

## A ‘Risky Westward Turn’? Putin’s 9–11 Script and Ordinary Russians

JOHN O’LOUGHLIN, GEARÓID Ó TUATHAIL & VLADIMIR  
KOLOSSOV

SINCE THE TERRORIST ATTACKS OF 11 September 2001 Russia has played a key part in the efforts of the Bush administration to build an international coalition to conduct the war on terrorism. In the hours immediately after the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre President Vladimir Putin was the first foreign leader to speak with President Bush and to personally offer his condolences.<sup>1</sup> Putin also dispatched a telegram to Washington DC conveying ‘anger and indignation’ against the ‘series of barbaric terrorist acts directed against innocent people’.<sup>2</sup> In a national television address later that day he described the 9–11 attacks as ‘an unprecedented act of aggression on the part of international terrorism’. The attacks, he claimed, were not a localised American drama but an event that ‘goes beyond national borders’. Terrorism, Putin declared, was the ‘plague of the twenty first century’ and ‘Russia knows first hand what terrorism is. So, we understand as well as anyone the feelings of the American people’. Broadening the common identification with America into a transcendent community, he described 9–11 as ‘a brazen challenge to the whole of humanity, at least to civilised humanity’. This common identity formation and divide—terrorist barbarism versus ‘civilised humanity’—led Putin to declare that ‘we entirely and fully share and experience your pain. We support you’.<sup>3</sup> Putin later declared a national minute of silence in commemoration of the victims of the attacks.

Less than two weeks after this first reaction Putin went on national television again and articulated what some have described as Russia defining its ‘strategic choice’.<sup>4</sup> The Russian Federation, he stated, ‘has been fighting international terrorism for a long time’ and ‘has repeatedly urged the international community to join efforts’. The forums for those efforts were ‘international agencies and institutions’, most especially ‘the UN and the UN Security Council’. Putin outlined a series of specific measures that Russia would adopt to aid the emergent American-led coalition against the Taliban government of Afghanistan. The Russian government would supply intelligence about ‘the infrastructure and locations of international terrorists’ and would ‘make the Russian Federation’s air space available for the through-flights of planes carrying humanitarian cargo to the area of that anti-terrorist operation’. In a noteworthy break from traditional Russian geopolitical thinking about controlling the Eurasian Heartland, he accepted the establishment of bases by America and its allies in Central Asia for operations against ‘international terrorism’.<sup>5</sup>

Putin's 24 September 2001 television address was the beginning of a series of key policy statements by him in the wake of the events of 11 September. That address, a product of a weekend of strategy making with his top advisers and a 40-minute phone call with President Bush, marked a new phase in US–Russian relations.<sup>6</sup> Commenting on Putin's post-9–11 geopolitical reasoning, Kaiser (2001) suggested that 'Putin has helped make September 11 potentially the most important moment in world history since the collapse of communism'. McFaul stated that acceding to American troops in Central Asia was as if 'Russian troops came into Mexico ... The center of gravity in the world has changed' (quoted in Badkhen & Shadid, 2001). Later McFaul (2001) held that, in supporting President Bush, Putin had 'made the boldest decision of his short tenure' and that this geopolitical orientation represented a 'risky westward turn' within the bureaucracies and traditions of Russian geopolitical thinking. McFaul's position is supported by Anatolii Chubais, a well-known reformer and former vice-prime minister in the El'tsin years, who stated that 'Putin has turned Russian foreign policy around 180 degrees. ... There has never been a change on a similar scale in all of the history of Russian statehood' (quoted in Treisman, 2002, p. 67). By contrast to McFaul and Chubais, Kuchins (2002a), Treisman (2002) and Lapidus (2002) think that Putin's turn to the West does not represent a seachange but a continuation of a westward shift started by Gorbachev and continued spasmodically through the El'tsin years. Is Putin's westward turn indeed risky? Against a background of the documented gap between the 'geopolitical fantasies' of Russian political elites and the lack of attention of ordinary Russians to foreign policy (O'Loughlin, 2001; Shlapentokh, 2001; Kolossou, 2001), what is the attitude of Russian public opinion to Putin's geopolitical positioning in the post-9–11 world? Putin's stand would only be risky if it were opposed by a large majority of Russian voters and/or by the political elites. Here, we examine the attitudes of the public after first spelling out Putin's policy as enunciated in his script: the alternative positions of parties, public intellectuals and political elites are analysed elsewhere.

This article has two specific goals. First, using a critical geopolitics methodology, we examine the script developed and publicly articulated by Putin in the six months after the 11 September attacks in New York and Washington.<sup>7</sup> We show that, in official and other texts, President Putin sought to represent the event as a 'global Chechnya' and that 9–11 provided the occasion for the development of an innovative geopolitical script that asserted the identity opposition 'civilised/barbarian' as a fundamental axis in world politics, (re)located Russia within the West as a 'civilised power' and gave Russian geoeconomic interests priority over traditional territorial geopolitics. Second, to test how well Putin's 9–11 script garnered support among ordinary Russians, we report on the results of a nationwide sampling of Russian public opinion on the events of 11 September (and sequel in the war in Afghanistan) that we organised and conducted in April 2002. We are particularly interested in the attitude of the Russian Federation's growing Muslim population. Our conclusions point to considerable variation in support for the different dimensions of Putin's policy of alliance with the United States in a war against 'international terrorism'. Simply put, there is significant support across all groups for Putin's foreign policy but support for an international war against terrorism is highly qualified, with great

suspicion about US intentions in Central Asia and policies designed to counter the 'axis of evil' (Iraq, Iran and North Korea).

*Making sense of a dramatic global spectacle: Putin's 9–11 script*

No event is immanently meaningful. What may appear as 'terrorism' to the prevailing consensus among one community of states can be interpreted as a 'war of liberation' or as 'jihad' by a different community. Critical geopolitics begins from the argument that geopolitics is inevitably an interpretative and not an objective practice. State leaders and political decision makers can never just 'read off' the interests of their state or the meaning of international affairs from the geographical location or objective structures delimiting their state in the interstate system as orthodox geopolitics implies. Rather, foreign policy decision makers and elites construct the meaning of international affairs and their state's interests within the geopolitical culture of their state. Geopolitical culture can be defined as the interpretative culture and traditions within which a state makes sense of its identity and its encounter with the world of states, and codifies a set of strategies for negotiating that encounter. Russian geopolitical culture, for example, is composed of a series of geopolitical traditions codified in varying forms of 'Westernisation' or 'Eurasianism' (Smith, 1999).

Geopolitical culture can be divided into popular (ordinary) and practical (elite) geopolitics. Popular geopolitics concerns the images ordinary citizens have of their state and others. The popular geopolitical image of the 'West' in Russia has multiple dimensions: it is an organic part of national identity, of individual and group perceptions, values and political ideologies.<sup>8</sup> Two components of the West's image in Russia are worth distinguishing (Diligenski, 1997, 2000). The first is the quotidian image that ordinary Russians have of 'the West' as a community of states separate from Russia in international affairs. This attitude is often sharply negative and partly based on frustration resulting from the loss of Russia's high status in world politics, the disintegration of the socialist bloc and of the Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> It is also partly explained by sporadic protest against growing American hegemony and the fear of an American *diktat* in Russian domestic affairs.

The second image of 'the West' is as a socio-economic model. This image is much more stable than the first and constitutes an important element of Russian identity, reflecting its internal contradictions and aspirations. On one hand, most Russian citizens admire the economic, technological and social achievements of Western countries and are persuaded that Russia must and can reduce her laggard status and reach the same level of economic development as the West. On the other hand, they realise how deep the gap remains and how difficult it is to catch up with 'the West'. Some commentators stress and exaggerate the uniqueness of Russia, its exceptionalism and even superiority as a more 'spiritual' country than the West, or as a distinctive civilisation based on Orthodox values and a hybrid European and Asian heritage.<sup>10</sup> The weight of 'pessimists' explains why lots of people accept or share common values with Western countries but believe that Russia constitutes a particular world. Indeed, 71% of respondents to the VTsIOM (All-Russian Centre for Research on Public Opinion) survey held in November 2001 agreed with the statement that Russia belonged to a 'Eurasian' civilisation and, therefore, the Western model did not

suit her, and only 13% accepted that their country was a part of European and Western civilisation. These ratios are a kind of compensatory reaction based on understanding that the gap separating Russian and Western standards of living remains important.

Both of these Western image components contrast Russia with 'the West' but are not necessarily antagonistic oppositional ones. For example, in March 2001 83% of Russian respondents to a FOM (Foundation of Public Opinion) survey declared that they were in favour of the development of relations between Russia and the European Union or the US, or both, and wanted to see Russia a member of the political club of developed countries. By no means does the Russian public want a confrontation with the West. Only 14% agreed with the position of the neo-Eurasianists and expansionists that Russia should create a coalition of countries opposed to NATO.<sup>11</sup> Russia's 'particular way' is inherently connected to its political autonomy in the world. As both the VTsIOM and FOM surveys indicate, nostalgia for the supposed glory years when Russia held parity with the largest world powers remains one of the cornerstones of Russian identity and is used by many who wish to slow the current political and economic changes. For 'new Russians', one's economic status is now considered the main criterion for high self-esteem. The political status of the country and its parity with world leaders is understood as a guarantee of independent development, and political independence, and is condition for the growth of well-being and, finally, of catching up to the West (Zudin, 2002a, 2002b).

Practical geopolitics concerns the daily construction and spatialisation of world affairs and state interests by foreign policy leaders and elites within geopolitical cultures. A central concept within the study of practical geopolitical reasoning is a 'script' which can be defined as a regularised way of acting and talking when negotiating certain social situations, scenarios and challenges.<sup>12</sup> A performative geopolitical script is what a foreign policy leader draws upon to articulate, explain and state foreign policy. It often takes the form of a leader literally reading a script from a teleprompter when giving a major foreign policy speech, such as Putin addressing the Russian nation, the German Bundestag, the Davos World Economic Forum or a Rice University gathering in the United States. It is also the 'talking points' that foreign policy leaders consult when meeting with each other or with journalists. While often carefully constructed and composed behind the scenes by foreign policy and public relations advisers, it is not necessarily a rigid set of lines but can be a loose set of 'discursive answers' to key questions that allows some degree of 'freelancing' by foreign policy leaders and key officials. Scripts, it is important to emphasise, may not necessarily be clear but will often contain deliberately abstract, ambiguous and vague formulations designed to avoid making the leader choose between competing policy alternatives or becoming trapped in an embarrassing logical inconsistency (e.g. supporting the spread of democracy whilst also supporting the military rule of General Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan).

Using already translated documents (with the translation checked, in selected cases, by us) available from the (Russian) Federal News Service through Lexis-Nexis and on the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, we have collected over 70 translated speeches and statements by President Putin, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and other top officials on the meaning, significance and foreign policy implications of

9–11. Our collection strategy was to obtain all formal statements of policy before domestic and international audiences, and also as many conversational statements and opinions expressed in interviews with the media over the six month period from 11 September 2001 to 11 March 2002 as possible. Following Ó Tuathail's (2002) 'grammar of geopolitics' scheme, we have broken down these speeches into five separable yet closely connected categories of classification and particularisation, the basic process of practical geopolitical reasoning. Table 1 provides a condensed summary of our analysis.

