

The Future of U.S.-Russia Relations: Beyond 2012

PANEL TWO – INTERESTS AND VALUES

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[00:02:39]

THOMAS DE WAAL: I'm going to get us started. (Pause.) So welcome back, everybody. I am going to get this second session started. My name's Tom de Waal; I'm a senior associate here at the Russia-Eurasia Program. And I think our next panel really is a continuation of the first, but we – I'd like to focus more on this issue of values and interests and also on – to get some more practical ideas about what can – what can be achieved in the next four years.

And I think some of this is the sort of conversation about the conversation, a topic that's been alluded to in the first panel. Senator Shaheen quoted Chekhov; I'd like to quote Pushkin, who said – and I think this is always relevant when you're – Westerners are talking to Russia – he said: Of course, I despise my country from head to foot, but it hurts when a – when a foreigner feels the same way.

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And so we have three excellent panelists. Dmitri Trenin, who needs no introduction – our colleague, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center; Nikolas Gvosdev from the U.S. Naval War College; and Bob Berls from the Nuclear Threat Initiative, which I think is an initiative to contain nuclear threat, as I understand it, not to – (chuckles) – (laughter). And I'll try and limit them to under 10 minutes so we can get a very good discussion. And just one plea from me as a – as a non-nuclear person, that when you're talking about nuclear issues, please do spell out your – do spell out your acronyms for us so that the rest of us mortals can understand. Thank you.

Dmitri.

DMITRI TRENIN: Well, thank you, Tom. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's a – it's a great privilege and a – and a – and a pleasure. Tom has asked me to really confine my remarks to maybe five minutes so that we have more time for discussion. And then he asked me for a 15-seconds summary of what I'm going to say. And I'll say it: I believe that the values normally inform people's interests. There can be no wall between interests and values.

But whenever you do something, think about the impact. Think about what you plan to achieve in the end. Too often, the discussion of values is just a discussion. You do something, you say something, and then it stays there. Or you do something based on values, and it may – it may hurt some other interest that you have as part of your policy, but you're only focused on the values part of the – of the equation.

I think that there is no – there's no way that one can protect domestic politics from impacting on international relations, whether that is in the United States or in Russia. But there is a difference between stating values, and even standing up for values, and actively engaging on somebody else's domestic political turf. That's a difference simply. I'm not suggesting that this should not be done, but it's certainly a different situation that calls, in the realm of international relations, for all sorts of counterreactions and other things.

I believe that Russian domestic politics has become very much a fixture in the U.S.-Russia agenda. I don't think it will – it will – I don't think it will disappear from that. I think it's more likely to be enhanced as a factor impacting on U.S. policy toward Russia. And I think that the

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United States has become part of Russia's domestic politics, as was suggested in the previous panel, not necessarily as part of any foreign policy agenda but very much as part of the Russian domestic political agenda. If you have the chance of branding your political opponents as foreign agents, then you get something from it. And if you can show something and you can sort of prove that your opponents are getting financial support from abroad, then it's – then it becomes easier to try to send a message to the wider public that those people's – that those people are actually following somebody else's foreign policy agenda.

So I don't think that the question that was formulated as the – as the – as the – as the question for this discussion – for this part of the discussion has a positive answer. Pragmatism cannot prevail in the relationship. But neither would the opposite of pragmatism, idealism. I don't think idealism can prevail in the relationship. But there'll always be some dynamic in the relationship between pragmatism and idealism in the – in the U.S.-Russia relationship.

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The real issue is – and this is my concluding point – the real issue is whether the relationship – oh, let me put it this way – whether people in charge of the relationship or people even at a higher level – people who make foreign policy in the United States and in Russia – whether they can formulate a relationship with the other country in such terms that would help achieve the core interests of the relevant country or not; in other words, whether – if I use the Russian example – whether a Russian leadership can – or the Russian leadership of the day can formulate and strategize the Russia policy – or the U.S. policy in terms of helping achieve the most important interests on the Russian policy agenda, whether it's economic modernization, revival of science and technology and many other things – whether the United States policy is coached – is framed in that – in that way or not or whether – if I look at the U.S. side – whether the United States policymakers can find a slot for Russia in their global foreign policy agenda.

As things stand today, I don't think that this is – that this describes the situation. I don't think that Russian and U.S. foreign policy makers have consistent policies – consistent policy strategies toward the other country. And I would hope that the reset would be followed in the – because you can only reset the relationship once. If you have a software – if you need a – excuse me – if, having reset the relationship, you can come up with a better software for the relationship that would exclude the glitches that in the first place had made you reset the relationship, then you are on a forward or upward trajectory.

If not, which, frankly today seems more likely in both countries, you reach the plateau, after which you will – after a while you will start slipping from the plateau. And that could be a future for the relationship in the next four years, a future that I hope will not lead to some major problems, some major conflicts that would necessitate a new reset for the relationship. Thank you.

[00:12:03]

MR. DE WAAL: Short and succinct. Thanks, Dmitri – and Nik.

NIKOLAS GVOSDEV: Thank you. Let me just start by noting that since I am an employee of the Naval War College, my remarks here are my own personal opinions and certainly don't reflect any official position of the U.S. Navy or of the government in general. Let me start by

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sharing – Dmitri’s answer to the question that was posed, was can pragmatism prevail? And I would also start out with a negative answer, and say, at present, no, it can’t. And I’d like to illustrate the two illusions, one on both sides, which I think have prevented pragmatism from playing a greater role in the relationship.

On the Russian side, I think there is still an illusion, particularly in parts of the Kremlin, that a – you could achieve a level of partnership with the United States by which you could then get a free pass from the U.S. on various aspects of Russian domestic and foreign policy. And we’ve even heard it from the first panel and Tobi Gaudi’s (sp) question about Russians who look at the U.S.-China relationship and say, well, what we want is to have something similar, where we’re so valuable to the United States that then they will give us a pass on a variety of domestic and foreign policy disagreements.

