

PANEL II OF A HEARING OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE SUBJECT:
STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF U.S.-RUSSIAN RELATIONS WITNESSES: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI,
FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, AND COUNSELOR AND TRUSTEE AT THE CENTER FOR
STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES; AIR FORCE LIEUTENANT GENERAL BRENT
SCOWCROFT (RET.), FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, AND PRESIDENT OF THE
SCOWCROFT GROUP CHAIRED BY: SENATOR JOSEPH BIDEN (D-DE) LOCATION: 419 DIRKSEN
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SEN. BIDEN: Will our next panel please be seated? We are indeed
fortunate to have two former national security advisers, but much, quite
frankly, more consequential than that, two men who, for the better part of the
last two decades, have played a major, major role in our foreign policy and
strategic doctrine and two of the most outspoken and well-respected voices from
both a Republican and Democratic administration. And I welcome you both. With
your permission, I'll put your bios in the record since you're probably two of
the best-known folks in the foreign policy field. And without objection, I'd
like to be able to do that.

And I would now, because we're very anxious to hear what you have to
say, turn to you, Dr. Brzezinski, by pointing out, by the way, that you and I
suffer from a similar fate. We have children who are better than we are. Your
daughter is incredible. I don't know whether you get a chance to watch her on
television, but she's tough. (Laughs.) And she's smart. You've trained her
well.

But I think my dad used to say the greatest satisfaction a father could
have is look at his children and know they've turned out better than they are.
I think that can be said about you. (Laughs.) She's awful good, as well as
your sons.

But at any rate, I welcome you. And the floor is yours. And after
that we'll turn to you, General Scowcroft. And we're anxious to hear from you
both.

MR. BRZEZINSKI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You have totally disarmed
me.

SEN. BIDEN: (Laughs.) It happens to be true. (Laughs.)

MR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, I realize that I'm now at a stage in my life in
which, when I go into a restaurant, people come up to me and I puff up because,
you know, I feel I'm being recognized, and they say to me, "Are you the father
of Mika?"

SEN. BIDEN: (Laughs.) Well, I'm known as Beau Biden's father in Delaware. He's the attorney general, so --

MR. BRZEZINSKI: Thank you very much for having me here. And the issue that you're focusing on is obviously important and timely. I'll make a few comments about it in general, but let me start by giving three capsule formulations which define my approach to this issue.

The first is, don't dramatize. The second is, don't propitiate. The third thing is, don't personalize.

In my view, we're not facing a renewal of the Cold War. I think that is an overdramatization of the present state of American-Russian relationships. But we are in a phase of a cold peace, and that cold peace is related to Russia's internal and rather difficult historical transition.

Russia is in the process of moving from an imperial consciousness, an imperial vocation, which has defined it over the centuries, to being a national state imbued with nationalism as the source of its internal unity, as the source of its political impetus. It has, as a consequence, regional ambitions. And we have seen them reflected in some one-sided, high-handed actions by Russia towards Estonia or towards Georgia or towards Ukraine. And it is still motivated, at least on the top elite levels, by what might be called an imperial nostalgia.

But the basic fact is it is no longer a superpower. Its economy is one-dimensional. It's an energy-exporting economy, but it has a very antiquated industrial infrastructure. Its social conditions outside of the major cities are still rather poor and primitive. And Russia faces an extremely serious demographic crisis in which its population is declining rapidly. And, while declining, it is also aging rapidly, which is a rather incongruous combination, but it maximizes the economic and social weaknesses of Russia.

Russia today worldwide has no ideological appeal. The Soviet Union did. Russia cannot exploit an ideological appeal because it doesn't have it. It tries to substitute for it by money, and it's learning to play the money game, including, I may add, here in Washington. If there's any doubt about it, you should have your staff dig up for you an article which appeared in The Wall Street Journal about a month or so ago on how Russian money is used in this city to buy services and influence.

But money, unlike ideology, does not buy commitment. It doesn't generate devotion. It can capitalize on opportunity, and that can be very useful. But it's not as a powerful source of influence.

Russia is therefore in no position to reignite the Cold War with us either. And it's rather interesting to me to note that Russian observers say that quite often. A leading Russian geopolitical thinker recently observed in writing -- Dmitri Trenin is his name -- "Energy superpower is a myth, and a dangerous one, because it may mislead the Russian leaders into thinking they have more influence than they actually can generate thereby."

