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AIR UNIVERSITY

CONFRONTING RUSSIA, AGAIN

by

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Abstract

The resurgence of Russia and its determined trajectory towards great power status have re-ignited once dormant tensions between the United States and Russia. Russia's rhetoric and campaign to expand its strategic influence are indicative of a perception by Moscow that its resurgence is a zero sum game vis-à-vis the United States. Russian influence and power are the result of its asymmetric energy relationship with Europe and its position in international institutions. This paper examines Russia's strategy to reclaim its great power status through energy politics, regional balancing, and positional leverage. The paper suggests several courses of action for the United States that counter Russian energy politics while providing collective energy security for U.S. allies and restoring the reputation and influence of the United States in the international community.

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Introduction

Since the election of Vladimir Putin to the Russian Presidency in March 2000, Russia has violated the sovereignty of Georgia; threatened to target parts of Europe with missiles; sold arms to Iran, Sudan, and Venezuela despite U.S. objections; suspended compliance with the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty; conducted overflights of NATO countries; and resumed its armed aerial patrols.¹ Russia's aggressive foreign policy and efforts to counter U.S. global influence imply that Moscow perceives its efforts to reclaim great power status as a zero-sum game vis-à-vis the United States. Rather than expressing Russian strength exclusively through military power, Putin has adopted a "mercantilist approach" to the Russian economy and exploited European reliance on Russia's vast energy resources to divide the West and become an energy superpower.² Russia's domination of the European energy markets and its veto in the U.N. Security Council have given Russia incredible leverage over the West, complicating Washington's ability to achieve its interests through consensus with its long-term allies.

Putin seeks to use this dominant position to challenge U.S. global hegemony and establish a "new architecture of global security" allowing Moscow to pursue its national interests unopposed.³ Putin has repeatedly made calls to establish a multipolar world as a first step to confront U.S. hegemony and sought to build global support for his position through energy deals and arms sales aimed at regional balancing.⁴ He has paired these actions with attempts to malign the United States in international forums, accusing it of unilateralism and an "uncontained hyper use of force... in international relations."⁵ His rhetoric and recent actions reflect a complex strategy aimed at dividing the West, diminishing U.S. global influence through regional balancing and international institutions, and employing Russia's energy as an instrument of policy to establish "asymmetrical interdependence" over nations that rely on Russian energy.⁶

Given Russia's assertive foreign policy, the use of its energy as an instrument of policy, and its recent military aggression in Georgia, the United States requires a flexible policy that avoids unilateral action and military confrontation while countering Russia's energy influence over U.S. European allies and shaping Russia's behavior to meet U.S. interests.

Background

Russia derives its influence and strength from its energy wealth and its position as the largest supplier of natural gas to Europe.⁷ According to the International Monetary Fund, in 2007 oil and gas represented 64 percent of Russia's total export revenue.⁸ Currently Europe imports 60 percent of its gas, half of which comes from Russia.⁹ The European Council, Directorate-General for Energy and Transport, projects Europe's dependence on imports to grow to 84 percent by 2030, further increasing Russian influence over key U.S. allies.¹⁰ Russia has used its energy to pursue its political agenda and to create what the EU Power Audit refers to as "asymmetric interdependence," in which Russia has employed its energy influence, predatory foreign investments, and bi-lateral deals to create a situation in which the EU needs Russia more than Russia needs the EU.¹¹

In the winter of 2006, Russia threatened to cut off gas supplies to Georgia and had previously cut gas supplies to Estonia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Belarus in response to political disputes.¹² In July 2008, Ukraine notified Russia that it would not renew the lease for the Russian Black Sea fleet at the port of Sevastopol after 2017. In the winter of 2008, Russia cut off the gas to its Ukrainian pipeline. Russia cited a payment dispute and accused Ukraine of siphoning gas; however, the timing and tactics of this event parallel Russia's use of energy to pursue its political ends in 2006. Jeffrey Mankoff describes the Russian strategy as a "mercantilist approach to foreign policy" in which Russia employs its energy as an instrument of policy. Stephen Blank

contends, “Close examination of much of Russian foreign policy reveals that such blackmail or intimidation tactics feature prominently in Russia’s diplomacy toward both the weaker states of the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] and toward Europe and the United States.”¹³

