

# By the West's Design: Problems in U.S.-Russian Relations Since the End of the Cold War

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For many foreign affair pundits the unilateral annexation of Crimea by Russia is evidence that U.S.-Russian relations have completely broken down. Many Western media outlets, and state leaders, have argued that this breakdown in relations is a result of the actions being pursued by Russia in attempting to regain some of its 'old glory' or Putin's desire to recreate the Soviet Union. This is not the case. As will be argued, the actions taken by the U.S. and NATO since the early 90's has led to a breakdown in U.S.-Russian relations. While the 1990s did see a hope arise that Russia may finally align with the West and its foreign policies, the past two decades have gradually shown this utopic idea to be false due to the realpolitik nature that is inherent in U.S.-Russian dealings over key foreign affair issues. Three areas will be examined to show what has led to this deterioration in relationship between the U.S. and Russia. The first section to be examined is the issue of NATO expansion and the illegal granting of independence to the former Serbian province of Kosovo. Nearly two decades of continual NATO and European Union expansion into East Europe and the Baltic region has left Russia feeling uneasy towards the policies of the U.S. and has led to the development of a combative attitude within the Russian government towards U.S. foreign policies. The second section of this paper will explore how Russia has reacted to Western policies towards the integration of Ukraine and Georgia into the U.S. and Europe's geopolitical sphere of influence. While historically under the control and influence, both countries have begun to lean towards integration into NATO and the European continent. Knowing that this situation is untenable, Russia has used both military and economic force to compel both states into submission. The final section of this paper will examine the new arms race that is developing between the U.S. and Russia in regards to the establishment of ballistic missile defence and offensive capabilities. The decisions by the U.S. to institute a Ballistic Missile Defence Shield in Europe, to protect U.S. interests from 'rogue states,' and step away from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Defence Treaty of 1972 has been met with contempt and distrust by the Russian government. Russian fears revolve around the belief that such a defence mechanism could be used to nullify Russia's advantage in ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads. In response, Russia has begun to re-militarize its border regions with Europe and re-deploy its ICBM launchers.

Before delving into the topic areas discussed above, an account of what happened in the early 90's must be examined to show where the decline in U.S.-Russian relations began and what were the reasons that set off this confrontative chain of events. Two issues are of note: President Clinton's decision not to work with Russia as a partner in arms and Russia's view that the Cold War settlement had been abandoned by the U.S. and its allies. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War, the U.S. was given two choices as to what path could be taken in regards to U.S. dealings with Russia: either make a serious attempt at integrating Russia into the Western System or begin expanding into its former

sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup> The U.S., under the Clinton Presidency, began to develop a foreign policy based on the latter of these two paths. This was, in part, the result of how the West viewed Russia during this period. Inclusion of Russia into the security order of Europe was hard to imagine due to Russia's unstable government during the 90's and its inability to decide whether its identity was that of being a part of the West or in opposition to the West.<sup>2</sup> Based on this, the U.S. began to develop its policy towards the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe and beyond. The reason for this expansion was outlined by the U.S.'s Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot. Talbot argued that NATO expansion could be used as an incentive for the nations of Central and Eastern Europe to strengthen democratization and legal institutions, ensure civilian control of armed forces, liberalize market economies, respect human rights, and additionally, resolve disputes peacefully and contribute to peace keeping operations.<sup>3</sup> While this move was approved by Clinton, the European partners of the U.S., and the general American public, specialists in the areas of U.S arms control and foreign policy believed that the policy would lead to a division in Europe and see Russia step away from cooperation on the issues of START I and START II.<sup>4</sup> By pushing for this policy initiative, they feared that the U.S. would alienate Russia and jeopardize the relationship that had been developing since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Under Clinton, the U.S. and its Western partners gave the green light to the acceptance of Poland, Hungary, and Czech Republic to become full-fledged members of the Atlantic organization. These three states were optimally the best candidates for initial NATO expansion due to several reasons: acceptance of these three states into the alliance was a sellable idea to the U.S. senate; the U.K. favoured letting in only a select number of states at a time; and Germany wanted to create a buffer zone that separated it from the front lines that it historically shared with Russia.<sup>5</sup> While the Western states saw the incorporation of these three states as a diplomatically opportune move, Russia did not agree with this view. Unable to have much of an effect on the proceedings, due to the weakness of its state and its inability to project its power on the candidates, Russia only had the power to vent its disappointment with the West and warn that in the future Russia would not tolerate further Western interference in the old domains of the Soviet Union.

