

# THE FUTURE OF U.S. – RUSSIAN RELATIONS

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*The opinions are those only of the speaker*

# The Past is NOT Prologue

- ▣ Russia is not the Soviet Union



# Sources of Soviet-US tensions

## ▣ Ideology

- Competition for resources and allies driven by conflicting and mutually hostile ideologies
- Not a classic realist confrontation
- When the ideology collapsed, so did the regime
- More importantly, when the ideology collapsed, so did the Cold War
- *There is no longer any organic source of tension between the Russian Federation, NATO, or the United States*

# Sources of conflict and cooperation

## ▣ Conflict

- On the one hand, American meddling in Russia's post-Soviet "near abroad"
  - ▣ U.S. would not appreciate similar Soviet moves in the West – just ask Hugo Chavez
  - ▣ On the other hand, clear Soviet-style thuggery and bullying of Russian neighbors (Georgia, Ukraine), with Moscow believing it has a veto on everything that happens from the Baltic to the Pacific



Major sticking point is the collapse of Russian democracy: maybe that invitation to the G-8 was a decade too early. And who is in charge over there?

*Meet the new boss,...  
Same as the old boss?*



# The case for cooperation

- ▣ First, current Russian-American squabbles are just silly. Let them send Blackjacks to Venezuela
- ▣ U.S. is paying the price for incoherent policies since Clinton through Bush (especially those of Albright and Rice)
- ▣ To some extent, this kind of squabbling is *normal* among major powers, especially competitors for resources
- ▣ No second “Cold War”



*Made it! Now how we do we get this thing home?*

*“NATO expansion!  
Haha! ”  
“I’m not laughing,  
Bill.”*



*“Uh, about that ABM Treaty thing...”*

# “The reset button”



- ▣ Major issues in common:
  - Strategic nuclear reductions
  - Non-proliferation
  - Terrorism
  - Global economic stability
  - Democratic development in Russia

# Russia's incentives to cooperate



Beslan terror attack, 2004

- ▣ Russia has more to gain from cooperation: far greater terrorism danger in Russia than U.S.
  - Many more major terror acts in Russia since 9/11 than in the U.S. or elsewhere
- ▣ Proliferators are closer to Russian borders, and hate Russians as much as they hate Americans
- ▣ Russian economic stability is hostage to oil price
- ▣ Sooner or later, the impossibility of a Russian “Monroe Doctrine” will be obvious – if for cost if no other reason

# U.S. policy opportunities

- ▣ Conserve oil. Make Russia function like a first-world economy.
- ▣ Quieter, but firmer, public diplomacy
  - Pick our battles more carefully: do we really want to identify the Caspian Sea as “vital?”
- ▣ Reduce nuclear weapons inventories
  - Something both sides want to do and *can* be done
  - Obama called for this last week
- ▣ Joint U.S. – EU move to make a Russia an ally, rather than an observer
  - Halt NATO expansion