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And I don’t think that that’s possible, in part because Russia’s own domestic and foreign policy interests preclude it from being able to offer such a partnership to the United States in the first place. And on the other hand, the cooperation that the United – or, Russia could offer the United States, while it is valuable to the U.S., is not worth so much to the United States, say, as the energy cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia traditionally has been, that you would have a willingness on the part of the United States to give that degree of a free pass.

So I think that if, after the experiences after 9/11, after the initial euphoria of the reset in 2009, I think that it is important for the Russian side not to enter into a post-2020 reassessment of relations with the United States thinking that this illusive level of partnership is available that would then give the Kremlin, and any Russian government for that matter, a free pass. I think as – I would completely agree with Dmitri’s – his opening point, that Russia has to expect and learn to live with a certain degree of U.S. domestic politics impacting the relationship. And part of what drives what U.S. domestic politics will be values issues. There’s no way to get around that.

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But from the U.S. side, there’s a similar illusion which I think is also problematic. And this is the illusion that Russia, in essence, has no choice but to cooperate with the United States and, therefore, the U.S. does not need to worry about putting pressure on Russia because Russia either has no options or has no choice. What we heard from this morning, and particularly from Senator Shaheen, is, yes, there are a number of areas where Russian and U.S. interests coincide and where cooperation is mutually beneficial.

I would argue that Russian interests drive it to cooperate with the U.S. in a number of areas, there’s a floor of cooperation. But that floor is still insufficient from the U.S. side. In other words, Russian interests will only take it to cooperate with the United States up to a point and then there’s a gap. And that is gap where, here’s the floor, this is where we would like to be. And therefore, there does need to be some incentive for Russia to have to increase its level of cooperation with the United States.

And what we have seen consistently is that there is an inverse relationship between the level of cooperation Russia is willing to give and the amount of criticism it will take from the United

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States. So U.S. policymakers therefore have to make their calculus: What level of cooperation do we want from Russia? What level – if we don't get cooperation from Russia – or let me reverse that. If we want to criticize Russia, what areas of cooperation are we willing, therefore, to give up in order to be able to criticize Russia on a whole host of domestic and foreign policy issues, and therefore live with those consequences?

To – and I think it's a perfectly acceptable strategic calculation from the American side to say, we don't think that cooperation with Russia in this area is worth the price of working with Russia. But you cannot have, as a basis for sound policymaking, this belief that Russia should cooperate with the United States because it's in Russia's interest to do so, and therefore we don't have to do anything to offer or make concessions to get Russian cooperation. We have to decide where we're willing to concede and where we're willing to stand the ground, and then to accept that there will be consequences from that decision.

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If both sides can move past these two illusions, then it is possible to have a more constructive relationship, avoid the plateau, which Dmitri has outlined, where you reach a plateau and then eventually the inevitable decline sets in. And there are a number of areas – and again, we've heard already from the morning two keynote speakers and from the first panel. I might point just to two, and these are not the only areas of cooperation, but two areas.

One is, of course, the continued work in space. The other is the development of the Arctic, the development of the Northern Sea route, the development of resources, making sure that ships and cargo can get through safely, that resources can be safely extracted and brought to market. These are two areas where there's immense areas for cooperation.

The problem that we've had in the U.S.-Russia relationship, and that even the reset of the Obama administration did not over – completely overcome, is that all of these areas of cooperation are subject to disruption by things that have nothing to do with the particular issue at hand. So for example, U.S.-Russia space cooperation was jeopardized because the U.S. and Russia did not see eye to eye on policy towards Iran.

So we had no way of insulating the areas of productive cooperation because at any given point – and Matt talked about this, about the insurance policy in his remarks in the first panel – we don't have the ability where leaders on both sides are willing to say, we have these disagreements here, let's prevent those disagreements from then negatively impacting cooperation.

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So for example, with the Arctic – Arctic cooperation would require closer military-to-military relations. It would require the Russian Navy and EMERCOM to work much more closely with the U.S. Navy and with the U.S. Coast Guard. Are we willing to fence in some of those areas of cooperation so that when you have the inevitable disagreements on Ukraine, on NATO expansion, on Georgia, the fallout from those disagreements doesn't then mean that well, because we had a disagreement on Georgia, now the mil-mil cooperation on the Arctic is interrupted because we have no way of insulating – we have no ring fence around it?

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And I think if – what we – I would end on this last point, that for the relationship to move forward in the next old/new presidential administrations in both Moscow and Washington, there will have to be a greater willingness to make some calls about the areas of the relationship that you're going to develop a ring fence around, that you're not – the Russian side isn't going to let the inevitable passage of a Magnitsky Act – which is going to happen – they're going to have to make some choices about where they're not going to let that impact the relationship on the U.S. side, similarly, where you're not going to have a fallout. Then you can let those areas of the relationship grow, develop, build the ballast, build the contacts and then, hopefully, that avoids Dmitri's (ph) plateau scenario where instead of sliding down at the end, you might actually begin to make incremental progress forward so that by 2016, 2018, we aren't going to be having this conference again – yet again to talk about two more presidential administrations and what ought to be the agenda for the future.

MR. DE WAAL: Nik, thanks very much (for both ?).

ROBERT BERLS: Thank you. I'd like to get specific about two areas of cooperation that have been around for quite a while, or at least discussions of them have been around for quite a while, and look at them in a context of where we might be able to make some progress in the coming years, as well as recognizing the great difficulties we face with dealing with these issues. And the two issues, both of which have been mentioned several times today, are missile defense, cooperation and the other is the future of the Nunn-Lugar program.