Russia's deteriorating view of the West centralized around the issues of NATO expansion and the belief that the Russian people had been abandoned by the West. The expansion of NATO became a hot topic for the Russian government and its elite due to their perception that NATO's expansion eastward was an aggressive move intended to restrain Russia's influence in the region. This puzzled and angered Russian officials because, up

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Lukin, "What the Kremlin is Thinking," *Foreign Affairs*, 00157120, Vol 93 Issue 4 (July/Aug2014): 1. <http://library.mtroyal.ca:2061/ehost/detail/detail?sid=4cac07b2-997d>.

<sup>2</sup> S. Neil MacFarlane, "NATO in Russia's Relations with the West," *Security Dialogue* 32 (2001): 283, doi: 10.1177/09670106011032003002.

<sup>3</sup> Michael McGwire, "NATO expansion: 'A Policy of Error of Historic Importance,'" *International Affairs* 84, no. 6, (2008): 1283, Academic Search Complete.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 1282

<sup>5</sup> Ivan Diney Ivanov, *Transforming NATO: New Allies, Missions, and Capabilities*, (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Lexington Books, 2011), 160, ProQuest ebrary.

until the point of NATO expansion, Russia had worked to create a working relationship with the West and believed that the West had made promises not to expand the alliance into Eastern Europe.<sup>6</sup> Then Russian President Boris Yeltsin believed that he had come to an agreement with the West that neither NATO, nor the EU, would expand into the territories that were formally under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. While Yeltsin believed he had come to a settlement with the U.S., the promise given to Yeltsin was never explicitly made or used to form a binding agreement on the issue of eastward expansion.<sup>7</sup> When NATO began its process of expansion into Eastern Europe the Russian elite were left with a feeling of betrayal and alienation as the organization that was once used to wall off Soviet expansion and influence into Western Europe began moving into territories that had played a historical role for Russia in the past. NATO's expansion eastward resulted in Russia becoming more combative and disapproving of NATO and its role in European security.<sup>8</sup> Just as in the Cold War, it seemed that the organization was being developed to once again deal with Russia.

While the issue of NATO expansion played a role in reinforcing Russia's more combative stance towards the West, and specifically the U.S., the feeling of betrayal created a belief that Russia had once again become alienated from the West. This view came about due to the perception that Russia had been abandoned by the West during its years of economic turmoil. Under Yeltsin's economic liberalization reforms Russia's economic stability collapsed as the state was unable to deal with the resulting pressures of his reforms. In the span of only a few years Russia's economy had shrunk by half, causing political turmoil within the country.<sup>9</sup> Yeltsin had expected that the West would assist Russia during this crisis, as he still believed that cooperation and integration into the West's security organizations was possible. The assistance never reached the levels that Russia expected to receive from the West during the process of liberalization. During the G-7 summit of 1992, Yeltsin called for a foreign direct investment of several billion into the Russian economy to help improve its economic performance; realistically, this was nearly impossible due to the domestic and economic issues that the U.S. and its Western allies faced at the time.<sup>10</sup> This perceived abandonment by the U.S and the West during Russia's gradual progress towards becoming a democratic and liberal state affected how Russia viewed the West and the relationship that they would have in the future.

Yeltsin's decision to resign in 1999 and the strengthening of Russia's economy in the last years of the 90's had little effect on the relationship. Though there was some hope that things might change with the coming of Bush and Putin into their respective presidency, the initial years of the 21st century followed the same deteriorating path of the 90's. In fact, the relations soon became combative as the newly elected President Vladimir Putin openly

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<sup>6</sup> Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity in National Identity*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2009), 105.

<sup>7</sup> Jeffrey Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2009), 164.

<sup>8</sup> MacFarlane, "Nato in Russia's Relations," 290.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>10</sup> Tsygankov, *Russia's Foreign Policy*, 72.

voiced his opposition towards the U.S. and the policies being made under the Bush presidency.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the 2000's, the U.S-Russian relation continued to be challenged by several issues: continued NATO expansion into Eastern Europe, Kosovo's independence, and the U.S.'s growing influence over Ukraine and Georgia. The issue of NATO expansion was seen as a threat to Russia's national security and a continual thorn that hampered its relationship with the U.S. and its Western allies. Kosovo's independence became an issue between the two powers because of the differing views they had on the legality of its independence and the precedent it was setting in Europe. While the U.S. was the main architect for its independence, Russia vehemently denied that Kosovo should be considered a legal state due to the nature of how Kosovo was able to attain its independence. In the cases of both Georgia and Ukraine, Russia disapproved NATO's stance towards accepting both states as possible candidates for integration into the organization. As well, Russia was angered by both former Soviet Union satellite states attempt to align with the West through their consideration of joining NATO. To keep its authority in both of these states, Russia used economic, military and political force to ensure the alignment of both states with Russian interests. In the case of Georgia, this eventually led to war in 2008.

