

Prospects for U.S. –Russian relationship during
D. Trump's presidency (pre)viewed through the
prism of the two countries' vital national
interests.

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“I cannot forecast to you the
action of Russia. It is a riddle
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key. That key is Russian
national interest.”

When asked in January 2016 whether if Russia had made any mistakes in relations with the West in the past 25 years, Russian president Vladimir Putin said:

“Yes, it has. We have failed to assert our national interests, while we should have done that from the outset.”

Russia's vital national interests (in order of importance):	U.S. vital national interests:	Converge / Diverge / No equivalent:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent armed aggression against Russia and secession of territories from Russia; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No equivalent;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Russian allies' survival and their active cooperation with Russia; ensure Russia is surrounded by friendly states, among which it can play a lead role and in cooperation with which it can thrive; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure U.S. allies' survival and their active cooperation with the U.S. in shaping an international system in which U.S. can thrive; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverge more than converge;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent emergence and/or expansion of individual hostile powers and/or hostile alliances on or near Russian borders; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a balance of power in Europe and Asia that promotes peace and stability with a continuing U.S. leadership role; • Prevent emergence of hostile major powers or failed states on U.S. borders; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverge more than converge;

Russia's vital national interests (in order of importance):	U.S. vital national interests:	Converge / Diverge / No equivalent:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain productive relations, consistent with Russian national interests, with the United States, China and core European Union members; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain productive relations, consistent with American national interests, with nations that could become strategic adversaries, including China and Russia; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Converge more than diverge;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the viability and stability of major markets for major flows of Russian exports and imports; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the viability and stability of major global systems (trade, financial markets, supplies of energy, and the environment); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Converge;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure steady development and diversification of the Russian economy, its integration into the global economy; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No equivalent, though U.S. is theoretically interested in integration of the Russian economy into the global economy;

Russia's vital national interests (in order of importance):	U.S. vital national interests:	Converge / Diverge / No equivalent:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent neighboring nations from acquiring nuclear arms and long-range delivery systems; secure nuclear weapons and materials; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent the use and slow the spread of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, secure nuclear weapons and materials and prevent proliferation of intermediate and long-range delivery systems for nuclear weapons; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Converge, but differ in methods of advancing this interest;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent large-scale or sustained terrorist attacks on Russia; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent large-scale or sustained terrorist attacks on the American homeland; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Converge to a significant extent;
<p>Total: Diverge = 2; Converge = 4; No equivalent = 1.</p>		

So why are relations so bad and volatile even though U.S.-Russian interests converge more than diverge?

(Who is to blame?)

- Conflicts over such issues, as color revolutions, missile defense and NATO expansion.
- Almost no one in U.S. Congress has a stake in good U.S.-Russian relations.
- Lack of solid economic foundation (In 2015 U.S. was 8th on the list of Russia's trading partners behind Japan, accounting for 4% of Russia's trade last year. In 2015 Russia was 32nd largest trading partner of US behind Venezuela).
- Lack of bureaucratic foundation: Abolishment of Track 1 dialogue (presidential commission suspended), abolishing of NIS office at DoS, DoD, DoE (only NIC still has that office – see A. Stent's book “Limits of Partnership: U.S.-Russian Relations in 21st Century.”)
- In absence of these foundations, personal relations between leaders disproportionately impact overall relationship (see A. Stent's book).

What is to be done?

- Acknowledge that Russia matters/cannot be ignored [(a) prevention of accidental war (can escalate into a nuclear exchange – so deconfliction and transparency) and (b) proliferation (JCPOA), (c) counter-terrorism, (d) China, (e) energy, etc.)]
 - See “A Blueprint for Donald Trump to Fix Relations with Russia” by G. Allison and D. Simes in NI.
- Acknowledge that the best outcome is selective partnership (in spheres where interests converge) and managing of competition (in areas where interests diverge)
- Hold a summit and resume Track 1 dialogue to discuss (a),(b), (c),(d),(e), as well as arms control, cyber, conflicts in Ukraine/FSU and Syria.

What is to be done?

- Refrain at least for now from beefing up beyond the already announced tripwires in Europe (especially as Russia plans to cut defense expenditures by a quarter in 2017-18).
- Emphasize U.S. adherence to protection of human rights and rule of law, but also stress regime change in Russia is not a U.S. objective.
 - Also keep in mind that democratic reforms can occur in Russia only if Russians want them and that promotion of such reforms from abroad have quite often backfired in the past.
- Expand economic cooperation (Trump's business experience is a plus).
- Keep in mind that history matters.