An article in a major Russian paper, Novaya Gazeta, recently said the following: "Would a confrontation, presumably with the United States, be beneficial to Russia? The answer: Obviously not. Russia's economic resources are not comparable to those of the West. In the event of a confrontation, our country would certainly have to choose between guns and butter, while the West,

much to the displeasure of many Russian, quote-unquote, 'patriots,' can afford both. A confrontation would not be good for the budgets of Russian corporations, some of them already burdened with debts to western creditors. Neither would it increase dividends for their shareholders. That's the best-case scenario. In the worst-case scenario, the western creditors would call in their debts, and a substantial part of those debts would be paid by the state at the expense of the people."

In brief, I don't think we are moving towards a confrontation of a Cold War type, but it is a process of accommodation to the new realities prevailing between us and the Russians and involving also Russia's new different position in the world.

A broader accommodation between the United States and Russia, which one had hoped for in the early '90s, I think has been delayed by two wars and their destructive impact on the policies both of Russia and of the United States.

I have in mind, first of all, the war in Chechnya, which badly damaged democratic prospects in Russia and set in motion political processes which have emphasized the authoritarian institutions of power. And I think, by and large, the West ignored that.

Interestingly, only one western leader who's now in power has made an issue of that war, its destructive and immoral aspects, and that's President Sarkozy, who explicitly said recently that he condemns the silence about the 200,000 dead and 400,000 war refugees in Chechnya generated by the war. He's been quite outspoken on that subject.

The war in Iraq has damaged American position in the world, and that's created temptations for the Russians, for Putin personally, to exploit the consequences of that war.

And some of his rhetoric clearly reflects that -- the recent rhetoric -- and some of his statements addressed towards Western Europe -- such as about targeting sites in Western Europe, or the rather excessively energetic reaction to the Estonian incident involving the Russian War Memorial, or the CFE issue that was recently raised in Vienna -- reflects, in my judgment, an excessive reaction which has rebounded negatively against Russia.

Having said this, I will also argue that the Putin regime, probably followed before too long by perhaps the Ivanoff regime, is gradually coming to an end in the sense that that regime reflects the last gasp of the old Soviet elite. They are the products of the KGB, ones that pampered children of the Soviet system with access to the world, with access to Western literature, trained in politics and hard-nosed playing. But within a decade, they're going to be replaced, probably by a new generation of leaders, many of them trained in the West, much more open to the West, not brought up in this imperial atmosphere.

And hence, in the longer run, I think we can be more optimistic and expect a steady improvement in American-Russian relations. In that context, Mr. Chairman, I think our policy should reflect the mixed nature of shared as well as conflicting interests with Russia. We should emphasize nonproliferation as a shared interest, and I think we do to some extent. The growing interdependence economically is to be welcomed. I think personally the Jackson-Vanik amendment should be looked at critically. The WTO issue is, I take it, maturing, and before long, Russia will be entering.

But we should, at the same time, support the new states around Russia in the preservation of their independence. We should further economic cooperation, particularly in energy, but avoid dependence. And we have been slack in exploiting opportunities in Central Asia with the risk to potential diversification. And above all else, our long-range goal ought to be to create a context in which Russia sees its own interest in becoming more closely associated with the Euroatlantic world, because in my view, in fact historically, there is no other option for Russia. Russia as an imperial undertaking is already historically passe. Russia as a regional dominant power will simply stimulate the resentment of all of its neighbors and it has, to some extent, already. Russia alone, between the Euroatlantic world and China, runs the risk eventually of losing its vast eastern spaces to China. Russia really has no choice but to be part of the West, and we should try to catalyze that. And an important way of catalyzing that is to help Ukraine become part of the West, and I emphasize that. Helping the Ukraine to be part of the West is not an anti-Russian policy. It is a policy which paves the way for Russia to be part of Europe. Because if Ukraine moves to Europe, to the West, Russia will have to follow suit. So it is a strategic objective that is actually in our shared interest.

Let me conclude by one final point. The president will be entertaining Mr. Putin in Kennebunkport. In my view, personal theatrics should follow progress in strategic relationships but should not create deceptive illusions. If I may say so, it is lesson to be drawn from the experience of the Bush-Gorbachev relationship in which Brent was involved. That was a relationship in which personal cordiality was closely linked to strategic progress, and strategic progress preceded personal cordiality. And that, in my judgment, was the way to do it. To do it the other way is to create illusions, misconceptions. It bred assertions such as the one made not long ago by the secretary of State that the American-Russian relationship is the best in history. It isn't. And it takes a long time and effort to make it the best in history. But personal relationships should formalize and express a changing reality.

