One participant pointed out that although it is not fashionable to talk about divisions in NATO, if nuclear weapons has been the glue that holds NATO together, then perhaps it has already come unstuck. Again, cultural understanding is vital within each side, not just between them.

The question of pressure from within nuclear states, to act on disarmament at a time when the economy seems to be ruling domestic politics around the globe, was raised. It was pointed out that youth, particularly those in the West were not interested in wanting to deal with this issue. While the Russian public is not overly interested they do see external defense as a threat. Thankfully there remain international civil society groups like Global Zero that ensure pressure on this issue is maintained.

Energy: The Key Concern?

Key Points and Suggestions

- The emotional charge surrounding energy (seen as something close to a human right) makes negotiation on its procurement heated.
- The idea of Russia's power being based on energy is worrying for the West but should be of far greater concern to Russia, considering its tenuous hold on the power this resource yields.

We have a dystopian view of energy between the EU and Russia; the fixation in the West is of Russia's power being based on energy. This perception may at some times be helpful to Russian leaders, but at other times it can lead the West to assume that Russia is taking advantage of energy as a weapon. In fact both sides are worried, but the Russians have more to fear. The oil price the Russian state relies on to balance its budget has fallen in the last few years. This is combined with a rising dependence on oil and a lack of economic diversification. The Arctic is perhaps Russia's greatest new opportunity in terms of energy, but Russia needs new resources and partners to get to it. Gas has been geopolitically key in the past but is now also more problematic due to the expected new role of the US as a future gas exporter, questions about the amount of shale gas China might have, and the increased competition in the LNG market. There will likely be a 'golden era for gas' but it is questionable as to whether this will be Russia's gas.

Finally, the use of energy as a weapon is losing its potency. Russia has been pushing for both North Stream and South Stream pipelines into Europe, but Europe is likely a declining market perhaps to be replaced by China. This could be a great match but the Russia-China relationship has been slow to develop, and China has kept its energy imports diverse with only a small percentage coming from Russia. The threat of an

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“A re-start to dialogue was thought to be a real possibility, though some doubted it: ‘for Russia, re-set means maybe you’re ready to accept our terms... Russia has no such re-set button’”

energy cut-off is also a blunt weapon. If customers think a cut-off likely, they will diversify; if not, it carries little strength.

Energy is part of the security state within Russia. FSB connections extend not only into RosNeft but also into GasProm, VnesheTorgBank and other major companies. Even foreign companies like Norway’s Telenor have felt pressure from the FSB. This is an area where cultural dialogue is all too often overwhelmed by a crude assertion of interests.

Possibilities for a Re-set: The Intersection of Values and Interests

Key Points and Suggestions

- Though the West should not compromise its values in relations with Russia’s government, it should also readily admit its shortcomings in upholding these values.
- Increased dialogue between Russia and Euro-Atlantic countries is needed to come to common understandings about interests and values, to increase levels of empathy about the other, and to learn from the other about oneself.

A re-start to dialogue was thought to be a real possibility, though some doubted it: ‘for Russia, re-set means maybe you’re ready to accept our terms... Russia has no such re-set button’. There was little faith that the Putin government had much respect for values such as the rule of law, human rights, and transparency; but the standards set by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Council of Europe, and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development are ones that Russia has subscribed to and that participants thought the West should strictly hold to in its negotiations with Russia. At the same time, many pointed out that



the West should not feign perfection in its living up to these standards itself but instead should be honest in building relations with Russia around accomplishing the fullest possible implementation of those standards. Here the group came to a ‘chicken and egg’ conundrum surrounding Russia’s greater desire for respect and sovereign independence and the West’s expectations of the Putin regime to live up to international standards. Certainly living up to these values would not only be a way of appeasing the West and, more importantly, providing human security for Russians, but it would be a path to securing the respect that Russia so desperately desires. Russia however feels it deserves this respect due to its role as a power in a multipolar world (a point disputed in plenary) independent of its actions in this field.

Greater and more open dialogue was seen as the most promising means to achieving cooperation but, while we do need to understand our partner, we must especially understand limits. It was pointed out that in many ways the West thinks of Russia as what Thomas Friedman called an ‘almost, but not really’ country in which claims to have values in common with those of the West such as democracy, free-market economy, and the rule of law are almost, but not really, practised.

Cultural dialogue is not diplomacy; it not about agreeing on common positions. It is based on the belief that others have historical experiences that are worth listening to and perhaps even using as a lens to observe ourselves as well as our interlocutors. We need dialogue is to be able to make better decisions for ourselves as well as for the common good. Humans are unique as a species in being able to lie to ourselves, an ability that causes much of the harm that befalls us. Without others views of us, we have little check against this. We do indeed need dialogue, but we (particularly in the West) need to go into it open to change in our perspectives.

“Cultural dialogue is not diplomacy; it not about agreeing on common positions. It is based on the belief that others have historical experiences that are worth listening to,”

Communications as a Cultural Phenomenon

Key Points and Suggestions

- Though the current political mindset of Russia finds its origins far back in Russian history (particularly the Orthodox Church), recent Soviet politics still weighs heavily on the minds of its political elites.
- This Soviet influence is illustrated by Russia’s hostile attitude toward the USA and NATO, its paternalistic and sometime aggressive stance toward the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and its reliance on rogue states as allies.
- Cooperation between Russia and the West is critical in the areas of energy and nuclear nonproliferation but it this and other cooperation is hindered by language barriers and a low level of individual contact across borders.

After acknowledging the boon that the end of the Cold War, the coming of globalization, and the dawn of the Internet has been for increasing cultural dialogue, we focused in on some of the deep value sets affecting dialogue between Russia, Europe, and the United States.

