

University of Tampere

Faculty of International Relations

International School of Social Sciences

Zachary R. Sorrells

WHY DO THEY DO WHAT THEY DO?

U.S. Foreign Policy Identity Studied Through the Discourse of Political Think Tanks with a  
Focus on U.S. – Russian Relations

Master's Thesis in  
International Relations

TAMPERE 2006

## ABSTRACT

### WHY DO THEY DO WHAT THEY DO?

U.S. Foreign Policy Identity Studied Through the Discourse of Political Think Tanks, with a  
Focus on U.S. – Russian Relations

By

Zachary R. Sorrells

This thesis analyses the discourse of a set of major influential political think tanks in the U.S. in order to better understand the foreign policy identity of the United States. The research focuses on U.S. – Russian relations, but the findings and methodology applied here could be applied in other areas regarding U.S. foreign policy.

The research leverages a theoretical construct based in the works related to Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's Propaganda Model and a strategy to understand identity construction presented by Abdelal, Rawi and Herrera, Johnston and McDermott. This strategy takes a close look at the different types of content in the discourse and the degree of contestation over this content. This helps us understand how firm or in flux the current identity is.

The methodological approach applied is mainly a version of critical discourse analysis. The result is a presentation of the key issues prevalent in the current discourse regarding U.S. – Russian relations, a snapshot of the current U.S. foreign policy identity, and the implications of this identity for future developments in the U.S. – Russian relationship.

## Table of Contents:

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Theoretical Assumptions.....	7
2.1. Theoretical Overview.....	7
2.2. The United States as an Actor.....	11
2.3. The Propaganda Model.....	13
2.3.1. Main Constituents of the Propaganda Model.....	14
2.4. Identity.....	17
2.4.1. Identity Defined.....	17
2.4.2. Identity Content & Contestation.....	19
3. Research Method & Materials.....	24
3.1. Discourse Analysis / Critical Discourse Analysis.....	24
3.1.1. CDA Defined.....	25
3.1.2. Specific Aims and Uses of CDA.....	27
3.1.3. Applying CDA.....	28
3.2. Materials.....	31
4. Analysis.....	32
4.1. Analysis Overview.....	32
4.2. Think Tanks and Text Analysis.....	32
4.2.1. Center for American Progress.....	32
4.2.1.1. Article Summaries.....	34
4.2.1.2. Content Analysis.....	38
4.2.2. AEI.....	45
4.2.2.1. Article Summaries.....	46
4.2.2.2. Content Analysis.....	50
4.2.3. Council on Foreign Relations.....	55
4.2.3.1. Article Summaries.....	56

4.2.3.2. Content Analysis.....	59
4.3. Contestation Analysis.....	62
4.4. U.S. Foreign Policy Identity.....	67
4.5. Implications.....	71
5. Conclusion & Future Research.....	73
6. References.....	76

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of this thesis is to produce a representation of the discourse found in the major U.S. political think tanks regarding U.S. – Russian relations. The purpose of this exercise is to discuss the likely future of U.S. – Russian relations, and more importantly gain a more thorough understanding of the U.S. foreign policy identity. This analysis will be set in the theoretical framework of Chomsky’s Propaganda Model, Castell’s concepts of Identity construction, and the framework established by Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, and McDermott in their paper titled, “Identity as a Variable”. The key methodological approach applied is Critical Discourse Analysis, which is at least partially outlined by Teun A. Van Dijk.

There are many ways to study foreign policy. One approach argues that by understanding the identity of the country under analysis, one can better understand the foreign policy agenda and behavior of that country. This approach is applied in this thesis. First, there is an attempt to understand the “foreign policy identity” of the United States, then, the implications are deduced. Using Chomsky’s Propaganda Model as a starting point helps set the discourse within a broader context. The end result is a presentation of the different aspects of the discourse content, which is useful for developing a “U.S. foreign policy identity”, which can then be used to develop a set of implications for future U.S. – Russian relations.

The theoretical basis for this thesis does not rest upon a single theoretical construct. This thesis is an attempt to produce a snapshot of the current foreign policy identity of the United States, with an emphasis on U.S. – Russian relations. I first make the claim that the U.S. is not a hegemonic power using a combination of Chomsky, Cox, and Nye. In addition to this assumption, Chomsky’s propaganda model helps us understand the role of think tanks in framing the discourse regarding foreign policy. Once we understand “what” the U.S. is as an actor, and how think tanks help frame the discourse, the final theoretical layer regarding identity construction gives a platform for the actual analysis of the discourse. This should explain and/or illustrate the actual foreign policy identity of the United States in regards to Russia.

The thesis then moves on to discuss the methodology applied throughout the research. Critical discourse analysis is applied, therefore there is a discussion about CDA, why it was chosen, the aims of CDA, and how it is applied in this case. The fact that CDA is used in this paper is significant, and the results of this research would be quite different were a different methodology applied. By its nature CDA is normative. Therefore, a certain critical tone is present throughout the text. This tone should by no means detract from the quality of this work; rather it is completely within the guidelines of such a method. The key goal of applying this method is to present a “story” which helps the reader understand the phenomenon more clearly. If this goal is achieved, this research will have been a success.

Following the discussion on research method, the actual analysis is presented. The analysis is conducted by looking at texts produced by three different think tanks that represent the spectrum of ideologies in major public discourse in the United States. The analysis is organized by think tank. In other words, all the texts of one think tank are analyzed, and a set of findings are presented, then the second think tank, then the third think tank. After which, the findings from the three separate think tanks are compared and combined to produce a meaningful snapshot of the current discourse and thus a snapshot of the U.S. foreign policy identity.

The framework of the analysis is based on s Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, and McDermott’s structure which outlines four key areas to examine when trying to understand identity. Finally, the level of contestation between the three think tanks is examined to help provide clues as to how firm certain elements of the identity are, or how much these elements are still being formed and created. The result of this type of analysis is both a close examination of each of the three think tanks, and a “bigger picture” analysis of the broader discourse.

An admitted weakness within this analysis is the relatively small size of the materials analyzed. There are twelve texts analyzed, four from each think tank. This does not equal a fully representative sample. However, because these think tanks are the most commonly cited, and are located on different spots along the ideological spectrum, one could assume that the material analyzed is indicative of what would be found in a broader analysis.

A set of implications for the future of U.S. foreign policy and specifically U.S. – Russian relations are deduced from the aforementioned analysis. This is the section which draws fully on the theoretical assumptions and the analysis to offer the reader a clear, concise description of the current situation. Following the implications section, a few concluding comments are presented as well as a set of areas for further research that the author believes would be fruitful and valuable for helping to understand U.S. foreign policy identity and U.S. – Russian relations.

## 2. THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

### 2.1 Theoretical overview

Three main strands of theory are applied in this thesis. Each plays an important role in telling a meaningful story about the current U.S. foreign policy identity as related to U.S. – Russian relations. First, for the purpose of this thesis, the U.S. is not positioned as a hegemonic power, rather the U.S. is considered as the most powerful superpower in the world, looking to extend itself globally and gain more power. Second, the structure described by Chomsky as the “Propaganda Model” is presented. It plays a dual role in this thesis by explaining, to a degree, how and why the discourse presented by think tanks is an important part of the general discourse, and by connecting discourse with specific interests within the U.S. system. Finally, a theoretical premise for the identity research within this thesis is presented through elements of Manuel Castells’ view of identity and Abdelal’s work in the area. Together these tools provide both a general and more specific way to think about and analyze identity. The three strands of theory work together to help illustrate the production of discourse, which serves specific interests in the U.S. system. This discourse both creates, and is representative of, the foreign policy identity of the U.S. and this identity influences greatly the actions taken by the U.S. on the global stage. The link between identity construction through discourse production and U.S. – Russian foreign policy is established through the use of these theoretical frameworks.

### 2.2. The United States as an Actor

Before entering a discussion regarding Chomsky’s propaganda model, it is useful to address the issue of the United States as an actor. One way to frame this conversation is by addressing the United States’ hegemonic status. This should help explain its actions on the global stage.

Hegemony is quite simply a form of dominance, but as Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton write in their article titled, *Theoretical and Methodological Challenges of neo-Gramscian Perspectives in International Political Economy*:

It [hegemony] becomes more than simply state dominance. Within a world order, a situation of hegemony may prevail 'based on a coherent conjunction or fit between a configuration of material power, the prevalent collective image of world order (including certain norms) and a set of institutions which administer the order with a certain semblance of universality' (Cox, 1981, p. 139). This means that it's not merely dependant on a strong state or a powerful military. In fact Robert Cox points out that hegemony is constituted through three spheres of activities: social relations of production, forms of state, and world orders. (Bieler, Adreas and Adam David Morton, 2003)

There are two key points mentioned here that are relevant to this analysis. First, in Cox's conception of hegemony, "the production and reproduction of knowledge and of the social relations, morals and institutions are prerequisites to the production of physical goods" (Cox, 1989, p. 39). Second, in Bieler and Morton's words (2003), "the state is not unquestioningly taken as a distinct institutional category, or thing in itself, but conceived as a form of social relations through which capitalism and hegemony are expressed". This means that civil society, consisting of elements such as the church, media and academia are just as important as government apparatus (Gramsci, 1971, p. 261). These points are significant because they link the production of ideas, knowledge, morals and the like, to the production of physical goods, or, in other words, are a source of profits in the capitalist system. This in turn clearly links ideas, knowledge and morals to profit making potential, and inextricably link government, corporations, media, religion, and academia to the production and/or continuation of hegemony.

Moving on to the question of the U.S.' hegemonic status, both Noam Chomsky and Joseph Nye offer views to support the argument that the United States is not a hegemonic power. As hegemony is not only the ability to achieve one's objectives by force, Nye's concept of soft

power is crucial to the continuation of hegemonic status. He states in a broad sense that, “Power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants” (Nye, 2004, p. 2). He continues by saying, “You can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want” (p. 2). In the most simplistic terms, threats relate to military strength, payments correlate with economic might and the ability to attract or co-opt corresponds with what Nye refers to as, “soft power”. This “soft power” is the ability to get people to do what you want without the “carrot” or the “stick”, rather they do it because they intrinsically want to.

Nye points to three primary sources of a country’s soft power, “Its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)” (p. 11). Nye is quite clear on the fact that the United States’ soft power is declining significantly. He points to events ranging from the decreasing global popularity of some American products, to an increasingly negative view towards American foreign policy. For example, Nye points out that:

A widespread and fashionable view is that the United States is a classically imperialistic power... That mood has been expressed in different ways by different people, from the hockey fans in Montreal who boo the American national anthem to the high school students in Switzerland who do not want to go to the United States as exchange students (p. 128).

Chomsky approaches the argument of the U.S. loss of hegemonic status from a different angle and helps connect the dots between Cox’s concept of hegemony and Nye’s view of America’s weakening soft power dimension.

In 1978 Chomsky wrote, “From the early 1970s, a major task of the American state and its propagandists has been to reconstruct the domestic and international order and the ideological system that was bruised, though never really seriously threatened”(Chomsky, 1978, p. vii). This reconstruction occurred on the heels of the U.S. defeat in Vietnam, when American hegemony was called into serious question. It would not be hard to argue that this marked, if not the precise

moment of defeat for American hegemony, the era when it became painfully apparent to the ruling elite of the United States that they could no longer do whatever they wanted on the global stage.

It would seem illogical, and there seems to be little historical precedent of a great power, willfully forfeiting power. It is more logical to suppose a great power will, if not attempt to acquire more power, at least attempt to retain its current power position. It follows that the U.S. hegemonic system (or once hegemonic system) would then function in a way that facilitates retaining power or reasserting itself. To take this argument one step further, the intelligentsia, as Chomsky refers to the intellectual elite who guide moral truths and knowledge creation, play a significant role in re-asserting this power by producing a public (and/or private) discourse that supports this hegemonic system.

Chomsky (1978) states that:

If we hope to understand anything about the foreign policy of any state, it is a good idea to begin by investigating the domestic social structure: Who sets foreign policy? What interests do these people represent? What is the domestic source of their power? It is reasonable to surmise that the policy that evolves will reflect the special interests of those who design it. (p. 1)

Chomsky (1978) somewhat answers his own questions when he writes:

In the United States, as elsewhere, foreign policy is designed and implemented by narrow groups that derive their power from domestic sources; in our form of state capitalism, from their control over the domestic economy, including the militarized state sector. Study after study reveals the obvious: top advisory and decision-making positions relating to international affairs are heavily concentrated in the hands of representatives of major corporations, banks, investment firms, the few law firms that cater to the corporate interests... (p. 10)

Chomsky (1978) continues, “In every society, there will emerge a caste of propagandists who labor to disguise the obvious, to conceal the actual workings of power, and to spin a web of mythical goals and purposes, utterly benign, that allegedly guide national policy” (p. 1).

In summary, the U.S. is not a hegemonic power, and therefore is in a power struggle. We can then assume that U.S. foreign policy is designed to improve the U.S.’s relative power position on the world stage. The interests of the state are linked closely to corporate interests, or it may even be possible to go one step further and say that U.S. interests ARE corporate interests. The intelligentsia has an agenda that links closely with the perpetuation of a hegemonic system or the aspiration of regaining hegemonic status. The U.S. could be accurately described as a complex system that actively constructs a world that best suits the interests of multi-national corporations.

### 2.3. The Propaganda Model

Building on the premise that the United States is a complex system that works in a way to perpetuate and extend the power of large corporations, it would be impossible to analyze the whole of the system. However, one key element that relates directly to the discourse of political think tanks is the question of how issues are framed and discussed. Chomsky’s propaganda model helps to shed light on this specific component of the system.

In the book titled, *Manufacturing Consent*, Noam Chomsky and Ed Herman, outline what they refer to as the “Propaganda Model”. In his book *Understanding Power*, Chomsky describes this idea of a “Propaganda Model” more as a truism than a theory as such. “It says, that you’d expect institutions to work in their own interests, because if they didn’t they wouldn’t be able to function for very long” (Chomsky and Herman, 1988, p. 14). In this case he is talking about the institutions in the United States that currently hold the majority of the power. These are the institutions that have a stake in perpetuating and extending the current system of power.