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First, a couple of words on missile defense. It's the issue we're probably most pessimistic about, and I think most people are. We've all acknowledged that this is an area that the U.S. and Russia should cooperate in. And for decades, we've tried various ways of finding – engaging in dialogues on how we could cooperate in missile defense. The most recent one is, of course, the current plan for the U.S. to deploy a European phased adaptive approach, as we referred to in Europe, that is, interceptors and radars in Europe and Aegis ships in the Mediterranean and the European waters.

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And it was a response to or followed on the heels of the Obama administration's rejection of the previous plan of the Bush administration. Early on, the Obama administration recognized the need to get Russia on board, and there was serious efforts on the part of the U.S., and I think, on the part of Russia to engage in a dialogue. Throughout this process, it was very clear that like so many other cases of attempted cooperation in the past, it was a U.S. lead on this. I remember having several discussions in the State Department with people involved in the discussions with Russia, and they kept saying, well – this is back in 2010 – well, we have given the Russians until December to get on board the train. The train's going to leave the station. You know, it's pretty hard to carry on a negotiation trying to find a cooperative way forward when one side is clearly driving that train and the other is regulated, perhaps, to the caboose. But we all know where we stand on joint missile defense cooperation. We've reached a deadlock over the issue of the Russians demanding a legally binding guarantee that the system being deployed in Europe will not pose a threat to Russia's strategic forces.

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And we've been stuck on this. This is a red line for Russia. They are concerned about two things – first of all, a great distrust of U.S. intentions, and secondly, also a great concern about future capabilities of U.S. interceptors that may not even be on the drawing boards at this point. We don't seem to be making much progress. When President Obama met with Prime Minister Medvedev in Seoul, you're all very familiar with the open mic case of talking about having more flexibility in a second administration on the issue of missile defense (it was presumed ?).

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Let me just venture one idea on cooperative missile defense and where we might be able to move forward, considering what Russia's concerns are and looking at some of the issues of the phased adaptive approach. As you know, those of you who are familiar with it, it's four phases. The last phase, which would be in about 2020, would end up deploying an interceptor, the SM-3 Block IIB, which is not even developed yet but would have some limited capability to intercept ICBMs. And the idea is that they would be intercepting ICBMs coming from the south, coming from Iran. The Russians are greatly concerned that this is the threat that would – this interceptor would pose a threat to their strategic systems.

I won't go into all the issues that are involved, our missile defense planning. Obviously there are budgetary issues, there are design issues, there are testing issues. There are questions of whether even Phase IV would be deployed. Well, let's posit a situation where we decide for tactical reasons, for budgetary reasons, Phase IV is something which we will not go forward with. Would this answer Russia's concerns? Perhaps. I've discussed this in Moscow recently with a number of experts, and they said, yes, that certainly would be – there would be a lot of noise, of course, around this, but yeah, that would probably be something acceptable. Well, obviously, there would be a lot of noise in this country too if we're – OK, we are not only abandoning Europe – which is not the case, because the first three phases fully cover the – Europe for protection from against any threats from the south – but they say you're also abandoning our own homeland protection. Well, then the possible option would be – and this has been discussed here in this country a little bit – is the actual deployment of a missile defense space here in the East Coast of the United States, with ground-based interceptors. It has a lot of questions, a lot of problems, very – much more expensive, certainly. It does provide, however, probably better coverage for the U.S. than the Phase IV would. It would allow the U.S. to take advantage of the radars we already have in the U.K. and Greenland, perhaps an additional radar site in the United States. So there are ways that we would be able to preserve our interests in terms of protecting the homeland, but also address some of the – may also maintain protection of Europe, but also maintain a dialogue with Russia and perhaps move – remove one of the threats.

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But then this takes us into another area, which is I think very important and something that was discussed in the previous panel: the need for a strategic dialogue. Because the European phased adaptive approach missile defense is one very, very small segment of what is eventually going to be a global missile defense system, and it's important that we start having that strategic dialogue with Russia. And as was discussed in the previous panel, I think on a multilateral basis, look at the missile – we're making as – a big deal of over this European system against – about missiles that don't exist and about a threat that still doesn't exist. But there are great concerns about what's going on, more accurately, in the Gulf, over much shorter-range threats to them; the Middle East – we've

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just seen what happened with Israel and Gaza recently; issues of missile defense in the Far East. So this is a very, very important issue that needs to be looked at a broader strategic perspective.

So I leave that at this particular point and go on to CTR, that is, the Cooperative Threat Reduction program known as – known as Nunn-Lugar. You all probably are very familiar with that program. It's been around for 20 years. Principally, it was set up in 1992 to address the threat of a rapidly decaying formerly Soviet infrastructure of missiles, warheads, chemical weapons, biological agents, and U.S. came through with billions of dollars over 20 years to dismantle, destroy, secure these very, very dangerous systems.

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Many of you may have heard that recently the Russian Foreign Ministry – (inaudible) – actually was in Kommersant announced that the Russian government did not intend to renew the CTR agreement, the CTR is – that is, Cooperative Threat Reduction umbrella agreement, the full name, which expires on June 13th of next year, and that it was fully capable of taking care of funding whatever remaining work needs to be done. And then it was followed up quickly by a statement by the Foreign Ministry, and in private conversations we heard that this news leak was a quote “unintentional leak” in Russia. I guess they have them, too.

Anyway, the foreign – Deputy Foreign Minister – (inaudible) – was very supportive. He said this – this agreement, we don't like it anymore. It doesn't fit out needs. And everyone here, I think, agrees with it. Twenty years have passed. It was set up at a time under very, very, different conditions, and there were provisions in there that were very favorable to the U.S. in terms of tax liability – I mean, taxes, liability and access to facilities. Much of the work has already been done; it's been a project shared by the Department of Defense, Department of State and the Department of Energy, but one of the big problems with this agreement – it set the – it set the framework for a very, very broad spectrum of cooperation, because many of the other agreements – the agency agreements were based on this agreement and took these very, very favorable conditions for the U.S. as provisions that would also cover their specific agency-to-agency relationships. So it's more than just cutting up submarines and blowing up old missiles; it also has to do with the entire program of the Department of Energy, and the State Department had a program – a lot of it having to do with scientist redirection.