#### *The 'what' of geopolitics: situation descriptions*

Situation descriptions are the ways in which events are rendered meaningful, similar to certain events but different from others. They involve analogical reasoning and basic acts of categorisation and particularisation. As the images from 9–11 were broadcast in Russia, they were instantly contextualised and interpreted within the history of Russia's recent war against Chechen terrorism. Putin's and Ivanov's initial remarks all declare that Russia understands America's pain because 'Russians have themselves experienced the horror of terror'.<sup>13</sup> The attacks themselves were described as 'barbaric' by a joint Russian–NATO statement and by Ivanov.<sup>14</sup> In his meeting with European Union officials in early October, Putin stated that the bombings 'bore the same signature' as the Moscow apartment bombings of 1999 (quoted in Drozdiak, 2001). To consolidate the link to Chechnya, Russian intelligence officials let it be known that they had discovered plans there amongst the rebels that detailed civilian airliners crashing into buildings.<sup>15</sup> While the unprecedented scale and nature of the 9–11 attacks were acknowledged, Russia's own experience with urban terrorism rendered 9–11 an overseas instance of the same phenomenon they themselves faced: 9–11, in short, was domesticated in Russia as a 'global Chechnya'.

Chechnya was not the only analogy that Putin used to interpret 9–11. On 17 September he remarked that the attacks were an atrocity that could be 'compared in scale and cruelty to what the Nazis perpetrated' (quoted in Gardner, 2001; see also Badkhen, 2001). Condensed in this one simile was a series of powerful historical analogies, particularly so in Russia: the Russian–American alliance of World War II, the evil common enemy faced by both states, the need for active cooperation against this threat and the requirement of total victory and 'unconditional surrender'. Before the UN in November 2001, Igor Ivanov noted that the United Nations Organisation was created 'by the anti-Hitler coalition powers with a view to preventing the revival of man-hating ideologies and regimes'. With the international war against terrorism, the UN now 'has a largely similar task among its chief priorities'.<sup>16</sup>

#### *The 'who' of geopolitics: protagonist typifications*

The 'breeding grounds' metaphor is part of a family of metaphors that represent terrorists as 'vermin', 'parasites', 'plague' and 'viruses'. President Bush, for example, repeatedly called terrorists 'parasites' while Putin gained prominence and stature as a strong leader in part because of his use of crude language to describe Chechen terrorists as 'vermin' and 'viruses'.<sup>17</sup> Besides dehumanising and decontextualising

TABLE 1  
SUMMARY OF VLADIMIR PUTIN'S 9–11 SCRIPT

'Grammar'	<i>Putin's script</i>
Situation description	A global version of Russia's Chechen terrorist problem. 9–11 like August 1999 apartment bombings. Like crimes of the Nazis.
Protagonist typifications	Terrorism as virus, plague. Islamic extremists. Evil. Bandits versus 'civilised' humanity. Russia and US have a common enemy.
Location specification	Global borderless threat. Terrorist enclaves. States harbouring terrorists.
Causality	Globalisation. Religious fanatics. Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. We are all to blame.
Interest enunciation	International alliance against terrorism. Independent EU power pole joined to Russia's resources. Geopolitics driven by geoeconomic priorities. New strategic framework.

*Source:* Compiled by the authors from an analysis of the Putin administration's policy statements, 11 September 2001–11 March 2002.

terrorism, such metaphors constitute and justify exterminist military campaigns to 'wipe out' and 'eliminate' the disparate social movements, armed resistance networks and political organisations determined by hegemonic power structures to be 'terrorists'.

Graphic metaphorical language about terrorists was made possible by the instantaneous projection of the spectacular horror of death and destruction on 11 September across the globe. Russian TV, like national media in many countries, broadcast footage of the attacks again and again, using a direct feed from American television networks. Given this shared global visual experience and trauma, it was not difficult for political leaders to make the argument that the attacks had been carried out by 'terrorists' beyond the pale of 'civilisation'. The civilised/barbarian division, one of the oldest in geopolitical reasoning, was utilised from the very outset and quickly became the basis for a new friend/enemy political formation. The speeches of Putin and Ivanov are full of references to 'civilised mankind', 'civilised humanity' and the 'civilised world' to which are juxtaposed 'barbarians', 'terrorists' and 'bandits', terms the Russian political class has long reserved for Chechen rebels. The day after Putin's television announcement of support for America, he declared 'we have a common foe, the common foe being international terrorism'. Foreign Minister Ivanov noted that 'we are both victims already, both the United States and Russia ...'. Concluding a meeting with Ivanov, US Ambassador to Russia Alexander Vershbow echoed these sentiments in declaring that 'we face a common enemy, the enemy of international terrorism' (quoted in Glassner & Baker, 2001).

The subject positionings that George W. Bush developed in response to the 9–11 attacks were stark and moralistic. The American-led response to the attacks was a 'war between good and evil'. Those who perpetrated the attacks were 'evil doers'.<sup>18</sup> This phraseology was used in the unprecedented joint NATO–Russia statement on 13 September 2001 which called for the defeat of 'this greatest evil'.<sup>19</sup> Foreign Minister Ivanov termed terrorism a 'common evil' three days after the attacks and returned to this conceptualisation on a number of occasions, as did Putin, remarking that 'evil without a doubt must be punished'.<sup>20</sup> Reiterating these sentiments before the UN General Assembly, Ivanov linked terrorism, evilness and criminality.<sup>21</sup> Whereas the Bush administration's discourse specified 'evil' as the antithesis of American virtue that required unilateral American action if necessary, the Putin administration sought to moralise a lesson of interdependence from the experience of evil. Addressing the UN Security Council in November 2001, Ivanov noted:

The tragic events of 11 September in the United States of America, as well as terrorists' crimes in other countries, provide graphic evidence that in an interdependent world of the globalisation era, one country's grief becomes the grief of the entire international community. In response to the evil-doings of terrorists the awareness of a simple truth is becoming stronger—solidarity and mutual support in the fight against common evil help to protect one's own country and its citizens.<sup>22</sup>

Like the label 'terrorist', the category 'evil' was attractive to the Putin administration because it created a common moralistic language between the two powers that inhibited political analysis and critique of particularly oppressive and destructive 'counterterrorist' practices, such as those of the Russian military in Chechnya. When

asked on American radio about potential problems of Bush's use of the word 'evil ones' to describe terrorists, Putin declared that Bush 'is being very mild in his choice of words. I have other definitions and epithets to offer, but I, of course, am being restrained by the fact that I am talking to the media and this is hardly appropriate'.<sup>23</sup>

*The 'where' of geopolitics: location specification*

The 9–11 attacks were not those of a state but a shadowy transnational terrorist network. Consequently, they required a different type of geopolitical language than the state-centrism of conventional geopolitics to describe them. The conceptualisation that developed in the wake of the attacks, both in the United States and in Russia, had three aspects. First, it emphasised the globalised, borderless nature of the threats. Bush talked about 'terrorists who have no borders' yet possess 'global reach', while Putin immediately declared that 9–11 was an event that 'goes beyond national borders'. International terrorism was seen as a part of a larger challenge of governance and sovereignty in the era of globalisation. On a number of occasions in his speeches Putin connected international terrorism with more general problems of lawlessness and contraband criminality. In late September he declared that 'Terrorism and drugs are absolutely kindred phenomena. They have common roots and similar destructive power. Terrorism, just as narco-business, has a ramified international network and without doubt bears a transnational character'.<sup>24</sup> At the outset of the US bombing in Afghanistan he was more sweeping in his characterisation, implicitly criticising not only the Taliban but also the Saudi regime. The terrorists are 'people who during the past decades have gained control of huge flows of money based on petrodollars and the narcotics trade. They are using that money to deliver monstrous strikes, monstrous in their brutality, on the countries that they target; they expect to be able to use that money, on the one hand, to deliver such strikes and to paralyse the will of the peoples of those countries to resist, and on the other hand, to use that money to dupe public opinion; they use that money to influence public opinion through the mass media they control'.<sup>25</sup>

Second, there was an emphasis on terrorist enclaves and zones beyond the rule of sovereign states. Bush spoke of 'safe havens' for terrorism while Putin spoke of 'terrorist enclaves' and a 'terrorist offshore'. Addressing a conference of EU ministers of justice, Putin stated that 'territories on which civilised law does not operate become a "terrorist offshore" ... It is exactly from there that the threat of terrorism comes'.<sup>26</sup> Third, concern with terrorist enclaves quickly lead to a focus on states seen as 'breeding grounds' and sponsors of terrorism, with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia the subject of implicit and explicit concern. Afghanistan was the initial and predominant focus of the United States in the six months after 9–11. This was shared by Russia, with officials describing it as a haven for terrorist operations launched against Russia. According to Putin, terrorists moved to and from Afghanistan to Chechnya through Georgia and Turkey.<sup>27</sup> Foreign Minister Ivanov argued that extremists had turned Afghanistan into a 'lair for terrorism'. In a similar manner, Russian officials sought to represent the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia as a terrorist enclave, pressuring Georgia to crack down on 'terrorist bandits' operating in the region and demanding the extradition of 'participants of illegal armed bands'.<sup>28</sup> One week after 9–11 the Russian



Foreign Ministry sent a strongly worded protest to Georgia declaring that 'It is time for Georgia not in words but in actions to join the united front of civilised states to remove the threat of international terrorism'.<sup>29</sup> In early October Sergei Ivanov, Russia's Defence Minister, accused Georgia of 'not having control of its own territory' or 'manipulating terrorists for its own ends'. On 11 October 2001 the Duma overwhelmingly passed a motion accusing the Georgian government of 'conniving with Chechen terrorists and refusing to take tough measures against bandits who are making their preparations on Georgian territory' (quoted in Cottrell, 2001). Tensions continued to ebb and flow between the two states over the following year, with Russian officials often making an analogy between Georgia and the 'preventative war' logic of the American campaign against Iraq.

*The 'how' of geopolitics: attributions of causality and blame*

Constructions of explanations of causality and blame are an important part of geopolitical reasoning. Reflections on the structural causes of 9–11 were rare in official speeches but constructions of the factors that made the attacks possible were abundant.<sup>30</sup> First, the spread of globalisation—borderlessness, global financial flows, ungovernable zones—was blamed for making it easier for international terrorists to operate. Second, the ideology of Wahhabism or, more generally, 'Islamic fundamentalism' was offered as an explanation for the attacks and a motivation for the attackers.<sup>31</sup> Putin represented those behind the Moscow apartment buildings bombings and the incursion into Dagestan in 1999 as 'religious fanatics' who wanted to establish a 'fundamentalist state across the territory between the Black and the Caspian seas, a so-called Caliphate or "United States of Islam"'.<sup>32</sup>

While evoking geopolitical spectres of fundamentalist states, both Bush and Putin were careful to distinguish Islam from terrorism, the latter noting that it is harmful to mix up terror and Islam. 'Terrorists who use various mottoes as their cover', Putin noted before the heads of the Commonwealth of Independent States, 'in this particular case Islamic mottoes, have nothing in common with this world religion, no matter how hard they try to link themselves to it. Terrorists, as we know, can be of different stripes and nationalities, and they can practise any religion'.<sup>33</sup> Putin, like Bush, repudiated a 'clash of civilisations' reading of 9–11.<sup>34</sup> Yet religious profiling and ethnic stereotyping more often than not drove the logistics of the everyday practices of immigration control and national security in both states.

