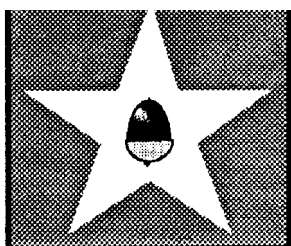


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**The Axis of Evil:  
The Russian Approach**

**July 2003**



**F83**

# The Axis Of Evil: The Russian Approach

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*Russia dislikes this concept, but is unable to offer an effective counter to US actions. A higher priority is maintaining a good relationship with the USA.*

The “axis of evil” was the term first used by US President George W Bush in his State of the Union address in January 2002, to designate Iran, Iraq under Saddam Hussein, and North Korea.<sup>1</sup> It is a highly misleading term, as these three states were not formal allies. Indeed, Iran and Iraq were deeply hostile to each other, having been at war for most of the 1980s. However, the term was used by the Bush Administration as a means of labelling these states as enemies of the US, which accordingly put them on notice that the US was prepared to pursue a hardline policy towards them, including the use of military force.

In common with many other European states, the Russian leadership regarded the term as inaccurate and unhelpful. In April 2002, foreign minister Igor Ivanov said the term was a remnant of Cold War thinking, and deputy foreign minister Georgy Mamedov criticised it in October 2002 for causing tension in international relations.<sup>2</sup> The Russian Federation has had good relations with all three members of the “axis of evil”, and US policy towards these states was therefore a significant challenge to Russian policy, particularly as the new US security strategy enunciated in September 2002 envisaged the use of pre-emptive strikes against states that the US considered a serious threat to its own security.<sup>3</sup> Russia had strongly resented the tendency of the Clinton Administration to use force in international relations without UN authorisation, and the Bush Administration, goaded by the trauma of “9/11” appeared even more likely to use force in this way in the first decade of the new century, in its determination to pursue the war on terrorism and confront the axis of evil. The challenge of what Russia saw as US unilateralism was thus growing more acute, in spite of the improved US-Russian relationship after September 2001.

This challenge was perhaps best summed up by deputy chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev at the end of January 2003, as US pressure on Iraq intensified. He said that Russia was not defending Saddam, “but the modern world order that has existed throughout the post-war period and is based on the fairly simple tenet that the world community's only body authorized to take decisions to use force, to use military force in international relations, was, is and will evidently remain the United Nations Organization. Time after time the United States of America - it happened in Yugoslavia, it happened in Afghanistan and now it's happening over Iraq - is attempting to force an entirely different model on the world, which presupposes a dramatic increase in the role of individual decisions. That is, the model the US is putting forward means decisions are taken at the national level, by the United States for example, as to who's good and who's bad, who's a pariah and who isn't.”<sup>4</sup>

## Iraq

The Russian leadership strongly opposed the moves by the Bush Administration to use force against Iraq. It argued that UN Security Resolution 1441, passed in November 2002, did not legitimise military action against Iraq. Moscow also said that it would not support (and if necessary, veto) any second UN resolution seeking to authorise force. Russia, along with France and Germany, argued for a continuation of UN weapons inspections in Iraq, and favoured the creation a long-term monitoring service to make sure that Iraq would not rebuild weapons of mass destruction. Russia also warned against the notion of “regime change” in relation to Iraq and refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of using force without the specific sanction of the UN Security Council (UNSC).

However, Moscow also realised that it was inevitable that the USA, along with the United Kingdom, was going to take military action against Iraq in order to destroy Saddam Hussein’s regime, and that no other power or combination of powers could prevent the USA from so doing. The Russian leadership made clear that although it strongly disagreed with US policy over Iraq, it was not prepared to risk a major breach in its relations with Washington. In March 2003, Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov said that that the Iraq crisis would not damage ties with US. He commented:

For us, relations with the United States are of exceptional importance, and what is happening now - the Iraq crisis, the UN Security Council, the differences in the positions of a number of members of the council - we do not believe that these differences will prevent us from continuing to develop our relations.