Russia hopes to increase its influence by heightening European dependence on Russian energy through predatory monopolistic deals to control European energy distribution while manipulating foreign assets and investments in its domestic energy sector.¹⁴ Alexandros Peterson states, “Many of these deals... come with strings attached that hand over ownership or effective control of much of the country’s energy infrastructure to Gazprom.”¹⁵ Russian energy companies have pursued deals in Europe in which Russia purchases key distributors in the EU while EU and U.S. companies receive access to gas fields in Russia. However, Russia’s takeover of the controlling shares of foreign oil ventures and monopolization of the energy pipelines in Russia and through the Caspian have solidified Russia’s control over gas production for Europe within Russia’s borders, granting it control over the profitability of foreign investments in its country.

Russia seeks to reinforce its asymmetric relationship with Europe by refusing to ratify the EU Energy Charter, blocking alternative energy delivery projects that bypass Russia, and establishing a gas cartel to control prices.¹⁶ Russia’s refusal to ratify or adhere to the EU Energy Charter has allowed Russia to avoid competition in the transport of oil to Europe. However, Russia’s pursuit of a gas cartel with Iran and Qatar represents the most pressing danger in the short term. While this cartel poses little threat to the energy security of the United States, it would heighten the relationship between Russia and Iran and allow Russia to dictate both the price and distribution of natural gas to Europe, thereby increasing its influence over America’s traditional allies. Ariel Cohen contends, “Russia and Iran are interested in increasing their geopolitical leverage against the EU in areas that have little to do with energy.”¹⁷ Further, Russia

has collaborated with Venezuela to jeopardize U.S. energy security.¹⁸ This partnership, involving arms sales, military exercises, nuclear power, and the construction of a Russian-funded refinery, aims to counter U.S. influence in the region and break Venezuela's dependence on U.S.-owned refineries, freeing Venezuela to reduce or eliminate sales to the United States.¹⁹ The U.S. Government Accountability Office speculates that a disruption in Venezuelan supply to the U.S. would reduce U.S. gross domestic product by \$23 billion.²⁰

Russia has used its asymmetric interdependence with Europe to divide the EU through bilateral deals, offering nations that acquiesce to its position favorable energy prices.²¹ Peterson states, "The intrinsic link between Moscow's energy and foreign policies means that not only are EU member states split between energy dependent and independent countries but between capitals willing to challenge Moscow's increasingly assertive global moves and those that calculate that an accommodating response is in their best interest."²² Russia's strategy to "divide and rule" through economic leverage seeks to undermine both the EU's and NATO's abilities to achieve a consensus and form a common approach to confronting Russia.²³ Cohen argues, "This would significantly limit the maneuvering space available to America's European allies, forcing them to choose between an affordable and stable energy supply and siding with the U.S. on some key issues."²⁴

Russia aspires to use its influence over Europe to further weaken the trans-Atlantic bond by proposing a legally binding, overarching security agreement encompassing Russia and Europe in which "the U.S. was no longer the dominant power."²⁵ Cohen predicts, "If current trends prevail, the Kremlin could translate its energy monopoly into untenable foreign and security policy influence in Europe to the detriment of European-American relations."²⁶ While the EU has declined Russia's advances, such an agreement would effectively grant Russia a veto over

NATO actions that Moscow perceives as falling under the purview of Russian-European security.

