

## **ROSSIYA V GLOBALNOI POLITIKE**

### **“RUSSIA AND THE WEST: IS CONFRONTATION INEVITABLE?”**

#### **Sir Roderic Lyne**

The last two issues of Rossiya v Globalnoi Politike have featured a rather agonised debate about the tensions in relations between Russia and (for want of a better term) “the West”, with notable contributions by Foreign Minister Lavrov, Sergei Karaganov, Alexei Arbatov and, from Washington, Thomas Graham. I would like to enter a view from a corner of the European Union.

It is instructive to compare today’s situation with that of six or seven years ago. As the new millennium opened, there was a much more optimistic mood in the world. Writing in the year 2000, David Gergen, a former adviser to Presidents Clinton, Reagan and Nixon, began his book “Eyewitness to Power” with the words: “It is just possible that we are living at the dawn of a new golden age.” He discerned political, economic, scientific and cultural forces which “could lift future generations to the distant, sunny upland envisioned by Woodrow Wilson, where people celebrate ‘with a great shout of joy and triumph’”. One would have to be a fantasist to write in such terms today, in the wake of 9/11, the debacle in Iraq and wider turmoil from the Near East through Iran and Pakistan to Afghanistan, or of the fast-rising concerns about climate change.

Russia was one of the reasons for Western optimism. Russia rebounded rapidly from the 1998 crash. In his first three years in office, President Putin established strong relations with all the major Western leaders and did much to restore Russia’s international reputation. An important part of his message was that Russia was keen to develop its international business links and to attract foreign investment: Russia wanted to become a significant actor in the global economy, and a member of the WTO. The greater stability within Russia was welcomed; and there was applause for the skilful macroeconomic policy and the significant steps being taken to reform and restructure the economy. The

main irritant in our relations was the way in which the war in Chechnya was prosecuted (although there was and is no sympathy in the West for Chechen terrorism).

Chechnya apart, a new level of trust and cooperation was established between Russia and the West. Russia's prompt and supportive reaction to the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001 reinforced this trust.

The mood in late 2007 could scarcely be more different. Russia and the United States are at odds over missile defence (which President Putin compared in Lisbon to the Cuban missile crisis – the most threatening moment of the Cold War); and also over the CFE Treaty and the agreement on intermediate nuclear forces. There are serious disagreements over Kosovo and Iran. The German Chancellor has used the word “unacceptable” to describe Russia's handling of Belarus. The French President has accused Russia of playing its trump cards in energy “with a certain brutality”. Russia has unprecedentedly blocked OSCE monitoring of the Duma elections. Meanwhile President Putin has complained that the United States has “overstepped its national borders in every way” and is acting in a way which “inevitably encourages a number of countries to acquire weapons of mass destruction”. Foreign Minister Lavrov (in his article in your last edition) described “a situation that can hardly be perceived as other than re-establishment of a cordon sanitaire West of the Russian borders...Various attempts are being made to contain Russia”. On 10 October General Patrushev of the FSB went a step further, claiming that “politicians thinking in the categories of the Cold War ...in a number of Western nations” were “hatching plans aimed at dismembering Russia”.

Self-evidently, the trust that existed up to 2003 has evaporated. Is the present fractiousness a stage in the development of our relations – or a fundamental parting of the ways? Is it in the interests of Russia and of Western Europe that we should be so deeply divided? What are the prospects for re-establishing more constructive relations?

### **Why have relations gone sour?**

In his article “A New Epoch of Confrontation” (Rossiya v Globalnoi Politike no. 4 [?]), Sergei Karaganov argued with his customary lucidity that the West and Russia were now in a new confrontation which differed from, and risked becoming even more dangerous than, the Cold War. The West, he says, has given up hope of turning Russia into an allied state and is thinking of “neo-containment”. In the preceding edition, commenting on reactions to President Putin's Munich speech in February, Alexei Arbatov asked: “Is a New Cold War Imminent?”

