## CULTURAL DIALOGUE IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA: POWER AND THE STRATEGIC DISCOURSE

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Abstract: The present paper aims at analyzing the cultural dialogue in the post-Cold War era, the Cold War being perceived as a security dilemma. The study makes a clear-cut distinction between the political differences regarding the United States of America and Russia laying emphasis upon concepts, such as: security and risk. This work tries to highlight if the cultural dialogue between the United States and Russia is a failure or a success. Another important issue is diplomacy related to the Soviet ideology and the American response. The concept of power is of paramount importance being viewed as a cultural device in the post-Cold War era. Politics is presented as an instrument of power. Both the United States and Russia fought to be the most powerful nations having the power to rule the world.

**Key words:** culture, dialogue, power, strategy, post-cold war.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The post-cold war era can be perceived as a very important age in the political field. We can say that throughout this period of time the political relationships between the United States of America and Russia have improved.

However, if we analyze this issue in depth, we will find out that even though the cultural dialogue between the previously mentioned two nations has improved, they are still guided by the same ideologies.

Nationalism is a very interesting concept and it might

greatly influence the behavior of very important states.

Another key term is diplomacy. In both cases, the diplomacy of the states has improved, but the focus should also be laid on security and risk.

The concept of power is of paramount importance. When we refer to power, we should mention two important dimensions: hard power and soft power. They have their own tools which have a certain impact, be it stronger or weaker, on the behavior of a certain state. The best tip for a successful strategic discourse might be cooperation.

Understanding the differences of their political cultures can lead to a fruitful cooperation.

Power is the concept which brings together the two very important players against a very interesting international background as power guides every move of each and every important nation.

The concept of power should be analyzed as a cultural device, too, politics being used as an instrument of power.

It is worth to look in the mirror of power to see how it is connected with security and the cultural dialogue.

### 2. THE COLD WAR – A SECURITY DILEMMA?

Living in a bipolar world, there is no authority which has the power to bring together the states into a commonly accepted pattern. In other words, when one state begins to increase its security, a certain effect is exerted on the other one, namely, it makes the other state insecure.

One state's intention can turn into the other state's need for protection. Thus, intention might be understood as threat. We can see the effects of bad state-to-state communication and notice how hard it is to have a secure interaction (Herz, 1950: 157-180).

Secure interaction can be interpreted as the situation in which when sharing a lack of understanding the reasons behind one move of a state might endanger the participation of the other state in a common global goal. And this can be perceived as a security dilemma.

Why? Because even if the two states share the same goal, that is, mutual security, each and every state's behavior confers a certain political position which might be very far to its purpose.

The word "dilemma" refers to a situation which requires a certain choice, generally between equally undesirable alternatives. If we bring together the word "dilemma" and the Cold War, the equally undesirable alternatives might refer to the costs and risks of a specific movement.

The Cold War was a new type of war, a war which was not based on armed conflict. It was based on different ideologies: on the one hand, there was democracy, and on the other hand, totalitarianism.

Meeting new situations and especially new ways of dealing with conflicts had as an outcome communication misunderstanding.

It is sometimes impossible to meet a common alternative and share the same vision of achieving the same goal into such a manner that should be satisfying at the international level.

The difficulty in this situation arises when the definition of security is understood as the status quo – that is, the state before the war (quoted in Ulam, 1968:5).

Even if the Cold War was not an aggressive war, based on armed conflict, it had a lot of potential insecurity for both the United States and the Soviet Union.

# 3. POLITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND RUSSIA

It is very important to understand the political differences between the United States of America and Russia. They have two different geographical locations on the world's map and two opposing political cultures.

On the one hand, American nationalism values the individual above anything else and on the other hand, Russia is a nation concerned with the welfare of the state.

The United States' foreign policy has traditionally been

focused on important values, such as: freedom, capitalism and human rights whereas Vladimir Putin's foreign policy was concerned with power and respect.

Their specific nationalism is rooted in their political cultures, which continues to have a great impact today.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the relationship between the United States of America and Russia has been influenced by the political culture of each nation.

If there are disagreements between the two nations they can be interpreted not only as conflicting interests but also as differences in their understanding of certain situations.

The American politicians are constrained to see the world through the lens of the American political culture based on democracy and individual rights whereas the Russian understanding is constrained as its fundamentals are the principles of the Russian political culture.

