

American-Russian Relations after 9/11

Grand Strategy & the Failure of Bush's and Putin's Strategic Partnership

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Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War successive American presidents have tried to build a productive partnership with Russia, but all attempts so far have failed. Following the 9/11 attacks President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin attempted to reset American-Russian relations by establishing a strategic partnership. This partnership, however, never flourished, and at the close of President Bush's second term it completely collapsed over the Russo-Georgian War. Many historians of American-Russian relations suggest that the Cold War legacy and Russia's great ambitions for power help explain why American-Russian relations remain so troubled in the post-Cold War era. This study explores the failure of Bush's and Putin's strategic partnership through the concept of grand strategy using a theoretical framework built on realist and neoclassical realist theories. The study will show that President Bush underestimated both the enduring importance of the Cold War legacy in the 21st century, as well as Russian international power politics, and that this culminated in the Russo-Georgian War that ended the partnership. From an analysis of primary sources – President Bush's National Security Strategies, speeches and news conferences – it can be concluded that the partnership failed because American international objectives internationally (derived from America's grand strategy) clashed with Russia's power ambitions, which the Bush administration had underestimated. The legacy of the Cold War indeed makes it particularly difficult for America and Russia to move past their disagreements.

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 4
Chapter 1: The 9/11 Attacks	Page 19
Chapter 2: The Iraq War	Page 35
Chapter 3: The Russo-Georgia War	Page 56
Chapter 4: Conclusion	Page 76
Bibliography	Page 79

Introduction

With the end of the Cold War in 1991 came also an end to America's strategy of anti-Soviet containment.¹ During the Cold War the Soviet Union was a supposed aggressor, and so America relied on a containment strategy that aimed to prevent Soviet expansion.² Following the Cold War both American politicians and political commentators agreed that a Russia transformed into a market economy and a partner of the West would best serve American national interests.³ If Russia became a partner of America it would no longer constitute a threat to American national security.⁴ Therefore since the end of the Cold War America has tried to build a productive partnership with Russia, but all attempts have so far failed.⁵ Presidents George H.W. Bush (1989-1993), Bill Clinton (1993-2001), George W. Bush (2001-2009), and Barack Obama (2009-2017) all attempted to reset American-Russian relations and to move forward on a more productive and constructive agenda.⁶ This would have allowed America and Russia to work together on shared interests, including counter-terrorism and the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction.⁷ However, it transpired that American and Russian objectives on these issues were often misaligned.⁸ On the one hand, since 1992 it has been Russia's central objective to regain its great power status and to be on a par with America.⁹ America, on the other hand, has quite different ideas about the post-Cold War world: Russia is no longer seen as a threat to American power and no longer occupies a central place in the minds of American policy-makers.¹⁰ Therefore, more than two decades after the Cold War, it can be concluded that American expectations of Russian partnership with the West have not been realized.

¹ Robert J. Art. *A Grand Strategy for America*. Cornell University Press, 2013. 111.

² Ibid.

³ James Goldgeier, McFaul, Michael. *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy toward Russia After the Cold War*. Brookings Institution Press, 2003. 4.

⁴ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 330.

⁵ Angela Stent. *The Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russia Relations in the Twenty-first Century*. Princeton University Press, 2015. 11.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 13.

⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 11.

⁹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 12.

¹⁰ Jeffrey Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2009. 100.

At the end of his second term President George W. Bush was confronted with the collapse of his America-Russia reset. This reset had begun following the terrorist attacks of 9/11; President Vladimir Putin (2000-2008) was the first foreign leader to call the American president.¹¹ President Bush needed Russia as a partner in the War on Terror following 9/11, and so he subsequently proclaimed the dawn of a new era in American-Russian relations, characterized by the revival of a 'strategic partnership' between the two nations.¹² This strategic partnership was mainly an anti-terror coalition: Russia facilitated American anti-terror operations in Central Asia, while America supported Russia's war against Chechen rebels.¹³ American-Russian relations seemed to have taken a decisive turn for the better.¹⁴ However, the strategic partnership would never flourish. At the close of President Bush's final term Russia invaded the former Soviet nation, Georgia, and while Russian troops seized control of the Georgian province of South Ossetia, Bush denounced the move.¹⁵ He claimed that Russia would isolate itself and damage its relationship with the free world.¹⁶ Putin, on the other hand, downplayed Bush's words and with them the importance of the strategic partnership.¹⁷ With Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev ascending to their own presidencies respectively in 2009 and 2008, American-Russian relations recovered and were once again stabilized.¹⁸ However, during President Obama's second term new tensions between the two nations arose and there were again disagreements about former Soviet Nations.¹⁹

Historians consider that the 'Cold War legacy' and Russia's power aspirations help explain why American-Russian relations have remained so intractable since the end of the Cold War. Its legacy influences American and Russian perceptions of each other: state officials of both countries still view the other with suspicion.²⁰ As a consequence, America's strategy towards Russia is still

¹¹ Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 97.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Angela Stent. "America and Russia: Paradoxes of Partnership." *Russia's Engagement with the West: Transformation and Integration in the Twenty-first Century*. Edited by Alexander J. Motyl et al. Routledge, 2016. 268-269.

¹⁴ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 2.

¹⁵ Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 97.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 10.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 12.

influenced by those of the Cold War era, such as containment.²¹ Furthermore, the bilateral agenda between the two remains dominated by the hard security issues of the Cold War era, such as strategic arms control.²² Paradoxically, historians also note that the influence of this legacy has not been acknowledged by America. President Bush, for example, claimed several times during his presidency that the Cold War was over. Historian Angela Stent claims that America has regarded Russia as weak since the fall of the Soviet Union.²³ According to Stent, throughout the 1990s this has fueled a Russian determination not to be treated by America as a junior partner, and has strengthened Russian aspirations to regain its geopolitical power status.²⁴ Stent calls this the 'legacy of the 1990s'.²⁵

A relevant question here is to what degree the failure of the Bush-Putin partnership was caused by an American underestimation of Russian power politics. In other words, **to what extent was the failure of the American-Russian strategic partnership during George W. Bush's presidency (2001-2009) related to an American underestimation of Russian international power politics after the end of the Cold War?** To answer this question this study explores the failure of the Bush-Putin strategic partnership through the concept of American 'grand strategy'. Before explaining several theories that will be used to analyze developments in American-Russian relations, the concept of grand strategy is explained in the following theoretical framework.

Grand strategy is mainly studied within the discipline of international relations theory (IR). It is a theory of how a state can best improve its security.²⁶ The term was first used by B.H. Liddell Hart in 1954, a military theorist, to describe a 'higher level' of wartime strategy above the strictly military

²¹ Stent. "America and Russia". 261-262.

²² Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 100.

²³ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 12.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Christopher Layne. *The Peace of Illusions: American grand strategy from 1940 to the Present*. Cornell University Press, 2007. 6.

level, by which the nation's policy-makers coordinate all resources at their disposal.²⁷ Liddell Hart considered grand strategy to be an essentially political exercise conducted by the highest state officials, most importantly the president.²⁸ America has only once had a formal grand strategy, during the Eisenhower administration when a the strategy of containment was formalized as policy within the Basic National Security Policy.²⁹ However, most American presidents prefer not to form coherent, prefabricated, binding strategies because international relations are simply too complex.³⁰ In order to define a nation's grand strategy historians instead consider the choices and decisions a president makes in relation to American foreign and national security policy.³¹ A grand strategy tends to persist until it is perceived as a failure.³² This generally happens following an international shock event such as a major war or an electoral turnover that creates new administrations and governing coalitions.³³

Ideas about grand strategy have changed over time. During the 1940s the ideas of 'classical realists' were dominant in IR.³⁴ Classical realists presumed that international pressures – most notably the distribution of power between nations – largely determine a nation's grand strategy, but they also understood that cultural factors such as national identity can also have profound effects upon a nation's strategic behavior.³⁵ Contemporary realism is known as 'structural realism' (referred to as 'realism' in this study) and places emphasis on international pressures, while it tends to downplay or ignore cultural factors.³⁶ Historian Robert J. Art is an example of a structural realist who claims that a grand strategy is comprised of a nation's perceived interests, the threats to these interests, and military strategies for confronting these threats.³⁷ Historian Barry Posen, also a structural realist, claims that grand strategy focuses on military threats, because these are the most

²⁷ Collin Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy*. Princeton University Press, 2008. 9.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Raymond Millen. "Eisenhower and US Grand Strategy." *Parameters* 44.2 (2014). 35.

³⁰ Colin Dueck. *The Obama doctrine: American grand strategy today*. Oxford University Press, 2015. 4-5.

³¹ Dueck. *The Obama Doctrine*. 5.

³² Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 37.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 3.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 4.

³⁷ Robert J. Art. "A Defensible Defense: America's Grand Strategy After the Cold War." *International Security* 15.4 (1991). 7-8.

dangerous, and military remedies because these are the costliest.³⁸ Military threats and remedies include nuclear dynamics, regional or ethnical conflicts and humanitarian intervention.³⁹

Apart from the structural realists, many IR scholars that currently examine grand strategy see themselves as neoclassical realists. Recent re-engagement with the ideas of classical realists has given rise to 'neoclassical realism', an approach that takes into account both the international system and the impact of culture and ideas, or ideology.⁴⁰ Neoclassical realists became dissatisfied with the explanations of structural realists for changes in grand strategy. Historian Christopher Layne explains why in *The Peace of Illusions* (2006). Following the Cold War America was the only remaining superpower, and it was thus not threatened by any international pressures. Yet paradoxically American policy-makers still saw the international environment as highly threatening and adjusted their strategic thinking accordingly.⁴¹ According to Layne, ideology should be used to explain this paradox. Culture can shape grand strategy in several ways. First of all, culture influences the way in which international events, pressures and conditions are perceived within a state.⁴² Secondly, culture provides a set of causal beliefs concerning the pursuit of national interests.⁴³ Thirdly, culture also aids policy-makers in forming the actual definition of those national interests by providing foreign policy goals.⁴⁴ Culture thus determines the strategic choices of policy-makers based on beliefs, perceptions, and preferences. Neoclassical realists maintain that international pressures remain the most important factor in the neoclassical school.⁴⁵ International pressures determine whether a state needs to adjust its strategy, while ideology determines the preferences of policy-makers for the chosen strategy.⁴⁶

³⁸ Barry Posen. *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*. Cornell University Press, 2014. 1.

³⁹ Barry Posen, Ross, Andrew L. "Competing Visions for US Grand Strategy." *International Security* 21.3 (2012). 6.

⁴⁰ Nicolas Kitchen. "Systemic Pressures and Domestic Ideas: A Neoclassical Realist Model of Grand Strategy Formation." *Review of international studies* 36.01 (2010). 117.

⁴¹ Layne. *The Peace of Illusions*. 10.

⁴² Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 15.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Kitchen. "Systemic Pressures and Domestic Ideas". 118.

⁴⁶ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 18-19.

This study will combine the theories of structural and neoclassical realism to explain how American grand strategy has developed and affected American-Russian relations. Historians, focusing their research on American-Russian Relations in the post-Cold War era, have often done this from a realist perspective. They have indicated the Cold War legacy, as well as the legacy of the 1990s, to explain how America and Russia interact with each other, but they have neglected to explain the role of American perceptions of Russia. Many neoclassical realist historians have alternately focused their research on the perceptions of policy-makers and how these have influenced America's general grand strategy. However, in the work of neoclassical realists America's strategy towards specific countries, including Russia, has remained generally unknown. This thesis will explore a particular American misperception, namely the underestimation of Russian international power politics, so neoclassical realist theories will be used to do this. However, the study will also rely on realist theories because these describe in depth the developments in American-Russian relations following the Cold War. The study will deal with theories by Colin Dueck, Henry R. Nau, James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, and Angela Stent, and the work of these historians will now be elaborated upon.

The term 'American strategic culture' was introduced by the neoclassical realist Dueck in *Reluctant Crusaders* (2006) in order to describe the role of ideology within American grand strategy. According to Dueck, since America's founding, its strategic culture has consisted of two cultural legacies: American liberal assumptions and limited liability.⁴⁷ Dueck claims that liberal assumptions – values such as individual freedom, equality, free enterprise, and majority rule – encourage American policy-makers to define their foreign policy goals in unusually idealist, expansive, and global terms.⁴⁸ These liberal assumptions are values that the American state was founded upon⁴⁹ and because of them American policy-makers have believed that their country is exceptional and a model for other countries, and that the American example will lead eventually to the spread of liberal and democratic

⁴⁷ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 5.

⁴⁸ Colin Dueck describes in *Reluctant Crusaders* that American liberal assumptions include individual freedom, equality of right, majority rule, progress, enterprise, the rule of law, and strict limits of the state. Like Nau, Dueck claims that this represented a break from Europe's 'old order' that was characterized by militancy, autocracy, and war. See: Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 21-23.

⁴⁹ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 21.

institutions worldwide.⁵⁰ Limited liability, however, pushes American grand strategy in the opposite direction, because it discourages American policy-makers from making concrete sacrifices for that liberal vision and from pursuing idealistic foreign policy goals.⁵¹ Limited liability has meant that America has played less of a role in world affairs throughout history than one would expect given its considerable international power.⁵² Dueck is not the only neoclassical realist who has analyzed the contradictory nature of American strategic culture. Historian Henry R. Nau has called this phenomenon ‘the separatist self-Image’ of America.⁵³ In *At home abroad* (2002) Nau claims that this self-image sharply divides America from the rest of the world. America has seen itself as an exceptional New World society, but has remained uncomfortable with Europe’s Old World because its multilateral diplomacy, frequent wars, entangling alliances and economic globalization could threaten American liberal values.⁵⁴

According to Dueck and Nau, these cultural legacies have created different ‘strategic subcultures’ in American foreign policy, and these subcultures determine how policy-makers make decisions when devising a grand strategy.⁵⁵ A greater emphasis on liberal assumptions means that America is more involved in international affairs, while a larger emphasis on limited liability means quite the opposite. First, there are ‘internationalists’ who are strongly liberal but only weakly committed to limited liability.⁵⁶ Internationalists believe in the promotion of American liberal values internationally, by force if necessary.⁵⁷ Second, there are ‘nationalists’ who are weakly liberal but more strongly committed to limited liability.⁵⁸ Nationalists are reluctant to promote American liberal values internationally and would rather focus on America’s domestic issues.⁵⁹ Third, ‘progressives’ are strongly committed to both liberalism and limited liability in strategic affairs.⁶⁰ Progressives

⁵⁰ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 26.

⁵¹ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 5.

⁵² Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 27.

⁵³ Henry R. Nau. *At Home Abroad: Identity and Power in American Politics*. Cornell University Press, 2002. 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 31-37.

⁵⁶ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 31.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 32.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

believe in promoting liberal values internationally, but not by force.⁶¹ Fourth, 'realists' are only weakly committed to both liberalism and limited liability.⁶² Realist are reluctant to promote liberal values abroad, but are keen to pursue economic and strategic goals internationally.⁶³

Nau also describes how the contradictory cultural legacies have led to the rise of different subcultures. Nau distinguishes internationalism, nationalism, and realism.⁶⁴ Unlike Dueck, Nau does not distinguish progressivism as a subculture, which suggests that he sees no difference within internationalism between promoting liberal values forcefully or peacefully. According to Nau, American foreign policy cycles between phases of realism, internationalism, and nationalism.⁶⁵ Nau claims that a major global threat – such as the Cold War – usually leads to a realist phase in foreign policy, in which America wishes to protect its strategic interests globally.⁶⁶ The end of a global threat generally leads to an internationalist phase, and American leaders use this phase to promote liberal values abroad.⁶⁷ An internationalist phase is usually followed by a nationalist phase, because internationalism leads to major commitments abroad and this exhausts American resources.⁶⁸ This causes American policy-makers to retreat once again into more limited involvement abroad.

Dueck's and Nau's theories are useful for this study not only because they provide a framework for exploring the beliefs and perceptions of policy-makers, but also because they help to explain how changes in these beliefs lead to a changes in grand strategic thinking. Historians of American culture have long acknowledged that liberal values coupled to a reluctance to promote those values internationally form the cornerstone of American culture. Dueck and Nau also have theories that enable the exploration of these cultural traits that shape American strategic culture, and of how American strategic culture in turn gives rise to different subcultures. When one subculture wins out over another, then grand strategy changes, which itself is a useful phenomenon

⁶¹ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 32.

⁶² Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 33.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Nau. *At Home Abroad*. 1.

