

Us and Them: Anti-American Views of the Putin Generation

For months, pundits from San Francisco to Vladivostok have energetically debated whether Vladimir Putin will retain power in Russia and under what rubric: president, prime minister, national leader, or something else. Although obviously critical to Russia's future, this narrow focus on one man overlooks an important political and social development inside Russia. As the eminent Soviet-era dissident Sergei Kovalev has observed, "'Putin' now stands for an entire set of policies" and a "web of political concepts generated in the bowels of the KGB."¹ Our recent nationally representative surveys in Russia indicate that Russians ages 16 to 29 gravitate enthusiastically to this ideological platform that Putin has built.

These young people, born between 1976 and 1991, are aptly labeled "the Putin generation." Instead of the Helsinki generation or the fall-of-the-Berlin-Wall generation bound together by an embrace of international human rights norms and democracy as core values, young Russians now tend to reflect and support the values and aspirations expressed by Putin. They favor the restoration of a hypersovereign Russia that remains outside the Euro-Atlantic community and resists or rejects international legal norms. Were Putin himself to leave the national stage any time soon, his views would likely live on in the Putin generation for years to come.

The first building block in Putin's national concept is Soviet nostalgia, an effort to restore a sense of pride in the putative accomplishments of the Soviet Union and to harness this pride to the current Russian state. One manifesta-

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Putin's views will likely live on for years in the younger generation.

tion is the theme that “the collapse of the Soviet Union [was] the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century.”² First pronounced during Putin’s State of the Union address in April 2005, this sentiment has become so familiar and widely accepted that young Russians discuss why they agree with

it even in casual conversation with Western reporters.³ Another aspect of Soviet nostalgia is ambivalence toward Joseph Stalin. A survey we conducted in 2005 showed that four in five young Russians agreed with Putin’s assessment of the Soviet collapse, and a majority failed the “Stalin test,” agreeing, for example, that Stalin did “more good than bad.”⁴ Our 2007 survey data confirmed these findings, providing additional evidence that these Putin themes

resonate deeply with young Russians. The rewriting of Soviet history in a positive light effaces historical memory and facilitates Russia’s development as an authoritarian state.

The second building block, the focus of this article, involves the manufacturing of enemies within and outside Russia. Kremlin authorities and Putin himself repeatedly stir up anxiety among the population concerning dangerous foreign influences, suggesting that enemies encircle Russia and claiming that the foreign governments that help finance Russian nongovernmental organizations are meddling in Russia’s internal affairs.⁵ Recently, official rhetoric has turned explicitly anti-American. Putin has accused the United States of seeking to impose its ideas and interests on the rest of world, going so far as to liken recent U.S. policies to those of the Third Reich. “One state and, of course, first and foremost the United States, has overstepped its national borders in every way. This is visible in the economic, political, cultural and educational policies it imposes on other nations,” he told a stunned audience in Munich in February 2007.⁶

At home, the Kremlin-supported youth group Nashi (Russian for “Ours”) actively promotes the belief that foreign enemies pose a threat to Russia.⁷ Although young Russians have been generally apathetic and apolitical, our 2007 survey shows a surprising jump in awareness of Nashi and growing desire to join its ranks. We illustrate these definitive sentiments of the Putin generation using data from our surveys, particularly the 2007 study, which contains a number of questions concerning views of the United States. First, we explore how extensively young Russians support the Putin path. Then we examine how young Russians ages 16 to 29 view the United States based on a series of indicators from our survey. Next, we analyze social, demographic, and subjective factors that correlate with views toward the United States among young

Russians. To conclude, we assess the challenges that Russia's current political situation presents to U.S. and European policymakers.

Why Youth Views Matter for U.S.-Russian Relations

Understanding young Russians' attitudes about the United States is important for multiple reasons. First, Putin's anti-American turn seems to be motivated at least in part by domestic political considerations. The creation of foreign "enemies" is a classic tactic used by political leaders, including, to be sure, Soviet leaders, to distract their populations from the shortcomings of their own government and rally support behind authoritarian measures. The Russian government is beset by widespread corruption, incompetence, and failure at many levels. Despite resource-driven economic growth, many government institutions—the police, the military, federal bureaucracies, local inspectors, and schools—are deeply dysfunctional.

As the economic situation continues to improve, young Russians may start to demand that the government commit resources to reforming the many public institutions that make their lives more difficult and dangerous instead of easier and safer. To date, rather than confront the problems posed by Russia's public institutions and undertake difficult reforms, Putin has instead chosen to eliminate dissent and raise the specter of enemies, both internal (immigrants) and external. These so-called enemies help his circle maintain power by implying that any dissent advances the agenda of Russia's external foes and thus jeopardizes Russia's sovereignty. Putin appears to have chosen the United States in particular as the new incarnation of the foreign threat, one that should scare Russian citizens away from critical thought or action directed against his administration. In the face of a supposed foreign threat, any challenge to the regime can easily be portrayed as treasonous.

An empirical assessment of how young Russians view the United States can demonstrate whether or not this strategy has been effective. If so, it bodes poorly for U.S.-Russian relations in the near term. The U.S. government and the next administration in particular will have to contend with the diplomatic challenges posed by the belligerent tone and confrontational actions of Russian government officials. Moreover, leaving aside the immediate issue of how the United States can effectively counter Putin's newly aggressive stance, if young Russians have turned decidedly against U.S. policies or people, U.S. officials will need to develop longer-term strategies to restore a more positive image within the current generation of young Russians. Young adults are an especially key population in Russian politics because they will obviously be around for years to come.

