



**Beyond the Headlines**  
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**Jill Dougherty**  
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

***Putinism: The World According to Vladimir Putin***

**Patricia Ellis:** Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to our first program of the fall season. It's hard to believe that fall is here, but it is here and everybody's busy once again. I just want to thank you all so much for joining us today for this Beyond the Headlines event with Jill Dougherty, a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, who will speak about a very timely topic: "Putinism: The World According the Vladimir Putin". There's so much going on a daily basis that I won't elaborate, but I will when we get to the Q&A.

I'm Patricia Ellis, I'm President of the Women's Foreign Policy Group. We promote women's leadership and women's voices on pressing international issues. So I'd like to begin by recognizing the WFPG board members who are here: our chair Ann Stock, Mary Catherine Toker, whose company is also one of our Corporate Advisory Council Members, General Mills, and Diana Negroponte.

*[Introductions of ambassadors and Deputy Chiefs of Mission to Bosnia, Liechtenstein, Croatia, Slovenia, Finland, and Norway]*

It's now my great pleasure to introduce and welcome back today's speaker, Jill Dougherty. She's a friend of the WFPG. She's been a moderator and spoke most recently at our Celebrating Women Leaders Luncheon with a group of journalists. As I mentioned, Jill is currently at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Prior to that, she finished a fellowship at the Shorenstein Center on the Media, Politics, and Public Policy. She wrote a new paper, a wonderful paper, on the Russian media, entitled "Everyone Lies: The Ukraine Conflict and Russia's Media Transformation." It was just released in July. I highly recommend this to you. But many of you will remember Jill from her very impressive three decade-long career at CNN. *[Applause.]* She reported from more than 50 countries, including Russia, Iraq and Afghanistan, China, North Korea, and her assignments included Moscow bureau chief and correspondent. She was White House correspondent, managing editor of Asia Pacific and Hong Kong foreign affairs correspondent, and US affairs editor. And I think this will be very obvious, but Jill has had a lifelong interest in Russia as an undergrad she got a BA in Slavic affairs and literature at the University of Michigan. She studied at Leningrad State University, Vladimir Putin's alma mater, and received her MA at Georgetown where she wrote her thesis on Putin's soft power diplomacy. And, she still is on CNN—has published many publications. So, I just wanted to ask you to please join me in welcoming Jill Dougherty.

**Jill Dougherty:** Thank you so much. I wanted to talk about Vladimir Putin, you know the topic I've decided to name this is "Putinism." And I myself am not quite sure exactly what Putinism is. That's my mission at the Woodrow Wilson Center is to try to research this and figure it out. I think there is Putinism, at least there appears to be. Is it something new? Is it some amalgam of some old things? Is he an anomaly in Russian history or is he very much in that mold of Peter the Great and other—let's call them definitive expansionists—powerful leaders Russia has had. And so, I am not going to make any conclusions at this point. I am willing to talk about it. But what I wanted to do was kind of give you—this is Peter the Great. *[Motions to screen.]* In fact I'm sure a lot of you have been to St. Petersburg, recognize that statue. And Peter the Great comes up a lot when I think about Vladimir Putin. Most of

these are photographs that I took when I was there not too long ago and went to a news conference we did for CNN right before I left CNN at the end of this past year. I went back to St. Petersburg/Leningrad where I studied, as Pat mentioned, and had been there many, many times and tried to do—I didn't—a biography of Vladimir Putin.

And what I'm going to try to do is share some of that with you. In other words, I'm not going to say that this is pop psychology, but maybe some of it is because I think that every leader has a background and in the case of Vladimir Putin, the background is very important. Leningrad/St. Petersburg is very important in his thinking. How he grew up, World War II. He's after World War II, but if you live in St. Petersburg, World War II is very much still present. And what happened to Russia in St. Petersburg, Leningrad, during the blockade is very, very important.

So I've had a number of, let's say, introductions to Vladimir Putin. As Pat mentioned, back in 1970, when I was studying—I studied in '69 and 1970 at Leningrad State University. And, it turned out that Vladimir Putin was there right about the same time. I never met him, but many years later I mentioned it to one of his press people. And I said, "You know I was at Leningrad State University." And he said "Jill, we know." [Laughter.] They probably know my shoe size. But in any case, so, beautiful as St. Petersburg is also politically very important in the way that Russia—modern Russia—is run. Many of the people that Putin brought on board are from St. Petersburg. It's kind of like New York vs Chicago, Boston vs New York. There's a certain rivalry. And the fact that he has a lot of people—many of them from the KGB. And I'm not using that pejoratively, I'm just saying these are guys who grew up in the KGB that he trusted and he brought into the power structure, and that is why you see a lot of KGB people. Now, speedily moving on because I know I want to cover a lot of ground, but I'm going to give you a little bit of background of Vladimir Putin.

