THE RUSSIANS AND THE AMERICAN "WAR ON TERRORISM": LESSONS LEARNED AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

ABSTRACT

Paper deals with the Russian perception of the American "war against terrorism" started after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon. It shows how the Russian attitudes towards the American foreign policy have changed during the first year of this war - from September 11, 2001 to September 11, 2002. The American "global war on terrorism" is reviving and crystallizing deep-seated cultural and ideological differences between the United States and Russia, and becoming a factor jeopardizing global stability. The analysis is based on data of opinion surveys, official documents and messages conveyed to the public by the national electronic and printed media.

Introduction

Social scientists knew a lot about Soviet and American perceptions - and misperceptions - of one another. Faulty perceptions, especially those of political elite in both countries, considered by various scholars as responsible for the deterioration of East-West relations after the World War II and the nuclear arms race. Less attention has been given to the study of perceptions of former adversaries after the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Meanwhile in post-communist epoch Russian and

1 Dr. Vladimir Olegovich Rukavishnikov, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI) Visiting Fellow, and Head of Dept., Institute of Socio-Political Research, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

American perceptions and misperceptions of former enemy's intentions remain factors that form foreign and security policies to a certain extent.

In this paper we deal with the Russian perception of the American "war against terrorism" started after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon. The analysis is based on data of opinion surveys, official documents and messages conveyed to the public by the national electronic and printed media.

We show how the Russian perception of the American "war on terrorism" has changed during the first year of this war - from September 11, 2001 to September 11, 2002. The time frame of our analysis is very important, because it seems to us that the second year of the 'global war against terrorism' may differ dramatically from the first one.

It is worth remembering, in this connection, that the immediate mass reaction on any human tragedy is always a mix of emotions with more or less rational interpretation of what has really happened. The reaction on the terrorist attack on the USA was not exclusion. Any discussion of the Russian perception of the American "war on terrorism" should proceed from the assumption that in various evaluations, registered in polls, or declarations presented to the public the emotional and analytical ingredients are twisted together. Sentiments do matter and emotional details cannot be excluded from consideration if one explore the perceptions of events and policy actions by masses and the elite. But people do not rely only on emotions, president's declarations and media information making own assessments and judgments concerning foreign events, because historical memory and attitudes implanted in brains long time ago also influence perceptions and misperceptions.

It makes more and more sense, the farther in time we are from September 11, to separate sentiments and popular explanations of what had happened and why it had happened, from the public opinion towards subsequent policy actions based on rational calculations and national interest. Conceptions of interests, if they are to be of any value, ought to at least be durable. Therefore such questions as why had Russia joined the anti-terrorist coalition and why does Russia disagree with the US proposal of the preemptive strike on Iraq lie in the framework of our analysis.

In our view, the proper understanding of the Russian reaction on September 11 has global significance – it is central to step-by-step construction of a secure international system, in which the Russian Federation wishes to play an important role. It is the point that connects the "war against terrorism" with the Chechen war and NATO enlargement eastward, the recent NATO aggression against Yugoslavia as well as the whole set of global security, disarmament and arms reduction problems with the perception of identifiable threats, risks and dangers. The Russian perception of the American war on terrorism is linked with popular attitudes toward President Putin's foreign policy and a change of attitudes toward the USA occurred in the post-Cold war period. The change of attitudes is not the
simple substitution of one static state for another, but an enduring process of transformation of the Russian public’s basic postures towards security and foreign policy affairs. Here we have to say that due a lack of space in this article we cannot discuss in details continuity of popular attitudes toward former adversaries both in Russia and America, the issue of Russophobia, anti-Americanism and NATO-phobia, the history of the US-Russia post-Cold war relations, the current perception of threats, etc.  

There is a view spread among the part of western experts on Russia that the Russian leadership is absolutely indifferent to domestic public opinion toward its foreign policy. It is just a myth, despite the fact that Russia is quasi-democracy. The variety and dynamics of attitudes toward foreign and security policy is carefully monitored by the authorities, because external affairs and a domestic political discourse are interconnected. Eventually, the approval or disapproval of foreign policy impacts voter's behavior to a certain extent and cannot be ignored by the president.

Because national media plays an important role in framing individual's attitudes toward foreign policy, the following comment seems to be necessary:

- Currently the presidential administration has a definite intention to enlarge the state influence on a media market in order to diminish the influence of oligarchs, who are still the actual owners of most of nation-wide newspapers and a set of TV channels. From sociological point of view there is nothing new in such policy: those who control the media control the brainwashing machine. The overwhelming majority of Russia's residents watch television, listen to radio and read newspapers every day or at least several times a week with the aim of finding out news about the political and economic life of their country and international events. It means those who own media resources have an effective instrument of manipulation of public opinion.

- The idea that the electronic media constitute a most important instrument for shaping public opinion is indisputable. Today the federal powers actually control the activity of main national television channels, and, perhaps, the electronic media at large, directly or indirectly, using licensing procedures. To reassert state control over media, the Kremlin went as far as to the crackdown on the national television companies exposed hostile criticism of state politics. The last year noisy scandal linked with NTV and TV-6, the country’s independent private companies, could be mentioned as the example. Without doubts, the scandal that looked at the first glance a part of non-stop process of re-sharing of property was politically motivated. It was an action in a framework of Putin’s course of consolidating information resources preparing for the next elections.

---

Attitudes toward foreign policy and perceptions of states as friends or enemies are correlated with ideological inclinations of individuals and the political face of editions they prefer to read. The political polarization of the printed press is a factor responsible for a variety of attitudes towards the American war on terrorism either. The total circulation rate of nationwide and regional newspapers and magazines is relatively small. Therefore the printed media’s impact on the general public is lesser than that of national television. However the influence of mainstream newspapers on the political and business elite's views should not be underestimated. The communist, leftist and national-patriotic editions also have their own audience despite the limited size of circulation rate of the left printed press.

The structure of this paper is as follows. The first section describes the immediate reaction of the Russian leadership, political elite, media and the public at large on the terrorist attack against the USA on September 11, 2001. Then, in the second section, we turn to the issue of interests and the Russian perception of the new US grand strategy. The third section focuses on how the public opinion toward the US and Putin's policy of reconciliation with the West was changing during the first year after September 11. The paper ends with a brief conclusion.

*The emotion does matter*

Let us begin by considering how Russians reacted on the terrorist attack against the USA on September 11, 2001.

Russia's president Vladimir Putin was the first foreign leader to express his condolences to the American people over that tragedy, which had befallen the residents of New York, Washington and the whole American people. According to Putin, Russia proceeds from the assumption that the challenge of international terrorism has been thrown down not only to the Americans, but also to all of humanity. Therefore Russia's support for Americans is rooted in what Moscow perceives as a common cause: the fight against Islamic radicalism.

It should be noted also that the theme of a fight against terrorism dominates in Mr. Putin's rhetoric. Perhaps, it is the only theme with which the former Head of the Russian Federal Security Service feels really comfortable. Since the autumn of 1999 the Kremlin portrayed the its' own second war in Chechnya as a struggle against international terrorists, Islamic fanatics and foreign mercenaries, responsible for the instability on Russia’s southern

---

4 President Putin of Russia gave an immediate phone call to President Bush of the USA and announced on September 13 at 12:00 a minute's silence throughout the country as a token of mourning for the victims of this tragedy. National flags were flying at half-mast throughout the country. If one agree that the presidential rhetoric plays an important role in forming popular attitudes toward foreign policy, than Russia's President Putin's statement and telegram to the US President, made on September 11, 2001, and other declarations about the war on terrorism are helpful documents for proper understanding trends in the Russian public opinion.
borders. Moscow also emphasized the alleged links between Osama bin Laden's "Al Qaeda" and Chechen rebels. It had been proofed later when the Russian citizens were captured by the US troops in Afghanistan as members of Taliban's military formations.

The tragic events of September 11 had divided the State Duma, the lower chamber of the Russian parliament, into several camps with very different views on whether or not Russia should participate in the prospective US retaliatory strikes. The revealed division of the State Duma was pre-determined by the ideological cleavage of the deputies' corps, which is strongly correlated with the party programmes and individual's attitudes toward the USA, NATO and the West as a whole. As far as the variety of immediate reactions of the political elite on the American tragedy is concerned, the following details are relevant.