Chomsky (1988) states that the Propaganda Model is, “primarily useful to help us think about the media,” and in this case how the media, or a component of the media system, helps us think

about the U.S. foreign policy identity (p. 15). Herman and Chomsky's idea of media is much broader than simply what appears in newspapers or magazines, and on t.v. or radio. They are considering the entire system and forces of the system that dictate the size, scope and content of public discourse. In their words:

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda. (Chomsky, 1988, pg. 1)

This propaganda model consists of a group of five key elements that function to produce a system that is quite effective at managing the discourse:

The essential ingredients of our propaganda model, or set of news "filters," fall under the following headings: (1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms; (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media; (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power; (4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media; and (5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism. These elements interact with and reinforce one another. The raw material of news must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print. They fix the premises of discourse and interpretation, and the definition of what is newsworthy in the first place, and they explain the basis and operations of what amount to propaganda campaigns. (Chomsky, 1998, p. 2)

In this thesis I will leverage mainly the third "ingredient", "the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and experts funded and approved by these primary sources of agents of power" (Chomsky, 1988, p. 2). Political think tanks in the U.S. at least partially fill this role rather well. Consequently, this model offers a valuable system in

which to position think tanks. They are analyzed as the “producers of fact” within this model, and a sector which represents the elite from government, business and academia.

In order to understand how the third element fits into the entire system, it is necessary to briefly outline the other four elements and how they fit together. This will clarify the position of think tanks within the overall system.

### 2.3.1 The main constituents of the propaganda model

#### *Size, Ownership, and Profit Orientation of the Mass Media:*

If this filter were discussed in general business vernacular it would be described as the extremely high cost of entry into the media business. In many industries, big, established businesses have a distinct advantage over small businesses simply because of the massive investment required to start-up a business in that industry. For example, one doesn't see small oil companies popping up all over the place, not because it's an unprofitable business, but because the cost of entering that business area is so enormous, that it is virtually a closed market area.

The result of this dynamic is a relatively small number of large media providers that dictate to a large degree what issues are discussed and how they are discussed. In *Manufacturing Consent*, Ben Bagdikian points out, “that despite the large media numbers, the twenty-nine largest media systems account for over half of the output of newspapers, and most of the sales and audiences in magazines, broadcasting, books, and movies” (Chomsky, 1988, p. 4). He continues by stating that these, “constitute a new Private Ministry of Information and Culture” (p. 4) that can set the national agenda. Chomsky (1988) sums up this filter by stating that the key media firms are big business, “controlled by very wealthy people or by managers who are subject to sharp constraints by owners and other market-profit-oriented forces, and they are closely interlocked, and have important common interests, with other major corporations, banks, and government” (p. 14) This is the first powerful filter that affects news choices.

*The Advertising License to Do Business:*

The main thrust of Chomsky's second filter states that due to the fact that the media business has become an advertising based business model, media content is automatically skewed in favor of big business. Chomsky explains the transition from an audience based business model to the current advertising based business model. The end result is a media system where advertisers (big businesses) are able to exert power over television programming because they in essence buy and pay for the programming. Chomsky sites several examples where companies exerted significant influence over program content, and discusses the implications of this business model. The net result is that big business can and do influence media content in a way that is beneficial to their interests. (Chomsky, 1988 p. 14-18)

*Sourcing Mass Media News:*

“The mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest” (Chomsky, 1988, p. 18). The key feature of this filter is the fact that government and corporate sources of information and “fact” are the key providers of information. There is a “heavy weight” given to official sources for several reasons. Using information provided by government and official sources both protects the media from libel suits and saves time and money that would need to be spent to verify information and facts. It is much easier and more convenient for the media to take these official statements as fact.

Chomsky (1988) describes the magnitude of public information operations of large government and corporate beauracracies, “that constitute the primary news sources” (p. 20). He sites the size of the U.S. Air Force's public information outreach, as well as the Pentagon's budget for public relations. These are just two very obvious public relations machines, but there are other sources as well, such as think tanks, as will be shown later by the number of citations made by the media of key think tanks.

Chomsky (1988) briefly mentions both the origin of think tanks and their role in this system. Chomsky points to what he calls the “shaping of experts” or “co-opting the experts” (p. 23). He claims this is done to reduce the effect of highly respected unofficial sources. This co-opting is

conducted by, “putting them [experts] on the payroll as consultants, funding their research, and organizing think tanks that will hire them directly and help disseminate their messages. In this way bias may be structured, and the supply of experts may be skewed in the direction desired by the government and “the market”” (p. 23).

There is evidence that this process of creating a certain body of experts has been deliberate. In 1972, Judge Lewis Powell, who would later become a Supreme Court Justice, wrote a memo to the Chamber of Commerce urging business, “to buy the top academic reputations in the country to add credibility to corporate studies and give business a stronger voice on the campuses” (Chomsky, 1988, p. 23).

If we take a look at the modern day think tank and analyze more closely the source of financial support, the leadership, and the researchers, we soon realize that the interests of the elite are represented in mass.

#### *Flak and the Enforcers:*

“Flak refers to the negative responses to a media statement or program” (Chomsky, 1988, p. 26). Chomsky (1988) writes that this can take the form of, “letters, telegrams, phone calls, petitions, lawsuits, speeches and bills before Congress, and other modes of complaint, threat, and punitive action” (p. 26). In common terms, Flak is the negative response to those who present views, content, programming, stories, etc. that go against the interests of institutional power. Those in power could be large corporations, government officials and agencies, interest groups, and individuals. Flak has a much larger impact than just a dissenting opinion. Flak can mean the loss of advertising revenues, career and character assassination (CIA leak), law suits, etc. The enforcers are the ones who actively produce this Flak.

#### *Anticommunism as a Control Mechanism:*

Writing in 1988, Chomsky described anticommunist rhetoric and ideology as the final filter. In reading Chomsky’s description of anticommunism, it is not a stretch in the least to replace the term communism with terrorism and apply the logic today. He points to the fact that the ideology of anti-communism “helps to mobilize the populace against an enemy, and because the

concept is fuzzy it can be used against anybody advocating policies that threaten property interests or support accommodation with Communist states and radicalism” (p. 29). There are some differences in the logic behind the war on terror and anti-communism, but the end effect is similar. Chomsky (1988) sums it up well by writing:

The anti-Communist control mechanism reaches throughout the system to exercise a profound influence on the mass media. In normal times as well as in periods of Red scares, issues tend to be framed in terms of a dichotomized world of Communist and anti-Communist powers, with gains and losses allocated to contesting sides, and rooting for “our side” considered an entirely legitimate news practice.... The ideology and religion of anticommunism is a potent filter. (pg. 31)

The point of this thesis is not to draw parallels between the way the terms communism and terrorism are used, but it is not difficult to at least see striking similarities, and the significance of an “enemy”, and just as valuable to the propaganda system is that the “enemy” is extremely abstract and obtuse.

Chomsky claims that these five filters work together to manage the flow and content of the issues discussed. This propaganda model focuses mostly on the media and content present in the media. However, the value of this type of thinking is important for this thesis because it places think tanks within a broader system of discourse management. In the scope of this thesis, it would be nearly impossible to conduct a wide-scale analysis of media content around even a single issue. This model justifies the use of think tank discourse as the main object of study and research material, as these think tanks play a crucial role in defining the content and boundaries of the discourse. They are to a large degree the institutions that are now setting and framing the debate and playing a large role in policy development.

## 2.4. Identity

Building on the assumption that the U.S. is a non-hegemonic power system looking to extend and protect itself, and that the Propaganda Model partially explains the system at work which controls public and private discourse, it now makes sense to discuss how discourse can provide us with valuable clues about the identity of a certain actor. This theoretical discussion about identity provides the framework for the actual analysis for this thesis.

### 2.4.1. Identity Defined

What is an identity? In *The Power of Identity*, Castells (1997) defines identity as “the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is/are given priority over other sources of meaning” (p. 6). Castells defines “identity” as a “process” not as an end state or a completed project. This general view is supported by Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston and McDermott (2005), when they state that in order to research issues regarding identity more effectively, “Techniques [need to be developed] that can take relatively rapid and easily developed snapshots of identities as these evolve, as they are challenged, and as they are constructed and reconstructed” (p. 17).

Other key words used in Castells’ definition are ‘cultural attributes’ and ‘sources of meaning’. For this thesis, Castells’ concept of a cultural attribute will be defined as characteristics of, “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time” (Cambridge online dictionary, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>). ‘Sources of meaning’ could be anything that somehow contributes to defining, giving a purpose to, organizing or describing, someone, something, or a set of phenomenon. Castells’ general definition of identity is helpful, but more so, is how he categorizes the three distinct types of identities:

*1. Legitimizing identity*: introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination over social actors. Legitimizing identities generate civil societies and

their institutions, which reproduce what Max Weber called "rationale Herrschaft" (rational power).

2. *Resistance identity*: produced by those actors who are in a position/condition of being excluded by the logic of domination. Identity for resistance leads to the formation of communes or communities as a way of coping with otherwise unbearable conditions of oppression.

3. *Project identity*: proactive movements which aim at transforming society as a whole, rather than merely establishing the conditions for their own survival in opposition to the dominant actors. Feminism and environmentalism fall under this category. ( Castells, 1997, p. 10-12)

A constant in all of these types of identities is that they are all constructed – legitimizing identity by the dominant institutions, resistance identity by those actors who are in a position/condition of being excluded by the logic of domination, and project identity by leaders of proactive movements or members of proactive movements (implied). This includes individual identities, national identities and regional identities. To clarify, an individual identity could be a legitimizing identity, resistance identity or a project identity, as could a regional identity or a national identity.

Returning to the idea of identity construction, Manuel Castells (1997) writes, “It is easy to agree on the fact that, from a sociological perspective all identities are constructed. The real issue is how, from what, by whom and for what” (p. 6). Castells offers a hypothesis that states in general terms, “Who constructs collective identity, and for what, largely determines the symbolic content of this identity, and its meaning for those identifying with it or placing themselves outside of it” (p. 6).

Castells starts us down the path to understanding this phenomenon. However, in order to understand the process of identity construction within the U.S. as related to U.S. – Russian relations, a slightly more structured and detailed approach to analyzing the discourse must be applied. The guide for this analysis is the analytical framework established by Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, and McDermott in their paper titled, “Identity as a Variable,” the culmination of a significant body of research in the field of identity research.

They define collective identity as a “social category that varies along two dimensions – content and contestation” (Abdelal, 2005, p. 3). They claim that the content is responsible for describing the meaning of a collective identity and this content “may take the form of four non-mutually-exclusive types: constitutive norms; social purposes; relational comparisons with other social categories; and cognitive models” (p. 3), while contestation is the level of agreement or disagreement about the content of the shared category. The “content” referred to by Abdelal is actually what Castells (1997) refers to as “a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes that is/are given priority over other sources of meaning” (p. 6). In other words, they are the building blocks required for the construction of meaning.

#### 2.4.2. Identity content and contestation

Abdelal offers many useful concepts and recommendations for researching identity. Here, only the four types of content which are present in varying degrees, in all social identities, are addressed: constitutive norms; social purposes; relational comparisons with other social categories; and cognitive models. Then, the level of contestation is analyzed to give further insights into the current identity.

##### *Constitutive norms (normative content):*

Constitutive norms are the formal and informal rules that define group membership. Abdelal (2005) states that the “Normative content of collective identity specifies its constitutive rules – the practices that define identity and lead other actors to recognize it” (p. 4). These norms can be “unwritten or codified,” the important issue is that they actually “fix meanings and set collective expectations for the group” (p. 4). There are several different elements to this concept, but one example offered by Abdelal clearly illustrates what is meant by this term. He writes:

Checkel’s (2001) research on Europe’s constitutive norms for citizenship policies falls into this category. Indeed, the European Union’s own Copenhagen Criteria for determining the acceptability of potential members – in a nutshell, a market economy, a democratic polity, and respect for human rights – represent

an explicit assessment of the constitutive norms that define Europeanness for current and potential group members. (p. 5)

*Social Purposes (purposive content):*

Purposive content refers to the shared goals of a group. Purposive content is similar to the notion that, “What groups want depends on who they think they are” (Abdelal, 2005, p. 5). “Thus, identities can lead actors to endow practices with group purposes and to interpret the world through the lenses defined in part by those purposes” (p. 5). Abdelal (2005) explains that normative and purposive content are similar in that they both “impose obligations on members”(p. 6). However, he points out the difference is that constitutive norms (normative content) “impose an obligation to engage in practices that reconstitute the group”(p. 6), while social purposes (purposive content) are somewhat more pro-active in the sense that they, “create obligations to engage in practices that make the group’s achievement of a set of goals more likely” (p. 6).

*Relational comparisons (relational content):*

“Relational comparisons refer to defining a group identity by what it is not, i.e. the way it views other identity groups, especially where those views about the other are a defining part of the identity” (Abdelal, 2005, p. 7). Barnett’s (1999) relational definition of identity developed through his work on the Middle Eastern peace process states that identity represents:

...the understanding of oneself in relationship to others. Group identities, in short, are not personal or psychological, they are fundamentally social and relational, defined by the actor’s interaction with and relationship to others; therefore, identities may be contingent dependent on the actor’s interaction with others and place within an institutional context. (p. 9)

Relational content also helps explain what is referred to in social identity theory as in-group and out-group differentiation. This explains that action is less based on “identity traits per se”, but is more of a reaction to the presence of “those who are different”. This type of thinking predicts “conflict with out-groups regardless of the content of identity – we are peace-loving, but you are

not, and because of this difference you threaten our peace-lovingness; therefore anything goes in dealing with your disposition to threaten us”(Abdelal, 2005, p. 7). This idea could be compared to the common ideas associated with the importance of the “other” when constructing one’s own identity.

*Cognitive Models (cognitive content):*

In Abdelal’s (2005) words “Cognitive models refer to the worldviews or understandings of political and material conditions and interests that are shaped by a particular identity”(p. 8). In other words, how does one’s “Americanness” or “Finnishness” or “Christianness” affect how that person views the world? Abdelal (2005) believes that this framework, “allows members of a group to make sense of social, political, and economic conditions (p. 4). Further, “The cognitive content of a collective identity describes how group membership is associated with explanations of how the world works as well as descriptions of the social reality of the group, in other words, a group’s ontology and epistemology” (p. 9).

Brubaker, Loveman and Stamatov (2004) point out the significance of recognizing the existence of these cognitive models:

What cognitive perspectives suggest, in short, is that race, ethnicity, and nation are not things in the world but ways of seeing the world. They are ways of understanding and identifying oneself, making sense of one’s problems and predicaments, identifying one’s interests, and orienting one’s action. They are ways of recognizing, identifying, and classifying other people, of constructing sameness and difference, and of “coding” and making sense of their actions. (p. 47)

This idea alone, gives theoretical permission to scrutinize the usage of such words as democracy, free-market, ethnic conflict, terrorism, etc. Because, these are not things in the world, rather they are only one way of seeing and describing the world.