Our countries have too many common interests in the world. We now have to actively engage in implementing the agreements on reducing [nuclear] offensive potentials, we have Afghanistan, we have the Middle East ... as concerns the Iraq crisis, here too, if you noticed, Russia has always stressed that it is trying to find a common language, with the USA, with Britain, and with the other countries which support a different point of view. We have never been supporters of artificially whipping up confrontation and polemics, the situation is now too serious to engage in polemics.<sup>5</sup>

Once Operation Iraqi Freedom had been launched, Igor Ivanov noted that the USA and Russia would remain partners, and not become adversaries. The head of the North American department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Igor Neverov, said at the end of March 2003 that US-Russian differences over Iraq would not result in a return to the Cold War.

We will of course do everything to prevent any kind of roll-back in relations with the USA. Our strategic policy of partnership with the USA is not based on short-term considerations, it is a long-term policy ... a great deal has been done over the past two years actually to rid ourselves of the legacy of the Cold War, and we cannot allow what has been achieved to be wasted. There are, of course, differences and in practice the current acute situation in Iraq is a serious test for our relations, there is no secret about this, of course. But it is customary among partners to discuss differences honestly, the fundamental differences on Iraq.<sup>6</sup>

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There was concern, however, that US actions could damage the anti-terrorist coalition, and in April 2003 Igor Ivanov warned against the notion of powers acting unilaterally. Both Putin and Ivanov repeated their belief in the need for the United Nations to play the lead role in resolving all international security problems.

As the war in Iraq came to an end, Russia continued to argue for the UN to play the main role in international security, and in resolving the problem of Iraq's future. Igor Ivanov talked in April at the Russia-EU summit in Luxembourg about healing the rifts between the major powers that had arisen over Iraq. "The main thing now is not the split of the international community, but its unification ... topical problems in the reconstruction of Iraq can be solved only through common efforts of all countries, both the opponents of the war and those who waged it ... the United Nations must play the central role in the postwar reconstruction of Iraq in order to make the process quicker and more efficient."<sup>7</sup> Later in May he commented that the USA could not resolve the problems of Iraq by herself, and would require the support of the international community.

Russia's cooperation was seen in her support of UN Security Council resolution 1483, which was approved in May 2003. This resolution lifted the economic and financial sanctions imposed by the UN in 1990 and granted the USA and UK the right to act as the legitimate authority in Iraq for twelve months. Russia has stated that she wishes to take a full part in the economic restoration of Iraq, and wishes to continue the extensive economic relationship that she developed with Iraq prior to March 2003. The USA has mentioned the possibility of forgiving the debts incurred by Saddam's regime; Russia has stated that she is prepared to discuss the restructuring of the Iraqi debt with the Paris Club.

Although disapproving of US actions towards Iraq, Russia has shown that she is unable to prevent the US from using force. Her anxiety to make known her continued desire to cooperate with the USA underlines her impotence in the face of US military and economic power. Igor Ivanov has talked about how the Iraq crisis demonstrates the need for the international community to develop an effective international security system, and for the UN to be reformed. However, he appears to have no clear idea of how to achieve these objectives. These sentiments seem more to reflect Russia's wish to prevent the USA from using force unilaterally, but having no means to see this wish fulfilled. The most that Russia is able to do in this regard is to increase her level of diplomatic cooperation with France, Germany and China, and talk about the need for a multipolar international system. As in the case of Kosovo in 1999, Russia has little choice other than to accept the outcome of US actions, and to continue to cooperate with Washington. Russia's concern about being excluded from the post-war reconstruction of Iraq, and Putin's recommendation that the Duma ratify the SORT Treaty (it was ratified in May 2003) make clear Moscow's awareness that it sees no alternative to cooperation with the USA.

### North Korea

The Russian Federation sees itself as an Asian-Pacific power, with significant economic and security interests in this region, and the desire to play a full part in the promotion of security there. Accordingly, she is a member of APEC and has developed a close association with ASEAN. Russia has supported the idea of a regional security structure for North East Asia, including Russia, Japan, China, the USA and the two Korean states.<sup>8</sup>

Russia has a strong interest in being involved in attempts to resolve the security crisis caused by the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea's (DPRK) desire to develop a nuclear arsenal. Discussing the crisis in June 2003, deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov said that "no issues relating to the DPRK can be resolved without taking into account the interests of Russia and without Russian involvement. This is unambiguous and manifest."<sup>9</sup> Foreign minister Igor Ivanov stated that Russia was ready to help in whatever way it could to promote a breakthrough in the standoff between the USA and North Korea on this issue.