During the parliamentary debates the leader of democratic and pro-western Yabloko party Grigory Yavlinsky insisted that the Russian leadership should do everything it can to co-operate with the United States in joint actions against the international terrorists. Boris Nemtsov, the leader of the Union of Right Forces (SPS- Zoyus Prvich Sil), the party with an ample pro-western orientation, also stood for closest cooperation with the U.S. and its allies. The pro-president centrist factions followed the official position of the Kremlin blaming international terrorism and calling for a cautious approach in the case of co-operation with the USA in the military action in Afghanistan.

While the right-wing politicians considered the September 11 as the historic chance for Russia to choose the course of ultimate reconciliation with the West and join the US "war on terrorism", Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov categorically objected to any such proposals. He said, “Russia should not get implicated in that war” and reminded of the Soviet Union’s disastrous invasion of Afghanistan and the ensuing 10 year war.

The leaders of nationalist ultra-radical Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) Vladimir Zhirinovsky and his deputy Alexei Mitrofanov shared a similar view, but, unsurprisingly, their statements were more radical. Mitrofanov, for instance, went on to say that "instead of sympathizing with the Americans, Russia should extend necessary assistance to the Taliban, who are now facing a humanitarian disaster". Zhirinovsky called for Russia to side with the Islamic world: “The (United) States is waiting for Moscow’s response to the recent events in the USA. If Moscow stands up to defend the Muslim countries, we will win. Russia will once again become a world superpower and will become the other centre of the world.” It should be

---

5 There is unofficial information that during Putin’s first meetings with President Clinton in the summer of 1999, Putin argued that al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden had forces working in Chechnya and planning acts of terrorism against Russia. However American experts interpreted his note as the intention to gain the western support for the bloody Russian crackdown in Chechnya, because at that time US officials and human rights activists were skeptical concerning alleged connections between the bin Laden network and the Chechen separatists.
noted that a few days later Mr. Zhirinovsky had radically changed his mind, and currently his party publicly supports the official Kremlin line, while the Communists and their allies stick with their initial stand as well as the right-wing parties do.

The heated parliamentary debates resulted in consensus in favour of Russia's no participating in the direct military actions, but providing intelligence information and other aid to the US-led anti-terrorist multinational coalition. The resolution was passed to give the president moral and political support, but not unfettered power to bring the nation to a new war.

As to the media coverage of the event, the following facts should be noted. All four national TV channels (ORT - Russian Public Television, the first channel; RTR - Russian Television and Radio, the second channel; NTV - Independent Television, the forth channel; TV6 -Sixth Channel) kept viewers informed of unfolding events. These Moscow-based companies and some regional companies provided non-stop coverage of the events in the US, picking up CNN, BBC and EuroNews, simultaneously translated, with commentaries by the Russian anchors. They cancelled their scheduled programs and even all advertising (going further than America was willing or could afford to go), feeling that promotional jingles were inappropriate in time of tragedy. The bulk of Russians watched President Putin's television address devoted to that event. "Spontaneous grief for the attack victims revived an old-style Russian compassion long unseen since post-Communist capitalization", wrote Nina Khrushcheva ⁶ in her comment on the Russian media coverage of September 11, and we have to agree with her conclusion.

Concerning the printed media reaction, it chased the ideological inclination of the edition. "Armageddon Now," proclaimed Kommersant Daily, the right-wing newspaper, describing a "market collapse" and "currency chaos."
The popular tabloid Komsomolskaya Pravda wrote: "This is not just a terrorist attack—this is a third world war started by terrorists." Centrist, state-oriented Izvestia declared a new political epoch, with "no superpower left" in "a war between civilizations." Only the anti-Western nationalistic Zavtra gloated, "Superpower Humiliated: The United States Has Been Taught a Bitter Lesson."

Regarding the immediate reaction of the general public, the author as a witness must say that everyone who saw on TV screens what had happened in New York City and Washington D.C. was shocked. Polls' data support this observation; for a lack of room we present only a single survey's result.

Several days after the terrorist attacks, Russians were asked the following open-ended question: "If you have heard about the terrorist acts in the USA, please describe what you felt when you heard about the tragedy." The overwhelming majority of them (77%) said they felt pity and sympathy for the American people, as well as fear, horror, shock, indignation, anger,

---

weakness, helplessness and inconsolableness. 14% of respondents were unable to answer this question. And only a tiny minority - 8% of those surveyed - was indifferent or even rejoiced ("everything is quite, there are no emotions"; "I don’t care"; "the Americans have gotten on everyone"; "it was the revenge they deserved"; "I rejoiced at their putting the squeeze on them").

Media commentators had drawn attention to the fact that immediately after the terrorist attack Russians were laying flowers not only at the US embassy, but also in the places in Moscow where two years ago terrorists exploded the residential buildings, killing innocent people. This was, of course, an accidental coincidence, but it was symbolic.

In autumn 1999 after the bomb blasts in Russian cities the Russian leadership called to combine the efforts of the international community in the fight against international terrorism. But the western leaders and parliamentarians were deaf and continued to criticize the Russian authority for cruelties in Chechnya. The reason was very simple: the West considered the Chechen war as primarily Russia's internal affair, not a threat to the global stability.

Russians said, Americans had waked up only on September 11, because terrorist hurt them in a heart, they did not feel our pain. Why two years ago had not the American leader responded to the Moscow tragedy in the same manner as the Russian president had done in the case of the American tragedy? It was a rhetoric question, of course. Opinions of residents of Moscow registered by the ROMIR polling agency on a day after the event showed that most Muscovites blamed Islamic terrorists for that act of terrorism and foresaw the angry American reaction on the terrorist attack. A year after this set of opinions has not changed, yet bin Laden is named separately (Box 1).

This brings us to popular perceptions of causes of September 11. According to the author's personal observations, in mid-September 2001 many people in Russia considered what had happened in the USA to be the direct consequence of the 'double standard policy' carried out by the American government in the previous years when Islamic militants were....

---

7 Data of the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) Russia-wide poll of urban and rural populations conducted on September, 15, 2001, the sample size - 1500 respondents. Quoted from the FOM press-information released on web on September, 20, 2001 (A. Petrova. "I cry because I feel so sorry for those people").

8 There were four apartment bombings in Moscow and other Russian cities during August and September 1999, which killed nearly 300 Russian civilians. Putin, then Russia's prime minister under the ailing President Boris Yeltsin, responded to these bombings by engineering a reinvasion of Chechnya.

9 The reader may notice that a few Muscovites put the responsibility of that action on the US secret service. The idea of internal conspiracy as a cause of the terrorist attack was expressed in the USA and some other countries as well. Frightening Fraud; the new book by Thierry Meyssan seeks to prove that the September 11 acts of terrorism were committed not by Arab terrorists but by US special services (Vasily Bubnov, 9/11 THE BIG LIE?, released on web-site Pravda.Ru on August 24, 2002).
often called "freedom-fighters" not terrorists. There is a saying, one that most people would probably agree with: "some days you feed the snake… and some days the snake bite you". Russians said, "because the US backed up the Taliban movement during the years of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and supported Albanian guerillas (KLA) in Kosovo, they got the September 11." And as the poll showed, the majority of the population agreed that the terrorist attack on the USA might be named an indirect outcome of the US imperial policy (Table 1).

According to the Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nation-wide survey conducted on September 15, 2001, almost three quarters of Russians (72%) answered negatively on the question "Some people demonstrated satisfaction that the United States had gotten the punishment it rather deserved. Did you feel this way, and if so, was the feeling strong or weak?" Only one in each fifth polled gave a positive answer (7% of those surveyed said their satisfaction was very strong, and 15% said their satisfaction was weak; no surprise, most of those “satisfied” were Zuganov's supporters - 36%).