The American officials are puzzled when Russia acts in a certain way which contradicts the American worldview whereas the Russians might meet difficulties in understanding why the United States said or did something in particular. All these cultural

differences are present on both sides and can explain under what circumstances the conflicts between the United States of America and Russia start (Gaddis, 1990:129-132).

The American paradigm for international relations after the failure of communism was rooted in the belief of the triumph of the liberal democracy and emergence of global markets. Accordingly, the United States of America did not win the Cold War, democratic capitalism did and Russia did not lose the Cold War, communism did.

## 4. SECURITY AND RISK. THE CULTURAL DIALOGUE: SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

Policy-makers in the United States and Russia view security through a multitude of risks rather than threats. They no longer see a world of existential challenges. On the contrary, they operate in a world of complexity in which the existence of their nations is no longer threatened as it was during WWI, WWII and the Cold War. In this context, the security of the fully citizens he cannot guaranteed.

In the context of globalization, risks are often transnational and do not apply to a particular territory.

The policy makers must take into consideration that their efforts to counter a risk can be understood as the potential to create more risks. Any act of risk management consumes a given resource in order to offset a certain risk — which might "boomerang" into another one — by making decisions in a world of risk (Crow, 2011:4-5).

Risk is perceived subjectively and also culturally. What we may consider to be a risk for a nation may not be for the other.

Sociologist Philip Windsor argued that the potential for cultural dialogue is set in between norms and values (Windsor, 1995:86).

It is really important do define what do "culture", "norms" and "values" mean in the given context.

Culture refers to society, to its traditions, its beliefs, be those religious, moral or national ones, to its historical experience.

Cultures are dynamic, they are in a continuous transformation, shifting, adjusting and developing.

One specific moment in the history of the American-Russian relationship raised fear among the Russians. This is the moment when

the United States has disregarded the United Nations and invaded Iraq. From that moment, Russia feared of the tendency towards the creation of a unipolar world under the economic and military domination of the United States. Russia feared that the United States had too much power and would intervene in its affairs (Ellison, 2003:88-89).

This attitude can be perceived as an attempt to refrain the American power. This attitude reflects Russia's deeper political values.

Vladimir Putin hoped that a change of political strategy would bring the growth of the country, welfare, security and revive the global power image. He structured the entire political system in Russia according to his own belief with reaching progress and stability (Kasymov, 2011:76-88). A hard-liner stance is maintained on many domestic and foreign policy issues.

Another important moment in the American–Russian relationship resulted when former US President George Bush announced his plans to station anti-ballistic missile systems in the former Soviet Union. In 2007, President Bush signed deals to build a missile defense shield in Poland along with a radar station in the Czech Republic. This was justified as it would protect the United States and Europe from a nuclear threat posed by states such as, Iran and North Korea. The Russian officials perceived this move as a hostile intrusion their sphere in influence. Putin considered that there was no justification for installing a missile defensive system in Europe. The missile defense system would strengthen US position while diminishing the Russian one.

The cultural dialogue between the United States and Russia after the Cold War depicts its own definition of diplomacy illustrating the interactions between the two states.

## 5. DIPLOMACY: SOVIET IDEOLOGY AND AMERICAN RESPONSE

Diplomacy refers to the art of conducting international relations by negotiating agreements, treaties and alliances.

The diplomacy held throughout the Cold War era between the United States and the Soviet Union was similar to a game.

While the Americans took small steps hoping to succeed in installing the democratic principles in the Soviet region, the Russians feared they will lose the game of power and this reaction could be perceived as an attack to the effectiveness of the American game strategy.

Both the American and the Russians wanted to win the pot by applying different radical strategies.

Because of the Soviet ideology, the national pride and effort to increase the sphere of influence, it was really hard to find a common purpose with the United States.

The United States was more concerned with achieving the highest level of security and managed to follow more realistic goals and use their resources at the maximum potential.

The United States' diplomats believed that the Soviet Union was more likely a political threat to their vital interests in Europe rather than a military threat.

In fact, this is what the Cold War represented, namely, a political and cultural war, which denies military impact.

## 6. POWER AS A CULTURAL DEVICE IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

Power is a highly important cultural device by means of which both the United States of America and Russia tried to achieve certain goals.

Each nation has its own perception of what power means and for what purposes it can be used. The United States perceived power as a means to prove their unique role in the international Russians system. The advantage of power in order to create a strong national identity in the post-Cold War international system. Both nations something in common: national pride.