⁶⁵ Nau. *At Home Abroad*. 2.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

to examine in this study, because when grand strategy changes, this also affects America's relationships with individual countries, including Russia.⁶⁹

Internationalism has been the single most common of the different subcultures and has comprised the most influential strain of thought among American foreign policy-makers since World War Two.⁷⁰ Many historians, including G. John Ikenberry and Andrew Bacevich, agree that 'liberal internationalism' is an important part of America's grand strategy, and that an internationalist grand strategy is essential in maintaining a liberal internationalist world order. Institutionalized political relations, such as those with multilateral institutions like the United Nations (UN), are cited by these historians as a cornerstone of liberal internationalism. The historian Ikenberry claims that the liberal internationalist world order was built by and is run by America, and is based upon open, rule-based relations between states.⁷¹ These rule-based relations are organized around organizations with liberal governance characteristics, such as multilateral institutions.⁷² The order has a hierarchical character and America has constructed the rules under which it operates.⁷³ The historian Bacevich claims that it is America's strategy to open up the world politically, culturally, and economically, and that barriers that inhibit the movement of goods, people, capital, and ideas need to be removed.⁷⁴ Like Ikenberry, Bacevich claims that liberal internationalism is based on the principles of democratic capitalism, with America as the ultimate enforcer of norms and guarantor of order.⁷⁵ Bacevich calls this strategy the 'strategy of openness'.⁷⁶

The historians James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul have examined how subcultures influenced America's strategy towards Russia during the post-Cold War era. In *Power and Purpose* (2003) they make a distinction between two traditions: 'regime transformers' and 'power balancers'.

⁶⁹ When grand strategy changes, this might affect relationships with individual countries through changing alliances, a more or less confrontational stance toward adversaries, or increased or decreased foreign aid for specific countries. See Dueck, *Reluctant Crusaders*, 12.

⁷⁰ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 31.

⁷¹ G. John Ikenberry. *Liberal Leviathan: The origins, crisis, and transformation of the American world order*. Princeton University Press, 2012. ix-xi.

⁷² Ikenberry. *Liberal Leviathan*. 2.

⁷³ Ikenberry. *Liberal Leviathan*. 7.

⁷⁴ Andrew Bacevich. *American Empire*. Harvard University Press, 2009. 2-4.

⁷⁵ Bacevich. *American Empire*. 3.

⁷⁶ Bacevich. *American Empire*. 88.

These two traditions reflect the subcultures of Dueck and Nau, but they define more specifically how American strategic culture has influenced American strategy towards Russia. Regime transformers champion America as a moral force in international politics and believe that the best way to guarantee American security is to remake the world.⁷⁷ This is an internationalist strategy as described by Dueck and Nau. Power balancers focus on the balance of power as a crucial ingredient of the international system instead, and pursue policies in order to maintain America's position in the world.⁷⁸ According to Goldgeier and McFaul, power balancers have more realist than liberal tendencies.⁷⁹ Realism, as described by Goldgeier and McFaul, corresponds to Dueck's and Nau's concepts of realism: all describe it as a strategy with little emphasis on liberal assumptions and limited liability, promoting instead America's strategic goals is the most important objective. During and following the Cold War these traditions have led to different policy approaches towards the former Soviet Union. Regime transformers believe that America should use its full arsenal of non-military power in order to transform Russia internally.⁸⁰ Power balancers claim that the Russian regime does not dictate its international behavior; they believe rather that international pressures dictate how states behave. Unlike Goldgeier and McFaul, few historians have examined American-Russian relations from a neoclassical realist perspective that takes into account how American perceptions of Russia influence American strategy towards Russia. This makes Goldgeier's and McFaul's theories particularly useful for this study.

Historian Angela Stent has also examined how strategies of realism and internationalism have been part of America's strategy towards Russia. Unlike Dueck, Nau, Goldgeier and McFaul, Stent has examined these relations from a realist perspective and does not explain how American strategic culture has contributed to shaping American-Russian relations. Instead she describes how

⁷⁷ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 6.

⁷⁸ The 'balance of power' is a principle of international relations theory that claims that national security is enhanced when military capability is distributed so that no one state is strong enough to dominate the others. See Charles Kegley, Wittkopf, Eugene R. *World Politics: Trends and Transformations*. Wadsworth Publishing, 2005. 503. See Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 7.

⁷⁹ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 7.

⁸⁰ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 5.

the Cold War has influenced American strategy towards Russia during the post-Cold War era. She describes in “America and Russia: Paradoxes of Partnership” (in *Russia’s Engagement with the West*, 2005) how American strategy has shifted between realism, which focused on promoting American strategic interests, and interventionism, which focused on liberalism and changing Russia internally.⁸¹ She argues that these strategies stem from the Cold War era and still dominate American strategy today. Stent’s *The Limits of Partnership* (2015) is also a useful text for this study, being an in-depth analysis of American-Russian relations since the Cold War. It examines the influence of the Cold War legacy as well as the legacy of the 1990s. As other historians included in the theoretical framework do not discuss American-Russian relations in such depth, Stent’s realist theories are a particularly valuable addition to the theoretical framework.

The above theories will be used to discuss President George W. Bush’s two terms, and Bush himself will be the most important element of this analysis. The American president generally has a leading role in shaping grand strategy and puts forward new strategic ideas, while executive officials help him to narrow down the available options.⁸² This approach limits the scope of this study: the role of President Bush’s aides is likely to remain ambiguous if the focus is mainly on the president. Historians Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay agree that President Bush had a central role in his administration and that he made important decisions himself.⁸³ At the same time, Daalder and Lindsay acknowledge that aides such as Condoleezza Rice and Paul Wolfowitz also had an important role in assisting Bush to develop a foreign policy vision. Therefore this study will occasionally examine the role of Bush’s aides and look at how their ideas were reflected in his grand strategy.

Historians generally disagree on the extent to which grand strategy changed under President Bush. Daalder and Lindsay claim that, following 9/11, the goals of American grand strategy did not change, although the method of achieving them did.⁸⁴ America began to rely on unilateral power

⁸¹ Stent. “America and Russia”. 261.

⁸² Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 41.

⁸³ Ivo Daalder, Lindsay, James M. *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. Brookings Institution Press, 2003. 16.

⁸⁴ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 2.

after 9/11 rather than international law and institutions in order exercise its own will.⁸⁵ Dueck agrees with Daalder and Lindsay in that American grand strategy changed after 9/11, and shifted from focusing on the balance of power between states towards American predominance.⁸⁶ Dueck used a neoclassical realist approach in order to examine why grand strategy changed after 9/11, and he concluded that it was caused not so much by international pressures as beliefs and perceptions within Bush's administration.⁸⁷ Historian Christopher Layne claims, on the other hand, that American grand strategy did not change after 9/11. He emphasizes the goals of American grand strategy in his research and concludes that geopolitical domination has, since 1940, been the goal of America, and thus that the grand strategy has been the same since then.⁸⁸

Methodology

This study is divided into four chapters; in the first three chapters three sub-questions will be answered. The first chapter analyzes to what extent President Bush's strategic adjustment following 9/11 influenced the American-Russian strategic partnership. This first question is relevant to addressing the main question because 9/11 was, according to several historians, both the start of an adjustment in grand strategy and the strategic partnership. Examining this relationship helps to determine whether grand strategy was a positive, negative, or neutral factor in establishing the strategic partnership and resetting American-Russian relations. The next question is: what role did President Bush's American strategic culture play in the difficulties that arose in the American-Russian strategic partnership after the American invasion of Iraq in 2003? The Iraq War was the most visible and aggressive manifestation of Bush's new strategy.⁸⁹ It was also the moment the partnership began to fray.⁹⁰ If Bush's aggressive grand strategy caused the failure of the American-Russian partnership, then the war and American perceptions of the war presumably contributed to the

⁸⁵ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 2.

⁸⁶ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 160.

⁸⁷ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 163.

⁸⁸ Layne. *The Peace of Illusions*. 2.

⁸⁹ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 165.

⁹⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 87.

failure of the partnership. The last sub-question is: in what way can the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 be related to Bush's American strategic culture? Like the Iraq War, the Russo-Georgian War led to a deterioration of American-Russia relations and, furthermore, ended the partnership. It is essential to examine how the Bush administration perceived Russia in anticipation of the Russo-Georgian War, because this will reveal how the administration perceived the end of the partnership, and whether Bush underestimated Russian power politics.

The theoretical framework will be used throughout the chapters of this study. The first chapter will rely on the theories of Goldgeier and McFaul, Stent, Dueck, Daalder and Lindsay. These historians have examined the impact of 9/11 on American grand strategy and American-Russian relations before and after 9/11, and so their theories will be useful in answering the first sub-question. In the second and third chapters primary sources will be analyzed in order to explore changes in Bush's grand strategy. This will be performed using Dueck's, Nau's, Goldgeier's and McFaul's theories of American strategic culture. Their theories of neoclassical realism will also be used, as Bush's grand strategy was mainly influenced by American strategic culture. The findings of this analysis will then be used to reflect on Stent's realist theories of the Cold War legacy and the legacy of the 1990s. However, there is a limitation in the use of this framework when examining Bush's underestimation of Russian power politics: the Russian perspective remains largely unknown, while the Putin administration took an important role in establishing the partnership and also hastening the deterioration of American-Russian relations. To some extent this limitation can be addressed using secondary literature. Stent has, for example, also discussed the Russian perspective in her work. In order to examine whether Russia also has a strategic culture that drives its relationship with America, a separate study will be necessary.

Throughout these chapters both primary and secondary sources will be consulted. This study examines many different primary sources: President Bush's National Security Strategies (NSS reports), a selection of his speeches on foreign policy, and statements made at press conferences. Bush produced two NSS reports during his presidency and these documents come closest to a

formulation of a grand strategy as policy, because they contain the plans for American national security concerns. The speeches will mainly be selected from “Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush, 2001-2008”.⁹¹ They show how Bush’s foreign policy developed over time and how he argued for the policy choices he made. They are thus useful for examining the general development of American grand strategy. Bush’s news conferences are additionally important. In his most important speeches, Bush did not always comment on his policy towards Russia. In news conferences, for example during the Bush-Putin summits, journalists often asked him about the state of American-Russian relations. This makes such sources useful when examining America’s strategy towards Russia. The news conferences can help determine Russia’s position in America’s overall strategy.

As stated above, in order to analyze the speeches and the NSS reports, Dueck’s and Nau’s theories from the theoretical framework will be used. The concepts ‘liberal assumptions’ and ‘limited liability’ will also be used to determine how American strategic culture developed. They are useful because they capture America’s most important cultural characteristics, while the theories of Dueck, Nau, Goldgeier and McFaul can help explain how these lead to a particular grand strategy. In order to analyze liberal assumptions and limited liability the analysis will focus on whether the speeches and the NSS reports show dedication in promoting liberal values or reluctance to do so. More specifically, the speeches need to be analyzed for their overall message concerning liberal values such as freedom, majority rule, and free enterprise: was Bush reluctant to promote these values abroad or not? The speeches will also be analyzed for their tone and for the context of their particular occasions. Using tone, Bush could invoke emotions that shape the message of a speech. The occasion of the speech can also help to shape its message. Furthermore, it is important to take into account that the primary sources are different types of documents. While both the NSS reports and speeches contain the president’s vision, they were issued in different contexts. The selected speeches are

⁹¹ This is a collection of Bush’s most important speeches and includes speeches on foreign policy and the State of the Union speeches. See “Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush, 2001-2008”. *Bush White House Archive*. N.d.

aimed at different audiences. However, Bush's news conference statements were directed at journalists. Concerning the press conference statements, some were given in the presence of President Putin, making it highly unlikely that President Bush would use language that could upset his Russian counterpart. The analysis of the news conferences will focus mainly on the general message concerning American-Russian relations and Bush's perception of Russia.

The primary sources have limitations, however. For example, plans articulated in speeches are not necessarily later translated into policies. Thus it is important to determine to what extent words were later followed up by administrative actions. This is important because actions ultimately determine a nation's grand strategy. Secondary sources can also help with this analysis. A further limitation is that the roles and the influence of presidential aides will not always be explicit from the speeches. Secondary sources can even help with this also, as several historians have described the particular roles of President Bush's aides.

Chapter 1: The 9/11 Attacks

When George W. Bush took office in January 2001 he promised a strategy of ‘tough realism’ towards Russia.⁹² In his first few months the most important feature of his Russian policy was a lack of interest: it had fallen from the core of American foreign policy interests.⁹³ Bush thought that his predecessor, Bill Clinton, had tried too hard to change Russia and that this had been counterproductive.⁹⁴ Instead Bush chose a strategy that did not purport to change Russia’s domestic behavior or foreign policy but rather sought to work collaboratively with them on a limited number of issues that served American interests.⁹⁵ However, the 9/11 attacks would change American foreign policy dramatically.⁹⁶ Bush began to believe in revising the international system by promoting freedom and democracy through regime change in countries that were hostile to America.⁹⁷

This chapter will analyze to what extent grand strategy changed after Bush became president and following the 9/11 attacks, and to what extent these changes contributed to establishing the Bush-Putin strategic partnership. The realist theories of Angela Stent will be used to examine how American-Russian relations developed from Clinton to Bush and how the concept of the Cold War legacy played a role. The neoclassical realist theories of Dueck, Goldgeier and McFaul will also be used to examine the concept of American strategic culture and how it helped to shape America’s strategy towards Russia. In this chapter only secondary literature will be discussed.⁹⁸

The Cold War legacy

⁹² Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 306.

⁹³ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 14.

⁹⁴ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 13.

⁹⁵ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 261.

⁹⁶ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 14.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ It is contested among historians whether 9/11 was a clear break from the past for American grand strategy. While this is contested by historians, using secondary sources only in this chapter can be defended by the limited time frame discussed in this chapter. Historians generally agree that the greatest shifts in grand strategy after 9/11 took place shortly before the Iraq War, and this will be discussed in Chapter 2, using primary sources.

President Bush came to office with the aim of recasting President Clinton's policies, including his strategy towards Russia.⁹⁹ Clinton and Bush had very different views on Russia and the first part of this chapter will argue that these views stemmed from the Cold War era. Both the realist and neoclassical realist perspectives can explain how these different strategies towards Russia came into being and both will be examined in the chapter. While the realist perspective claims that the Cold War legacy still shaped America's strategy towards Russia at the beginning of the 21st century, the neoclassical realist perspective shows that American strategic culture has also had its influence on America's Russia strategy.

The realist Angela Stent claims that the Cold War left America with two strategies on Russia. In her article "America and Russia: Paradoxes of Partnership" she claims that during the Cold War American policy on Russia shifted between a realist strategy of containment and an interventionist strategy.¹⁰⁰ Containment was a limited strategy designed to engage Russia on several foreign policy issues that served American interests.¹⁰¹ 'Interventionism' was a broader strategy that sought to change Soviet domestic behavior as well as its foreign policy.¹⁰² The containment strategy was dominant from 1945 until 1969.¹⁰³ American policy-makers believed that the Soviet Union's combination of communist ideology and traditional Russian expansionism was dangerous and needed to be contained; little attention was paid to trying to change domestic Russian behavior.¹⁰⁴ With the onset of the *Détente*, interventionism became more influential and democratic policy-makers insisted on linking Soviet behavior on human rights to trade privileges.¹⁰⁵ During President Carter's administration more economic legislation was used to punish the Soviet Union for the treatment of its citizens.¹⁰⁶ Following the collapse of the Soviet Union there was no consensus on the

⁹⁹ Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 110.

¹⁰⁰ Stent. "America and Russia". 261.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Stent. "America and Russia". 262.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

legacy of the interventionist linkage policy and whether or not it had contributed to the Soviet collapse.¹⁰⁷

Neoclassical realists James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul generally distinguish the same post-Cold War strategies. In *Power and Purpose* Goldgeier and McFaul claim that American policy-makers have advocated two different strategies for Russia: in one camp are the regime transformers and in the other are the power balancers.¹⁰⁸ Regime transformers – like Stent’s interventionists – believe an internal transformation of Russia is necessary to guarantee American security.¹⁰⁹ They are driven by liberal assumptions and strongly believe in the American democratic system of government.¹¹⁰ Power balancers – like Stent’s realists – believe that no effort should be made to change Russia internally, and that what matters most is the balance of power between Russia and America. The difference between Stent and Goldgeier and McFaul is that Stent examines the history of the Cold War to explain why these strategies continued to exist into the 21st century, while Goldgeier and McFaul use American ideology to explain this. According to Goldgeier and McFaul, regime transformers and power balancers reflect two deep traditions, within American strategic culture, of American foreign policy.¹¹¹ Thus the interventionist and realist strategies originated during the Cold War and are a legacy from that era, but were ultimately derived from American strategic culture. This means they are also grounded in longstanding traditions of American ideology. Stent, Goldgeier and McFaul all claim that these strategies have survived into the 21st century.