And I hope that before the president meets Putin in Kennebunkport and entertains him in his family's setting which is likely to create illusions that he reads an important book. And I brought it here. It's called "A Russian Diary" by Anna Politkovskaya. This is the Russian journalist who was shot to death in Moscow not long ago. Mr. Putin dismissed the significance of her killing. The killers have not been discovered. And the book is a remarkable statement of personal courage and decency by a sensitive Russian woman who just kept a diary about what is happening today in Russia day after day after day, noting the things that troubled her politically and morally. And it conveys what is good about the Russian people -- some of them -- their depth of feeling, their ability to empathize, their sense of history. But it also conveys what's wrong and what shouldn't be ignored -- the brutality, the insensitivity, the mendacity, the cruelty particularly -- and she was concerned with that -- in Chechnya but more generally in the system at large. We have to have that mixed perspective to understand what is going on. And we have to feel for someone like Politkovskaya to have a better understanding of both the opportunities and limits of a personal relationship with a president who originates from a very particular institution of the Soviet state and whose traditions, to some extent, he still embodies.

Thank you very much.

SEN. BIDEN: Thank you very much.

General Scowcroft.

MR. SCOWCROFT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for inviting us to appear before you on such an important subject. Almost everything that could be said about the relationship has been said this morning. And I will not tread the same path that Zbig has. I largely agree with his observations. But let me just say briefly where I come from. I believe that Russia is in the process -- Zbig called it a historical transition. I think it is that, but it is Russia coming to grips with itself. Zbig said Russia is no longer a superpower. That is a -- we can pass that off our tongues. That is a traumatic event for Russia and the Russian peoples. They're used to occupying a huge space -- huge geopolitical space -- in the world. And this is a traumatic adjustment for them. And I think this adjustment is taking place in typical Russian fashion.

We're not going to determine the outcome. We can hasten it. We can retard it. There are many disagreeable aspects to this current phase in the transition, different from previous ones, hopefully worse than succeeding ones. But preaching to them about how they ought to be just like us is, first of all, not likely to succeed and secondly, not likely to be useful. Indeed, it could be counterproductive. We ought to make certain that they understand our views on their policy and what we think of it. But that's different from harassing them and us exacerbating the situation.

I think that on the whole at this particular juncture, we ought to focus on the things that we can do together rather than on the things that divide us, and there are many of those. I think Senator Isakson talked about Putin's speech which began this rhetorical dissent last February. And there were three parts to Putin's speech, and I think it tells more about what's going on, both in Putin's mind and in the Russian soul, if you will, than the actual words themselves. There were three parts to his speech. The first part was at the end of the Cold War when we were flat on our back you walked all over us. You took advantage of us, you pushed us here and there. The facts are almost irrelevant here. That's the way they feel. This is part of this (descent ?) from superpower into abject poverty and insignificance. The second part of his speech was we're now strong again -- largely due to energy -- but now we're strong again, and we're going to push back. We're not going to take it anymore. And that, again, is the Russian bravado in the face of difficult circumstances. But the third part of his speech nobody paid any attention to. He said but now we need to cooperate. We need to cooperate on strategic nuclear weapons. We need to get on with the succession to the Moscow treaty. We need to cooperate on nonproliferation, and we need to cooperate so that no country feels it necessary to nationally enrich uranium. Now, that's a pretty dramatic statement, and nobody paid any attention to that.

And so I think what we need to do is to work to understand. We don't need to sympathize with the Russians. They are where they are. But we need to understand what motivates them in part.

And I think the trauma they're going through is probably harder for the Russians than almost any other society of which I'm aware.

But to try to work on the kinds of things that we do have in common, among them are the things that Putin mentioned -- nuclear weapons, Iran -- those kinds of things. We do not differ significantly on those and I think we can make progress. The area around Russia -- the former Soviet space and so on --

that is probably the area where we come close to confronting each other right now.

On the personal versus the policy, I don't disagree with Zbig at all, but I think one of the things that has happened since the end of the Soviet Union is that the leaders have gotten together -- gotten along much better than the bureaucracies on both sides. I don't think there's ever been a real reconciliation of the bureaucracy. We don't like dealing with each other. The first attempt to do it was the Gore-Chernomyrdin thing -- to force the bureaucracies to work together and so on. Then there was personal diplomacy when President Bush, early in his first term, met with Putin and says, here's somebody I think we can do business with. And that sort of suffused a glow, but there wasn't anything underneath it and it fell apart -- partly because of our actions.

Putin reached out after 9/11 -- reached out about terrorism -- and we pretty much brushed him aside. I think Putin thought he was going to be able to participate in Afghanistan and so on, because they knew much more about it and so on. So I think now he feels rebuffed and I think this is his answer. Will this solve the problems? No. Kennebunkport is quintessentially atmosphere. And if we can change the atmosphere it might affect the policy, but this is going to be a long road. And I think on our part -- hey, we're the winners here. On our part it's going to take a lot of patience, understanding and firmness when required.

Thank you.

SEN. BIDEN: Thank you very much.

And I yield to Senator Lugar to begin.