Russian interests in relation to the Korean peninsula have been well summarised by Valery Denisov of the Russian specialist institute MGIMO.<sup>10</sup> In 2002 he wrote that the basic principles of Russian policy over Korea were:

- Support of an independent process of reconciliation in Korea, without external interference.
- The resolution of all problems exclusively by peaceful, diplomatic means.
- The support of the creation by a peaceful path of a single Korean state, which has a friendly relationship towards Russia and other countries.
- The ensuring of security on the peninsula by the process of working out corresponding international-legal guarantees.
- Rejection of any foreign military presence in Korea.
- The non-existence of WMD in Korea, the ensuring on the basis of international guarantees the non-nuclear status of the peninsula, the non-proliferation of missiles.
- The implementation of mutually advantageous economic cooperation in Korea, including cooperation on a multilateral basis.

The Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1990, and Moscow and Seoul have enjoyed a good relationship since then. Relations with North Korea deteriorated as a result of this, and only improved significantly in 2000, when a friendship and cooperation treaty was signed by the Russian and North Korean foreign ministers in Pyongyang in February 2000, and when Vladimir Putin visited Pyongyang in July 2000, the first Soviet/Russian leader ever to do so. Since 2000, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il has visited Russia on two occasions (July-August 2001 and August 2002). During his 2001 visit, Kim Jong Il signed a declaration on relations with Putin that marked the development of a closer bilateral relationship. The economic relationship has also expanded since 2000. Russia and North Korea have discussed Pyongyang's Soviet era debts to Moscow. The two sides have also discussed the modernization by Russia of the North Korean railway system, and connecting it with both the Trans-Siberian and South Korean railway networks. Cooperation between the fishing industries of both countries has also increased since 2000. In April 2001, when the North Korean defence minister visited Moscow, a military-technical cooperation agreement was signed, along with an interagency agreement on developing military cooperation. There has been a steady flow of high level visits between the two countries in the last two years. In many respects, the improvement in Russo-North Korean relations since 2000 has been the main factor in reducing Pyongyang's international isolation.<sup>11</sup>

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The possibility that North Korea may develop (or even already possess) nuclear weapons presents Russian foreign policy with several challenges. Moscow has no desire to see North Korea emerge as a nuclear weapons state, particularly in view of the nature of the North Korean regime, whose stability and predictability are highly questionable. At the same time, Moscow is strongly opposed to this issue being resolved by the USA in a unilateral and punitive fashion. The Russian leadership rejected the Bush Administration's inclusion of North Korea in its axis of evil in January 2002, and has argued that Pyongyang does not support terrorism. It has also tended to downplay US warnings about the DPRK's possible nuclear ambitions. Moscow's approach stems from its longstanding opposition to US dominance of the post-Cold War international system. To agree with the US approach would mean acquiescing in what it sees as the US tendency to resolve international security problems on its own terms, without taking into account the views of the rest of the international community. This was the Russian perception of the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 and of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 and of the new US doctrine of pre-emptive strikes. It is concerned that the US may act in a similar fashion over North Korea.

The Russian leadership has argued that the USA's hardline approach towards North Korea is counterproductive. It has sought to promote a direct dialogue between the USA and North Korea on the nuclear issue, and argued that both sides should return to the October 1994 Framework Agreement under which North Korea gave up graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities in return for the USA agreeing to help the DPRK develop light-water reactor power plants. The USA agreed to supply North Korea with oil for its power stations and North Korea agreed to fulfil its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to cooperate fully with the IAEA. North Korea also agreed to abide by its previous agreements committing itself to the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