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And so the big question – where do we go from here? Well, I was recently in Moscow; I had a lot of discussions with people over there, and everybody seems to indicate – and through private channels – to – that the Russians are interested in finding a way to continue this cooperation. It'll be in a very different form. There are, I guess, two – one immediate question and one long-term question. The immediate question is, what do you do about projects that are ongoing now and what happens on June 14th of next year when everything is supposed to end?

Well, the Foreign Ministry indicates that they are looking at perhaps two alternatives ways of addressing the problem. The first is the question of finding a way of not extending, but adjusting the existing agreement to give much more favorable conditions to Russia – just for these specific projects in order to get them – get them completed. And then the other is to let the agreement lapse and let existing agency-to-agency agreements be the framework for continuing the work on existing projects. The only problem is, most of these agency-to-agency agreements depend upon the CTR

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agreement and the provisions therein, so there are a lot of problems with it, but at least they're looking at trying to find ways of solving this short-term problem.

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But they're also looking at the long-term problems. Where do we go from here? And they have an interagency working group currently working in Moscow on avenues for progress looking forward. Now, I'm probably running over my time, but let me just make one or two more quick points on this. The – there have been discussions going on within the presidential commission that Matt spoke about, and through bilateral discussions with various agencies about, how do we take advantage of the very, very rich experience the U.S. and Russia has gained over these 20 years in nuclear security, nuclear safety issues, and how do we take this and apply it outside of the United States? And Senator Shaheen mentioned the possibility of a follow-on agreement looking at the cooperation in third countries.

And there has been a lot of discussion, a lot of nice words said; nobody has a – has a – has a concrete proposal, though. I must say, in deference to some of the work that's being done, that the Russians and the Americans are actually doing a cooperative program right now in Armenia in upgrading the safety of the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant; that's an area of nuclear safety, but they need to do work in nuclear security as well. There are many possible avenues for moving this forward: through the IAEA perhaps some joint task force could be set up through the – there's a lot of work that needs to be through the U.N. 1540 commission; many countries needing working security. So there are opportunities to cooperate. It would not require a broad – a long negotiation between the United States and Russia; this could be done through a presidential – a joint presidential statement or an executive agreement.

And finally, there's still the possibility of some cooperation within Russia in the area of training, in security culture, but this would have to take a very, very different form. So I think both countries are looking at this as the end of an era, also the start of a new era, but moving forward on this is going to be difficult. It will be one, I think, that will be fraught with a lot of traps. There are – just one final point. There is some – right now, an ongoing negotiation between the Department of Energy – the U.S. Department of Energy and Rosatom about developing a – or signing very soon an agreement on R & D cooperation that would allow for a resumption – a lot of the work that was done during the 1990s in lab-to-lab cooperation.

So this – and there's a lot to be done in Russia by American scientists. I mean, the Russians have some pretty advanced systems in nuclear energy that the Americans would like to be able to study, so it would be an exchange of scientists. The big caveat, I think, right now is this new law on treason. Will it so scare Russian scientists away from any cooperation that this type of – this R & D agreement will be an empty document? It's hard to say, but – I think there are opportunities out there, but it's going to be a tough slug forward making that happen.

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MR. DE WAAL: Bob, thanks very much for that. I'm going to pose a question in a moment, but I'm – I'd like to get five minutes at the end in which I hear from each of our panelists, sort of, one idea, big or small which that – let's imagine – it's going to happen sooner or later – a bilateral meeting between Presidents Obama and Putin, and if you were to give a briefing with one

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idea, small or large, ahead of that briefing – Bob, it could be a crystallization of something that you said – that – I’ll leave that till the end of our panel.

And I just want to kick off with a question, which is that we’ve talked a lot about relations with the Kremlin, but yesterday, Dmitri presented this report, which I urge you all to read, about the Russian awakening, about how Russian society is changing. And so my question is – Dmitri and his Moscow colleagues have this striking phrase about how the Putin administration has lost legitimacy in the eyes of more dynamic, potentially trend-setting segments of society, and thus lost its long-time pretense to rule on behalf of all Russians except for a handful of dissenters. So my question would be – I guess more to Dmitri and Nick – though – that segment of society, they’re probably looking for something different from the U.S. than the Kremlin is. Is there an agenda with them, empowering them, supporting them, and if so, what would it be?

MR. TRENIN: You want me to – Nick?

MR. : (Laughs.)

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MR. DE WAAL: Well, maybe there isn’t an agenda, maybe the best thing is to leave them alone – but the question deserves asking.

MR. TRENIN: No, absolutely, but I think it goes to the heart of the matter as we are discussing what is the impact that, in this case, the United States wants to achieve in Russia? And the idea is – I think this idea is widely shared in the United States – that the people who oppose present autocracy in Russia are, in fact, America’s genuine friends. And those people need to be empowered and those people need to be helped and those people are the future of Russia, and one should prepare for that future to become the reality in Russia.

Now, one of the things that we were saying in this report is that the Russian awakening actually has brought back to life – or brought back to the political arena people from all persuasions, from libertarians, Pussy Riot libertarians to Orthodox fundamentalists to Islamists in places like Tatarstan. When you see pictures of Moscow demonstrations, you are struck by the wide range of colors of the flags that people carry. You have the reds of the left front, you have the white black and yellow of the Monarchists – ultranationalists, in other words – you have the white flag of the Yabloko, you have the Communists, and when people march in Moscow, they march together, but sometimes they march in different columns. You have communists, you have nationalists, you have liberals, you have many other people.