Once with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Americans themselves valued as being superior to the Russians. The Americans valued their ideology of democracy as being superior to communism and so they valued the American identity as being superior to the Soviet one.

This superiority was also fueled by the fact that democracy won after the Cold War ended. Thus, Russia experienced a sort of inferiority complex due to the fact that communism lost the battle and the Russians could not succeed in imposing their political tradition in the international system. However, this loss of the Soviet Union did not decrease the strength of the nation.

After the Cold War ended, Russia started to be more open to the Western ideas, that is, more diplomatic. Russia started to rethink its political strategy in order to achieve the state's main goal, namely, enlarging the Russian sphere of influence.

Once with the ending of the Cold War, the United States' state of affair acquired a new dimension, more powerful than ever. They started to rethink their methodology and to rebuild their strategy in order to develop a successful dialogue with the Russians.

However, Russia was still considered a threat for the democrats and they decided that the best ideology to promote was liberalism.

The Post-Cold War era brought greater imbalance of power. The American state was at its highest level of strength adopting an imposing attitude towards the international political system. The Russian state's reaction to this new order consisted of a greater struggle for its national identity and uniqueness in the international system.

### 7. POLITICS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER

According to an unwritten law, who has the power has the control. Who has the power can influence the foreign policy.

Regarding the communication between the two superpowers, there are certain gaps, such as: the lack ofunderstanding intentions and the lack of reactions. interpreting certain Such gaps are consciously created so that the states could have some kind of social protection of their own political culture.

We can say that none of the two states managed to use power as an instrument of achieving national goals. It is just a game of winning something. There is no winner and it will never be. This happens due to the fact that even though they have good intentions, they do not use power properly in order to achieve their goals. Instead, they involve in a neverending race about who is the winner rather than who to win the pot.

The relation between the United States and Russia is based on poor quality information. The real image is distorted through politicians and media lens. The media channels offer poor quality information and they do not inform the citizens about the real events.

Can politics be an instrument of power? Yes, it can. One state which has immaculate discourse can influence their receptors and, in this way, it can become more powerful in the political system. How can politics become such an instrument? It can by means of diplomacy.

The most important elements involved in the analysis of how diplomacy works are the culture and politics of a state. Diplomacy goes hand in hand with negotiation and it implies international cultural dialogue.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. the US-Russian relations have known several stages. The first step was to create a strategic alliance but since they were struggling for global supremacy, there was no energy left for alliances. Each nation followed its own interest and diplomacy was used when their spheres of influence interfered.

The phrase "soft power" was developed by John Nye in the 1980s and it suggests the ability of a state to use its persuasive skills in order to determine other states to act how it wants without using coercive power (Nye, 1990:10-23).

Nye argues that in order to have a successful interaction, one state must use both soft and hard power. He states that the United States struggles to win as many hearts as possible like if it fought to win a war. Hard power can help with the physical dominance while the soft power accompanies it on the other levels, such as: culture and economy.

Soft power is mainly based on diplomacy. With a good cultural dialogue strategy, one state can determine the other state to perceive the security in the same way. Cooperation would be more accessible even between the United States of America and Russia.

Politics is used as an instrument to gain power and security was used as a tool of defending a cultural idea rather than protecting a realistic threat.

### 8. QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

In what follows, the focus will be laid on the questionnaire itself, on the respondents who answered the ten questions of the questionnaire, on the interpretation of the results as well as on a few general conclusions.

#### 8.1 The questionnaire itself

Here is the questionnaire consisting of 10 questions:

- 1. Do you think the Cold War fed a security dilemma?
  - a) Yes, historical events prove that a bipolar world equally made nations feel both secure and insecure:
  - b) I am not sure, both states had a mutual goal security yet none of them reached that level:
  - c) No, the Cold War was only about the fight between democracy and communism and ended with democracy as a winner;
  - d) I do not know.
- 2. What do you think are the features that result from the contradiction between the United States and Russia's political cultures?
  - a) Organized crime networks and international terrorism, which threaten the international security;
  - b) Violent cultural movements, which disable the opportunity to cross-cultural education;
  - c) Instability in the international political system, which stimulates undesirable reactions from the other nations:
  - d). The insecurity of world peace that results from their fight for power.