Third, Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda were at the centre of discourses of causality through official speeches that preferred abstractions about terrorism to specifics. Russian officials tied Bin Laden and the attackers directly to Chechnya. The Saudi Arabian-born Chechen military leader Khattab (later killed by Russian forces) was the chief exhibit in this discursive exercise. Bin Laden was said to be in direct contact with Khattab and Shamil Basaev, the leader of the raid on Dagestan. A spokesperson for Putin claimed that Bin Laden was by no means the only foreign backer of Chechen rebels but 'he is a real sponsor. That is a fact'.<sup>35</sup> The attackers, according to Putin, told their relatives they were going to Chechnya. Putin pointed out to the American press that Bin Laden 'differs little from his disciples who are operating in the North Caucasus in Russia'. He added:

These are simply people practically belonging to the one organisation. They were trained together in the same terrorist centres. They consider Bin Laden to be their teacher. He trained them on his bases in Afghanistan. They fought together against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan and so on. Since Russia left the territory of Chechnya in 1995, as you know, more than two thousand bandits and militants have been trained on the territory of Chechnya, on a very conservative estimate, and they later took part in military operations in other hot spots on the planet: in Kosovo, Kashmir, Sudan and Afghanistan. It is in effect a single system, a single network. It is even hard to tell where is the centre and where is its branch. They are the same people, they know each other very well and they have the same sources of financing. This, too, is not much of a secret, we have conveyed that information to our American partners.<sup>36</sup>

For radical Islamic fighters, Chechnya is certainly a celebrated cause but the full extent and power of radical Islamic finances and forces in Chechnya is disputed.<sup>37</sup> That such a connection does exist, however, enabled Putin's administration to locate Chechnya within the prevailing international counterterrorist discourse and not within storylines about Russian imperialism and human rights abuses.<sup>38</sup>

Fourth, certain regions and states were viewed as ambivalent in their attitude towards terrorism. The so-called Bush Doctrine declared 'You are either with us or you are with the terrorists'.<sup>39</sup> Putin connected the attacks to Chechnya in the same way as the US government immediately connected them to the territory of Afghanistan. In his 24 September address he declared that what was happening in Chechnya 'cannot be viewed out of the context of the fight against international terrorism'. While recognising that the Chechen conflict had a dynamic of its own, Putin echoed the stark Bush choice:<sup>40</sup> 'Now that the civilised world has defined its position on fighting terror', he declared, 'everyone should define his or her position as well'. Armed militias and political leaders in Chechnya were urged 'to immediately cease all contacts with international terrorists and their organisations' and contact federal authorities to negotiate their disarmament and re-integration into peaceful Chechen life. These negotiations came to nothing but Putin's discursive strategy of representing Chechnya as a problem of international terrorism and not a war of national self-determination by a people marginalised by Russian imperialism in the Caucasus yielded some results. After Putin's speech the White House initially hesitated but subsequently made a point of endorsing Putin's representation of the conflict as, in part, an instance of 'international terrorism' (Matthews, 2001; Sipress, 2001). Bush himself was cautious but nevertheless stated that the United States believed that 'there's some al Qaeda folks in Chechnya' (quoted in Mufson, 2001). To prevent refinements and geographical specificity in the US attitude towards terrorism, Ivanov proclaimed repeatedly in the subsequent days that there was 'no distinction between good and bad terrorists' (quoted in Jack, 2001). Putin repeated this formulation and denounced, with Indian Prime Minister Atal Vajpayee, the 'double standards' of the international community in the fight against terror, a reference both to criticism of its war in Chechnya and Pakistan's involvement in Kashmiri violence.<sup>41</sup> Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov somewhat optimistically claimed at the end of September that 'the whole world community' supported Russia's position on Chechnya.<sup>42</sup> A more accurate assessment was offered by a German parliamentarian in the wake of Putin's celebrated address to the Bundestag,

when he noted 'silence on Chechnya is the price for this new solidarity' (quoted in Erlanger, 2001).

Finally, in a 24 September 2001 speech, Putin also assigned blame for 9–11 to the international community as a whole: 'We are also to blame for what happened'. Political leaders, he suggested, had 'not yet managed to recognise the changes that have taken place in our world during the past ten years'. In a non-specific critique of NATO and the Bush administration, he contrasted 'old security structures' organised around competitive power politics while the world faced new security challenges and threats like terrorism.<sup>43</sup> This discursive tactic was part of Putin's larger geopolitical strategy of de-legitimising the increasingly unilateralist exercise of untrammelled power by the American state while, at the same time, encouraging the development of an independent pole of power on the European continent and disguising the fact that Russia was a failed world power no longer able to compete geopolitically with the United States.<sup>44</sup> In its criticisms of the Bush administration that repudiated the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in December 2001, that pushed and agreed the expansion of NATO in November 2002) and that made the decision to begin deploying a missile defence in December 2002, Russia used the same discursive strategy. Threat assessment based on Russia as a non-Western power was old 'Cold War thinking' whereas international terrorism was a 'twenty first century threat' that demanded a new global security framework.

#### *The 'so what' of geopolitics: interest enunciation*

Until Putin's defining policy statement on 24 September there was considerable public debate among his advisers on how to respond to an American-led campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov told reporters that he saw 'absolutely no basis for even hypothetical suppositions about the possibility of NATO military operations on the territory of Central Asian nations'.<sup>45</sup> Other generals expressed scepticism about an active US presence in Central Asia and Russian support for any campaign against Afghanistan (Cottrell, 2001). Putin's turn toward closer cooperation with the West and partnership with the US and NATO divided the cadre of high military officials. For instance, the chief of the general staff, General Anatolii Kvashnin, stated that the Basic Act Russia–NATO was no more than 'an informational cover' and, as in the Cold War years, NATO continued to consider Russia and Belarus as major potential enemies; therefore, Russia should be able to protect herself against external aggression. It was reported that no more than one-third of army officers supported Putin's foreign policy.<sup>46</sup>

Opposing these traditional geopolitical sentiments were the arguments of intellectuals and individuals within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Their views were clearly expressed by former first deputy foreign minister and Soviet/Russian ambassador to a number of Western countries, Anatolii Adamishin. 'Despite all Russian particularity (and it should not only be supported but consciously cultivated), the place of our country is with the West. It is not only a civilisational but first of all a pragmatic choice based on fundamental national interests', stressed Adamishin (2002). Further, he believed that solving three main problems was essential for the survival of Russia as a sovereign country—to maintain her present borders, to build a modern market

economy able to meet social needs, and to create a democratic civil society based on national traditions. In solving these problems, Russia would get much more from rapprochement with the US than from rejection and confrontation.

There are two main types of national interest interpretation in Russia, and both of them are supported by sections of public opinion. According to the first view, Russia must return to the status of a great power. To reach this goal, she must use all possible means to strengthen her material and political status to maximise her impact on world and European affairs, especially in her traditional sphere of influence. The strategy premised on this understanding assumed a counteraction to the NATO enlargement, attempts to prevent NATO military involvement in Bosnia and Kosovo and the proclamation of the post-Soviet space, including the Baltic countries, as a zone of Russia's special interests (McFaul, 1995).

The adherents of the other view understand national interests to be inclusion of Russia in the world economy and participation in globalisation that could lead to an increase in personal incomes and quality of life, public services and high technology industries, as well as the formation of civil society and a state of law. The ultimate objective of this strategy is to join the system of Western economic and political alliances. For observers and politicians sharing such views, national particularities are no more significant than the notion of folklore, important only for the development of a tourist trade (Sheinis, 2002). Opposing traditional territorial geopolitical sentiments were the arguments of individuals within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After considerable internal debate, Putin came down decisively on the latter side (Volkova, 2001).<sup>47</sup> Russia's priorities were economic and state-building reforms at home. A stable, predictable and friendly set of relations with the West, particularly the European Union, was vital to advance the greater integration of its economy into world markets. The discursive answer Putin developed in response to traditional territorial sphere of influence questions reiterates Gorbachev's early repudiation of geopolitics in the mid-1980s in favour of 'new thinking'. The core of this policy is a geo-economically driven geopolitical vision (see Treisman, 2002). When asked by reporters about territorial competition between Russia and the United States over Central Asia and where he 'draws the line' in terms of Russia's strategic interests, Putin remarked that 'what was important in the former frame of reference is becoming largely irrelevant at present. If Russia becomes a full-fledged member of the international community, it need not and will not be afraid of its neighbours developing relations with other states, including the development of relations between the Central Asian states and the United States'. He added that Russian and US policies should not be guided by their former fears. Rather, there were real geo-economic benefits to be had from cooperation and deal making in the region:

If Russia is a full-fledged member of the international community, it may, in upholding its national interests in this sphere, derive benefits from such cooperation, for example, our joint work in the Caspian Pipeline Consortium which we have recently completed together with our American partners, or the development of Sakhalin deposits. I have already mentioned this project that we are pursuing together with our Indian partners—and together with Exxon Mobil ... Ultimately, if there is more confidence and cooperation, both the United States and Russia will gain from this.<sup>48</sup>

Responding to the same question when visiting Bush in the United States, Putin added that he was 'more concerned with the presence of terrorist training camps in northern Afghanistan who send guerrillas to the Caucasus' than any possible 'redrawing of spheres of influence' in Central Asia.<sup>49</sup> Terrorism and business were the central themes of Putin's visit to the United States in November 2001. His address at Rice University in Houston repeated his standard 'stump speech' on Russia as a great place to invest, a theme he had previously articulated at Davos: Russia's progress in liberalising its economy, its low flat income tax, its reduced corporate profit tax rate, its reform of land ownership and its goal of entering the World Trade Organisation.<sup>50</sup> Russia, in short, was open and ready for business.

Summing up Putin's 9–11 script, there are three particular innovations that have generated descriptions of it as 'bold' and 'risky', despite its roots in policies going back to Gorbachev. The first is the clear articulation of an enemy, terrorism, that in practice easily becomes a decontextualised and ageographical abstraction. The United States and Russia, it is asserted repeatedly, 'share a common enemy'. From this develops the sweeping geographically limitless platitude that, as Bush put it whilst welcoming Putin to the United States, 'Russia and America share the same threat and the same resolve. We will fight and defeat terrorist networks wherever they exist'.<sup>51</sup> The second is the evocation of an equally vague yet useful abstract community—'the civilised world'—as a means of (re)locating Russia within a community of states led by Western states and institutions like the European Union and NATO. As already noted, the dichotomy barbarian/civilised is one of the oldest forms of geopolitical categorisation. To a significant extent Putin's presidency was premised on it for it underpinned his popular second war in Chechnya in response to the Dagestan incursion and Moscow bombings of 1999. The 9–11 attacks were an opportunity Putin seized to give this description spectacular global meaning and international currency. The third is the marginalisation of the traditional discourse of territorial sphere of influence thinking in Putin's geopolitical reasoning. Putin prioritises modern geoeconomic considerations and interests over traditional geopolitical conceptions and modes of thought. Putin's geopolitics has a geoeconomic core. Scripts, of course, are abstract, flexible and ambiguous, something that Putin can use to his advantage. The fact that the United States and Russia worked from a mutually implicated script after the 9–11 attacks does not make their interests coincident nor is it necessarily a strong basis for a stable and predictable relationship. In fact, their shared script disguised many key policy differences, such as the US targeting of Iraq as part of the 'axis of evil'. And scripts, as we see daily, can and do change in response to the ebb and flow of international dramas.

### *The attitudes of ordinary Russians*

How is the ordinary Russian reacting to the Putin script about the meaning of 9–11, including the international cooperation with the US-led war against terrorism, the war in Afghanistan and the placement of American troops in the Caucasus and Central Asia? In April 2002, as part of a nation-wide sampling of Russian public opinion on the events of 11 September and their sequel in the war in Afghanistan, we asked

1,800 adults (a representative group interviewed in 202 locations across Russia) their opinions on these subjects (see Appendix for survey details).