SEN. RCIAHRD LUGAR (R-IN): Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

General Scowcroft, as you commented, there were some areas of potential cooperation indicated by President Putin in the speech that Senator Isakson you heard directly in this third portion, as you described it: cooperation on weapons of mass destruction -- (background noise) -- proceed to try to bring proper controls there, and likewise the possibility of nuclear sharing with countries that are prepared to go into peaceful means and forgo weaponization.

And as you indicate, perhaps as you -- though maybe no one was listening to that -- but obviously the chairman and I were and Senator Isakson and you were -- and this is why we queried the previous witness about where our administration is heading in these areas where I would agree there are tremendous opportunities, but they're very important for our security, as well as Russia.

You also indicated, however, that there are potential controversies in so-called Russian space, as they see it -- countries that are near Russia. And perhaps with regard to the specifics of how we pursue energy supplies for ourselves, as well as for our friends in NATO or Europe. And it's in this area that I really want you to comment.

How do we discuss with Russia the important work, for instance, that Dr. Brzezinski is doing in a task force with former minister Volker Ruhe of Germany advising Ukraine on how it might progress at a very difficult time in that country; or those of us who have been visiting frequently in Georgia with a

government there that certainly counts upon our understanding and support in the same way that we count upon the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline proceeding through Georgia, and perhaps even hooking up in due course with Kazakhstan, if that's possible -- or various other areas out to the east.

What is an appropriate way to approach Russians on these subjects without it being an in-your-face type strategy, because these are important to us, and we do not hide that, and we probably need to discuss that in addition to areas in which we might seek cooperation?

GEN. SCOWCROFT: Well, I think that this is the most difficult area for us to cooperate and I think we each deeply suspect the motives of the other in it. And I think I would probably disagree with Zbig on Ukraine. I think having Ukraine lead the Soviet Union to the West probably will retard -- Soviet Union -- will retard Russia going to the West, because they will look at it as us trying to tear the brotherhood apart and isolate Russia and bring Ukraine into the West.

I think we need to be very cautious on this. You know, one of the problems with the previous witness -- we talked about the NGO law in Russia. Well, look what happened: The orange revolution. We trumpeted the role of the NGOs in the orange revolution. What do the Russians do? They turn around and say, we've got NGOs. We better prevent that from happening. Was it intended? No, no it wasn't. But we need to think more and put ourselves in Russian shoes and be smarter in the way we handle things. On the other hand, with energy, for example, I think we ought to make clear to the Russians that we are not content with them having an energy monopoly and thus coercive capability over Europe. And I think we ought to push hard, just as an example, for a pipeline under the Caspian Sea, which would bring Central Asian oil and gas into Europe. It doesn't hurt Russia. It simply breaks their monopoly.

So I think we need to be more sophisticated than we have, because each one of these problems needs to be dealt with on its own bottom.

SEN. LUGAR: Dr. Brzezinski, would you want to comment on Ukraine specifically and the difference of opinion that apparently you have with General Scowcroft?

MR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, first of all, let me say I don't think foreign policy is the same thing as psychiatry. Foreign policy involves defining your objectives, assessing how reasonable it is to seek them, try to avoid a confrontation with the other side, while at the same time demanding those objectives in a manner that doesn't put the other side in complete jeopardy. That requires careful balancing, but not an excessive concern for the moods and sensitivities of the other, because that opens you up to manipulation and exploitation.

Obviously it's important to have a sense of history and to understand what is happening in a given part of the world. But in doing so, I think one has to have a much broader view than concentration simply on hurt feelings or complexes.

As far as Ukraine is concerned, I think the argument that Ukraine moving to the West is going to help Russia move to the West is sustainable by some degree of evidence. For example, the fact that Ukraine has been moving forward on WTO has helped to accelerate Russian interest in moving into WTO. And that's all to the good! I want Russia in WTO.

I'd be very happy to see Russia in WTO.

I think the question of energy dependence of Ukraine and Russia, and the issue of ownership of pipelines in Ukraine, has helped to advance a discussion on access not only of Russian capital to downstream arrangements in the West, but the Western capital to upstream arrangements in Russia, again, creating a suction effect on Russia moving to the West.

So I rather stick to my position that advancing Ukraine's evolution to the West is not an anti-Russian policy, but one which, in fact, paves the way to Russia moving in the same direction. Conversely, if we adopt a policy towards Ukraine which is dependent on Russian sensitivities, we will help to reawaken the lingering nostalgia for essentially an imperial position in which Ukraine, Belarus and the others are viewed as an extension of a traditional sphere of imperial power.

Finally, when it comes to dealing with the question of the oil producers outside of Russia -- and particularly the Central Asian states, I think we have to deal with them directly, and make an effort to deal with them directly, and make it attractive to them to diversify their sources of access to world markets.