Both neoclassical realist and realist perspectives claim that, for America, the end of the Cold War did not bring any clear strategy towards Russia. Many politicians at the time – including George H.W. Bush and later Bill Clinton – agreed that a democratic and market-oriented Russia integrated into Western structures would best serve American interests.¹¹² However, American policy-makers were still divided over whether they should intervene in Russia’s internal affairs or take a more

¹⁰⁷ Stent. “America and Russia”. 262.

¹⁰⁸ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 5.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 4.

realist approach.¹¹³ Furthermore, during the 1990s there were widely differing expectations of what might become of the former Soviet state.¹¹⁴ At the most optimistic end of the spectrum there were those who believed that Soviet Russia could transform itself into a post-imperialist, democratic, market economy.¹¹⁵ At the most pessimistic end there were those who believed Russia could never move away from authoritarian rule, corruption, economic backwardness, and imperial ambitions.¹¹⁶ Continued economic and political instability fueled fears that Russia was unable to break from its Soviet past.¹¹⁷

President Bill Clinton was a regime transformer, implying that he believed only a democratic Russia could lead to long-term peace and a stable relationship.¹¹⁸ He believed also that America should be involved in Russia's domestic transformation and integration into Western structures.¹¹⁹ President Clinton was thus determined to pursue policies designed to assist democratic and market reform in Russia, with the goal of integrating Russia into the Western community.¹²⁰ His policy on Russia was highly interventionist: integration into Western structures would necessarily fail without transformation, making a democratic revolution a prerequisite for joining the West.¹²¹ During Clinton's administration Russia was denied access to Western structures and organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).¹²² This is because Clinton was unwilling to allow Russia to join before economic and political liberalization were complete.¹²³

Clinton's Russia policy focused on a close personal relationship with Russian President Boris Yeltsin.¹²⁴ During the Cold War close personal ties between American and Russian heads of state had

¹¹³ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 5.

¹¹⁴ Stent. "America and Russia". 263.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Deborah Welch Larson, Shevchenko, Alexei. "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian Responses to US Primacy." *International Security* 34.4 (2010). 76.

¹¹⁸ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 11.

¹¹⁹ Stent. "America and Russia". 264.

¹²⁰ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 11.

¹²¹ Stent. "America and Russia". 264.

¹²² Larson & Shevchenko. "Status Seekers". 79

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 35.

been important for American-Russian relations.¹²⁵ This was due to the fact that both Russia and America were nuclear powers, which posed grave challenges, and because institutional ties between the government organizations of the two countries were lacking.¹²⁶ Clinton believed that Yeltsin was a crucial factor in Russian transformation; without Yeltsin the democratization of Russia would certainly fail.¹²⁷ Ultimately, the relationship was not without problems. Yeltsin would become increasingly estranged from America, especially when he became more embattled domestically.¹²⁸

By the end of President Clinton's administration it had become clear that his strategy towards Russia had failed. Three events would lead to the collapse of Clinton's agenda.¹²⁹ The Russian financial crisis of 1998 led to disillusionment in the belief that Russia could be transformed economically.¹³⁰ The crisis left Russia impoverished and unstable.¹³¹ The war over Kosovo in 1999 led American-Russian relations to deteriorate considerably.¹³² Yeltsin believed that America wanted to increase its power in Russia's sphere of influence, and he felt betrayed by American bombardments of Serbia.¹³³ While America was at war in Kosovo, Russia invaded Chechnya.¹³⁴ The Chechen War led to human rights atrocities and reduced any hope for a democratic transformation.¹³⁵ These three events completely stalled Clinton's Russia policy at the end of his term.¹³⁶ According to Stent the legacy of the 1990s, which mainly coincided with Clinton's presidency, led Clinton to underestimate Russia's ambitions, and this contributed to the collapse of his Russia-agenda.

Bush takes office

¹²⁵ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 35.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 121.

¹²⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 36.

¹²⁹ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 13.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 107.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 13.

¹³⁴ Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 108.

¹³⁵ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 13.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

When President Bush took office American grand strategy did not change. However, Bush had a different, more realist strategy towards Russia than his predecessor. Bush and his advisers blamed Clinton's failure on his interventionist policies; he had tried too hard to change Russia's domestic affairs.¹³⁷ At the same time Clinton was also accused of being too soft on Russia: he had favored Russia's corrupt elite and excused 'Russian brutality' in Chechnya.¹³⁸ Goldgeier and McFaul claim that Bush had promised during his campaign that he would adopt the opposite approach: tough realism.¹³⁹ This strategy of realism implied that the importance of Russia's interior affairs was downplayed by Bush and his team. There was instead a focus on Russia's external behavior, which they believed was chiefly influenced by the balance of power in the international system.¹⁴⁰ There would be no soft-line on Russia because Bush and his team saw the country as dangerous and erratic.¹⁴¹ Chechnya was an issue that Bush would take a particularly tough stand on.¹⁴² Bush argued Clinton had not done enough to condemn human rights atrocities in the Russian federal subject.¹⁴³ An end would also come to Clinton's over-personalized approach, as Bush claimed that the administration's embrace of Yeltsin was a problem.¹⁴⁴ Stent agrees with Goldgeier and McFaul, and adds that Condoleezza Rice – Bush's adviser on foreign policy during the campaign – had a major influence on these policies.¹⁴⁵ She urged Bush to end the overemphasis on personal ties between Russian and American leaders.¹⁴⁶

Historians have debated whether the transition from Clinton to Bush constituted a shift in America's general grand strategy. Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay claim that Bush's foreign policy was both conventional and 'Anything but Clinton'.¹⁴⁷ This means that the core of American foreign policy did not change; like Clinton, Bush was devoted to classical liberal ideas. President Bush – like all his

¹³⁷ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 13.

¹³⁸ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 38.

¹³⁹ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 306.

¹⁴⁰ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 307.

¹⁴¹ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 306.

¹⁴² Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 309.

¹⁴³ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 307.

¹⁴⁴ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 309.

¹⁴⁵ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 65-66.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 36-37.

predecessors since World War II – believed that America should play an active role in world affairs.¹⁴⁸ What also made Bush conventional was the fact that he was devoted to creating and maintaining an open and integrated international order dominated by America.¹⁴⁹ Like Clinton, Bush was a firm believer in free trade and globalization.¹⁵⁰ He also thought that America should promote democracy overseas by using open markets.¹⁵¹

Colin Dueck claims that the Bush presidency began with a few minor, or ‘second-order changes’ in grand strategy.¹⁵² A major change in grand strategy is a massive shift in the scale of strategic commitments; a second-order change is a less fundamental alteration, for example an increase or decrease in military spending.¹⁵³ Dueck mentions the following changes: the new administration had an emphasis on military preparedness, greater power politics, and concrete national interests.¹⁵⁴ Bush moved further away from Clinton’s liberal internationalism and was skeptical of multilateralism and humanitarian interventions.¹⁵⁵ He also vowed to be more cautious when sending troops abroad.¹⁵⁶ Overall, the implication was that Bush would favor a more modest and pragmatic strategy than Clinton, and his foreign policy would be based on realism and limited liability.¹⁵⁷ This meant that people expected Bush to avoid major commitments abroad and focus on more modest strategic goals internationally.

Unlike Dueck, Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay claim that Bush’s first few months in office presented a significant shift. This is because of how he saw America’s role in the world. Even when the core of American foreign policy remained unchanged, one particular point made Bush quite different from his predecessor: his rationale concerning how America should act in the world.¹⁵⁸ This

¹⁴⁸ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 36.

¹⁴⁹ Bacevich. *American Empire*. 206.

¹⁵⁰ Bacevich. *American Empire*. 201.

¹⁵¹ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 149.

¹⁵² Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 148.

¹⁵³ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 12.

¹⁵⁴ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 148.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 149.

¹⁵⁷ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 148-151.

¹⁵⁸ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 40.

rationale that affected Bush's foreign policy can be best labeled 'hegemonic'.¹⁵⁹ The most important idea in hegemonic thinking is that America's immense power and its readiness to wield it is the key to securing American interests in the world.¹⁶⁰ It was not until the 9/11 attacks, however, that this hegemonic thinking would be converted into a more assertive grand strategy.¹⁶¹ Bush's policy regarding Russia can in part be explained by hegemonic thinking. One of the premises of Bush's hegemonic rationale was that the world is a dangerous place.¹⁶² This is why he criticized Clinton's policy on Russia: the idea that Russia could change was simply too idealistic.¹⁶³ Bush and his advisers saw Russia instead as a threat to America and its European allies.¹⁶⁴

Early in the administration it seemed that Bush and his team would follow through on the strategy of confrontational, tough realism concerning Russia.¹⁶⁵ Officials in President Bush's administration took tough lines on Chechnya, and on Russia's relations with rogue states.¹⁶⁶ For example, the Chechen prime minister in exile, Ilyas Akhmadov, received political asylum in America following a meeting with a senior State Department official, much to Russia's irritation.¹⁶⁷ A more confrontational strategy was also signaled by rumors that America should cut assistance programs to Russia, including the Nunn-Lugar program, which was subsidizing Russia's military.¹⁶⁸

Stent, Goldgeier and McFaul are in agreement that Bush's policy towards Russia in his first months was mainly characterized by the scant attention it received. Goldgeier and McFaul claim that this was a break from his two predecessors. While George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton largely focused on Russia, Bush Jr. did not.¹⁶⁹ In his first six months President Bush appeared to downgrade the American-Russian relationship on several fronts, strengthening instead relations with America's allies

¹⁵⁹ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 40.

¹⁶⁰ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 40-41.

¹⁶¹ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 13.

¹⁶² Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 41.

¹⁶³ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 42.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁵ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 309.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁷ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 68.

¹⁶⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 69.

¹⁶⁹ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 13-14.

in Europe and Asia.¹⁷⁰ In addition, Russia's position in the State Department Bureaucracy was downgraded. The Bush administration abolished the Office of the Newly Independent State, which meant that Russia no longer had its own bureau in the State Department.¹⁷¹ From that point onwards Russia and all the former Soviet states would become part of the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs.¹⁷² Bush also abolished the American-Russian Joint Commission on Economic and Technological Cooperation.¹⁷³ These downgrading measures in foreign policy concerning Russia indicated the tough line that was being taken.¹⁷⁴

According to Goldgeier and McFaul, President Bush began to shift his Russia policy more towards the approach taken by President Clinton shortly before 9/11. Bush decided to embrace a policy of personal engagement with Vladimir Putin during the spring and summer of 2001.¹⁷⁵ This strategy was similar to Clinton's personalized approach, although Bush had different goals in mind.¹⁷⁶ Clinton had believed that his friendliness would help Russia's internal transformation.¹⁷⁷ Bush hoped instead that a close personal relationship with Putin might secure Russian acceptance for American withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.¹⁷⁸ Withdrawal from the treaty would allow the building of a defense system against ballistic missiles, possibly fired from states such as North Korea or Iraq.¹⁷⁹ Thus during Bush's and Putin's first meeting, only a few months before 9/11, Bush went out of his way to praise Putin, and issues like Chechnya were not publicly discussed.¹⁸⁰ This was still a realist strategy because it was limited and was aimed at engaging Russia in issues of interest to America. It was also a continuity of the Cold War precedent to build American-Russian relations upon close personal ties between American and Russian leaders.

¹⁷⁰ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 331.

¹⁷¹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 68.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 311.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 312.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

The 9/11 attacks

The 9/11 attacks marked the start of an adjustment in American grand strategy, and this new strategy provided America and Russia with the opportunity to establish their strategic partnership. The remainder of this chapter will argue that while the Bush administration believed that America and Russia had moved past the Cold War, America's strategy was still heavily influenced by the Cold War legacy.

According to the historian G. John Ikenberry, following 9/11 the Bush administration embarked on the most ambitious rethinking of American grand strategy since World War Two.¹⁸¹ Whether 9/11 was such a clear break with the past or not is still contested among historians. What can be concluded from scholarly work is that the essentials of American foreign policy did not change. After 9/11 America was still dedicated to creating an open and integrated world.¹⁸² However, 9/11 was a shock to Bush, his administration, and the public, and it opened up a window of opportunity for another strategy.¹⁸³ The goals of American grand strategy were still the same: working together with America's democratic allies in Europe and Asia to promote peace, democracy, and free trade globally.¹⁸⁴ What had changed was how to achieve these things.¹⁸⁵ Ikenberry describes Bush's new strategy in the following way: "At the heart of the Bush doctrine was the proposition that America would act directly – and alone if necessary – in pursuit of global security threats that it itself identified, and in this struggle countries were either with the United States or against it".¹⁸⁶ The United States would stand above the global order and use its unrivaled power to enforce security and order.¹⁸⁷ President Bush's new strategy rested on his hegemonic beliefs: first, the world is a dangerous place, and the best way to ensure America's safety is to shed the constraints imposed by

¹⁸¹ Ikenberry. *Liberal Leviathan*. 224.

¹⁸² Bacevich. *American Empire*. 226.

¹⁸³ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 153.

¹⁸⁴ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 39.

¹⁸⁵ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 2.

¹⁸⁶ Ikenberry. *Liberal Leviathan*. 255.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

allies or multilateral institutions.¹⁸⁸ Second, America should use force to change the status quo.¹⁸⁹

There were commonalities between these hegemonic beliefs and the subculture of internationalism: both meant changing the international system. However, the hegemonic worldview was inspired more by fear, while internationalism was driven by the liberal assumptions of American strategic culture.

The shift towards a new strategy needs to be understood as a process. It was not until later in the Bush administration that it would become fully developed, and the Iraq War epitomized the strategy.¹⁹⁰ The first phase of the War on Terror – the war in Afghanistan – was less controversial and less of a departure from the old strategy.¹⁹¹ At the time of the war in Afghanistan there was still a debate about alternative strategies. Ikenberry described these in his 2001 article “American grand strategy in the age of terror”. According to Ikenberry, shortly after 9/11 there were two distinct strategies competing for primacy.¹⁹² One was liberal multilateralism, based on the idea of American security through promoting the liberal international world order organized around democracies, open markets, and multilateral institutions.¹⁹³ The second was a more unilateral or even imperial strategy, based on a realist vision of American interests.¹⁹⁴ In 2001, Ikenberry claims, the Bush administration spoke with a mixed message on grand strategy. It reaffirmed basic aspects of the multilateral economic and security order and America’s leadership position in it, but there was also deep skepticism about this strategy and a preference for a unilateral approach within the administration.¹⁹⁵ Even after the war in Afghanistan there were still alternative strategies available.¹⁹⁶

9/11 also had consequences for American-Russian relations and American grand strategy towards Russia. Above all, 9/11 generally brought American and Russian strategic interests closer.¹⁹⁷

¹⁸⁸ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 13.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 153.

¹⁹¹ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 154.

¹⁹² G. John Ikenberry. “American grand strategy in the age of terror.” *Survival* 43.4 (2001). 25.

¹⁹³ Ikenberry. “American grand strategy in the age of terror”. 25-26.

¹⁹⁴ Ikenberry. “American grand strategy in the age of terror”. 25.

¹⁹⁵ Ikenberry. “American grand strategy in the age of terror”. 26.

¹⁹⁶ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 155.

¹⁹⁷ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 313.

Both countries had suffered tremendously from Islamic terrorism.¹⁹⁸ Both hoped to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and crush al Qaeda; for Russia this was relevant since al Qaeda was aiding the Chechen rebels.¹⁹⁹ With the Russian public the attacks led to an outpouring of sympathy for the American victims.²⁰⁰ The attacks thus offered a chance to move beyond the impasse of the Clinton administration.²⁰¹

The relationship between Presidents Putin and Bush also seemed to deepen.²⁰² The reset of American-Russian relations was initiated by Putin.²⁰³ He was the first foreign leader to call Bush and expressed his sympathy as a leader from a country that had also suffered from terrorist attacks.²⁰⁴ In the months following Putin promised that Russia would assist America in the war against terrorism.²⁰⁵ He also pledged that Russia would share intelligence with American intelligence agencies, and would open up Russian airspace for flights to provide humanitarian assistance.²⁰⁶ He would work also with Russia's Central Asian allies to provide the same airspace access for America, would participate in international search and rescue efforts, and increase support for the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance in Afghanistan.²⁰⁷ In addition, Putin made no objections to two American military bases in central Asia, thus enabling America to establish two temporary bases in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.²⁰⁸

These pledges of Putin's resulted in an assumption by the Bush administration that the Cold War was over, but for Putin there was a deeper reason behind his strategy. Putin's rhetoric indicated that Russia was with America.²⁰⁹ For Putin to allow the American military to operate in the former Soviet states in central Asia amounted to a historic change in Russian foreign policy.²¹⁰ Since the

¹⁹⁸ Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 111.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Stent. "America and Russia". 268.

²⁰² Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 313.

²⁰³ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 11.