Because Russia is such a heterogeneous society in ethnic, national and religious terms, we wanted especially to gather information about the representative attitudes of Russia's Muslims, who according to the last national (Soviet) census held in 1989 comprised about 8.3% of the total population. Since 1989 the Muslim ratio has certainly grown to over 10% due to both high natality and migration from former Soviet republics, especially from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The Islamic population is concentrated in two main geographical blocks. The Urals-Volga region contains more than 3 million Muslims in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, while the North Caucasus autonomous regions contain more than 4 million Muslims—Chechens, Avars, Kumyks, Kabardinians, Karachais and others. It should be noted that the Muslim population is found all over the country; for example, only about one-third of Tatars live in their titular republic. Muslim migration to big cities such as Moscow as well as ethnic Russian settlement in traditional Muslim regions, especially high during Soviet times, means that Islamic populations dominate only small geographical pockets. To reliably compare Muslim and ethnic Russian reactions, we over-sampled titular populations in the two concentrations of Islamic population.

In the rest of this article we report on Russian attitudes to five key issues surrounding the participation of the Russian government in the US-led war on terrorism. 1) Do Russians believe that the war on the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan is the correct course of action? 2) How do Russians perceive the US as a country? Is it seen as a 'friendly' state and how does its ranking compare with other countries? 3) What do Russians think about the growing presence of the US military in the Caspian sea–Central Asian region? 4) Do Russians support an extension of the war on terrorism to other states, such as the Bush-designated 'axis of evil' (Iraq, Iran, North Korea). 5) How is Putin's script on the meaning of 9–11 and his policy of alliance with the United States being perceived by the electorate, both Muslims and other Russians? Is one of the core elements of the Putin argument, the similarity of the 9–11 attacks and Chechen terrorism, receiving any credence? We carefully examine the support that the Russian President is receiving from various sectors of society as a clear indication of how widespread is the acceptance of his post-9–11 geopolitical script and we identify significant differences between the socio-demographic sectors. Like leaders of electoral democracies, Putin must pay attention to the key differences and determine to what extent he can guide or respond to their attitudes in the run-up to the presidential campaign of 2004.

The geopolitical context for our survey is that Russians rank fairly low in positive attitudes to the US policies and to Americans in general. Compared with citizens of other countries, Russians rank near the top in negative attitudes towards the US. In the Pew Global Attitudes project, Russia ranks 10th of the 46 countries on the question that asked whether the respondent had 'somewhat unfavourable' or 'very unfavourable' attitudes to the US. On a parallel question, Russia also ranks 10th in the ratio of the population who believe that 'it is bad that American ideas and customs are spreading here', just after Islamic countries, Argentina, Bolivia and France. Over half of Russians think that US policies are increasing the gap between rich and poor countries.<sup>52</sup> Further, positive attitudes towards the US have consistently trailed the

rate of positive feelings towards the European Union countries and Japan (Kolossoff, 2002b).<sup>53</sup>

Russians in general are developing a more positive attitude to the outside world. For a sample of 18 countries, the average proportion of 'friendliness' in 2001 was 58.2% among Russians, even though the list included such contrasting countries as the US, Iran, India, Sweden and North Korea. The only country considered by most Russian respondents as unfriendly is the US. Before the events of 11 September 2001 only 32% of Russians believed the US was a friendly state, while 53% thought the contrary (Kolossoff, 2002b). These ratios significantly changed after the terrorist attack against American cities, generating in most Russian citizens a sincere natural sympathy with the American people. The positive glow, however, lasted only for a relatively short time. By April 2002 the ratio of those who perceived the US as a friendly state to those who thought it unfriendly had returned to the same level as in early 2001. This negative ratio has been dropping slowly over the past decade but it tends to fluctuate a lot depending on contemporary world events. It spiked at the time of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in spring 1999 and even rose again at the time of the Salt Lake City Olympics (February 2002) as a result of the controversy about the judging of ice-skating events and drug tests for Russian athletes.<sup>54</sup> A negative view on American foreign policy is usually combined with the desire to see Russia as an autonomous and independent actor on the world political scene (Kolossoff, 2002a). Over the longer time horizon, overwhelming evidence from multiple opinion polls points to increasing support for 'Western values' in Russia, though democracy as an ideal gains more support than the model of a market economy.<sup>55</sup>

#### *Attitudes of Russians toward the international war on terrorism*

The Russian population was evenly split about the war on terrorism in its current form (the attack on the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in October 2001 and its continuance) and strongly opposed to an extension of the war to other countries that had been mentioned by the Bush administration as harbouring terrorists. In answer to the question 'Did the US operate correctly in launching the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan?' 44% of the national sample said that the US operated correctly while 40% answered that it was an incorrect action. (On this and other questions discussed here the remainder gave a 'don't know' answer.)

We searched for key differences in our survey by gender, education, religion and marital status. Of course, these categories partly overlap; for example, widows and Islamic populations tend to have lower educational attainment. The most sizeable difference among the Russian nationality was by gender—Russian women were significantly less likely than Russian men to support the war on terrorism.<sup>56</sup> Only 36% of women, compared with 54% of men, thought that the US actions were correct (in the Muslim sample the gender gap was almost as large—33% of men thought it correct compared with 18% of women). The gender gap in attitudes to war and to military responses is well documented in many democracies, including the large gender gap in US attitudes to the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 (O'Loughlin & Kolossoff, 2002). In Russia, women have been the strongest critics of the Putin administration's war on Chechen rebels and have been the backbone of peace

movements in that country. It is also clear from our survey that older women are also more critical of the war on terrorism than younger women (a 10 point difference), though the gender gap appears for all age groups. A reason for this age distinction can be attributed to the mentality about peace that became so ingrained in Soviet times. Older women hold most strongly to the slogans of the Soviet state and demonstrate most concern about the unending strife in Chechnya with the daily loss of Russian lives.

Among the Russian respondents in our study, 33% of widowed persons (mostly women) supported US actions as correct; by comparison, 45% of married, 50% of divorced and 49% of single individuals considered them correct. The reason for these dramatic differences, of course, is a function of life chances and attitudes to the economic and political upheavals in Russia over the past decade since the collapse of the communist system. The biggest losers from the changes have been the elderly generations and because of the dramatic differences in life expectancy between men (60 years) and women (72 years), the elderly are disproportionately female.

Because of over-sampling in titular Muslim regions, we can statistically compare the regional samples. Of Muslims in traditional Islamic areas in the Urals-Volga region, only 29% thought that the anti-Taliban military actions starting in October 2001 were correct, and the figure for the other Muslim region is significantly lower at 17%. Both Muslim sub-samples are significantly lower than the Russian sample. While these differences between Muslims and Russians are statistically significant, they are not terribly surprising. International surveys on attitudes to the United States around the world show a dramatic contrast between Muslim populations and others; with a couple of notable exceptions (Uzbekistan is one), Muslims are far less likely to have a positive view of the US.<sup>57</sup>

In our survey and in other works it is evident that there are big differences in the nature of politics and ideology between the two Islamic regional traditions (Malashenko, 1998; Malashenko and Yunusova, 1998). Groups of Tatars and Bashkirs living in the numerous large cities in the Volga-Urals region are more politically independent than their compatriots in rural areas. The same generalisation holds for people in the western part of the North Caucasus compared with the Chechen, Ingush and Dagestani peoples in the east of this region. The more urbanised Volga-Urals Muslims are more religious than Muslims of the North Caucasus if one uses Mosque attendance as the criterion. While 58.2% of Tatars and Bashkirs responded that they 'practically never' attended a Mosque, the comparable figure for the North Caucasus sample was 73%.

Of the sub-samples in our survey, it is the more rural Muslims of the North Caucasus who were the strongest opponents of the war on terrorism. The residents of the North Caucasus live close to the foci of war in Chechnya, Abkhazia and other areas of ethnic tension. For the past 10 years, they have been affected, in varying degrees, by refugee flows, kidnappings, military operations, market and apartment building bombings, and dislocation of daily life in the form of transport interruptions, power outages and roadblocks. Inter-ethnic rivalry among the North Caucasus Muslims precludes any kind of united front. In fact, some Muslim peoples such as the Karachais and the Muslim minority of the Ossetians have traditionally been loyal to Russia since tsarist power came to the North Caucasus piedmont and mountains more than two centuries ago.<sup>58</sup>



We anticipated that nationality within Russia would be an important factor in determining the attitudes to the events of 11 September and its aftermath. While many Russians (41% in our sample) think that radical Islam (Russians often use the term 'Wahhabism' to stereotype fundamentalist Islamic movements) is making gains among Russia's Muslims, Russia's Muslims are secular; 63% of our sample said that they 'practically never go to a mosque'. But in every question about Islamic countries, the war on terrorism, US military actions in Afghanistan and setting up bases in Central Asia, Muslim respondents were significantly more likely to take anti-American positions than other Russian citizens. For example, 40% of the Muslim sample said that the US attack on the Taliban was 'certainly the wrong action' (another 21% believed it to be mostly incorrect), almost double the rates for the Russian sample. Well over half of the Muslim respondents were 'strongly opposed' to extension of the war on terrorism to other (mainly Islamic) countries like Iraq, Iran, Somalia etc. Poorly educated respondents in Islamic regions were more sceptical of US military actions—in the lowest educational category only 11% thought the US attacks on the Taliban were correct, compared with 28–30% among those with higher educational status. In this respect, the Islamic respondents reflect the class status differences of the larger Russian sample.

*Attitudes towards the United States and a possible alliance in the war on terrorism*

Suspicion of the US is long standing in Russia and, in this light, it is surprising that 74% of Russians believed that the alliance between the two former rivals in the struggle against international terrorism was a positive development (15% disagreed). On the follow-up question about the nature of the relationship between the two large powers, only 26% believed that Russia was an equal partner to the US. A larger number (35%) believed that the US imposed its policy on Russia in this supposed cooperation and a further 28% thought it was only a short-term and artificial partnership in a front against terrorism. While the cooperation is supported as long as it lasts, the underlying suspicion of Russians is that this united front will not last long. Given general concern about the seemingly interminable Chechen war, any help from the US in combating terrorists is welcomed by ordinary Russians.

In our survey, the one-third of the sample believing that the US was a friendly state did not show significant variation by education, size of settlement, age or the level of adaptation of a respondent to the contemporary economic situation. However, less adaptable individuals (people older than 50 and those with the lowest level of education and those who stated that they would probably vote for the Communist party) tended to evaluate the US more negatively.

This gap between Russia and the Western countries parallels one that appeared at the time of the Kosovo war in 1999, when Russian opposition to NATO bombardment was almost total (over 95%) at a time when more than 60% of the citizens of such NATO countries as Denmark, UK, US, Canada and Norway favoured it (the average for all NATO countries was 61%).<sup>59</sup> But the Pew Global Attitudes project of 46 countries in late 2002 showed that Russians were more similar to Europeans, non-Islamic Africans and Latin Americans (except Argentinians) in their support for the US war on terrorism than samples in Islamic countries, who opposed it strongly.<sup>60</sup>

The generally negative attitude of Russians to the US has multiple causes. It partly results from the need for a psychological compensation for the defeat of the USSR in the Cold War and the consequent sharp weakening of Russia, from an emotional reaction to the perceived attempts of the US to influence Russian foreign and domestic policy, and to the perceived behaviour of the US in the international arena as the only superpower that apparently has abrogated the right to itself to impose its interests on other states and peoples. But American actions that are seen as contributing to helping Russia in its own war on terrorism are viewed positively.<sup>61</sup> In fact, our poll showed that 61% of Russian respondents (47% of Muslims) wanted the US to help Russia in the Chechen conflict by curtailing the flow of weapons to the rebels.