- 3. What do you think is the most important cultural difference that contributes to the state of depression in the United States-Russia relationship?
  - a) Their opposing political cultures, which promote contradictory ideologies in the international system;
  - b) Their mutual struggle for attaining more power and become the sole superpower nation;
  - c) Their bad conflicting interests which resulted from the difference in their understanding of events;
  - d). All of the above.
- 4. What is your understanding of the political position of the United States in the post-Cold War era?
  - a) A new approach with respect to bilateral relations;
  - b) A preoccupation with the rise of a global market;
  - c) Spreading the liberal democracy;
  - d) Improving global security.
- 5. What is your understanding of the political position of Russia in the post-Cold War era?
  - a) A new approach with respect to bilateral relations;
  - b) Preoccupation with the growth of the country's welfare;

- c) Intensive promotion of communism as ideology;
- d) Improving global security.
- 6. In your opinion, what of the following statements could supply the best explanation for the high potential of risk in the United States Russian relationship?
  - a) Security is viewed through a multitude of risks rather than focusing on specific realistic threats:
  - b) In the context of globalization, risk becomes transnational and does not apply to a particular territory;
  - c) Bad risk management can generate undesired results and bring unintended consequences:
  - d) The perception of risk is very subjective, thus what may be considered to be a risk for a nation may not be the same for the other one.
- 7. How do you perceive the concept of power?
  - a) A cultural device used to achieve a particular aim;
  - b) A means through which a nation proves its unique role in the international system;
  - c) It inspires authority in global security concerns;
  - d) A tool to suggest a strong national identity.

- 8. What do you suggest as a main reason for the post-Cold War era's greater imbalance of power?
  - a) The United States' status as the world's superpower;
  - b) Russia's greater fight for its national identity rather than focusing on cooperating with the United States.
  - c) The condition of the American state that suggests all nations should take into consideration to adhere to liberal democracy;
  - d) Russian refusal to accept dependency on the American policy.
- 9. Do you think that the ineffective communication between the United States and Russia is a result derived from their opposing political ideologies?
  - a) Yes. I consider their opposing ideologies carry their poor and unsuccessful interaction;
  - b) Not really, I think that pride is what maintains the two states far away from a future successful cooperation;
  - c) No, I suggest that their mutual goal being the most powerful nation is what maintains unstable collaboration;
  - d) I am neutral to this question.

10. According to you, what should today's Russia do in order to fit in the international system?

- a) To repattern its political system;
- b) To adjust its governing to the new type of society;
- c) To take a break from extreme nationalism;
- d) To do nothing: the other nations should change to fit in the Russian model.

## 8.2. Subjects of the Questionnaire

The previously presented questionnaire has been distributed to a number of 30 subjects aged in

between 19 and 55, as follows: 5 subjects being 19 years old and representing 16.6%; 11 subjects being 22 years old and representing 36.6 %; 5 subjects being 24 old years representing 16.6%; 2 subjects being 31 years old and representing 6.6%. 2 subjects being 36 years old representing 6.6%, 1 subject being 40 years old and representing 3.3 %, 3 subjects being 47 years old and representing 10% and 1 subject being 55 years old representing 3.3%, as it can be seen in Figure 1:

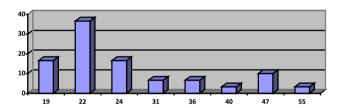


Figure 1. Subjects' Age.

In order to achieve a balanced result, the gender of the subjects was the following: 15 out of 30 are male subjects and 15 out of 30 are

female subjects, each category representing 50% as shown in Figure 2.

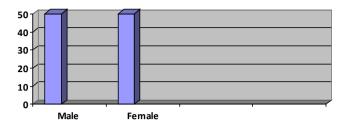


Figure 2. Subjects' Gender.

Subjects' occupation varies from student to unemployed and finally retired. Out of 30 subjects, 16 are students representing 53.3%, 10 subjects are employed

representing 33.3%, 3 subjects are unemployed representing 10% and 1 subject is retired representing 3.3% as it is shown in Figure 3

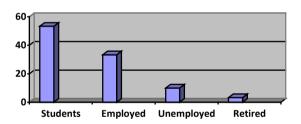


Figure 3. Subjects' Occupation.

Concerning the subjects' education, out of 16 students, 11 have already graduated from higher education another institution representing 36.6 while the other 5 are students at the present time representing 16.6%. Out of the remaining 14 subjects, 3 have as their last education the

high school representing 10%, 8 subjects graduated from a higher education institution and they stand for 26.6%, 2 subjects had home education representing 6.6% and 1 subject had no education, standing for 3.3 % as it is shown in Figure 4

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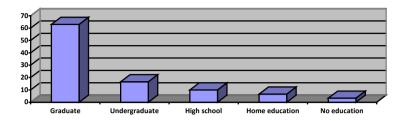


Figure 4. Subjects' Education.