Additional Slides

Russia will continue to matter to U.S./West in short-to-medium term

- Nuclear weapons.
- Essential role in preventing proliferation of WMD.
- Most consequential partner in preventing nuclear terrorism until Ukraine crisis.
- Countering ISIS and al-Qaeda.
- Preventing Afghanistan from becoming a failed state again.
- Oil and gas.
- Managing China's rise.
- UNSC and G-20.
- Largest country by land area, vital for transit of goods.
- Brains and technologies.
- Potential as a spoiler.

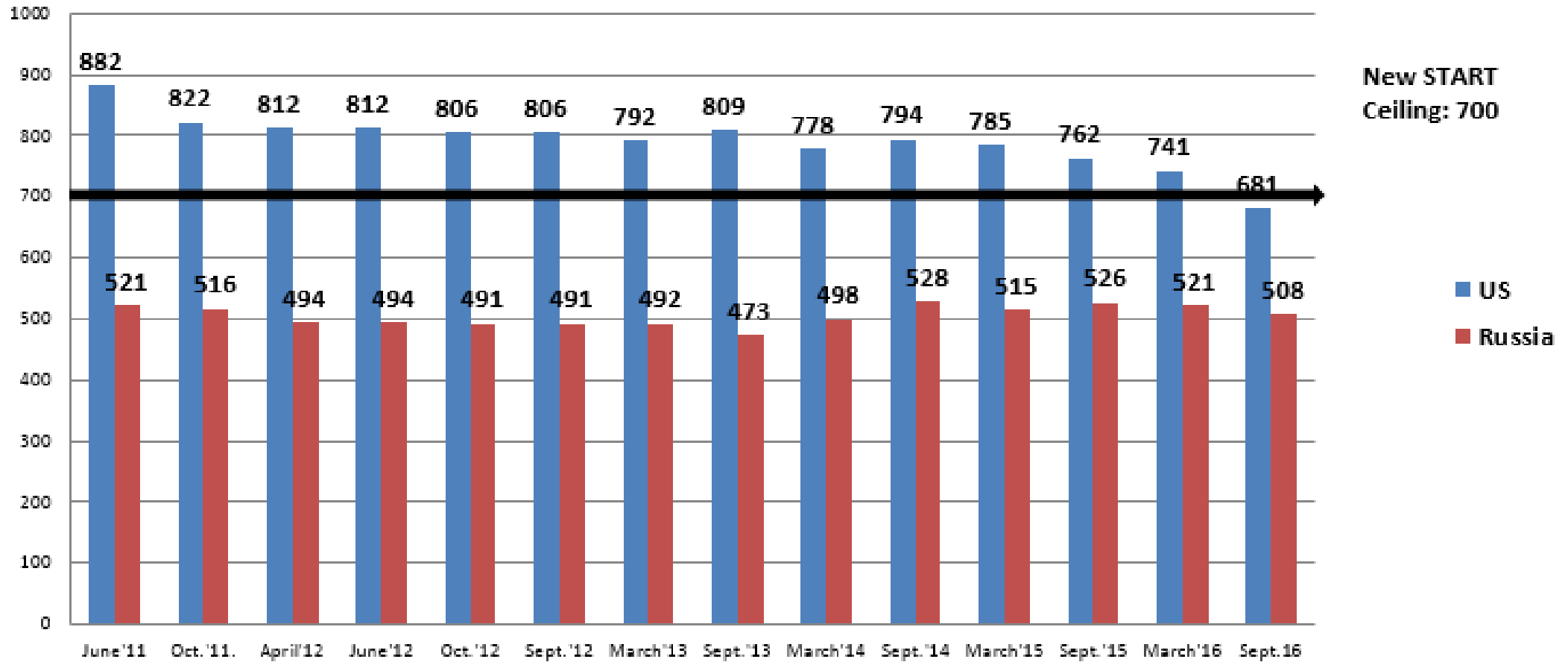
Russia by Numbers vis-à-vis U.S. (2015, source: Russiamatters.org)

Category	Russia	U.S.
Deployed strategic nuclear warheads	No. 1 1,796	No. 2 1,367
Oil production	No. 3 11,029.7k barrels/day	No. 1 15,043.5k barrels/day
Natural gas production	No. 2 20,437 bln ft	No. 1 25,728 bln f
GDP (PPP) (constant 2011 international \$)	No. 6 \$3,498 billion	No. 2 \$16,890 billion
Global exports	No. 15 \$340 billion	No. 2 \$1,505 billion
Global imports	No. 23 \$194 billion	No. 1 \$2,308 billion
Bilateral trade	Exports: No. 30 Imports: No. 20	Exports: No. 16 Imports: No. 4
Population	No. 9 144,096,812	No. 3 321,418,820
Total area	No. 1 17,098,242 km or 10,624,355 mi (Crimea excluded)	No. 3 9,826,675 km ² or 6,106,013 mi
Life expectancy	No. 110 70.4 years Simon Saradzhyan, January 2017	No. 31 78.9

