



Russia and the US
Current Events Wednesday
January 31, 2018





Russia and the US

- How have Russia and the US cooperated since the Soviet Union collapsed?
- What are Russia's grievances against the US?
- What are the US's grievances against Russia?
- Where do we stand now?



First, a Note on Nuclear Weapons

- One of two relationships in the world in which nuclear weapons figure prominently.
 - India and Pakistan is the other.
- Nuclear proliferation is on our agenda in March.



The Soviet Union ceased to exist on December 31, 1991 at midnight.



Soviet flag lowered over the Kremlin for the last time on 12/31/91.



Post-Soviet Russian Leaders

- Boris Yeltsin: 1992–1999
- Vladimir Putin: 2000–2008, 2012
- Dmitri Medvedev: 2008–2012*

* Putin was prime minister during Medvedev's presidency and was still largely in charge.



Post-Soviet Cooperation

- Russian reforms: political (democratization) and economic (marketization).
- Nuclear de-escalation: de-commissioning of weapons on both sides (thousands).
 - Plus: the important news that never became news.



Nuclear Security

- Three challenges:
 1. Four new nuclear powers after Soviet collapse.
 2. The security of nuclear grade fuel.
 3. The loyalty of nuclear scientists.
- The response:
 1. Negotiations to move all nukes to Russia.
 2. US assistance in protecting fuel.
 3. US assistance in adequately paying scientists.



Post-Soviet Cooperation

- NATO Partnership for Peace: Russia joined in 1994.
 - Less than membership.
- Russia invited to join the G-7 → G-8.
- Cooperation in fighting terrorism.




Russian Grievances

- The 1990s transition: followed US and European advice. The result: disaster.
 - Hyperinflation, economic decline, impoverishment, political instability, breakdown of public order, rapid rise of inequality, near disintegration of the state.



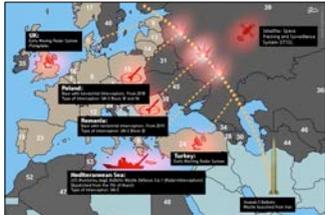

Russian Grievances

- Promise of cooperation and partnership in international relations was empty.
 - Example: negotiations over Serbian/Kosovo war.
- This after Russia took responsibility for Soviet debt and nuclear weapons.



Russian Grievances

- Expansion of NATO despite perceived promise not to.
- Withdrawal from ABM Treaty.
- Installation of missile shield in Europe.




Russian Grievances

- US-led invasion of Iraq (2003).
- NATO intervention in Libya (2011).




Russian Grievances

- Support for regime change in neighboring countries (Georgia 2003, Ukraine 2004, Kyrgyzstan 2005).



Orange Revolution
Ukraine 2004



Russian Grievances

- US support for Russian protestors 2011-12.




US Grievances

- Scaling back of democratic institutions (2000s).
- Opposition to Iraq War.
- Russian-Georgian War (2008).
- Annexation of Crimea (2014).




US Grievances

- Involvement in Ukrainian Civil War (2014-present).
- Support for Syrian government in its civil war (2016-17).
- Claims of election interference (2016).




Where Do We Stand?

- High levels of mutual distrust.
- Media and politicians on both sides regularly demonize the other side.
- Russia wants to see less dominance by the US in international affairs (so do many other countries).
 - Why? The Iraq War, the 2008 financial crisis, the ongoing crisis in Libya, and more.
- We are not cooperating on important issues such as nuclear proliferation and terrorism.



Where Do We Stand?

- We still cooperate in space.

The moon
Russia and US will cooperate to build moon's first space station






Views on Current Relations

- Realists: this is to be expected.
 - Russia, China and others seek to maximize power.
 - Their gain is our loss (zero sum).
- Liberal internationalists: a confrontational relationship is not automatic.
 - It is a result of choices made by Russia, the US, or both.
 - Cooperation is still possible (but maybe not probably).