Not long ago, many policymakers and analysts assumed or expected that young Russians would overwhelmingly demand democracy in Russia. This as-

sumption seemed reasonable given that many students in the Soviet period were the “chief milieu for underground or semi-underground circles.”⁸ In fact, the only known protest against Stalin came from a small student group.⁹ Today, although young Russians have embraced lattes, iPods, and other consumer goods enjoyed by youth in Western countries, their political views tend to be neither pro-Western nor pro-democracy.

Young Russians are not, however, monolithic. Although majorities largely embrace Putin’s anti-American message, we do find that substantial numbers are pro-American or at least neutral. The next logical question to ask is which social, demographic, and subjective variables are related to views toward the United States. Moreover, our data permit us to assess, albeit in a preliminary manner, the claims raised by some critics of U.S. counterterrorism policies that these very policies have eroded U.S. soft power. Additionally, the conventional wisdom holds that individuals who believe that the United States practices or facilitates human rights abuses such as torture and the indefinite detention of terrorist suspects are more likely to hold anti-American views.

Although our data cannot be used to assess causal relationships among these views, they do permit us to see whether perceptions of human rights violations associated with U.S. policies correlate with negative views of the United States. Such a correlation is not sufficient to establish a causal link, but it is consistent with the argument that U.S. policies have helped contribute to the erosion of the U.S. reputation. This information, along with additional survey data, will be helpful in the campaign to restore U.S. soft power. Finally, we investigate whether anti-American views are related to support for the pro-Kremlin group Nashi, for the Moscow-based human rights organization Memorial, and for Putin’s assertion that the collapse of the Soviet Union is the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century.

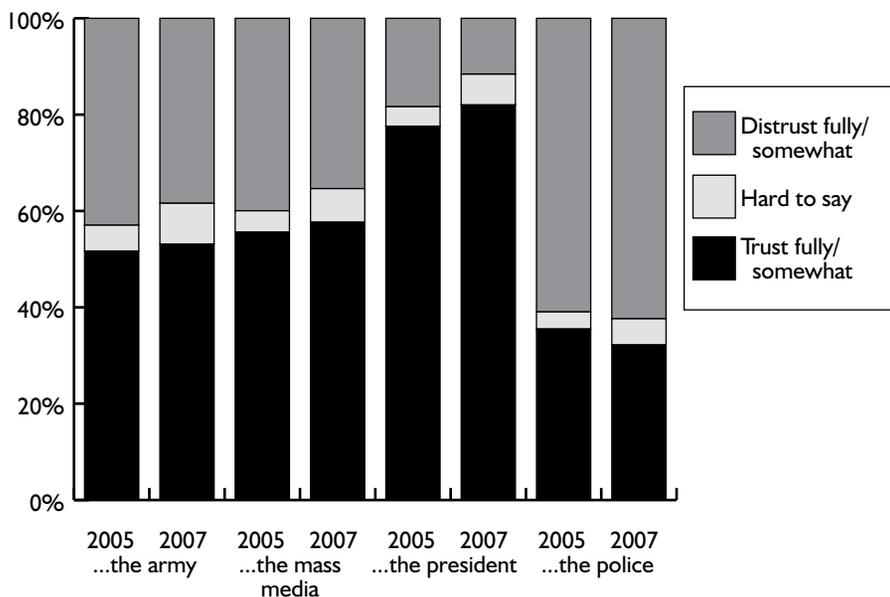
Youth Support for the Putin Path

The most direct evidence as to what young Russians think about Putin’s policies and ideas is how they feel about Russia’s current path and about Putin himself. By both counts, our surveys show very strong support for the Putin path. Although Western observers have grown increasingly worried about Russia’s trajectory, especially since 2005, when Russia paid off all of its foreign debt and Putin’s antidemocratic tendencies became more evident, young Russians have become increasingly likely to agree that Russia is on the “right path.” In 2005, 45 percent thought that Russia was on the right path, while 44 percent disagreed. By 2007, there is distinct growth in support for the current policies. In the most recent survey, a solid majority (56 percent) of respondents concurred, while fewer than three in 10 disagreed.¹⁰

This widespread perception that Russia is on track is rooted in support for Putin himself, not in a positive assessment of the performance of other Russian institutions. We asked respondents to indicate how much they trust specific institutions, including the president (fig. 1). Confidence in the president is substantially higher than trust for any other institution, and it is growing: 82 percent trusted the president in 2007, whereas 78 percent did in 2005. Young Russians are substantially less likely to express trust in other government institutions, such as the police and the army, and trust in them is on the decline. Trust in the media also seems unusually high given extensive government control, suggesting that young Russians buy into Putin’s project of asserting state control over information.¹¹

Clearly, young Russians support Putin and tend to have an optimistic outlook on their country’s trajectory despite the growing encroachment of the government on civil society, the loss of civic freedoms, and the poor performance of other institutions. Dysfunctional public institutions in Russia include the military, the police, and other security organs; federal, regional, and local governments; inspectorates and license administrators; and educational institutions, especially universities. For example, violent hazing and economic exploitation of soldiers are endemic and persistent problems, as evidenced by the brutal beating in early 2006 by senior officers of one young man that cost him his legs and his genitals. Rather than take responsibility for such crimes

Figure I. How Much Do Russians Trust...