In October 2002 the Russian line shifted away somewhat from its standard one of criticising the USA's tough approach towards North Korea. Moscow became a little more concerned about North Korea's stance on the issue of nuclear weapons. In that month the USA claimed that North Korean officials had confirmed that the DPRK possessed nuclear weapons. On 24 October 2002, deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov said Russia was holding consultations to obtain as full and trustworthy information as possible about the North Korean nuclear programme. On 26 October Losyukov said Russia had no evidence of a nuclear programme by North Korea, but later complained that Moscow had received unsatisfactory explanations from North Korea through diplomatic channels concerning the North Korean nuclear programme. He said, "the statements by North Korean authorities contain some ambiguity. In our opinion, such ambiguity is very dangerous, because it leads to mutual suspicions and may negatively influence the situation on the Korean peninsula."<sup>12</sup> The Foreign Ministry later expressed concern over "the ongoing and conflicting reports from North Korea about the DPRK's right to possess nuclear weapons ... Russia expects the friendly Korean leadership to strictly observe all the terms and commitments in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty."<sup>13</sup> In December 2002 the Foreign Ministry's concern grew when the DPRK stated that it had resumed its nuclear programme after the USA ceased to supply fuel oil. It also expressed regret over North Korea's unilateral step to remove seals and other monitoring tools put on its nuclear facilities by the IAEA.

By the end of 2002, Russia's position on this issue could be summarised as follows:

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- North Korea and the USA should return to the October 1994 Framework Agreement.
- North Korea should cooperate fully with the IAEA and abide by the NPT.
- The USA should have direct, bilateral talks with North Korea on this issue, rather than seek to negotiate with North Korea in a multilateral framework, as desired by Washington.
- North Korea should not be subject to any sanctions and the international community should avoid trying to isolate Pyongyang.

Although concerned about North Korea's nuclear policy, Moscow also doubted whether Pyongyang could develop a nuclear weapons programme. This was very much the line taken by the defence minister, Sergey Ivanov, and the minister for atomic energy, Aleksandr Rumyantsev, who on 13 January 2003, stated:

To the best of our knowledge, there is certainly no know-how to produce nuclear weapons in North Korea. It would have been very easy to spot, had this kind of know-how been in development. And their declarations to the effect that their nuclear programmes are purely peaceful can only be welcomed.<sup>14</sup>

In 2003, as US concern over North Korea's possible intentions grew, so did those of Russia, both over the possibility of the DPRK seeking to develop a nuclear weapon, and over the possible US response. Moscow deplored Pyongyang's decision to withdraw from the NPT and also from the 1992 agreement with South Korea to keep the Korean peninsula free from nuclear weapons. In April 2003, Aleksandr Rumyantsev became more sombre in his assessment of North Korea's nuclear potential when he warned that North Korea's statements that it has a nuclear arms capability should be taken seriously, although he was still of the opinion that Pyongyang did not currently possess nuclear weapons.<sup>15</sup>

The US Administration talked about possibly taking the issue of North Korea's possible nuclear ambitions to the UN Security Council (UNSC). This was opposed by the Russian Federation, which feared that the DPRK would be likely to ignore any resolution passed by the UNSC and thus inflame the situation. If North Korea ignored any UNSC resolution, then the UN would presumably have to face the possibility of imposing sanctions, which Pyongyang would also be likely to defy. This could then mean that the USA could return to the UNSC to seek more punitive sanctions, possibly including the use of force against North Korea. The Russian Federation would then find itself in the position of either having to go along with the UNSC decision, or to veto it, which would arguably worsen the situation, and complicate relations with the USA.

The Russian leadership has accordingly argued against taking the issue to the UN. Defence minister Sergey Ivanov warned in April 2003 that:

I do not rule out the possibility that should the UN Security Council adopt any decisions on this issue, North Korea could ignore them, adducing other precedents ... I believe that only through political diplomatic means with the involvement of all the parties concerned should the situation be restored to a status quo and the return of International Atomic Energy Agency staff to North Korea be ensured ... it

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goes without saying that this can only be achieved if North Korea received full and absolute guarantees of its security...should the question arise whether Russia is willing to provide such security guarantees, Russia will be willing.<sup>16</sup>

Russia is willing to provide North Korea with written security guarantees, providing the USA also does so, in exchange for Pyongyang not developing nuclear weapons. Aleksandr Losyukov stated in April 2003 that Moscow "would be ready to guarantee North Korea's security together with other countries on the condition that similar US guarantees are provided".<sup>17</sup> Although reluctant to see sanctions of any sort imposed on North Korea, Losyukov warned that Moscow might reconsider its opposition to sanctions if Pyongyang were to continue to talk about acquiring a nuclear arsenal.