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So that’s one thing to take into account. It’s not that there’s a liberal awakening that would live – that would lead to a liberal takeover of Russia. A liberal Russia is not going to be. A Russia that will be modern, will have many elements – a mosaic – there will be a certain balance between, let’s say – if I may use, for reasons of simplifying things – clarifying, maybe, things anyway – you have the Russian (tricolor ?), you can have the traditionalists or conservative white, you can have the red of the socialists or whatever – neocommunists – and then you would have the blue of the

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liberals. But they all – they all come together in one country. You will not have a country that will have one flag – one color flag. That’s passé; that’s history.

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And more importantly, I think, my second point would be that as soon as the United States becomes directly involved in Russian domestic politics, that may serve a useful purpose for the – for the people who want to continue with the status quo. It gives Mr. Putin and the Kremlin a very good opportunity to essentially brand everyone who is against them and is getting Western assistance, especially material assistance, as Western agents or U.S. agents whose task is to promote a U.S. foreign policy agenda in Russia. And this is something that is rejected by the protest community. But it’s – but the idea is sinking in among other people. So that is – that is something to consider.

When one – and this is my final word – when one tries to engage on somebody else’s domestic political turf, one has to have a lot of courage. And one has to be ready to accept the implications of it all.

MR. GVOSDEV: In looking at that question that you’ve posed and based on the report, I would have two cautionary points. One is not to confuse government-to-government relations with relations between societies. And I think sometimes when that is put forward, there’s this sense of – that it’s an all-or-nothing. And again, when we look at developed relations between the U.S. and other countries, you can have good government relations even as the U.S. and elements within U.S. civil society are engaging with elements there. So that would be the first.

The second is – it’s, again, a reminder about not overpersonalizing the relationship. And of course, every U.S. administration comes in promising that it’s not going to overpersonalize, and then it ends up personalizing the relationship with whoever happens to be in the Kremlin at the time. And we actually have a unique opportunity because I think that we’ll break that paradigm come January 2013, because you will not have an overly personalized relationship between Obama and Putin the way you did between Obama and Medvedev.

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With that in mind is that there are certain enduring interests between countries that, even as governments change and even when societies go through major upheavals, they can continue. And so for me – keeping in mind, I guess, the point of comparison would be the U.S. relationship with South Korea, where when you had democratization and liberalization in South Korea and people came to power, they didn’t upend decades of institutions that had been forged between more authoritarian governments in South Korea and the United States, because you had institutional ties; you had interests in place.

And partly I think we need to pursue greater institutionalization of a relationship, because let’s say – even if you got – you know, by whatever change, you got a color revolution, you got a major change in political power in Russia – you would still be faced with the day after of a very thin basis for a U.S.-Russia relationship – so that even if you got, come 2017, a very – and you know, a completely pro-Western, liberal government in Moscow that would be prepared to move very differently, you wouldn’t have anything in place for that relationship to develop.

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So the idea of somehow we're going to wait until Russia changes its form of government and personalities change in the Kremlin before we're going to engage is not really a recipe for building a stronger relationship. I think we need to have – to pursue the development of these areas of cooperation, and we'll all give you our big ideas at the – in the last five minutes. And that should be regardless of who's in the White House or who is in the Kremlin at any given point. And hopefully because the value of those – of those institutions would be proven, that when you have changes in the White House and you have changes in the Kremlin, that you would not see changes in the relationship because it would be grounded in something more solid.

And I think we really do need – you know, this is, again, the opportunity we have beyond 2012 to try to move out of the dynamic that every U.S. president and Russian president has a relationship that does not survive the end of their presidential terms. The fact that we have not had – you know, going – and you know, Matt's monograph on this, I think, was very telling, that – you know, why the Shultz-Shevardnadze commission did not become permanent, why every new U.S. president and Russian president reinvents the wheel. We have to move away from that dynamic. Otherwise, as I said, we're going to be having this – we'll have this conference again in 2016, and we'll be lament – just as we were having these conferences in 2008, 2004 and 2000. And then why is it that we don't move forward?

[00:45:38]

So engaging with society – certainly we want to be open to that. But I think we can't lose sight of the fact that there's a government-to-government relationship that has to be built that is independent of the personalities of who happens to staff the government in any given point.

MR. DE WAAL: Excellent.

MR. : (Off mic.)

MR. DE WAAL: (Chuckles.) OK. Good. Thank you.

Let me open it up. We've got about 20 minutes, just under. I'll take – I'll start at the back and take maybe three questions, right at – right at the back.

Q: (Off mic.)

MR. DE WAAL: Could you – could you speak a bit – speak a bit louder, or –

[00:46:25]

Q: Thank you. Yeah, can you hear me? Yeah. Giorgio Liberti (sp) from the Italian Embassy. I have a question for Dmitri Trenin. We've heard that – I mean, we know that PNTR is going on, and the Magnitsky Act as well is going on. We heard different views about the Russian reaction. I want to know what you think will be the Russian reaction. You think that this will impinge on the whole relationship between U.S. and Russia, and so give a negative start, let's say, to the second Obama mandate? Thank you.

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MR. DE WAAL: Thank you.

I'm going to take another one. Who – yeah. Keep – staying at the back. OK, well, doesn't matter. We can – (scattered laughter) – whichever order; you'll all get your turn.

[00:47:13]

Q: Mike Scanlon with the House Foreign Relations Committee. I have a question as to the importance of the Eurasian Union to the vision of the Russian awakening or also to – the implications for it as a subject of – we've been talking about Russia-U.S. relations. Does that limit the ability to the United States to have an independent relationship vis-à-vis Ukraine, Belarus or similar countries? Thank you.

MR. DE WAAL: Thank you.

And the gentleman we just had, with the beard – just – OK. We've got two microphones.

Q: Paul Schwartz Rand (ph). I'm going to pick up on some of the other questions, but I don't think this has been answered specifically, which is: How do you think the increased instability and questioning of the system is affecting the current government's foreign policy and how it's – is it changing it? Is it changing the nature of it? Is it moving them more toward sort of – let's say – call them a – sort of a nice isolationist to try and cut themselves off? And how much of a factor is that now, you think, in comparison to other things going on?