Russia views its position in international institutions as a source of political leverage and as a platform for its anti-U.S. rhetoric to extend Moscow's influence at the expense of the United States. Moscow uses its position in international organizations to prevent consensus on issues important to its adversaries, thereby reducing the institution to a forum with no authority. Following the NATO condemnation of the Russian invasion of Georgia, Russia threatened to withhold critical support in the UN Security Council on non-proliferation actions regarding Iran and North Korea.²⁷ Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, stated, "The West must choose between support of Georgia and Moscow's cooperation on other international issues."²⁸ Russia employs a vast array of strategic information operations to malign the U.S. and divert international attention from Russia's recent aggression, its unsound economic practices, and its return to authoritarianism while maintaining the Russian elites' hold on domestic power. It uses its position in international forums to direct its message both internationally and to a Russian audience. Blank asserts, "Russia's adversarial posture towards America and the West is not just a ploy to mobilize support for the regime, though it is that. Rather, this policy is intrinsically linked to and grows out of Russia's regression towards a police state."²⁹

Russia seeks to discredit the U.S. internationally because it perceives its return to great power status as a zero-sum game vis-à-vis the United States. Cohen asserts, "Russia remains obsessed with the U.S. as its 'principal adversary.' The current elites define Russian strategic goals in terms of opposition to the United States and its policies."³⁰ Russia seeks to capitalize on the international unpopularity of the Iraq war through its strategic information operations campaign that highlights U.S. "unilateralism" and use of "hyperforce" to reduce U.S. influence

while drawing support for its vision of an alignment of nations to counter U.S. hegemony in a new multipolar world.³¹

To achieve its goal of a multipolar world and counter U.S. influence, Russia has pursued strategy of regional balancing by creating and reinforcing security and economic ties in the Middle East, Africa, Southeast Asia, and South America. Russia has provided economic assistance, sold arms, and/or performed joint military training with Iran, Syria, Sudan, China, and Venezuela to counter U.S. influence in each region.³² Wade Boese of the Arms Control Association contends, “Russia, like the United States, sees arms sales as a potential means of influence [over its buyers].”³³ In the attempt to build regional influence at the expense of the U.S., Russian actions are leading to regional destabilization and arms races. Former Brazilian president Jose Sarney commented, “As Venezuela turns itself into a major military power, it obliges the other nations in South America to increase the power of their own forces. [An arms race] sadly seems to be getting under way.”³⁴

Russian arms sales to Iran and support of its nuclear ambitions have added to the destabilization of the Middle East. Russian actions have countered international efforts at non-proliferation in Iran and potentially provided arms to terrorist organizations.³⁵ Michael Eisenstadt, director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy’s Military and Security Studies Program, contends, “The trick from the Russian perspective is to strike a balance in their foreign policy—supporting an Iran that can tie the U.S. down while not creating a Frankenstein that can threaten their own interests.”³⁶ Russia’s obsession with countering the U.S. has led to actions that jeopardize the security and stability of the international order. Russia’s belligerence towards the U.S. and its disregard for the interests and welfare of the international community in

the blind pursuit of Russian objectives mandates that the U.S. develop a strategy in cooperation with its international partners to temper Russia's assertive foreign policies.

Russia's belligerence, its veto power in the UN Security Council, and its influence over key portions of Europe have created a dilemma for the United States in its ability to counter Russian rhetoric and actions while pursuing U.S. national interests through international accord. Russia's strategy to divide the West has further complicated U.S. efforts to avoid the pitfalls of unilateral action and gather consensus to resolve international issues such as non-proliferation and terrorism in an increasingly energy dependent world.

Policy Response

Sun Tzu stated, "To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."³⁷ The U.S. must approach Russia through a flexible strategy that constrains Russian aggression, avoids military confrontation, and counters Russian energy politics while fostering reciprocal economic integration under the "rule of law."³⁸ The goal of this strategy is to integrate Russia into the international order of responsible democracies by mitigating its influence, binding it to international laws, and encouraging domestic reform to shape Russian behavior rather than attempting to punish it through economic sanctions or military confrontation. The strategy must clearly define acceptable Russian behavior with respect to U.S. interests and international laws while establishing red lines and pre-coordinated responses to Russian transgressions.