Russia's main policy initiative over the North Korean crisis consists of the package agreement presented by Losyukov to the DPRK leadership when he visited Pyongyang in January 2003. The package consists of three main elements:

First, it provides for "a nuclear-free status of the Korean peninsula, a strict observance by all the parties concerned of the commitments stipulated by other international agreements, including the 1994 framework agreement". Second, it provides for "a constructive bilateral and multilateral dialogue between the parties concerned, and guarantees of North Korea's security should become one of the results of the dialogue". Third, the document suggests "the resumption of humanitarian and economic programmes, which were implemented in the Korean peninsula".<sup>18</sup>

The Russian leadership welcomed the US-North Korean talks that took place in Beijing in April 2003. By late May the Foreign Ministry warned that the situation was becoming more complicated, and expressed its willingness to act as a mediator between Washington and Pyongyang if so desired. This appeared to mark a difference from Losyukov's statement in February 2003, when he said Moscow would not act as a broker between the USA and North Korea.

By mid-2003, Russia's official position was much the same as it had been in December 2002, with the exception that it was prepared to act as a mediator, and to offer North Korea security guarantees along with the USA and other powers. There are inconsistencies in Russia's position. Her claims that North Korea does not possess nuclear weapons or currently have the capacity to produce them seems to run counter to North Korean official statements. Her position on the possible imposition of sanctions is also inconsistent, although she would be highly reluctant to take a punitive stance.

Moscow's policy slightly favours North Korea, in that Moscow supports North Korea's idea of direct bilateral talks with the USA, and generally takes a softer line towards Pyongyang. However, both Russia and the USA share the common objective of a non-nuclear North Korea. Russia is likely to oppose any attempts by the USA to take a harder line, be it through the UN or acting outside it. She would certainly oppose any attempts to use force. China would very probably take a similar position, and Moscow and Beijing may well coordinate their diplomacy if the situation further deteriorates. However, Russia may face the problem of becoming irrelevant in attempts to resolve this crisis.



If the USA and North Korea refuse to alter their stances, then Russian mediation attempts are only likely to underline her own impotence. Russia has very little, if any, leverage over Pyongyang. It is likely that China has greater influence with the North Korean leadership than Russia does, and mediation efforts by Beijing are more likely to be successful, which would further underline Russia's impotence. Japan and South Korea are moving closer to the USA over this issue. Russia thus risks becoming relatively isolated as the USA and her allies may seek to resolve the North Korean nuclear question without significant Russian participation.<sup>19</sup>

However, if this problem is resolved diplomatically, by means of agreement between the USA and North Korea, it seems likely that both Washington and Pyongyang would be interested in seeing any agreement underpinned by greater regional security cooperation, which would inevitably include Russia. Moscow is therefore unlikely to be completely marginalised in North East Asia and would form part of any regional security system, albeit with the risk of being the least important part of that system.

## Iran

Post-Soviet Russia has enjoyed a cooperative relationship with Iran throughout the 1990s, seeing Tehran as a major force in the Persian Gulf, and a useful counterweight to Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Russia has accordingly become an important supplier of arms to Iran, and has also become a significant supplier of civilian nuclear technology to the Tehran regime. Iran has not challenged Russian interests in Central Asia, and has supported Russia's calls for a multipolar international system.

The most important aspect of Russo-Iranian relations, which has direct bearing on US attitudes towards Iran, is the agreement whereby Russia will complete the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant. This agreement was signed in January 1995. Washington has consistently opposed this deal, fearing that the supply of Russian civil nuclear technology could help Iran to build nuclear weapons. Moscow has rejected US pressure to cancel the Bushehr agreement, contending that it will not enable Iran to develop a nuclear weapons capability.