Klandermans (1997) adds that cognitive content:

...not only emphasizes the commonality of grievances, it also establishes the group's opposition to the actor held responsible... thus causal attributions are an important element in the identity component... this element is related to the construction of a cognitive schema which comprises causes and solutions for the adverse situation. (p. 18)

The final element regarding cognitive content connects identity construction with land and territory. Risse et al. (1999) have argued, "Collective identities define and shape how actors view their perceived instrumental and material interests and which preferences are regarded as legitimate and appropriate for enacting given identities" (p. 157). Abdelal (2005) hypothesizes that "Identity may indeed shape perceptions of territory, which also shape perceptions of culture" (p. 9) and that, "The attention to the cognitive content shows us both how identity affects how actors understand the world, and consequently, how their material or social incentive for particularly actions will be influenced by their identities"(p. 9). This facilitates the link between discourse, which functions to construct an identity, and strategies that are implemented in practice. If there is a connection between discourse and action, then, if we wish to understand more about both past and future actions, discourse and identity become a useful place to look.

#### *Contestation:*

Regarding contestation, Abdelal (2005) writes, "Indeed, much what we think of as identity talk, or identity discourse, is working out of the meaning of a particular collective identity through the contestation of its members. Individuals are continuously proposing and shaping the meanings of the groups to which they belong" (p. 10).

Contestation cannot be discussed as either present or absent; rather it should be thought of as a matter of degree. Certain content can be more or less contested. Contestation tells us something about the content of the identity itself. For example, Abdelal (2005) claims, "When there is contestation, there is more fragmentation, where there is less contestation, the ideals and values are becoming closer to being accepted inherently" (p. 12).

How is it then possible to identify the degree of contestation that is taking place? Abdelal (2005) explains simply that, “ Because the content of an identity is the product of contestation, the very data that a scholar extracts from a group elucidate, in manner and degree, the members’ consensus and disagreement about the constitutive norms, social purposes, relational comparisons and cognitive models of their collective identity” (p. 11).

In other words, the absence and/or presence of certain issues in discourses give valuable clues regarding the degree of contestation for that specific element. This is valuable to this research, because this concept help guide the research and help gain valuable insight about not only what is being discussed, but also about what is absent from the discourse.

### **3. METHOD**

#### 3.1. Discourse analysis / critical discourse analysis

Abdelal (2005) states in their survey of the scholarly literature on identity that, “discourse analysis, surveys, and content analysis were the most widely used methods for measuring content and contestation of identity” (p. 20). She continues by stating that, “each of these three methods may be used to measure the normative, purposive, relational, and cognitive content of an identity, as well as their contestation” (p.20):

The critical task is for an author to convince his or her readers that a particular reconstruction of the inter-subjective context of some social phenomenon – in our case, a collective identity – is useful for understanding an empirical outcome. Discourse analysis thus can be considered the qualitative contextualization of texts and practices in order to describe social meanings. (Abdelal, 2005, p. 21)

The method of discourse analysis applied in this research is critical discourse analysis (referred to throughout the rest of the text as CDA). In this part of the thesis, CDA is introduced and defined, its general purposes and usefulness are explained, and examples are given of how and where it has been applied, and it is spelled out how and why it is being used in this specific research project. The final part of this chapter is dedicated to a discussion concerning the materials used in this project.

### 3.1.1. CDA defined

CDA is a broad field, and can be defined in a variety of ways. As Ainsworth & Hardy (2004) describe CDA:

Simply put, CDA involves the use of discourse analytic techniques combined with a critical perspective, to interrogate social phenomena. It builds on cultural studies insofar as it draws on social constructionist assumptions, but provides systematic techniques with which to implement them in the academic project, and also provides a critical framework with which to explore material effects (Phillips & Hardy, 2002; Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002; Powers, 2001; Wood & Kroger, 2000). (p. 236)

To more fully understand CDA, it is worthwhile to outline some of the views about discourse. As is the case with many other academic terms, the term “discourse” has been defined in numerous ways. “Discourse has been variously defined (e.g., Jaworski & Coupland, 1999) as a “recognizable collection of statements which cohere together” (Wetherell, 2001, p.194), the “institutionalized use of language and language-like sign systems” (Davies & Harre, 1990 p. 47) and a set of social practices that “make meaning” (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999, p. 7). Du Gay extends the meaning of discourse in a way that is useful for this research. He connects the production of knowledge, and its institutionalization, to actual events:

[Discourse is] a group of statements which provide a language for talking about a topic and a way of producing a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. Thus the term refers both to the production of knowledge through language and representations and the way that knowledge is institutionalized, shaping social practices and setting new practices into play. (du Gay, 1996, p. 43)

For the purpose of this research, we will move forward understanding discourse in this way. Under this definition, statements include written documents, spoken words, or even

images. We are not confined to the basic definition of a spoken statement. In fact, texts will be the main object of analysis for this thesis.

The legitimacy of using texts as the object for discourse analysis is reinforced by Burman & Parker (1993). They believe that although it is impossible to analyze an entire “discourse”, elements of it can be found in texts. These texts by no means are the entire story. There are much broader social and cultural issues at play that function to, “constitute forms of knowledge and beliefs, an interpersonal function in that they help to construct certain forms of self or social identities and relational function in terms of how they contribute to social relations between different actors” (Ainsworth, 2004, p. 236).

There are many different approaches to discourse analysis, ranging from micro-level to macro-level, from focusing on linguistic structure to a more abstract approach, and from descriptive to undoubtedly critical and political (Ainsworth, 2004, p. 236). This research will utilize a critical and political approach to discourse analysis, as referred to above as Critical Discourse Analysis.

A basic element that theoretically legitimizes the use of CDA is a set of some social constructionist assumptions. The most basic being that, “reality is only knowable through social processes of meaning-making” (Ainsworth, 2004, p. 237). This does not mean that there is not a physical reality. Rather, the key word in this statement is “knowable”. We can see the tree, but we don’t know it is a tree until we define it as such, giving it meaning. This is significant in the context of political discourse, and further in the context of this research. It shows that, “any particular version of reality is not natural or inevitable and, in fact, may serve the political aims of specific interest groups” (Ainsworth, 2004, p. 237). “To the extent that my interests determine how it is I describe the world, then my descriptions lose the capacity to objectively describe... more broadly, if you can detect my personal interests you throw my authority into disrepute” (Gergen, 1999, p. 21).

### 3.1.2. Specific aims and uses of CDA

Teun A. van Dijk, one of the leading authors and researchers in the area of discourse analysis (<http://www.discourse-in-society.org/teun.html>), states that, “CDA should deal primarily with the discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 252). This could be discussed on either a micro or macro level. For example, one could use CDA to analyze the relationship between police officers and inner-city youth, or as is the case in this research, analyze the role of think tanks in presenting a “reality” which continues to perpetuate a certain level of injustice and inequality. To be more specific, the exact type of power being abused is the power gained through access to certain media channels, or the power granted from being deemed “experts”, or the power gained by financial support from corporations.

Van Dijk is absolutely clear about the purpose of CDA. He claims that, “CDA does not primarily aim to contribute to a specific discipline, paradigm, school or discourse theory. It is primarily interested and motivated by pressing social issues, which it hopes to better understand through discourse analysis” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 252). In the case of this research, the goal then is to better understand the U.S. foreign policy identity and further U.S. – Russian relations by applying CDA. One would receive little, if any, argument by stating that current U.S. foreign policy is one of the most pressing global social issues at the moment, and any research that would help us to better understand the situation is worthwhile, and therefore suited for CDA. In addition, the recent events involving Russia and the G-8 Summit make U.S.- Russian relations an extremely relevant topic.

Further, the purpose of this type of analysis is not to present an unbiased, neutral analysis of the phenomenon. The researcher has taken a clear stance, in stating that there is a propaganda model that shapes the discourse in a way that serves the interests of the elites, and a key component of this is the ability of political think tanks to shape and mold the prevailing discourse extremely effectively. Further, this system works to produce a domestic and international social order filled with injustice and inequality. According to Van Dijk (1993), this type of critical stance is not only acceptable, but is required when applying CDA:

Unlike other discourse analysts, critical discourse analysts (should) take an explicit sociopolitical stance: they spell out their point of view, perspective, principles and aims, both within their discipline and within society at large... their work is admittedly and ultimately political. Their hope, if occasionally illusory, is change through critical understanding. (p. 252)

He continues:

Their critique of discourse implies a political critique of those responsible for its perversion in the reproduction of dominance and inequality. Such a critique should not be ad hoc, individual or incidental, but general, structural and focus on group, while involving power relationships between groups. In this sense critical discourse scholars should also be social and political scientists, as well as social critics and activists. In other words, CDA is unabashedly normative: any critique by definition presupposes an applied ethics. (pg. 253)

The issue of U.S. foreign policy is undoubtedly broad and complex. By focusing on identity, the scope of the research is narrowed. However, the ambiguity of identity research, combined with the broadness of foreign policy creates a complex research challenge. This is at least one of the reasons why CDA has been chosen for this research. As Van Dijk (1993) writes, "Since serious social problems are naturally complex, this usually also means a multidisciplinary approach, in which distinctions between theory, description and application become less relevant" (p. 252).

### 3.1.3. Applying CDA

According to Van Dijk (1993), one of the key starting points of conducting quality critical discourse analysis is to examine the relationship between social power and dominance. He claims that, "Social power is based on privileged access to socially valued resources, such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge... special access to various genres, forms of or contexts of discourse and communication is also an

important power resource” (p. 254). This methodological assumption, links extremely well to Chomsky’s view of the propaganda model, and further to the position of think tanks within this model. Van Dijk clearly supports the idea that this “special access” that certain elite have plays a significant role in the level of social power they have.

Power is an important word and issue, and how one defines power, greatly influences how CDA is conducted. Van Dijk (1993) writes that, “Power involves control, namely by (members of) one group over (those of) other groups” (p. 254). Van Dijk talks about two different methods of control. Namely, control over action and control over cognition. In other words, one can “limit the freedom of action” and/or “influence their minds” (p. 254).

Although it is debatable about which is more powerful, there are many who believe, and at least van Dijk (1993) specifically, that the cognitive method of control, which applies “persuasion dissimulation or manipulation, among other strategic ways to change the mind of others in one’s own interests” is more powerful (p. 254). This cognitive method of control is not always overt. In fact, much of this type of persuasion or manipulation is “reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear natural and quite acceptable” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 254). And because of this, Van Dijk (1993) recommends that, “CDA need to focus on the discursive strategies that legitimate control, or otherwise naturalize the social order and especially relations of inequality” (p. 254).

He continues:

Managing the mind of others is essentially a function of text and talk. Note, though, that such mind management is not always bluntly manipulative. On the contrary, dominance may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear natural and quite acceptable. Hence, CDA also needs to focus on the discursive strategies that legitimate control, or otherwise naturalize the social order and especially relations of inequality. (p. 254)

In this thesis, the discursive strategies of a set of political think tanks are analyzed to produce a snapshot of the current U.S. foreign policy identity with a special focus on U.S. – Russian relations. This analysis will be set in the context of the U.S. as a complex system that actively constructs a world that best suits the interests of corporations. Further, the assumption is made that the propaganda model is valid. Within this propaganda model, political think tanks play a meaningful role in defining “truth” or presenting the “facts” and for that reason, are a worthwhile subject for analysis. The discourses are analyzed by addressing the four types of content relevant to identity construction as outlined by Abdelal (2005) (normative content, purposive content, relational content, and cognitive content) and the degree of contestation around this content. Finally, after conducting this analysis, and producing an identity snapshot, a set of possible implications for the future of U.S. – Russian relations will be presented. This gives a solid theoretical, methodological and practical point of departure for the rest of this research.

### 3.2. Materials

In critical discourse analysis, especially when related to identity research, texts are seen as, “empirical materials that articulate complex arguments” about social identities of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc.” (Denzin, 1994, p. 509). CDA “mediates the connection between language and social context, and facilitates more satisfactory bridging of the gap between texts and contexts” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 189). This helps us understand the broader political context, and implications (Grant et al., 2004).

This research is focused entirely around a collection of texts. A total of 12 texts are analyzed - 4 texts each, from 3 different think tanks. The think tanks are selected by their relative influence on the media. An assumption is made that the more times they have been cited in the media, the more influential they are. Research conducted by FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting) revealed the rankings for the top 25 most cited think tanks. The think tanks were categorized into 3 main categories depending on their prevailing ideology: Conservative or Center-Right, Centrist, and Progressive or Center-Left. Three think tanks have been selected to review: 1) American Enterprise Institute (Conservative), 2) Council on Foreign Relations (centrist), and 3) The Center for American Progress (Center-left). AEI and the Council on Foreign Relations are both one of the top five most cited think tanks, while the Center for American Progress is ranked 13, but it is the highest ranked think tank with a center-left ideology. The criteria for selecting these think tanks was that they represented one of the key ideologies and were one of the most often cited of that ideology that conducted research in the area of international relations and more specifically Russia (Dolny, 2005, pg. 1).

## 4. ANALYSIS

### 4.1. Analysis overview

The analysis section of this thesis is divided into 3 sections. The first part of the analysis is a set of brief summaries of the texts analyzed. There are four texts reviewed for each of the three think tanks. Following each set of reviews, there is a more in depth analysis of the discourse content discussed in the context of the four key types of content: normative, purposive, relational and cognitive. Many of the specific examples provided could be placed into multiple categories, and in reality the content works together in a more fluid relationship, than is depicted by separating the content into four different types. However, by attempting to categorize the different types of content within the texts, we can more clearly understand the collection of texts analyzed. Then, we can produce a more fluid description by using the knowledge gained by analyzing the parts separately. After each think tank is analyzed in this way, a summary of the think tank is developed. Then, an analysis of the contestation is conducted. All of the texts were found on the respective think tank's website.