As Blank contends, "An intelligent policy towards Russia cannot let Moscow's objections deter American actions in support of the national interest where those objections undermine our ability to reach those interests."³⁹ Further, he argues that a successful strategy for countering Russia must take into account Russia's status and how it perceives itself as well as

consider the costs with respect to what the U.S. can realistically achieve given Russia's current influence in an era of globalization.⁴⁰

Russia's self-perception as a great power, deserving of respect and a free hand in international affairs, combined with its energy influence have complicated efforts to devise a strategy to shape Russia's behavior without heightening East-West tensions. Mankoff highlights the danger in Russia's self-perception and the entitlements it associates with that status. He contends, "Most members of the Russian elite share a common vision of Russia as a fully sovereign Great Power existing—at least in part as a result of the blunting of U.S. power in Iraq—in a multipolar world, not subject to the limitations of international norms and institutions, and with a particular right to manage affairs around its own borders."⁴¹

Competing strategies of containment and integration offer only partial solutions to confronting Russia's aggression and influence, and risk an East-West polarization or expose the West to further Russian exploitation. A strategy of containment or isolation cannot effectively isolate a major energy producer such as Russia in an era of globalization and industrialization and risks pushing Russia away from the West. Blank asserts that by attempting to isolate Russia from the West, the U.S. would drive Russia to China, creating a "Sino-Russian energy nexus" linking Russian energy with Chinese needs, fostering closer Chinese-Russian security ties, thus posing a greater threat.⁴² Likewise, attempts to integrate Russia into the West without first ensuring adherence to international laws and transparent business practices would allow Russia to complete its domination of the European energy market while using institutions as tools to prevent consensus and constrain other members.

The key to confronting Russia and shaping its behavior is controlling its source of strength and influence. Russia's weakness lies in the lack of diversification in its economy. The

decline of oil prices in 2008 and Russia's overreliance on energy exports as a disproportionate source of revenue for its economy are critical weaknesses in the Russian strategy. In 2008, the World Bank highlighted this, stating, "Russia's high dependence on oil and gas, coupled with relatively low average productivity in manufacturing, complicates the realization of diversified growth and the effective integration into world markets."⁴³ The international impact of Russian actions and its vulnerability to energy pricing indicate that the U.S. should pursue a collective approach to energy security to limit Russia's influence and pursue global stability and security in line with U.S. interests. The West requires a collective security arrangement to ensure security from the Russian energy threat just as NATO formed to confront the Soviet military threat.⁴⁴

The U.S. must expand its concept of national security to encompass collective energy security to mitigate the source of Russian strength and influence. To exploit the weakness in Russia's strategy, Blank suggests the creation of a "countercartel" composed of the EU, the United States, China, Japan, India, and South Korea under the supervision of the International Energy Agency (IEA) to collectively bargain with energy producers to assure fair market prices.⁴⁵ However, Russia's influence over a significant portion of the EU and the inclusion of China and India pose significant problems. Few countries are interested in subsuming their self-interest for that of the collective with respect to energy security. Russia's use of bi-lateral deals and attractive energy prices for acquiescent buyers could easily divide the countercartel and lead to bureaucratic paralysis as Russia prevents consensus by luring individual nations to Russia's influence through favorable energy pricing. While the full participation of the EU in this countercartel would be key to confronting Russia's influence and economic power, such a prospect is unlikely due to the lack of alternative sources, Russia's energy influence over numerous European nations, and the trans-Atlantic tensions that still persist from the Iraq war.

To solve this dilemma, the U.S. should lead efforts to create an international energy buyers' consortium composed of trusted and willing allies in Europe and other regions where Russia has attempted to expand its influence.