The fact of the matter is that all of these new states feel vulnerable in their political independence. And they prefer to be independent. And they know that if they have no access to world markets, they become much more susceptible to pressures. But to deal with that, one has to negotiate with them and to be prepared to really make serious commitments.

The reason we've got the Baku-Ceyhan line was that the United States was really prepared to put its money where its mouth is to develop a consortium that was engaged in this effort. I know a little bit about it because I was a presidential emissary to Azerbaijan dealing with that issue -- and that was a success. We need to do the same now regarding the Trans-Caspian pipeline that Brent correctly mentioned. That's very important. But that means we have to deal with the Turkmeni regime at a very high level -- flatter them, take into account their diverse national interests; we have to deal with Kazakhstan. And we shouldn't go too far -- in fact, I think we have gone too far in ostracizing the Uzbek regime, which is also an important source of independence for the Central Asian states. So we have to have a comprehensive strategy which is not one of hostility towards Russia but which is designed, above all else, to create a context in which Russia's movement to the West -- to the European community, to a closer association with it -- is tangibly furthered in keeping with historical dynamics.

SEN. LUGAR: I thank you both.

SEN. BIDEN: Thank you.

Senator Hagel.

SEN. CHUCK HAGEL (R-NE): Mr. Chairman, thank you. Gentlemen welcome.

A question for each of you. What should be the agenda for July 1st and 2nd in Kennebunkport when the two presidents meet?

Dr. Brzezinski.

MR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, a nice boat trip -- (laughter) -- photo opportunity -- family dinner showing great conviviality, joint press conference on the lawn in a nice scenic setting. But then in addition to it -- and actually more seriously, I would hope that the president would say to Mr. Putin, "Look, we have a long road to travel. Your country and my country are going to be playing important roles in the world. We have to deal with problems in a calm, non-accusatory fashion. It would be good if your neighbors feared you less, hated you less, and perhaps you ought to think a little bit about that. It might be helpful to you to know that the road to the West, for you, is also going to be open, that we would like to have a closer association with you in some fashion."

I am not sure the Russians really want to be part of NATO, and probably their membership in it would mean the death of NATO. But we can have a wider security arrangement with them -- particularly focusing on nonproliferation, and more tangibly on Iran -- I think we could say to them that we would help and support some wiser arrangement involving the Trans-Atlantic community and its special association with Russia historically.

If we look 20-30 years ahead, I think the Russians know that they have a serious problem in the Far East, which is being depopulated and which faces an over-populated and thriving China. And some shared engagement in the development of a Euro-Atlantic community that embraces Russia is a vision that I think would attract many Russians who know that their standard of living is infinitely lower than in the West, and that their security is threatened by protracted isolation in a democratic crisis.

I think that would be helpful. But specific negotiating relationships cannot be negotiated on a weekend in which neither president is really supported by a lot of the material that is needed -- by the complexities of respective positions, and so forth. And I would not like to create illusions of, you know, personal friendship that obscures certain problems that we have to work at in common.

SEN. HAGEL: Thank you.

General Scowcroft.

MR. SCOWCROFT: I agree largely with that, except about the boat trip -- (laughter) -- which, in my experience could set back U.S.- Russian relations by a -- (inaudible, laughter).

Two people are not going to solve the massive problems -- there's no question about that. And foreign policy is not psychiatry. But foreign policy is not made by states. There is nothing Russia, the United States -- it's made by people. And when you're making policy you need to figure out how is the policy -- how is it going to be taken? What you want to do is do it in a way that makes it more effective. And I believe, Zbig, has been very critical of this administration by saying, we know what's right; you just fall in line behind us; we don't consult, and so on and so forth.

So that's what I'm talking about. And it seems to me, on the one area where Russia putatively is still a super-power, that is in nuclear weapons, that the two of them could sit down and say, "Look, we're the custod --" -- it could even take off from Putin's speech at (Verecunda ?) -- "Okay, let's figure out what we do after 2009. What's the kind of nuclear world we'd like to see in 30

years. How do we deal with nonproliferation? How do we deal with nonproliferation in Iran, North Korea, and so on?" That is something the two of them could, in broad outlines, come to an agreement on and set the course for negotiations which right now I think are pretty nonexistent.

SEN. HAGEL: Also, for each of you, what is your sense of the Putin succession process? We have parliamentary elections scheduled in Russia this Fall, in December, and then a presidential succession election scheduled for next year.

Dr. Brzezinski.

GEN. SCOWCROFT: Oh, sorry.