Rather than heeding the indicators that Russia was giving out through diplomatic channels, the U.S., under its newly elected President George Bush, continued to have its "open-door policy" towards any states that were looking to join NATO.<sup>12</sup> While some of the U.S.'s key European partners were hesitant about further expansion of NATO, the decision was made to accept the second phase of NATO expansion. In part, this was the result of Eastern European realpolitik analysts pushing for Western integration to protect against Russia and the appeal of charismatic Eastern European leaders to the U.S. public.<sup>13</sup> This resulted in the states of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia being accepted into the alliance and integrated into NATO's security system in 2004. NATO's final phase of expansion was finished in 2009 with the addition of Albania and Croatia. While they had attempted to gain membership in 2004, they were unable to due to their low levels of political stability and general unpreparedness of their militaries.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout this process, NATO expansion led to heightened tensions in Russia's relationship with the West. As states joined the alliance, Putin frequently made statements that the process would damage Russian-Western relations and that Russia would take a firmer stance against the West and its actions. During discussion on the second phase of membership into NATO, Putin was troubled by the fact that Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia were being considered possible NATO members. In 2000 he went so far as to threaten to declare a "red line" if the Baltic States became a part of NATO, though he failed to followed through on this promise.<sup>15</sup> What set these three states apart from the other Eastern

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<sup>11</sup> Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "The Unravelling of the Cold War Settlement," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, 51:6 (2009): 51, doi:10.1080/00396330903461666.

<sup>12</sup> Roger E. Kanet and Maxime Henri Andre Larive, "NATO and Russia: A Perpetual New Beginning," *Perceptions* Volume XVII, Number 1, (Spring 2012): 85, Proquest Research library.

<sup>13</sup> Deudney, "Unravelling of Cold War," 50.

<sup>14</sup> Ivanoff, *Transforming NATO*, 166.

<sup>15</sup> Janusz Bugajski, *Cold Peace: Russia's New Imperialism* (Connecticut: Praeger, 2004), 59.

European states looking to integrate closer to the West was their proximity to Russia's borders and the sizeable ethnic Russian population that they have.<sup>16</sup>

Though Putin was not pleased with the actions of NATO, he was still willing to work with the U.S. during the early years of Bush's presidency. Bush, likewise, attempted to cooperate with Russia on wide-ranging issues of security and dealing with terrorist threats.<sup>17</sup> While this cooperation did help to rebuild the relationship between the two states to a degree, Putin soon became more combative towards the U.S. when it was evident that Bush was still not prepared to treat Russia as an equal partner.

The issue that has come to revolve around the legality of whether Kosovo is an independent state came out of the collapse of Yugoslavia in the late 90's. Following its collapse, Yugoslavia became divided into several different states based on historical relevancies and ethnicities of the former Yugoslavian state. The situation soon became abysmal as ethnic tension led to war and ethnic cleansing between the newly founded states. This deteriorating situation resulted in NATO's involvement in an attempt to secure order and quell the unrest that had erupted in the region. In 2008, the U.N. mandated province of Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia and was recognized by the U.S. and a majority of Western states. This unilateral decision on independence was accepted by the West for several reasons. As Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated on the subject, "The unusual combination of factors found in the Kosovo situation – including the context of Yugoslavia's breakup, the history of ethnic cleansing and crimes against civilians in Kosovo, and the extended period of U.N. administration – are not found elsewhere and therefore make Kosovo a special case."<sup>18</sup> While the U.S. and its Western partners saw this as a noble action to ensure the Kosovo people were not subjected to further ethnic discrimination or violence, Russia saw Kosovo's independence as a violation of international law and a dilemma for states that were battling with breakaway regions.