Table 1. The Russian views on the terrorist attack on the USA, September 2001.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: “Some people name the terrorist attack on America as the payment for the USA policy toward other countries. Are you inclined to agree or to not agree with this statement?”</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am inclined to agree</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am inclined to not agree</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesitated to answer</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data of the Public Opinion Foundation national survey carried out September 22 - 23 2001
In October 2001 and August 2002 the Russian Center for Public Opinion (VCIOM) asked Russians concerning September 11: "Do you agree that it serves Americans rightly? That now at own experience they have learned how people felt under bombardments in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in Iraq and Yugoslavia?" The answers were presented to readers of the web-newspaper "Gazeta.Ru" under the notable heading "Russians are not sorry about September 11" in the issue released on September 11, 2002. The article pointed out that nowadays, one year after September 11, the general perception of the event has not changed. In August 2002, 52% of respondents answered on that question affirmatively, 42% disagree, 6% hesitated to answer, while a year ago, in October 2001, 50% respondents agreed and 43% disagreed. On this ground the newspaper's observer came to a conclusion that one out of two Russians think there is an American fault in the September 11 events.

In our view, the VCIOM poll's question was formulated incorrectly. It had two very different parts. Respondent may agree with the second part of this question, but disagree with the first one. While the first part referred to the perception of the terrorist attack as a fair punishment for the past US actions, the second part simply implied consent with the proposed statement. It was not directly asserted, but it seems to be implied.

Moreover, in our view, it was unethical to question people in streets about the feeling of satisfaction and fair punishment of Americans for sins of the US foreign policy in a face of deaths of thousands of innocent people in New York and Washington. It was politically incorrect. We doubt that above-described questions were specially designed to proof that Russians hate Americans, that the Russian people are heartless cool-blooded monsters. Nonetheless, the heading of the article in the "Gazeta.Ru" disorient readers.

We are absolutely positive, most Russians do have a feeling of compassion to Americans. But anyone, who watched the Russian television reports from the US in September-October 2001 or read Russian newspapers and magazines, might well had concluded that, expressing a grief for innocent people killed, Russians emphasized the need to look deeper on the roots of events. They saw the roots of September 11 in a hatred of American’s imperial behavior and arrogant display of power and wealth widely spread among the poor nations. It was a reasonable point of view - to understand the nature of the new American war on terrorism, we need to look at its origins.

Russians coupled their sympathy to victims with expressions of concern over how the United States would retaliate and doubt the U.S. military in Afghanistan could find the right culprit and that no other innocent victims would die. They also rise up questions: What would be consequences, for Russia and the rest of the world, of the way Americans

---

dealt with this new threat, their power and interests? What difference, if any, did it all make?

Table 2. The Russian public opinion about the US bombardment of Afghanistan, October 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: “Some people say, that USA are doing the right thing dropping bombs on Afghanistan. Others say, that America is acting incorrectly. With what point of view do you agree – with the first or with the second one?”</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With the first point of view</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the second point of view</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data of Public Opinion Foundation national survey carried out on October 13-14, 2001.

The mid-October 2001 survey reported a split of nation on the issue of the US bombardments of Afghanistan (Table 2). About one year after September 11, the cleavage of the Russian society on this issue remains, but the number of supporters of the US action in Afghanistan has significantly decreased. The results of the FOM poll carried out on August 31, 2002 showed that 29% approved and 45% disapproved of the US military operation in Afghanistan.11 According to another recent poll, about two thirds of Russians are sure that there are hidden goals of the US campaign in Afghanistan beyond the announced objectives of the "war on terrorism".12

---

11 Data of Public Opinion Foundation Russia-wide poll of urban and rural populations. August 31, 2002. 1500 respondents. The press-report released on 5 Sep 2002 presents arguments of those who approve and disapprove of US actions as follows. "The basic argument of those disapproving of US actions is that any war inevitably leads to the deaths of civilians, which cannot be justified by anything. In condemning the US operation, many (20%) pointed to the unjustified character of those actions, or hidden (and far from noble) motivations behind the war on international terrorism ("America has no right to interfere in the policy of another nation," "they must look for the guilty ones, not destroy the nation," "NATO is advancing under the cover of a fight against terrorism," "it was all planned by the CIA to get closer to our borders...") The military operation is justified because "Afghanistan is a hotbed of terrorism," and "terrorism must be wiped out." By invading Afghanistan, the US helped the entire world ("Only the US would dare to attack them"), and particularly Russia ("they helped us by moving the borders back" – 13%). In the opinion of 9%, the US military operation in Afghanistan was an act of justified revenge. Three percent approve by saying the US action was prompt, decisive and efficient" (Petrova A. "It was people, not the terrorists that suffered " [http://english.fom.ru/reports/frames/eof023304.html]

12 Here are data of the Russian Center for Public Opinion (VCIOM) poll carried out on August 21-27, 2002. 22% of those interviewed said, in the Afghan military campaign "the US wanted to demonstrate who is a ruler in the world ", and 20% - "it was driven by a feeling of revenge". For 16% of respondents the aim of the campaign was to rise up the US prestige in the eyes of the international community; 11% - the US aspiration to strengthen its military presence in Central Asia; 6% - to rise up the rating of George Bush in the US. In total 64% felt that the US authorities in that campaign pursued other goals than declared. Only 15% believed the US wanted to eliminate
Soon after the terrorist attack on the USA, many western politicians and reporters said the world is not the same as before and a new era has begun. Did Russians also feel that the world had dramatically changed since September 11? It’s difficult to give a straight affirmative answer - and perhaps, it's most impossible.

As the October 2001 poll showed, Russians had two very different opinions on this issue: 42% disagreed with the statement that the world is not the same after the September 11, while 39% believed a new era had already began.13

Certainly, the reported cleavage of public opinion might be interpreted as an illustration of how the public at large perceived the meaning of that event. But this may be a misleading interpretation. The positive answers on aforementioned question reflect the media impact on mass consciousness to a large extent.

The following data are also relevant to the case. There is an opinion that the acts of terrorism that shocked the entire world are perceived as primarily the American internal affair. But this point of view is not very popular in Russia: in August 2002 one out of four respondents shared this opinion. Yet the number of people with such view has increased during the first year of the "war on terrorism" (26% against 14% in October 2001), the majority of plain Russians are convinced that those acts refer to the entire mankind (70% in August 2002 and 81% in October 2001).14

Everyone agrees that internally the USA has changed dramatically after September 11. But it is not true for Russia. Personally the author doubts very much whether ordinary people living in Russia today are much more frightened or more worried about the international terrorism, going about their daily lives, than they were before the September 11 tragedy in America. Their own country does not become a more safety place after the launch of the American war on terrorism. It is the country, where policemen are used to false signals about bombs deployed in schools, train terminals and the apartment buildings. It is the country, where the non-stop anti-terrorists operation in the rebellious republic of Chechnya brings a dozen of casualties a week, and where killings of businessmen and politicians are not exclusion of rules but a way of doing business, etc.

Muscovites did not position the American tragedy on the top of the list of most important events of the year of 2001. The successive Putin's visit

---

to the USA was also reminded only by a small number of people.\textsuperscript{15} No surprise, because, according to the author's research experience, plain people do not worry much about foreign events being preoccupied with their own business and domestic affairs.

To repeat, right after the terrorist attack on the United States, many voiced the opinion that this event changed the world and a new era had made a start. However, by late August 2002 in Russia the proportion of those who disagree with this view has grown up to 51\% against 42\% in 2001. The number of those still thinking the September 11 events marked the beginning of a new era has declined by 1.5 times - 39\% against 26\% (data in \% of all those surveyed). These figures support the above-presented interpretation of the results of the October 2001 poll.\textsuperscript{16}

September 11 emotionally shocked Russians much the same degree as it did other nations. Emotions did matter immediately after September 11, but their influence had not lasted long time. By October 2001 the perception of September 11 was not influenced by emotions in the same manner as it was in a day after the tragedy. The initial euphoria of warmer relations with the United States appeared to have cooled somewhat by the end of the year, after the Bush-Putin summit in the USA in mid-November 2001. Foreseeing and precaution replaced sentiments. One year after the start of the American "war

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|}
\hline
Most important events of 2001 & \% of the total sample \\
\hline
Lifting of Kursk submarine & 40.6 \\
Russian airliner crash due to Ukrainian missile hit & 18.5 \\
War in Chechnya & 14.9 \\
V. Putin's US visit & 7.5 \\
Situation around NTV channel & 6.6 \\
Civil Forum & 2.1 \\
Governmental reshuffle & 2.1 \\
Other & 3.6 \\
Don't know & 4.1 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Most important events of 2001}
\end{table}

A representative sample of 500 Muscovites aged 18+ were questioned by phone December 10-13.