MR. BRZEZINSKI: I think Putin will step aside, and I think that's an important step. If he does it, he'll be the first ruler of Russia to have ever done so. And if even if he retains influence behind the scenes, that nonetheless is an important step in institutionalizing regularity and respect for procedures. His most likely successor, however, is going to be someone from his immediate entourage. The one that's talked about the most is the recently promoted secretary of Defense Ivanov, who is also a KGB product who actually tends to be even somewhat more outspoken, more sharper -- maybe belligerent is too strong a word, but more assertive in some ways than Putin has been even in the last year. And he may be even more inclined than Putin to appeal to Russian nationalism and its various roots, including the resentments and so forth that Brent has talked about. So in that sense, I don't think there's going to be a significant change of policy. However, I do thin

k that the next president of Russia is going to be facing a much more serious economic and social crisis.

Putin has been able to consolidate the chaos that ensued upon the fall of the Soviet Union. And this year -- 2007 -- Russia regained the same level of GDP that it had at the time of the fall of the Soviet Union, which is also a measure of the problems that they've had to overcome because they have had a lot of growth in recent years. But they have now reached only the level of the former Soviet Union. But in doing so, they haven't really made major investments in social infrastructure and addressing the social problems, and these will come home to roost in the course of the next presidential incumbency. And that, I think, will be the time when perhaps new voices and new faces will begin to appear on the political scene.

And I'm preoccupied about the short-term relationship because I think we have to have a strategic framework for it, but I'm historically more optimistic about the long range once the Soviet elite that put in Ivanov -- exemplify -- has passed from the scene and an altogether new political formation begins to dominate the political scene, people who have been part of the world, who have dealt with the world, who have gone to Western business school and so forth. So that is basically the prognosis. Greater difficulties inside, but also probably -- eventually -- resumption of a more positive political change.

SEN. HAGEL: General Scowcroft? GEN. SCOWCROFT: I, too, believe that Putin will step down. I believe he will try to manage things from behind the scenes. Whether he subsequently will attempt to change the constitution to put power in the prime minister is another thing. But they have one great element of cohesiveness. If you take what putatively are the 10 top people in the structure right now, they're also chairmen of some of the top corporations and commercial entities in Russia. So the overwhelming objective is to preserve

that because if they leave office, then they will lose that. So there is this attempt which they're assiduously carrying out to make sure that there's nothing that disrupts the transfer of power.

But I think what's likely to happen -- Putin ruled in a very unusual time. He followed Yeltsin in a time of great chaos and so on, and there was great angst in Russia about things falling apart. He brought it back together. I believe his successor will have a lot more trouble. I think there could be splits within the leadership and so on, and I agree with Zbig that gradually this will evolve into something which is more reasonable, more stable and durable. But what it'll happen immediately after Putin, I don't know. But I think it will happen.

SEN. HAGEL: Thank you.

Gentlemen, I'd like to pursue what we've been talking about the last few minutes. To the extent that it matters, I share your view that generationally, there's reason for optimism -- that we're -- in the next -- whether it's three years, five years, 10 years, there is likely -- there is a greater reason to be optimistic about developments internally in Russia. And you said, Zbig, that your present preoccupation is with the specific issues that affect our bilateral relationships now. If there's only one thing I look at that makes me pessimistic about the optimistic projection of a emerging generation educated in the West, different perspective, not coming out of the security apparatus that worries me, and that is strategic doctrine -- strategic relationship. If we do not, during this period of transition, harness and deal with what is a -- I think, very worrisome strategic relationship in the next couple of years -- not as it relates to threatening one another, but as it relates to the continued instability of stored material -- plutonium, highly enriched uranium -- failure to follow through on the Moscow Treaty, losing an opportunity to move toward significantly further reductions that -- I don't know how you recapture that if it begins to erode.

I mean -- you know, there's a lot of things we can change. We can change almost by treaty, by discussion, by agreement energy relationships. We can change relationships as it relates to our economic relationships, our political -- but I don't know how you harness what would become a very -- a lost opportunity here if something isn't done more concretely to promote this -- what has heretofore been a progressively better strategic -- a sort of a consensus on how to deal with the existence of nuclear weapons and material and cooperating together to prevent further proliferation. Could you talk to me a little bit about that dynamic? I mean, it seems to me Putin talked about it. It's the positive part of his speech. It seems to me that it raises and ups the ante on its importance. It's the one place we may be able to cooperate, and failure to deal with it -- because I see no -- I don't detect any sense, and Senator Lugar would be better prepared to speak to this than I would as to the relationship with the administration -- I don't detect any sense of urgency. As a matter of fact, I don't detect any sense of desire to maintain what is viewed as the old regime in terms of arms control, even improving it.