The residence environment splits into 24 subjects coming from the urban environment representing 80% and 6 subjects

living in the rural environment representing 20% as it is shown in Figure 5.

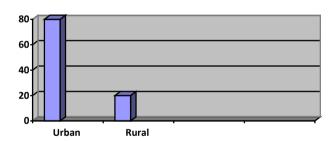


Figure 5. Subjects' Residence Environment.

Regarding the subjects' nationality, 10 subjects have Romanian nationality, 10 subjects have American nationality and 10

subjects have Russian nationality, each of them representing 33.3 as it is presented in Figure 6.

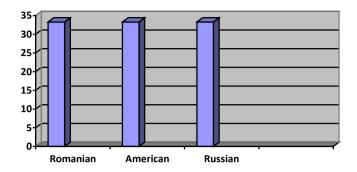


Figure 6. Subjects' Nationality.

Regarding the subjects' religion, I will split them according to their nationality. Out of 10 Americans, 4 subjects are Protestant representing 40%, 5 subjects are Roman Catholic representing 50% and 1 subject has no religion representing 10%. Out

of 10 Russians, 7 are Russian Orthodox representing 70% and 3 are spiritual but not religious representing 30%. 10 out of 10 Romanians are Christian Orthodox representing 100% as it is shown in Figure 7.

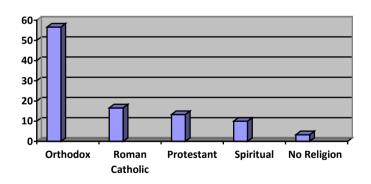


Figure 7. Subjects' Religion.

This study is based on 30 respondents, carefully selected to supply a balanced result. I have

chosen an equal number of respondents from both genders and also an equal number of respondents from each geographical area.

Given all these facts, it can be noticed that the respondents come from very different cultures, thus they meet diversity in their cultural background.

#### 8.3. The Interpretation of the Results

The first question brings the Cold War into discussion. At the question "Do you think the Cold War fed a security dilemma?", the majority of subjects, that is 21. representing 70% preferred variant a) believing that the historical events prove that a bipolar world equally made nations to feel both secure and insecure. 6 subjects representing 20% picked up variant b) answering that they are not sure, both states had a mutual goal - security - yet none of them reached that level. 2 respondents (6.6%) have chosen variant disagreeing with the question, thinking that the Cold War was only about the fight between democracy and communism as ideologies and ended with democracy as a winner and 1 respondent only (3.3%)

confirmed variant d) meaning he/she does not know.

The second question concerns the features that result from the contradiction between the United States and Russia's political cultures. To this topic, respondents 10 (33.3%)suggested that variant organized crime networks and international terrorism, which threaten the international security, is the most suitable answer, 4 respondents (13.33) picked variant b) suggesting violent cultural movements. which disables the opportunity to cross-cultural education as major factors, 10 respondents (33.3%) picked up variant c) meaning the instability in the international political system, which stimulates undesirable reactions from the other nations the last 6 respondents (20%) have chosen variant d) the insecurity of world peace that results from their fight for power.

The third question concerns a problematic issue consisting of the most important cultural difference that contributes to the state of depression in the United States – Russian relationship. Surprisingly, all respondents (100%) favored

variant d) all of the above answers.

The fourth question highlights a new topic, that is, the subjects' perception of the political position of the United States in the post-Cold War (10%)respondents preferred variant a), a new respect approach with 7 bilateral relations. respondents (23.3%) favored variant b), preoccupation with the rise of global market, the majority of 15 respondents (50%)understood that spreading the liberal democracy is the most accurate answer, whereas the last 5 respondents (16.6%)have chosen variant d) improving global security.

The fifth question refers to the subjects' perception of the political position of Russia in the post-Cold War era. None of the respondents has chosen variant a), a new approach with respect to bilateral relations, and d) improving global security. The majority of 20 representing 66.7% voted for variant b) and the rest of 10 subjects representing 33.3% picked up variant c) standing for an intensive promotion of communism ideology.