### 4.2. Think tanks and text analysis

#### 4.2.1 Center for American Progress

*Mission Statement:*

*The Center for American Progress is a nonpartisan research and educational institute dedicated to promoting a strong, just and free America that ensures opportunity for all. We believe Americans are bound together by a common commitment to these values and we aspire to ensure our national policies reflect these values. Our policy and communications efforts are organized around four major objectives:*

- *developing a long term vision of a progressive America,*
- *providing a forum to generate new progressive ideas and policy proposals,*

- *responding effectively and rapidly to conservative proposals and rhetoric with a thoughtful critique and clear alternatives, and*
- *communicating progressive messages to the American public.*

*We work to find progressive and pragmatic solutions to significant domestic and international problems and develop policy proposals that foster a government that is "of the people, by the people, and for the people." We believe in honoring work, building strong communities, fostering effective government and encouraging free and fair markets.*

*Every day we challenge conservative thinking that undermines the bedrock American values of liberty, community and shared responsibility.*

*The Center for American Progress advances policies that help create sustained economic growth and new opportunities for all Americans. We support fiscal discipline, shared prosperity, and investments in people through education, health care and workforce training.*

*The Center for American Progress promotes the cause of liberty. We press for a government that protects our civil rights, safeguards our neighborhoods and lands, and provides equal justice under the law.*

*In a world of unprecedented threats, the Center for American Progress encourages policies that protect the American people and further our national interests. We promote the need for a strong, smart military and believe America must safeguard its homeland, fight terrorism and take on threats that know no borders. And we believe America's interests are advanced when we strengthen alliances and work with multilateral institutions that support the rule of law.*

*As progressives we stand for policies that unleash the potential of all our people. We are dedicated to promoting concrete ideas that can help create an America that is powerful, just, safe and free. - <http://www.americanprogress.org/site/c.biJRJ8OVF/b.3459/>*

#### 4.2.1.1. Article summaries

##### *Article summary I*

**Title:** Re-engaging Russia and Russians: New Agenda for American Foreign Policy **Author:** Michael McFaul

**Date:** October 25, 2004

**Source:** <http://www.americanprogress.org/site/pp.asp?c=biJRJ8OVF&b=229830>

The main argument of this article is that “U.S. – Russian relations are adrift” (McFaul, 2004, p. 1). This article points out the failures and successes of the current (Bush) administration’s approach to U.S. – Russian relations. Further, it lays out a set of recommendations for future dealings with Russia. The key argument presented by McFaul (2004) is that George W. Bush has done an excellent job at establishing a meaningful personal relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, but has done little to “translate this friendship into concrete objectives that serve U.S. foreign policy interests” (p. 1).

McFaul (2004) generalizes the U.S.- Russian relationship as “stable but stagnant”. He views this as a negative situation, especially since there is, what he frequently refers to as, a “democratic backslide” occurring in Russia, led by Putin himself. He believes the ultimate risk is that at this critical moment in time, Russia could revert, “back to a full-blown dictatorship”. Because of this possibility, and what it would mean for U.S. security, he argues that the administration “must move immediately to re-engage both the Russian state and Russian society” (p. 1).

McFaul addresses several key issues directly. The main thrust of this paper deals with nuclear non-proliferation, trade restrictions, oil and gas resources, the conflicts in Moldova, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, and the amount of involvement the U.S. should have in developing a civil society in Russia. In general, McFaul argues for the elimination of antiquated trade restrictions, demonopolizing the oil and gas industry, finding multilateral solutions to the regional conflicts, and to reach out to, not pull back from, helping Russia develop a strong civil society.

*Article summary II*

**Title:** The Putin Paradox

**Author:** Michael McFaul

**Date:** June 24, 2004

**Source:** <http://www.americanprogress.org/site/pp.asp?c=biJRJ8OVF&b=99061>

As the title indicates, this article is about the positive and negative elements of Putin's behavior. The paradox presented by McFaul (2004) is one between "a positive agenda of economic reform and a negative agenda of political repression" (p. 1). McFaul (2004) points out the "impressive" economic reforms made on one hand, and the "attacks on democracy" on the other, that make "a full-blown dictatorship in Russia a very real possibility" (p. 1).

According to McFaul the successes are: the introduction of a flat tax, a lower profits tax, and new land and legal codes. He further points out that foreign direct investment hit an all time high, hard currency reserves are "bursting", inflation is under control, and per capita income has grown by more than a third in 4 years. He links these successes mainly to the devaluation of the Ruble in 1998 and the rising oil prices. Meanwhile, the political failures are the inhumane war in Chechnya, seizing control of all national television networks, using the law to jail or chase away political enemies, weakening independent political parties and removing candidates from electoral ballots, to name just a few.

The conclusion reached by the author is that despite the economic success of Russia in recent years, they are entering dangerous territory, and in fact if the trend continues he believes, "there is no doubt that a nontransparent, unaccountable Russian state will eventually become a corrupt state unable to sustain long-term and diversified economic growth" (McFaul, 2004, p. 2).

*Article summary III*

**Title:** Wanted: A New U.S. Policy on Russia

**Author:** Sarah E. Mendelson

**Date:** January 2004

**Source:** [http://www.americanprogress.org/AccountTempFiles/cf/%7BE9245FE4-9A2B-43C7-A521-5D6FF2E06E03%7D/russia\\_mendelson.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/AccountTempFiles/cf/%7BE9245FE4-9A2B-43C7-A521-5D6FF2E06E03%7D/russia_mendelson.pdf)

This article outlines why current U.S. policy towards Russia has not worked and the ways to improve it. Mendelson connects Russia's domestic politics to U.S. national security. In fact, Mendelson (2004) states that "Russia's democratic future is of fundamental interest to the United States" (p. 1). And, that despite the emphasis placed on the need for democracy in the Middle East, policy makers have lost focus on the democratic transition in Russia, and as a result there has been a measurable democratic regression.

The key issue for Mendelson is lasting national security. She moves beyond simply trying to secure WMD's (most often seen as the biggest threat to U.S. security) and talks more about ideas and institutions. She refers to these elements as "software" while the weapons are the "hardware". Specifically she calls "software", "transparent, democratic institutions bolstered by democratic activists who share democratic values" (2004, p. 1). Her main argument is that this side of the security question "has been in jeopardy in Russia for a long time" (p. 1).

Mendelson is critical of the Bush administration for "turning a blind eye" to undemocratic practices: controlled elections, Chechnya and the harassment of individual and organized opposition. Mendelson states that this has been done in the name of fighting terrorism, but she believes that little has been gained by ignoring the undemocratic activities of Putin and the Russian state. For example, she points out that Russia was not helpful at the UN prior to the Iraq war, and continues to be unhelpful through their dealings with Iran. To summarize, she feels the U.S. loses much more than it gains by allowing Russia to continue down an undemocratic path.

Mendelson (2004) presents a brief outline of how the U.S. should approach Russia. She says that:

U.S. leadership should send a clear message to democratic and human rights activists that the United States stands with them; the United States can and should assist democratic reform in Russia rather than ending support as is currently planned; the U.S. – Russian relationship should be embedded in core values rather than derivative of presidential chemistry; the United States should work with Russia and with Europe to end the war in Chechnya. (p. 3-4)

She believes that it would be wise to take steps to “help make Russia a real, strategic partner to the United States” (Mendelson, 2004, p. 4).

*Article summary IV*

**Title:** Russia’s Transition to Democracy and U.S. – Russian Relations: Unfinished Business

**Author:** Michael McFaul and Helen Bing

**Date:** January 2004

**Source:** [http://www.americanprogress.org/AccountTempFiles/cf/%7BE9245FE4-9A2B-43C7-A521-5D6FF2E06E03%7D/russia\\_mcfaul.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/AccountTempFiles/cf/%7BE9245FE4-9A2B-43C7-A521-5D6FF2E06E03%7D/russia_mcfaul.pdf)

McFaul (2004) claims that, “the future of Russian democracy is the most important issue in U.S. – Russia relations” (p. 2). In this article, he explains why a functioning Russian democracy is of vital importance to the U.S., and he outlines the steps the U.S should take to help the cause of Russian democracy.

He mentions five key steps that he feels would help this process. First, he believes it is necessary for the current administration to clarify its policy on Russian democracy. There seems to be some discrepancies within the administration as to how the Russian democracy is performing and the actions that should be taken. Second, he thinks that congress should be more vocal about the democratic shortcomings in Russia. Third, the U.S. should help, support and show solidarity

with Russian human rights activists. Fourth, the U.S. should maintain financial support for democracy building activities inside Russia. Finally, Congress should review the past efforts in democracy building within Russia to establish a set of best practices for democracy construction and promotion. (McFaul, 2004, p. 2)

The majority of the rest of the paper sets to describe the current state of Russia in regards to its empirical aspirations, foreign policy, economy, state of democracy, and the link between U.S. national security and Russian democracy. He writes that although the Russian Empire is likely gone for good, the current trend is that Russia wishes to re-exert its influence in its near abroad. McFaul (2004) believes that a democratic Russia “will be less likely to seek to acquire new territory through the exercise of military force” (p. 3). In general, McFaul sees that Russia has decided to move closer to the west, but that it still falls short of what one would call a true ally. In regards to the economy, although Russia is not a fully developed market economy and needs much work, it has realized impressive success over the last 4 years.

#### 4.2.1.2. Content analysis

##### *Normative content*

Normative content is defined as the norms or rules that define group membership. In the context of addressing the foreign policy identity of the U.S. by analyzing the discourse about U.S.-Russian foreign policy, we are attempting to identify the types of behavior, activities, policies, etc., that the U.S. either approves of and sees as positive, or disapproves of and sees as negative. This should identify the “rules” and “norms” that are present in the U.S. foreign policy identity.

The texts presented by the Center for American Progress illustrate a few key areas where rules and norms are defined. The issues are related to supporting U.S. military actions, promoting free market policies and limiting state involvement in the private sphere, and membership in “western” organizations.

It is clear that one gains nearly automatic favor with U.S. foreign policy analysts by providing military support for U.S. military operations. Just as quickly, if the military support fades, so to

can the positive feelings. The U.S. foreign policy elite praise Russia for the assistance in Afghanistan by stating, “The Russian government trained and armed the northern Alliance, shared intelligence with its American counterparts, opened Russian airspace for flights providing humanitarian assistance, and did little to impede the creation of American military bases in Central Asia” (McFaul, 2004, p. 3). However, Russia’s unwillingness to support the war in Iraq and assist in the reconstruction efforts has resulted in a mood change, which is apparent in this collection of texts. Conclusion: Not providing support for U.S. military actions is unacceptable behavior.

The Center for American Progress appears to approve of most policy moves that liberalize the economy, and are critical of actions that either extend the power of the state or limit market freedoms. For example, they praise Russia, and specifically Putin, for introducing a flat income tax of 13 percent, which has raised state revenues, issuing, “new land and legal codes; a new regime to prevent money laundering; new legislation on currency liberalization; and a reduction in the profits tax” (McFaul, 2004, p. 4). However, they are still critical of the presence of too many monopolies, a large state sector, and too much corruption. In general, the Center for American Progress seems very positive about the direction the Russian economy is heading.

The final clear “rule” or “norm” that is revealed is the positive light in which membership in international organizations is viewed. Membership in these “clubs” is definitely a sign of at least some level of acceptance into the international community. In fact, the membership or affiliation of Russia with organizations such as the WTO, NATO, G-8, and the EU, is described by McFauls (2004) as, “a real achievement of the Cold War” (p. 18), and at least representatives he thinks that, “In the future, Russia should acquire normal or full membership in all of these international organizations” (McFaul, 2004, p. 18). Conclusion: at least from the perspective of CAP, integrating Russia into the international community is the proper course of action.

### *Purposive content*

Purposive Content is described as the goals or purposes shared by an identity group. The analysis here focuses on the suggested goals and purposes of U.S. foreign policy. In many cases, the think tanks are offering ideas about what the U.S. should do or what the goals of the U.S.

should be. In the Purposive Content section, these issues are addressed, again relative to U.S. – Russian relations.

There is considerably more Purposive Content present in these texts relative to Normative Content. Throughout these texts the issue of democracy building is discussed at length, and specifically the reasons why promoting democracy in Russia is vital to U.S. interests. Most of the goals are linked back to the issue of democracy. Key goals include reducing the security threat related to WMD's, preventing terrorists from spilling over from the Chechnya conflict, increasing the level of positive engagement with Russia, helping Russia to integrate into the western community of democratic states, improving the energy connection with Russia, and creating a strong economic and investment environment within Russia.

The importance of Russian democracy is repeatedly mentioned, and one could argue that it is the major goal. According to McFaul (2004), “The future of Russian democracy is the most important issue in U.S. – Russia relations today” (p. 2). The reasons stated why democracy is important are that it would, “help ensure economic growth, and to ally ourselves with the Russian people” (McFaul, 2004, p. 7). Further, the authors for the Center for American Progress argue that “the United States should want to see the consolidation of democracy in Russia because the people of Russia want democracy” (p. 7). McFaul (2004) quotes Condoleezza Rice as saying:

The people of the Middle East share the desire for freedom. We have an opportunity – and an obligation – to help them turn this desire into reality. Russians also want freedom. We still have an obligation to help them as well. It is an obligation not only to the Russian people, but to the American people. Active, vocal support for Russian democracy and its supporters serves not only the political and economic interests of Russia's citizens but will advance the national security interest of the American people. (p. 9)

This is consistent with one of the goals introduced by the Center for American Progress. This is the idea of long-term democracy building around the world. The Center for American Progress

clearly sees that, “At the most general level of analysis, there should be no question that the United States has a strategic interest in fostering democratic regimes abroad, and especially in large, powerful countries like Russia” (McFaul, 2004, p. 6). One more issue related to democracy is the fact that CAP believes that “As is, the United States’ commitment to democracy appears hollow” (Mendelson, 2004, p. 4), and steps need to be taken, “for democracy promotion to actually be – and to be perceived to be – central to U.S. foreign policy” (Mendelson, 2004, p. 4).

The Center for American Progress seems to believe that another one of the key goals, albeit ambiguous, of U.S. –Russian foreign policy must be to increase the level of positive engagement with Russia. This, along with promoting democracy, also ambiguous, would help to achieve the more tangible goals of reducing the threat associated with WMD’s, help to solve the conflict in Chechnya, and thus prevent a terrorist spillover from Russia to the rest of Europe and possibly the U.S. More engagement and democracy promotion would also help Russia integrate into the West.

The final main goal as presented in these texts is to increase the reliability of Russia as an oil and natural gas provider, and improve and maintain Russia as a strong and attractive economy for American investment. McFaul (2004) writes that:

In addition to another emerging market filled with potential for American investors, Russia’s economy also has strategic importance for American national interests. Russia is the world’s largest producer and exporter of hydrocarbons, has one of the world’s largest oil reserve bases, and owns 30 percent of the world’s proven gas reserves. Because the United States now seeks to decrease its energy dependence on the unstable regimes in the Middle East, Russia offers a significant alternative source of oil and gas. (p. 9)

### *Relational content*

Relational content is the views and beliefs about other identities or groups which are shared by an identity group. Here we discuss how one group views another group, or how the group views itself relative to another group.