Note: All changes from 2005 to 2007 are statistically significant.

and the overall lack of reform in the army, government officials then blamed society for the abuse.¹² Police corruption and arbitrary violence against citizens are so widespread that Russia conforms to a model of “predatory policing” in which the police do more to harm than to protect public well-being.¹³ Although *Time* proclaimed Putin “Man of the Year” in 2007 for the “stability” that he has brought to Russia, nearly every day someone in the North Caucasus disappears or is assassinated from bomb explosions. Literally hundreds of such incidents have occurred during Putin’s second term, including the Beslan school siege.¹⁴

Despite evidence of institutional dysfunction, the Putin message appeals to the current generation of young Russians, perhaps fulfilling a psychological need to believe in a strong Russia. Members of this cohort were very young when the Soviet Union collapsed, the last of the travel bans were lifted, and shortages of material goods ended. Most probably cannot recall a Russia without foreign imports. They came of age during the 1990s, a time of rampant political chaos and economic crisis, including crippling inflation. The failure of Russian leaders during that period to construct and promote an alternative, positive concept of the Russian state likely contributed to the current appeal of the Putin path, filling an ideological vacuum. Its themes of past glory and achievement, blaming Russia’s troubles on external and internal enemies, and promise of economic growth and political order seem to satisfy a visceral yearning for a radiant future in response to an unstable and troubled present. Increasing revenues from oil and natural gas undoubtedly help as well.

Anti-American Sentiment

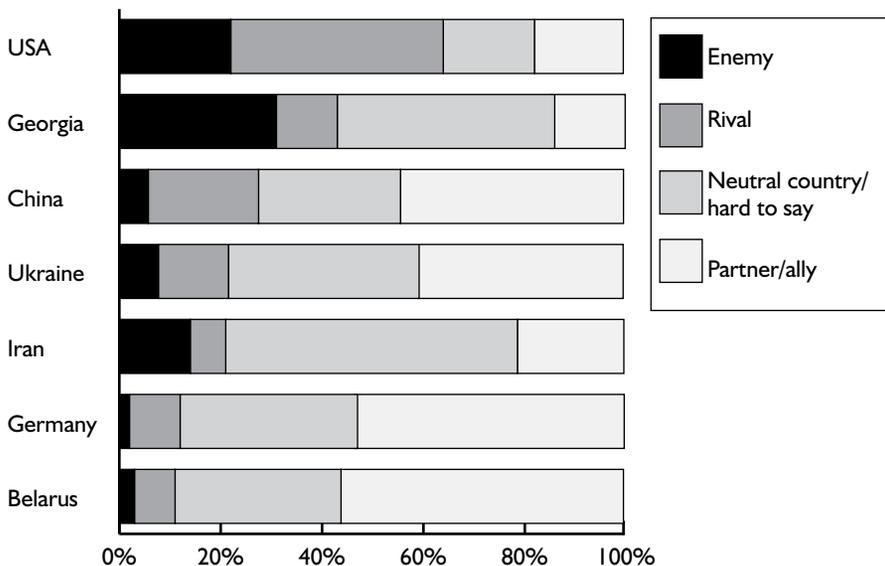
Given the apparent appeal of the Putin path, we should perhaps not be surprised to find considerable antipathy toward the United States. Putin’s rhetoric has been especially harsh concerning those who accept funding from foreign sources, calling them “jackals” and warning foreigners against “sticking their snotty nose[s] into our affair[s].”¹⁵ The 2007 survey contains a variety of questions measuring how fully young Russians share these views. We asked respondents whether they agree or disagree with three statements about the United States. The first is a standard assertion of Russian officials and news media: “The United States tries to impose its norms and way of life on the rest of the world.” Nearly 80 percent of respondents agreed with this statement.

We reversed the polarity of the responses for the next statement, to make sure that the first set of responses does not merely indicate that respondents are likely to agree with the questioner. In this instance, only 20 percent agreed that “the United States does more good than bad in the world.” Finally, about

three-quarters agreed that “the United States provides aid to other countries only in order to influence their internal affairs.” These three questions clearly indicate that a large majority of young Russians, 70 to 80 percent, hold anti-American views. Apparently, Putin’s anti-American rhetoric has resonated with a large portion of Russia’s youth.

More evidence that young Russians have embraced Putin’s depiction of the United States comes from the responses to a question regarding how best to describe the relationship between the United States and Russia (fig. 2). Sixty-four percent of the respondents viewed the United States as either an “enemy” or a “rival.” This overwhelming tendency to see the United States as a threat stands out in comparison to views on other countries. We asked the same question about six other countries. The only one that comes close to the United States, in terms of the percentage of respondents who viewed it either as an enemy or a rival, is another target of Putin’s bellicose rhetoric: Georgia, at a distant 44 percent. The remaining countries are even less likely to be viewed in such negative terms, even though some of them (Iran and China) arguably pose a greater or equal threat: Belarus (12 percent), Germany (13 percent), Iran (21 percent), Ukraine (21 percent), and China (27 percent). Young Russians are three times more likely to see the United States as a threat than to see Iran as such. Correspondingly, young Russians are more likely to see Belarus, China, Germany, and Ukraine either as partners or allies than they are to see the United States or Georgia as such.