Again, these are pictures I took as we were doing the CNN documentary which re-aired. It aired before the Sochi Olympics and then we re-did it just a few weeks ago when it went on CNN International in the context of the Ukraine. Here you see this 1943—this is a period—and this is a cemetery that's called Piskarevskoye. This is a cemetery where the people who died during the blockade, the Nazi blockade, were hauled off, many times in carts, some of them not even defined who they were because they had starved to death, frozen to death, and probably about 800,000 people died—accounts vary. But this is an important part of this history of Vladimir Putin. This is a piece of bread. This is from a small museum at that cemetery. A piece of bread. Now imagine, in real life, it's about that big. That is what people ate during the blockade. And at the end, it wasn't even bread. It was wallpaper paste. You know, cellulose and something. It was a terrible thing that happened and Vladimir Putin's parents went through it. His father just briefly went to the front, was shot up, came back, went into a hospital, went back to the front again. And when he was back in Leningrad trying to recuperate, his wife, who was going through the blockade, she almost starved to death. And he tells this story that she actually collapsed because of hunger and was almost hauled off as dead to the cemetery. But she wasn't and they discovered it. It's a dramatic story but it gives you the idea of what he comes from. His, what would have been, his older brother, also died during the blockade and Putin says to this day they don't know where he's buried. So, that is his background.

Here's some pictures, these are not mine, but these are from the museum of some of the people who went through the blockade. And here is little Vlad with his mother. In other words, what I'm saying is, imagine yourself if you had gone through a blockade, your parents had starved, you would probably think this is never going to happen again on my watch. And in fact, at the cemetery, there is this really beautiful phrase—and this phrase—what they actually say "No one is forgotten, nothing is forgotten." And that, you could say, is partly Vladimir Putin's motto. So that's World War II. Vladimir Putin grew up in post-war Leningrad. I can tell you when I was there in '69 and '70, it felt like the war. There were a lot of people who had starved, there were a lot more women than men. The women used to go to what's called the *banya*. I won't go too far, Pat, but the *banya*, which were these bathhouses where you go because we would run out of hot water in our dorm. And we would go there and the women would tell

us, “you American girls, you’re all so skinny.” And of course, I’m a great example. But they would say, “You really have to eat because you never know, remember what happened to us.”

This is the street where Vladimir Putin grew up, and we went to—there he is, as a kind of sad sack-looking little student. He grew up kind of on the wrong side of town. Boskov Lane, number 12, which now has been kind of painted, but it’s still kind of not your most desirable place in the world. This is the entrance when you look at the building, this is how you go in. He lived in the back. You go in through the courtyard—as you do in many buildings in St. Petersburg—down through that passageway to the courtyard. And this is the interior courtyard and his apartment. His parent’s apartment is up there—I think it was the second floor from the top. He tells this story that when he was a little kid he beat off rats with a stick. It was that bad. And he also became—he studied judo. This was—I think as we all know—he’s a judo expert, very good at this. And I think, again, forgive me for psychology 101, but he learned judo and it became his salvation. He described himself as a “hooligan.” He said he was hooligan, he was always getting into trouble, being beaten up or beating up other kids, and when he got the discipline of judo it gave him focus, strength, and discipline. And we talked to the son of the guy who taught him judo and that, the father who is deceased now but would be in his 80’s was Jewish. And his son told me that his father learned judo to protect himself from being beaten up on the tough streets of Leningrad and Putin too. Many people have said, I love this picture, I think this is Photoshopped. [*Laughter.*] But I mean look at that, he kind of looks like a movie star.

Some people have said that his international leadership style is very akin to judo—that he waits for other people to make a move, to study the situation and wait for others to move, and then he moves in. And I think there’s something to that. Look at that face. Lot of strategy in that. When he was about 16 he decided he was going to become a KGB agent. This is KGB headquarters in St. Petersburg. A kind of a place where lot of—when he went, he actually went to headquarters, he says when he was 16, and they basically said “Kid, you can’t become an agent when you’re 16. But if you go back to school and study and probably get a law degree, maybe you can.” He was watching movies at the time he says, they’re kind of like “the FBI-type movies” and he really loved the whole thing. So he did, he went back to school, Leningrad State University, got his law degree. This is the law faculty as they call it of St. Petersburg State University. Went back, got his degree, and did get into the KGB.