²⁰⁴ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 313.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 73.

²⁰⁹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 72.

²¹⁰ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 313.

collapse of the Soviet Union Russia had resented American presence in its backyard.²¹¹ Putin's ultimate goal was to restore Russia's formidable power status.²¹² As previously stated, during the 1990s it became Russia's goal to regain its power status. According to Deborah Welch Larson and Alexia Shevchenko, Russia had initially sought this status through acceptance of Western capitalist norms.²¹³ But during the Clinton presidency Russia was denied integration into Western structures and organizations.²¹⁴ The terrorist attacks allowed Putin to reframe Russia's identity and to align with America, thus showing that Russia was an equal, indispensable partner.²¹⁵

Bush took the opportunity of enlisting Russia's help in the War on Terror and they formed a partnership against fundamental Islam.²¹⁶ According to Angela Stent this partnership was based on six premises. Russia's prime importance lay in its ability to assist in the War on Terror, and in return America remained silent on Russia's domestic issues, such as human rights violations in Chechnya.²¹⁷ America would also reward Russia by facilitating one of Putin's primary goals: economic modernization and integration into the global economy, by offering for example to accelerate World Trade Organization (WTO) membership.²¹⁸ Despite this anti-terrorist alliance Bush still pressured Putin over ties with aggressor states such as North Korea.²¹⁹ Although there were some disagreements over these issues, Putin was regarded as a reliable partner.²²⁰ Russian assistance programs would be retained or even increased.²²¹

Bush's overall grand strategy is described by Goldgeier and McFaul as 'selective Wilsonian', referring to Woodrow Wilson's policies for promoting liberal values internationally.²²² This new grand strategy made the promotion of liberty around the world an explicit American national security

²¹¹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 72.

²¹² Larson & Shevchenko. "Status Seekers". 88.

²¹³ Larson & Shevchenko. "Status Seekers". 67.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Larson & Shevchenko. "Status Seekers". 88.

²¹⁶ Stent. *America and Russia*. 268.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 315.

interest.²²³ But liberty was only promoted selectively in a handful of authoritarian states that threatened American interests.²²⁴ These descriptions are however accurate regarding America's strategy towards the Middle East. For example, Bush waged war in Afghanistan for freedom, but supported longtime American allies such as Egypt.²²⁵ However, his strategy towards Russia can best be described as realism because there was limited engagement with Russia and no focus on liberal values.²²⁶ Putin was rewarded by Bush for immediately choosing the American side in the War on Terror.²²⁷ After Bush and Putin established their partnership, America did not commit itself to participating in Russia's internal transformation.²²⁸ In this sense the American grand strategy towards Russia was still essentially realism and not Wilsonian.²²⁹ It was not however the tough realism that Bush had promised when he took office.

While a realist strategy was still a departure from the Clinton era there were also some striking continuities. Stent demonstrates that the American-Russian security agenda resembled the agenda of the 1990s and can be considered another legacy of this decade.²³⁰ At the same time it was also a continuation of the Cold War era, as many hard security issues still dominated the agenda. After the Taliban was removed from power Russia and America had pressing issues to work on, including nonproliferation, missile defense, counterterrorism, and Russia's WTO accession.²³¹ Some issues that had been the subject of disagreements between the two nations for more than ten years, such as missile defense, NATO enlargement, and Russian ties to Iran, remained problematic.²³² None of these issues however led to problems at the onset of the strategic partnership.

²²³ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 315.

²²⁴ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 316.

²²⁵ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 328.

²²⁶ Dueck has claimed that America has never followed one strategy at a time, but that grand strategy varies over time and place. Concerning the Bush administration, this claim by Dueck holds true, since America could adopt a selective Wilsonian strategy in the Middle East and a realist strategy in Russia. See Dueck. *The Obama Doctrine*. 23.

²²⁷ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 316.

²²⁸ Stent. "America and Russia". 268.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 80.

²³¹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 78.

²³² Ibid.

In December 2001 Bush notified Putin that he was going to withdraw America from the ABM Treaty, which occurred six months later.²³³ Russia had objected to American withdrawal because arms control had been the cornerstone of American-Russian relations, enabling Russia to interact with America as an equal.²³⁴ Russia was also suspicious of the goals of missile defense installations and whether they would really be aimed at Iran and North Korea.²³⁵ Putin and many other Russian officials disapproved of this unilateral act, but there were no immediate negative consequences for the strategic partnership.²³⁶

A move towards downgrading arms control was the next stage for America and Russia.²³⁷ During Bush's first visit to Moscow he and Putin signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) or Moscow Treaty.²³⁸ According to Stent this treaty was minimalistic but it was also the high point of the American-Russian strategic partnership.²³⁹ The treaty committed both parties to reducing the aggregate number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads to between 1700 and 2200 by December 2012.²⁴⁰ This was the largest reduction in strategic nuclear weapons ever codified in an international agreement, although there was no obligation on either side to destroy the weapons.²⁴¹

In the same year the SORT treaty was signed NATO enlargement was also on the agenda.²⁴² There was little interest in the Bush administration for seriously considering NATO membership for Russia.²⁴³ Instead the Bush administration decided to work on a special relationship between NATO and Russia.²⁴⁴ The NATO-Russia Council was established in May 2002 and it offered Russia a seat on the table for joint decision-making on issues such as terrorism.²⁴⁵ In 2002 it was also decided that from 2004 onwards NATO would admit several former Soviet states, namely Estonia, Latvia,

²³³ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 322.

²³⁴ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 79.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 322.

²³⁷ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 80.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 81.

²⁴⁴ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 323-324.

²⁴⁵ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 324.

Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.²⁴⁶ This decision in particular would lead to resentment in Russia and gave the impression that America had ignored Russian interests.²⁴⁷ Like Clinton, Bush underestimated Russia's ambitions.

Conclusion

The transition between President Bill Clinton and President George W. Bush did not bring a new American grand strategy globally until 9/11, according to the secondary literature examined. However, there was a shift in America's strategy towards Russia when Bush ascended to the presidency. While Clinton's strategy on Russia was interventionist, Bush adopted a realist strategy. These strategies had originated in the Cold War and were influenced by American strategic culture. The 9/11 attacks provided the opportunity for the Bush administration to adjust American grand strategy and it became more idealistic and assertive. The new strategy also provided America and Russia with the opportunity to work together in the War on Terror and the two nations established a strategic partnership. The Bush administration interpreted this as a sign that the Cold War was finally over. However, America's strategy toward Russia was still heavily influenced by the Cold War legacy and the bilateral agenda between the two countries was still dictated by Cold War issues such as nonproliferation.

²⁴⁶ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 83.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Chapter 2: The Iraq War

More than two years after the war in Afghanistan the War on Terror remained the most important aspect of George W. Bush's foreign policy.²⁴⁸ The war in Afghanistan had brought Bush and Putin together but when discussing the war against terrorism in Iraq they were not talking from the same script.²⁴⁹ With the start of the war in Iraq (March 19, 2003) the partnership between America and Russia began to fray.²⁵⁰ This chapter will examine the problems of the American-Russian strategic partnership through the concept of grand strategy during the Iraq War. For Russia regime change in the Middle East was unacceptable, while America had made it a goal of its grand strategy.²⁵¹ Although the American-Russian strategic partnership was built on working together in the War on Terror, the nations were unable to do this in Iraq.

This chapter will examine how grand strategy developed before and after the war. Concepts used to analyze primary sources in this chapter include Daalder's and Lindsay's hegemonic worldview and Dueck's liberal assumptions. In discussing American-Russian relations the realist perspective will be used and the following concepts are important for this perspective: the legacy of the 1990s and the Cold War legacy. The time period discussed in this chapter comprises late 2001 until mid-2003. This timeframe allows us to examine grand strategy developments after the war in Afghanistan. The period between the war in Afghanistan and the release of Bush's first National Security Strategy (September 2002) will be examined on the basis on four speeches. These speeches contain President Bush's most elaborate remarks on America's grand strategy before releasing the NSS. After discussing the NSS three speeches in anticipation of the war will be examined. They comprise Bush's speech before the UN general assembly, the State of the Union of 2003, as well as remarks on the future of Iraq in February 2003. The chapter will also make use of remarks made during a press conference during the 2003 Bush-Putin summit.

²⁴⁸ Elizabeth Wishnick. "Strategic Consequences of the Iraq War: US Security Interests in Central Asia Reassessed." *Strategic Studies Institute* (2004). 7.

²⁴⁹ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 325.

²⁵⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 87.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Grand Strategy after Afghanistan

In chapter 1 it was stated that the shift towards Bush's new grand strategy needs to be understood as a process. Even after the first phase of the War on Terror – the war in Afghanistan – there were still many directions in which grand strategy could go. Many expected that America would adopt a long-term strategy of bringing those to justice who had played a role in 9/11 in order to prevent future attacks.²⁵² With the Iraq War – the second phase of the War on Terror – grand strategy would take an aggressive and idealistic direction.²⁵³ The first part of this chapter will explain how the 2002 NSS acquired its assertive form; as a result of Bush's hegemonic worldview and the liberal assumptions of American strategic culture. Part of the new grand strategy was an extremely negative view of rogue states, which caused the Bush administration to view Russia more favorably.

The Address at the Citadel on December 11, 2001 was one of the first occasions that Bush had discussed America's future strategy following the war in Afghanistan. The date of the address was symbolic: the speech was given precisely three months after the 9/11 attacks. The place was also symbolic: the speech was given at the Citadel, the military college of South Carolina, and the audience consisted of the South Carolina Cadet Corp.²⁵⁴ Bush mentioned in the address that he had also spoken on the future of American security at the Citadel during his campaign two years earlier.²⁵⁵ It was thus a fitting place, time, and audience for the president to make statements concerning America's future strategy.

Bush claimed in the speech that the War on Terror was a new development, a new chapter in the story of America that required a new strategy. The speech cast the War on Terror in a wider historical context; he compared the threat of terrorism to America's past challenge of World War Two.²⁵⁶ Bush did this by first recalling how America had reshaped the world after World War Two. He

²⁵² Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 117.

²⁵³ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 153.

²⁵⁴ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 91.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 92.

then introduced the War on Terror as “another dividing line in our lives and in the life of our nation”.²⁵⁷ It was thus the new great cause, but Bush also acknowledged that the world had changed. In the speech he claimed that 9/11 had shattered the illusion that America was safe in the world it had created.²⁵⁸ He stated: “To win this war we have to think differently”.²⁵⁹ Thinking differently meant developing a new strategy, and Bush explained parts of this new grand strategy in the address.

In the speech Bush claimed that the possibility of working together with other nations was unprecedented and should be part of the new strategy. Terrorism had contributed to the end of division between nations: “all at once, a new threat to civilization is erasing old lines of rivalry and resentment between nations”.²⁶⁰ According to Bush the vast majority of nations were on the same side in the War on Terror, including great powers like China and Russia.

Overall, the tone of speech was mainly positive and determined. Bush was especially hopeful on the possibilities of collaborating with other nations in the War on Terror. He saw this as a chance “to write a hopeful chapter in human history”.²⁶¹ When it came to fighting terrorism Bush was steadfast; he warned the terrorists: “America and our friends will meet this threat with every method at our disposal. We will discover and destroy sleeper cells”.²⁶²

Central to Bush’s new strategy was the idea that rogue states were extremely dangerous because their actions could lead to mass terror. In his Address at the Citadel Bush claimed that the greatest threats to America were rogue states, their support for terrorism, and their acquisition of weapons of mass destruction.²⁶³ In the State of the Union of 2002 Bush elaborated on these rogue states. This State of the Union is especially known as the speech in which Bush coined the controversial term ‘axis of evil’.²⁶⁴ Some commentators have claimed Bush had no evidence that

²⁵⁷ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 92.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*.

²⁶² “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 93.

²⁶³ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 95-96.

²⁶⁴ “Bush’s ‘evil axis’ comment stirs critics.” *BBC News*, 2 February 2002. Web. 19 June 2017.

these so-called axis of evil states possessed weapons of mass destruction or supported terrorist organizations in any way that could justify actions against them.²⁶⁵ In the State of the Union Bush branded North Korea, Iraq, and Iran as the axis of evil.²⁶⁶ He explained why these nations were a threat to the world: “By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred”.²⁶⁷ In the speech Bush emphasized that the War on Terror was only just beginning and that it had a worldwide scope, taking in 60 countries.²⁶⁸

Bush also hinted for the first time at the possibility of making a pre-emptive strike in his 2002 State of the Union Address. The president claimed: “I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. (...) The United States will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons”.²⁶⁹ This was a warning to other nations: if they did not stand up to rogue nations, then America would.²⁷⁰ Bush justified the pre-emptive strike partly through the image he created of the terrorist. The tone and vision he used to portray his enemies was dark. This was apparent in a passage towards the end of the speech: “Our enemies send other’s people children on missions of suicide and murder. They embrace tyranny and death as a cause and a creed”.²⁷¹ Bush’s speech invoked fear, yet he was also hopeful, especially on the future of the newly liberated Afghanistan and the prospects of working with other nations. On the possibilities of working with other great powers Bush stated: “America is working with Russia and China and India in ways we have never done before, to achieve peace and prosperity”.²⁷² Since rogue states were now the main threat to America and were considered evil forces, American policy-makers acquired more favorable views from Russia and other great powers. In Chapter 1 it was stated that Bush saw Russia as dangerous when he began his first term. This view had now been completely reversed.

²⁶⁵ “Bush’s ‘evil axis’ comment stirs critics”. 2 February 2002. Web. 19 June 2017.

²⁶⁶ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 105-106.

²⁶⁷ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 106.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 105.

²⁷¹ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 113.

²⁷² Ibid.

The State of the Union reflected the views of the hardliners in the Bush administration, including Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz. According to Colin Dueck several members of the administration were genuinely concerned that nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists, especially in Iraq.²⁷³ Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay agree with Dueck on this point and add that it was Vice President Cheney particularly who was concerned about a terrorist attack with nuclear weapons.²⁷⁴ Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had for a long time argued that regime change in Iraq was necessary, and following the war in Afghanistan Cheney joined them.²⁷⁵ However, while the hawks had an important role advising President Bush, he ultimately made the decisions regarding America's strategy.²⁷⁶ Bush thus took the leading role in adjusting American grand strategy.

While the State of the Union emphasized a dark vision in order to justify a new strategy, liberal assumptions were also a driving force behind the strategy. There was less emphasis on liberal assumptions in the State of the Union, but Bush touched upon these in his speech at a forum, 'Promoting Compassionate Conservatism' on April 30, 2002. According to Bush compassionate conservatism was his philosophy and his approach to governing.²⁷⁷ In this speech the influence of American strategic culture on grand strategy was shown. He stated that "America has always had a special mission to defend justice and advance freedom around the world".²⁷⁸ The president claimed that the war in Afghanistan and the War on Terror were a part of this mission.²⁷⁹ He invoked 'American exceptionalism', which is the belief America had had a special mission and an ability to set an example to the rest of the world since its founding.²⁸⁰ The president used a comparison to position himself within this American history. For example, he mentioned Franklin Roosevelt's four

²⁷³ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 156.

²⁷⁴ The fact that there were several anthrax mailings in America at the end of 2001 contributed to Cheney's fears. See: Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 118.

²⁷⁵ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 156.

²⁷⁶ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 16.

²⁷⁷ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 119.

²⁷⁸ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 117.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ David Mauk, Oakland, John. *American Civilization: An Introduction*. Routledge, 2013. 42.

freedoms – freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from fear and want – and claimed that whenever America fights for the security of its country it also fights for these liberal values.²⁸¹ The War on Terror should thus be regarded as a war for American liberal values which is part of a greater American mission.

Bush assembled his most important ideas concerning grand strategy at a commencement speech at the United States Military Academy of West Point in New York. He chose his audience, which consisted of a new generation of graduating officers that would join the military during the War on Terror, in order to launch the strategy of the future. Bush justified the new strategy by claiming that it was America's historic duty to fight the War on Terror. The president began by comparing the War on Terror to World War Two and the Cold War.²⁸² He pointed out that in the past graduating officers had helped to fulfill missions in these wars and then suggested that history now calls upon the new generation to fulfill its duty in the War on Terror.²⁸³ Bush justified the War on Terror with American exceptionalism, claiming that fighting for freedom and peace is "America's opportunity and America's duty".²⁸⁴

With his dark vision of the rogue states Bush fully embraced the position of the hawks. At West Point Bush argued that small groups of terrorists could attain catastrophic power.²⁸⁵ Concerning rogue states he claimed that "the gravest danger to freedom lies at the perilous crossroads of radicalism and technology".²⁸⁶ With this statement he articulated again his belief that rogue states are dangerous because they could provide terrorist groups with nuclear weapons. To meet this threat he claimed that strategies of deterrence and containment were no longer adequate options.²⁸⁷ According to Bush enemies such as terrorists could not be deterred.²⁸⁸ He then hinted again at the possibility of using a pre-emptive strike, claiming that the battle has to be taken to the

²⁸¹ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 117.