#### *Attitudes to the US presence in Central Asia*

Since the mid nineteenth-century Russia has been the dominant power in Central Asia and control of this strategic region is an integral aspect of the Eurasian Heartland strategy of Russian conservatives. When the Putin administration gave its tacit approval of US use of former Soviet bases in this region, it marked a dramatic switch in traditional Russian geopolitical thinking. Responding to a question on the new US bases in Central Asia (in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan), Russians were very far from convinced that their construction was only for purposes of fighting the war in Afghanistan. On an open-ended question (three answers possible) about the US motives in establishing these bases, only 17% (19% in Islamic regions) thought it was part of the ongoing fight against terrorism, while 48% (56% in Islamic regions) thought the *raison d'être* for the bases was to expand the US sphere of influence. Another 31% (39% in Islamic regions) thought the bases were designed to help control the region's oil and gas supplies for American interests and 37% (40% in Islamic regions) thought the American aim was to replace Russia in that country's traditional zone of influence. While American commentators argue that the arrival of Western aid and strategic interest in central Eurasia will promote democracy and civil liberties in these hitherto repressive countries, despite doubts about Western-style liberal democracy's compatibility with social and political stability in the region, a miniscule 4% of Russians believed the democratisation argument.<sup>62</sup>

Suspicious about long-term US intentions, despite earlier sympathy for the victims of the attacks of 11 September, abound in Russia. The Putin administration's actions must be seen in light of these traditional beliefs. Most Russians are willing to suspend final judgment about the validity of the new pro-West orientation promoted by President Putin, but the opposition is hammering away at the scale of the US operations, the geographical range of new bases that now encircle Russia from Central Asia through Georgia and Turkey to the expanded NATO countries of Eastern Europe, the lack of direct Western help to the Russian people, and the weakening of Russia's position in the bilateral and multilateral military arrangements signed during the peak of Soviet power.

#### *Attitudes towards extending the war on terrorism*

President Putin reflected the preferences of Russians in his public refusal to endorse

the possibility of extending the war to other countries in autumn 2002 and spring 2003. Across all socio-demographic groups in Russia, there was strong opposition in Russia to the eventuality of an extended war. Asked 'Would you approve military actions of the US against other countries suspected of supporting international terrorism?', only 21% approved and 67% disapproved. Among Islamic respondents the ratio was similar—19% approval and 68% disapproval. Similarly high proportions are opposed to military action against members of the 'axis of evil' as President Bush has named Iraq, Iran and North Korea. For example, only 16% approved of military action against Iraq (12% in Islamic regions) and 68% were opposed (73% in Islamic regions). This fully matches the general trend: Russian public opinion since 1991 has consistently been against the use of military force in any region of the world, including in Bosnia (1995) or in Kosovo (1999). This disavowal of military action can be explained by the historical experience of the Russian people, including memories of the heavy losses in World War II and the disastrous war in Afghanistan (1979–89) that are very much still alive. The opposition is also partly a heritage of Soviet propaganda with its famous slogan '*Miru–mir!*' (Peace to the world!).

#### *Support for Putin's foreign policy and the 'risky westward turn'*

As the polling data above indicate, President Putin is fighting some hoary anti-American stereotypes that date from the Cold War. At the time of writing, Putin had been very effective in supporting the US actions since 11 September—in word and in deed—while at the same time pursuing his wider 'Westernising' geoeconomic strategy. The only sizeable opposition to his foreign policy was visible among a large minority of Communist party voters (72% approval) and among Islamic adults in central Russia (Tatarstan and Bashkortostan) at 67%; overall, his foreign policy was approved by 79% of all Russians (Muslims and Russians together) (see Table 2).<sup>63</sup> A post-election pact with the largest political party in Russia, *Edinstvo i Otechestvo*, formed in 2001 by President Putin has solidified his electoral support, and his popularity in turn is promoting the success of this new bloc. The Communists, while still commanding about 20% of the electorate, have fallen to second place among party preferences consistently for the first time since they returned to the electoral arena in 1993. But the biggest single group of adults remains in the 'undecided' or 'non-voting' categories. A caution against predicting further electoral success for Putin is that Russian electoral politics and politician preferences have been notoriously unstable since 1991. Putin is trying to end these electoral swings and he currently appears invincible electorally with about 70% support for his overall policies.

We examine the support for the Putin pro-Western foreign policy by looking at his support and opposition by socio-demographic categories and political beliefs. A comparison of Tables 2 and 3 shows clearly that more statistically significant differences appear in the political beliefs categories than among citizens categorised socio-demographically. Only the nationality variable, Russians and Muslims, shows a statistically significant difference in approval ratings of Putin's foreign policy—but only on the order of a couple of percentage points, which is within the survey's margin of error. Other socio-economic differences are slightly larger in percentage

TABLE 2  
SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT PUTIN'S FOREIGN POLICY BY SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS (%)

	<i>Approve of Putin foreign policy</i>	<i>Do not approve of Putin foreign policy</i>
Gender		
Men	78.4	21.6
Women	80.8	19.2
Sub-samples		
Muslims	78.4	21.6
Russians	80.8	19.2
Age		
Below 30	77.8	22.2
30–60	80.5	19.5
Over 60	79.9	20.1
Income sufficiency		
Yes	80.3	19.7
No	76.5	23.5
Marital status		
Single	77.9	22.1
Married	79.9	20.1
Divorced	83.3	16.7
Widowed	79.4	20.6
Type of settlement		
Moscow/St Petersburg	79.3	20.7
Regional centres	80.2	19.8
Small town/village	79.6	20.4
Region		
North/Northwest/West	77.5	22.5
Central/Urals/Volga	80.4	19.6
Siberia	81.5	18.5

*Note:* There are no significant differences (measured by Chi-square statistic) between the categories shown in this table.

TABLE 3  
SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT PUTIN'S FOREIGN POLICY BY POLITICAL ATTITUDES (%)

		Approve of Putin foreign policy	Do not approve of Putin foreign Policy
Interest in foreign policy	Interested	81.7	18.3
	Not interested	74.7	25.3
Is Russia a European country?	Yes	82.2	17.8
	No/maybe/don't know	77.8	22.2
Political preference	Unity	92.7	7.3
	Communist	72.6	27.4
	Other/no vote/unsure	77.3	22.7
Do you approve of the US war on the Taliban in Afghanistan?	Yes	84.3	15.7
	No/don't know	76.5	23.5
Moscow apartment house bombings have 'same signature' as 9-11	Yes	83.1	16.9
	No/don't know	76.6	23.4
Russia's Muslims are becoming Wahhabites?	Yes	83.3	16.7
	No/don't know	77.3	22.7
Is Russia a strong state?	Yes	86.5	13.5
	No/don't know	75.2	24.8
Should the war on terror be extended to other countries?	Yes	83.2	16.8
	No/don't know	78.8	21.2

Note: All of the comparisons between categories in this table show significant differences (indicated by the Chi-square statistic).

terms but because of the smaller sample sizes within categories, the differences do not reach the threshold of statistical significance. Regional differences, type of settlement, gender, age, marital status and income sufficiency status matter little in explaining approval of Putin's foreign policy.

The opinions expressed by Russians about Putin's position in the war on terrorism and cooperation with the US do not divide along the usual socio-demographic cleavages that are so evident in Western societies. In answering specific questions in our poll about relations between Russia and the US, Russians strongly agreed with the main thrust of the Putin administration in equating the attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September to the bombings in apartment buildings in Russian cities in autumn 1999. Further, they saw a clear parallel in similar anti-terrorist actions between the US-led war on Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and the war by Russia against rebels in Chechnya. On the comparison between the 11 September attacks and the apartment building bombings in Russia that Putin characterised as bearing the same signature, 50% of respondents (39% in Islamic regions) thought this characterisation was correct, while 32% disagreed (38% in Islamic regions).<sup>64</sup>

President Putin's approval rating transcends all divisions within Russian society, including regional divisions across the vast country. Our results parallel those of White & McAllister (2003), who showed that Putin's supporters at the time of his 2000 election were remarkably representative of the whole of Russian society in socio-demographic terms. Further, they were close to the Russian averages in terms of political opinions and attitudes. Every major socio-demographic category that we examined, as well as every major political ideology, showed a clear majority for approval of Putin's foreign policy. While press commentary in leftist media and in far-right pamphlets denounces Putin for 'selling out to the West', the ordinary Russian citizen is backing the administration on its shift to the West. This shift, begun by Gorbachev in the mid-1980s, has seen some hiccups—especially at the time of the Kosovo–Yugoslavia war in 1999—but the remarkable level of support for the Putin position that the best way forward for Russia is in partnership with the West is barely challenged in any socio-demographic category.

Unlike the socio-demographic categories, clear statistically significant differences appear in the mean approval ratings when respondents are classified by political beliefs and attributes. All of the eight cross-tabulations reported in Table 3 showed a significant difference in the rates at which they approved Putin's foreign policy. Respondents interested in foreign policy (in turn more educated than average) supported the Putin foreign policy position more strongly than those less interested (a gap of seven percentage points). Similarly, those who thought Russia was a European country supported the Putin foreign policy significantly more than those who thought Russia was either an Asian country or both European and Asian (the Eurasianist position). Classification of Russia as a European state and acceptance of that regionalisation is a cornerstone of the principles of Westernisation promoted by those close to the Kremlin and strongly supported by the economic and political elites. The biggest difference in the approval of Putin's foreign policy is according to political party affiliation. Of those intending to vote for the 'party of power', *Edinstvo i Otechestvo*, 92.7% approve Putin's foreign policy. By contrast, supporters of the Communist party, though still showing overwhelming support for the President's

policies, come in at 72%, seven points below the national average of 79.7% approval rating.

A sizeable gap of eight percentage points appeared in the approval ratings of Putin's foreign policy between those who approved of the US attack on the Taliban and those who did not. A gap of almost the same magnitude (seven points) appeared between those who accepted the Putin argument that the bombings of apartment buildings in Russian cities in September 1999 and the 9–11 attacks on US cities 'bore the same signature' and those who questioned this analogy. The acceptance of this argument is key to both of Putin's audiences—to the West, who would be expected, in turn, to look the other way during a Russian crackdown on Chechen rebels, and to the domestic audience, who would be expected to accept the crackdown and Russian support for the West as a *quid pro quo* for Western support of the Russian domestic 'war on terrorism'. Russians who believed that Muslims in Russia were becoming more 'Wahhabite' (more inclined towards fundamentalist Islam) also supported the Putin foreign policy at a significantly higher rate than those who did not think that Russia's Muslims were trending in that direction. Similarly, those who thought the US-led war on terrorism should be extended to other countries had a higher level of endorsement of the President's foreign policy. Finally, the largest gap in the approval ratings was found between those who thought Russia was a 'strong state' (86.5% approval) and those who thought Russia had lost much of its status (77.3% approval).

In summary, the findings of our analysis of the poll of Putin's foreign policy approval show a great deal of consistency. While Putin was supported across all socio-demographic categories with no significant difference evident between strata, significant differences appeared when respondents were stratified by political ideology and opinions about the nature of Islam. Respondents who thought Russia was a strong state, who were suspicious of the trend among Russia's Muslims, who thought the war on terrorism should be extended to other (Islamic) countries, who approved the US attacks on the Taliban, who thought of Russia as a European country and who had an interest in foreign policy were all more likely to show a higher degree of support for the Putin foreign policy positions. These ideologies correlate strongly with political preference—the highest approval of all was from supporters of Putin's political party, and one of the lowest mean approval rates was from supporters of the Communist party. Putin has decidedly turned to the West since 9–11 though his administration had been shifting in that direction even before the attacks and the subsequent war on terrorism. Our polls show clearly that about three-quarters of Russians are following him on his 'risky Westward shift', with a large majority among all groups and ideologies. In this respect, then, the shift to the West is not (yet) at all risky politically for Putin and represents a geopolitical bonus for the West.