Figure 2. What Is the Relationship of [country] to Russia?



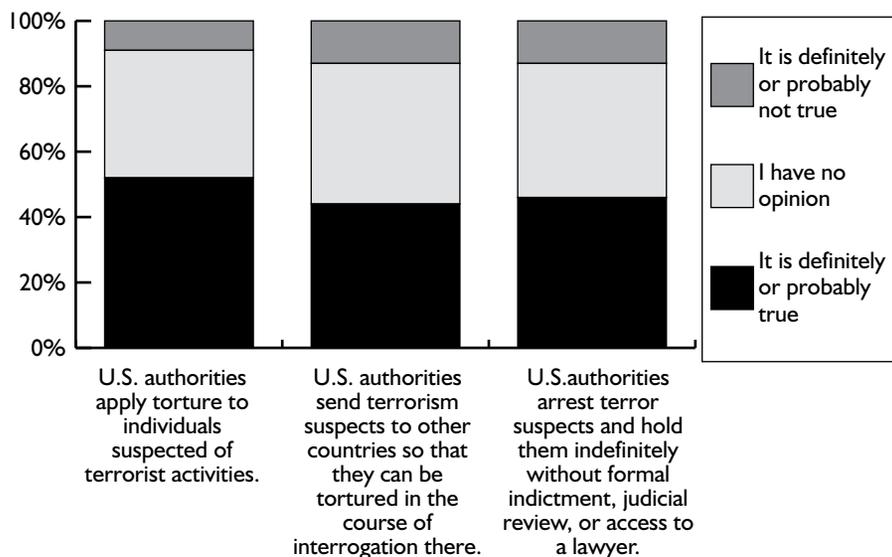
Views of U.S. Counterterrorism Policies

Although we believe that Putin's rhetoric is the main factor shaping the Putin generation's perceptions of the United States and foreign influence, their views of the Bush administration's counterterrorism policies may also encourage anti-American sentiment. In light of the argument that these policies have contributed to the loss of U.S. soft power, it is worth considering the possibility that young Russians who perceive the United States as violating human rights are also more likely to adhere to the broad anti-American message that Putin has been promoting.

In order to test at the individual level whether perceptions of human rights violations in U.S. counterterrorism policies are associated with more critical views of the United States, we included three questions measuring whether respondents believe the United States engages in such practices. We explained to each respondent that there are reports that the United States has taken certain actions but that these reports have been contested. We then asked whether the respondent believed the allegations to be true. We also asked whether the respondent believed the United States should take these actions, to see whether some Russians might advocate "harsh" measures against suspected terrorists.

These data can provide a useful benchmark for more rigorous analyses in the future of any causal relationship between U.S. counterterrorism policies and views toward the United States, particularly if the policies change. The results indicate that young Russians tend to believe that the United States tortures terrorism suspects, renders them from justice to countries that practice torture during interrogations, and detains terrorism suspects indefinitely without due process or legal representation (fig. 3). Although for each question, a fair number of respondents had "no opinion" as to the truth of these allegations, in every case roughly one-half stated that the allegations are definitely or probably true. Very few, 9 to 13 percent, believed these allegations to be false.

We also assessed whether young Russians support these policies. In fact, majorities opposed rendition from justice and indefinite detention; fewer than 20 percent supported either. Perhaps surprisingly, views on torture were somewhat more balanced, with 30 percent saying the United States probably or definitely should torture terrorism suspects. Nonetheless, here too there was more disapproval than approval, with 42 percent opposed. Thus, despite some ambivalence with respect to torture, the broad finding is that young Russians oppose policies, such as rendition and indefinite detention, that have resulted in violations of human rights and that the Bush administration has sought to justify as part of the "war on terror."

Figure 3. Do You Agree or Disagree With the Following Statements?

Who Is Anti-American and Why?

One criticism raised against the Bush administration's counterterrorism policies focuses on the practical global cost of human rights violations, which are alleged to tarnish the United States' traditional image as a protector of individual rights and freedoms. In short, counterterrorism policies that violate human rights foster anti-American sentiment throughout the world. Although this argument seems logical and plausible, we have not seen it tested empirically.

If U.S. human rights violations undermine America's image abroad, we should expect to find that those young Russians who believe that the United States engages in such violations have more negative opinions of the United States than those who do not believe such allegations. That is not to say that a correlation of this nature proves that the Bush administration policies promote anti-American views, because the causal arrow could point in the opposite direction; that is, those who are more anti-American at the outset could be more likely to give credence to the allegations of U.S. human rights violations. The absence of such a correlation, however, would effectively disprove the argument, so if we find it in our data, we can at least conclude that the argument is plausible and merits further study. Thus, we bring empirical evidence, albeit preliminary, to bear in the larger debate over the consequences of these policies for U.S. soft power. Moreover, this issue is practical as well as theoretical. Although U.S. policymakers cannot control the Kremlin's rhetoric, they can reverse policies that undermine the international image of the

United States as a guarantor of human rights norms and as an alternative to authoritarian regimes around the world.