The relational content in this collection of texts paints a relatively clear picture of an “other”. The major points of comparison revolve around democracy, market economy, relative power, and the type of relationship between the U.S. and Russia.

In general there is a condescending tone throughout the texts. Russia is not depicted as an equal. For example, terms like “graduation” are often used when referring to Russia, as well as the concept that, “Russians report that they value democratic ideals and practices, even if they are not ready at this time to fight for the protection or promotion of these practices” (McFaul, 2004, p. 13). It is a quite undeveloped group of people who know what they want, but aren’t even able to fight for it, whereas the U.S. is standing ready to help them.

There is a clear distinction between the U.S. and Russia regarding democracy, market economy, human rights, and freedom of press. Simply, the U.S. is a liberal democracy, Russia is not. The U.S. has a fully functioning free market economy, Russia does not. The U.S. values and protects human rights, while Russia does not. And, the U.S. has a free press and Russia’s press is very “un-free”. In these texts Russia is also described as much weaker economically and militarily, not only relative to the U.S., but to the former Soviet Union.

Throughout these texts, the authors attempt to label Russia. For example, is Russia an ally or enemy, a friend or foe, a member of the West or still an outsider? The most telling phrases used to describe Russia are as an, “ineffective ally” an “embarrassing friend [Putin]”, “not a good partner” and “not a trusted partner” (McFaul, 2004, p. 5). There is almost nothing present in these texts that depict Russia as a true partner or ally. In fact, one very telling statement describes what it will take for Russia to become a better partner, and within this statement there are valuable clues which tell us how Russia is seen now. “Russia will never become a trusted partner of the West and a “normal” European country unless Russia becomes a “normal

democracy” (McFaul, 2004, p. 11). Russia is clearly an outsider, and is clearly not seen as a partner or ally.

### *Cognitive content*

Cognitive content, also referred to as cognitive models, is “worldviews or understandings of political and material conditions and interest, which are shared by an identity group” (Abdelal, 2005, p. 13). In this context we are looking at how the texts interpret the actions and/or actors. The cognitive content presented in these texts could be grouped into four sub-categories: issues related to democracy, Putin, U.S. security, and general world beliefs.

Democracy by far is the most discussed issue in these texts. There is considerable content describing democracy as a valued commodity. It is believed that “If Russia consolidates a liberal democracy at home then Russia will develop into a reliable and lasting ally of the United States in world affairs.” (Mendelson, 2004, p. 1) Another positive outcome expected to be derived from a democratic Russia is that Russia will be less likely to acquire territory through military force. There is also considerable content which describes the link between democracy and economic growth. McFaul (2004) writes, “one of the striking outcomes across the board is the correlation between democracy and economic growth” (p.7), and that “the fastest democratizers are also the fastest economic reformers and most successful economies” (p. 12). Further, the claim that democracies rarely fight other democracies is presented, directly linking Russia’s domestic political developments to U.S. national security. The state of democracy within Russia has already been mentioned in the relational content. However, there is some cognitive content which describes the situation within Russia as a “battle” that the un-democratic forces are currently winning. The texts support the idea that the U.S. should help the pro-democratic forces win this battle.

Russian democracy is clearly linked to U.S. national security in these texts. Other content which involves U.S. security is Russia’s continued support and involvement with regimes such as Iran, Iraq (formerly), and the “fact” that North Korea gained its nuclear capabilities through Russia. The nuclear issue is a key issue in these texts, not only with regards to North Korea and Iran, but also present is the fact that, “Russia is still the only country in the world that can launch a major

nuclear attack against the United States” (McFaul, 2004, p. 10). Although there are still security threats presented by Russia, it is presented as fact that the collapse of the Soviet Union greatly reduced the security threat to the U.S. almost overnight.

In many ways, these texts discuss President Putin and Russia interchangeably. Often times the texts speak of Putin as if he were Russia and Russia were he. Although the texts describe a Putin that “looks to the West”, they also depict a Putin that, “seeks to expand Russian influence throughout the territory of the former Soviet Union”(McFaul, 2004, p. 3). In general he is described as a man carrying out attacks on democracy, civil rights, and a free press.

Other general themes, which describe the state of world affairs include the idea that Russia is the regional hegemon, who can either be a positive or negative force for U.S. interests in the region. The authors of these texts believe with a great deal of certainty that Russia will not ever become a member of the EU. The authors also seem to call for an approach to international politics which is not an “us vs. them” approach which was so prevalent during the Cold War era. They seem to be calling for a more delicate approach which takes into account more shades of grey. Finally, a very telling quote written by McFaul (2004) states that, “the advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country” (p. 8).

#### **4.2.2. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI)**

*Mission Statement:*

*Competition of ideas is fundamental to a free society*

*The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research is a private, nonpartisan, not-for-profit institution dedicated to research and education on issues of government, politics, economics, and social welfare. Founded in 1943, AEI is home to some of America's most accomplished public policy experts--from economics, law, political science, defense and foreign policy studies, ethics, theology, medicine, and other fields. The Institute sponsors research and conferences and publishes books, monographs, and periodicals. Its website, [www.aei.org](http://www.aei.org), posts its publications, videos and transcripts of its conferences, biographies of its scholars and fellows, and schedules of upcoming events.*

*AEI's purposes are to defend the principles and improve the institutions of American freedom and democratic capitalism--limited government, private enterprise, individual liberty and responsibility, vigilant and effective defense and foreign policies, political accountability, and open debate. Its work is addressed to government officials and legislators, teachers and students, business executives, professionals, journalists, and all citizens interested in a serious understanding of government policy, the economy, and important social and political developments. -<http://www.aei.org/about/filter.all/default.asp>*

#### 4.2.2.1 Article summaries

##### *Article summary V*

**Title:** Energy, National Security and Natural Gas

**Author:** Gary Schmitt

**Date:** April 2006

**Source:** [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24223,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24223,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)

This article focuses mainly on the issues of energy security and how this relates to overall U.S. national security. Russia is an important factor in this issue simply because Russia and Iran are estimated to have almost half the world's natural gas reserves. This article explains why it is necessary to improve the energy security of the U.S. and tactics for doing so. The general position of Schmitt (2006) is that the U.S. must expand domestic supplies, "creating a global market in gas, and countering Russian efforts to create a dominant market position" (p. 1). He believes a dominant Russian position would not only threaten energy security, but overall national security as well.

He presents a set of facts and figures, which is meant to illustrate that the U.S. in fact has a large supply of untapped natural gas reserves in areas like Alaska, the Gulf Coast, and the Rocky Mountains, and that the U.S. simply isn't taking advantage of the resources in their backyard. He points to environmental regulations and poor energy infrastructure as the major obstacles preventing access to these valuable resources. In fact, he cites the Energy Information Agency, which believes that there is a sufficient supply of recoverable natural gas in the United States to "take care of America's natural gas demand for fifty to seventy – five years" (Schmitt, 2006, p. 5).

By not utilizing the domestic energy sources, and thus gaining energy security, Schmitt believes we become somewhat beholden to Russia and lose our ability to negotiate from a strong position. The argument is that the Russian state currently uses, and will continue to use even more, their abundance of natural resources as a political tool to extend their influence and power, especially

over neighboring countries and Europe. It is in the U.S. interest for Russia to “promote an open and competitive energy market” which would require, “Gazprom to open its network of pipelines to independent gas producers” (Schmitt, 2006, p. 4).

In summary, Schmitt outlines the two major elements necessary to establish energy and national security in relation to natural gas. The U.S. must utilize domestic energy sources, and must limit Russia’s ability to develop too much power in the natural gas sector.

*Article summary VI*

**Title:** From Russia, with Spin

**Author:** Igor Khrestin

**Date:** May 10, 2006

**Source:** [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24356,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24356,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)

In this brief article, the idea of a battle over Russia’s public image is introduced. The question raised is the issue of how Russia is perceived in the U.S. and internationally. It also illustrates briefly how Russia is attempting to improve its image.

The debate, as presented by Khrestin (2006), stems from the fact that in recent years Russia has been depicted as a potential U.S. ally and the two countries are, “increasingly united by common values. Russia is in the midst of a hopeful transition, reaching for its democratic future and a partner in the war on terror” (p. 1). On the other hand, more recently it has been presented as a country filled with, “opponents of reform [that] are seeking to reverse the gains of the last decade” (p. 1).

Khrestin points out that Russia realizes it has a negative image problem, and that they are taking steps to improve this image. Specifically he cites the pro-Kremlin response to the report issued by the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations task Force titled “Russia’s wrong direction: What the United States Can and Should Do”, which was titled, “Russia’s Right Direction: What Does the U.S. Want?”. In the end this report concluded, “By reinforcing state integrity, making its foreign policy more independent, and confirming its status as a nuclear and energy power, Russia

has chosen the only right direction... Russia should continue reinforcing its defenses against the democratizers who dream of an empire of democracy” (Khrestin, 2006, pg. 1).

Khrestin illustrates a clear difference of opinion between how the U.S. perceives Russia and how Russia wants to be perceived. Maybe even more accurately, the issue is about the direction the U.S. would like to see Russia go, and the direction that Russia is actually heading.

*Article summary VII*

**Title:** Putin’s Pander

**Author:** Igor Khrestin

**Date:** March 2006

**Source:** [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24025,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24025,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)

This article addresses the issue of Russia’s, and more specifically, Putin’s strategy for dealing with the Muslims and terrorists. Khrestin (2006) states that, “Putin’s strategy, evidently, is to repress ordinary Muslims at home while pandering to Islamist extremists abroad” (p. 1).

Khrestin’s view is that Putin has been accommodating, “terror at the expense of Russian democracy and the safety of its own citizens” (p. 1).

The contradiction he points out which he believes is causing serious problems for U.S. – Russian relations, and in the end may put their solidarity in the war on terror at risk, is Putin’s willingness to work with Iran and Hamas and criticizing anti-Muslim sentiment around the world, while driving an extremely hard line in Chechnya. The general view presented in this article is that Putin has no real concern for Muslims, or for the welfare of Russian citizens. Rather, he is attempting to position Russia as a mediator between the western world and the Muslim world, while at the same time presenting a view that he is an ally in the war on terror, and continuing to apply heavy handed tactics in Chechnya.

*Article summary VIII*

**Title:** Threats in Eurasia

**Author:** Leon Aaron

**Date:** September 22, 2005

**Source:** [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.23228,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.23228,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)

This text is the transcript from testimony given to the House Armed Services Committee concerning threats in Eurasia. The focus of this testimony is mainly on Russia and what Aaron (2005) refers to as “the most disturbing trends in Russian politics and their worse-case effects” (p. 1).

The major threats, according to Aaron, are the re-centralization of power in Russia, which he believes could eventually lead to a true autocracy or dictatorship, and the possibility of the total loss of control of the Chechen conflict. He believes these two threats are closely linked. Because of the recentralization of power, if a massive terrorist attack were to occur, he believes public opinion could turn against Putin, resulting in a very unstable situation. Further, he believes that if public opinion were to shift dramatically against Putin, high levels of disorder and chaos could follow. In his mind, this presents the greatest risk, especially in Chechnya. In his view, if the situation becomes any less stable, the entire North Caucasus will become, “a new version of Afghanistan under the Taliban, with all the obvious and extremely adverse consequences for the national security of the United States” (Aaron, 2005, p. 2).

In summary, the major threat in Eurasia is Russia according to Aaron. More so, the centralization of power sets up a precarious situation where a single incident may result in the deterioration of the Russian state, similar to the revolution in 1991.

#### **4.2.2.2. Content Analysis:**

##### *Normative content*

In the AEI texts there are three main streams of normative content. There are norms and rules discussed directly or strongly implied regarding business and more specifically, government involvement in business, and the type of cooperation and involvement with Muslim countries and organizations, and the appropriate level of involvement in other countries' affairs.

In the business arena the texts harshly judge the “band of oligarchs and the Kremlin elite (often perceived as one and the same)” (Khrestin, 2006, p. 1). There is a sense that there should be a certain degree of separation between business and government, and that Russia does not have this separation. In fact, the phrase “band of oligarchs” draws a parallel between Russian businessmen and thieves. Another expectation is that the government should not use economic power to their advantage. In other words, it is unacceptable to wield economic advantages as one would military advantages. The example of Russia's dealings with Ukraine and Georgia are cited. There is also a fine line drawn between a free market and monopolistic behavior. Within the text there is a theme, that Gazprom has crossed the line between taking advantage of free market opportunities, and making attempts to monopolize the energy sector. It is also implied that governments should not directly be able to use the profits from industry. For example, it is mentioned with a negative tone that, “If nothing else, Gazprom's profits provide an enormous slush fund for the Kremlin to dip its hand into, outside the official state budget” (Schmitt, 2006, p. 4).

In these texts there is a definite boundary set which outlines at least generally an acceptable level of cooperation with Muslim organizations and countries, specifically ones that the U.S. does not approve of. The texts are critical towards Russia gaining observer status in, “controversial organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Conference” (Khrestin, 2006, p. 1), and are scathing in their criticism of Russia's dealings with Hamas and Iran. Khrestin (2006) goes as far as to describe, “Putin's groveling in the face of Muslim riots as a part of a broader push on the part of his government over the past several years to reaffirm Russia's “unyielding commitment to Muslim causes””(p. 1). This comment follows Putin's reaction to the printing of the Danish

Mohammad cartoons, which included closing down two regional newspapers for printing these controversial cartoons.

Briefly mentioned, but significant, is the critique of Russia for its perceived meddling in Ukraine's 2004 elections. This is cited as proof of Russia's emboldened foreign policy. This shows a clear norm in which other countries should not get involved in the domestic affairs of another country. Or, at least Russia shouldn't get involved in these affairs.

### *Purposive content*

The content of these texts presents three key purposive themes. The themes involve giving the United States a freer hand in international affairs, reducing Moscow's leverage, and opening up the energy markets.

The purposive arguments stem from the basic idea that the U.S.' economy is heavily dependent on oil and natural gas, and that the U.S.' preeminence in the world is heavily dependent on economic strength. Thus, the key purpose implied through these texts is maintaining the U.S. position in the world. Schmitt (2006) directly mentions that because of the U.S. dependency on oil they [U.S.] must:

...trim its sails when it comes to dealing with the major oil-producing countries, costs the American taxpayer a substantial premium to ensure access to that commodity through the deployment of U.S. military forces, and gives any number of major oil producing states vast revenues that allow them to support foreign and domestic policies that complicate the security of the united States and its allies.  
(p. 1)

From these texts, it appears that the U.S. would like to take a "tougher line" against countries like Russia and Iran, and that the dependence on oil prevents them from doing such.