MR. DE WAAL: Sure.

So who wants to –

MR. : He has a – you have a specific question – (inaudible).

MR. TRENIN: OK. Well, I think I – to the first question, I think that we've seen at least some elements of the Russian reaction to the Magnitsky Act, even though it's still not – it's – it has not yet completely become law. It's on the way getting there. I think that people expect it – people in Russia – the Russian government expect it to become law. They have no illusions about that. So we've seen a number of measures restricting U.S. access to Russia – U.S. government's access, but broader U.S. access to Russian society. And the law on treason has been mentioned, restrictions on the Russian NGOs, many other things that may have been introduced anyway as part of a policy that I call sovereignization – doing away with the vestiges of the 1990s, when Russia was the recipient of Western, European, American aid and all that.

[00:49:28]

But the Magnitsky Act, when it's – when it becomes law, will have some token Russian reaction. There will be, I think, a similar law passed by the Russian Federal Assembly. Like the U.S. law, it will be largely symbolic. You don't need a law, frankly, to bar certain personalities from going beyond immigration, both in – at Dulles, or Kennedy, wherever. So the law is essentially a political thing. It – and it's understood as such in Russia. There will be a political thing will be, again, of political value – no other value other than political value in Russia. And I hope that the Russian –

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the Russian policy will be to try to contain it there. There's no value for the Russian government to push it beyond where it is.

[00:50:30]

I'm not so sure about the United States. And frankly, I believe that in the next several years, as developments within Russia will be – political development will become more dynamic, there will be more spillover from the reaction to those developments here in the United States, to the U.S.-Russian relationship. But this is, again, the reality that the Russians will have to live with and, you know, there are not too many things that you can do about it.

If I can very briefly answer the other two questions on the Eurasian Union. I think a lot will depend on what the Eurasian Union will be. If it's an economic arrangement – essentially leading to a single economic space with the name, freedom of movement for capital labor, whatever – then it will impact somewhat on the U.S. relationship with Kazakhstan, I think. Belarus, I don't believe that there's a very lively relationship between the two countries at this point, nor do I expect it to become more active.

But Kazakhstan will be – I believe will be very careful not to let the Eurasian Union limit Kazakhstan's sovereignty. So it's likely to be an economic enterprise. There's one caveat here: Mr. Putin is very eager to get Ukraine within the customs union and eventually into this process of Eurasian economic integration. But the thing is that it's – this – his wooing of Kiev is unlikely to get any positive response from Ukraine, which I believe understands, and understands correctly, that economic integration with Russia is likely to put an end to the Ukrainian project.

If you come – if a country like Kazakhstan moves closer to Russia, Kazakhstan will still stay Kazakhstan. If Ukraine comes too close to Russia, it may become little Russia at the end of the process. And that is well-understood by the people, whether they are in eastern Ukraine or western Ukraine or in Kiev. I don't think that this will – this will become the reality.

[00:53:16]

There will be some competition, I think, then inevitably between Russia and the United States in the post-Soviet world. The Russians will be very sensitive to that competition. I frankly believe that the United States does not think that any enhancement of Russia's influence in the former Soviet Union – whether it's economic, cultural or any other influence – is a good thing. And that would – that leads to friction, that leads to Russia's – the Russian government's view of the United States as a – as a geopolitical competitor in the former Soviet Union and all these things.

And very lastly, whether the increased instability could have an impact on Russia's foreign policy, it might. I think that the impact so far has been very – pretty limited. I don't think that Russia has a – has changed its basic approach to the United States and Europe very much beyond ceasing to look at the U.S., or particularly Europe these days, as a model to emulate sometime in the future – especially Europe. There's been a very big reassessment of Russia's view of Europe in the last few years.

But if stays at the present level, if Western criticism stays at the present level, I don't think that Russia will become alienated from the West – United States and Europe. If, however, one

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believes that a common front could be built to seriously pressure the Russian leadership on a number of fronts, using the Magnitsky bill not as a – as a means to make a political statement but as a real policy tool, and expand on it and essentially apply pressure on both Russian officials and Russian assets associated with Russian officials in the United States and in Europe, that could lead to a more isolationist policy from Moscow.

And that could lead to Russia reorienting its policy away from the West. Whether it will be to anyone's benefit apart from Russia, apart from the United States or Europe, it's too early to tell. But Russia would certainly change its course. It's not the case now, nor do I think is it – is it likely. But there is some possibility that this may be the future.

[00:56:07]

MR. GVOSDEV: I see the question of the Eurasian Union, in a way, as kind of a reverse or alternate Magnitsky process, in that the U.S. default position is we would not like to see the Eurasian Union at all, in any form. And that's not probably realistic. So the question is, is – for U.S. policy, what kind of Eurasian – closer Eurasian cooperation would best serve U.S. interests?

And I think if we – the U.S. sort of sees it in that light, which is not trying to stop this from happening altogether but strengthening elements in Kazakhstan that will, of course, for their own interests want to keep – make sure that the Eurasian Union isn't a threat to sovereignty, recognizing that we're not going to stop trade and economic and cultural links between Russia and Ukraine, but again ensuring that Ukraine can stand and retain its separate status, then I think you could avoid this from becoming a flashpoint – too much of a flashpoint in the U.S.-Russia relationship.

But if the U.S. position is going to be to try to prevent this from happening altogether, then that could be an area for conflict in the future. Link to that into Lowell's (sp) question, I think that there is somewhat of a link between the growth of the Eurasian project and some of the political instability.