More broadly, our data provide an opportunity to discern what factors are related to the intensity of anti-American sentiment among young Russians. Are some demographic groups more inclined toward criticism of the United States than others? Perhaps, for example, better-educated, more urbanized young Russians take a more favorable view. Do supporters of Nashi differ in any meaningful way from others in their views of America? The Kremlin has poured money into Nashi in an effort to create an institution that fosters nationalistic and pro-Putin sentiments among young Russians. Our data suggest that awareness of this group is growing. Thirty-three percent of the respondents to the 2007 survey said that they had heard of Nashi, up from 20 percent in the 2005 survey.

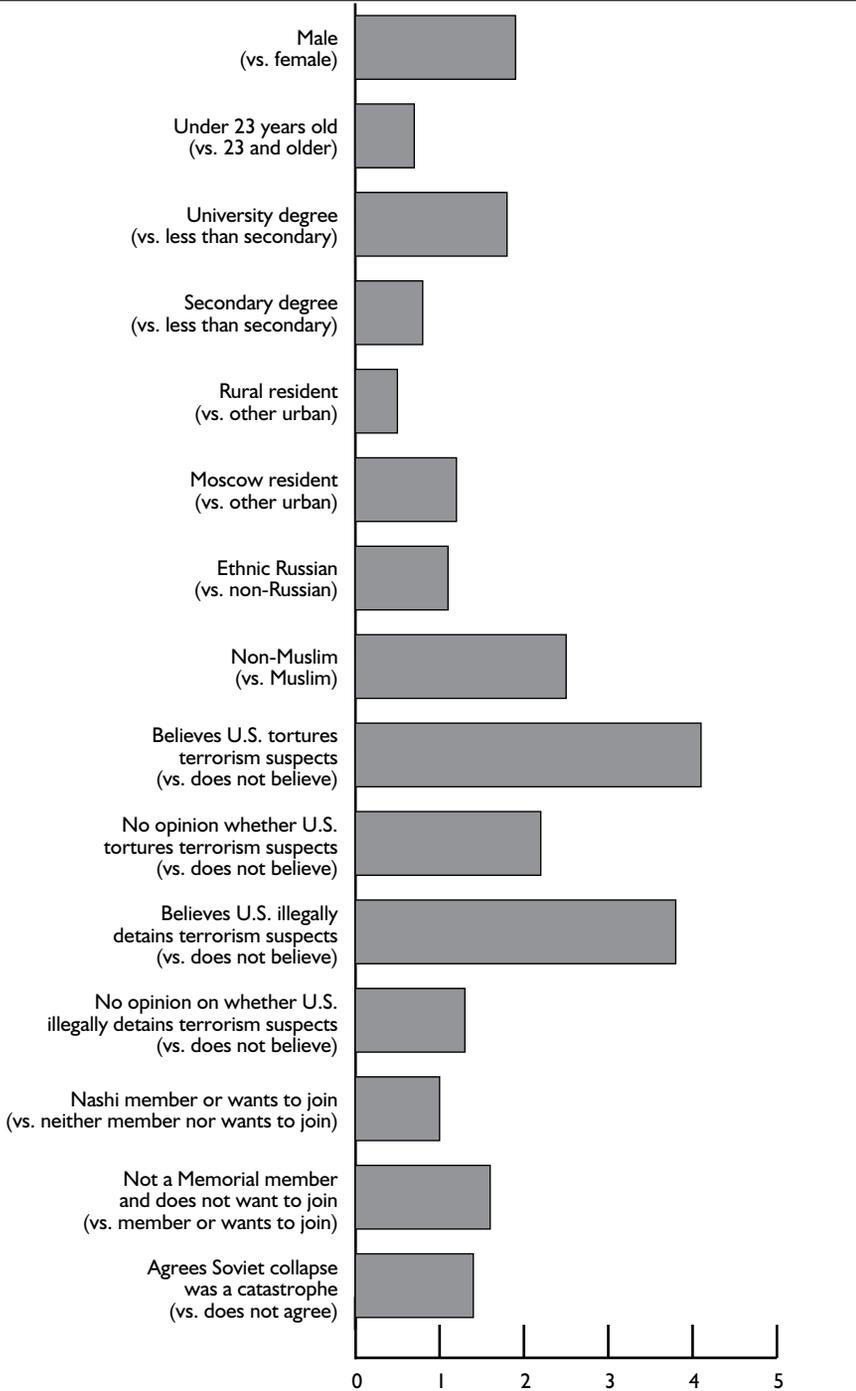
If the organization is serving its designed purpose, we would expect to find that those who support it, by which we mean the 9 percent of our sample who either are current members or say they would like to join, are more likely to embrace the Putin administration's anti-American message. On the other end of the political spectrum, the 3 percent of our respondents who support Memorial may also have distinctive views toward the United States. Although we would generally expect supporters of human rights to hold the United States in high esteem, recent U.S. policies may have undermined that positive image. Finally, if the two building blocks of Putin's platform create a coherent ideology, we would expect that those who see the Soviet collapse as a catastrophe also to hold more negative views toward the United States.

To examine how, if at all, these factors are related to anti-American sentiment, we first created a single scale measuring anti-American views based on the answers to the four questions regarding the United States discussed above, as well as a fifth question asking whether respondents like or dislike the U.S. president.¹⁶ The resulting "anti-Americanism" scale runs from 1 to 5, with higher values denoting stronger anti-American views. The sample mean on the scale is 3.72.¹⁷

Next, a multiple regression analysis obtained precise measures of how the variables of interest relate to anti-Americanism when the other variables are held constant. The results are presented in figure 4.¹⁸ The length of each bar in the figure represents the factor's average effect on anti-Americanism on the 5-point scale, all else being equal. For example, the first bar indicates that young Russian men have, on average, a 0.19 higher value on the anti-Americanism scale than do young Russian women who are otherwise identical in terms of the variables measured—education, age, place of residence, etc.