The goal of this consortium would be to reduce the energy and political influence of Russia over member nations by increasing their energy security, and to curtail the spread of Russia's influence to other world regions by extending the consortium's benefits to additional nations within each member's region. The U.S. should build the core of the organization from its allies in each major region of the world. Potential core members such as the UK, South Korea, and Columbia would serve as a sponsor and offer membership to other nations in their regions. This geographic alignment would facilitate regional interconnected energy networks in which members would collectively fund projects in their area to enhance energy security and foster stability. Core members would decide on collective actions, establish policy for minimum standards and requirements for participation, and perform collective bargaining for bulk and long-term energy purchases with multiple producers for the group at reduced prices. Membership would mandate adherence to collective norms and bargaining and prohibit bilateral deals regarding energy.

Daniel Yergen contends countries must abide by the principles of diversification, resilience, integration, and rapid and accurate information to ensure energy security.⁴⁶ These core principles provide a framework for the consortium that can reduce the influence of Russia and other energy producers over individual nations. Prior to World War I, Winston Churchill noted, "Safety and certainty in oil lie in variety and variety alone."⁴⁷ A U.S. led energy buyers' consortium must begin the diversification of supply through collective bargaining with multiple energy producers to secure the most favorable prices for its members. However, Russia's

domination of energy transport through the Caspian region limits European members' alternatives in the short term. Russia currently controls the only pipelines in the Caspian that provide energy directly to Europe. Peterson suggests, "Transatlantic partners must do more to realize the development of alternative Western-oriented energy routes to alternative Caspian sources."⁴⁸ The short-term solution to this problem lies in regional collaboration on energy exploration, transportation, and the construction of alternative energy sources while the mid-term solution calls for the regional collective funding of alternate energy transport projects that bypass Russia such as the Nabucco pipeline. Member nations can achieve further diversification through cooperation and technology sharing on alternative energy sources, joint ventures in existing energy sources, and methods of conservation with the goal of eliminating single points of failure in supply. By reducing overall reliance on a single producer and lessening demand, member nations would be less susceptible to supply disruptions caused by natural factors or political influence.

Yergen defines resilience as "a 'security margin' in the energy supply system that provides a buffer against shocks and facilitates recovery after disruptions."⁴⁹ Membership in the consortium would require the establishment and maintenance of a minimum strategic reserve for each nation to ensure a security margin in supply. Edward Lucas argues, "Europe needs better gas storage and to link its national 'energy islands' with interconnecting pipelines and electricity lines. The result will be a gas supply system that is both physically and economically robust, and therefore much harder for an outside supplier to dominate."⁵⁰ Expanding the concept of regional energy networks to the contiguous regional members of the consortium would bolster resilience and prevent the intimidation of a single nation through threats to its supply.

Cohen recommends that the U.S. “build bridges to potential Russian allies to prevent the emergence of anti-American blocs and expand relations with key emerging markets.”⁵¹ Cohen’s recommendation applied to the energy sphere suggests a means to counter Russian regional balancing while enhancing energy security and stability. Core members of the energy consortium would sponsor the membership of several developing nations in their region to develop energy infrastructure, establish national and regional strategic reserves, and link energy resources to counter disruptions in supply. Further, core members would share alternative energy technology and conservation techniques with developing member nations to improve efficiency. The resulting integration would counter Russian regional influence and expand collective bargaining power while assisting in the economic development of these countries. This solution would promote both economic and political stability through the creation of jobs for indigenous labor and increased investment in the economies of developing nations. Once established, the energy infrastructure of individual nations would form a regional energy network linked through interconnecting pipelines and power lines that would promote resilience and cooperation. Regional energy networks would tie into the consortium for collective bargaining and could leverage the surplus of other regions in the event of a catastrophic disruption of supply.