\textsuperscript{15} Hereby are the data of the ROMIR December 2001 telephone poll:

\textsuperscript{16} Respondents who think a new era has begun were asked to elaborate on their views. According to the press-information, the answers could be divided in 3 groups. The first group (13\%) are those who think the world has realized the scale and danger of international terrorism ("all nations started to think about their security," "people realized the hazard," "the nations drew closer in the fight against international terrorism"). Half as many (6\%) focused on changes in US foreign policy and its stand on problems experienced by other nations, such as the Chechen conflict ("America took a tougher stand against other nations," "America found an excuse to affect world policy by force," "the Americans experienced themselves what Russia did," "Americans stopped criticising us for Chechnya"). Another 2\% suppose the split between Muslims and Christians has made the world change ("the Muslims and Christians are divided," "the world is split into two parts: the Arabs and the rest"). The forth group - only 1\% of those interviewed pointed to Russia's growing prestige in the world. This has been caused, they believe, by the fact that not only the US, but also other nations have changed their attitude towards Russia (Petrova A., "Has the World Changed after September 11?" [http://english.fom.ru/reports/frames/eof023302.html] Date of release: 05 Sep 2002)
On terrorism, President Putin of Russia faces the dilemma whether to stay or to quit the US-led anti-terrorist coalition if the US unleash the war against Iraq. This brings us to the issue of interests.

*After September 11: solidarity vs. competing interests*

If one defines the most vital American interest as that of eliminating the Islamic terrorist threat - as President George W. Bush did define the aim of the war against terrorism - then the Russian Federation key interest matches the American one.

It is well-known fact, however, that the gap between what nations seek to do or declare to achieve and what they wind up doing is often as wide as for individuals. That fact alone ought to make people suspicious of what lie behind the initial intentions and declared goals. One can, through, raise the set of questions: What does a "global war against terrorism" mean? War against whom, and for how long? Does the United States fight the real threat to global stability? Or is the scale of a danger of Islamic terrorism to the world exaggerated because the US is acting primarily in self-defense? And is "a war" a right name for the American response to the September 11, 2001? Do Americans in this war act in such a way as to improve (or preserve, at least) rather than degrade the quality of international environment within which they operate? What will be the next target of the US attack after Afghanistan? Why should the United States to be a one-nation tribunal of "regime change" wherever it detected "evil spinning on an axis"? And what are the other United States interests beyond the words about the war on terrorism? Is American foreign policy a hostage to oil? What might be long-term consequences of the appearances of the US troops near the south and southeastern borders of the Russian Federation look like?

We have no room to discuss all these questions and a range of alternative answers in this paper. There is no way to prove that the world will be better or worse off because the United States launched the war on terrorism. The future is, of course, unknowable, and will remain so until it gets around to becoming the present and the past. But threats to global stability and the US security will remain after the end of "Bush's war on terrorism", to be sure. They always will, as long as there are interests. And it is likely that the Russian and American national interests will not coincide in the coming future as it had happened at the very beginning of the US "war on terrorism", in the military campaign in Afghanistan.

Russia provided tanks and fuel, arms and food aid to the Northern Alliance anti-Taliban forces. Russian militarily cooperation with the Northern Alliance had made it much easier to isolate Al Qaeda and defeat the Taliban troops on the ground and ultimately to establish the pro-western regime in Kabul. In winter 2001/2002 Russians helped the new Afghan authorizes to cope with specialized tasks such as mine clearing, repairing of the mountain passes and tunnels, etc. The medical hospital was brought to
Kabul as Russia's gift to the Afghan people. But Russian troops did not participate in the air and ground operations, and Russia also has no plans to participate in the postwar international peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan. There is a strong opposition to any involvement of the Russian military contingent in any operations in this country among the army generals and the public at large - which is not surprising, one may say, given Russia’s sorry experience in its 1979–89 Afghan war.

Taliban and the certain circles in Saudi Arabia supported the terrorist groupings and the radical Islamic opposition to the local authorities in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan that undermined the stability in the entire Central Asia region. The break down of the unfriendly or even hostile Taliban regime was in the interest of the Central Asian states, first of all, and, of course, Russia. But after the military victory over Taliban and the regime change the perspectives of peace and stability in Afghanistan are still vague. The leaders of Al Qaeda are not captured so far. The flow of drugs through the Afghan-Tajikistan border, where the Russian border guards backed by the Russian 203rd division are stationed, has even increased in 2002. The new Afghan central government is powerless and dependent on the US-led coalition economic aid and the peacekeeping forces. The US bodyguards, not locals, protect the new national leader, Mr. Karsai, and his ministers. The contradictions among the Afghan tribe leaders have not disappeared, therefore the internal situation is unstable, and if fighting between regional warlords happens, the puppet transitional government might collapse.

Russia’s political support eased U.S. efforts to build international coalitions against terrorism to invade into Afghanistan. Vladimir Putin as a pragmatic man clearly understood that he could not stop other CIS states to join the US-led coalition. In the weeks after September 11, four of the five governments in the Central Asian region offered military facilities to the United States. All five republics - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - welcomed the U.S. deployment. And now the American soldiers together with troops of other western allies are stationed in Russia's Central Asia backyard. In the 11th year of their independence, former republics of the Soviet Union had become military partners of the United States.

General Tommy Franks, head of the U.S. Central Command, which is responsible for Afghanistan, has affirmed in August 2002 that U.S. soldiers would be in Afghanistan for "a long, long time." Describing the sort of commitment Afghanistan will require, Franks mentioned South Korea, where

17 The author touched this point in his previous COPRI Working Paper 20/2001 'Peacekeeping and National Interests'. As to the religious discourse in the Central Asia states and the split of the entire Islamic community in the former Soviet Union as a whole the following comment is necessary. The problem is associated with the growth of influence of the Wahhabi sect. It should be noted here that Wahhabism has become a worldwide movement of radical Islam perpetuated by Saudi-sponsored madrassas that indoctrinate young males into this fanatical belief system, of which Al Qaeda is merely a symptom. Wahhabi's adherents are most furious Chechen fighters.
U.S. troops have been based for more than half a century. And, if one goes after the general's logic, he may easily reach a conclusion that the US troops in Central Asia may be also stationed for years, because, the US military may say, the effort to stabilize Afghanistan will depend on them.

The situation in the region really has changed after September 11, but what would be long-term consequences of all this changes? Nobody knows the definite answer. The Central Asian states are listed among 'no-freedom nations' by international human rights organizations such as Freedom House. The American money that came together with the troops in the Central Asian states is reinforcing the ruling regimes that are far from democratic standards. The contradiction between the declared American commitment to democracy and promoting democracy across the world and the real action is obvious here like in all previous cases of the US cooperation with dictatorships. But it is politics. The cooperation with these pseudo-democratic regimes serves the US interests. As to the American public, it is presented as a compromise to the declared principles because of the primacy of national security interests.

Frankly speaking, the Russian authorities also do not care much about democracy in that region. The Russian General Staff is not happy to see the increase of the US influence in that strategically important region for defense and security reasons. The Russian attempts to counterbalance the growth of the American influence in the region are not very effective so far.

Oil and gas have primarily enhanced the region's strategic value. As experts say, by 2015, this zone may become one of the world's most important sources of oil and natural gas. It will have strategic consequences by lessening dependence of the western customers on Persian Gulf oil. The real gain for Russia is and will be a control over pipelines, which is one of the most important factors of its geopolitical influence in the Caucasus and in Central Asia. And, of course, Russia's economic interest in Central Asia, Kazakhstan as well as the neighbouring Caspian Sea area is competing to the American one.

Eventual control of the development of oil and gas deposits as well as the eventual pipeline routings will determine the political and economic future of the Central Asian and Caucasus states, and relations between Russia

---

18 According to The Washington Post, "The State Department describes U.S. policy in Central Asia since September 11 as "enhanced engagement." In testimony to the Senate earlier this summer, B. Lynn Pascoe, deputy assistant secretary of state, outlined the U.S. goal: to push the Central Asian states toward free markets and democratic politics to try to strengthen them against Islamic extremism and instability" (Robert G. Kaiser, U.S. forces put down roots in a troubled Central Asia. The Washington Post, Thursday, August 29, 2002).