He also got married. He got married in ’83 to Ludmila. There is Ludmila. They eventually had two daughters and as you know, unfortunately, they are now divorced. And there are rumors about his personal life, you know, that he has some girl on the side, but nothing has ever been proven. However, this is—this is something that kind of—I think increases the macho component, the attractiveness of him, among some, in his country.

Now, I’ll speed through this, because his history is very interesting. He goes as a KGB agent to Dresden, Germany. And he is in Dresden, Germany from ’85 to 1990. And when did the Wall fall? The Wall falls in ’89. So he was abroad when a lot of very important things were happening, but he was in Dresden which is kind of off the beaten path. They didn’t get a lot of broadcast there. And he—it strikes me that he was not in Russia when some of the key events in the late 80’s were happening, when the new thinking was beginning, when, kind of the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union. He was in Germany. So, he missed some of that ferment. So he goes in ’89, the wall falls, and he tells this story of phoning back to Moscow and saying he’s in the embassy, what do we do? What are we supposed to do here? And he says Moscow didn’t answer. Moscow just didn’t answer. So he felt abandoned, and I think that—what is happening to the world around me at the end of the Soviet Union? I think he felt very powerfully, and in fact, he went with some other people to the furnace in that building and burned a whole lot of classified information. And he says until the stove almost exploded from the heat.

So he goes back to Leningrad and gets into the administration of the University in international relations. And then he gets into the city government with a man whose name was Sobchak, who became the Mayor of St. Petersburg. Here’s Putin’s office, and—oh good you can see it—at the top, in those days when he was in office, I mean when he was in the administration—the local

administration—a lot of people had the President of Russia, Gorbachev, Yeltsin, etc. He always had Peter the Great, who he says was the person that he kind of modeled himself on. And even during the communist days, Peter the Great was revered. That's why that statue is still there; it wasn't ripped down. So, here's his office, and there's Peter the Great. And there's Putin. As he begins his rise, he goes from St. Petersburg into Moscow relatively quickly, but I just want to show you one photograph. This is a photograph that I took when we were doing some shots in his office. And if you want something that kind of captures—this is such a drag because you're not seeing the top of it. Yes, it is a Russian flag. Imagine a tri-color. It's up there. If this picture were framed properly—I'm sorry about that. But here, the three components as I see it of Putin's ideology, or what motivates him: you have modern Russia—the flag—modern Russia, with its, let's say, managed democracy, and some capitalism. No question, it is not communist. Putin is not a communist. You have the czarist elements from, you know, hundreds of years ago, great Russia, imperial Russia. And then you have Vladimir Lenin, whose statue is still there. I mean this picture is from like winter. So it's there. And I think all three of those elements kind of capture what he brings to his presidency. You know, the national anthem of Russia is the old communist melody with new lyrics. And symbolically, I think that kind of tells you something as well. So, as we go along, I'm trying to put together these elements that I really do want to talk maybe for at the most, five more minutes.

You know, Putinsim, what is it? Part of it I think is his own background. The cold Leningrad. This is St. Petersburg just a few months ago. The city that pulled together to fight the Nazi's. When he talks about being surrounded by NATO or other forces, I think some of that comes into play. Whether you agree with it—I'm not saying I agree with everything he's saying—but I'm just saying, let's try to understand where he's coming from. He doesn't want to be surrounded. He does want to protect Russia, whatever that means. But he doesn't want to be attacked by other forces. He does, if you asked him or his people, as I actually have, about democracy, they would say "yeah, we believe in democracy." But it is, as they call it, "managed democracy." It's very linear, it's almost as Lilia Shevtsova, who's a very good expert at Carnegie, has pictured it. It's kind of like a power vertical, with not the way, that say—in most of the West, we have a lot power centers and civil society around the bottom then it comes up to the president. There, it's kind of top down. It's the president who decides, it's the government, the Kremlin that decides, and then it comes down on a point, almost like, let's say, this, as opposed to that. And, so, he is the decider. He is the person who he and the people who support him are, united with him, many of them for economic reasons. They are the people who decide. And I think if there's any way to describe their approach to average Russians, it's that average Russians really can't be trusted because they're going to make mistakes. They're going to elect the wrong people. Unless you guide them. I am quoting here. I am being a little bit factious. But I've had these discussions. It's yes we believe in democracy, but not quite your way and certainly not right now. Because it can be very dangerous. Russia is an unstable place and there's a point to that. Think of Chechnya. You know the Southern Caucasus. So it is managed. The latest rumor in this is protecting Russians around the world. The so-called Russian Rural. You can define that in various ways but that is the justification Putin is using to protect Russian speakers and members of the Russian language and cultural groups in different countries, especially Ukraine. This is the justification for protecting them. My question is how far does this extend? Brighton Beach? Or seriously, does Russia protect Russian speakers in Kazakhstan or Estonia? How far do you go?