We heard how many in the West underestimate the role of the split between Western and Orthodox Christianity. It was the Orthodox Church that gave Russia the role of

“Despite the hurdles, there are two areas in which cooperation between Russia and the West is critical: nuclear non-proliferation and energy”

the church as an instrument of the state, and an egalitarian mindset that continues to today. This is evident in the lack of great economic success in any orthodox country and the low scores of Eastern Europe in rankings of economic freedom.

Looking at the period following the Cold War, we see that despite Yeltsin's rapprochement with the West, Russia remained a captive of its political mindset. There are five dimensions in which the Soviet mentality still exists within the minds of Russia's foreign policy-setting elites.

1. Sentiment is still very anti-American and based on a zero-sum vision of the world. If it is good for America, it must be bad for Russia. This plays well in domestic politics as well where America can be portrayed as an obstacle to the restoration of Russia's superpower status.
2. A hostile attitude toward NATO also persists. There were attempts to overcome this in the early 1990s but both sides missed opportunities during this period and the changing landscape of NATO enlargement eventually ended these opportunities. Some in Russia today still believe in the myth that NATO can be split through bilateral relations and thereby weakened.
3. Russia also tries to utilize its greater size and strength to exert influence over smaller countries in Eastern Europe which they still feel is their area of influence. Leverage (such as energy exports) is used in attempts to make these countries docile and political influence is used to try to fend off other types of influence in this region, such as NATO.
4. A modified sort of 'Brezhnev Doctrine' is still applied on the nations of the former Soviet Union whose sovereignty they see as subaltern. Pressure continues to be exercised on countries such as Ukraine and Georgia based on threats or actual force.
5. Russia today relies upon rogue nations whom it inherited as allies from the USSR. Many of these such as Iraq or Libya were lost which makes retaining the last remaining allies like Syria a matter of honor.

Despite these hurdles, there are two areas in which cooperation between Russia and the West is critical:

1. Nuclear non-proliferation - Though Russia gives this some attention, its leaders primarily consider the proliferation of such weapons a threat to the USA, not Russia. This is a myopic position likely to backfire at some point (a nuclear Iran would eventually be a threat to Russia as well) but it does at least make some shortsighted sense.
2. Energy - Russia and its budget are dependent on energy exports and the price of oil. If the price of oil were to drop to \$40 it would be a catastrophe. For this reason Russia is interested in some degree of protracted tension in the Middle East that will help to keep oil prices high.

There are though two opportunities to be grasped on the level of micro-communication. The first comes in the form of neurolinguistic programming - a set of methods and techniques used by a communicator to influence and even manipulate an audience to achieve his goals. Both Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin had this natural born talent, seen as a politician's charisma. Putin, however, was



“Each party has its own problems and each side should be ready to learn from the experiences of the other ”

educated to use these techniques in KGB schools systematically; this conditions dialogue, in effect keeping it closed rather than open.

Finally, communication in Russia is still an issue of language. Even amongst those who are adequately trained specialists, the number who can participate in English discussions on their specialities is quite small. This holds back the development of personal relationships but also online interaction and the development of international connections. One project being considered at the Yeltsin Foundation would be the creation of a new intellectual platform for discussion of liberal topics aimed at bridging this transatlantic gap. Russia needs such a platform to form recommendations about advancing freedom and overcoming the authoritarian legacy of the past.

In discussion some suggested that the greatest barrier toward democratic change in Russia was not cultural difference but the current regime. This therefore made interaction and the exchange of ideas (particularly amongst the younger generation) on the individual level all the more important as a way to ‘fertilize the field’ for when the time is right for such political change. In creating this dialogue it was stressed that enforcing or encouraging any kind of superiority/inferiority complexes be avoided. Each party has its own problems and each side should be ready to learn from the experiences of the other.

A Look Ahead: Scenarios for the Future

We concluded our discussions with a review of different scenarios – on the pessimistic side, where economic melt-down in Europe, isolationism in the United States, or fragmentation and increasing instability in Russia might nullify attempts at cultural dialogue; and on the optimistic side where enhancements in multi-lateral co-operation might breed further success and greater openness to dialogue, or where the urgency of common problems or cycles of political change on either side – even if things got worse before they got better – might create the conditions for a genuine ‘re-set’.

But there was a strong argument that change was going to come ‘below’ the level of the regime. For instance, interpersonal ties could be improved in the future as a result of higher population diffusion. Larger migrant networks would portend natural communication as a by-product and so could in fact build positive relationships, and contacts on all levels, not only at the level of elites. This would be aided by an improved visa regime that allowed each side’s citizens better contact with one another. It was lamented that it seemed the lawless in society currently had more cross-border access than the so-called ‘good people’.

New programs are needed, particularly amongst rising generations from a wide geographical area (not just the major cities), which could create interaction in several exchange contexts including professional skills training as well as more informal interactions. This area, the promotion of exchange and the building of civil society platforms, was one in which the group thought that the Salzburg Global Seminar was particularly well positioned to make an impact.

“New programs are needed, particularly amongst rising generations from a wide geographical area - not just the major cities,,



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Founded in the wake of World War II, Salzburg Global Seminar brings together emerging and established leaders from every region of the world to broaden thinking, challenge perspectives, encourage collaboration, and build networks that support future cooperation.

Without adopting any political agenda of its own, the Seminar asks critical questions on the most pressing topics of our times.

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Rather than being just a space for speakers to deliver presentations, seminars are designed to move participants beyond their 'comfort zones', by being participatory, prompting candid dialogue, fresh thinking and constantly in the search for innovative but practical solutions.

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Our sessions are devised with timeliness and pertinence in mind. Because of our desire to respond to a rapidly changing global environment, our program is under continuous development, so please check the calendar on our website for updates.

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