US concern over Bushehr has grown much stronger in 2003, as Iran was not fully cooperating with the IAEA and appeared to be interested in developing its own uranium deposits. The USA takes the view that Iran is seeking to develop a nuclear weapons capability, and is using the Bushehr project as a cover to obtain and develop technologies that would help her to achieve this objective. It is for this reason that the Bush Administration has sought to persuade Moscow from continuing its civilian nuclear cooperation with Iran.

The USA, along with the EU and IAEA, has expressed its concern over Iran's lack of full cooperation with the IAEA. This concern was also expressed by the G8, which includes Russia, at the Evian summit in June 2003. However, Russia rejects US claims that Iran is seeking to develop a nuclear weapons capability, and in June 2003, deputy foreign minister Georgy Mamedov denied charges made by Under-Secretary of State John Bolton that Russia was helping Iran develop nuclear weapons. Russia has however echoed the recommendations by the USA and EU that Iran cooperate more closely with the IAEA. The foreign ministry, defence ministry and ministry of atomic energy have all urged Iran to sign an additional protocol to the NPT which would allow the IAEA to check facilities at short notice.

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On 20 June Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev said Russia would begin supplies of nuclear fuel for Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant only after Iran has put all of its nuclear facilities under the control of the IAEA and provided answers to all questions the IAEA might ask.

Russia also desires that Iran sign another protocol with her, under which Tehran would undertake to return all spent nuclear fuel back to Russia. At the beginning of July 2003, the Iranian Vice-President and head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization Gholam Reza Aqazadeh visited Moscow. Aqazadeh said that Moscow and Tehran would soon announce the date for signing this additional protocol to the intergovernmental cooperation agreement, and a schedule for the first shipment of fuel from Russia to the Bushehr nuclear power plant.

Therefore, although Russia agrees with the USA that Iran should fully cooperate with the IAEA and fully abide by the NPT, she continues to resist US pressure to cease all cooperation with Iran in the civilian nuclear sector. Russia intends to develop a close partnership with Iran, and although Russia has shown some misgivings over Iran's nuclear programme, she will not abandon the Bushehr project. Russia sees US policy towards Iran as aiming to isolate the regime in Tehran, a development which Moscow sees as counterproductive. Needless to say, Russia would also oppose any use of force by the US to destroy Iran's nuclear capability, and any US attempt at regime change in Iran. However, as in the case of Iraq, Russia would be unlikely to risk any major break in her relationship with the USA, even if Washington does take military action against Tehran. It is also possible that Israel may at some stage take pre-emptive action against Iranian nuclear facilities as she did against Iraq in 1981. In this event, Moscow is unlikely to do little more than issue a verbal criticism of Israel, for fear of jeopardising her ties with both Washington and Jerusalem.

## Conclusions

The Russian leadership strongly disagrees with the validity of the concept of the axis of evil, seeing it as a product of the USA's dominance of the post-Cold War international system. However, although Moscow opposes Washington's stance, she is unable to effectively counter it, and is unwilling to risk any major breach with the USA over any member of the so-called axis of evil. Moscow will continue to maintain cordial relations with North Korea and Iran, and in the event of the intensification of an American hardline policy towards these states, Russia is likely to pursue a diplomatic strategy that would try to persuade Washington to soften its approach.

The Putin leadership has responded to the Iraq crisis by intensifying arguments for a multipolar international system. This has been a fundamental feature of Russian foreign policy doctrine since at least the mid-1990s, when Yevgeny Primakov replaced Andrey Kozyrev as foreign minister. These calls were muted for a short time in the immediate aftermath of "9/11", but have resurfaced in the light of the Bush Administration's tendency to bypass international institutions such as the UN when considering using force in meeting challenges to American security interests.

Putin made an explicit call for a multipolar international system when interviewed on French television in February 2003.