19 There is no need to discuss here the steps toward a closer security cooperation between Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (the so-called Shanghai Six) as well as decisions made in the framework of the Pact on Collective Security.

20 "We have an enormous economic and energy stake in this country," said a senior U.S. official in Kazakhstan. "It's part of our national energy strategy." (Quoted from Robert G. Kaizer, U.S. forces put down roots in a troubled Central Asia, The International Herald Tribune, 29 August 2002, p. 2 [http://www.iht.com/articles/69118.html]).
and other neighbouring regional countries as well. It will determine positions of Iraq and Iran in the region and their relations with the West and the Russian Federation; it will determine the character of relationships between the US, Russia and China in the next decades, etc. Therefore the American military interventions in the region should be considered as a part of the big geopolitical game, not just a revenge on September 11.21

The US is the dominant power in the twenty-first century world politics, and the American leadership is determined to maintain the American hegemony in the world. Less clear than the fact that Americans accumulated great power is their ability to wield power wisely. Today it become transparently clear that the September 11 event may be used as the *casus belli* for the new American war against Iraq, although there is no evidence that Iraq is responsible for the September 11 attacks on the USA.22

We'll not debate the issue of legitimacy of the US intention in this paper, because is out of the frame of our theme. The task is a regime change. Iraq poses no eminent danger to the USA and its allies, but the US does not like Saddam. It such context the pre-emptive strike is an illegal action, a violation of norms of the international law. What is more important in the context of this paper is considering what is Russians' attitude toward regime change and taking military action in Iraq and how is it perceived in the US.

For Americans, "the real issue isn't whether we want to overthrow Saddam, but what price we would have to pay to get the job done."23 For Russians, that war is not acceptable and they will not co-operate in any military action. According to the Kremlin officials, "this sort of issues shall be settled in due course in compliance with a relevant UN Security Council Resolution".24 At this particular point we see the discrepancy between Russia's position and that of the United States, which, like in the case of Kosovo, is ready to act militarily without the UN sanction.

---

21 Keep in mind, that among those plans there is also a project of a pipeline to the Pakistan part of Karachi, which may go though the part of Afghan territory.

22 James A. Baker III, who was US secretary of state from 1989 to 1992, explains the American motives: " While there may be little evidence that Iraq has ties to Al Qaeda or to the attacks of September 11, there is no question that its present government, under Saddam Hussein, is an outlaw regime, is in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, is embarked upon a program of developing weapons of mass destruction and is a threat to peace and stability, both in the Middle East and, because of the risk of proliferation of these weapons, in other parts of the globe. Peace-loving nations have a moral responsibility to fight against the development and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by rogues like Saddam Hussein. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to do so, and leading that fight is, and must continue to be, an important foreign policy priority for America" (J. Baker. The Right Way to Change a Regime. The New York Times, August 25, 2002, Editorial-Op-Ed.)


The Kremlin proceeds from the premise that the UN Security Council should be at the center of collective international efforts to battle terrorism.\textsuperscript{25} And, perhaps, the most important political goal for the UN now is to coordinate the response to new challenges to the international peace and stability to work out measures, which will allow the preventing such tragedies recurring in the future. While the US diplomacy is trying to marginalize the UN from this process, Russia is determined to act in accordance with the will of the international community, not the US joined by some its traditional allies and clients. Russia is not alone in such approach to this issue.\textsuperscript{26}

Thus, despite the consensus in favour of uniting the world community's long-term efforts against terrorism in the aftermath of September 11 attack on the United States, the dissimilarity between Russia and the US concerning the use of force without the UN mandate remains. We have to remind that the mentioned dissimilarity was perceptible already in the days of the 1999 Kosovo crisis.

President George W. Bush tends to stress the predominantly American military action as a matter of punishment of the Iraq president Saddam Hussein. And he, like his father in the Persian Gulf War in 1999, wants to build a broad coalition of nations that is prepared to act in a full accord in the new US-led campaign against Iraq. It was not in interests of the USSR to join the anti-Iraq coalition in 1999, and Russia's position has not changed since that time.

Russia's historical, political and economic ties with Iraq make for a tangled relationship that could pose genuine problems for any American military campaign against Baghdad. Iraq's debt to the old Soviet Union totals at least $8 billion, and Baghdad offered Russian oil companies billions more in concessions during the 1990's as it sought to build support in the United Nations. Russia is also Iraq's largest supplier in the United Nations' oil-for-food program, sending at least $2.5 billion a year in non-military goods in exchange for cash raised by oil sales.

We have to note here that Bush administration officials are frustrated that warmer relations with Mr. Putin's Russia have not been translated into a support for the US administration's goals in the case of Iraq. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld recently warned that Russia's relations with

\textsuperscript{25} The UN General Secretary has established in October 2001 the Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism, which aims are to identify the implications and broad policy dimensions of terrorism for the United Nations and to formulate recommendations.

\textsuperscript{26} In August 2002 French President Jacques Chirac repeated a demand that any military action against Iraq must be approved by the Security Council. "This runs contrary to the vision of collective security of France, a vision that is based on co-operation among states, respect for the law and the authority of the Security Council," Chirac said. German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder accused the U.S. of undermining the UN's attempt to return weapons inspectors to Iraq. In an interview in the Financial Times on August 29, 2002, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said that Britain was committed to the UN weapons inspections. (Kate Taylor. Allies urge the U.S. to hold off, and more on the debate over going to war. Slate (on Web), 8/30/02)
nations the United States considers enemies, i.e. nations the United States calls an "axis of evil", threatened to erode its diplomatic and economic standing. "To the extent that Russia decides that it wants to parade its relationship with countries like Iraq and Libya and Syria and Cuba and North Korea, it sends a signal out across the globe that that is what Russia thinks is a good thing to do, to deal with the terrorist states," Mr. Rumsfeld said on August 21, 2002 (The New York Times, August 22, 2002).

For the beginning of September 2002, officials from both countries play down the possibility of a breach in the new partnership. Despite criticisms like Mr. Rumsfeld's, other American officials said that Mr. Putin's Russia remained a staunch ally in the campaign against international terrorism. However, there are no eternal allies, but there are eternal national interests. Perhaps, Mr. Rumsfeld doesn't want to agree that Mr. Putin's government is simply pursuing its own diplomatic and economic interest as much as Americans do.

Why should Russia's foreign policy be subordinated to American interest? Readers may reasonably ask, and we can begin to answer this question by noting the following point. The Russian commitment to the international anti-terrorist coalition is not absolute. After the period in which old adversaries became allies 'the cold peace' in the US-Russia relationships may come if the Bush administration exploits Russia's present weakness and support to its own advantage.

In the most recent American-led military campaign —the 1999 war in Kosovo— Russia’s opposition made it more difficult to create the anti-Serb international coalition and to keep it united. But Russians could neither persuade the previous US administration not to go on war, nor protect Yugoslavia by the military means. If the Bush administration decides to proceed with the military operation against Iraq anyway, then the American ignorance of Russia's arguments repeats. Then like in the Balkans the Russia's influence in Iraq eventually will be demolished. Well, Americans cares about their own interest, not Russia's one.27

Professor G. John Ikenberry from Georgetown University has characterised the new US grand strategy in the following words:

"In the shadows of the Bush administration's war on terrorism, sweeping new ideas are circulating about U.S. grand strategy and the restructuring of today's unipolar world. They call for American unilateral and preemptive, even preventive, use of force, facilitated if possible by coalitions of the willing -- but ultimately unconstrained by the rules and norms of the

27 Other members of the U.S.-led war on terrorism are also beginning to chafe at Washington's apparent disregard for allied interests, and the US talk of a "crusade" against "evil-doers" is reviving old accusations of superpower arrogance. As Foreign Affairs has noticed: "Indeed, since the "axis of evil" entered the lexicon of U.S. foreign policy, the rhetoric coming from Paris, Berlin, or Beijing seems little different from those governments' complaints during President George W. Bush's first months in office" (Foreign Affairs, September 10, 2002; quotation from the web-version).
international community. At the extreme, these notions form a neoinperial vision in which the United States arrogates to itself the global role of setting standards, determining threats, using force, and meting out justice. It is a vision in which sovereignty becomes more absolute for America even as it becomes more conditional for countries that challenge Washington's standards of internal and external behavior. It is a vision made necessary -- at least in the eyes of its advocates -- by the new and apocalyptic character of contemporary terrorist threats and by America's unprecedented global dominance. These radical strategic ideas and impulses could transform today's world order in a way that the end of the Cold War, strangely enough, did not.\(^\text{28}\)

Yet one may argue such definition of the 'new US grand strategy', it seems to us more important that, in fact, Professor G. John Ikenberry is talking about an inherited imperial policy adjusted to new circumstances. It is fundamental change in America's national security and foreign policy doctrine compared with the previous one, nonetheless. Implicitly, Mr. Bush has agreed with connotations that follow the mentioned change in America's national security strategy.\(^\text{29}\) On August 29, 2002, The Washington Post wrote "the US president is no longer choosing between war and no war, but rather war alone or war with allies."\(^\text{30}\) Which one sounds better?