Yergen’s final principle is information. While he defines this principle in relation to the rapid and accurate dissemination of information relating to the status of the energy market, information has a much broader application to energy security and the stability of the global energy market when used to confront actions by nations that undermine energy security and disrupt market principles. Russia’s efforts to dominate both production and distribution and manipulate price through the formation of a gas cartel represent a threat to the energy security of the West that nations must confront collectively. To counter the cartel and diminish Russia’s

energy influence over Europe, the members of consortium must enforce and expand existing national anti-trust laws and decouple energy production and distribution in their countries.

Peterson suggests, “Transatlantic structures should work together with the International Energy Agency (which has identified gas collusion as a major threat) to develop an international anti-trust framework under which the market fixing practices of states that would make up the gas cartel could at least be named and shamed.”⁵² However, naming and shaming these countries will neither deter these countries from continuing their practices, if profitable, nor prevent prospective buyers from purchasing gas from these countries if it is their only option or the cheapest source. The members of the consortium must aggressively enforce their national competition laws to protect their energy markets. Further, the consortium should use the framework of the International Competition Network to pursue convergence of member nations’ competition laws to establish a uniform energy anti-trust policy within the consortium. The initial goal of this effort would be to decouple the production and distribution of natural gas throughout the consortium while later efforts would focus on advocating for the demonopolization of Russia’s domestic and Caspian gas pipelines and preventing the formation of a gas cartel.

Lucas contends that if Russia “depoliticized and demonopolized its own energy industry—chiefly by allowing third-party access to its gas pipeline monopoly—it could diffuse the controversy over energy security.”⁵³ This would give foreign companies greater control over the profitability of their Russian investments, enhance integration, and return free market principles to Russian business, potentially increasing foreign investment in Russia. Blank asserts, “Russian participation under market conditions in such an arrangement would force reforms in

its energy industry, and thus its government. Such reforms might then allow for foreign investment.”⁵⁴

Leonard and Popescu argue that the application of anti-trust laws “could lead to the unbundling of energy companies in these states, greater transparency of their energy sectors, and as a consequence greater energy security for Europe and fewer possibilities for Russia to use energy for political purposes.”⁵⁵ As these authors contend, the collective pursuit of anti-trust legislation and enforcement in Europe has the potential to diminish Moscow’s hold on supply and distribution in key global markets and open Russia to greater foreign investment. However, the success of this measure depends on consensus within the EU and on each country subordinating its interests to that of the common good, which is unlikely given Russia’s effective strategy of divide and rule. Therefore, the solution for the U.S. in Europe would be to extend membership in the consortium to individual nations and work with those countries that accept this offer to diminish Russia’s influence and foster a more symmetrical economic integration.

By diminishing Russia’s influence over key U.S. global partners through cooperation on energy security, the U.S. will have greater ability to achieve international support on issues such as counterterrorism and non-proliferation. While the primary emphasis of the consortium is to ensure the energy security of its constituents, the core members of this organization, under U.S. leadership, can translate this economic security into political power in other areas of global concern that have been held hostage by Russian vetoes and energy influence. The consortium must form a voting bloc in international organizations to curtail Russia’s energy influence, promote fair competition in energy, and achieve energy security for its members. However, the bloc could expand its agenda to encompass other issues of common importance such as non-proliferation, combating terrorism, and the security of the global commons.

The authors of the EU Power Audit suggest that the West may shape Russia's behavior by limiting participation in international organizations when Moscow refuses to comply with previous agreements and treaties. Leonard and Popescu contend, "Under a 'rule of law' approach, the EU would keep Russia engaged in these institutions, but moderate the level of cooperation in line with Russia's observance of the spirit as well as the letter of the common rules. For example, if Moscow drags its feet on G8 commitments and policies, more meetings should be organized on these topics at a junior level under a G7 format - excluding Russia."⁵⁶ By making Moscow's participation in organizations conditional based on its adherence to international law and the principles of free trade, the consortium may not only resolve international matters of critical importance without fear of Russian consensus blocking, but also shape Russian behavior and foster greater cooperation on issues of global concern.