²⁸² "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 126.

²⁸³ Ibid

²⁸⁴ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 127.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 128.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

enemy.²⁸⁹ This again reflected the position of the hawks in his administration, such as Wolfowitz and Cheney. Secretary of State Colin Powell, who was the most significant dove in Bush's cabinet, was still in favor of a containment strategy towards Iraq.²⁹⁰

During the address Bush repeated his claims about the possibilities of working with other nations: "We have our best chance since the rise of the nation state in the 17th century to build a world where the great powers compete in peace instead of prepare for war".²⁹¹ This vision of cooperation between great powers derives from the idea that great powers are united by the threat of terrorism and rogue states. Bush added to this, saying that great powers are also increasingly united by common values instead of divided by conflicting ideologies.²⁹² These ideological divides that characterized the Cold War era belonged to the past.²⁹³ At West Point Bush claimed that Russia was reaching towards democracy, and this in effect contributed to the idea that ideological divides were in the past.²⁹⁴ This statement was too optimistic; according to Angela Stent Russia actually moved further away from democracy during Bush's presidency. Following the Iraq War in particular, Putin would not allow the outcome of presidential elections be left to chance.²⁹⁵ This speech again showed that Bush viewed Russia much more favorably as a result of the War on Terror.

In Chapter 1 it was stated that Bush adhered to a hegemonic worldview, and this was also shown in the speeches. According to Daalder and Lindsay, two of the main propositions of hegemonic adherents are that the world is a dangerous place, and that self-interested nation states are the main actors in it.²⁹⁶ The hegemonic argument also contends that America is an immense power and has the willingness to wield this power.²⁹⁷ These propositions were propagated by the

²⁸⁹ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 128.

²⁹⁰ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 133.

²⁹¹ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 130.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ According to historian Angela Stent, Russia was actually becoming less democratic after 9/11. Russia's democracy was moving toward a 'managed democracy'; in this system elections were too important to be left to chance, so any uncertainty had to be removed. However, Putin's most extreme measures would take place after the Iraq War. One of these measures was the elimination of regional centers of power; for example, Putin abolished direct elections for governors of Russia's 89 federal units. See: Stent, *The Limits of Partnership*, 88-90.

²⁹⁶ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 41-42.

²⁹⁷ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 40.

hawks of the Bush administration and were included in the speeches. This hegemonic worldview ultimately led to justifying a pre-emptive strike. The West Point commencement speech featured the notion of a pre-emptive strike most prominently when Bush claimed that deterrence and containment were no longer relevant strategies. He began arguing for the pre-emptive strike option when he started to attribute catastrophic abilities to rogue states and terrorists. To the claims of Daalder and Lindsay it must be added that liberal values were secondary to Bush's hegemonic faith in influencing his strategy.

The National Security Strategy of 2002 was the fullest elaboration of Bush's new grand strategy.²⁹⁸ This NSS articulated the idea that the world order had moved on from the Cold War and that a new 21st century struggle had begun. The document begins: "The great struggles of the 20th century between liberty and totalitarianism ended with a decisive victory for the forces of freedom – and a single sustainable model for success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise".²⁹⁹ Bush claimed that these American liberal values had been superior during World War Two and the Cold War and had since become uncontested. The NSS also acknowledged that there was a new threat; there had been a shift from conquering states to failing states.³⁰⁰ According to the NSS the gravest danger was now "at the crossroads of radicalism and technology".³⁰¹ Failing states or rogue states are not just dangerous because they harbor terrorists, but because they could provide weapons of mass destruction to these terrorists.³⁰² To counter this threat deterrence or containment were no longer seen as adequate strategies, as terrorists are not risk-averse and cannot be deterred.³⁰³ The NSS also justified the pre-emptive strike. The threat of terrorists armed with nuclear weapons was so destructive that America could not allow such enemies to strike first.³⁰⁴ Most of these points Bush

²⁹⁸ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 122.

²⁹⁹ "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002." *National Security Strategy Archive*, 17 September 2002. iv. Web. 19 June 2017.

³⁰⁰ "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002". 1. Web. 19 June 2017.

³⁰¹ "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002". v. Web. 19 June 2017.

³⁰² *Ibid.*

³⁰³ "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002". 30. Web. 19 June 2017.

³⁰⁴ "The National Security Strategy of the United States, 2002". 15. Web. 19 June 2017.

had already articulated in his West Point address, but this was the first time there was a clear statement concerning the pre-emptive strike. While Bush had already hinted in the speeches that America could use the pre-emptive strike in the future, it became fully adopted as a policy in the NSS.

With the pre-emptive strike and interventionism, the NSS articulated – for the first time – how America could beat rogue states. The NSS embraced an interventionist strategy for America: it was part of the America’s strategy to remake the world, by force if necessary.³⁰⁵ It was acknowledged that America was the most powerful nation on earth: “The United States possesses unprecedented – and unequalled – strength and influence in the world. Sustained by faith in the principles of liberty, and the value of a free society, this position comes with unparalleled responsibilities, obligations and opportunities”.³⁰⁶ The central opportunity that America had was to remake the world in its image, and the way to achieve this was to spread freedom, open markets, and democracy. The NSS argued: “We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world”.³⁰⁷ On the level of foreign policy this meant that America would speak out against human rights violations, use foreign aid to support nations moving towards democracy, promote democracy in bilateral relations, and take special efforts against repressive governments.³⁰⁸

The NSS relied on liberal internationalism, but it simultaneously undermined that liberal internationalism because it opened up the possibility for unilateralism. This ambivalence was justified by a preference for multilateralism through acting in coalitions of able and willing states, while unilateralism was presented instead as a measure of last resort.³⁰⁹ On one hand the NSS propagated liberal values such as freedom, democracy, and free enterprise and proposed strengthening these values through international institutions. For example, international organizations could help to develop regions prone to conflict and the Bush administration hoped this

³⁰⁵ The NSS hinged on the idea that democratic values are universal and can be implemented anywhere. The idea that people all over the world would embrace freedom, democracy, and free enterprise is a deeply American liberal assumption. See: Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 21-23.

³⁰⁶ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. 1. Web. 19 June 2017.

³⁰⁷ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. v. Web. 19 June 2017.

³⁰⁸ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. 4. Web. 19 June 2017.

³⁰⁹ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. 25. Web. 19 June 2017.

would lead to the rejection of terrorism.³¹⁰ On the other hand unilateralism and the pre-emptive strike were central to the NSS. When it came to defending America against rogue states and terrorists, America “will not hesitate to act alone if necessary”.³¹¹ This meant that America could bypass an organization like the UN if it wished to take action against rogue states. This possibility would mean America undermining liberal internationalism because it would act unilaterally, outside of any institutionalized political relations.

In the NSS it was acknowledged that good relations with other great powers were necessary, although there were some doubts about working with Russia. The introduction stated: “we will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers”.³¹² Good international relations were needed because America needed partners in the War on Terror. Forming coalitions was certainly considered possible because the great powers were on the same side in the battle against terrorism, and because they were increasingly united by common values.³¹³ According to the NSS several great powers – Russia, China, and India – were in the midst of an internal transition, and were expected to become more democratic.³¹⁴ It was also stated that Russia was no longer a strategic adversary and that America was building a mutual strategic partnership.³¹⁵ However, the NSS also mentioned limits to this partnership.³¹⁶ The former Soviet nation is described as weak, and the only way to gain strength would be to move towards an open-market democracy.³¹⁷ Russia’s weakness limited the opportunities for cooperation, according to the NSS.³¹⁸ These statements indicated that America’s strategy towards Russia had shifted slightly from realism to interventionism. As stated in the introduction, interventionists believe that the nature of Russia’s regime does matter, and that America should attempt to transform Russia into a democracy. The NSS implies that

³¹⁰ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. 9. Web. 19 June 2017.

³¹¹ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. 6. Web. 19 June 2017.

³¹² “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. iv. Web. 19 June 2017.

³¹³ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. v. Web. 19 June 2017.

³¹⁴ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. 26. Web. 19 June 2017.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2002”. 27. Web. 19 June 2017.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

although the character of Russia's regime matters, it does not include any measures for pushing Russia towards democracy other than limited cooperation.

While the NSS still articulated liberal internationalist values, it also pushed American grand strategy towards the imperial approach. In Chapter 1 it was stated that historians have debated whether Bush's strategy changed after 9/11. It was concluded that the essentials of foreign policy did not change, but that there was a window of opportunity for a new strategy. From analyzing the NSS it can be concluded that renouncing deterrence and containment, and adopting unilateralism and the pre-emptive strike as official policy, were the most important strategic innovations. As related in Chapter 1, the historian Ikenberry claimed that following 9/11 there were two strategies competing for primacy: liberal internationalism and a more imperial strategy. The latter became more dominant in anticipation of the Iraq War.

The NSS provided America with two options on Russia concerning Iraq: to act unilaterally in the war, which involved leaving Russia to one side, or try to enlist Russia as a partner in the war. Within the Bush administration the goal of regime change in Iraq was widely shared, but there were differences on how to achieve this.³¹⁹ The hawks in the administration believed that regime change in Iraq would be easy, especially as America was much stronger militarily.³²⁰ Secretary of State Colin Powell, however, favored a strategy of containment towards Iraq in order to force regime change.³²¹ With the support of a united international community, Powell believed that Saddam could be forced to relinquish his nuclear weapons.³²² After some debate within his administration, Bush decided to wage the first phase of his campaign against Iraq at the UN.³²³ With this decision Bush initially followed Powell's strategy by working within a multilateral framework. This might seem surprising, as Bush's speeches had reflected the position of the hawks. That Bush chose this strategy can be

³¹⁹ Daalder & Lindsay. *American Unbound*. 132.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Daalder & Lindsay. *American Unbound*. 133.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 326.

explained by the fact that working with other nations could make the Iraq War easier for America. As the NSS had stated, there was a preference for multilateralism and working with coalitions. Going to the UN first gave Bush the opportunity to assemble a coalition.

On September 12, 2002 Bush delivered an address to the United Nations General Assembly for making the case for enforcing the UN resolutions that Iraq had failed to live up to. In the speech, targeted at an international audience, Bush claimed that “our principles and our security are challenged today by outlaw groups and regimes that accept no law of morality”.³²⁴ By using the word ‘our’ he argued that nations had a common interest in dealing with rogue states. He then went on to argue why action against Iraq was necessary. The president did this by listing all of Saddam Hussein’s broken promises to the UN, including his refusal to give UN inspectors unrestricted access for verifying Iraq’s commitment to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction.³²⁵ Bush ended the list of broken promises with a rhetorical question: “We know Saddam Hussein pursued weapons of mass murder even when inspectors were in his country. Are we to assume that he stopped when they left?”³²⁶ He then concluded the UN should not take this risk.³²⁷

The speech before the UN general assembly was rather different than those discussed in the first part of this chapter. While Bush still painted a dark vision of Iraq, this speech appealed to logic rather than to fear, because he relied mainly on a fact-based overview of how Saddam Hussein had repeatedly disrespected UN resolutions, and he then argued this had made Iraq a threat to all UN members. Bush claimed in his speech that he had a preference for multilateralism in dealing with Iraq.³²⁸ However, the speech was decidedly an ultimatum and he also warned that his administration would act unilaterally: “the purposes of the United States should not be doubted. The Security Council resolutions will be enforced – the just demands of peace and security will be met – or action

³²⁴ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 140.

³²⁵ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 141-143.

³²⁶ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 144.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid.

will be unavoidable".³²⁹ Here Bush claimed that the resolutions the UN had taken in the past – and that had been broken by Saddam – needed to be enforced, or America would take action.

The Russian perspective

For Russia, supporting America in the Iraq War was unacceptable. While there were several reasons for Russia not to support its strategic partner, it will be argued here that the most important one was concerned with American grand strategy: the strategy for Iraq was at odds with Russia's great power ambitions.

After President Bush's UN speech there was no unanimity on Iraq in the international community. Nevertheless all members of the Security Council voted in favor of UN Resolution 1441 in November 2002.³³⁰ This would give Saddam a final opportunity to destroy his weapons of mass destruction or face "serious consequences".³³¹ After this resolution was passed Bush sought to secure support for an attack against Iraq, both from Russia and America's European allies.³³² France and Germany made it clear that they would vote against military action if Iraq refused to comply with Resolution 1441.³³³ Russia had three options: support America, remain uninvolved like China, or form a 'coalition of the unwilling' with France and Germany.³³⁴ With both America as well as France and Germany wooing Russia, Putin had considerable leverage.³³⁵ Historians Stent, Daalder and Lindsay agree that America could have done more to ensure Russia's support in the War in Iraq that. Stent claims that there were no high-level American visits to Iraq, and neither was Putin engaged directly by the Americans.³³⁶ Daalder and Lindsay add that America did not exert a great deal of pressure on all members of the Security Council.³³⁷ However, Stent does not believe it likely that Russia would

³²⁹ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 146.

³³⁰ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 326.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 92.

³³³ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 92-93.

³³⁴ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 95.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Stent. "America and Russia". 270.

³³⁷ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 144.

have joined the American campaign in Iraq, even if America had tried harder to ensure their support.³³⁸

There were several reasons for Russia's opposition to the American War in Iraq. First, America and Russia need to be understood as two great powers with opposing goals internationally. America had presented itself in the NSS as a revisionist power; it wished to remake the world in its own image. Russia, on the other hand, was a status quo power.³³⁹ Interestingly, this meant that the Cold War situation had been completely reversed: during the Cold War it had been the Soviet Union that was seeking global regime change.³⁴⁰ Following the Cold War, and increasingly after the 9/11 attacks, Russia had begun to advocate non-interference in the affairs of other countries.³⁴¹ Furthermore, Russia had maintained relations with Iraq, Iran, and North Korea, and had economic interests in these countries.³⁴² The Bush administration became increasingly irritated over this, but from a Russian perspective America seemed hypocritical because it targeted countries that Russia had relations with, while America had little interest in them.³⁴³ In addition, America remained silent on the issue of those dictators it did maintain relations with, such as Egypt's Hosni Mubarak.³⁴⁴

George W. Bush and his National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice claimed after the war that economic interests and oil contracts were the reasons that Russia would not support America.³⁴⁵ Historians Angela Stent and Galia Golan, however, both claim that in reality it was more complicated than this. The reason that Russia did not support America is more complex than economic interests; according to Galia Golan it was a combination of economic interests, domestic pressures and regional concerns. Domestic pressures included anti-Americanism among the public.³⁴⁶ In anticipation of the war, Russian media outlets were becoming increasingly anti-American and these

³³⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 96.

³³⁹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 87.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 88.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 94.

³⁴⁶ Galia Golan. "Russia and the Iraq War: was Putin's policy a failure?" *Communist and Post-communist studies* 37.4 (2004). 433.

views were reflected by many Duma politicians, who were even more anti-American than Putin.³⁴⁷ Putin had good reasons for improving his domestic standing, as the Duma elections were held in December 2003 and presidential elections were scheduled for March 2004.³⁴⁸ Concerning regional dynamics, there were concerns that the Iraq War could strengthen radical Islam and that this could spread to the Russian border; the Caucasus particularly would be at risk.³⁴⁹ To this can be added that, with a partnership with France and Germany, Russia could gain benefits such as closer ties with the European Union (EU), easier visa regimes, and economic assistance.³⁵⁰ Golan offers a neoclassical realist account for the rationale of the Iraq War, because domestic pressures are essential in her argument.³⁵¹

While these factors cited by Golan were significant in Russia's decision on Iraq, Stent has a more compelling, realist argument. Stent also mentions the same domestic, regional, and economic concerns, but she argues that it was ultimately the legacy of the 1990s that drove Russia to support France and Germany. More importantly, she claims that the 1990s legacy played a role in undermining the American-Russian strategic partnership during the Iraq War. What angered Russia was the lack of consultation on Iraq from America, the dismissive attitude towards the UN, and American unilateralism.³⁵² As was stated in Chapter 1, since the 1990s Russia has focused on an equality of treatment with America. This is why Putin initiated the partnership with Bush; he wanted to restore Russia's great power status by being the indispensable partner in the War on Terror. However, on the American side there was a complete lack of understanding of the need to treat Russia with respect.³⁵³ Stent indicates a major contrast between the Gulf War and the Iraq War: George H.W. Bush's administration had consulted intensively with Russian officials before the Gulf

³⁴⁷ Golan. "Russia and the Iraq War". 433-435.

³⁴⁸ Golan. "Russia and the Iraq War". 433.