Responsibility for the strike on Iraq will, somehow, lie with American imperialism (or neo-imperialism, if one prefers Professor Ikenberry's term). Why should post-Soviet Russian foreign policy and the 21st century world order be associated with American imperialism? Readers might reasonably ask again. Some good answers float in the air now. They have not yet found profound political support in Russia, but they could.

Are lessons learned?

At the start of the year of 2001, relations between Russia and the United States remained strained over various issues, including disagreements over NATO expansion, and Russia’s objection to U.S. plans to deploy a national missile defense system. A series of expulsions of diplomats from Moscow and Washington in March 2001 for suspected espionage should be mentioned in this list as well. At that time over a half of Russians (52%) perceived the U.S. as the state hostile to Russia. And a strong majority of Russians thought Putin's foreign policy corresponded to national interest.\(^\text{31}\)

\(^{28}\) G. John Ikenberry, America's Imperial Ambition, Foreign Affairs, September/October 2002. Citation from the web-version of article.

\(^{29}\) The same conclusion was expressed by Davis E. Sander in the New York Times (Sander D. E. Bid to Justify a First Strike, The New York Times/nytime.com, August 5, 2002).


\(^{31}\) In the ROMIR poll conducted in February 2001 a strong majority of about 70% thought the Russia foreign policy corresponds to national interest either 'completely' (19.6%) or ‘to a great extent
After the terrorist attacks against New York and Washington, and President Putin's speeches in which he supported the U.S., the former adversaries started working together to address what all of them view as the main common threat. As the mentioned mid-October 2001 poll showed, opinions concerning the impression about the change of relationship between the two countries were divided almost equally: 44% said “Russia-American relations are improving,” while 41% didn't agree and said, "relations have not visibly changed." Hope more than facts determined opinions of the first group. And then, as many observers had underlined, the number of those who consider the U.S. to be hostile to Russia declined to 46%. Perhaps, the rapid shift toward co-operation between the two countries after September 11 had caused more and more Russians to consider the U.S. to be a friendly nation.

Russia’s co-operation with the U.S.-led anti-terrorist campaign led to considerable speculations about concessions Moscow had made, about what the Kremlin might expected in return and what it actually gained, and why President Putin made the turn in foreign and security policy toward the West. Former US Secretary of State Prof. Henry Kissinger, for example, saw Russia’s response as one of desperation: threatened with isolation, Putin joined with the United States to “pursue Russia’s objectives by enlisting America’s support.”

That was a view from the American shore. At the same time, when Americans applauded Russia's joining the anti-terrorist coalition, the Kremlin continued to face opposition to its policy from those members of the political and military establishment, who remained wary of closer ties with the West.

As we said earlier, Putin is using the threat of international terrorism to promote his own political agenda both at home and abroad. In fact, the President of the Russian Federation had no choice but to support the American war against the Al Qaeda network backed by Taliban in Afghanistan and the war against Chechens quarrelers and Arab mercenaries who are fighting alongside
the Chechen separatists was obvious. He could not change his stand on the issue of terrorism that brought him to the top of power even if he would like to do it. That was the basic psychological reason why Mr. Putin backed the U.S. campaign against terrorism, in our view.

In accord to the line of reconciliation with the former adversary Russia's leader pledged to close Russia’s Cold War-era intelligence listening post in Cuba and a naval base in Vietnam. It was announced before Putin's visit to the USA. The reaction of the Russian public and the military brass on this decision was far from overwhelmingly favourable.

Perhaps, Russia's president expected to get the Bush administration to stop criticizing Russia about the brutality of the Russian troops in the breakaway province of Chechnya. And, indeed, by mid-November 2001, the United States had reduced its criticism of the war in Chechnya on the occasion of Putin's visit to the USA. Americans noticed links between Al Qaeda and Chechens only after the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked because Osama bin Laden made them noticed September 11 and because he declared the United States his enemy. The Bush administration has never made Chechnya a high-priority issue and later in 2002 has gradually returned to its former line concerning this problem.

At the US-Russia summit in November 2001 the announcement on the further reduction of strategic offensive weapons was the central point. It implied that the political atmosphere at the meeting was favourable, but, as for the essence of the issue, there is nothing new in that. Bush at the summit said the USA would unilaterally reduce arms to between 1,700 and 2,200 over the next 10 years. Putin had already suggested that both parties cut their weapons to 1.5 thousand warheads each. We would like to remind here that back in 1997 both states signed a framework agreement calling for (the signing of) START-3, under which arms should have been reduced to about 2 thousand warheads each. The United States currently has about 7,000 deployed warheads to Russia’s 6,000. Therefore, at their first meeting the presidents said nothing new on the crucial issue of nuclear weapons reduction. The discussions on that issue were continued, and as a result the new treaty on reduction of nuclear potentials of two states was signed in Moscow in May 2002. Many experts doubt it is an agreement that Russians wanted to have.

If Putin's team expected to see the US shifts on such controversial issues as the US national missile defense system and NATO enlargement as a response to these Russia's steps as well as the political support and the military assistance in the operation against Taliban, then it was a miscalculation. In mid-December, President George W. Bush announced Washington’s intention to withdraw from the 1972 US-Soviet Union ABM Treaty in order to build a national missile defense system to defend against possible attacks from so-called rogue states, such as Iraq and North Korea. Russia's objections were not taken into account. And in spring 2002 this Treaty became of a part of Cold-war history. Bush's support to a plan to
move NATO eastward, to the Russian border, had not been revised as well. Bush's ream commitment to the fundamentals of Republican's vision of US foreign and security policy, which always emphasizes the primacy on national interest, is strong, plus they understood the weakness of Russia quite well.

Russia's president was delighted to be included in the narrow circle of leaders of the G-7 (or G-8) group, that allowed him to enlarge personal contacts with major world and European leaders and, especially, with his American counter-partner. The USA and the EU officially recognized the Russian economy as the market-type one. The US president had promised to accelerate Russia’s entry into the WTO. That is almost all what may be considered as gains obtained by Russia after its shift to closer co-operation with the West.

Some Russian observers have noticed that Putin's personal behavior and diplomacy during the first year after the September 11 resembled that of Michael Gorbachev, when the last was in power in the Soviet Union. On this ground they have jumped to a conclusion that in total Putin's Russia would be a looser again.

Now we have to refer to data exposing the state of minds at the end of the first year of the war against terrorism or not. According to the FOM poll, carried out on August 31, 2002, nearly half of those interviewed (44%) think the terrorist attacks on America had a positive effect on Russia-US relations. This is exactly the same figure as in October 2001! Hope is dying the last, the Russian proverb say. One out of four (27%) hold that Russian-US relations are unchanged, with as little as 6% thinking they have deteriorated. By November 2001, two thirds of Russians (65%) felt quite positive about the idea of the improvement cooperation between Russia and the USA within the framework of international anti-terrorist coalition, these people said they would like "Russia and the USA to become more close." One year ago this mood has remained.

We have to point out Russians support the president’s line to improving of relations with the West with a clear understanding that the possible alliance between the West and Russia unlikely would be the union of equals. One in two (48%) of those interviewed in November 2001 did not believe that Russia would restore herself as the great power in coming 5-10 years.


