

RUSSIA

Not a Cold War, but Certainly a Chill Wind

Kremlin leaders play to some old emotions in encouraging a wave of anti-Americanism

By Alastair Gee

MOSCOW—Vladimir Dobrovinsky, 33, a teacher at a design school in Moscow, says he's not interested in politics. But bring up America and the well-traveled, university-educated Dobrovinsky holds forth. He criticizes Washington's "crude interference" in world affairs. He complains that Russia is not treated as an important partner by the Bush administration. "A lot of Russians," he says, "are angry that America deals with us like we're Thailand."

Dobrovinsky is hardly alone in such sentiments. Russia is witnessing a revival of the anti-Americanism that had dissipated with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Taking their cues from President Vladimir Putin and the state-controlled media, almost half of Russians now believe America's objective is the complete destruction of Russia, according to a recent survey by the independent Levada Center. And a poll by the state-owned Russian Public Opinion Research Center suggests that Russians consider the United States to be Russia's greatest enemy (and China its greatest friend). "In the last six or seven years, anti-Americanism has been getting worse and worse. It's staggering," says Nina Khrushcheva, a professor of international relations at the New School in New York and the great-granddaughter of Cold War-era Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev.

While there are echoes of old Soviet-style antagonisms in the Putin-era anti-Americanism, there are differences. Earlier, the clash was in large part ideological and seemed to herald a fight to the death—"We will bury you," Khrushchev warned western nations in 1956. Today, Putin is using anti-American rhetoric to boost his own popularity, tapping into widespread resentment of western-backed economic reforms made during the rapacious 1990s as well as of

U.S. foreign policy. Borrowing from the same playbook as Hugo Chávez and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, he has accused the Bush administration of trying to tilt the outcome of parliamentary elections, and he blames Washington for all manner of misdeeds, including "plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts."

Parting ways. This attitude has carried over into Russia's foreign policy, and the compliant partner that Washington had hoped for has become a belligerent-sounding opponent that fosters ties with Iran and China. The Kremlin's opposi-

would become better," says Masha Lipman, an analyst at the Carnegie Moscow Center. After western-backed economic "shock therapy" reforms, however, when Soviet-era price and currency controls were removed, inflation rocketed and people's savings were wiped out. Oligarchs close to Boris Yeltsin later bought up Russia's prime assets at fire-sale prices. The United States, as well as Russia's liberal parties, has consequently lost face.

In its foreign policy, meanwhile, Washington is seen as marginalizing



A member of the Young Guard, a pro-Kremlin group, rips a poster of President Bush during a demonstration.

tion to Washington's proposed European missile defense system and its hosting of Hamas leaders in Moscow early last year may provoke ire in the United States, though they improve Putin's ratings at home. It's a far cry from the warm U.S.-Russia relations that seemed in store in 2001, when President Bush met Putin for the first time and said, "I looked the man in the eye. I found him to be very straightforward and trustworthy."

As the repressive Soviet regime crumbled in the late 1980s, the American way of life seemed appealing to many Russians. "There was a belief that if we opted for western values and civil liberties, life

Russia. Russia opposed the war in Iraq and resents the proposed missile system and the expansion of NATO into eastern Europe as an encroachment on its strategic backyard. "The U.S. views these as its zones of interest, but for Russia they're vitally important," argues Mikhail Leontyev, the anchor of a political talk show on one of Russia's most popular television channels.

Putin has cultivated Russians' resentments, making strident nationalism and bitter antiwesternism a regular part of his public addresses. Before the parliamentary elections, he said in a nationally televised speech that his liberal oppo-

ALAEKEY SAZONOV—AFP / GETTY IMAGES

nents “scavenge like jackals at foreign embassies.” Meanwhile, billboards around Moscow proclaimed “Putin’s Plan—Russia’s Victory.” His message is reinforced by Russia’s state-owned television channels, which dominate the airwaves, and many of Russia’s major papers. “The enlargement of NATO, America’s actions in Iraq and Georgia—they irritate people, and they want an explanation,” explains Andrei Baranov, a political editor at Putin-friendly *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, one of Russia’s largest papers.

Any talk of a new Cold War seems premature. Russia may have withdrawn

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in July from a 1990 treaty limiting military-force numbers in Europe, but it continues to cooperate with Washington on counterterrorism, among other issues. “Americans and Russians have more in common than differences,” says Alexander Lebedev, a former Duma deputy and billionaire part owner of the airline Aeroflot. “They’re not facing each other across the Berlin Wall anymore.”

Moreover, Russia’s presidential elections take place in March, and the politician backed by Putin as his successor, Dmitry Medvedev, is considered to be sympathetic toward the West (he is expected to win). Medvedev has said Russia should position itself as part of Europe and that confrontation with the United States is unnecessary. At any rate, if Russia does have a change of heart, it would not be unprecedented. “The Russian mentality is of dashing from one extreme to another,” says Khrushcheva. “The embrace of the West turns into the embrace of anti-Americanism and back again.” ●

IRAQ

Martyrdom Bureaucracy

Turns out, would-be bombers first have forms to complete

By Kevin Whitelaw

Soon after a man calling himself Abdallah Awlad al-Tumi became a recruit for the terrorist group known as Al Qaeda in Iraq, the 36-year-old Tunisian filled out a form. He told his handlers that he was recruited at a large mosque in Dublin, and then he took a flight from Turkey to Syria before arriving in Iraq. He carried his marriage certificate, a knife, and \$5,000 in cash. His occupation back home: “massage specialist.” As his profession, he listed simply “martyr.”

Over the past year, U.S. intelligence agencies have been building a clearer picture of the machine behind Iraq’s suicide bombers—and much of the information is coming from Al Qaeda in Iraq’s own internal records. U.S. forces have captured piles of documents from this unusually bureaucratized terrorist group. The stacks of paper formed part of the basis for Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell’s testimony to Congress last week that between 50 and 80 foreign terrorists are entering Iraq each month. He described a group that has been weakened but remains “a potent force” capable of carrying out deadly attacks.

The Combating Terrorism Center at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point recently released more than 600 per-



Iraqi troops hold detainees while U.S. soldiers hunt for Al Qaeda in Iraq terrorists near Baghdad.

sonnel records. Typed on letterhead that reads, “Islamic State of Iraq,” the captured records contain basic biographical data as well as questions aimed at verifying recruits’ connections.

Part of the motivation is simply keeping track of the recruits. “But it is also to impress the recruits in this martyrdom pipeline that they really are part of something bigger than they are,” says Bruce Hoffman, an expert on terrorist groups at Georgetown University. Al Qaeda in Iraq is also using the forms for quality control, asking new arrivals, “How did the coordinator treat you in Syria?” Some complain of being stripped of their cash before crossing the border. “They might be putting in some safeguards to try to identify those individuals who are less ideologically committed down the

chain,” says Lt. Col. Joseph Felter, who runs the Combating Terrorism Center.

Additional documents, including financial records and a series of suicide bombing contracts, are set to be released in March. Recruits often pledge to blow themselves up. If they back out, they may be stripped of their Al Qaeda in Iraq salary and forced to divorce their wives.

The records could help intelligence agencies, particularly if Al Qaeda in Iraq has grown into a more hierarchical organization. Already, researchers have been tracing the telephone numbers included in the records, as well as the names of intermediaries in Syria. “Just the fact that they had these records was a big security risk,” says Felter. “We’re hoping it will be useful in stemming the tide from their home country.” ●