³⁴⁹ Golan. "Russia and the Iraq War". 430.

³⁵⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 96.

³⁵¹ Colin Dueck claims that domestic pressures – through interest groups, legislators, and bureaucratic actors – play a role in a neoclassical realist perspective on grand strategy. See Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 41.

³⁵² Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 94.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

War.³⁵⁴ The fact that America started the Iraq War unilaterally, outside the framework of the UN, did not help. Since the end of the Cold War the UN Security Council has been the only venue in which Russia has had equal status with America.³⁵⁵ This situation made it completely unacceptable for Putin to support American unilateralism, and explains why he opposed the war and did not remain uninvolved, as China did. Bush's NSS had been wrong: while he foresaw unprecedented possibilities for collaboration with other great powers, they turned out to be much more complicated. It was on this point especially that Bush underestimated the influence of the Cold War. He had claimed that the ideological divides were over, but as Stent has demonstrated, Russia and America still represented opposing objectives internationally.

To sum up: regional, domestic, and economic concerns motivated Russia not to join America in the war. It was above all however the legacy of the 1990s that drove Russia towards a coalition with France and Russia and against American unilateralism. Yet to Stent's realist argument it can be added that, from the American perspective, a neoclassical viewpoint is also applicable: grand strategy, with all its liberal values, reinforced Russia's anti-war position. The strategy that Bush had articulated up until the NSS had justified American unilateralism and the pre-emptive strike, and these elements were precisely what Russia had opposed since the Cold War.

The Iraq War

The American-Russian strategic partnership would suffer during the Iraq War, but was quickly restored after the war because both countries still held favorable views of each other. However, this chapter will assert that the partnership between the two nations was only a limited partnership.

In anticipation of the war Bush began to comment in more detail on the reasons for invading Iraq and his strategy to rebuild the country. This is apparent from his 2003 State of the Union as well

³⁵⁴ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 94.

³⁵⁵ Golan. "Russia and the Iraq War". 431.

as a speech on the future of Iraq held at a Washington, D.C. think tank on February 26, 2003. From the State of the Union it could be concluded that America would soon invade Iraq. Bush left no doubt that America would act unilaterally and pre-emptively if the international community did not stand up to Saddam Hussein: “let there be no misunderstanding: if Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm, for the safety of our people and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him”.³⁵⁶ As in the address to the UN general assembly, Bush explained in more detail than before why Iraq was a threat. The president used very precise numbers to explain this. For example, he claimed that American intelligence officials had estimated that Saddam Hussein had about 500 tons of sarin, mustard gas, and VX nerve agent.³⁵⁷ He also stated that Iraq had about 30,000 munitions capable of delivering these agents, and that while Saddam Hussein had promised to destroy them, there was no evidence that he did.³⁵⁸ However, as in his earlier speeches, Bush also used the vision of Iraq as a dark threat as well as American liberal values to justify an invasion. Bush painted Saddam Hussein’s regime as pure evil: “International human rights groups have catalogued other methods used in the torture chambers of Iraq: electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on skin, mutilation with electric drills, cutting out tongues, and rape. If this is not evil, then evil has no meaning”.³⁵⁹ Bush described America on the other hand as a liberator: “We seek peace. We strive for peace”.³⁶⁰ He justified this with American exceptionalism: “The liberty we prize is not America’s gift to the world, it is God’s gift to humanity”.³⁶¹ With this statement American exceptionalism acquired a religious component. As in his previous speeches the president was determined, claiming that free people will set the course of history “whatever the duration of this struggle, whatever the difficulties”.³⁶²

President Bush’s ‘Remarks on the Future of Iraq’ speech had a much more positive tone.

Here he discussed the future of Iraq beyond the war. Before an audience of members of his cabinet,

³⁵⁶ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 163.

³⁵⁷ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 160.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 162.

³⁶⁰ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 163.

³⁶¹ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 164.

³⁶² “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 157.

members of Congress, justices, and policy experts, Bush tried to win over his critics by offering a positive outlook on the prospect of a liberated Iraq. He still claimed that Iraq represented the greatest danger in the War on Terror, but his main argument was that the world had an interest in the spread of democracy.³⁶³ This had a strategic as well as a moral objective; Bush claimed that liberty for oppressed people meant security for American people.³⁶⁴ He was especially positive about America's performance in the War on Terror. He claimed that America was winning and that the military was well equipped to win the War in Iraq.³⁶⁵

From these speeches it can be concluded that, shortly before the war, Bush described in more detail why Invading Iraq was necessary. The president used for justification the numbers of weapons possessed by Iraq. However, he mainly reasserted the arguments he had used in early 2002: vilifying the Iraqi regime and contrasting this with a positive message of the spread of liberal values.

In less than a month after these remarks on the future of Iraq, the war began. Just a few weeks before the invasion, on March 5, 2003 Putin and his German and French colleagues held a press conference to announce that they would not support a new UN resolution against Iraq.³⁶⁶ Russia, France, and Germany asked Bush to allow the UN weapons inspectors more time in Iraq.³⁶⁷ The Russian minister of foreign affairs urged Bush to establish a new world order based on multipolarity, the principles of international law, with respect to UN resolutions.³⁶⁸ Bush did not listen to these warnings and on March 19, 2003 America started the Iraq War.³⁶⁹ America had only limited international support; Great Britain, Australia, Poland, Kuwait, Qatar, and a few other gulf states assisted America.³⁷⁰ Three weeks after the start of the war Bagdad fell and Saddam's rule was

³⁶³ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 170.

³⁶⁴ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 173.

³⁶⁵ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 168-172.

³⁶⁶ Goldgeier & McFaul. *Power and Purpose*. 339.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 147.

over.³⁷¹ Putin's reaction to the start of the war was moderate: he called the decision 'regrettable' when he spoke with Bush on the phone; publicly he called it "a mistake".³⁷² When ground forces approached Baghdad Putin returned to a more conciliatory tone and more attention was devoted to preserving relations with America.³⁷³ According to Golan one of Putin's objectives after the war broke was maintaining the warm relationship between himself and Bush.³⁷⁴

In September 2003 Putin visited Camp David for an America-Russia summit. During the press conference that Bush and Putin held there Bush talked as if there had never been any disagreements over Iraq. Bush and Putin both agreed that they were more than mere partners in the War on Terror, they were allies.³⁷⁵ Bush claimed that he wanted to move to a "new level of partnership", thus moving on from the impasse of the Iraq War.³⁷⁶ The two presidents claimed that they had discussed cooperation in the War on Terror both in Iraq and Afghanistan, broader Russian-American military cooperation, nonproliferation – especially concerning Iran and North Korea – and broader economic cooperation.³⁷⁷ Although neither Bush nor Putin addressed their differences over Iraq, journalists asked about the status of American-Russian relations. One of them asked whether the American-Russian partnership had a declarative character, but both Bush and Putin rejected this.³⁷⁸ Putin claimed that the cooperation was not declarative but concrete and pragmatic.³⁷⁹ A second journalist asked how it was possible that American-Russian relations did not seem to worsen over the Iraq War. According to Bush this was because they understood each other's positions and because of the close personal relationship. Putin added that the fundamental interests of both countries were in alignment. These comments showed that Putin and Bush wished to leave the Iraq War behind them and to restore their partnership. Bush still favored a positive image of Putin and

³⁷¹ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 147.

³⁷² Golan. "Russia and the Iraq War". 442.

³⁷³ Golan. "Russia and the Iraq War". 446.

³⁷⁴ Golan. "Russia and the Iraq War". 430.

³⁷⁵ "The American Presidency Project, The President's News Conference with President Vladimir Putin of Russia at Camp David, Maryland." *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 27 September 2003. Web. 19 June 2017.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

American-Russian relations. America's policy on Russia returned to a realism strategy that stemmed from the Cold War era, and that only sought to engage Russia on a few foreign policy issues. The Cold War legacy thus remained influential after the Iraq War.

Historian Angela Stent claims that the reconciliation demonstrated that only a limited partnership between the two nations was possible, and indeed it was limited partnership: there was positive rhetoric but the partnership lacked any substance.³⁸⁰ According to Stent the American-Russian strategic partnership had returned to its pre-Iraq War condition by the fall of 2003.³⁸¹ The rekindling of the strategic partnership was mutually initiated. The Bush administration found it easy to forgive Russia, since their opposition to the war was explained in economic terms, and because Russia remained helpful in Afghanistan.³⁸² Stent's analysis of a limited partnership is correct, although the Bush administration had already stated in the 2002 NSS that its partnership with a 'weak' Russia was limited. Even before the war America was aiming for a limited partnership. As stated earlier in this chapter, Bush's strategy had shifted more towards interventionism and this led to the announcement that cooperation with an undemocratic Russia should be limited. Bush's strategy towards Russia was thus a cause of the limited partnership. Another important point to add is that liberal values played an important part in creating conditions for the limited partnership following the war, since unilateralism and pre-emption – on which the War on Terror strategy was built – were difficult for Russia to accept.

Conclusion

Following the war in Afghanistan American grand strategy became more assertive and idealistic as a result of Bush's hegemonic worldview and the liberal assumptions of American strategic culture. Bush used this hegemonic worldview to justify the pre-emptive strike and to pave the way for the Iraq War. For Putin it was unacceptable to support America in this war. This can

³⁸⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 98.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

³⁸² Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 120.

mainly be attributed to Russia's great power ambitions: since the end of the Cold War Russia had opposed American strategies that relied on unilateralism and dismissive attitudes towards Russia. Prior to the Iraq War American grand strategy relied on unilateralism. However, after the fall of Baghdad the American-Russian partnership was restored, although it became clear that this was limited. These partnership limits had already existed before the war, in the NSS, and were partly caused by America's realist and interventionist strategies, which assumed that Russia was weak and that there should be limits to American-Russian collaboration. The strategic partnership returned to the status it had before the Iraq War, including an American strategy of realism toward Russia, and with an emphasis on a close personal relationship between Bush and Putin.

Chapter 3: The Russo-Georgian War

The Russo-Georgian War that began in August 2008 completely wrecked what was left of the Bush-Putin strategic partnership and revealed the limits of American-Russian rapprochement.³⁸³ The war was a conflict over the Georgian regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia; Russia supported the independence of these regions, while Georgia wanted to restore its territorial integrity.³⁸⁴ The roots of this conflict lay in an event that had occurred a few years earlier: the Georgian 'Rose Revolution'.³⁸⁵ This revolution was part of the 'Color Revolutions', a series of revolutions in former Soviet nations between late 2003 and mid-2005 that promised to turn these autocratic countries into pro-western democracies.³⁸⁶ The Color Revolutions were a source of major disagreements between America and Russia. On one hand America took credit for the revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, especially as these were countries that were part of an American program that supported their transformation into democracies.³⁸⁷ Democratic changes in these countries would demonstrate the value of Bush's efforts to spread democracy, which was part of his grand strategy.³⁸⁸ Russia, on the other hand, saw the Color Revolutions as an American plot to gain influence in the former Soviet nations.³⁸⁹ The Russian invasion of Georgia should be regarded as an attempt to undermine western influence in the Caucasus.³⁹⁰

This chapter will discuss how American strategic culture contributed to the events that led up to the Russo-Georgian War and thus to the end of the American-Russian strategic partnership. The main focus of the analysis will be on the events in Georgia, since the Rose Revolution ultimately led to war during Bush's second term. Ukraine's Orange Revolutions and Kyrgyzstan's Tulip Revolutions will occasionally be mentioned in this chapter also. As in Chapter 2, neoclassical realist theories will

³⁸³ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 171-175.

³⁸⁴ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 168-170.

³⁸⁵ Lincoln A. Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. 104.

³⁸⁶ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 2.

³⁸⁷ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 75.

³⁸⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 119.

³⁸⁹ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 76.

³⁹⁰ Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 123.

be used to analyze the primary sources, and both liberal assumptions and limited liability are concepts that will be dealt with. As in Chapter 2, this chapter will also reflect on realist theories that point to legacy of the 1990s as well as the Cold War legacy to explain why the partnership ended. The time period discussed in this chapter comprises late 2003 until late 2008. The first part will discuss five of President Bush's major speeches, including State of the Union speeches from late 2003 to the beginning of 2005. These speeches are useful for discussing grand strategy development that led to the 2006 NSS, which will also be discussed. Because this is a limited number of sources for the time period discussed, statements made at news conference will also be used. Several news conferences will be used to examine Bush's strategy towards the former Soviet Union later in the chapter, because Bush did not always comment on these nations in his major speeches. There is however a gap in the primary source material between early 2005 and the announcement of the National Security Strategy in 2006, but this is ameliorated by the fact that Bush's 2006 NSS elaborated further on ideas he had already publicly expressed by early 2005.

The Freedom Agenda

The first part of this chapter will discuss how grand strategy changed after the Iraq War. Bush began to rely on liberal assumptions to justify the War on Terror, and claimed that democracy should be promoted on a global scale as a goal of his administration. It will be argued that after the shift towards this strategy Bush embraced the Color Revolutions because they demonstrated that his policy of promoting democracy was successful.

In November 2003 President George W. Bush claimed that he wished to adjust his strategy in the Middle East towards the promotion of democracy.³⁹¹ This strategy was called the 'freedom agenda' and he chose the 20th anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy – an organization dedicated to promoting democracy internationally – to launch his new agenda.³⁹² The

³⁹¹ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 186.

³⁹² "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 177.

occasion allowed him to reflect on the previous successes of this strategy and to claim that more success was guaranteed in the future. Bush claimed that America had created conditions during the 20th century in which new democracies could flourish.³⁹³ By the early 21st century progress towards liberty was a trend: more and more countries were becoming democratic.³⁹⁴ Yet Bush also claimed that there were challenges to this progress, especially in the Middle East.³⁹⁵ The president used the speech to encourage Middle Eastern leaders to reform their countries.³⁹⁶

There was a change in President Bush's rhetoric: he did not rely on a hegemonic vision of the world, and fully used liberal assumptions to justify the strategy. What Bush emphasized was the universal character of liberal values: they could be implemented anywhere and democracy can thus only flourish. This rhetorical change was caused by the developments in Iraq; by the end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004 these developments had led Bush to look for new ways to justify his grand strategy. A few weeks after the invasion Iraq had descended into chaos: basic services such as water and electricity were scarce and there was no single person who was clearly in charge of the country.³⁹⁷ A more pressing problem was that there were insufficient coalition troops to provide security.³⁹⁸ By 2004 Bush's mission in Iraq was far from accomplished.³⁹⁹ The war had produced something that Bush had not expected: a bloody occupation that demonstrated the limits of American power.⁴⁰⁰ Additionally, since the start of the war in March 2003 no weapons of mass destruction had been found.⁴⁰¹ Because success in Iraq was far off, Bush abandoned that part of his old strategy that had caused him to start the war and he began to look for new ways to justify it.

After his speech on the freedom agenda Bush started to use the promotion of democracy to justify this agenda and the Iraq War in several of his speeches. This was evident in his State of the

³⁹³ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 178.

³⁹⁴ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 179.

³⁹⁵ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 180.

³⁹⁶ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 181-183.

³⁹⁷ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 148.

³⁹⁸ Daalder & Lindsay. *America Unbound*. 149.

³⁹⁹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 142.

⁴⁰⁰ James M. Lindsay. "George W. Bush, Barack Obama and the future of US global leadership." *International Affairs* 87.4 (2011). 765.

⁴⁰¹ Lindsay, "George W. Bush, Barack Obama and the future of US global leadership". 767.

Union of 2004. First, the president argued that America should remain on the offensive in the War on Terror. He claimed that America could either go forwards or backwards in the war; backwards however meant returning to the illusion that terrorists and rogue states no longer formed a threat.⁴⁰² According to Bush it was tempting to think that terrorists no longer formed a threat because America had not been attacked since 9/11.⁴⁰³ He used the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to argue how this strategy had been successful. He acknowledged that America faced a violent uprising in Iraq, but he also claimed that America should not be held back by this: “As democracy takes hold in Iraq, the enemies of freedom will do all in their power to spread violence and fear. They are trying to shake the will of our country and our friends, but the United States of America will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins”.⁴⁰⁴ The president was as steadfast as he had been before the Iraq War.

By 2004 Bush was dealing with criticism of his strategy and he addressed this criticism in his speeches. He used the State of the Union to speak directly to his critics, including members of Congress who had opposed the war. Bush used three arguments to justify the war. First, he argued that if America had not invaded Iraq, it still would have posed a threat.⁴⁰⁵ Second, Bush rejected criticism that there was no international support for the war, and claimed that many countries were helping in Afghanistan and Iraq following the invasions.⁴⁰⁶ Third, President Bush claimed that bringing democracy to the Middle East ought to be an American mission.⁴⁰⁷ He used religion to justify this goal: “I believe that God has planted in every human heart the desire to live in freedom”.⁴⁰⁸ The president rejected accusations of imperialism: “America is a nation with a mission, and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs. We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire. Our aim is democratic peace – a peace founded upon the dignity and rights of every man and woman”.⁴⁰⁹ In this paragraph Bush rejects the notion that America had become an empire by mentioning American

⁴⁰² “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 197.