35 We have to note that the share of supporters was large in all social-demographic groups of the populace regardless to ideological inclinations and education of respondents. This idea was approved by the three quarters (74%) of respondents with the university degree, about the same share of Putin’s adherents (73%) and over a half of communist voters (62%); over two thirds of people under 35 years old and over 50 (respectively 67% and 71% in these categories). See more about the results of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nationwide poll on the web-site: (http://www.fom.ru/survey/dominant/310/761/2510.html).
years; the overwhelming majority agrees that the Russian leadership depends on western policy to a too big extent.36

A great many people in the world, particularly in the United States, are under the impression that the United States and the Russian Federation now have a policy of enlarging cooperation. The culmination of such efforts was signing of the new Treaty on reduction of strategic nuclear potentials in Moscow in May 2002. Americans have overwhelmingly approved of the arms agreement signed in May 2002 in Moscow by American President George W. Bush and Russia's President Vladimir Putin. The agreement is intended to significantly reduce the nuclear arsenal of both countries over the next 10 years. A Gallup poll conducted May 20-22, 2002, just before the signing of the agreement, showed that more than eight in 10 Americans approved it (82%). Only one in 10 Americans disapproved of the plan (11%).

The reaction of a bulk of Russians was moderate. For the Russians it is clearly a triumph for a White House operating from a position of overwhelming growth, and only a "virtual" victory for Mr. Putin who heeds something to show for the geopolitical concessions for the US since September 11, 2001. The treaty ratified what the Americans had already committed to, and that the Russians could not afford but to do. The signing of the treaty has not stopped the construction of the new US national missile defense system, which is now under way.

Similarly the new NATO-Russia Council (NRC) formed in May 2002 and the democratic title assigned to its participants, the NATO 20, while appearing on paper to be a major breakthrough, represent, in practice little change from the previous talking-show. Essentially Russia retains the right to vote on those issues for which there is mutual agreement, and not on those issues in which there isn't. The biggest change has been a noticeable increase in the level of politeness with which Russia should be ignored and, possibly, a new reason for existence for NATO.

The US missile initiative together with the expanding "war on terrorism" has forced the Russian government and parliament into sacrificing more for defense. The Bush's decision on that issue had been defined in Moscow as 'an untimely and irresponsible step, which could lead to weakening strategic stability and security in the world'.37 The structure of the Russian missile forces has been reviewed, and other amendments in the military reform plan were made.

As to the public opinion, the polls' data sound for itself: over a half of nation actually does not approve Putin's foreign policy! Thinking about this

37 We do believe, if Democrat Al Gore not Republican George Bush won the presidential elections in 2000, the outcome would be the same. Leon Fuerth, Vice-President Gore's national security advisor, speaking in July 2000 at the United States Institute of Peace, when questioned about Russia's resistance to U.S. plans for building a national missile defense program, said "the U.S. should not sacrifice its own national interests for the sake of Russia's".
figure, reader should count the tight control of news coverage of Putin's actions after September 11. According to our observations, there is no a large diversity of opinions at the national television channels which currently rather strictly follow the official line in their coverage of Russia’s foreign policy. The bulk of media comments defined the outcomes of November 2001 and May 2002 summits and the creation of NRC as successes of the Russian diplomacy. Critics of this policy (mainly from the left side of the political spectrum) had not much airtime.

When President Putin took office in 2000 the majority of Russians approved the way he was handling his job. Since that time his personal rating persists on a very high level, which incomparably higher than his predecessor ever had (around 70% of Russians are confident in the incumbent president according to numerous polls, in late 1990s only about 5% trusted Yeltsin). It means the majority of Russians keeps a favourable view to man, who promised to revive Russia’s dignity, status and might. But then why are they so critical concerning his 'concessions to the US'?

In our view, the poll’s results are understandable. Many of attitudes and phobias reflect both the paranoia of the Cold war and the nostalgia for the 'old good times' when the USSR was the second superpower and Americans respected its might and demands.\(^{38}\) The entire system of attitudes toward the USA and the West as a whole cannot change over night even under the pressure of September 11. Looking at the May and August/September 2002 polls' data, one may suggest that now the Russian public is more likely to view the US as an unfriendly state, to say at least. This point of view has over a half of respondents (Table 3). This is a remarkable shift back compared to the start of "war on terrorism".

**Table 3. The Russian public opinion about the USA as a friendly state in 2001-2002, %**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you feel that USA is an ally of Russia, is friendly, or is unfriendly, or is an enemy of Russia?</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unfriendly</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly state</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nationwide polls.

---

\(^{38}\) In November 1999 a majority of Russians didn't believe "Western countries are friendly towards Russia". 41.1% of respondents said "the West wants Russia to be a "Third World" state, to become dependent on developed countries". 37.5% thought "the goal of Western countries is to break down Russia, to destroy it as an independent state". 11.5% assumed that "Western countries are rendering political and economic support to Russia in order to prevent a global crisis". And only 3.7% of Russians said, "the West is doing everything possible to help Russia become a civilized and developed state". Data of the pubic opinion poll was conducted by ROMIR on November 13-14, 1999 by the national representative sample (N=1500) in 40 federal entities (160 sampling points).
Note: In the FOM poll carried out in March 2001 71% of respondents said the USA is the unfriendly state against 17% with opposite view. This was an immediate reaction on unfair decisions of judges and prejudice toward Russia’s sportsmen at the Olympic games in Salt-Lake –City, the USA.

Turning back to most recent Russian polls' data, we have to say that in late August 2002 over half of Russians (53%) did not favour the American intention to go on war in Iraq, Libya and Somalia. This attitude has not changed since 2001 when the same negative opinion was expressed by 66% in October 2001, 53% - in November 2001 and 57% in December 2001. One out of four (26%) supported the military actions against nations suspected for supporting terrorists. Only 22% said contacts with Iraq, Iran and North Korea must be cancelled. The majority of 57% agreed it is necessary for Russia to continue dialogue with countries enlisted in the 'axis of evil'. The dominant view is Russia should be neutral in the case of war in Iraq.

The bulk of nation rejected the "theory of punishment of the wrong government" that justified 'accidental but unavoidable collateral killings of innocent civilians'. In condemning the US military ambitions, Russians pointed to hidden (and far from noble) motivations behind the war on international terrorism and the unjustified character of the proposed preemptive strikes.

40 In the February 2002 FOM poll Russians were asked the question: "Some people consider Iraq to be an aggressive state, while others think it doesn’t threaten other countries. Which of these two views is closest to your own opinion?" Poll results showed there was no public agreement on this issue: 40% of those surveyed hold the first opinion, while 35% hold the second. However, if the USA starts military actions against Iraq as part of its fight against international terrorism, one-third of Russians (30%) would show sympathy for the “victims." Half as many of Russians (14%) said they would approve of military actions against Iraq. And almost half of those surveyed (45%) said they would feel neutral towards both sides if a military conflict takes place. According to the overwhelming majority (69%), Russia should remain neutral in case a military conflict breaks out between the USA and Iraq. As for the others, they are more likely to think Russia should support Iraq (12%), than the USA (7%) When respondents were asked if Iraq is friendly towards Russia, opinions split: 39% consider this state to be friendly, while 35% called it unfriendly. (From the FOM press-review on web released 28 Feb. 2002. Petrova A. "This is nothing to us" and "There is war in that country", [http://www.fom.ru/reports/frames/eof020802.html]).
41 The author has touched this topic in his work on Peacekeeping and National Interests (COPRI Working Paper 20/2001) describing the Russian position on NATO bombardments of Serbia during the war for Kosovo in spring 1999.
42 Ordinary people in various countries share this view. In many countries hopes for a more safety world are yielding to disappointment, bitterness, and fear as the US focused less on a hunt of Al Qaeda leaders and more on Iraq. According to Foreign Affairs (September 10, 2002), "even before international attention began turning to where to take the war on terrorism after Afghanistan, a December 2001 poll by the Pew Research Center and the International Herald Tribune found widespread unease among U.S. allies about American "hyperpower" and unilateralist tendencies. Whereas 70% of American respondents said the United States was taking allied interests into account, only 40% of foreign respondents agreed. And this skepticism was shared across regions:
The dominant view on Bush's war against Iraq in Russia does not differ from the opinion expressed by the president. As to plausible consequences of this possible Iraq war scenario, the following effect is most likely, in our view. Due to the ambivalent attitude toward Saddam's dictatorship in the Russian society, the American military action will not significantly affect Putin's popularity. While his criticism of the US in the case of the American attack against Iraq likely would be in muted tones, the hawks in the military and political establishment would strongly voice about the humiliation of Russia, take it for granted. It may lead to a rise of anti-American feelings among the part of the public and elite and a small increase of a number of those who blame Putin's "myopic policy of reconciliation with the West".