Some politicians and commentators in both East and West have been only too happy to resurrect the spectre of the Cold War. It makes an easy newspaper headline. (One British journalist not known for his love of Russia has brought out a book entitled “The New Cold War And How To Win It”.) I agree with Karaganov and Arbatov that analogies with the Cold War do not stand up to any serious scrutiny and should be dismissed. The cardinal features of the Cold War were ideological conflict; the perception of a direct military threat from the Soviet Union to the West and vice versa; proxy conflicts, in

which the USSR and the West took opposing sides in regional wars and disputes in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America; the subjugation of the states of Central and Eastern Europe to the Warsaw Pact and CMEA; and the isolation of the Soviet system from the capitalist world (with low levels of trade, different economic systems, and narrowly controlled exchange of information and human contact). Not one of these features exists today.

From my Western European perspective, I would attribute the malaise principally to five elements:

First, irrational though it may be, the legacy of the past ineluctably colours the relationship. Historical emotions ingrained in the mindset of our peoples can be aroused with the greatest of ease by events – the poisoning or shooting of political opponents by persons unknown, missiles falling on neighbouring countries, bitter arguments over war memorials. These are serious matters in their own right, but their political effects are magnified by history (and all too readily manipulated by politicians and polemicists). The very word “NATO” has inescapably negative connotations in Russia. When Russia and Estonia came to blows over the Tallinn war memorial, it was not difficult for a third party to understand the deep grievances on both sides. It is not only in relations with Russia that we have to contend with the legacy of the past. One could quote hundreds of examples from around the world. The events of 90 years ago still have a bitter effect on Turkish/Armenian relations and have recently disrupted US/Turkish relations. The partition of Ireland happened in 1922; the UK and Republic of Ireland joined the EEC together in 1972; but the Republic is one of the few countries to which the British sovereign has not paid a State Visit in her long reign. One could cite France and Algeria; Japan and China (and the Yasukuni Shrine); Japan and Korea; Germany and Poland or the Czech Republic; and so on, almost ad infinitum. The real Cold War ended only half a generation ago. The memory will linger on for at least a generation hence.

The Russian people are reacting also to a yet more recent memory, which is under-appreciated in the West: the pain, destabilisation and humiliation of the 1990s. Their political system collapsed (which a majority welcomed), but without a ready-made alternative (to this day). Their economy collapsed, twice, which was painful and frightening. Their empire and country, previously a proud superpower, collapsed almost without warning, losing two fifths of its population and much of what was previously regarded as the heartland. They were sent food parcels and economic and political advisers. These nightmarish experiences happened only in the last decade, under what they were misleadingly told was a system called “democracy”.

Westerners ought not to be surprised at the yearning of the Russian people to regain respect, strength, independence and “sovereignty” – a yearning which has been both reflected and directed by their political leadership. Nor should the West be surprised if Russia’s leaders tend to exaggerate their country’s renewed strength (much as Khrushchev vastly exaggerated the USSR’s nuclear capabilities and economic potential in the 1950s). It took other former imperial powers (the UK, for example) fully half a century to adapt psychologically to their loss of status and to find a new equilibrium.

Most of Russia's population, and all of its leaders, were well into adulthood in Soviet times. Of course this affects their outlook on the world (just as British leaders in the 1950s still thought in terms of Empire and of membership of a global "Big Three"); but this does not mean that Russia can or will go back to the Soviet Union.

Second, we are paying a price for disappointed expectations on both sides – expectations which arose through naivety, ignorance and lack of understanding; and disappointment which has been exacerbated by ancient suspicions. Solzhenitsyn has called this "the clash of illusory hopes against reality".

In "Getting Russia Right" (Carnegie Endowment, 2007), Dmitriy Trenin recalls that: "the idea, popular in the 1990s, that Russia would be integrated as a full-fledged member of the Western community inspired Russian democrats and their partners in Europe and America...Hopes were raised of a new Marshall Plan, early NATO membership, and some sort of a progressively tighter association with the EU....In the 1990s, when Russian elites wanted integration in principle, they dreamed of an instant accession to a position of prominence in each and every club they were seeking to join. Instead of going through obligatory and tedious homework on the path to joining, they hoped to use networking to reach a master deal with American and European elites. This approach went nowhere."