⁴⁰³ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 198.

⁴⁰⁴ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 200.

⁴⁰⁵ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 202.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 203.

⁴⁰⁸ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 202.

⁴⁰⁹ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 203.

exceptionalism. Denying and opposing American imperialism was a new strand in Bush's speeches following the Iraq War. After the war several academics had accused Bush of imperialism and claimed that this was a counterproductive strategy.⁴¹⁰

American exceptionalism acquired a central role in justifying the War on Terror. This was evident in September, 2004 when Bush spoke at the Republican National Convention, in which he accepted the nomination as Republican presidential candidate for the 2004 elections. The convention took place in New York, which was symbolic because the 9/11 attacks were a significant moment in Bush's first term. He used the speech to claim that he was the candidate to defend America against terrorists.⁴¹¹ To do this he claimed that the goal in Afghanistan and Iraq should be "to help new leaders to train their armies, and move toward elections, and get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible".⁴¹² This was certainly not a new goal for the Bush administration, but what was remarkable was that Bush barely made any references to weapons of mass destruction to justify this. The War on Terror was described as a quest for freedom against tyranny. He asserted: "I believe that America is called to lead the cause of freedom in a new century. I believe that millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given the chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things because freedom is not America's gift to the world, it is the almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world".⁴¹³ As in the State of the Union, Bush fully relied on American exceptionalism to justify the War on Terror.

Spreading democracy had a strategic objective, and this became more important in 2004. From several news conferences Bush gave throughout 2004 it was also apparent that promoting democracy had become an even more important goal than preventing proliferation across rogue regimes. On April 13 Bush stated at a news conference: "A secure and free Iraq is an historic

⁴¹⁰ Dueck. *Reluctant Crusaders*. 160-161.

⁴¹¹ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 265.

⁴¹² "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 266.

⁴¹³ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 269.

opportunity to change the world and make America more secure”.⁴¹⁴ A few days later, on April 16, he claimed: “We’re engaged in difficult and necessary work of helping Iraqis build their own democracy, for the sake of our security and to increase the momentum of freedom across the greater Middle East”⁴¹⁵ During a news conference on November 4 Bush commented on his strategy in the Middle East. He said: “If we are interested in protecting our country for the long term, the best way to do this is to promote freedom and democracy”.⁴¹⁶ From all these quotations it is apparent that the security of America was now tied to the spreading of democracy in the Middle East. This was a major shift from 2002 and early 2003. As was discussed in Chapter 2, before the Iraq War American security was tied to preventing rogue regimes from providing nuclear weapons to terrorists.

In 2005 the president launched the strategy to spread democracy on a global scale. Bush’s second inaugural address provided him with the occasion to make a new start with this strategy. This made the tone highly idealistic. The address began by stating the goal: “It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world”.⁴¹⁷ In promoting democracy America should not force a particular style of government on anyone. Bush stated: “our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way”.⁴¹⁸ This was not an entirely new objective for the Bush administration, but what was new was the desire to achieve this on a global scale. It was furthermore noteworthy that Bush articulated this goal very carefully in terms of helping other nations. This was in order to prevent accusations of American imperialism, and was consistent with Bush’s ideas of democracy: if it is a universal value then ultimately all nations will accept it.

Spreading democracy also had a moral objective, and Bush linked both the strategic and moral objectives. He emphasized the strategic goal of spreading democracy: “The survival of liberty

⁴¹⁴ “The President’s News Conference.” *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 13 April, 2004. Web. 20 June 2017

⁴¹⁵ “The President’s News Conference with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.” *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 16 April 2004. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴¹⁶ “The President’s News Conference.” *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 4 November 2004. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴¹⁷ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 274.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

in our own land increasingly depends on success of liberty in other lands”.⁴¹⁹ But he also spoke about the moral objective: “From the day of our founding, we have proclaimed that every man and woman on this earth has rights, and dignity, and matchless value, because they bear the image of the Maker of Heaven and earth. Across the generations we have proclaimed the imperative of self-government, because no one is fit to be a master, and no one deserves to be a slave. Advancing these ideals is the mission that created our nation”.⁴²⁰ Bush had used the historic component of American exceptionalism in the past, but the emphasis on religion was now heavier. Through religion Bush could claim that the mission had a larger purpose. He claimed that the strategic and moral objectives of the strategy were connected: “America’s vital interests and deepest beliefs are now one”.⁴²¹

At the time of Bush’s second inaugural speech there were still no weapons of mass destruction found in Iraq, and so Bush decided to fully justify the war in terms of the promotion of democracy.⁴²² According to James Lindsay, this is why during Bush’s second term freedom became a priority over rogue states and weapons of mass destruction.⁴²³ This new goal had a much broader, global scale. Before the Iraq War Bush’s strategy mainly concerned the axis of evil. The shift that Lindsay describes is visible in Bush’s speeches, especially in his second inaugural address. What can be added to Lindsay’s claims is that ideology and American exceptionalism, especially the religious aspect, became more important to Bush’s grand strategy.

In Bush’s freedom agenda Georgia and Ukraine could serve as success stories of democracy assistance.⁴²⁴ Historian Lincoln Mitchell claims in *The Color Revolutions* (2012) that America has taken credit for those revolutions. The actual American influence on them has been debated among historians. Mitchell claims that Russia sees the revolutions as an American plot to gain influence in

⁴¹⁹ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 273.

⁴²⁰ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 274.

⁴²¹ “Selected Speeches of George W. Bush”. 273.

⁴²² Lindsay. “George W. Bush, Barack Obama and the future of US global leadership”. 769.

⁴²³ Lindsay. “George W. Bush, Barack Obama and the future of US global leadership”. 770.

⁴²⁴ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 75.

former Soviet Nations.⁴²⁵ While the revolutions served as examples of how democracy assistance can be successful, it is more difficult to determine what America's real intentions or impacts were.⁴²⁶ According to Mitchell tendencies to overstate America's role need to be balanced against the claims of others that America played no role.⁴²⁷ Mitchell claims that the events were not American plots, but neither were they entirely homegrown.⁴²⁸ What can be concluded from examining Bush's speeches is that in early 2005 the Color Revolutions became more relevant for the Bush administration. Up until 2005 the Bush administration had not paid very much attention to the former Soviet nations and they were not mentioned in his most important speeches.

When the post-revolution Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili visited Washington, DC in February 2004 Bush praised the Rose Revolution, but he was also somewhat reserved. He told the Georgian president at a press conference: "We appreciate your firm commitment to democracy and freedom (...) I know firsthand that the president will do everything he can to earn the confidence of the people of Georgia by representing their will, by fighting corruption, by working for a system based upon integrity and decency and human rights".⁴²⁹ The Rose Revolution was a historic moment according to Bush.⁴³⁰ The American president said that the revolution was an example for people around the world who long for freedom and an honest government.⁴³¹ The statement was very brief, however, and Bush did not link the revolution directly to American efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East.

A year after the meeting with Saakashvili Bush mentioned the Color Revolutions in his 2005 State of the Union. According to the president the American elections were a privilege. He then stated: "And tonight that is a privilege we share with newly elected leaders of Afghanistan, the

⁴²⁵ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 73.

⁴²⁶ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 76.

⁴²⁷ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 79.

⁴²⁸ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 91.

⁴²⁹ "Remarks Following Discussions with President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia and an Exchange with Reporters." *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 25 February 2004. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*

Palestinian territories, Ukraine, and a free and sovereign Iraq".⁴³² In this quotation Ukraine referred to the election that was held after the Orange Revolution. According to Bush all these events showed that freedom had momentum, and that it could be expected that more countries would choose liberty.⁴³³ Success in any of these countries validated Bush's strategy of the promotion of democracy. The fact that Bush mentioned Ukraine in the same sentence as the Middle Eastern countries meant that this former Soviet nation was now also part of the freedom agenda. Yet there was greater emphasis in the speech on the promotion of democracy in the Middle East, which was still seen as a danger to American security, especially Iran and Syria.

When Bush visited Georgia in 2005 his administration had launched its new strategy of worldwide promotion of democracy, and it fully embraced the new Georgian president. Bush felt that the Color Revolutions had strengthened American interests in the region.⁴³⁴ In 2005 he gave a speech in Georgia's capital Tbilisi, where Bush stood in front of thousands of enthusiastic Georgian citizens.⁴³⁵ The speech was triumphant and Bush said he was proud to stand besides Saakashvili. He praised the Georgian people for their revolution: "because you acted, Georgia is today both sovereign and free, and a beacon for liberty for this region and the world".⁴³⁶ By 'this region', Bush referred to the Middle East, but also Central Asia. The president hoped that in all these nations citizens would demand a democratic transformation.

By 2005 Georgia also had a larger strategic value for America. The president believed that Georgia's commitment to democracy would have consequences for other countries: "Your courage is inspiring democratic reformers around the world and sending a message across the world: freedom will be the future for every nation and every people on earth".⁴³⁷ Bush not only hoped that the revolution would have consequences across the Caucasus and the broader Middle East, he directly linked the Georgian revolution to the freedom agenda in the War on Terror. He praised Georgia for

⁴³² "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 279.

⁴³³ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 288.

⁴³⁴ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 108-119.

⁴³⁵ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 119.

⁴³⁶ "Text: Bush's Speech in Georgia." *BBC News*, 10 May 2005. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

their cooperation and for sending troops to Iraq and Afghanistan.⁴³⁸ Furthermore, he also told the Georgians that he wished to encourage their closer cooperation with NATO and European organizations.⁴³⁹ This would enlarge American influence in Central Asia.

It can be concluded that the Bush administration had very different objectives concerning the Middle East and former Soviet nations such as Georgia. The Middle East had priority when it came to the promotion of democracy, as these countries were still linked to terrorism and seen as potential threats to America. Georgia, instead, could serve as an example of the successful promotion of democracy and function as a partner of the West. While several former Soviet states were still autocratic, they were treated differently and were not mentioned as threats.

Russia and the Freedom Agenda in 2006

The strategy that Bush had outlined in his speeches between 2003 and 2005 would lead to a more interventionist approach towards Russia and Central Asia in 2006. However, it will be argued that there was no cohesive American strategy for Russia and Central Asia. In the Central Asian states of Georgia and Azerbaijan particularly, Bush expressed the hope that these states would reform towards democracy, although but he was reluctant to push for these reforms. American-Russian relations suffered over these double standards.

By 2006 it was time for a reappraisal of America's relations with Russia.⁴⁴⁰ While the freedom agenda became more prominent in Bush's grand strategy, two question concerning Russia stood out: how much should the freedom agenda be emphasized in relations with Russia?⁴⁴¹ The second question concerned the strategy towards Russia: should America continue to focus on a realist strategy based on common interests?⁴⁴² Within Bush's administration there was a faction in favor of realism, but there was also a faction in favor of a more value-based strategy.⁴⁴³ Among Bush's staff

⁴³⁸ "Text: Bush's Speech in Georgia". 10 May 2005. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 142.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

the National Security Council's senior director for Russia, Thomas Graham, was one of the few still in favor of working more closely and pragmatically with Russia.⁴⁴⁴ He argued that public criticism of Russia was counterproductive and that America still needed Russia on issues such as Iran and Afghanistan.⁴⁴⁵ Among the 'value-centered' politicians was Dick Cheney, who adopted a hostile attitude towards Russia and advocated closer ties to Georgia and Ukraine coupled to a diminishing Russian influence in this region.⁴⁴⁶ The National Security Strategy of 2006 was built on the strategy that Bush had articulated in his 2005 inaugural speech, and it shed a light on the strategy that America would follow concerning Russia.

The national security strategy was a "wartime national security" according to the document, and the most important obligation was to protect the security of the American people. The war the NSS referred to was the War on Terror, which was thus still central to American grand strategy. Like the 2002 strategy, the 2006 strategy claimed that America had the opportunity to reshape the world, and this was inspired by ideals such as freedom, democracy and human dignity.⁴⁴⁷ In the NSS the idealistic approach to grand strategy is firmly located in the tradition of Truman and Reagan.⁴⁴⁸ Several goals that were articulated in the NSS of 2002 were still mentioned in the NSS of 2006. For example, the proliferation of nuclear weapons was still considered the most significant threat to American national security.⁴⁴⁹ Another continuity was pre-emption: the NSS stated that the place of pre-emption in American strategy remained the same.⁴⁵⁰ The most significant change from 2002 was that of the spreading of freedom and democracy, which became the core of the NSS and of America's strategy.

The NSS was founded upon two pillars: "The first pillar is promoting freedom, justice, and human dignity – working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity

⁴⁴⁴ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 143.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁷ "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006." *National Security Strategy Archive*, 16 March 2006. i. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴⁴⁸ "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006". ii. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴⁴⁹ "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006". 19. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴⁵⁰ "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006". 23. Web. 20 June 2017.

through free and fair trade and wise developments”.⁴⁵¹ The second pillar of the strategy was “confronting the challenges of our time by leading a growing community of democracies”.⁴⁵² One of the core ideas behind this strategy is the liberal assumption that democracies do not go to war with one another. The NSS explained this idea further: “democracies are the most responsible members of the international system; promoting democracy is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability”.⁴⁵³ The Color Revolutions are mentioned as successful occurrences since 2002, along with Afghanistan and Iraq, where tyrannies had been replaced by democracies.⁴⁵⁴ It was also mentioned that the revolutions had a transformative effect; they “brought new hope for freedom across the Eurasian landmass”.⁴⁵⁵

According to the NSS there was still scope for working together with other great powers, even after some of America’s oldest and closest allies had disagreed with American policy in Iraq.⁴⁵⁶ The potential to collaborate with other great powers was “an extraordinary opportunity”.⁴⁵⁷ This was a continuity from 2002, when the opportunity to do so was described as greater than ever. The 2006 NSS acknowledged that there were contrasting interests with Russia, but America still sought to work closely with Russia on issues of common interest.⁴⁵⁸ However, the NSS was more interventionist with Russia than the Bush administration had been, and this also had relevance to the broader region of South and Central Asia. The NSS stated that “We must encourage Russia to respect values of freedom and democracy at home and not to impede the cause of freedom and democracy in these regions. Strengthening our relationship will depend on the policies, foreign and domestic, that Russia adopts. Recent trends regrettably point toward a diminishing commitment to democratic freedoms and institutions”.⁴⁵⁹ According to Angela Stent in 2006 Bush usually sided with those who favored a more

⁴⁵¹ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006”. ii. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006”. 3. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴⁵⁴ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006”. 2. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006”. 36. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ “The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006”. 39. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

pragmatic approach towards Russia than a value-centered approach.⁴⁶⁰ In the National Security Strategy both visions exerted their influence. The Bush administration tilted towards a more interventionist strategy on Russia that focused on its internal structure, but the door was still open for partnership.

Historians claim that during Bush's second term American policy in central Asia was problematic. According to Stent an overall integrated policy towards Eurasia was lacking.⁴⁶¹ Mitchell makes a similar claim: there was no cohesive regional strategy towards Russia and Central Asia.⁴⁶² Stent blames the State Department for this non-cohesive foreign policy towards Central Asia, but she does not elaborate on it. A neoclassical perspective does offer a coherent argument for this. The NSS only addressed Central Asia briefly and claimed that the region had an enduring priority in American foreign policy.⁴⁶³ Promoting effective democracies and expanding free-market reforms are mentioned as goals in the same sentence as enhancing security and winning the War on Terror.⁴⁶⁴ This is precisely what made America's strategy problematic: it was not easy to maintain all these goals. Before the NSS was published Bush had already settled on a policy towards Central Asia that did not actively encourage democratization. After publication of the NSS Bush continued to encourage the states of Central Asia to maintain cooperation with America on counter-terrorism, while downplaying criticism on their political systems.⁴⁶⁵ This fed into Russian claims of American hypocrisy and that America was using the freedom agenda as a part of a realpolitik strategy.⁴⁶⁶ The fact that Bush chose partnership in the War on Terror with Central Asian states (mainly Azerbaijan and Georgia) over the promotion of democracy was a sign of limited liability. While Bush had stated in his inaugural address that the promotion of democracy was a goal on a global scale, his administration was reluctant to take significant actions to accomplish this in Central Asia. This

⁴⁶⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 143.

⁴⁶¹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 144.

⁴⁶² Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 80.