**Concluding remarks**

In many respects, the attacks of September 11, 2001 seem to have opened a new chapter in the world history. The United States is at "war". The US troops are sent overseas to fight against a far different enemy from any they have previously prepared to see. The definition of US national security has been globalized and widened to include homeland security. The broad international alliance was formed to fight what is perceived as a common threat. Yet one year after September 11, people from Europe to the Middle East, Asia and Russia are wondering how much in the world has really changed.

September 11 did not change the world much, at least from Russia's perspective. It altered many things, influenced the shift in the US-Russia and NATO-Russia relationships, but few in this country see it as an event akin to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Perhaps, US president George W. Bush hurried up and may be made a mistake when he chose to call his response to September 11 a "global war against terrorism". Because this "global war", if war it is, is one that may go on forever. Terrorists aim is political, not military.

Sympathy with the US was initially strong. But it is being eroded due to time and a US behavior, which is now considered as 'neo-imperial'. But in fact, the new American security and foreign policy doctrine is based on pillars of geopolitics inherited from the past.
Put it simply - the US unlimited war politics is becoming a factor jeopardizing global stability. Moreover, the American "global war on terrorism" is reviving and crystallizing deep-seated cultural, and ideological (if it’s a proper word to characterize a specific vision of the world order), differences between the United States and Russia. The Russian public opinion remains skeptical with respect to the US ultimate goals in this war. As the US opinion surveys’ data show the feeling of distrust to Russians and the suspicious look to Russia’s foreign and security policy is not disappeared in America either. The perceptions of nations, policies and external threats based on phobias rooted in the remote past are still influential forces.

The US focus has been shifting from Al Qaeda to Iraq. In Russia there is almost no support for a war with Iraq. There is a real concern in Russia that the manner of the US response on September 11 may be undermining the entire anti-terrorist international coalition, sowing disaccord between the USA and Russia, in particular. And - say it in plain words - Russians do not like how American president plays the role of the world sheriff. The rise of anti-Americanism in Russia and the entire world in the case of possible war in Iraq is a minor problem for President Putin of Russia, who can distance himself from President Bush of the USA. It is a big problem for Americans.

Day-to-day policy-making reacts to the immediate, and too often the focus of policy-makers is myopic. Certainly, the start of 'war on terrorism' brought remarkable changes in policies and public attitudes. But in many respects they have not changed so greatly. In early 1990s there was an impression that the arms race had halted forever, but today Russians believe it was a misimpression. After the US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty it became clear that Russia's strategic arsenal should be renovated. The Bush principle of pre-emption is already being adored and exploited by other world leaders who have their own devious uses for it. Pakistan is worried that India will pounce in the Bush manner. And Mr. Bush's soul mate, Vladimir Putin, just warned the UN that he might pre-empt rebels in neighbouring Georgia provoking a storm of anti-Russian sentiments in that country.

Interests are driving forces of politics. The national interest is not something that shifts back and forth from administration to administration or from crisis to crisis. If the September 11 attack really is the equivalent of the start of the World War III (some people like this metaphor), then it is not too early to begin thinking about what could be long-term geopolitical consequences of this new global civil war. Just as World Wars I and II produced new orders and divisions, so too might this war.

Furthermore, the author believes that it is no longer safe to presume that the entire system of international relations is going to develop in the way that even as recently as one year ago seemed obvious and clear. The new concepts emerging from the Bush administration's war on terrorism will form the world order in which the United States arrogates to itself the global role of setting standards, determining threats, and using force. These radical ideas could transform today's world order in a way that the end of the Cold War did
not. The future shape of world and that of Russia are profoundly in question, but for a lack of room this question is out of our consideration in this paper.

“History never looks like history when you are living through it”, said writer John Gardner. I'd like to end this paper with this quotation from John Gardner because it suggests how limited our view of the "war on terrorism" has actually been.

On September 12, 2002 the next year of the war on terrorism begins. The Russian perception of the American "war on terrorism" will change. But it will be another story.

Original in English

Dr Vladimir RUKAVIŠNJIKOV

RUSKO VIĐENJE AMERIČKOG "RATA PROTIV TERORIZMA": POUKE POSLE 11. SEPTEMBRA

REZIME

Razni istraživači smatraju da su pogrešne predstave koje su Sovjeti i Amerikanci imali jedni o drugima, posebno one koje su dolazile od političkih elita u obe zemlje, doprinela pogoršanju odnosa između Istoka i Zapada posle Drugog svetskog rata i razbuktanju trke u nuklearnom naoružanju. Autor smatra da i danas, u postkomunističkoj epohi, shvatanja i pogrešne predstave o bivšim neprijateljima i njihovim namerama ostaju faktori koji do izvesne mere utiču na kreiranje spoljne i bezbednosne politike u obe zemlje.

U članku autor istražuje rusku percepciju američkog "rata protiv terorizma" koji je počeo posle terorističkih napada na Svetski trgovinski centar u Njujorku i na Pentagon 11. septembra 2001. Studija je zasnovana na podacima iz anketa javnog mnijenja, zvaničnih dokumenata i poruka koje su javnosti prenete preko nacionalnih elektronskih i štampanih medija. Autor tvrdi da što se vremenski više udaljavamo od 11. septembra sve više ima smisla odvojiti osećanja i objašnjenja u prvim danima o onom što se dogodilo i zašto se dogodilo, od mišljenja javnosti o tome kakve treba da budu slediće političke akcije zasnovane na racionalnim procenama i nacionalnom interesu. Koncepcije o interesima, ukoliko se želi da one imaju ikakvu vrednost, trebalo bi da imaju trajniji karakter. Zbog toga takva pitanja kao što su zašto se Rusija pridružila antiterorističkoj koaliciji i zašto se Rusija ne slaže sa američkim predlogom o preventivnom napadu na Irak spadaju u domen ove analize.

Kao što ankete pokazuju u emocionalnom smislu 11. septembar je šokirao Ruse u istoj meri kao i druge nacije. Saosećanje sa Sjedinjenim Državama je u početku bilo snažno. Ali ono je sa protokom vremena erodiralo, posebno zbog američkog ponašanja koje se sada smatra "neoimperijalističkim". Po mišljenju Rusa nova doktrina američke bezbednosne i spoljne politike se zasniva na geopolitičkim stubovima nasledenim iz prošlosti.

Jednostavnije rečeno – američka ratna politika bez ograda postaje faktor koji ugrožava globalnu stabilnost. Štaviše, američki "globalni rat protiv terorizma" oživljava i učvršćuje duboko usadene kulturne i ideološke razlike između Sjedinjenih Država i Rusije. Rusko javno mnijenje je i dalje skeptično prema konacnim ciljevima ovog rata.

Središte američke pažnje se pomera sa Al Kaide na Irak. U Rusiji skoro da ne postoji podrška za rat protiv Iraka. U ovoj zemlji postoji stvarna zabrinutost da način na koji
Sjedinjene Države reagiraju na 11. septembar može podriti celu antiterorističku međunarodnu koaliciju, pri čemu se posebno ispoljava neslaganje između SAD i Rusije. Jednostavno rečeno – Rusima se ne sviđa kako američki predsednik igra ulogu svetskog policajca.


U dnevnom kreiranju politike se reaguje na ono što se neposredno dešava, a to se suviše često pokazuje kratkovidim. Početak “rata protiv terorizma” je svakako dovelo do značajnih promena u politici i javnim stavovima. Ali u mnogim aspektima se oni nisu tako mnogo promenili. Interesi predstavljaju pokretačku silu u politici. Nacionalni interes nije nešto što se pomera napred i nazad od administracije do administracije ili od krize do krize, kaže autor.