The regression results reveal that highly educated males living in Moscow are actually the most anti-American within Russia's youth. Their average

Figure 4. Factors Associated with More Anti-American Views



Note: Bars represent estimated increase in the anti-American scale associated with the corresponding category, holding constant the other variables. All results are statistically significant except for “rural resident.”

values on the anti-Americanism scale are 0.49 higher than females without college education who do not live in Moscow but are otherwise the same with respect to the other variables in the figure. Given that the standard deviation of the scale is 0.76, this represents a substantial effect. This finding is cause for particular concern. The most educated young Russians, who, given their gender and residence in the country's power center,

are likely to figure prominently in the next generation of elites, are the most anti-American.

Two other demographic effects also merit commentary. First, ethnic Russians are somewhat more anti-American than non-ethnic Russians, which may point to greater Russian nationalism as one source of anti-American views. Second, young Muslim Russians hold the United States in substantially higher esteem (0.29 on the scale)

than non-Muslims. Although this finding is not too surprising considering the potential tensions between Russia's Muslim population and the Putin administration, it is nonetheless quite striking. Where else in the world, apart from perhaps Albania and Kosovo, might we find that the Muslim population is more pro-American than other religious or ethnic groups?¹⁹

Young Russians who believe the United States tortures or indefinitely and unlawfully detains terrorism suspects have considerably more negative views of the U.S. government than do those who place little or no credence in the allegations. Those who have no opinion as to the validity of either allegation fall in between those who believe and those who do not. Our regression model provides clear, direct evidence supporting the hypothesized link between beliefs about U.S. human rights violations and the declining image of the United States among foreign publics.

Statistical analysis of our cross-sectional data cannot demonstrate that the linkage between perceptions of U.S. abuses and anti-American sentiment is causal. Yet, our analysis demonstrates that, at the individual level, the perception of U.S. human rights abuses and anti-American sentiment are strongly correlated, even when other variables are controlled statistically. Our findings are thus consistent with the argument that the Bush administration's counterterrorism policies have damaged the reputation of the United States among young Russians. It is plausible that Russians who are inclined to dislike the United States in the first place may be more likely to believe reports of U.S. human rights abuses than are Russians who are positively inclined toward the United States. Yet, even under this scenario, reports of abuses at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo clearly reinforce anti-American inclinations.

The first building block in Putin's national concept is Soviet nostalgia...

Supporters of Nashi are also significantly, although only slightly, more anti-American than young people who do not support Nashi, and supporters of Memorial are less anti-American than nonsupporters. Nashi has yet to attract the attention and interest of a majority of young people. Only one-third of our sample has even heard of the organization, and only 9 percent are members or want to join. This 9 percent, however, is more anti-American than other young people (again, controlling for the other variables in the model), suggesting that as this constituency grows, so too might support for anti-American sentiment. The fact that we see growth in support for Nashi from less than 3 percent in 2005 is also noteworthy. U.S. policymakers should therefore closely monitor the trajectory of this youth organization and any of its successors.

At the other end of the spectrum, Memorial had less recognition and support in 2007 than Nashi and slightly less support than it did in 2005. Only 17 percent said that they had even heard of Memorial, one of the oldest indigenous human rights organizations in Russia with branches in most regions of the country. The mission of Memorial is to document political crimes committed during the Soviet period against citizens and to monitor current human rights abuses in Chechnya and elsewhere in Russia. Memorial is often a partner and a source of information for the work of Human Rights Watch. Strikingly, only 3 percent of the respondents are members or would like to join. Yet, despite the recent U.S. record regarding human rights, the Memorial constituency remains more pro-American, after controlling for the other variables. Anything the United States can do to encourage the expansion of that constituency could reap longer-term benefits in terms of swaying Russian public opinion toward more favorable views of America.

Supporting this particular organization is challenging in the current political climate; overt funding of Memorial by U.S. government entities could well make the organization a target of the Russian government. Moreover, as an organization, it faces its own demographic crisis, as the majority of its active members are senior citizens, who themselves were repressed by Stalin or who lost relatives in the gulag, the Soviet system of forced labor camps. Nonetheless, U.S. policymakers and other donors should explore creative ways of supporting the organization and helping expand its appeal to young Russians.

We find clear evidence that those who agree that the Soviet collapse was the greatest catastrophe of the twentieth century are more anti-American than otherwise similar young Russians who do not agree with that statement.

...The second building block involves manufacturing enemies within and outside Russia.

This association between nostalgia for the Soviet period and anti-American views suggests that the two pillars of Putin's platform combine into a unified political ideology.

Policy-makers should also be aware that anti-American sentiment seems to be driven by responses to U.S. government policies as opposed to prejudices about the U.S. population. In the survey, we asked, "How do you feel about Americans?" meaning the American people. This question was part of a series of similarly worded questions regarding feelings about 12 different national, ethnic, religious, or political groups. Although more respondents expressed negative views (19 percent) toward Americans than expressed positive views (14 percent), the most common response was neutrality (64 percent), and the level of anti-Americanism by this measure is considerably lower than the level of hostility toward the U.S. government's policies. This suggests that, although the Putin generation holds largely negative views toward the U.S. government, this sentiment has not translated into widespread animosity toward the American people.