One of Russia's main objections to Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence was that international law was not taken into account. By deciding to recognize Kosovo's independence, the West opted to ignore the implications of secession and the consequences that the recognition of Kosovo had for long-standing autonomist and secessionist conflicts in Europe and the world.<sup>19</sup> What Russia feared the most was that the model of decision-making process used in Kosovo's independence could be used again by the West to legitimize secession movements in other states across Europe. As Putin stated publicly in 2006, "[Kosovo] is an issue of immense importance for us, not only in terms of abiding by the principles of international law, but in terms also of the practical interests of the post-Soviet area..."<sup>20</sup> Russia felt this keenly as the precedent of Kosovo could in theory allow the West to intervene in Russia's own secessionist troubles, mainly the issue of Chechnya. By

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<sup>16</sup> Ivanoff, *Transforming NATO*, 164.

<sup>17</sup> Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 164.

<sup>18</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny and Vicken Cheterian, "Making States and Breaking States: Kosovo and the Caucasus in 2008," *Nationalities Papers* 40, no.5 (September 2012): 666, doi:10.1080/00905992.2012.707461.

<sup>19</sup> Solveig Richter and Uwe Halbach, "A Dangerous Precedent? The political implications of Kosovo's independence on ethnic conflicts in South-Eastern Europe and the CIS," *Security and Human Rights*, no. 3 (2009): 223, Academic Search Complete.

<sup>20</sup> Suny, *Making States*, 667.

the standard that Kosovo had set, it is now not necessary for the U.N. to recognize states for them to be considered a legitimate body, as it only now requires the approval of the West.

While the view that Kosovo was a unique circumstance that required a unique action was accepted by the West, much of the world did not agree with the decision to recognize the state of Kosovo as an independent entity. Several months following Kosovo's declaration the U.N. General Assembly passed Resolution A/RES/63/3; the goal of the resolution was to allow Serbia to submit the question of the legality of Kosovo's independence for an advisory opinion of the International Criminal Court.<sup>21</sup> Even with the support of the U.S. and Western countries, Kosovo is still not recognized as an independent state due to the questions raised about its creation and the hesitancy of other states of the world to deal with it knowing that Kosovo creates a new precedence in state creation outside of following the laws and norms of the international system.

Though the decision by the U.S., and its Western allies, to back NATO's expansion and the independence of Kosovo was a factor in the deteriorating relations between the West and Russia, the abysmal relations we see today cannot be completely blamed on the West. Russia's actions to ensure its influence in both Georgia and Ukraine in the late 2000's angered the U.S. Though the two states wished for closer relations with the West, Russia saw this position as untenable due to the view that both states were integral to Russia's image of itself as a great power and by the geo-political importance that both states have played for Russian influence in the region. The combination of the cultural bond that Russia has with the Georgian people and the role that Georgia has played in being the economical lynchpin in trade between the South Caucasus states and Europe meant the Russia could not allow Georgia to fall outside of its influence, as this could have an impact on Russia's position in the region.<sup>22</sup> Russia's view that Ukraine is "Mother Russia's" western-most province, and that it plays a strategic role in Russia's position in Eastern Europe, creates the foundation for Putin's hesitancy in regards to Ukraine's growing relationship with the West.<sup>23</sup> Because of these considerations, Russia has taken a firm stance in ensuring that both states do not sway to far from Russian influence. Fear that either state may become further integrated into Europe has resulted in Russia adopting economic embargoes and military intervention to ensure that both states fall in line with Russian demands and interests.

Since the early 2000's, Putin has attempted to safeguard Russia's influence in the two states through the use of either economic pressure or military force, or a combination of both. The strategy that Russia has used on these states significantly differs as to how far Russia has been willing to go to achieve its objectives while dealing with the least amount of condemnation by the West. Fearing the possibility of closer Georgian-Western ties, if Georgia continued on its path to becoming incorporated into NATO, Russia used the issue of South Ossetia as a pretext to invade Georgia and attempt to upset the Western-leaning government that was presently in power. When Georgian forces began the bombardment on the capital of South Ossetia, Tskhinvali, the government of Russia used this as a pretext

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<sup>21</sup> Suny, *Making States*, 667.

<sup>22</sup> Ghia Nodia, "The August 2008 War: main consequences for Georgia and its conflicts," *Nationalities Papers* 40, no. 5 (September 2012): 730, doi:10.1080/00905992.2012.705270.