One other thing also is there, is a creeping moralistic tone to a lot of Russia's foreign policy—the belief, the feeling, the opinion that the West is debauched with such things as gay marriage. Anything goes in the west. The center of moral gravity is based in Moscow. And that's something you get very much. It is very alive with the Russian Orthodox Church. The power and influence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia right now, in Ukraine, is very active and in moral crusades in Russia. What you are getting is this feeling that Russia is leading the way and the West is corrupt.

Does that have relevance in other countries? I think, in a way, it does. I actually think there is some appeal that the West is anathema—we are the moral majority or the "moral minority". It works in Africa when you get the gay issue, it works sometimes in the Middle East. There is resonance; this is not just a theory. I think Putin is on to something and I think that's attracting support in other countries. And

finally, economically, I really will talk about Ukraine for two seconds. Putin has come out pretty well in this so far. With this peace agreement, which is really written or based on the seven points he wrote a week ago—they have incorporated. A lot of the details are unclear: will it be a peace agreement, a temporary ceasefire, we don't know. But it is being spun by Moscow as a real success. But remember chemical weapons in Syria? That was another take-it-out-of-your-hat solution Putin brought up at the last minute and it actually worked. So he's having some successes. The question always is long term. Will the cost of annexing Crimea for average Russians who will have to pay for it, will that come back to haunt him? Will it increase dissent? So far I think it's a bandwagon, support Russia, big bad Russia is back, is partially what's doing this. Economically I don't know. The young Russians in California want to go back or are they happy in Silicon Valley? They're the people that I think about a lot. What are they going to do? Do they want to be cut off from the rest of the world as much as seems to be happening right now? How will they integrate? How will they integrate Russia?

And in closing, don't forget that Putin, was in his first term in office beginning in 2000. It's been 14 years, he has another few years as president. He legally could run for another six-year term. So theoretically he could be in power for 24 years. That's quite long. Will we deal with him? Will he actually be re-elected and could he be in office another 24 years? Or is there some other ways for people who think differently—another generation that will change things? But right now, Putin is a leader and he is the guy that we have to deal with. So thank you very much.

**Ellis:** I have a couple questions following up on what you just said. First of all, one question that keeps coming across my mind is about the ceasefire—and the Russians are claiming it as a success—but my basic question is how come the Ukrainians are not negotiating with the separatists as opposed to negotiating with Russia who says that they're not involved in questions?

**Dougherty:** It is counter-intuitive because just a few days ago Vladimir Putin said "We can't decide anything because we're actually not the party that is fighting here." And people said, "you're kidding." But, when we do look at the rebel groups, Putin does not have total control. He has been stirring up things, and there are certain groups that do listen to what Russia says. But I don't think he's in total control. And there are a whole lot of groups, almost like, here are our problems—and I think his problem with the Syrian opposition is who he trusts—who are these people? In any international conflict like this, you are going to get the wackos from every fight around the world who are going to be coming to what the way the battle is. And there are plenty of wackos in Ukraine just as there are plenty of nutty people in Syria who are just spoiling for height. So you have a very disparate group and that may be just one of the reasons. Plus, of course, Putin does want to have some type of influence for Russia in whatever emerging—politically if they get to that point, that the negotiations are beginning.

**Ellis:** In terms of Putin's success, your paper was about the control of the media and Putin's great propaganda machine, and his positioning himself as the man in charge of values. I'm just wondering if you could share a little bit more about the impact of his control of the media not only in Russia where he is extremely popular, but the Russian media is what people get in eastern Ukraine. The Russian media is also received in countries with large Russian populations. And so, if you could talk about this, and related to that, during the time of Sochi we heard some things about Putin's concern with his image as a big player in the world and everything. So how concerned is he still with his image and what have recent events done to his image? As you said, he is popular in some places, but it hasn't exactly turned out the way he had hoped.