Finally, although hostility to the United States in particular has been especially salient in Putin's rhetoric and in the views of young Russians, we also have evidence of broader fears of foreign influence and motives, which Putin has fanned. Seventy-eight percent of respondents agree that "Russia would be better off if foreigners stopped imposing their ideas on us," and 65 percent agree that "foreigners who assist Russian organizations financially are trying to meddle in our affairs." One-third even agree with the view that "foreigners introduced AIDS in Russia in order to weaken it." Fewer (only 30 percent) agree that "Russia should strive to become a European country rather than pursue its own path."

The Need for a New U.S. Policy on Russia

Policy-makers in the United States need to calibrate their approach to Russia based on where Russia is today politically, rather than where they wanted Russia to be when the Soviet Union collapsed. The dream of a democratic Russia embedded in the Euro-Atlantic community is, for the time being, over.²⁰ This reality raises several delicate and interconnected policy dilemmas that the West and particularly the next U.S. president will confront in its relations with Russia: What should a new policy toward Russia emphasize? How can we avoid a new Cold War? How should the United States engage Russia on issues related to human rights and democracy? How stable and durable is the current Russian political situation?

Putin's Russia is not the Soviet Union. Yet, the ambiguous nature of this relationship, in which Russia is not exactly friend yet not exactly foe, is dif-

difficult to navigate politically. On one hand, Russia does not currently pose an existential threat to the United States, despite its nuclear arsenal. There is no inherent reason why a return to the Cold War is necessary or likely, notwithstanding potential fault lines, such as differing approaches to Iran's nuclear program or Kosovo's quest for independence.²¹ Policymakers in the United States and in Europe should continue to engage Russia, as they did during the Soviet period, on common interests and, where possible, in joint projects, such as health promotion campaigns.²² Policymakers need to carefully monitor Russia's relations with states that are hostile to U.S. and European interests, such as Belarus, Iran, and Venezuela.

Through some of its actions, the Russian government has attempted to take advantage of declining U.S. influence and challenge the current international order, advancing a hypersovereign model to replace one that emerged from the Helsinki accords of 1976. Of late, Russia has had much greater impact on the international human rights and democracy machinery than vice versa.²³ Russian authorities have successfully used divide-and-conquer strategies inside international organizations, blocking the condemnation of gross human rights violations that occur inside states and challenging the practice of international election-monitoring. In the UN Security Council, for example, they joined China to prevent, weaken, and ultimately delay international responses in Darfur and Burma.²⁴ At least one human rights organization claims the Russian and Chinese governments have supplied Sudan with arms or dual-use technologies that were diverted to Darfur despite the arms embargo in place since 2005.²⁵ These and other actions suggest an urgent need to generate recommendations and political will to repair the weakened international human rights machinery, including within the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the European Union.

When Russia demands special rules for itself or departs from accepted norms, such as rejecting international election observation by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as it did in December 2007 before its parliamentary elections, international organizations and member states should respond. The United States should coordinate strategy with European states. The use of administrative means to pressure voters and the brazenness and impunity with which the Putin administration orchestrated the events leading up to the election marked a new, negative stage in Russia's post-Soviet trajectory. Yet, Putin received calls of congratulations from President Nicholas Sarkozy of France and former prime minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.²⁶ These actions suggest that European policymakers are oblivious or in-

Young Russians are increasingly likely to agree that Russia is on the 'right path.'

different to the threats that human rights defenders and journalists experience in Russia today. Coordinated transatlantic responses are more likely to deter repressions against these targets, while the recent mixed messages only enable the authoritarian drift.

European policymakers are not the only ones enabling Russia's departure from international norms and laws. Although not intuitively connected to

Confidence in the president is substantially higher than trust for any other institution.

a new Russia policy, reestablishing the United States as a generator of human rights norms will have important repercussions for engaging Russia and other authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes. These are more than just fuzzy, feel-good recommendations. Our data suggest that U.S. counterterrorism policies have a corrosive effect, possibly stimulating negative views among young Russians. Part of the repair work, therefore, requires new U.S. policies on a range of issues and should

be driven by a desire to opt back into the international legal framework that generations of Americans helped create. This shift toward international legal frameworks will require a dramatic departure from current U.S. policies on counterterrorism, including adopting new detention and interrogation policies for alleged terrorist suspects.

The repair work will also require a radical shift in how the United States approaches the thorny issue of foreign assistance, particularly democracy promotion. The Russian government is rich, with plans for not one but two stabilization funds worth hundreds of billions of dollars.²⁷ Yet, assistance should not end for important groups such as Memorial and other human rights organizations that will surely see none of the emergent oil wealth. Instead, assistance requires radical restructuring. The top-down approach of the Bush administration's "F" process offers exactly the wrong model.²⁸ Instead of listening and responding to local needs, existing approaches are likely to benefit Washington insiders.

