



National Institute for Public Policy

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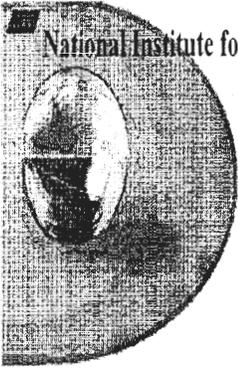
The Search for “New Ideology” in Russia

Presentation for the Defense Science Board

Dr. Andrei Shoumikhin

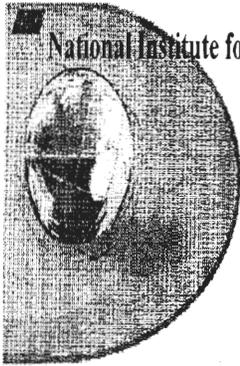
National Institute for Public Policy

May 26, 2005



“A weird schizophrenia grips the nation, as Putin’s power fades and new threats emerge... No wonder, these days, that Russia is looking like a dotty old neighbor developing a split personality—or that the world doesn’t quite know how to react.”

Frank Brown, “How to Handle Russia,” *Newsweek*, May 3, 2005



Rhetoric of Ideology

President Putin:

“A number of fundamental ideological and political issues [arise]... I regard the development of Russia as a free and democratic state our main political and ideological task... [Russia’s movement toward democracy] increasingly becomes the subject of intense ideological discussions...

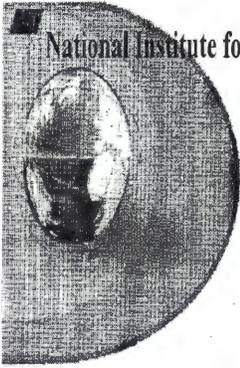
The collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century... The old ideals have been destroyed.”

April 2005

“To say or allege that Russia wants to restore some kind of a superpower posture is rubbish that does not correspond to recent historic truth and contemporary realities.”

May 2005

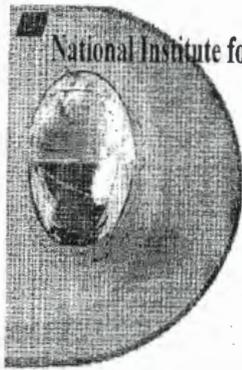
**Putin’s use of the language of ideology is new but
ambiguous**



Problems Facing Russia

- **Internal challenges**
 - Demographics
 - Public apathy, lack of direction, social instability
 - Chechnya, “Islamization”
 - Problems in the military establishment
- **External challenges**
 - Uneven relations with U.S., NATO
 - Fear of “encirclement”
 - “Color revolutions” in CIS
 - China
 - International terrorism

**The Putin government hopes that ideology will help to
resolve these problems**



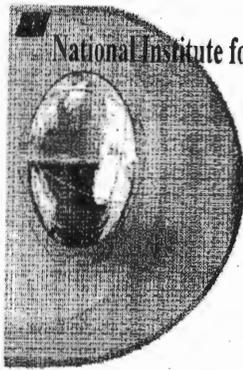
Ideology as Response to Problems

- Ideology is important in Russian history
 - “God, Tsar, Motherland”
- Gives people direction, purpose
 - e.g., Bolshevik “Messianism”
- Identifies “who is to blame”
- Justifies sacrifice and patience
 - Great Patriotic War

“Russia needs a new state ideology, something that would fill the void created by the collapse of Marxism-Leninism”

Yegor Gaidar, former Prime Minister under Yelstin

The Kremlin hopes that ideology can provide social cohesion and support for the government



Putin's "Ideological Cocktail"

The Kremlin's "new ideology" is forming from a number of sources:

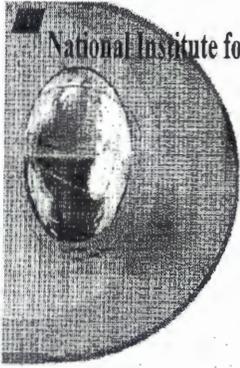
- Authoritarian centralism
- Nationalism
- Christian Orthodoxy
- Historic memory, pride
- "Great Power" status [*velikoderzhavie*]
- Restore the Union
 - "Common destiny" of FSU states
- Managed democracy
 - e.g., media control, one party system, civil rights subordinate to security

May become Russian "Neo-Imperialism"



Implications for Bilateral Relations

- **As ideology forms, Putin will likely maintain:**
 - A pragmatic “front” toward the West
 - An increasingly rigid, authoritarian internal policy
 - Drift toward Russian-style National Socialism?
- **Anti-American tenets of ideology likely to:**
 - Erode U.S. ability to influence Russian internal, foreign policies
 - Kremlin may have less room to compromise
 - Lead to membership in alliances inimical to U.S. interests
 - e.g., Belarus, PRC
 - Create incentives for challenging the U.S.
 - In the “Near abroad” and beyond (e.g., Iran)
 - Diplomatically, e.g., BMD, space arms control
 - Support militarization
 - Priority on nuclear weapons



Implications for Bilateral Relations cont.

Ideology after Putin

- Succession process, successor unpredictable
- Successor likely to be more radical
- Continued pressure for “tough” policies based on populism, nationalism, use of “enemy” imagery
 - Restoration of “empire” may be central theme
- Revival of the “Cold War”
 - Direct confrontation based on incompatible ideologies