It appears that one of the main goals is to reduce Moscow's power and leverage in world affairs. The texts point towards Gazprom's power in the energy markets as one of the key reasons for

Moscow's strength. There are several reasons cited in the texts and ways of dealing with this issue. One clear goal is getting Russia to ratify the Global Energy Charter for Sustainable Development in exchange for acceding to the WTO. Further, there is a desire for "Gazprom to open its network of pipelines to independent gas producers" (Schimtt, 2006, p. 4). These actions, in the view of these authors, would help to reduce Moscow's relative power and increase the energy security, and general national security of the U.S.

#### *Relational content*

There is very little overtly relational content in these texts. There is a brief mention of the U.S. – Russian solidarity in the war on terror, however, there is a general adversarial tone within the texts. The texts are not speaking of Russia as a partner or an ally, or even indifferently. The relation does not seem to go as far as an outright enemy, but it isn't a relationship of equals or cooperation in the least.

#### *Cognitive content*

In these texts, the most frequent content is by far cognitive content. The major cognitive content addressed in these texts is about Russia's relationship with the Muslim world, the current condition of Russian domestic affairs, Russia's desire to extend its influence, and an analysis of the current energy situation, specifically related to natural gas.

The general picture of the domestic situation in Russia presented by these texts is a Russia where the power is being re-centralized in politics, legal system, federalism and economy. The authors believe this process has put Russia in a very unstable position. It is a stability that depends on the popularity of one man. The picture presented here is of a Russia teetering on the edge of, "paralysis or chaos", if there were to be another terrorist attack or other major shock to the state that would bring Putin's credibility into question (Aaron, 2006, p. 2).

In defining the world, these texts discuss Russia's relationship with the Muslim world as a way to position them as friend or foe. The idea is suggested by Khrestin (2006) that Russia aspires to "serve as the new global mediator between the West and the Islamic World" (p. 1). And, that in trying to achieve this, they have developed a strategy which, "is to repress ordinary Muslims at

home while pandering to Islamist extremists abroad” (p. 1). The repression referred to here is the activity in Chechnya, while the pandering is connected with Russia’s dealings with the likes of Hamas and Iran.

The idea of Russia as a mediator between the West and Islam is linked to the discussion about Russia’s intentions abroad. There is strong rhetoric which states that Putin and Russia are indeed trying to restore “Russia’s waning influence abroad.” They specifically cite Putin writing that the key to Russia regaining its former might is to regain, “its role as provider of natural resources to the rest of the developed and developing world”(Schmitt, 2006, p. 4). Russia’s desire to reassert itself is mentioned regularly and oftentimes in connection with the former Soviet Union. Senator McCain is quoted as saying, “There has been steady retrogression and a sort of an effort to restore the old Soviet Empire” (Khrestin, 2006, p. 1). This feeling combined with Russia’s power as an energy provider concerns these writers greatly, and in these texts there is considerable time spent discussing energy issues as related to U.S. security.

The key framework in which the entire energy issue is couched is the general belief that it is, “the undeniable fact that a strong American economy, the backbone of current American pre-eminence in the world – does require, as the president stated, “affordable energy””(Schmitt, 2006, p. 1). The goal then is to maintain pre-eminence and the issues here must be considered in this context.

The texts emphasize the concern about countries such as Russia and Iran holding control over resources that are so vital to the economic and global power of the U.S. Not only is the negative impact of the current energy market discussed in the context of the U.S. economic competitiveness, but arguments are made that the profits from this energy will be going to countries whose foreign policy runs counter to that of the U.S. It is implied within these texts that it is in the interest of the U.S. to prevent these countries from becoming too profitable. Schmitt (2006) writes, “Russia and Iran have almost half the world’s natural gas reserves... Higher demand for gas at today’s higher prices will provide vast new revenues for those states and help sustain very problematic governments” (p.2). One of the major issues in these texts is

indeed energy resources and in many cases the world is being defined according to the dynamics associated with these energy markets.

#### 4.2.3. Council on Foreign Relations

##### *Mission Statement*

*Founded in 1921, the Council on Foreign Relations is an independent, national membership organization and a nonpartisan center for scholars dedicated to producing and disseminating ideas so that individual and corporate members, as well as policymakers, journalists, students, and interested citizens in the United States and other countries, can better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments. The Council, which is headquartered in New York with an office in Washington, DC, does this by:*

- *Convening meetings in New York, Washington and in other select American cities where senior government officials, global leaders, and prominent thinkers come together with Council members to debate and discuss the major foreign policy issues of our time;*
- *Conducting a wide-ranging studies program where Council fellows produce articles and books that analyze foreign policy issues and make concrete policy recommendations;*
- *Publishing Foreign Affairs, the preeminent journal covering international affairs and U.S. foreign policy;*
- *Maintaining a diverse membership, including special programs to foster interest and expertise in the next generation of foreign policy leaders;*
- *Sponsoring independent task forces whose reports help set the public foreign policy agenda; and*
- *Providing up-to-date information about the world and U.S. foreign policy on the Council's website, www.cfr.org.*

*- <http://www.cfr.org/about/mission.html>*

#### 4.2.3.1 Article summaries

##### Article summary IX

**Title:** Repairing U.S. – Russian Relations

**Author:** Lionel Beehner

**Date:** March 5, 2006

**Source:** [http://www.cfr.org/publication/10027/repairing\\_usrussian\\_relations.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10027/repairing_usrussian_relations.html)

This article offers a summary of the current situation in U.S. – Russian relations. The main argument presented here concerns Russia’s, “two-pronged” foreign policy, and that this approach, “continues to confound Western policy makers” (Beehner, 2006, p. 1).

The positive developments, according to Beehner (2006), and from the U.S. perspective, are Russia’s desire to be an international peace broker, their involvement in the G-8, and their desire to join the WTO. On the other hand, some of the negative issues are Putin’s desire to reassert Moscow’s influence in the near abroad, the “takedown of Russia’s oligarchs”, and their, “meddling in Middle East politics” (p. 1).

In order to repair U.S. – Russian relations, it is recommended to take steps for freer bilateral trade and to revise the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program.

##### *Article summary X*

**Title:** U.S. – Russian Relations Headed in Wrong Direction, Concludes Council Task Force Chaired by Edwards and Kemp

**Author:** Stephen Sestanovich and Lee Feinstein

**Date:** March 5, 2006

**Source:**

[http://www.cfr.org/publication/10020/usrussia\\_relations\\_headed\\_in\\_wrong\\_direction\\_concludes\\_council\\_task\\_force\\_chaired\\_by\\_edwards\\_and\\_kemp.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10020/usrussia_relations_headed_in_wrong_direction_concludes_council_task_force_chaired_by_edwards_and_kemp.html)

This article provides a summary of the findings presented by the task force concerned with U.S. – Russian relations. The overall finding by Sestanovich and Feinstein (2006) is that a “strategic partnership no longer seems realistic” and that instead the U.S. goal is, “how to make selective cooperation – and in some cases selective opposition—serve important international goals” (p. 2).

Although, the task force found that cooperation with Russia is key to achieving U.S. national interests, it seems that true cooperation is more often, the exception, not the norm. The bulk of this article discusses the areas of most concern and a set of recommendations for moving forward with Russia. The areas of most concern are de-democratization, energy supplies, the war on terror and the G8.

The report recommends increasing Freedom Support Act funds to help support democracy in Russia. The other 7 members of the G8 should assume a stronger role relative to Russia. The U.S. needs to work with other governments and Russia to ensure that Russian energy companies, “act like true commercial entities” (Sestanovich, p. 1). In general, the report recommends accession to the WTO, but on an appropriate timeline. The report recommends that the U.S. should not cede power to Russia in what would be considered Russia’s near abroad.

#### *Article summary XI*

**Title:** Putin Addresses Shrinking Russia

**Author:** Lionel Beehner

**Date:** May 12, 2006

**Source:** [http://www.cfr.org/publication/10680/putin\\_addresses\\_shrinking\\_russia.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10680/putin_addresses_shrinking_russia.html)

Beehner offers a brief summary of the main topics covered by Putin in his State of the State speech. Putin discussed Russia’s shrinking population and discussed a 10-year plan to address this problem. Beehner (2006) points out that Russian spent some time talking about foreign affairs, specifically labeling the U.S. as a threat from abroad, and discussing “Russia’s security inferiority complex” (p. 1). According to Beehner, this inferiority complex stems from the fact

that the principles of mutually assured nuclear destruction are almost obsolete, removing one of the main deterrents for the use of nuclear weapons.

Finally, Beehner (2006) explains the downward spiral of U.S. – Russian relations over the past several years including “Russia’s bullying of Kiev” (p. 1). He says that as a result of some of the bad press Moscow has been receiving as of late, they have launched a PR campaign in an attempt to improve their image. Part of this PR campaign includes accusations that the U.S. is applying double standards when criticizing Russia.

*Article summary XII*

**Title:** A Cold Wind Toward Moscow

**Author:** Robert McMahon

**Date:** May 8, 2006

**Source:** [http://www.cfr.org/publication/10623/cold\\_wind\\_toward\\_moscow.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10623/cold_wind_toward_moscow.html)

McMahon’s analysis of current U.S. – Russian relations is set in the context of Vice President Dick Cheney’s statements while on tour in the Baltic region. Specifically, Cheney chided Russia for using energy resources as “tools of intimidation or blackmail” and the rollback of political freedoms. According to McMahon, this tough language has sparked the idea of returning to a “new Cold War” (McMahon, 2006, p. 1).

Although, there is mention of political rights, the main issues presented by McMahon are about energy issues and the upcoming G8 conference. McMahon (2006) also presents a few Russian views from experts who seem to be “puzzled” (p. 1) by criticism from the west about their energy policy. Many believe the rhetoric is simply overblown and that Russia and the U.S. are not returning to a cold war, and that both Russia and the U.S. favor cooperation and integration. Finally, many are looking to the G-8 Summit and the Iran crisis as a test to see if Russia can be counted on as a partner.

#### 4.2.3.2. Content analysis

##### *Normative Content*

The normative content in this collection of texts produced by the Council on Foreign Relations outlines a few basic rules or norms. The first is the power of free market reforms. Beehner (2006) claims that free market reforms are what have “brought Russia out of its economic doldrums” (p. 1). Other ideas that are seen as positive, illustrated by the identification of negative opposite trends are: openness, pluralism, rule of law, political opposition and an independent media. These texts also illustrate that it is seen as unacceptable international behavior to use, “energy exports as foreign policy weapons” (Sestanovich, 2006, p. 1).

##### *Purposive Content:*

These texts rather clearly lay out a set of goals or objectives. One of the main goals mentioned is promoting democracy. Another area of objectives involves limiting the use of oil and gas exports as an instrument of coercion – and as a prop for authoritarianism. The third set of goals is to create freer bilateral trade with Russia and to get Russia to accept a rules-based international trading system. The final purpose addressed in these texts is to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and to prevent terrorist attacks (Sestanovich, 2006, p. 1).

##### *Relational Content:*

It is written in these texts that, “Russia is not the bear it once was” (Beehner, 2006, p. 1). Russia is described as a country dealing with a “demographic crisis” which has left the country smaller in size and stature. It is also a country in which, “Alcoholism and AIDS are also on the rises. So too are racism, skinhead violence, and xenophobia” Beehner, 2006, p. 1).

The texts here depict a Russia that is, “struggling to find its rightful place on the world stage” (Beehner, 2006, p. 1). In a somewhat cynical tone, the authors refer to Russia’s role as an international peace broker, or rather, Russia’s desire to be positioned in the world as an international peace broker. However, this is viewed more as a political tactic than the reality.

Russia's relations with the U.S. and Europe are still uncertain, and the situation in Iran is cited as providing a "crucial test" of Russia's relations. Despite this general uncertainty, there is evidence in these texts that from the U.S. perspective the U.S. – Russian relationship is broken, as the title of one of the articles is "Repairing U.S. – Russian Relations". Further, a consensus seems to be building among this collection of texts, and specifically, Sestanovich (2006) believes that the, "very idea of a strategic partnership no longer seems realistic" (p. 2). Although a strategic partnership is cited as being a long-term goal, the texts seem to support the idea that there are simply too many differences, and more importantly Russia continues to fail to meet the standards set by the U.S. to be a "partner" (Sestanovich, 2006).

An interesting piece of relational content brought up in these texts by Beehner (2006) is the idea of "Russia's security inferiority complex" (p. 1). Essentially, the U.S. believes that Russia feels unnecessarily insecure, and that this has been made even worse by the fact that a report was issued that claims the U.S. has, nuclear primacy which "has rendered near obsolete the principles of mutually assured destruction" (p. 1).

Finally, the issue of Russia's attitude towards the U.S. is briefly mentioned. Beehner (2006) depicts Russia as a paranoid state which sees, almost foolishly, the United States as a security threat. The actual circumstance is in reference to Putin's State of the State Address, "which included reference to threats from abroad including, of course, the United States," and "likens Washington to a wolf that eats whatever it wants without listening to others" (p. 1).

### *Cognitive Content*

In these texts there are several instances where "Cold War" is mentioned, either in connection to the U.S. victory in the Cold War, which authors cite Putin as calling a "tragedy", or in relation to the possibility of a new Cold War or "mini-Cold War" (Beehner, 2006, p. 1). There is clearly the belief that in many ways Russia is acting as an obstacle to the U.S. and the West. For example, the authors mention, "a Russian seeming effort to curtail U.S. and NATO military access to Central Asian bases," as a "sign that Russia is retreating from the idea that success in Afghanistan serves a common interest" (Beehner, 2006, p. 1). Further, the United States, doesn't believe it should give any special consideration to Russia's concerns in Russia's periphery.

These texts point out that they believe the U.S. should have a free hand to deal with individual countries in Russia's periphery regardless if it runs counter to the interests of Russia, which they believe often is the case.

In many cases, Russia's foreign policy is linked very closely to Putin, and in these texts Putin draws comparison to Stalin. "At the center of Russia's two-pronged foreign policy is President Putin, a tough confident leader to some, a tyrannical neo-Stalinist to others" (Beehner, 2006, p. 1). He is accused of reasserting Moscow's influence in the near abroad in a way that is similar to Soviet times.

Finally, the current status of the Russian state is addressed and helps to define the overall situation. The economic successes are cited and the Sestanovich (2006) writes that, "Between 2000 and 2004 the number of Russians living below the government's poverty line dropped from forty two million to twenty six million, the national unemployment rate-over 10 percent in 2000 – is now about 7 percent and a middle class appears to be emerging" (p. 1). However, he also discusses Russia's political failings by saying, "Russian political institutions are becoming corrupt and brittle. As a result Russia's capacity to address security concerns of fundamental importance to the United States and its allies is reduced" (p. 1). Again, the issue of supporting fraud in European elections and using energy as negotiating weapon are cited as proof of Russia's failings.