<sup>23</sup> Bugajski, *Cold Peace*, 79.

to join the conflict on the side of the Ossetians. According to the Russian view, Georgia's attack on the city put Russian peacekeepers in danger and threatened the Ossetian population with genocide.<sup>24</sup> Within a short amount of time, Russian forces were able to rout the Georgians out of the North of their country and neared the capital Tbilisi. Before the war could escalate any further, Russia agreed to a truce ending the conflict. Despite agreeing to the ceasefire, Russia eliminated all military installations and infrastructure in the Northern regions of Georgia that were occupied, and declared the break-away regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia independent states protected by Russia from future Georgian aggression.<sup>25</sup> This unilateral declaration of independence was an exact copy of the action that the West had taken to give independence to Kosovo.

Throughout the 21st century, Russia has constantly used economic and political pressure to attain the outcomes that it desires within Ukraine. These actions have generally taken the form of cutting off Ukraine's gas supply and getting deeply involved in parliamentary elections for Ukraine's Presidency. Russia has on several occasions used the embargo of gas as a way to show its displeasure with the government of Ukraine. Following the resignation of President Leonid Kuchma in 2005, Putin campaigned for the candidate Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich to take office.<sup>26</sup> Known for his pro-Russian views, he was seen as a candidate that would keep Ukraine in line with Russian interests. This decision backfired when Yanukovich's opponent, Viktor Yushchenko, won the elections and led Ukraine on a path toward Western integration. The pro-Western actions taken by Yushchenko during his term in office ultimately led to the Russian government applying economic pressures on the state. In both 2006 and 2009, natural gas was cut off when the Ukrainian government could not pay the fourfold increase in price that Russia expected to be paid in full.<sup>27</sup> While Russia claimed the massive increase in natural gas was the result of market considerations, it was noted that the price of gas that Russia delivered to Belarus or Trans-Dniester region did not change in this same period of time.<sup>28</sup>

One of the most contentious issues that has plagued the U.S.-Russian relationship since the early 2000's has been the U.S.'s desire to establish a Ballistic Missile Defence shield in Europe. Seen as a way to protect the U.S. from 'rogue actors', Russia has viewed this move as a threat to its national defence and a way for the West to counteract the advantage Russia has in nuclear armed ballistic missiles. Out of this desire for security, both states have stepped away from international agreements on nuclear missile deployment and arms treaties as a way to protect themselves from international threats. The U.S. has stepped away from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972 to find new ways to protect itself from possible threats, while Russia has backed away from treaties on the deployment of military forces in Europe due to the decisions the U.S. has taken. While both states have

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<sup>24</sup> Nodia, *The 2008 War*, 721

<sup>25</sup> Mankoff, *Russian Foreign Policy*, 264

<sup>26</sup> Robert H. Donaldson and Joseph L. Noguee, *Foreign Policy of Russia: Changing Systems, Enduring Interests*, 4th Ed., (New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 175.

<sup>27</sup> Dian Rome Spechler, "Russian Foreign Policy During the Putin Presidency: The Impact of Competing Approaches," *Problems of Post-Communism* 57, no. 5 (Sept/Oct 2010): 37, Academic Search Complete.

<sup>28</sup> Donaldson, *Foreign Policy of Russia*, 175.

made these decisions based on their desire to guarantee their security, their actions have only led to a more volatile world due to the increased risk of confrontation.

The issue of BMD was first hypothesized in the latter years of the 1990's. Missile tests conducted by North Korea in 1998 led to serious discussion in the U.S. about establishing a nuclear missile defence shield to protect itself from possible strikes by rogue states.<sup>29</sup> While the groundwork was laid, the technology at the time was insufficient for progress to be made in creating an effective program. The situation changed, however, following the 9/11 attacks as the U.S. looked to implement new ways to ensure the security of the state from threats. Under Bush, the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty was abrogated, the BMD shield was brought up as a legitimate option to secure the U.S., and counter measures to ballistic missile strikes were set up in Alaska and California.<sup>30</sup> Meant to limit the amount of anti-ballistic countermeasures that were active at a time, the ABM Treaty was abandoned by the U.S. so that it could work on building up its defenses against possible strike. The U.S.'s plan for a BMD shield in Europe centered on deploying a radar station in Czechoslovakia and ground-based interceptors in Poland.<sup>31</sup> While the shield was seen as a way of protecting the U.S. from possible threats, notably North Korea or Iran, Russia saw this action as an attempt to build counter measures to Russia's arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The proximity of the BMD shield and its intended purpose became the main criticisms that Russia had with the program. Since the end of the Cold War, both the U.S. and Russia have been protected from one another due to the threat of 'Mutually Assured Destruction', if war was to break out between them. This balance of power based on MAD has been relatively unchanged since the end of the Cold War. If the U.S. was to deploy its BMD shield in Europe then this balance of power would be altered due to the nature of the shield in defending against nuclear strikes. While it is argued that the shield is meant for defensive purposes, its deployment would also alter the deterrent relationship that Russia has with the U.S. because the BMD shield gives the U.S. nuclear superiority.<sup>32</sup> The fact that Russia relies on its nuclear capability greatly for its military strength and power in the international system means that a BMD shield built in Europe, close to its borders, would be perceived as a great threat to its power projection ability. To regain the balance in power, Russia suspended its commitment to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe in 2007.<sup>33</sup> The impact of this measure is that Russia can now build up the amount of heavy weapons deployed on its western and southern borders; a move that would come about if plans for a missile defence shield are set up in Europe.