So that's -- it's a little bit of a rambling preamble to my question. Could you guys discuss a little bit about a strategic doctrine -- U.S.-Russian attempts to deal with proliferation, controlling, reduction center?

MR. BRZEZINSKI: Well, let me perhaps parse what you have said into three segments. One is the U.S.-Russian strategic relationship, strictly

speaking. Second is the issue of nuclear proliferation, including loose nukes - - you know, theft from arsenals -- the Nunn- Lugar Initiative and all of that. And the third is the geopolitical context and how it might interplay, particularly with the second of the three.

I think basically the strategic relationship between the United States and Russia is relatively stable in the sense that both sides have an equilibrium that they can live with and that is reasonably understood by both sides.

Though there are some uncertainties that should not be ignored, I personally think that we may have been somewhat insensitive to the Russian sense of American nuclear superiority, which, in effect, does exist, in our pursuit of the missile defense shield in Central Europe, some aspects of which do impinge on Russian capabilities, either immediately in the short run -- that is to say, the radar facility, which would actually cover part of Russia; not so much the 10 interceptors in Poland, but if the interceptor system becomes larger in scale and more effective statistically in probabilities, it could affect, in the long run, Russian capabilities. So I think we should have been a little more prudent in the unveiling of this system.

The second aspect is the loose nukes. Obviously much more needs to be done. And I am deferring, in this respect, to Senator Lugar, who has been a pioneer in this issue. But obviously we and the Russians have and should have a continued stake in making certain that there is no illicit access to these systems outside of the preeminent state actors that are responsible for generating the existence of these systems. And I think a great deal more can be done. And there are some question marks about the efficacy of some of the existing arrangements.

But that brings me to the third issue, which is the geopolitical context. I think much depends also, in this connection, how the situation in the Persian Gulf and in the Middle East will unfold. If the United States gets involved in a protracted war in the Middle East, beyond what it is engaged in today, and particularly if it spreads to an American-Iranian conflict, the Russian position on that may very well be very ambivalent.

On the one hand, certainly the Russians would not wish the spread of nuclear weapons to rogue entities, Islamic fundamentalists, given the fact that a large percentage of the Russian population now is Muslim. The Russian population is 140-odd million people. Close to 30 million are Muslims, and after the war in Chechnya, increasingly self-aroused politically and resentful.

A war in Iran would contribute a great deal of instability to that. At the same time, it would also have the effect of bogging down the United States to an unprecedented degree. And we shouldn't ignore the fact that there's a great deal of Schadenfreude already in Russia about the costs to us of our present imbroglio in the Middle East. And hence there may be some temptation to view that, at least in a limited sense, as of some benefit in equalizing the status, the very asymmetrical status, of these two powers, America and Russia.

All of that will add to the complexity to the relationship, produce more suspicions, more fears on both sides, and hence it is something that we have to try to avoid on several levels: Maintain the strategic relationship but not be insensitive; tighten controls, to the extent that we can, on a bilateral basis; and also be very prudent specifically in the Persian Gulf area.

SEN. BIDEN: Thank you very much.

General.

MR. SCOWCROFT: I think this is a very important area for us, both of us. As I say, we are still the two big nuclear powers. And I am less sanguine about the bilateral relation. Is it stable? Yes. Is it likely to remain stable? I don't know. Four of our colleagues recently wrote an op-ed saying we ought to move toward complete nuclear disarmament. You know, I don't know how much traction there is in something like that. But if that gets hold in this country, we could be facing something very different.

And so I think we ought to consult each other on a nuclear future. What kind of a nuclear world do we both think would be the most stable, the most unlikely to precipitate a war; indeed, the most likely to preserve stability? So I think we have discussions at the nuclear level. And my guess is that the arsenals are not ideally configured to long range that way.

On the nonproliferation, that also spills over into nonproliferation. We still have an NPT. It is flawed. The Iranians are pushing a -- what do you call it -- a gap, a lapse, whatever, in it. But another part of the NPT is an agreement among all the nuclear powers to start reducing their nuclear weapons. So you can take advantage of that, perhaps, to put some more pressure on the Iranians.

And I think -- first of all, I think a U.S.-Iranian military confrontation is not likely, unless it's by accident. But I think we have significantly common interests, as Zbig indicated, on Iran and on the Iranian nuclear development. And I think if we can cooperate across the board on nuclear issues, we can bring enough perhaps pressure and solidarity that Iran will think twice about proceeding willy-nilly ahead.

SEN. BIDEN: Thank you very much. I can't resist the temptation. I'd like to ask one last question, if I may. What should our policy be now with regard to Iran, if you're willing to respond? I know that wasn't part of the hearing per se, but it does affect the relationship. Are either of you willing to venture a response to that? I know that's an essay question, but how would you recommend, were you in your old positions, we proceed on Iran now? And you can defer. (Laughs.) We can end the hearing if you'd like. But if you --

MR. BRZEZINSKI: I'm willing to answer that --

SEN. BIDEN: Well, please.