### **4.3. Contestation Analysis:**

In this section of the thesis the level of contestation is reviewed. This is an extremely important step in the process of understanding the foreign policy identity of the U.S. As Abdelal (2005) points out, it is the degree of contestation that gives us clues as to what views have become implicitly accepted, and the ideals that are still being debated and developed (p. 18). In this section of the thesis there is a discussion which compares and contrasts the texts presented by the different think tanks, as well as a discussion of the relative level of contestation present. In addition, issues that aren't mentioned or are conspicuously absent from the texts are also brought to attention. This section does not develop the "identity" it merely points out the areas and degree of agreement and contestation around the views and issues, as well as the issues that aren't mentioned. The final development of a "foreign policy identity", which will be useful in developing a set of implications for the future of U.S. – Russian relations and general foreign policy behavior of the U.S., is presented in the next section.

In general, there are far more areas of agreement between these texts, than there are areas of outright contestation. The most useful way to present this information is to list the topics or issues and have a discussion about where each think tank falls in the debate, if indeed there is a debate. Otherwise, the discussion becomes a confusing mix of issues, views, stances, think tanks, authors, etc.

It is worth mentioning again that these three think tanks come from the different points along the ideological spectrum present in the U.S. The Center for American Progress is considered a center-leftist think tank, AEI is considered a Conservative, and the Council on Foreign Relations is considered centrist. If there is indeed a spectrum of views, it would be logical to believe they would be represented by these different think tanks.

*Supporting U.S. Military Actions:*

All three of the think tanks criticize Russia for their unwillingness to support the war in Iraq. Only the CAP briefly praises Russia for their assistance in Afghanistan, but this is withdrawn as Russia's support is withdrawn. There is very little if any contestation over Russia's right to not support military action in Iraq and Afghanistan. To take this one step further, it seems there is a consensus across the board that it is expected that the world should support the U.S. in its military activities.

*The Russian Domestic Situation (Economy & Political):*

In discussing the Russian economy, there is a general consensus that Russia has made significant progress in liberalizing and opening up markets. The prevailing view is that this economic success is largely due to the inflated oil and gas prices. Despite the general view that the past 10 years have been very good for Russia, there is a strong sense of foreboding across the board about the danger the democratic rollback poses to the Russian economy. There is also a consensus that there is too much state involvement in the economy, especially in the energy industry. Although most agree that there have been positive developments, there is a slight difference in tone between the CAP and AEI and the Council on Foreign relations. CAP is less of an alarmist about the current situation of the Russian economy. While they do see dangers and risks, they are slightly more positive about the situation.

There is general agreement as to the political situation in Russia. They all agree that there is a democratic backslide taking place. The CAP again takes a less aggressive and alarmist tone, and in fact says it is very unlikely that Russia will ever revert to a full dictatorship, while AEI presents Russia as a country on the very brink of authoritarian rule, chaos and disaster. The Council on Foreign Relations' rhetoric is more in line with the CAP on this issue. They see the political situation in Russia as a major problem, but are slightly less extreme in their analysis relative to AEI.

### *Russian Gas & Oil:*

All three of the think tanks see the gas and oil issue as one of the key issues. The three think tanks also link oil and gas to the national security of the United States. Again, the CAP is slightly less brash about it. AEI focuses on the energy issue the most out of the three think tanks. Specifically, they draw strong connections between U.S. national security and access to oil and gas. While the CAP view the energy issue as an important one, AEI positions it as the most important one for the U.S. They see the U.S. dependence on foreign oil, and specifically on oil from Russia and the Middle East, as a huge obstacle preventing the U.S. from pursuing its global goals. AEI is not shy about stating this. They are very clear that they would like the U.S. to be able to exert more influence around the world, and the energy issue is preventing this. The Council on Foreign Relations also sees the energy issue as vital, and believes that steps need to be taken to reduce Russia's relative power. In essence, all of the three think tanks agree, the only difference is the aggressiveness or severity of tone present in the text.

An interesting issue introduced is Russia wielding its oil and gas resources as a weapon in international affairs. Both AEI and The Council on Foreign relations use this language to describe Russia's approach. The CAP does not mention this, but this could be because all of the CAP texts were written before the events in the Ukraine, where Russia threatened to turn off their oil supply. In other words, a consensus seems to be building that oil and natural gas are "weapons". This may have always been the case, but now it is more open, especially since AEI specifically states that the U.S. is deploying military to secure access to these resources.

### *Membership in Western Organizations – In or Out?:*

There is some contestation over this issue. The CAP believes that Russia should be integrated as much as possible into Western organizations such as NATO, the G-8 and the WTO, whereas the texts from AEI hardly mention the issue at all, and when it is mentioned, it is mentioned as a bargaining chip to be used in negotiations with Russia. The Council on Foreign Relations agrees with the CAP in the sense that they believe Russia should be accepted into the WTO under the right circumstances, while they think the "G7" should exert influence on Russia to improve its democratic record at the risk of being put on probation by the other members of the G8. They clearly position Russia as a second class member of the G8.

### *Democracy:*

Concepts related to democracy are the most frequently discussed issues. It is discussed in relation to the state of democracy within Russia (which was already mentioned), the importance of democracy to U.S. national security and interests, and the obligation of the U.S. to assist in democracy building. In the texts from the CAP and The Council on Foreign Relations, the driving force of the arguments is around democracy. For them, democracy is the Holy Grail. If “real” democracy takes hold in Russia, many of the problems will disappear. AEI also is a strong supporter of the idea of democracy building; however, for them it takes a back seat to the energy concerns. In addition, all of the think tanks link democracy to many other issues. All agree that the U.S. should support democracy building not only in Russia, but throughout the world, and all agree that a Russian democracy makes the U.S. more secure. There is almost no contestation regarding this issue. It is doctrine.

### *Russia & the Muslim World:*

Only AEI addresses this issue specifically, but it is significant. AEI clearly links Russia with U.S. “enemies” such as Iran, Hamas, Iraq (formerly), and other Muslim organizations. The other think tanks don’t mention this issue specifically. However, they do mention Russia’s lack of support at the U.N. There may be some degree of contestation regarding Russia’s ties to the Muslim world. On one end of the spectrum, there is a direct link drawn between Russia and groups such as Hamas and Iran. On the other end of the spectrum, there is a much looser connection drawn by merely pointing out Russia’s sometimes obstructive behavior at the U.N.

### *Putin:*

All three of these think tanks place much of the blame for Russia’s failings squarely on Putin’s shoulders. Putin is accused of abusing human rights, limiting the freedom of the press and attacking democracy. This criticism, in most cases, is not directed at the Russian state, rather it is pointed at Putin. There is a spectrum of views towards Putin which is represented in these texts. There is a brief mention of Putin’s positive accomplishments in the economic arena, and he is sometimes described as a strong leader. However, this is quickly followed by a “but” in regards to his attacks on democracy. On the far end of the spectrum, he draws comparison to

Stalin, the epitome of Soviet evil. And, he is described as a man who laments the Soviet times, and aspires to rebuild a Soviet style system in Russia's near abroad. In regards to Putin, there is a small degree of contestation. Some see him as a strong leader, while most see him as a potentially dangerous figure taking Russia in the wrong direction, and a man who should be viewed with very suspicious eyes.

#### *The Soviet Russian Empire:*

To varying degrees of severity, all three think tanks at least allude to the idea that Russia is trying to extend its sphere of power in the manner of the former Russian Empire or the Soviet Union. There is rhetoric from the CAP of a much less caustic nature which claims the more democratic Russia is, the less likely they are to acquire more territory through military force, which implies that they are currently interested in doing such. The Council on Foreign Relations compares Putin directly to Stalin and the current activities of Moscow to those of the Soviet Union, and cited by AEI is Senator McCain who believes there is clear evidence that Russia is trying to reassert its influence similar to Soviet times. There is very little contestation in this area, the only difference the boldness with which they compare Russia and Putin to the Soviet Union.

#### *Russia & the U.S.:*

There is absolute agreement on the attitude that Russia is a weaker and less significant player on the global stage. There is also still the idea that the U.S. needs to help and save Russia and Russians from undemocratic forces. Russia is also unanimously seen as an important player due to its energy resources, and the potential security threats to the U.S. There is total agreement that the U.S. needs to have more engagement with Russia, not less. It is agreed upon that more engagement will promote democracy, improve energy security, increase security related to WMD's and terrorists. There is a consensus in this area.

#### **4.4. U.S. Foreign Policy Identity**

In this section, the content analysis and discussion regarding contestation over the major issues are applied to produce a snapshot of the current U.S. foreign policy identity. This identity is then combined with the theoretical construct to produce a set of implications and likely developments for the future of U.S. – Russian relations. Until this point in the thesis, the voice has been mostly as an unbiased researcher. At this point, there is a noticeable change in tone, as the researcher now attempts to construct a snapshot of the current U.S. foreign policy identity. This is done by drawing upon an intimate knowledge of the texts analyzed, the type and variety of content, and the level of contestation present amongst the three think tanks.

Even as writing this, new events and discourses are developing. Especially, as the final writing of this thesis corresponds with the G-8 meeting, hosted by Russia. As identity construction is a never-ending process, the snapshot provided here, is just that, a snapshot of a situation that immediately changes before the final word is even typed. This is unavoidable, but this picture offers us something tangible and meaningful to look at, and a possible place of departure for analyzing and understanding future developments and changes.

As a reminder, the three think tanks represent three of the mainstream differing “ideologies” in the U.S. political discourse: conservative, centrist, and center-left. It is interesting that there isn’t a “representative” from the “left”. Also, the center-left representative is ranked 14<sup>th</sup> on the list of most cited think tanks, while the conservative and center-left are both in the top 5. Also, the center-left think tank’s (CAP) most recent article was written in October 2004. In other words, there has not been a contribution by a major leftist think tank in regards to Russia – U.S. relations since then. In this sense, the volume coming from the (CAP) and like views is much lower relative to the Council on Foreign Relations and AEI.

The most obvious revelation from the analysis of these texts is that there is very little contestation. The range of ideas, arguments and general debate is extremely narrow. On nearly all issues there is a virtual consensus. The variety is only seen in the tone and level of directness

used by the different authors. In regards to the process of identity construction this gives a hint that the U.S. foreign policy identity is relatively fixed. It is not at a stage of major shift or change, at least relative to U.S. – Russian relations.

The key issues introduced and discussed by the think tanks also give us some insights into the current U.S. foreign policy identity. Clearly, the most often talked about issues are democracy and energy resources. All other issues are either derivatives, sidebars, or strongly linked to these two issues. A possible third area which is frequently mentioned as a major issue is Putin. What does this tell us?

If this discourse is set in the context of Chomsky’s propaganda model, where think tanks are in many ways the key producers of fact, we can deduce that a U.S. foreign policy identity which includes democracy building as a key component has been, or is being, created. There is virtually no debate over whether or not democracy building is the proper course of action. Democracy building also justifies U.S. involvement in other countries. For example, it is completely justified and further encouraged, that the U.S. support democratic activities (which could be anti-Putin, anti-Russian state) inside Russia. An important element of this part of the foreign policy identity is the idea that this is both serving U.S. interests and the interests of the countries the U.S. is “helping”, and even further, the interests and security of the entire world. A telling statement is the one which describes the willingness of the U.S. to fight for the rights that the Russian people aren’t yet able to themselves. If this rule is applied elsewhere, the U.S. can choose who wants democracy and who doesn’t. This is a key part of the U.S. foreign policy identity.

While the U.S. foreign policy identity has democracy building as a key component, the next obvious question is why? The think tanks are not shy about linking democracy to economics, and specifically energy resources. It’s difficult to say for certain if democracy is simply a means to the ends of opening up the energy markets. In fact, democracy is not desired, rather the goal is a “free market democracy”. There is no doubt that the U.S. sees Russia as a valuable supplier of energy resources, and this energy is required for the U.S. to maintain its dominant position in the

world. The U.S. is not in a position to attack Russia in the typical sense, however the weapon of democracy, or rather the weapon of the rhetoric of democracy can be and is being wielded.

Another key part of the U.S. foreign policy identity is the fact that the U.S. sees itself as the most powerful country in the world, and the most just and free country in the world. This self-righteousness entitles them to maintain this preeminent position, and it is absolutely acceptable to use military force to do so. The evidence of this is partly revealed by the statement that military forces are being deployed to secure vital energy resources in the Middle East. There is no real attempt to conceal this. This tells us that this practice is becoming, or has become, quite acceptable.

The demonizing of Putin is interesting in regards to U.S. – Russian relations, but it also gives clues to the U.S. psyche. Putin probably is the driving force behind many of developments in Russia, or at least it is depicted this way. However, it reveals a U.S. tendency to place a face on the “enemy”. Repeatedly in the discourse and actions of the U.S. in the foreign policy arena, they find an enemy on which to focus attention. Past and current examples of this are Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, Castro, Stalin, and the list could go on and on.

Identity is a very complex issue, and it difficult to define a country’s foreign policy identity in a concise manner without glossing over, generalizing, or losing entirely important intricacies and nuances. But, in order to provide something more meaningful than a collection of texts from which readers can make their own judgments, it is necessary to attempt to produce a statement of identity to work with.

From this analysis, there seems to be a relatively simple statement which can describe the U.S. foreign policy identity. The current snapshot of the U.S. foreign policy identity is that of a *powerful superpower under constant threat of terrorist attacks or WMD’s, with moral right on its side that realizes energy resources are vital to maintaining its dominant position, and the spread of free market democracy (by whatever means) is the most effective way of achieving this goal.* In many ways the ideas of WMD’s and terrorism were themes which were ever present, but not often discussed at length, but they are present in this statement with good reason.

The fact is, despite all the rhetoric, terrorism will not bring the U.S. to its knees, but the U.S. propaganda model, according to Chomsky, needs an ambiguous enemy to rally against. Also, these issues have been discussed so often, that they have become implicit in the identity of the U.S. There is no need to discuss them anymore. Always present underlying the issues are the threat of terrorism and the fear of an attack on the U.S. with a WMD. This has become ingrained in the U.S. foreign policy identity. It would be considered blasphemy to question the actual threat level associated with terrorism or WMD's.