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<sup>29</sup> Rueben Steff and Nicholas Khoo, "Hard Balancing in the Age of American Unipolarity: The Russian Response to US Ballistic Missile Defense during the Bush Administration (2001-2008)," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 235, doi:10.1080/01402390.2013.866556.

<sup>30</sup> Andrew Fetter, "The Elephant in the Room: US Ballistic Missile Defence under Barack Obama," *Defense and Security Analysis* 28, no. 1 (2012): 5, doi:10.1080/14751798.2012.651374.

<sup>31</sup> Mikhail Lsyppkin, Mikhail, "Russia, America and Missile Defense," *Defense & Security Analysis* 28, no. 1 (2012): 85, doi:10.1080/147517798/2012.651379.

<sup>32</sup> Steff, "Hard Balancing," 30.

<sup>33</sup> Spechler, "Russian Foreign Policy," 38.



While the U.S. still sees the shield as an effective way to protect itself, under Obama steps have been taken to appease Russia as well as continuing progress on the shield. Under the "reset" of relations that the U.S. was hoping for with Russia, the decision was made to alter the BMD shield to make it more acceptable to the Russian government. Under Obama's revisions, it was decided that the BMD shield would rely on rapid deployment of a sea-based platform, as well as land sites, to deal with potential inter-continental threats.<sup>34</sup> While this does, to some degree, deal with Russia's objections to the program, there is still a lack of trust between both sides as to whether they can work together as security partners. As long as Russia relies on nuclear weapons as a deterrent, it is unlikely that the BMD program can continue without angering Russia in the process.<sup>35</sup>

In the past twenty-five years, the working relationship that Russia had built with the West following the end of the Cold War has slowly deteriorated to a point where neither side is willing to cooperate with each other. The issues of NATO expansion, the questions over the legality of Kosovo, Russian actions in Georgia and Ukraine, and the development of a BMD shield in Europe have all contributed to the relationship that we see today between the West and Russia. Because of this state of abysmal relations that have developed, neither side is willing to work with the other on international issues due to the lack of trust that has developed. One of the international issues affected by this deterioration has been the progress that the U.S. and the Soviet Union made on the containment of the threat of nuclear war. Many of the treaties made on the issue of arms control have been abandoned by both sides either due to security fears coming from a changing world, as seen in the U.S., or the threat that specific issues have on national sovereignty and defence, as seen in Russia.<sup>36</sup> While neither side is at complete fault for the strained relationship that we see today, the actions taken by the U.S. have played an integral part in the deterioration that has taken place over the last twenty years. The decision to take actions that could be considered aggressive by Russia without consulting the state first, or creating a partnership on several of the above mentioned factors, has not only upset the Russian government but has led it to become more aggressive in its foreign policy directives. The world that we live in today, whereby the U.S. and Russia once again see each other as their respective enemy and the conflict in Ukraine continues, is directly linked to the decisions made by the U.S. in regards to Russia and how it should be dealt with.

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<sup>34</sup> Stephen J. Cimbala, "Minimum Deterrence and Missile Defenses: What's New, What's True, What's Arguable," *Defense & Security Analysis* 28, no. 1 (2012): 68, doi:10.1080/14751798.2012.651380.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Robert Legvold, "Managing the New Cold War," *Foreign Affairs* 93, no. 4 (Jul/Aug2014): 1, Academic Search Complete.

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