### *Conclusions*

President Putin has taken a strong pro-West stand since 11 September 2001 and argued that Russia must be a partner in the international war on terrorism while it fights its own domestic terrorism in Chechnya. A large majority of Russians support his foreign policy in the abstract but the population is split on some key policies the President is pushing. Ordinary Russians are highly dubious about US intentions in

Central Asia, are split on the war in Afghanistan, and are strongly opposed (across all socio-demographic groups) to an extension of the war on terrorism to other countries. President Putin, like other leaders facing re-election, will have to take these qualms into account in his foreign policy calculus. It is also increasingly obvious that, while the public supports Putin's positions and policies, the elite (intellectual, political and military) remain much more critical of the US, as can be seen in articles in the oppositional media, op-ed pieces and press debates (Kuchins, 2002a). Recent work, including White & McAllister (2003), has questioned the extent of Putin's support and power. Rose *et al.* (2000) argue that the formal powers of the presidency do not guarantee Putin effective support since he is an 'étatist leader' in a society without a modern state. Gerber & Mendelson (2002) show through public opinion surveying that Russians are not overly concerned about terrorism (surveys conducted shortly after 11 September 2001) and the economy remains the major issue despite five years of macroeconomic growth. Reddaway (2002) attributes Putin's popularity to the fact that he is the one hope of most Russians confronted with continued uncertainty about their life chances and concludes that, if a disaster befalls Russia, Putin's popularity will probably deflate as fast as it inflated in autumn 1999.

Support for the US war on terrorism is viewed as a principle of solidarity with the West—a cornerstone of the Westerniser position in Russian geopolitical culture. But it is the same Westernisers who are blamed for most of the travails that have been evident in Russia since 1991. These include the pauperisation of a huge segment of the population, rising long-term unemployment, the collapse of the Soviet industrial structure and the ancillary growth in disease, premature death, family stress and alcoholism. In an open-ended question in our survey on the most important internal problems facing Russia, respondents listed the economy and the standard of living in first place. In the surveys by Pew Global Attitudes, Russians ranked 1st or 2nd among the 46 samples of those who were most dissatisfied with their level of household income and purchasing power.<sup>65</sup> In open-ended questions about worries, practically nobody mentioned foreign policy, the international situation of the country, etc.<sup>66</sup>

Like democratic societies, Russians are much more concerned with domestic economic circumstances than with foreign policy. In this regard, Russians are like Americans and other democratic citizenry; they do not over-react to foreign events. Russian public opinion is strongly against military actions (Zimmerman, 2001). Putin has been able to take advantage of the relative lack of interest in foreign affairs to press his pro-West strategy (Lipman, 2002). Unless things change drastically, President Putin will be re-elected or defeated in 2004 on the economic issues and to boost his chances, he needs good relations with the West. Putin's geopolitical strategy of alliance with the West in the war against terrorism is predicated on the expectation that there is will be a pay-off, as there was to his predecessor, Boris El'tsin.<sup>67</sup> This time, Putin has gone further and has acquiesced in the expansion of NATO even to parts of the former Soviet Union. After dampening down for a while in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September, Western criticism of the actions of Russia in Chechnya have returned to their earlier levels, despite Putin's repeated attempts to portray the Chechen rebels and Al-Qaeda/Taliban in the same light. Putin can ward off criticism of his strong pro-West stand because of the huge popular mandate he maintains in the polls but an economic down-turn after four years of sustained growth



could easily erode this popular support. While we have not investigated the reasons for the 'western turn' of President Putin, Kuchins attributes it to a combination of factors, including a recognition of the huge asymmetry in the US–Russia power ratio, Putin's need for Western aid in promoting and extending economic growth in Russia, and a coincidence of Russia's national interests with those of the US, especially terrorist threats, militant Islam and instability in Central Asia and the Caucasus.<sup>68</sup>

Russian reactions to the events of 11 September and the aftermath are caught up in the web of domestic politics and traditional divisions regarding the geopolitical orientation of the country—as Western, Eurasian, uniquely Russian or a mix of these. President Putin has advocated a consistent pro-Western position and, while it appears that he is winning the public relations battle, other geopolitical discourses appear in the oppositional media. The outcome of this orientational battle—'the risky westward turn'—will determine the future of Russia's geopolitics and will have a major impact on its domestic politics and life.

*University of Colorado at Boulder*

*Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

*Institute of Geography, Russian Academy of Sciences Moscow*

This research is supported by a grant, number 0203087, from the US National Science Foundation, Geography and Regional Science Programme. The authors thank Dr. Elena Petrenko of the Foundation of Public Opinion in Moscow who worked closely in developing the questionnaire for the national survey and who supervised its successful and timely completion. Dr. Nadezhda Borodulina of the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences was responsible for the identification and collection of the textual material analysed in this article.

<sup>1</sup> Bush later noted his appreciation of this gesture and of Putin's decision to 'stand down' Russian forces after America's forces had been placed on high alert: 'It was a moment when it clearly said to me that he understands the Cold War is over'. (Bush quoted in Sipress, 2001, p. A1 and President Bush's remarks at a joint appearance with President Putin at a Crawford, TX school, 15 November 2001). For an American account of the Russian role see Woodward (2002).

<sup>2</sup> 'On Russian President Vladimir Putin's Telegram of Condolence to US President George Bush, 11 September 2001', Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, [www.in.mid.ru](http://www.in.mid.ru) (look under 'Documents and Materials' link for speeches).

<sup>3</sup> 'Statement by President Putin of Russia on the Terrorist Acts in the US, Moscow, 11 September 2001', available from Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, [www.in.mid.ru](http://www.in.mid.ru).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the arguments of Goldgeier & McFaul (2002), p. 317; and Trenin (2002).

<sup>5</sup> See Clover (1999) for a review of the Russian tradition of claiming Central Asia as part of the Russian strategic space.

<sup>6</sup> According to Russian journalists, Putin's team of advisers included Sergei Ivanov, Minister of Defence, Igor Ivanov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aleksandr Voloshin, Head of the Presidential Administration, Anatolii Kvashnin, Chief of the General Staff, and Vladimir Rushailo; see Volkova (2001).

<sup>7</sup> Critical geopolitics is a post-structuralist school of thought in contemporary political geography; see Ó Tuathail (1996, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> For a study of popular geopolitics that addresses the image of Russia in American geopolitical culture see Sharp (2000).

<sup>9</sup> Kuchins (2002b, p. 13) stated that 'As a consequence of the policies of Gorbachev and his successors in the Kremlin, Russian power and influence in world affairs dropped more precipitously and rapidly than that of any major power in peacetime in modern world history. The most fundamental challenge for Russians in the last decade has been to fashion a foreign and security policy that matches the country's limited means'. The recognition of the country's limited means is growing. A VTsIOM (All-Russian Centre for Research on Public Opinion) survey of November 2001 showed that Russian society was split into 'optimists' and 'pessimists'. 'Extreme optimists' (10% of respondents) believed that if Russia followed the way of Western countries, she would need only a few years to reach their level. 'Moderate optimists' (35%) were convinced that Russia would need

dozens of years and 'moderate pessimists' (13%) even 100 years. Finally, for the relatively numerous 'extreme pessimists' (24% in total), the Western model was not useful, because they were either persuaded that by using it Russia could reach the present Western level only after 200 years and more (14% of respondents), or thought that Russia would never be able to catch up the West (10% of respondents).

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 3 in Smith (1999). Also see G.A. Zyuganov, *Za gorizontom* (Moscow, 1995); G.A. Zyuganov, *Kontsepsiya natsional'noi bezopasnosti RF v 1996–2000* (Moscow, 1995); G.A. Zyuganov, *Rossiya i sovremenniy mir* (Moscow, 1995); G. Zyuganov, *Geografiya pobedy: Osnovy rossiiskoi geopolitiki* (Moscow, 1997); S. Baburin, *Rossiiskii put': stanovlenie rossiiskoi geopolitiki nakanune XXI veka* (Moscow, 1995); A. Mitrofanov, *Shagi novoi geopolitiki* (Moscow, 1997).

<sup>11</sup> See Kolossov (2001, 2002b). 'Neo-Eurasianists' believe that Russia is neither an Asian nor a European country but has a unique Eurasian identity. 'Expansionists' want to extend Russian power to all parts of the Eurasian landmass (Kolossov and Turousky, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> See Ó Tuathail (2002). For the sake of simplicity, we are not investigating the other key concept in the study of practical geopolitical reasoning, storylines. Unlike scripts, storylines are discursively consolidated foreign policy arguments about particular events, challenges and situations. Scripts are public performances that are often incoherent and vague because they reference multiple storylines that are mutually exclusive. Storylines are relatively coherent sets of arguments with clear policy choices associated with them. To consider fully Putin's interpretation of 9–11 as a storyline, we need to investigate the alternative storylines offered in Communist-backed newspapers like *Sovetskaya Rossiya* (formally, it is independent; circulation about 300,000 copies) and the national-patriotic paper, *Zavtra*.

<sup>13</sup> 'On Russian President Vladimir Putin's Telegram of Condolence to US President George Bush', Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, [www.In.mid.ru](http://www.In.mid.ru).

<sup>14</sup> Joint Russia–NATO statement, 13 September 2001; transcript of Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov's Speech at the Nixon Centre, Washington, 19 September 2001, available from Lexis-Nexis.

<sup>15</sup> In his interview with the American press, 10 November 2001, Putin spoke about showing Bush intelligence from Chechnya that revealed Islamic rebels plotting to kill Americans when they met at the APEC summit in Shanghai.

<sup>16</sup> Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Ivanov in the Course of the General Political Debate at the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly, 16 November 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Russian politicians began to use a tougher language. The recently appointed Prime Minister was the first to legitimate this new language by publicly announcing that we would "bury them in their own crap". It was after saying this that Putin's ratings in the polls began to rise astronomically; finally there was a "tough guy" at the wheel' (Kovalev, 2000, p. 4). After 9–11 Putin could use such language on the international stage without problems. For example, Putin compared international terrorists to bacteria 'which adapt to the organism bearing it' in an exchange with reporters after meeting Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt; see Drozdiak & Chandrasekaran (2001).

<sup>18</sup> George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, Washington DC, 20 September 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Russia–NATO statement, 13 September 2001 (Federal News Service).

<sup>20</sup> Joint press briefing by Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and French Minister of Foreign Affairs Hubert, 14 September 2001; Putin, interview with German media, 24 September 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Ivanov in the Course of the General Political Debate at the 56th Session of the UN General Assembly, 16 November 2001.

<sup>22</sup> Statement by Igor Ivanov Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation at the Meeting of the UN Security Council on Counter-Terrorism, 14 November 2001.

<sup>23</sup> National Public Radio interview and listener call-in with Russian President Vladimir Putin, New York, 15 November 2002.

<sup>24</sup> Speech by President Vladimir Putin at a Meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, Moscow, 28 September 2001.

<sup>25</sup> President Putin's statement at a meeting of the Russian Federation government, 9 October 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Speech by Russian President Vladimir Putin at a meeting with participants of the 24th Conference of European Ministers of Justice, Moscow, 4 October 2001; National Public Radio interview and listener call-in with Russian President Vladimir Putin, New York, 15 November 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Meeting of Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin with Chief Correspondents of the Moscow Bureaus of leading US Mass Media at the Kremlin, 10 November 2001.

<sup>28</sup> The fact that the majority of the 9–11 terrorists came from Saudi Arabia, and that the infamous 'Arab terrorist' Khattab in Chechnya also came from there were sources of strain in US–Saudi relations. Russian officials, more than the United States, were strident in their criticism of Saudi

Arabia and Pakistan as breeding grounds of terrorism. Marginalised in all this talk was the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which Hosni Mubarak of Egypt pointed out was a ‘breeding ground’ for a new generation of terrorism threatening world security; see Erlanger (2001).