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We believe here, in Russia, just as French President Jacques Chirac believes, that the future international security architecture must be based on a multipolar world. This is the main thing that unites us. I am absolutely confident that the world will be predictable and stable only if it is multipolar.<sup>20</sup>

His state of the nation address delivered to the Federal Assembly in May 2003 also made an oblique criticism of the USA's decision to ignore the UN. After making standard comments about the central importance of the UN in dealing with challenges to global security, he commented:

It is not always easy for the Security Council to pass a decision. Sometimes no decisions are passed. It happens sometimes that the initiators of a resolution do not have enough arguments to persuade other countries that their initiative is right. Of course, UN decisions are far from being favoured by everyone every time. But the world community has no other more universal mechanism. This mechanism should be looked after and maintained.<sup>21</sup>

Elsewhere in his address he noted that, "terrorism threatens the peace and security of our citizens. Strong, well-armed national armies are sometimes used not to fight this evil but to expand the areas of strategic influence of individual states". This appears to be a subtle criticism of the USA. The chief of the Russian General Staff, Anatoly Kvashnin, echoed this comment more emphatically in June 2003, when he warned the General Staff Academy that:

It is one thing when a particular country's armed forces are combating terrorism on their own territory and other countries extend assistance. It is a different matter when certain countries pursue their objectives of interfering in another country's domestic affairs under the pretext of eradicating international terrorism.<sup>22</sup>

However, as the comments cited above by Yury Fedotov and Igor Neverov make clear, Moscow believes that there is no alternative to cooperation with the USA in many important areas. For all the talk that US military action against Iraq without UN approval could wreck the anti-terrorist coalition, Moscow is still as keen as ever on cooperating with the USA in this area, and her opposition to Operation Iraqi Freedom has not prevented her from seeking to build a significant economic relationship with post-Saddam Iraq. Moscow desires to play a role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, including deploying peacekeepers to help maintain a settlement if such an agreement is ever reached, and it is unlikely she would ever be able to play such a role if she ruptured her relationship with Washington over any member of the axis of evil.<sup>23</sup>

Moscow is therefore engaged in a difficult balancing act whereby she seeks to encourage multipolarity as a means of containing American power, whilst at the same time seeing close Russo-American partnership as an indispensable feature of her foreign policy. The situation is made more complicated as the Bush Administration sees no virtue whatsoever in the concept of multipolarity. In June 2003 US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice made the following comments on multipolarity.

Some argue that Europe and America are more divided by differing worldviews than we are united by common values. More troubling, some

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have spoken admiringly - almost nostalgically - of "multipolarity", as if it were a good thing, to be desired for its own sake.

The reality is that "multi-polarity" was never a unifying idea, or a vision. It was a necessary evil that sustained the absence of war but it did not promote the triumph of peace. Multipolarity is a theory of rivalry; of competing interests - and at its worst - competing values.

We have tried this before. It led to the Great War - which cascaded into the Good War, which gave way to the Cold War. Today this theory of rivalry threatens to divert us from meeting the great tasks before us.

Why would anyone who shares the values of freedom seek to put a check on those values? Democratic institutions themselves are a check on the excesses of power. Why should we seek to divide our capacities for good, when they can be so much more effective united? Only the enemies of freedom would cheer this division ...

... We have important work to do ... work that cannot be done by any of us alone ... and cannot be done well if we are working at cross purposes.

Let us, then, lay aside the quest for new "poles" and turn our energies to creating what President Bush has called "a balance of power that favors freedom" - where we defend freedom against its enemies and support those across the globe seeking to build freedom in their own societies.<sup>24</sup>

If the USA does resolve the North Korean and Iran problems by force, Russia will probably respond as she did over Kosovo and Iraq. Namely, she will oppose such a policy in every available diplomatic forum, but at the end of the day she will not permit her opposition to risk any serious rupture in her relationship with Washington. Such events will encourage her desire to create in the long-term a Russia-EU pole (and probably also a Russia-China pole) that could constrain the USA, but in the short to medium term, Russia is forced to combine close cooperation with the USA along with a profound disagreement with many features of the USA's vision of the international system.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For the January 2002 State of the Union address, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>. Note that Under Secretary of State John Bolton gave a speech at the Heritage Foundation entitled "Beyond the Axis of Evil" in May 2002, in which he also included Syria, Libya, and Cuba as states which the USA saw as serious security threats: <http://www.state.gov/t/us/rm/9962.htm>. These states are seen as threats by the USA because they are believed to be developing weapons of mass destruction.