**Dougherty:** My thesis at Georgetown was on soft power diplomacy, which some people started laughing at in light of the Ukraine. How could you possibly write about soft power? But I meant it in the technical term. Soft power diplomacy is an international relations term. Let's go back to the Sochi Olympics. That was all soft power. That was all Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy. Russia the land of culture, which it is. I mean deep, high culture. And that is what Russia communicated. So that was then, and this is now. Then Ukraine happened. And I do not believe that Vladimir Putin set out to do what he did to Ukraine. I think it was a lot of serendipity that came into that. What the people on the dime did,

unexpectedly—Yanukovich running away. Lots of this was not planned but Putin very quickly decided he had to react. And then once he reacted then it set a train in an entire spiral. So in Sochi, which was in the beginning of this year, was totally soft power. Then you saw hard power of Russia coming into Ukraine. Albeit, it was kind of soft hard power because they never said they were Russian troops. No matter what you call it, but it was certainly hard power ultimately. Now, I think that Russia has great soft power, in terms of its culture, but the hard power too can attract the people as well. Sticking up for your brethren in other countries, domestically in Russia, it's very successful.

The domestic media in Russia—television which has about 98% penetration of the market. Everyone has a TV, maybe multiple TV's. It is the primary way that the government expresses its opinions and molds public opinion in Russia—through TV. The Internet is close to this. But mainly, it's really kind of a younger phenomenon. And those younger people do not watch TV and do not, according to statistics—so you have a very different dynamic. The Kremlin—by the time that Sochi happened and certainly by the time that Ukraine [happened]—had almost total control over the domestic media. And by that I do not mean that the secret police come to the door and break down the door and take over. Also, when I was in Moscow they actually did that with MTV, if you remember. They actually did come with guns. But now they really don't come with guns, they just have a cozy working relationship with the owners. And they kind of say, "Hey let's have a drink. What was that story that you did the other day? You really shouldn't be doing this. Here's what you ought to be doing." It's much more soft pressure and sometimes not pressure at all because the people who run the media usually are in sync with the Kremlin. So, domestic media are controlled. International media, which would be kind of like the United States' old US Information Agency. You're spreading your message abroad. The thing with the United States right now is trying to figure out how do you do this with terror. Their USIA, which was an organization which had such a long name I'm not even going to tell you, used to broadcast the communist message around the world. And they had almost Confucius centers that the Chinese had around the world. After the end of the Soviet Union, it all fell apart.

So when I entered the picture like two and half years ago researching soft power, the Kremlin was rebuilding a lot of their structures to project this message internationally. And when Ukraine happened, it sped up the process so that Russia now has a very well oiled international broadcasting and propaganda—but I'm using that word technically—propaganda structure which with Ukraine and it shut down broadcast in Ukraine. Ukrainian broadcasts could not be seen in the East and the Ukrainians, I think stupidly, shut down Russia broadcasting in their area. So what the people in the eastern part of Ukraine were seeing was Russian broadcasting which excoriated new leaders in Kiev fashion. So, the bottom line, you have the internal control by the Kremlin of the media in Russia. And now you have the external—they're putting a lot of money into it. Look at RT Television, and it's a complete revamp of the external broadcasting.

**Ellis:** Okay let's open it up to questions. We're going to take three questions at once.

**Question:** Hi, I'm Angela Crooks, I'm currently working in the Department of Energy. I loved your pictures, they were very nostalgic for me when I studied in Leningrad. I'm wondering what your standing is on Putin's endgame in Ukraine. He says one thing and there's a lot of brethren and we're protecting and Russia brethren are in Ukraine, and so on, but what do you think his true endgame is in Ukraine?

**Question:** I'm Anna Borshchevskaya and I'm a fellow with the European Foundation for Democracy. I'm American but I'm originally from Russia. So you brought up Russia's inherent instability and you brought up Chechnya and I think it's important to talk about now in light of radical extremism across the world and in Syria and Iraq. The Chechnyan conflict actually began with a secular separatist one, it had nothing to do with radical Islam, but, at least to some, Russia's own policies they became radicalized. And we now see this radicalization that we've never seen before, and I'm curious. I've heard people make the argument that we're facing the same struggle in the United States as in Russia, we're both facing radical Islam. But in Russia, it's starting to look a bit different.

**Question:** I'm Nancy Jackson, I'm at the Department of State right now. I was wondering what role that Ukraine passing the law that Ukrainian language would be the language and that Russian was no longer—what role that had in Putin's response?