The sixth question ends the discussion about political culture with the following question: "In opinion, your what of the following statements could supply the best explanation for the high potential of risk in the United States Russian relationship?"4 respondents (13.33) believe that variant a) according to which security is viewed through a multitude of risks rather than focusing on specific realistic threats is the most suitable, 6 respondents (20%) considered that in the context of globalization, risk becomes transnational and does a particular apply to territory as variant b) states, only 2 respondents (6.67%) picked variant c), which states that bad risk management can generate undesired results and bring unintended consequences and the majority agreed with d), 18 variant respondents believed (60%)that the perception of risk is very subjective, thus what may be considered to be risk for a nation may not be the same for the other one.

The seventh question refers to the subjects' opinion concerning the concept of

Therefore. power. respondents (20%) think that it is a cultural device used to achieve particular aim a (variant a), 4 respondents (13.3%) believe that it is a means through which a nation proves its unique role in the international system, majority of 20 respondents (66.7%) suggested variant c) according to which the concept of power inspires authority in global security concerns. None of the respondents picked up variant d), that is, a tool to suggest a strong national identity.

The eighth question deals with the subjects' view on the main reason for which the post-Cold War era brought greater imbalance of power. 2 of the respondents (6.6%) picked up variant a) the United States' as the world's status superpower, 11 respondents (36.6) suggested variant b) according to which the main reason might be Russia's greater fight for its national identity rather than focusing on cooperating with the United States, 10 of the respondents (33.3%) think that variant c) fits better while the last 7 respondents (23.3%) agree that

Russian refusal to accept dependency with American policy leads to imbalance of power.

The ninth question aims at finding out if the ineffective communication between the United States and Russia occurs because of their opposing political ideologies.

The majority of 43.3% (13 respondents) voted affirmatively to the question (variant a), 7 respondents representing 23.3% are not sure if that was the real reason. suggesting variant b), pride is what maintains the two states far away of a future successful cooperation, ofnone respondents suggested variant c) according to which their mutual goal – being the most powerful nation - is what maintains unstable collaborations. 33.3 % of the respondents decided to remain neutral to this question (10 respondents).

The tenth question of this questionnaire requests the subjects' opinion on the following question: "What should today's Russia do in order to fit in the international system?" Variant a) suggests repatterning its political system

and there was only one subject who has chosen this answer (3.33%). Variant b) was majority's favorite answer (18 respondents – 60%) according to which Russia should adjust its governing to the new type of society. 6 respondents (20%) picked up variant c) according to which Russia should take a

break from the extreme nationalism and finally there were 5 respondents who agreed with variant d) that Russia should do nothing; the other nations should change to fit in the Russian model (16.6%).

The interpretation of the results is given in Figure 8.

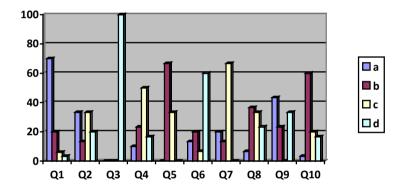


Figure 8. Interpretation of the Results.

In the following, I will present the conclusions drawn after the interpretation of the data of the questionnaire.

The Cold War was a security dilemma because a bipolar world equally made nations fell both secure and insecure.

The contradiction between the United States of America and Russia's political cultures generates organized crime networks and international terrorism, which represent threats to international security. It also generates instability in international political the stimulates which system. undesirable reactions from the other nations.

The major cultural difference that generates a state of depression in the United States – Russian relationship consists of their opposing

political cultures, their mutual struggle for power as well as their bad conflicting interests; all of these resting upon their different ways of understanding the events and situations.

The political position of the United States in the post-Cold War era is based on the spread of liberal democracy. The political culture of Russia in the post-Cold War era is concerned with the growth of the country's welfare.

The potential of risk in the United States - Russian relationship rests upon the fact that the perception of risk is very subjective, thus what may be considered to be a risk for a nation may not be the same for the other one.

The post-Cold War era brought greater imbalance in the international system because of Russia's greater fight for its national identity rather than focusing on cooperating with the United States.

The ineffective communication between the United States and Russia occurs due to the fact that they have opposing ideologies which carry their poor and unsuccessful interaction. In

order to fit in the international system, Russia should adjust its governing to the new type of society.

#### 9. CONCLUSIONS

As a conclusion, it is clear that security is used as a cultural device of one nation and it has an imperative role regarding the common political interests shared by nations.

In the post-Cold War era, the United States and Russia have used their own political cultures as security strategies in order to avoid risk.

A very important parameter consists in fighting for global supremacy.

Lacking communication and understanding, both superpowers will open more doors to the possibility of giving birth to conflicts.

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