MR. BRZEZINSKI: -- if you want.

SEN. BIDEN: I would like to hear your answer.

MR. BRZEZINSKI: I think we ought to engage the Iranians on two levels, one regarding Iraq, because the fact is that every one of the states adjoining Iraq is going to be threatened if and when we leave, and if then Iraq explodes. So there is a kind of latent shared interest here.

My own view is that we ought to leave. And I won't get into that. But if we are ever going to leave, I think we have to engage the states around Iraq in serious discussion as to what should be done in conjunction with our

disengagement. And I think Iran obviously is a major influence, and we have to engage it on that issue. And my own personal view is the sooner, the better.

Secondly, I think if we do that, it will make it perhaps somewhat easier to engage Iran also in negotiations about their nuclear weapons program. There I think we have an opportunity in the fact that the Iranian posture, publicly, on the nuclear issue is different from the North Korean public posture.

The North Korean public posture is "We have a nuclear program. It is also a weapons program. We want weapons," and, at one point triumphantly, "We have tested weapons."

The Iranians are saying something quite different; namely, "We don't have a nuclear weapons program. Secondly, we don't want nuclear weapons. Third, our religion forbids us to have nuclear weapons."

Now, they may be lying through their teeth, and we suspect that they might be. But it is still an opening, which is to say, "Fine, if that is really your posture, then we have a shared interest in us believing you. And therefore, we ought to negotiate about arrangements, mutually agreed to, which would enhance our confidence that that really is the situation." And we can, you know, perhaps define some technical ways of dealing with that.

But to do that, we have to be willing to sit down. And here is where I part company with the administration. The administration says, "We will not sit down until you stop enriching." The problem with that is that they have a right to enrich -- not to enrich to 95 percent in order to have weapons-grade uranium, but they're enriching only to 5 percent, which is in keeping with what a lot of other countries are doing when they're enriching uranium.

We're in effect saying to them, "Stop your program, though you have the right to it, for the privilege of negotiating with us about a mutual accommodation." That makes it easier for the hardliners in Iran to say, "No way." It mobilizes their nationalism. It tempts them to feel that we're essentially using this as a device to make them stop while negotiating ad infinitum.

I think our position ought to be, "We want you to stop, at least for some duration of time, pending the negotiations. But we are prepared to do something in return simultaneously." And here I have in mind some substantial lifting of sanctions that have, over the years, been adopted by the United States, whether in ILSA or subsequent to ILSA. And these are various sanctions -- financial, banking, trading towards not only ourselves but even towards our friends.

That would give the Iranians some sort of quid pro quo, some also saving of face. I would probably divide the moderates from the extremists in Iran instead of a posture which actually unifies the extremists with the moderates and stimulates their nationalism.

Now, whether that will lead to a good outcome, I don't know. But it certainly would break the paralysis into which I think we have actually injected ourselves.

SEN. BIDEN: Thank you very much.

General.

MR. SCOWCROFT: I, too, think we should talk to Iran. I don't think they're probably in a mood they feel they need to do us any favors on Iraq, that they're broadly content with us being bogged down. But I think they're prepared to talk about it.

But most importantly, it could lead to a talk about the region. And from the Iranian perspective, it's a dangerous region. And we ought to be willing both to put things like ILSA and the other sanctions on the line, but to say we're prepared to look at security arrangements in which you could feel secure.

On the nuclear side, I think it's important that we have a united front among the United States, the Europeans, the Russians and the Chinese. And I think that is not too hard to maintain, because I don't think anybody wants Iran to have nuclear weapons.

And there we proceed toward whether you call it the GNEP or other kinds of things to deal specifically with Iranians' objectives of what they say is "We have been prevented from doing things because we make agreements with countries and then they withdraw." If we can have a process sanctioned by the U.N. that will guarantee to any state, in compliance with U.N. restrictions, nuclear fuel for their reactors, it seems to me we have an overwhelming weapon to use. We're not trying to deny them everything, and it's beyond the right of any one nation to veto.

It seems to me that that's the kind of approach that, in the long run, might work. In the short run, they're rug merchants and they're skillful at playing one off against the other and so on. And it's going to be long and hard, and they're going to say yes and no and maybe and up and down. But I think with patience we can avoid what I think would be a real disaster in the region, and that is an Iran having the capability of -- quick capability to develop nuclear weapons.

SEN. BIDEN: Okay, thank you both. My one regret is you're both not still in the government. Thank you.

MR. SCOWCROFT: We're not. (Laughter.)

END.