⁴⁶³ "The National Security Strategy of the United States 2006". 40. Web. 20 June 2017.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁵ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 146.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

contributed to making American foreign policy towards Central Asia and Russia extremely inconsistent: both liberal assumptions as well as limited liability had a strong influence on Bush's strategy.

Bush was reluctant to push for democratic reforms in Central Asia because the Middle East was far more important for the freedom agenda. The administration needed the help of the Central Asian states. This could already be concluded from Bush's 2005 State of the Union. From two speeches that Bush gave on the War on Terror in 2006 it can be seen that the Middle East was still central to the freedom agenda, both for strategic and moral reasons. On August 31, 2006 Bush gave an address to the American Legion National Convention, an organization for veterans. While this speech many American troops were still stationed across the world, and so he spoke about the "new generation of Americans in uniform".⁴⁶⁷ He claimed that Islamic terrorists were the "enemies of liberty", and that the war on terror is "the ideological struggle of the 21st century".⁴⁶⁸ In a speech before the United Nations National Assembly Bush again made clear that the Middle East was the primary object of his foreign policy. He claimed that "it is clear the world is engaged in a great ideological struggle, between extremists who use terror as a weapon to create fear, and moderate people who work for peace".⁴⁶⁹ States such as Georgia and Azerbaijan were on the side of the moderates, and thus remained the allies of Bush.

While America was questioning the nature of its relations with Russia, Russia was doing likewise.⁴⁷⁰ Its position internationally was changing: from about 2006 Russia was a rising power.⁴⁷¹ This was partly due to its oil revenues: the country was experiencing high growth rates.⁴⁷² With its new position as a rising power there also emerged a new ideology to counter the Western promotion

⁴⁶⁷ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 379.

⁴⁶⁸ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 380.

⁴⁶⁹ "Selected Speeches of George W. Bush". 431.

⁴⁷⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 142.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷² *ibid.*

of democracy: 'sovereign democracy'.⁴⁷³ The core idea of Russia's sovereign democracy was that the political system met the needs and expectations of the Russian people, so neither America nor any other country had any business telling Russia how it should govern itself.⁴⁷⁴ At the same time tolerance to criticism was decreasing under Putin.⁴⁷⁵ Putin's administration had been alarmed by the Color Revolutions and they ensured that no popular unrest or uprising could gain a foothold in the country.⁴⁷⁶

American-Russian relations were also suffering over America's supposed double standards towards Central Asia.⁴⁷⁷ In this matter vice president Cheney also played a role, as in 2006 he was making increasingly negative comments on Russia's internal affairs.⁴⁷⁸ As a response to Cheney's comments Putin attacked America publicly for the first time at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007.⁴⁷⁹ In a speech he blamed America for its unilateral and reckless attitude towards the world.⁴⁸⁰ According to Stent the speech ushered in a new phase for Russian relations with the West, because Russia would no longer accept an agenda that had been scripted by America.⁴⁸¹ The realist argument thus contends that Russia's rising power status was highly consequential for American-Russian relations.

By 2007 however there was still something left of the American-Russian partnership: Bush's and Putin's warm relationship. This was apparent from the news conference at Kennebunkport (Maine) on July 2 at a Bush-Putin summit. Bush received Putin for the summit at a house owned by the Bush family, a fact which also emphasized the close personal relations between the two. At the news conference the two presidents were friendly and amicable, joking about a fishing trip they had made earlier that day, in which Putin had caught the only fish of the day.⁴⁸² According to Bush the

⁴⁷³ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 147.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 149.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 145.

⁴⁷⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 144-145.

⁴⁷⁹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 151.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 153.

⁴⁸² "Remarks Following Discussions with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia and an Exchange with Reporters in Kennebunkport." *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 2 July 2007. Web. 20 June.

two also had a constructive dialogue about nuclear security, bilateral relations, Iran and North Korea.⁴⁸³ Their differences on the freedom agenda did not go undiscussed at Kennebunkport. Bush was asked whether he trusted Putin. To this he answered: “Yes, I trust him. Do I like everything he says? No. And I suspect he doesn’t like everything I say. But we’re able to say it in a way that shows mutual respect”.⁴⁸⁴

The end of the partnership

At the end of this chapter it will be concluded that Russia’s great power ambitions led to the invasion of Georgia that ended this partnership. Historians cite NATO enlargement as the most important event leading up to the invasion. Disagreements over Kosovo between Russia and the West – which had been a constant since the 1990s – had preceded this.⁴⁸⁵ Moscow saw itself as protector of the Orthodox Serbs and claimed the Balkans as its traditional sphere of influence.⁴⁸⁶ To America Russia’s position in the conflict seemed coldly indifferent concerning the ‘ethnic cleansing’ of the Kosovars by the Serbs.⁴⁸⁷ In February 2008 Kosovo declared independence from Serbia unilaterally.⁴⁸⁸ This was supported by America and many European states, but Russia deemed the move illegitimate under international law.⁴⁸⁹ Following Kosovo’s declaration the Russian government released a statement claiming that if Kosovo could declare independence then so could Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁴⁹⁰

After the Orange and Rose Revolutions Ukraine and Georgia started to bid for NATO membership.⁴⁹¹ At a NATO summit in April 2008 it was decided whether Ukraine and Georgia would receive a ‘membership action plan’ (MAP) or a road map stipulating a country’s requirements were

⁴⁸³ “Remarks Following Discussions with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia and an Exchange with Reporters in Kennebunkport”. 2 July 2007. Web. 20 June.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 161.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 162.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 163.

⁴⁹¹ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 100.

for NATO membership eligibility.⁴⁹² While NATO members were divided over whether Ukraine and Georgia should be allowed to join, it was ultimately decided that the MAPs would not be granted, although it was agreed that Ukraine and Georgia could eventually become NATO members.⁴⁹³

According to Stent it was unclear precisely what this meant, but it was significant because it was for the first time explicitly stated the former Soviet states could become NATO members.⁴⁹⁴ Russia was of course deeply opposed to these countries joining NATO.⁴⁹⁵ Mitchell claims that NATO was not a serious threat to Russia but that NATO expansion itself was a symbol of Russia's decline.⁴⁹⁶

Following the NATO summit Saakashvili began efforts to strengthen the Georgian state, and part of these efforts comprised bringing South Ossetia and Abkhazia back under Georgian territorial integrity.⁴⁹⁷ If territorial integrity were restored then Georgia might possibly qualify for a MAP.⁴⁹⁸ The direct cause of the war was the Georgian response to a Russian buildup of troops in the contested regions.⁴⁹⁹ On August 7, 2008 Saakashvili initiated military action to expel the Russians from South Ossetia.⁵⁰⁰ Putin responded forcefully: the following day Russian troops marched into South Ossetia and the Georgian army was defeated.⁵⁰¹ According to Stent the Bush administration had tried to prevent this by making clear to Saakashvili that America supported the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of Georgia, but that it would not support the use of force to restore territorial integrity.⁵⁰²

The legacy of the 1990s should be regarded as an indirect cause of the war. According to historian Jeffrey Mankoff the West's decision to recognize Kosovo led to Russian demands of equal treatment for South Ossetia and Abkhazia.⁵⁰³ Additionally, opening up the possibility of bringing

⁴⁹² Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 164.

⁴⁹³ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 164-167.

⁴⁹⁴ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 167.

⁴⁹⁵ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 101.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 104.

⁴⁹⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 168.

⁴⁹⁹ Mitchell. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 104.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² There were Americans both inside and outside the Bush administration who admired Saakashvili and supported him in his stand against Russia, so it is highly possible that Saakashvili received a quite different impression and had anticipated American support. See: Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 170.

⁵⁰³ Mankoff. *Russian Foreign Policy*. 134.

Georgia and Ukraine into NATO was experienced by the Russians as American unilateralism, especially as Russia was not consulted on the issue, neither were its interests addressed.⁵⁰⁴ As was demonstrated in Chapters 1 and 2, Russian aversion to American unilateralism and a focus on equal treatment were important legacies from the 1990s. In anticipation of the Iraq War, the same legacy had caused problems for the American-Russian strategic partnership. Although unilateralism was not as explicitly integral to American grand strategy in 2008 as it had been before and during the Iraq War, American strategy was seen this way by Russia because it saw the former Soviet nations as its sphere of influence.

In the Russo-Georgian War the legacy of the 1990s was also reinforced by American grand strategy, which had focused on making Central Asian states pro-western allies, and had also sought to democratize them. During the Iraq War the Russian focus on equal treatment and its aversion to American unilateralism were also reinforced by American grand strategy. This time both liberal values and limited liability were the most significant driving forces behind grand strategy. It can be concluded that when American strategic culture became more important in shaping grand strategy, it also had a more negative impact on American-Russian relations. To this must be added the fact that by about 2008 Russia had become a rising power internationally and could more easily go to war over Georgia than it could have done before. This also contributed to the end of the partnership.

The conflict between Russia and Georgia had major consequences for American-Russian relations. During the war American and Russian troops came closer to facing each other on opposing sides than at any time during the Cold War.⁵⁰⁵ America had troops in Georgia who were training Georgian soldiers for the War on Terror.⁵⁰⁶ Another aspect that demonstrated how far the relations between the two nations had deteriorated was that of American-Russian communications.⁵⁰⁷ For

⁵⁰⁴ Andrei P. Tsygankov. "US-Russia relations in the post-Western world." *Responding to a Resurgent Russia*. Edited by Vinod K. Aggarwal, Govella, Kristi. Springer Science and Business Media, 2011. 48.

⁵⁰⁵ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 171.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

example, the American-Russian military dialogue proved invaluable for solving the Georgian conflict.⁵⁰⁸ Following the war America terminated all official American-Russian contacts above the level of Deputy Assistant Secretary.⁵⁰⁹ According to Stent this was unprecedented in the post-Soviet era.⁵¹⁰

Following the Russian invasion Bush released several statements on the situation in Georgia. He first condemned Russia's actions on August 11, stating: "These actions have substantially damaged Russia's stand in the world, and these actions jeopardize Russian's relations – Russia's relations with the United States and Europe".⁵¹¹ In this first statement Bush did not comment on any consequences for American-Russian relations, but he did do so two days later. On August 13 Bush stated: "In recent years, Russia has sought to integrate into the diplomatic, political, economic, and security structures of the 21st century. The United States supported those efforts. Now Russia is putting its aspirations at risk by taking actions in Georgia that are inconsistent with the principles of those institutions. Russia must end the crisis to restore its place in the world".⁵¹² On August 15 Bush made another statement, in which he said: "The Cold War is over. The days of satellite states and spheres of influence are behind us".⁵¹³ From the statement it was apparent that Bush saw Georgia as a European nation: "Georgia's emergence as a young democracy has been part of an inspiring and hopeful new chapter of Europe's history. (...) Every administration since the end of the Cold War has worked with European partners to extend the reach of liberty and prosperity".⁵¹⁴ In this statement Georgia became the European partner.

In these statements Bush fully blamed Putin for the end of the partnership. The president claimed that Russia's actions had damaged its standing in the world, while what they had really shown was that America had very little leverage over Russia.⁵¹⁵ Bush claimed that America had

⁵⁰⁸ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 172.

⁵⁰⁹ Stent. *The Limits of Partnership*. 174.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹¹ "Remarks on the Situation in Georgia." *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 11 August 2008. Web. 20 June.

⁵¹² "Remarks on the Situation in Georgia." *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 13 August 2008. Web. 20 June.

⁵¹³ "Remarks on the Situation in Georgia." *Public Papers of the Presidents*, 15 August 2008. Web. 20 June.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁵ Oliker, Olga et al. *Russian Foreign Policy: Sources and Implications*. RAND Corporation (2009). xviii. Web. 20 June 2017.

supported Russian efforts to integrate into Western organizations. With these claims he lacked self-criticism. His administration had, for example, never seriously considered offering Russia NATO membership. Additionally, Bush underestimated Russia's great power ambitions, because the Russo-Georgian War had demonstrated that these were very much still alive. The statements emphasized that America and Russia had fundamentally different opinions on the former Soviet states. While Russia saw them as its traditional sphere of influence, Bush claimed that this viewpoint was no longer valid.

Conclusion

Following the Iraq War the Bush administration revised its grand strategy and began to rely on liberal assumptions such as freedom and democracy. This shift was needed to justify the Iraq War, as no weapons of mass destruction had been found. The shift in grand strategy had led Bush to embrace the Color Revolutions in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan because they could prove that America's strategy worked. The new strategy led America to adopt a more interventionist approach towards Russia, and the administration also advocated democracy and freedom in the former Soviet nations. However, limited liability still played a major role in American grand strategy. Bush decided that the War on Terror in the Middle East was more important than regime changes in Central Asian states such as Azerbaijan, and so Bush maintained good relations with these countries and did nothing to push them towards democracy. This strategy was extremely inconsistent and Russia accused America of hypocrisy. The Russo-Georgian War should be considered as the Russian response to growing American influence in the former Soviet nations. Russia's great power ambitions – which it had nurtured since the 1990s – was the cause of the invasion of Georgia. These ambitions were only reinforced by American grand strategy, which had led to American unilateralism in the eyes of Russia.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This study has attempted to answer the following research question: **to what extent was the failure of the American-Russian strategic partnership during George W. Bush's presidency (2001-2009) related to an American underestimation of Russian international power politics after the end of the Cold War?** To answer this question the failure of the Bush-Putin strategic partnership was explored through the concept of grand strategy. The theoretical framework included both theories of realism and neoclassical realism. In Chapter 1 it was concluded that the Bush administration adjusted grand strategy following the 9/11 attacks. The new strategy provided the opportunity to establish the strategic partnership with Russia and to work together in the War on Terror. However, American relations with Russia were still influenced by the Cold War legacy, as America's strategy towards Russia was shaped by Cold War realism. In Chapter 2 it was concluded that the strategic partnership was a limited partnership. In anticipation of the Iraq War American grand strategy became more assertive and aggressive. The pre-emptive strike and unilateralism became central to American grand strategy and Russia opposed this because it stood in the way of their great power ambitions. The possibilities of working together with Russia were thus limited. Chapter 3 demonstrated that following the Iraq War the Bush administration adjusted grand strategy again in order to justify the war. The new strategy focused on promoting democracy on a global scale, and the Color Revolutions were a relevant and welcome development to this. While Bush embraced the Color Revolutions, Russia saw them as an American plot to gain influence in the former Soviet nations. This hindered Russia's great power ambitions and ultimately led to the Russian invasion of Georgia and the end of the American-Russian partnership. From the analysis in Chapters 1 to 3 it can be concluded that the partnership failed because American foreign policy goals clashed with Russia's great power ambitions, which the Bush administration had underestimated. The administration viewed Russia's ambitions as belonging to the Cold War era. The endurance of the Cold War legacy – mainly through the strategies of realism and interventionism on the American side – made it more difficult for America and Russia to move past their disagreements.

Using the concept of grand strategy in order to analyze American-Russian relations has broadened the scope of this study. By using this concept it has focused not only on America's strategy towards Russia, but also on America's most important foreign policy goals and Russia's position within these goals. This has shown that there were tensions between the Cold War and the 9/11 attacks. American foreign policy during President Bush's two terms was heavily focused on the War on Terror in the Middle East. The 9/11 attacks and the War on Terror caused the Bush administration to believe that Cold War hostility between America and Russia was over. However, by using the concept of grand strategy this study has demonstrated that the legacy of the Cold War still influences American-Russian relations in the 21st century.

Using the concept of grand strategy has also allowed the use of both structural realist and neoclassical realist theories to examine the failure of the strategic partnership. Bush's grand strategy was heavily influenced by American strategic culture and thus the neoclassical realist perspective was crucial to the analysis in this study. Throughout these chapters the realist perspective has indicated the Cold War legacy and Russia's great power ambitions as the reasons for American-Russian relations remaining so troubled following the Cold War. As stated in the introduction, the Cold War legacy still influences America's perception of Russia. However, the realist perspective never really explains how American strategies of realism and interventionism towards Russia originated. A neoclassical realist analysis of the primary sources, on the other hand, has demonstrated that the Cold War legacy originated in longstanding traditions of ideas – liberal assumptions and limited liability – within American foreign policy.

Further research on American-Russian relations and grand strategy should be conducted regarding Russia's role in the events discussed in this study. Russia's role has remained partially unknown because this study and its theoretical framework have focused on the American perspective. The neoclassical perspective in particular has been applied specifically to American strategic culture. Because of Russia's major role in both establishing and ending the strategic partnership, Russian grand strategy should also be examined. This could lead to a more complete

explanation of why American-Russian relations have been so difficult and how this relates to grand strategy. In order to do this, however, the whole question of whether there is a Russian strategic culture and what exactly it is comprised of needs to be very carefully examined.

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