And one only has to look at the trajectory of Putin's own statements regarding Europe from the last – over the last 12 years – versus 2000, being very pro-integration into Europe, being a part of Europe, and now talking – he's not given up the idea that Russia is a part of Europe, but the Eurasian Union is try to recast or renegotiate Russia's interaction with Europe as Russia, one country, coming to the European Union of many countries and instead talking more about EU to EU in a way that there's the European Union and the Eurasian Union. And together they create greater Europe.

[00:58:06]

So I do think that some of that is this kind of inward turning away from it. And as we saw from the impact of prime minister – or Chancellor Merkel's visit to Moscow, very interesting in that on the one hand it kind of demonstrated the strength of the institutional relationship between Russia and Germany, but it also showed that there are frictions developing. And the frictions are developing over the values issues, primarily, not the economic ones. The business leaders are getting along well. They're going ahead with joint projects.

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But the values issue has come back on the agenda. We'll see what happens with Hollande and his future encounters with Putin. Again, you know, Sarkozy was willing to kind of downplay some of the values issues in his relationship, and now the French may be more willing to put those back on the table as well. So I do think that there is some degree of a link between internal instability and the feeling of the Russian government or the Kremlin feeling more vulnerable, and then a desire to kind of diminish the Russian dependence on Europe, or at least to find some alternatives.

[00:59:14]

MR. BERLS: Just one quick comment – and this, again, bringing it down to the grassroots level in terms of how Russians are reacting to the state of U.S.-Russian relations and internal problems within the country. And this is – again, it's rather abstract, but it's something that I've been sensing and colleagues have been sensing over the past couple of months, and this predates the treason law, is that there has been a growing sense of anxiety and caution on the part of scientists and people in the – in various institutes, to engage with Americans on – in new areas. I think there's a caution. There's a feeling that they're waiting for a signal and until they – until that comes, they're not going to exert any initiative whatsoever. It almost reminds me of some of the mentality of the Soviet period, to be honest. But it certainly is a change from the way it was during Medvedev.

MR. DE WAAL: Thank you.

We do have Bob on the panel. Is there any – before we move to the conclusion, is there any specific question to Bob on his presentation on nuclear issues? He certainly deserves one, but maybe – (laughter).

MR. BERLS: I covered everything.

MR. DE WAAL: OK. He answered it all. In that case, I would – OK, sure.

Q: (Off mic.)

MR. DE WAAL: Just – sorry, wait for the microphone.

Q: (Inaudible.) Just your thoughts on, you know, next steps. I mean, is there anything we can do on your areas of working cooperatively, et cetera? I mean, do you have any – a few comments to make, but any advice to pass on to those of us who are interested in making sure the numbers get down and more cooperation and protections, et cetera? Thank you.

MR. DE WAAL: That actually makes a nice segue to our – my exam question, so can I just use that to start with you – (inaudible)?

MR. BERLS: OK. Well, I have a – (inaudible) – (where I speak to your wife?). (Laughs.)

[01:01:22]

Rose Gottemoeller, acting undersecretary of state, for those of you who don't know – (laughter) – her advice – actually, you know, the – we've had a number of discussions. There – right now I think a lot of this is in the – in the hands of the Russians. Deputy Foreign Minister Ryabkov will be here at the beginning of December and will be meeting, I know, with Rose and with other

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officials on how to move this forward. And it's just – pretty much the ball is in their court in how they want to move this forward. I mean, there are a lot of ideas on our part, and I've raised a number of them. But the big problem always is, oh, this is another U.S. initiative. You know, do we really need this? Do we really want this? So we really need to hear from the Russian side what do they really want. And it's – in our discussions with them, it's sometimes very hard for them to articulate anything specific. They know what they don't want, but it's hard to see what they want. And what we're hearing from Moscow is any future cooperation will probably be on an ad hoc basis. That's kind of all that we're getting at this particular point. I would hope that there is going to be something more specific, more ideas coming out of this.

[01:02:40]

And to answer the bigger question, is this something that the presidents could discuss? Sure. I mean, they did this with the presidential commission, and Matt very eloquently spoke about this earlier. And I see the same problems that you, Matt, with this. For example, in – there's a committee on nuclear safety and nuclear security. And if you look at the agendas, they're like this. The interests of the United States is on nuclear security. We want to go in there and help Russia and tell them what do, and maybe we'll cooperate in (foreign ?) countries.

The Russians are really not interested in that. They're interested in the nuclear safety issue and nuclear power. (Inaudible) – is a state corporation, and their principal motive is profit. So you've got very, very increasingly different views on how you cooperate and how you bring these two together. It's difficult. It's not impossible. There are certainly shared interests in both areas. But we've got to work really hard to try to make that happen.

[01:03:44]

MR. DE WAAL: Thank you. I'm going to wrap up now. And I'm just going to give our final two speakers a final word and, hopefully, a kind of positive recommendation to leave us with.

MR. : Yeah. I think on the positive side there's so much that can be done in the Arctic, it's – and it's not to overhype the Arctic, but this is an area where, first of all, there's – because the opening of the Arctic post-dates the end of the Cold War, there are no Cold War legacy issues, you know, about the Northern Sea Route and other things. It's an area where you can get on-the-ground cooperation moving up. It does not hit any of these other contested issues. It's an area where the NATO-Russia relationship, which has been moribund again, can revive because, you know, now that Norway and Russia and have settled their boundary issues, there's no flash point there. The Arctic Council is functioning as it should. And one of these – one of the problems, of course, is that when you have successes, is that they're not trumpeted as much. But – and that's a forum where Russia and the United States feel very comfortable working because it's a multilateral format, and it's not – Russia has as much of an equal right to set the agenda as the United States so it allows them to work together, you know, then of course, it allows Russia to leverage its, you know, good relations with Canada and other areas. So the Arctic – and there are so many of these other areas to spill over, the energy dialogue, the security cooperation, military-to-military contact, so that our militaries – you know, the fact that – you know, just from my side on this – the fact that Russian officers spend – are going to spend time in China, and they know their Chinese counterparts because they do things, exercises with them – they don't know their American counterparts. These – and we're back to, you know, this point about personal relationships.