Returning to the theme of homogeneous views relative to the U.S. – Russian issues, it tells us something more about the U.S. foreign policy identity. It gives strong support to Chomsky's arguments regarding the propaganda model. When three supposedly ideological opponents reach the exact same conclusions and support basically the same steps, either there is only one right answer, or there is indeed a system which frames the issues and facts in a certain way, which is beneficial to certain power groups.

Completely missing from any of these texts is the question of Russia's right of free choice – either to not be involved in Iraq, or to choose its own political course. Also absent was any debate whether or not the Russian state had the right to use profits from energy resources. There was harsh criticism of Russia for using gas and oil as a weapon against Ukraine and Georgia, however no one seemed to notice the fact that the U.S. has used, and is using military weaponry against regimes in order to further U.S. interests. Further, economic sanctions are commonplace at the U.N. and in more severe cases the U.S.'s relationship with Cuba. There is no debate on whether democracy building does actually produce a more peaceful world. There is more democracy now in the world than ever before, and we are currently embroiled in a multitude of violent conflicts. These are just a few of the issues that could have a variety of views, but do not. The U.S. intellectuals have fallen in line. As such, a huge characteristic of the U.S. foreign policy identity is that it is unified. The U.S. very effectively presents a unified front to the world in regards to its foreign policy. There is very little ideological room for maneuvering. There may be room for slight tactical adjustments or disagreements, but the overall worldview and value system which are the building blocks of an identity are relatively fixed.

#### **4.5. Implications:**

To build on the current U.S. foreign policy identity established here, this section attempts to draw some implications for the future developments in U.S. – Russian relations. The goal of this section is not to make an attempt to accurately predict the future. The goal is to complete the journey of this thesis. The journey has been from building a theoretical construct that describes the U.S. as an actor, identifying the source of the information or the forces that play a significant role in shaping the discourse (think tanks), reviewing the discourse, from this discourse establishing a snapshot of the foreign policy identity in respect to a certain issue, and finally attempting to build a set of implications for practical issues.

In short, we can expect to see more of the same in regards to U.S. – Russian relations in the short to medium term, regardless of political changes in the U.S. or Russia. The U.S. needs to and will continue to attempt to strengthen ties with Russia, for the sole purpose of more secure access to energy resources – this is simply unavoidable in the short term. However, it serves Russia’s interest to maintain more, not less, control over the energy resources, and recent developments have shown a trend by the Russian state to be moving in that direction. In the U.S.’ mind, these two concerns are diametrically opposed. If the Russian state has more control of the resources, then the U.S. feels less secure.

The U.S. will continue to present a “good, but...” approach to Russia. They will praise certain developments, while chastise them for others. Currently, in the discourse there is a desire for the U.S. administration to take a harder line towards Russia and Putin in regards to democracy. It is likely that the next U.S. president will leverage this position.

The U.S. – Russian relationship for the near future will remain at a tense level. Not a dangerously tense level, but a purposefully tense level inflicted by both parties. U.S. and Russia need each other too much to become enemies, but they’re interests are too divergent to become good friends. The U.S. will continue to attack Russia for its political direction and its energy issues. Russia will resist as much as it can, holding back strategic concessions to be played at the bargaining table. It is in fact in Russia’s interest not to fully implement many of the changes the

U.S. desires. They will use these issues related to democracy and energy concerns to their advantage. On the other hand, the U.S. will use membership and involvement in the G-8, WTO, U.N., etc. financial aid, and investment, in exchange for concession on the democratic front and the energy concerns.

The perception of this situation as gleaned from these texts is that of two skilled negotiators trying to maximize their gains. This type of behavior should continue for some time. There will never be outright animosity, but the relationship will also not become cordial, and the discourse should reflect this to varying degrees depending on current events.

The accuracy of these implications is not the test of the quality of this research. As the author has attempted to bring his own critical perspective into this analysis, there is the possibility of making a slight misstep. The more meaningful issue, is the general process applied. This could be a model to be applied for helping students and academics better understand the trajectory of U.S. foreign policy. If one closely analyzes the content and degree of contestation across a representative sample of think tanks, it should give a very good indication of not only where the U.S. foreign policy identity is now, but where the policy is going in the future. In fact, this may be a more effective way to analyze U.S. foreign policy over the long run than analyzing the words and texts of politicians. Whereas politicians change every few years, and in many cases the rhetoric used by politicians is for a domestic constituency, upon which the politicians depend upon for their continued employment, the think tanks are shielded from the forces of elections, and may tend to speak more candidly about their interests. This does not mean that the think tanks are necessarily speaking the truth. What it does mean however, is that they serve a different master than the politicians do.

## **5. Conclusion & Future Research**

This thesis is a multi-dimensional approach to understanding the foreign policy behavior of the United States with a specific focus on Russia. The research rests on the premise that in order to understand the foreign policy actions of a country, one must understand the identity of that country. In many ways this is a question of determining what the interests of that country are.

To help understand what the interests of the U.S. are, Chomsky's propaganda model was applied. This tells us that the key interest of the U.S. system is to maintain the current power structure. The system wants to survive, and it will function in a way to serve this goal. There is significant evidence that the propaganda model is legitimate within the U.S., giving considerable power to the producers of fact. One group of organizations that are key producers of fact is political think tanks. These think tanks work to define and shape the discourse that is presented in the public.

As these think tanks define and shape the discourse, they are a valuable research object to help us understand both the foreign policy identity of the U.S. and the likely future developments.

Analyzing the discourse presented by three influential think tanks in relation to U.S. – Russian relations has indeed shed light on the current foreign policy identity and on the current and likely future developments of the U.S. – Russian relations. The most important finding is that the foreign policy identity of the U.S. is relatively fixed and that it is unlikely we will see any major shifts in the U.S. – Russian relationship in the short to medium term.

Of course it is impossible to predict the future, and as already mentioned, any study in the area of identity is like attempting to take a picture of a moving object. Identity construction is a never ending process that is always changing and shifting. However, from this research it is possible to see that although slight shifts will continue to take place, the overall ideology guiding the foreign policy of the United States is likely to remain very similar to where it is today for the near future.

As important as the implications for U.S. – Russian relations that were reached in this research, is the method applied here to study U.S. foreign policy. I believe this shows that analyzing discourse between think tanks is a valuable approach to researching U.S. foreign policy. Also, it reveals that even though there may seem to be real debate, when it comes down to the base level of understanding, there is very little debate and discussion. One could say that the debate is almost at a superficial level when discussing foreign policy.

CDA was applied here to allow for a critical approach. The major critique is that the debate is controlled and limited by a relatively small number of people in powerful positions. Real debate is needed, not just the fully filtered type of discourse which is currently present in the U.S. This is the abuse of power which is present in the current U.S. system. This is why, the U.S. stance on foreign policy has remained the same for so long, and will continue to remain the same for the foreseeable future.

The research conducted in this thesis only touched on one of many possible areas for future research. It would be interesting to compare the levels of contestation present in the discourse of U.S. domestic issues and U.S. international issues. One possibility is that there is a much higher level of contestation on domestic issues, and if so, why is this the case? Due the constraints of this type of research, it was not possible to make the next connection between think tanks and businesses, academia and government. There would be an opportunity to study this relationship and how donors and supporters are able to influence the type of research and policy suggestions produced by the think tanks. This type of research would help to reveal a more complete picture of who is setting the boundaries of the discourse. These are just two possible areas for continued research, but there are undoubtedly many more. The course of U.S. foreign policy will continue to play an important role in world politics, and any research that helps us understand this more clearly is welcomed and worthwhile.



## References:

- Aaron, L. (2005, September). Threats in Eurasia. American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.23228,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.23228,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)
- Abdelal, Rawi and Herrera, Johnston and McDermott. "Identity as a Variable." Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. Boston, July 22, 2005. <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/%7Eherrera/ID050722.pdf>
- Ainsworth, Susan and Hardy, Cynthia. Critical Discourse Analysis and Identity: why Bother? Critical Discourse Studies Vol. 1, No. 2 October 2004, pp. 225-259.
- Barnett, Michael. "Culture, strategy and Foreign Policy Change: Israel's Road to Oslo." European Journal of International Relations 5, no. 1 (1999) 5-36.
- Beehner, L. (2006, March). Repairing U.S. – Russian Relations. Council on Foreign Relations. [http://www.cfr.org/publication/10027/repairing\\_usrussian\\_relations.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10027/repairing_usrussian_relations.html)
- Beehner, L. (2006, May). Putin Addresses Shrinking Russia. Council on Foreign Relations. [http://www.cfr.org/publication/10680/putin\\_addresses\\_shrinking\\_russia.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10680/putin_addresses_shrinking_russia.html)
- Bieler, Adreas. And Adam David Morton. "Theoretical and Methodological Challenges of neo-Gramscian Perspectives in International Political Economy." International Gramsci Society Online Article January 2003. [http://www.italnet.nd.edu/gramsci/resources/online\\_articles/articles/bieler\\_morton.shtml](http://www.italnet.nd.edu/gramsci/resources/online_articles/articles/bieler_morton.shtml)
- Brubaker, Rogers, Maria Loveman, and Peter Stamatov. "Ethnicity as Cognition." Theory and Society 33, no. 1 (2004): 31-64.
- Burman, E., & Parker, I. Against Discursive Imperialism, Empiricism and Constructionism; Thirty-two problems with discourse Analysis. In E. burman & I. Parker (eds.), Discourse Analytic Research: Repertoires and Readings of Texts in Action (pp. 155-172). London: Routledge, (1993).
- Castells, Manuel. The Power of Identity. Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1997.
- Chomsky, Noam. 'Human Rights' and American Foreign Policy. Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978.
- Chomsky, Noam. Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky. New York: The New Press, 2002.
- Chomsky, Noam and Herman, Edward. Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media.

- Cox, Robert W. "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10 (1981): 126-55.
- Cox, Robert W. "Production, the State and Change in World Order." in Ernst-Otto Czempiel and James N. Rosenau (eds) *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Approaches to World Politics for the 1990s*. Toronto: Lexington Books. (1989).
- Davies, B., & Harre, R. Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves. *Journal of the Theory of Social Behavior*, 20, 43-65, 1990.
- Denzin, N. (1994). The art and politics of interpretation. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 500 – 515). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dolny, M (2005, May/June). Right, center think tanks still most quoted: Studies of cites debunks "liberal media" claims. Extra!, <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=2534>
- Du Gay, P. *Consumption and Identity at Work*. London: Sage, 1996.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Addison Wesley Longmans.
- Gergen, K. J. *An Invitation to Social Construction*. London: Sage, 1999.
- Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.
- Grant, D., Keenoy, T., & Osrick, C. (1998). Organizational discourse: Of diversity, dichotomy and multi-disciplinarity. In D. Grant, T. Keenoy, & C. Osrick (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational discourse* (pp. 1-36). London: Sage.
- Jaworski, A. and Coupland, N. (eds). *The Discourse Reader*. London: Routledge, 1999.
- Klandermans, Bert. *The Social Psychology of Protest*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1997.
- Khrestin, I. From Russia, with Spin (2006, May). American Enterprise for Public Policy Research. [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24356,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24356,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)
- Khrestin, I. Putin's Pander. (2006, March). American Enterprise for Public Policy Research. [http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24025,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24025,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)
- Mcfaul, M. (2004, October). Re-engaging Russia and Russians: New Agenda for American Foreign Policy. Center for American Progress, <http://www.americanprogress.org/site/pp.asp?c=biJRJ8OVF&b=229830>

- McFaul, M. (2004, June). The Putin Paradox. Center for American Progress.  
<http://www.americanprogress.org/site/pp.asp?c=biJRJ8OVF&b=99061>
- McFaul, M. & Bing, H. (2004, January). Russia's Transition to Democracy and U.S. – Russian Relations: Unfinished Business. Center for American Progress.  
[http://www.americanprogress.org/AccountTempFiles/cf/%7BE9245FE4-9A2B-43C7-A521-5D6FF2E06E03%7D/russia\\_mcfaul.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/AccountTempFiles/cf/%7BE9245FE4-9A2B-43C7-A521-5D6FF2E06E03%7D/russia_mcfaul.pdf)
- McMahon, R. (2006, May). A Cold Wind Toward Moscow. Council on Foreign Relations.  
[http://www.cfr.org/publication/10623/cold\\_wind\\_toward\\_moscow.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10623/cold_wind_toward_moscow.html)
- Mendelson, S. (2004, January). Wanted: A new U.S. policy on Russia. Center for American Progress. [http://www.americanprogress.org/AccountTempFiles/cf/%7BE9245FE4-9A2B-43C7-A521-5D6FF2E06E03%7D/russia\\_mendelson.pdf](http://www.americanprogress.org/AccountTempFiles/cf/%7BE9245FE4-9A2B-43C7-A521-5D6FF2E06E03%7D/russia_mendelson.pdf)
- Nye, Joseph S. Jr. Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. New York: PublicAffairs, 2004
- Phillips, L., & Jorgensen, M. W. Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method. London: Sage, 2002.
- Philips, N., & Hardy, C. Discourse Analysis: Investigating Processes of Social Construction. Qualitative Research Methods Series 50. Thousand Oak, CA: Sage, 2002.
- Powers, P. The Methodology of Discourse Analysis. Boston: Jones and Bartlett, 2001.
- Risse, Thomas, Daniela Engelmann-Martin, Hans-Joachim Knopf, and Klaus Roscher. "To Euro or Not to Euro? The EMU and Identity Politics in the European Union." European Journal of International Relations 5, no. 2 (1999): 147-187.
- Schmitt, G. (2006, April). Energy, National Security and Natural Gas. American Enterprise for Public Policy Research.  
[http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24223,filter.all/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.24223,filter.all/pub_detail.asp)
- Sestanovich, S. & Feinstein, L. (2006, March). U.S. – Russian Relations Headed in Wrong Direction, Concludes Council Task Force Chaired by Edwards and Kemp. Council on Foreign Relations.  
[http://www.cfr.org/publication/10020/ussrussian\\_relations\\_headed\\_in\\_wrong\\_direction\\_concludes\\_council\\_task\\_force\\_chaired\\_by\\_edwards\\_and\\_kemp.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/10020/ussrussian_relations_headed_in_wrong_direction_concludes_council_task_force_chaired_by_edwards_and_kemp.html)

Van Dijk, T. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. Discourse and Society, 4, 249-283.

Wetherell, M. Minds, Selves and Sens-making: Editor's introduction. In M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, & S. J. Yates (eds.), *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader* (pp. 186-197). London: Sage in association with the Open University, 2001.

Wood, L.A., & Kroger, R.O. *Doing Discourse Analysis: methods for Studying Action in Talk and Text*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000.