There is now a strongly-rooted belief in Russia that the West deliberately spurned the opportunity to embrace and integrate Russia; offered no help; and sought instead to exploit Russia's weakness. Karaganov reflects this perception when he says that "when Russia was weak, it was not invited to join the "club" of Western democracies". So does Solzhenitsyn (in his interview with Der Spiegel of 23 July 2007) in lamenting that the West refused Russia's helping hand after 9/11. Arbatov complains that Putin's major step towards Washington after September 11 was rewarded by US withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, the liquidation of large Russian oil concessions in Iraq, and NATO's Eastern advance.

This is a myth. There were certainly large helpings of naivety and wishful thinking in Western attitudes to Russia in the early 1990s, and much of Western behaviour will have come across as insensitive and (unintentionally) patronising. But the fact is that Russia was welcomed into a number of democratic "clubs" in the 1990s and before and after 9/11 – to the maximum extent possible. In the 1997 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Russia, the EU declared "a strategic partnership founded on common interests and shared values". Russia joined the IMF and the Council of Europe. President Yeltsin was invited to G7 Summits. The G7 was then enlarged to G8. In response to Russia's support after 9/11, the NATO-Russia Council was established; and the 2002 G8 Summit at Kanaskis awarded President Putin the accolade of hosting (in 2006) the premier "club" of the largest industrialised democracies – a club to which neither India nor China has yet been admitted. These are but the leading examples among many. From which "clubs" has Russia been excluded? Russia has not applied to join, indeed does not wish to join, the EU (in the unlikely hypothesis of Russia wishing to join and the EU agreeing, it would take many years for the Russian economy and political system to

achieve the necessary alignment). Russia has not applied to join NATO (the possibility has been discussed but was never pursued). The WTO is not a “club” of democracies, but a rules-based trade body: Russia’s accession negotiations, though slow, are well advanced. And the OECD, a club of lesser stature, is considering Russian membership.

Such are the facts; but what matters politically is that there is a perception within Russia of rejection and exclusion. The most extreme form of this perception is the accusation that the West is actively trying to undermine or even “dismember” the Russian Federation. Can any responsible person actually believe this? There is not a shred of serious evidence to support the idea. What possible motive could the West have for dismembering Russia? The worst nightmare of Western policy-makers in the early 1990s was that Russia might collapse and fall apart, with terrifying consequences – especially for Western and Central Europe.

Third, there are genuine and substantive differences of interest and policy between Russia and Western countries. Rows about NATO enlargement or the possible stationing of a handful of interceptor missiles in Poland or the gesture politics of renewed patrolling by antiquated Bear reconnaissance aircraft over the North Sea may have been played up for political reasons. On the most important global issues there are no fundamental differences between Russia and the West. However there are of course some areas where our interests diverge. Russia takes a different view of Iraq from that of the US and British Governments, though its view is widely shared in Western Europe. In the Middle East generally, in Asia, and in certain parts of Africa and Latin America, Russia is pursuing its interests more actively. It has every right to do so, within the framework of international law. Legitimate competition should not be confused with deliberately obstructive confrontation.

Fourth, the conflict of values is an obstacle to partnership. In his article, Foreign Minister Lavrov sought to exclude values from intergovernmental relations: “The Westphalian system, which has become a fashionable object of criticism in certain circles, has placed differences in values beyond the scope of intergovernmental relations. In this respect, the Cold War was a setback. Should we really follow this path back, which can only lead to confrontation?”

In the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, whether we like it or not, values inescapably play a part in international relations. Why else, for example, has the UN Secretary-General involved himself (with wide support) in the internal affairs of Burma? Russia has joined the Council of Europe and signed the European Convention on Human Rights. It has signed documents declaring that it shares the values of the EU, and has joined the G8’s club of industrialised democracies. States which do not share values of course cooperate where they have interests in common. But genuine partnership, joint membership of democratic clubs, demands a commonality of values. The perception that our values are not converging, especially with regard to the rule of law, has taken a toll on Russo-Western relations.