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The Arctic is an area where you can get personal relationships at all levels of government, you can get the economic ties going, the state companies, private companies, U.S. investors, Exxon Mobil with Rosneft – there's so many areas where this could be done, and where these – the contentious issues that we've heard about in so many areas – this is – Arctic is one area where they can be somewhat insulated, and you can move forward to develop the habits of cooperation. I know that, you know, Matt and I have had many discussions, but what happens when Afghanistan ends? Because that's an area of good cooperation, but it ends in 2014, and thereafter we need a replacement project that can move the habits of cooperation forward. And so I nominate the Arctic as the best candidate, where we're going to – where we can see this positive cooperation move forward, and where the inevitable negative issues of other parts of the relationship can be kept at a minimum.

MR. GVOSDEV (?): Thank you, well, I'm not sure Afghanistan does end in 2014, but that's for another day, but Dimitri, final word from you.

[01:06:37]

MR. TRENIN: Well, I think that most that needs to be done should be done and can only be done unilaterally, the Russians strategizing about their own country and how they manage and how they reach to a new level, and what they need from the outside world to make that happen, and what they need from the United States to make that happen. And that would help the Russians formulate a policy toward the United States that would be just the opposite what – to the formula that Bob Berls has just used. We know what we don't want; we don't know what we want. You know, we're not – we now have to develop a list of things that we want in the world, what we want from the United States. And that would – could be the foundation for Russia's policy toward the United States.

I would imagine that something like that could happen in the United States on a much, much, much smaller scale – where does Russia fit in the world? And I find, like so many others, I find it, let's say, mildly abusing that the United States Asia-Pacific policy does not overtly include Russia. It doesn't serve the United States very well, frankly.

If a place, assuming the place for the Russia relationship could have – could be found within the broader scheme, a broader strategy of United States foreign policy, then the United States could have an approach toward Russia that would have a better chance of meeting with Russian, serious Russian collaboration.

[01:08:19]

But the question that I'm always struggling with in audiences in Washington, you – this audience was polite enough not to ask that question – but it's on many peoples' minds: Does Russia matter? And I think my answer to that question would be, the more Russia matters to Russians, and this is the whole business of Russian awakening, the more Russia matters to the world – which could be the result, the medium to long-term result of the Russian awakening – the more it will eventually matter to the United States. And I don't see a shortcut here, frankly.

And very finally, if I were, you know, pushed real hard against the wall and asked, well, what is it that you can – you know, what you can propose to the leadership that could be affected

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immediately, I would say, you have this – Matt talked about it – the bilateral presidential commission; it's fine, it's a working tool, it's a working instrument, it's your executive body, but what you actually need is a brain behind it or above or whatever behind that body. A strategizing brain which does not exist, and I would – I would very much like the two presidents to agree to a point, you know, a committee, a commission, a group of people – eminent, independent people where this – with stellar reputation to discuss the things that Tom Graham discussed – strategic dialogue between the United States and Russia.

It does not exist; you cannot rely on the State Department and the MFA to engage in that dialogue. The two presidents are too busy to spend any amount of time on actually doing that dialogue; they need some proposals, some suggestions from others, and that could – that dialogue could help ease the relationship dealing with some of the current issues. I don't think that the United States and Russia are that far apart on Syria, frankly. And I see many of the – many of the things that I read about in the Russian media or in the U.S. media regarding the other country's foreign policy as wildly off the mark, to be very charitable about it.

[01:10:51]

And something could be – could be done on the current issues, but more broadly – more importantly, the group could come up with suggestions about the projects that the two countries might engage in, and the president – the bilateral presidential commission will have some guidance. So those could be the guys who would be giving guidance via the two presidents to the bilateral presidential commission. So, eminent personalities with full confidence of the two presidents and enjoying easy access to both of them could be a modest but hopefully helpful start. Thank you.

MR. DE WAAL: Great. Thank you so much; Matt's going to finish off with a couple of final words, but I'd like to thank our panel for a great discussion. (Applause.)

MR. ROJANSKY: Thank you – thank you very much, Tom. You're just the first of a long list of people that I couldn't fully list to thank for making an event like this happen, but in particular, Ambassador Collins, Jessica Matthews, all of our panelists – Ann (sp) and Jake (sp) have been scurrying around with microphones – and the team here at Carnegie.

[01:11:53]

I just want to say, by way of closing observation, that, you know, we've had to be satisfied over the last with – each time we sort of bring our brilliant think-tank ideas up to people in the government with the sort of answer, well, wait till after X – you know, after this election, that election after this thing ends. You know, the hibernation period is now over. I think that's clear, and – you know, if what we're feeling – call it a thaw of some kind, premature spring, or just, sort of, the songs of the chirping of the birds and the squirrels – I mean, that's the role – the humble role that we experts play, but it's now long past time, I think, to awake and to see how much the world around this relationship has changed, because one thing is fundamentally true about this relationship that hasn't been as true in the past, is that it's intimately linked to the wider global realities, whether you talk about Asia, the Arctic, changes in the strategic landscape, or indeed, changes in the global economy. And I think those are the things – we have to see those connections much more clearly.

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In order to do that – let me just flag a couple of things for those of you who are interested. Friday we have a lunchtime discussion on Russia and China led by Harley Balzer and Yukon Huang from Carnegie here; it's going to be very fact-rich. I've already seen Yukon's slides – they're fantastic. And then – and then early next year, we're going to be doing a big conference on the Arctic under the framework of our Euro-Atlantic security initiative, which many of the folks here have been intimately involved in. And of course, Carnegie has this world famous, every-two-years nuclear policy conference, which I hope you'll all register for. So thank you once again for coming, and thank you to my colleagues.

(Applause.)

(END)