In contrast, new approaches must be geared to Russian needs and designed to encourage Russian civil society to engage local populations. What forms of engagement do Russians want? Are they hostile to all forms of assistance? By responding to their needs rather than our own, assistance can dramatically leverage its impact as well as inoculate donors and activists against accusations that the assistance constitutes foreign interference. Young Russians are generally neutral or positive about Russian organizations that accept foreign financial contributions for work on health issues such as HIV prevention or human rights issues that matter to them, such as police abuse. They feel

negative about support for political organizations, such as those that protest against the government. U.S. policymakers will need to find a way to respect the wishes of Russians while not enabling the hypersovereign tendencies that reject international norms and laws. Again, the need for the United States to repair the damage done in the human rights sphere will be critical to any possible future engagement with Russia, as well as other authoritarian states, on these issues. Equally important, solid opinion data on what Russians support in terms of foreign engagement can bring to life a policy that is based on listening and responding.

Contacts between the United States and Russia need to be multiplied and diversified, rather than relying mainly on high-level meetings, as the Bush administration has done with the encouragement of the Kremlin. The over-personalization of presidential politics that marked both the Clinton and Bush administrations has not helped U.S.-Russian relations. The new approach should, if the Russian government is willing, support concrete cooperation between different parts of societies (mayors, legislators, university presidents) on a range of issues of common concern, such as public health, counterterrorism, youth alienation, or even urban decay, where stakeholders may share best practices. Youth exchange programs might be highlighted to reverse the trend revealed in the current generation of 16- to 29-year-old Russians. Additionally, one could imagine a sister-school program bringing children in the United States and Russia into direct contact over the Internet.

Congressional contacts with the Russian Duma and Federation Council have dropped off in recent years and need to be restored, not because these are important centers of power in Russia, but because there is widespread misperception among Duma deputies of the U.S. Congress's relationship with the executive branch. This lack of understanding of how politics works in the United States is another ingredient feeding Russian misperceptions. Is this situation something that the Kremlin seeks to perpetuate, or will there be willingness to challenge misperceptions? Will the Kremlin allow, support, or be neutral about diversifying or multiplying contacts? The answers to these questions will offer a useful metric to gauge the Russian government's desire for hostile or neutral relations with the United States.

We may well be in for a decade of Putin or Putin-like policies, with Russia slipping farther from the Euro-Atlantic community and creating its own set of allies and networks while shutting down voices of opposition internally. Burdened by dissent, corruption, and poorly functioning public institutions,

Highly educated young men from Moscow are the most anti-American.

the future could be less bright than the current oil-flush economy suggests. A day may come, if not next year or the year after, then perhaps within a decade or two, when either a middle-aged Putin generation tires of the manufactured Soviet nostalgia or the children of the Putin generation, having grown up with more knowledge of the world outside of Russia, demand political structures that are more consistent with the dreams many had for Russia when the Soviet Union collapsed. Perhaps the post-Putin generation will eventually view Russia as not so distinct from Europe. It may be that the most we can hope for is that young Russians might share the nuanced vision of the United States expressed by Andrei Sakharov: “[W]e don’t idealize America and see a lot that is bad or foolish in it, but America is a vital force, a positive factor in our chaotic world.”²⁹ From where we stand today, that would be progress.

Notes

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3. See “Viewpoint: Pro-Putin Cheerleader,” *BBC News*, November 26, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7113253.stm>.
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7. See Nickolai Butkevich, “Pro-Kremlin Youth Group’s Brochure Exposes Ravidly Paranoid Worldview,” *Coalition Against Hate*, May 16, 2007, <http://www.coalition-againsthate.org/2007/05/16/pro-kremlin-youth-groups-brochure-exposes-ravidly-paranoid-worldview>.
8. Ludmila Alexeeva, *Soviet Dissent* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, 1985), p. 395.
9. Adam Hoschschild, *The Unquiet Ghost: Russians Remember Stalin* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003), pp. 28–40.

10. Throughout this article, we aggregate categories such as “fully agree” and “agree somewhat” in order to simplify our presentation of the results. Disaggregating the categories adds some nuances but does not affect any of our arguments or conclusions.
11. We also asked about trust in political parties and the courts. Trust in political parties is even lower than trust in the police, while trust in the courts is about equivalent to trust in the mass media.
12. Steve Gutterman, “Russian Army Abuse Blamed on Society,” Associated Press, February 15, 2006.
13. See Theodore P. Gerber and Sarah E. Mendelson, “Public Experiences of Police Violence and Corruption in Contemporary Russia: A Case of Predatory Policing?” *Law and Society Review* 42, no. 1 (2008): 1–43.
14. Detailed charts available on request from Mendelson.
15. Clifford Levy, “Putin Accuses U.S. of Trying to Discredit Russian Vote,” *New York Times*, November 27, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/27/world/europe/27russia.html>.
16. Fifty-two percent disliked “the American president,” 27 percent liked the president, and 21 percent found it difficult to say. We created the scale by recoding all variables to run from 1 to 5, with higher values denoting greater animosity for the United States. We used factor analysis and reliability analysis to verify that these variables should all be combined into a single scale.
17. The standard deviation is 0.76.
18. All the coefficients differ statistically from zero (that is, they are “statistically significant”), except for that contrasting rural residence to residence in “other urban” areas. Overall, the independent variables we identified as possibly relating to anti-Americanism account for 15.4 percent of the variance in the scale, which is relatively high for a social science analysis.
19. See Maxim Artemiev, “Pervasive Anti-Americanism,” *Vedomosti*, July 31, 2007, <http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article.shtml?2007/07/31/130154>.
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