Fifth, differences have been played up for reasons of domestic politics. This happens on both sides. Arbatov warns that “those politicians in Russia and the West who are attempting to gain political capital from this confrontation are recklessly turning the major national interests of their states into bargaining chips for internal political games.” In a similar vein, the Editor of this journal commented in the Moscow Times on 7 March: “The escalation of aggressive rhetoric we are witnessing is capable of reviving the outward appearance of the Cold War, which will do nothing toward providing real security, inasmuch as the real threat does not come from any real conflict between Russia and the West. But it is far simpler for politicians on both sides to fall back into familiar patterns of behaviour than to try to resolve the real problems they actually face.”

Exaggerating the threat of an external opponent is an age-old political gambit. Russia entered an ideological vacuum and an identity crisis in 1991. Some argue that anti-Westernism has now become the new “national idea”; that xenophobic nationalism is being used to bind the nation together. Certainly the oft-repeated assertion that the West is trying to subvert and weaken Russia has its uses. It can be used to justify increased central control over civil society, limitations on civil and political rights and the reinvigoration of the internal security organs. Blame can be diverted onto external opponents. And now that the flow of critical opinion into the country can no longer be blocked, discrediting external critics as malign and destabilising forces is the most effective counter-attack. It seems to me that Russia’s anti-Western rhetoric is being aimed above all at the domestic audience.

### **The Risk of Confrontation**

A neutral observer landing from Mars and reading the newspaper headlines of the past few months would reasonably conclude that Russia was locked into a bitter and lasting confrontation with the West. But if the same observer had sat in any one of the dozens of meetings I have attended in Russia this year – business meetings, negotiations between Russian and international companies about joint projects, seminars on leadership, education reform and civil society and so on – he would have made the opposite deduction.

Russia and the West are not in what can properly be called a confrontation. The Russian leadership is pursuing a vision of “sovereignty” modelled on the great powers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is using all the instruments at its disposal to reassert influence and explore the limits of Russian power. However I do not believe that the leadership’s objective is a generalised policy of confrontation with the West. This would be very costly; and it would not serve Russia’s interests.

Likewise, neither the European Union nor the USA is seeking a confrontation with Russia. This would serve no Western interest. Russia has enjoyed becoming a more

awkward customer for the West, and in some areas a competitor: but it is not a threat to be contained or confronted.

So is Karaganov wrong to warn that we could find ourselves in an “even more dangerous” confrontation than in the past? It is not hard to identify issues which could produce this unintended consequence. In his article, Arbatov gave a list which included the breakdown of arms control agreements, the possible knock-on effects of Kosovan independence, the risk of Russian involvement in armed conflicts with NATO-supported Georgia and Moldova and the risk of a flash-point in Ukraine. None of these risks have receded in the six months since he was writing.

Meanwhile the intractable problem of Iran’s nuclear programme has moved closer to a denouement. Iran is playing a dangerous game of brinkmanship. The noises coming out of Washington are all too reminiscent of the build-up to the Iraq conflict (the lessons of which seem to have been lost on the Bush administration); and the Presidential candidates are vying to display their virility over Iran. No sane person wants to see a nuclear-armed Iran; but the question is how best to avert this undeniable threat. Up to now, Iran has been a source of tactical rather than strategic disagreement between Russia and the West. But if the USA were to use force against Iran, it seems likely that the Kremlin would come out strongly on the other side – and the consequences would be extremely serious.

This is far from an exhaustive list of possible sources of a deeper rift. As Arbatov rightly puts it, “Russia’s slide into confrontation and rivalry with the US and NATO must be stopped, even though this confrontation is not global but regional, geopolitical and selective in military-technical issues.”

### **Where is Russia Heading?**

Assessing Russia’s internal course is fundamental to any reappraisal of how Russia and the West should act towards each other. Foreign policy emanates from domestic policy.