<sup>2</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 5 April 2002; 21 October 2002.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the strategy see: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>. See also the Weapons of Mass Destruction strategy of December 2002: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/WMDStrategy.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 30 January 2003.

<sup>5</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 9 March 2003.

<sup>6</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 28 March 2003.

<sup>7</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 15 April 2003.

<sup>8</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 12 October 2002.

<sup>9</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 11 June 2003.

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- <sup>10</sup> V Denisov, 'The inter-Korean settlement and Russia's interests', *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*, 1, 2002, pp58-61.
- <sup>11</sup> Alexander Vorontsov, 'Russian and Korean Peninsula: Contemporary Realities and Prospects', *Far Eastern Affairs*, 3, 2002, pp52-56.
- <sup>12</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 31 October 2002.
- <sup>13</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 18 November 2002.
- <sup>14</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 13 January 2003.
- <sup>15</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 29 April 2003.
- <sup>16</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 10 April 2003.
- <sup>17</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 11 April 2003.
- <sup>18</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 18 January 2003.
- <sup>19</sup> See Georgy Bulychev & Aleksandr Vorontsov, 'The Korean problem at the crossroads', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 18 June 2003 for an argument that Russian participation in resolving the North Korea problem is essential. See also the article by Sergey Luzyanin, 'All-powerful Peking, and powerless Moscow', *Nezavisimaya Gazeta - Dipkur'yer*, 23 June 2003.
- <sup>20</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 9 February 2003.
- <sup>21</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 16 May 2003.
- <sup>22</sup> BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 21 June 2003. The US-UK military operation in Iraq led to calls within Russia for an acceleration of military reform. On 3 April, Viktor Ozerov, head of the Federation Council committee for defence and security, said the war in Iraq has brought to the limelight the need for speeding up the reform of the Russian armed forces. For an analysis of the consequences of the Iraq war for Russia and Russian military reform see the article by Chairman of the Duma Defence Committee General Andrey Nikolayev in *Pravda*, 24 April 2003.
- <sup>23</sup> Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Saltanov's comments on Russia's desire to maintain contacts with Iraq, and how he links this with the overall situation in the Middle East, are illuminating: "Russia has never turned its back on Iraq. Our relations are of long standing and have been developing for decades. Now it is important not to break off our economic relations, which are important for the restoration of normal life in Iraq... It is beyond all doubt that the Iraqi developments continue affect the situation in the region. This requires strenuous international efforts to bring about post-war reconstruction in Iraq on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1483. At this moment the Iraqis must be given a chance to create transitional and eventually full-fledged bodies of state power. This will bring about early political stabilization in Iraq and greater security there, and also make it possible to take steps to repair the Iraqi economy and address acute social issues. One cannot but take into account the sentiment in Arab society the war in Iraq has fermented. This sentiment is far from optimistic. One of the greatest risks is that such an atmosphere may be used by extremists, whose tactics have never promoted stabilization in the region. This is the reason why it is important for the international community to pay special attention to the solution of Middle East problems. Active assistance is required to the international quartet of mediators (Russia, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations) in the interests of resuming efforts aimed at a political settlement of the Palestinian issue. Systematic, practical implementation of steps under the "road map" plan by the Palestinians and the Israelis is of paramount importance." See BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 4 July 2003. Deputy foreign minister Yury Fedotov spoke of the possible deployment of Russian forces to participate in any international peacekeeping force to uphold an Israeli-Palestinian agreement on 18 June 2003. Russia's interest in participating in any such force contrasts with her recent decision to withdraw from the peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and Kosovo, and her lack of interest in participating in peacekeeping operations in either Afghanistan or Iraq. See BBC Monitoring <http://news.monitor.bbc.co.uk/>, 18 June 2003.
- <sup>24</sup> For the text of Condoleezza Rice's speech, see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/06/20030626.html>

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ISBN 1-904423-42-6

**Published By:**

**Defence Academy of the**  
**United Kingdom**

**Conflict Studies Research Centre**

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Camberley  
Surrey  
GU15 4PQ  
England

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**ISBN 1-904423-42-6**