While these tactics will serve as an effective means to counter Russia's use of energy and international institutions to produce political leverage; without incentives for integration and a public diplomacy campaign to justify these actions to the Russian people they present an opportunity for the current Russian leadership to further solidify their hold on power and continue their assertive foreign policies. By casting the U.S. as an impediment to Russia's return as a great power and as the source of Russian problems at home and abroad, Russian leaders seek to focus public discontent on an external source while generating a strong nationalistic sentiment that allows the leadership to act without restraint both domestically and abroad. Vladimir Shlapentokh contends, "The core of the Kremlin's ideological strategy is to convince the public that any revolution in Russia will be sponsored by the United States. Putin is presented as a bulwark of Russian patriotism, as the single leader able to confront America's intervention in Russian domestic life and protect what is left of the imperial heritage."⁵⁷ Cohen suggests that the

U.S. “reach out to the people of Russia through a comprehensive public diplomacy strategy via the Internet, international broadcasters, visitor programs, and exchanges to debunk the myth that the U.S. is hostile to Russia.”⁵⁸ The U.S. must implement such a program to foster greater understanding and ties at the grassroots level to break the false perceptions of the U.S. as the source of Russia’s problems. This will allow the population to remedy Russia’s problems through political reform rather than through direct interference in Russian politics by an external source.

The U.S. must engage Moscow and integrate Russia into Western efforts to resolve issues of global concern. This will appeal to Russia’s need for respect as a great power and counter its accusations of U.S. unilateralism while fostering greater ties between the two nations. Issues such as terrorism, regional instability, and non-proliferation confront both the West and Russia. By focusing the Russian people and leadership on resolving these common issues through cooperation, Washington can remove the Russian perception of the U.S. as its principal adversary and effect change in Russian policies. The U.S. must appeal to the ego of Russian elites and approach Russia as a great power with the intent of promoting responsible cooperation on key international issues to secure Russian support. By developing and cultivating personal relationships in Russian industry and government, the U.S. can foment a change in Russian policies and practices that can outlast the political tenure of today’s hard line leaders.

Conclusion

The resurgence of Russia and its determined trajectory towards great power status have re-ignited once dormant tensions between the United States and Russia. Russia’s rhetoric and campaign to expand its strategic influence are indicative of a perception by Moscow that its resurgence is a zero sum game vis-à-vis the United States. Russian influence and power are the

result of its asymmetric energy relationship with Europe and its position in international institutions. Russia seeks to expand this influence through regional balancing and attempts to control the supply, distribution, and pricing of a portion of the global energy market. Its intent is to counter U.S. global hegemony and to create a new multipolar world in which Russia may exercise its power without opposition. Peterson contends, “The truth about the transatlantic energy conundrum is that the Kremlin has it right. Energy policy cannot be separated from foreign policy.”⁵⁹

To counter Russian efforts, the U.S. must adopt a strategy of collective energy security to secure the political and economic independence of its key allies while reaching out to create new partners in the developing world. The U.S. must translate this economic cooperation into political action to bind Russia to existing international laws and norms and prevent it from exploiting its positions in international organizations in an effort to shape its behavior. However, the United States must temper these tactics with efforts to integrate Russia into the West through information and cooperation. The U.S. must employ public diplomacy to break Russian perceptions of the U.S. as its foil and encourage political reform, while engaging Russian leadership on issues of global concern. By integrating Russia into its efforts regarding non-proliferation, terrorism, and the security of the global commons, the U.S. will appeal to Russia’s need for respect as a great power and counter accusations of unilateralism.

While this strategy is by no means a panacea for resolving all of the latent issues between Russia and the United States, it does offer a way forward that brings Russia closer to the West. In sum, by countering Russia’s source of influence and integrating it into the norms and responsibilities of the West, the U.S. can successfully shape Russian behavior while increasing Washington’s influence and standing in world affairs.

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