“Russia is at a crossroads” is an overworked cliché. It would be more accurate to say that Russia passed a crossroads four years ago, and that the next fork in the road lies some considerable way ahead. I recall two prescient speeches made in Moscow by sympathetic Westerners around the turn of the year from 2002 to 2003. Carl Bildt (at a meeting to launch this journal) noted the great progress made in convergence between Russia and the West but saw warning signs of impending divergence. Stanley Fischer, speaking at the Academy of the National Economy, praised economic restructuring, but was concerned that the process was slowing down.

As we can now see, 2003 was a turning point in both internal and external policy.

Internally, the flood of petrodollars was the death knell for reform. Externally, it has become increasingly clear since 2003 that the dominant forces in the current Russian leadership have turned against the idea of a “strategic partnership” with the West. They

do not feel they need it: Russia is strong enough to pursue a wholly independent policy, does not need to make concessions to Western viewpoints, and can dictate its own terms for cooperation. They do not wish to be tied by the constraints of partnership, or to embrace the responsibilities it requires. They mistrust the motives of the West – a mistrust reawakened by events and Western actions, and by Western criticism of Russian behaviour. And they are angry: there is a bitter feeling (which is reflected in the articles I have cited) that Russia has not been respected, but has been abused, exploited, ignored and made a victim. As Sergei Karaganov says, Moscow “does not want and cannot afford to integrate with the traditional West on the terms the latter proposed just recently...Russia has made the decision that it will not join this club; and if it does ever decide to join in the future, it will do so as a strong power.” Or, in President Putin’s words, “Russia will either be independent and sovereign or will most likely not exist at all.”

“Respect” is a key point in this debate. Russia “wants its legitimate rights to be respected and its views on major issues to be reckoned with”, says Arbatov. It is worth pondering why Russia enjoyed more respect internationally in 2002 than in 2007. A state earns more respect by moderation, by applying the rule of law, by speaking softly while carrying a big stick, than by bullying, threats, accusations and manipulating or ignoring the law. In 1991, the United States and their allies earned huge respect for halting the first Gulf war once Kuwait’s sovereignty had been restored – complying with UN resolutions and humanitarian principles, and preserving the unity of a wide coalition. By contrast they have suffered a major loss of respect and influence by taking the opposite approach in the second Gulf war. Russia is recognised as a force to be reckoned with; but too much force engenders opposition.

At the risk of over-simplification, there are two broad schools of thought about Russia’s future direction.

One is that Russia has chosen its course. What we are seeing now is the future. There are not a few analysts within Russia and outside who believe that, having regained strength and self-confidence, Russia has now reverted to a historic model which is fundamentally incompatible with the West: “sovereign” should be interpreted as “separate”. (As a retired Sovietologist from the US Navy put it in a recent letter to the Economist: “Any scholar of Russia knows that Russian history revolves around long periods of authoritarian rule, broken only by brief periods of chaotic liberalisation before a new kind of authoritarian regime comes to power to exploit the nationalistic anti-Western xenophobia of the Russian people.”) Russia has a unique Eurasian character. Its national identity, in part founded on the Orthodox Church, is deeply conservative. It is not attracted by democracy: strong, centralised authoritarian rule is the only way of ensuring order in this vast land and – as opinion polls show – is widely supported by the people. Stalin (who in the West tends to be equated with Hitler and quantitatively was responsible for even worse atrocities) remains an admired leader. The country’s future success can be built on its huge natural resources (in a resource-hungry world) and traditional strengths in heavy industry, with the State playing the dominant role in the economy.

The opposing school of thought is that what we are currently witnessing is a revisionist cycle in a long process of transition. Processes of change are under way which are not yet apparent at the political level – notably the growth of a new middle class, of new and competitive private sector businesses, and the gradual emergence of a generation of young, educated Russians who have been exposed to the outside world in a way that was denied to their parents, and wish to be part of it. It is also argued that the traditionalist model of Russia will not work – that an economy based on gigantic and massively inefficient (indeed value-extracting) state-run industries failed in the 1970s and 1980s, and will fail again. Likewise there are doubts about the long-term viability of a political model based on a single individual and the single institution of the “vertical of power” – a vertical heavily dependent on the cadres and successor institutions of the former KGB. As Arbatov put it, “the main problem with Putin’s ‘managed democracy’ and ‘executive vertical’ is that the country’s present economic well-being and political stability rest on a very fragile and short-lived foundation.” Speaking to the Valdai group on 14 September, President Putin himself expressed these doubts succinctly:

*“We cannot build Russia’s future by tying its many millions of citizens to just one person or group of people. We will not be able to build anything lasting unless we put in place a real and effectively functioning multi-party system and develop a civil society that will protect society and the state from mistakes and wrong actions on the part of those in power.”*

It seems to me that the determining factor will be the economy. But the prosperity generated by high oil and gas prices has merely masked, rather than resolved, the underlying structural weaknesses in the system. Both Karaganov and Trenin (in the works already quoted) see the need for modernisation of the economy as the probable catalyst for wider change in Russia’s future internal and external policies.

Karaganov forecasts that, in five to seven years’ time, “Russia will come down to earth after its present euphoria and will conduct a more cautious, although not less active, policy.” This is because Russia’s share of world GNP will tend to decrease unless “sustainable growth of 8 to 10 per cent a year” (a very ambitious target) can be achieved; and because “the new epoch of competition requires the transition to a knowledge economy; advantages based on energy resources are transient. The continuous modernisation of the political system is required in order to prevent a slide into stagnant authoritarianism. If Russia does not take avail of the favourable economic and geopolitical situation, and fails to use semi-authoritarian and state capitalism methods for moving to a new development model, the country’s decline in the next epoch will be predetermined.”

Trenin’s verdict is not dissimilar: “Over time, Russia will acquire more and more rightful owners: from a few dozen today to a few hundred several years from now to hundreds of thousands. Within a generation, having a single master of the land will first become impossible and then unthinkable. The powers of government will have to be separated in reality....Governance and competence are likely to emerge as criteria for grading the

political regime and determining its fate. Russia circa 2025 will still not be a democracy, but it will be considerably more liberal and modern. The liberalism that has a chance to prevail in Russia will be economically driven.”

We should not expect an early change in the atmosphere. For the next few months Russia will be preoccupied by the “2008 question”. Whatever reshuffling takes place within the ruling elite in the spring of next year is not expected to lead to a sharp change of direction. But over time the facts of economic life and social development will require a reappraisal of where Russia’s best interests lie.

How will Russia’s future leaders view the world in 5-10 years from now? Let me hazard a few guesses:

- \* It will be clear to all – indeed it is already – that Russia has asserted its sovereignty. No one will be under any illusion about Russia’s economic revival and determination to be regarded once more as a significant and independent actor on the international stage.
- The angst of the 1990s will have faded. It will have become obvious that raging furiously at the West and developing a national sense of victimhood is a political tactic, but not a strategy. If the aim is to regain respect, the tactic is counter-productive. The more the Russian Government accuses the West of failing to acknowledge Russia’s strength or of seeking to undermine Russia, the more it conveys an impression of insecurity, of not feeling (as the French put it) comfortable in its skin. A siege mentality did not serve Russia well in the past. I believe that the bile will pass through the system.
- Economic integration will have advanced. Russia will want a modernised, diversified, competitive economy, making full use of its human capital, not one that qualitatively lags behind the developed world. The growing shortage of skilled personnel will have required higher levels of education, training, and investment to achieve the necessary productivity. Progressive private sector companies, succeeding in global markets, will have shown the way forward – not state monopolies.
- Internal pressure to strengthen the rule of law and diminish corruption and the rule of bureaucracy will have increased.
- The array of global threats – including weapons proliferation, international terrorism, instability in the Middle East, climate change – will be no less acute.
- Adapting to the rise of China will be a difficult issue for Russia, as for the United States and the EU.

- The United States will have moved beyond the failed ideology of neo-conservatism.
- The EU will still be the world's richest bloc and Russia's largest trade partner, and will have developed a more cohesive foreign policy.

In these circumstances it is more likely that a future Russian leadership will wish to use the country's independent weight to be part of the solution, in concert with other powers whose interests overlap, rather than to be a part of the problem.

### **How Should The West Change Its Approach?**

In the meantime, what approach should the West take?