<sup>29</sup> Statement by Aleksandr Yaevenko, the official spokesman of Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Regarding the note of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Georgian side over the threat of international terrorism’.

<sup>30</sup> For an exception see the statement by Igor Ivanov at the Meeting of the UN Security Council on Counter-Terrorism.

<sup>31</sup> Though Wahhabism refers to a particular version of Islam that is found predominantly in the Arabian peninsula, the term is used widely in Russia to signify any sort of Islamic fundamentalism.

<sup>32</sup> President Putin’s Address to the Bundestag, 25 September 2001.

<sup>33</sup> Speech by President Vladimir Putin at the meeting of the CIS Heads of Government Council in Moscow, 28 September 2001.

<sup>34</sup> See Putin’s Bundestag speech, his address at the meeting of the CIS Heads of Government Council in Moscow, 28 September 2001, and speech at the Russian Embassy in Washington DC, 13 November 2001.

<sup>35</sup> Sergei Yastrzhembsky, quoted in *LaFraniere* (2001), p. A17.

<sup>36</sup> Meeting of Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin with Chief Correspondents of the Moscow Bureaus of Leading US Mass Media at the Kremlin, 10 November 2001.

<sup>37</sup> See Lieven (2002) for a balanced account. He quotes one source as claiming Bin Laden sent 400 men to Chechnya. Motivations exist on both sides to exaggerate the significance of radical Islam. In an 8 November 2001 videotaped message, Bin Laden denounces Putin by name as well as the Russian war in Chechnya.

<sup>38</sup> These storylines continued to be influential; see Politkovskaya (2001a, 2001b).

<sup>39</sup> George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, Washington DC, 20 September 2001.

<sup>40</sup> Putin’s representation of the causes of the Chechen conflict requires more detailed examination than can be provided here. Suffice it to say that it involves an acknowledgement, on one hand, that the problems of Chechnya involve more than international terrorism and external interference yet, soon after, reiterates the theme of international terrorism. For example, in his interview with American reporters on 10 November 2001, he said: ‘We are waging a land operation against international terrorism in the territory of the North Caucasus. The problem of Chechnya is much more complex than simply a problem of international terrorism. But it is a fact that international terrorism is present there’.

<sup>41</sup> These words are repeated in many sources including the *Financial Times*; *Asia–Africa Intelligence Wire*; Aris (2001); Ferreira-Marques (2001).

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Glasser (2001b). President Putin was no doubt pleased when, during an interview with National Public Radio in the United States, he heard one listener declare that ‘it seems like Russia has gone through pretty much what we are going through now with Chechnya with the terrorists’ and ask what advice he could give the United States about handling terrorism; see National Public Radio interview and listener call-in with Russian President Vladimir Putin, New York, 15 November 2002.

<sup>43</sup> President Putin’s address to the Bundestag, 24 September 2001.

<sup>44</sup> Putin, in fact, in his Bundestag address offered an updated Russian version of Sir Halford Mackinder’s old fear of a German-heartland alliance, noting that ‘Europe will consolidate its reputation as a powerful and truly independent centre of world politics, firmly and for the long term, if it can join its own capabilities with Russia’s possibilities—with the human, territorial and natural resources, and the economic, cultural and defence potential of Russia’. For Mackinder’s biography and geopolitical models see Parker (1982).

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Glasser (2001a); see also M. Khodarenok, ‘Na vtoroi “afgan” net sil’, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 2 November 2002, p. 2; ([http://ng.ru/politics/2001-11-02/1\\_afgan.html](http://ng.ru/politics/2001-11-02/1_afgan.html)).

<sup>46</sup> I. Korotchenko, ‘Armeiskoe dvoevlastie’, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 6 March 2002, [http://www.ng.ru/politics/2002-03-06/2\\_army.html](http://www.ng.ru/politics/2002-03-06/2_army.html).

<sup>47</sup> An article by Igor Bunin, general director of the Centre for Political Technologies, ‘Two oppositions to Putin’, *www.Politikom.ru*, 13 November 2001, examined the leftist and ‘El’tsin family’ oppositions to Putin’s policies. He concludes that Putin has been able to unite ‘strong state’ ideals with liberal values and that any opposition remains fractured along ideological lines and interest priorities. The article is also available as FBIS (Foreign Broadcasting Information Service) report CEP 2001111300025.

<sup>48</sup> Meeting of RF President Vladimir Putin with Chief Correspondents of the Moscow Bureaus of Leading US Mass Media at the Kremlin, 10 November 2001.

<sup>49</sup> President Bush and President Putin's joint press conference, 13 November 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Speech by President Putin to the Baker Institute, Rice University, Houston, Texas, 14 November 2001. He reiterated these themes in an interview with the *Financial Times*, 13 December 2001, and complained that 'Cold War era' politics and prejudice were blocking Russia's opening of negotiations with the World Trade Organisation.

<sup>51</sup> President Bush and President Putin's joint press conference, 13 November 2001.

<sup>52</sup> All figures from the Pew Global Attitudes Project; see the tables in <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=165>. Russians rank 7th in the samples who dislike US music, films and TV, behind Bolivia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Egypt, Jordan and Pakistan.

<sup>53</sup> But on another measure the US ranks high in Russian eyes: among respondents to a survey of Russians by FOM reported in Kolossov (2002b), 29% mentioned the American general contribution to world culture, moral and spiritual norms, laws protecting democracy and human rights as 'civilisational' criteria. The USA, Germany and France were at the top of the list of 'civilised countries', with respectively 33%, 22% and 20% of the 'votes' (26% refused to answer or could not give an example of a 'civilised country').

<sup>54</sup> See the tables in A. Petrova, 'Dearest enemy', 17 May 2002, <http://english.fom.ru/reports/frames/eof021html>.

<sup>55</sup> Michael McFaul remarks on this trend in his comments transcribed in the Report of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 'Is the US–Russia Partnership Working?', 10 October 2002, <http://www.ceip.org/files/events/2002-10-10-us-russia-tscript.asp>.

<sup>56</sup> We use the term 'significantly' in this section in the statistical sense—that is, the mean replies are statistically different at the 5% level of confidence. If the mean percentage difference between two sub-samples is less than 3.5% (the margin of error in the survey), we do not consider the difference to be significant.

<sup>57</sup> Pew Global Attitudes Project, 3 December 2002; see <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=165>.

<sup>58</sup> See Høiris & Yürükel (1998); Wright, Goldenberg & Schofield (1995); and Karny (2000).

<sup>59</sup> The polls are summarised and reviewed in O'Loughlin & Kolossov (2002).

<sup>60</sup> See the tables in Pew Global Attitudes, <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=165>. The surveys (38,000) were conducted in July–October 2002 with representative national samples and a margin of error less than 5%.

<sup>61</sup> Michael McFaul in his testimony to the US House of Representatives, 22 February 2002, reproduced in <http://www.ceip.org/files/Publications/McFaul022702testimony.asp?pr=2&from=pubdate>. See also Ponarin (2002).

<sup>62</sup> For more on the 'clash of democratic and traditional cultures in contemporary Central Asia' see Kaiser (2002), p. A1.

<sup>63</sup> In trying to identify sub-samples that show a majority disapproving Putin's foreign policy, only tiny sub-groups such as elderly female Communist supporters could be so identified. Putin's approval extends widely across all major socio-demographic groups.

<sup>64</sup> Already on the next day after the events of 11 September the Federal Security Service (FSB) stressed that the terrorist attack against the US and the bombing of apartment houses in Moscow and Volgograd in September 1999 were links in the same chain, and were backed by the same organisers and sponsors (communication of the public relations directorate of FSB, 12 September 2001, quoted from the official web site of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [www.mid.ru](http://www.mid.ru)).

<sup>65</sup> Only Bulgarians ranked higher in terms of the percentage dissatisfied with their level of income. The samples for Bolivia, Honduras, Venezuela, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and the Philippines ranked higher than Russians (7th overall) for the ratio who said that they did not have enough money to buy the food that the family needed in the past year; data from Pew Global Attitudes survey, <http://people-press.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=165>.

<sup>66</sup> For instance, answering the open-ended question of a FOM monitor survey on 3–4 August 2002, 'Please, in your opinion, list the main problems faced by contemporary Russia', 28% of respondents named the low level of economic development (economic crisis and unemployment), 26% the low level and quality of life (poverty, high prices, low salaries, inaccessible education and health care etc), 19% the lack of an efficient system of state management (weakness of power, inadequate legislation, corruption and concentration of power in the hands of tycoons, the absence of national idea and ideals, the situation in the army), 15% criminality and drugs, 5% the moral crisis and 5% the war in Chechnya and ethnic conflicts (20% could not answer). There was thus not a single respondent who worried about the international situation of the country, international terrorism etc; see <http://www.fom.ru/>. When asked during our survey 'What are the most pressing issues in Russia today?', 62% gave 'internal problems' as the answer and another 26% answered 'internal as well as external'. Only a tiny minority (8%) thought that foreign problems were most pressing.

<sup>67</sup> Though Putin has stressed that Russia does not require any compensation for her decision to support the anti-terrorist coalition, the political opposition and many in the media accused the US of not reciprocating, even drawing up a list of Russian steps toward closer cooperation. Russian complaints against the US include the US decision to leave the 1972 Anti-Missile Defence Treaty, the refusal to help Russia to restructure her debts, as was done in the case of Poland and Pakistan, the continuation of the Jackson–Vanik trade amendment, a decision to stock nuclear warheads instead of destroying them, the tightening of US visa rules, the establishment of drastic quotas for imports of steel from Russia, a new wave of criticism of human rights violations in Chechnya and the state of civil freedoms in Russia, the active promotion of Baltic republics' membership of NATO and the refusal to support the position of Paris and Berlin, who proposed to limit the new wave of enlargement to Central European countries, and official American declarations about the intention to keep new American bases in former Soviet Central Asia for a long time under the pretext of the need to support 'democratic reforms', i.e. to exchange loans, investment and economic aid for loyalty to the US. These arguments were used to dispute Putin's strategy not only by Communists and other left forces but partly also by liberal parties and media; see N. Airapetova, 'Kak Rossiya vyshla iz SNG', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 26 December 2001, [http://ng.ru/cis/2001-12-26/5\\_about.html](http://ng.ru/cis/2001-12-26/5_about.html).

<sup>68</sup> The comments of Andrew Kuchins are transcribed in the Report of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 'Is the US–Russia Partnership Working?', 10 October 2002, <http://www.ceip.org/files/events/2002-10-10-us-russia-tscript.asp>.