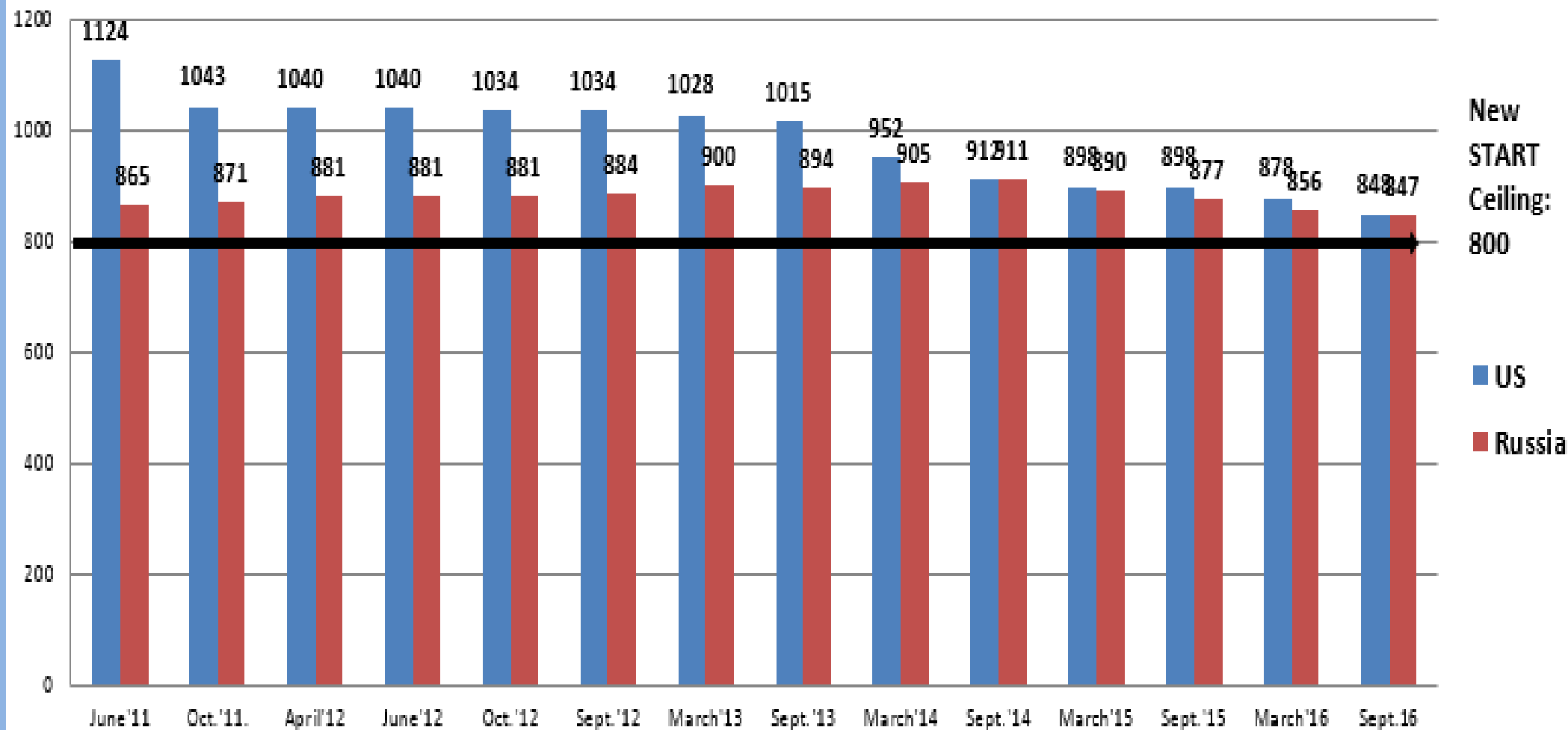
Country's GDP PPP constant 2011 dollars as share of world's GDP %

Country Code	Year 1999	Year 2015	% change in 2015 since 1999
CHN	7.1415%	17.1282%	139.84%
USA	20.8608%	16.0181%	-23.21%
IND	4.2649%	7.0029%	64.20%
DEU	4.9413%	3.3698%	-31.80%
RUS	2.9379%	3.0846%	5.00%
BRA	3.1835%	2.8006%	-12.03%
GBR	3.1237%	2.3740%	-24.00%
FRA	3.4125%	2.3448%	-31.29%
ITA	3.3145%	1.9209%	-42.05%

New START: Deployed Delivery Systems



New START: Deployed and Non-Deployed Delivery Systems



New START: Warheads on Deployed Delivery Systems