The first requirement is to try to prevent a further deterioration in the atmosphere. The current agenda needs to be handled consultatively, with restraint and sensitivity, if we are not to slide into a mutually damaging confrontation. In place of strategic partnership, the West should seek cooperation with Russia on specific strategic issues.

Second, Western Europe and the United States must recognise that change in Russia will come from within, and over a long period. To the extent possible, they should continue to support processes of enlightenment there – but should not gear policy to unrealistic expectations of the pace of change. It is futile to fulminate that Russia does not meet the benchmarks of Western democracy. In the countries where it exists, democracy takes many forms, and took hundreds of years to develop. A fair amount of personal freedom has developed in Russia over the past twenty years. Genuine democracy (which is a bottom-up process), not surprisingly, has yet to start – but may well develop over the next 25 to 50 years. It would make better sense for the West to focus on the rule of law, where the Russian government has clearly defined internal and international commitments: implementing them would unarguably be in Russia's best interests, and would provide a much stronger foundation for Russo-Western relations. The West, however, will have no credibility in Russia unless it practises what it preaches: the cavalier attitude of the Bush administration to international law has done insidious damage.

Third, the Western reappraisal should be geared to neo-engagement, not neo-containment. In fact no major Western government or organisation is pursuing “neo-containment”. If the West is to have an influence, it will be felt predominantly through the power of example, the flow of information and human contact. Isolation is wholly counter-productive: the case should not need arguing again.

The most important form of engagement is the mutually advantageous two-way interaction of business. The further development of the market economy will be the most powerful driver of the modernisation of society and governance in Russia. In Trenin's words, “market forces can be relied upon to open up Russia even wider and help transform it even more deeply, but they need encouragement.” Growing economic

interdependence is already a constraint on negative behaviour, and will become an even stronger one in the future.

Last, but by no means least, I believe that the European Union needs to articulate a clear and principled long-term view of its relationship with Russia – Europe’s largest nation. The European Union should make clear that it:

- is resolutely opposed to a new division of Europe and commits itself to work over time for the progressive dismantling of barriers.
- recognises that a strong, stable, prosperous and modern Russia will make a very large contribution to the well-being of the European continent; and seeks to cooperate with Russia to the greatest extent possible.
- fully acknowledges Russia’s right to defend its own interests and pursue its own independent policies within the parameters of international law and of the sovereign rights of other states.
- has an equal interest in the sovereignty, stability and development of the Russian Federation and of all of the other states of the former Soviet Union, and in harmonious relations between them.
- is not seeking to expand its influence at the expense of Russia, but will oppose any encroachment on the sovereign rights of any European state.
- will defend its own interests and values robustly where they are challenged.

## **Conclusion**

Policy should not be based on a misplaced presumption of confrontation. We are not – yet – in a confrontation. Confrontation would be unnecessary, mutually damaging and potentially dangerous; but the possibility exists.

We tried to become partners and allies. That turned out to be unrealistic. We have failed, for the time being. But that should not make us enemies. There is too much at stake, and we have too much in common.

We need to rebuild trust, step by step, by cooperating where we share interests. That will require levels of statesmanship and sobriety in rhetoric and behaviour which have recently been conspicuous by their absence; and a realistic perspective on the situation we are in and the problems we face.

It will be a slow process. But if the analysis which I broadly share with Sergei Karaganov, Alexei Arbatov and Dmitriy Trenin is well founded, a time will come a few years hence when genuine partnership is feasible. It may be inoperable now, but it is a worthy long-term objective. We may no longer be at the “dawn of a new golden age”, but in a few years’ time we shall be in a different situation, and with luck a more rational environment.

*Sir Roderic Lyne served as British Ambassador to the Russian Federation from 2000 to 2004. He was the co-author, with Strobe Talbott and Koji Watanabe, of “Engaging with Russia: The Next Phase” [Vzaimodeistviye s Rossiyei: Sleduyushchaya Faza], a Report to the Trilateral Commission, published in a Russian edition in 2007 by Biblioteka Moskovskoi Shkoly Politicheskikh Issledovaniy.*