### References

- Adamishin, A., 'Zachem nam nuzhna prozapadnaya vneshnyaya politika', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 16 March 2002.
- Aris, B., 'Putin Warns of Rift Over "Double Standards" ', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 November 2001, p. 8.
- Badkhen, A., 'Next Steps in Fighting Terrorism: Russia's Helping Hands Tied by History', *Boston Globe*, 17 September 2001, p. A6.
- Badkhen, A. & Shadid, A., 'Russia Agrees to a Regional Role, Bases, Airspace Offered', *Boston Globe*, 25 September 2001, p. A1.
- Clover, C., 'Dreams of the Eurasian Heartland: The Reemergence of Geopolitics', *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1999, pp. 9–13.
- Cottrell, R., 'Russia: Army Wary of Becoming Involved in Any Action', *Financial Times*, 19 September 2001.
- Diligenski, G., *Rossiiskie arkhetypy i sovremennost'—Kuda idet Rossiya? Obshchee i chastnoe v sovremennom razviti* (Moscow, Prometei, 1997).
- Diligenski, G., 'Zapad v rossiiskom obshchestvennom soznanii', *Obshchestvennye nauki i sovremennost'*, 2000, 5, pp. 41–53.
- Drozdiak, W., 'Putin Eases stance on NATO Expansion: Closer Ties with the West Pursued', *Washington Post*, 4 October 2001, p. A1.
- Drozdiak, W. & Chandrasekaren, R., 'NATO: U.S. on Bin Laden Compelling', *Washington Post*, 3 October 2001, p. A11.
- Erlanger, S., 'Schroeder Urges Milder View of Moscow Role in Chechnya', *New York Times*, 26 September 2001, p. B6.
- Ferreira-Marques, C., 'Putin Backs Wider Role for India After War', *Boston Globe*, 7 November 2001, p. A6.
- Gardner, D., 'Why Russia Matters Again', *Ottawa Citizen*, 21 September 2001.
- Gerber, T. P. & Mendelson, S. E., 'Russian Public Opinion on Human Rights and the War in Chechnya', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 18, 4, 2002, pp. 271–305.
- Glasser, S., 'Russia Rejects Joint Military Action with United States', *Washington Post*, 15 September 2001a, p. A6.
- Glasser, S., 'Russia Welcomes Chechnya Support: Contacts with Rebels Follow U.S. Reversal', *Washington Post*, 28 September 2001b, p. A25.
- Glasser, S. & Baker, P., 'Putin, Bush Weigh New Unity Against a "Common Foe" ', *Washington Post*, 13 September 2001, p. A25.
- Goldgeier, J. & McFaul, M., 'George W. Bush and Russia', *Current History*, 657, October 2002, pp. 313–324.
- Høiris, O. & Yürükel, S.M. (eds), *Contrasts and Solutions in the Caucasus* (Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, 1998).
- Jack, A., 'Moscow in Talks on Joint Force', *Financial Times*, 27 September 2001, p. 6.
- Kaiser, R.G., 'Putin's Bold Steps', *Washington Post*, 10 November 2001, A27.

- Kaiser, R.G., 'U.S. Plants a Shaky Footprint in Central Asia', *Washington Post*, 27 August 2002, p. A1.
- Karny, Y., *Highlanders: A Journey to the Caucasus in Quest of Memory* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000).
- Kolossov, V. (ed.), *La collocazione geopolitica della Russia: Rappresentazioni e realtà* (Turin, Edizioni della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 2001).
- Kolossov, V. (ed.), *Mir glazami rossiyan: obshchestvennoe mnenie i vneshnyaya politika* (Moscow, FOM, 2002a).
- Kolossov, V., '“High” and “Low” Geopolitics: Images of Foreign Countries in the Eyes of Russian Citizens', *Geopolitics*, 8, 1, 2002b, pp. 121–148.
- Kolossov, V. & Turovsky, R., 'Russian Geopolitics at the Fin-de-siecle', in A. Dawson & R. Fawn (eds), *The Changing Geopolitics of Eastern Europe* (London, Frank Cass, 2001), pp. 141–164.
- Kovalev, S., 'Putin's War', *New York Review of Books*, 10 February 2000, pp. 4–8.
- Kuchins, A., 'Explaining Mr. Putin: How New is Russia's Foreign Policy?', Address to the Kennan Institute, Washington DC, 6 December 2002a.
- Kuchins, A., 'Introduction', in A. Kuchins (ed.), *Russia after the Fall* (Washington, DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002b), pp. 1–18.
- LaFraniere, S., 'Moscow Eager to Tie Rebels in Chechnya to Bin Laden', *Washington Post*, 26 September 2001, p. A17.
- Lapidus, G., 'Putin's War on Terrorism', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 18, 1, 2002, pp. 41–49.
- Lieven, A., 'What is the Future of Chechnya?', in A. Kuchins (ed.), *Russia After the Fall* (Washington, DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), pp. 242–259.
- Lipman, M., 'Russia's Values', *Washington Post*, 24 December 2002.
- Malashenko, A.V., *Islamskoe vozrozhdenie v sovremennoi Rossii* (Moscow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1998).
- Malashenko, A.V. & Yunusova, A.B. (eds), *Etnichnost'i konfessional'naya traditsiya v Volgo-Uralskom regione Rossii* (Moscow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1998).
- Matthews, M., 'U.S. says Russia Fights Terror in Chechnya: White House Statement Seen as Reward to Putin After his Offer of Support', *Baltimore Sun*, 27 September 2001, p. A12.
- McFaul, M., 'Revolutionary Ideas, State Interests, and Russian Foreign Policy', in V. Tismaneanu (ed.), *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharp, 1995), pp. 27–52.
- McFaul, M., 'Putin's Risky Westward Turn', *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 November 2001, p. 11.
- Mufson, S., 'Foreign Policy's “Pivotal Moment”': From Chechnya to China, U.S. sees Relations in a New Light', *Washington Post*, 27 September 2001, p. A1.
- O'Loughlin, J., 'Geopolitical Fantasies, National Strategies and Ordinary Russians in the Post-Communist Era', *Geopolitics*, 6, 1, 2001, pp. 17–48.
- O'Loughlin, J. & Kolossov, V., 'Still “Not Worth the Bones of a Single Pomeranian Grenadier”': The Geopolitics of the Kosovo War 1999', *Political Geography*, 21, 5, 2002, pp. 573–591.
- Ó Tuathail, G., *Critical Geopolitics* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
- Ó Tuathail, G., 'Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 22, 2/3, 1999, pp. 107–124.
- Ó Tuathail, G., 'Theorizing Practical Geopolitical Reasoning: The Case of U.S. Bosnia Policy in 1992', *Political Geography*, 21, 5, 2002, pp. 601–628.
- Parker, W.H., *Mackinder: Geography as an Aid to Statecraft* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1982).
- Politkovskaya, A., *A Dirty War: A Russian Reporter in Chechnya* (London, Harvill, 2001a).
- Politkovskaya, A., 'Remember Chechnya', *Washington Post*, 14 November 2001b, p. A33.
- Ponarin, E., 'Walking on Thin Ice: Putin's Rapprochement with the U.S. on the Background of Latent Anti-Americanism in Russia', PONARS Policy Memo No. 269. Washington, DC, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Problem on New Approaches to Russian Security, 2002.
- Reddaway, P., 'Is Putin's Power More Formal Than Real', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 18, 1, 2002, pp. 31–41.
- Rose, R., Munro, N. & White, S., 'How Strong is Vladimir Putin's Support', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 16, 4, 2000, pp. 287–312.
- Salmin, A.M., 'Iznanka vneshnei politiki', in S.V. Mikhailov (ed.), *Rossiiskaya politiya na rubezhe vekov* (Moscow, Politeia, 2001), pp. 102–210.
- Sharp, J., *Condensing the Cold War: Reader's Digest and American Identity* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000).
- Sheinis, V.L., 'Natsional'nye interesy i vneshnyaya politika Rossii', <http://www.politcom.ru/2002/jour116.php>.

- Shlapentokh, V., 'Putin's First Year in Office: The New Regime's Uniqueness in Russian History', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 34, 4, 2001, pp. 371–399.
- Sipress, A., 'U.S., Russia Recast their Relationship', *Washington Post*, 4 October 2001, p. A1.
- Smith, G., 'The Masks of Proteus: Russia, Geopolitical Shift and the New Eurasianism', *Transactions, Institute of British Geographers NS*, 24, 4, 1999, pp. 481–500.
- Treisman, D., 'What is Different about Putin's Russia?', *Foreign Affairs*, November–December 2002, pp. 58–72.
- Trenin, D., 'From Pragmatism to Strategic Choice: Is Russia's Security Policy Finally Becoming Realistic?', in A. Kuchins (ed.), *Russia After the Fall* (Washington, DC, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), pp. 187–204.
- Volkova, M., 'Tainyi sovetnik: o sostave intellektual'noi komandy Putina, obespechivshei emu vneshnepoliticheskii proryv v Brussele', *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 5 October 2001.
- White, S. & McAllister, I., 'Putin and His Supporters', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 55, 3, 2003, pp. 383–399.
- Woodward, B., *Bush at War* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 2002).
- Wright, J.R., Goldenberg, S. & Schofield, T. (eds), *Transcaucasian Boundaries* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1995).
- Zimmerman, W., 'Survey Research and Russian Perspectives on NATO Expansion', *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 17, 3, 2001, pp. 235–261.
- Zudin, A., 'Modernizatsiya posle Dubrovki', <http://www.politcom.ru/2002/prognoz2.php> (2002a).
- Zudin, A., 'Novaya sistema koordinat. Zapad v obshchestvennom mnenii rossiyan do i posle 11 sentyabrya', [http://www.politcom.ru/2002/soc\\_test5.php](http://www.politcom.ru/2002/soc_test5.php) (2002b).

#### *Appendix: Survey design and sampling strategy*

The first part of this project was to gather the statements and opinions of the Russian elites and intelligentsia, prominent politicians and government officials through documents and archives of newspapers, mass media, press releases etc. The second part was to see what opinions ordinary Russians held about the war on terrorism, the comparison of the wars in Afghanistan and Chechnya, the support of their leadership for the US campaign against international terrorism, Russia's possible role in the coalition against terrorism, the possible extension of the war to other countries, and attitudes towards the US and to President Bush's statements. The survey was conducted by the Foundation for Public Opinion (Fond Obshchestvennoe Mnenie—FOM) in Moscow under the supervision of the investigators. The complete questionnaire had 53 questions, some of which were open-ended. The sample was representative of the Russian population across the usual socio-demographic categories, regions and size of settlement. The margin of error was 3.5%.

After a pilot survey in Moscow in March 2002, the full survey was conducted in 202 sampling points across Russia by a doorstep interview from 11 to 22 April 2002. Survey questions were posed to two categories of respondents, the all-Russian territorial sample and Muslim inhabitants of those regions of Russia where Islam is the traditional religion. The interviews were completed at the residence of the respondent and the questionnaire consisted of closed and open questions. As an answer to a closed question, the respondent had to choose the variant of the answer most suitable to him or her—one or several—from among those offered. In specially stipulated cases, the interviewer showed the respondent auxiliary cards with the list of answer variants. Each of the 227 interviewers received a complete set of field documents, including description of the borders of the polling district sampled, description of the polling district and a route chart. Selection of respondents was carried out by a routing method for polling districts with the use of quotas on gender, age and education, with the residential population over the age of 18 as the target set. Of the 1,500 respondents, 1,098 were from urban areas and 402 were rural respondents. The interviews were conducted in 64 subjects (*oblasti*, republics etc) of the Russian Federation, with 202 settlements included in the sample. The average time to complete the questionnaire was 25 minutes.

In the Islamic region sub-samples, surveys were administered in four national republics of Russia, where representatives of titular nationalities were interviewed; Kabardinians, Balkarians, Karachevians, Circassians, Tatars and Bashkirs. Three hundred respondents (150 each in urban and rural regions) were interviewed in 29 cities and rural villages in the ethnic republics.

A total of 10,700 contacts were attempted to achieve the completed sample of 1,800. The principal causes of unattainability of respondents were the selection of an uninhabited house or apartment, the impossibility of gaining entrance to a residence (code locks, house phones etc), nobody present after multiple visits, refusal to answer the questionnaire, refusal to open the door, nobody present meeting the targeted socio-demographic quota and an incomplete interview. The effective response rate therefore is 16.8% but the response rate for contacts who met the survey socio-demographic specifications is over 70%.

All completed questionnaires were checked by the heads of the regional branches. Phone and personal visit call-backs within two weeks to 33% of respondents confirmed the completion of the survey accessible to respondents. The interviewers remarked on the general low level of knowledge about foreign policy and Russia's role in the war on terrorism.