**Dougherty:** Okay, let me start with that Nancy. I think it was a big mistake. It was exactly the thing that they shouldn't have done that and they should not have shut down Russian TV either. They're acting like the people that they've criticized. Far be it from me to tell Ukraine what to do. But I think if they had been inclusive of the Russian language it would have removed one of the legitimate concerns that Russians in the East had. It would not be complicated. Many people in Kiev speak Russian. But it became a political issue and I think they thought it was a certain triumph. I think it was a big mistake. It did fuel and it continues to initiate right now these peace talks and negotiations—Russian language rights are one of the main issues.

Now, the endgame in Ukraine. I would say as far as we know, it is obviously number one, keep Ukraine out of NATO... I doubt I would see, well maybe, but I don't think NATO is particularly interested right now in letting them in, and I don't think they're particularly interested in bringing Georgia in either, because it's just too much at this point to think anything provocative, to try to do that. So, I think the endgame—keep them out of NATO, and also protect the rights of the people in the East and keep Russia's hand in there. Because I'm not quite sure he knows the ultimate aim that he has. Look at Crimea. Did you ever really think in the beginning that they would do that? So there might be an endgame, there may be several endgames depending on how the situation works out. But I think definitely, having influence and power in the East, some type of influence, is very important to Russia. That raises the issue of these conflict zones, the amount of influence, which is highly controversial. Does Russia have a right to a Monroe Doctrine?

Now, let's move to Chechnya. I'm not too sure, Anna, that it's the same. I agree in the beginning, it was secular. I do totally agree with you we'd rather collide. But the problem is they move from place to place and become radicalized. So you find people from Chechnya fighting in Syria. They're all over the place, very mixed. And then depending on the funding they get, they become even more radicalized. So once you get out of Chechnya I think that they do become more of that international terror group. And don't forget, Chechnya itself has basically been pacified. There's not a heck of a lot happening in Chechnya right now. It's the other areas like Dagestan, these other areas that are much more unstable. That said, it's bad for Russia as a whole to have these areas.

**Ellis:** Okay, let's open it up to some other questions.

**Question:** I'm Brigitte Dias-Ferreira. You mentioned Ukraine was not a country, it was a state. And then you mentioned that Kazakhstan was not a state or a country, which kind of triggers some concerns. And now with Eurasia, they're trying to create a counter to the European community. What is your take? Is it President Putin's intention to recreate the Soviet Union or is he just trying to put a mark history? What is your input?

**Question:** Hi, I'm Jill Welch. I'm with NAFSA: Association of International Educators. Thank you so very much for speaking with us today. I was very interested in your comments about soft power, and the level of understanding you as a scholar have gotten. And I'm wondering what your take is on the foreign policy threat and you look at US leadership and America's understanding of the situation. What's your take on how much people understand what's going on there in that part of the world and the level of total understanding and soft power.

**Question:** Hi, glad to see you all. I'm Elizabeth Doyle from Customs and Border Protection. I have a fairly general question. I was wondering about the picture of Peter the Great on his wall in his office. And I thought Peter the Great was a great Westernizer—very interested in the West. And I thought that was interesting, if you could comment on how that conflicts with his view on the West as decadent?

**Dougherty:** I think he knows. Peter the Great, he was the Westernizer. And I think Vladimir Putin, if you go back to his first term, was a reformer. What has happened subsequently is another issue. Economic reform is on the backburner. But in his original, his first term, they did do some reform. I also think Peter's expansionist search to international relations. I think obviously Putin is expanding but I don't think—maybe this kind of gets us into that USSR—I don't think he's recreating the USSR. I think you can do that and the point has been made—there's not really an ideology, per se, the way there was. Communist ideology, workers of the world unite, nothing to release your chains. And if you've already worked out your ideology in a book, that's Marx, etc. But what he does seem to be doing—he speaks about economics a lot. He is up against the EU. He wants a kind of alternative world to the EU. And You could say on the one hand it probably won't work because the world doesn't work like the old Soviet Union. In some of this, I think he is replaying an economic system that is less transparent. So, if you really want to compete with the West, probably the best way is to be transparent and really bring back the young people, create companies and really compete, which I absolutely believe that Russia can do. However, what they continue to do is play on the fear of people who used to be part of the old Soviet Union—the West doesn't want them. And you can see this in Ukraine. The message that Russia was giving to some of the people in eastern Ukraine was, "Look, do you really think that Western Europe is going to welcome you with open arms and you're going to take their jobs? Do you really think that you're going to get free visas to go to the West? You are dreaming. It is much better, stick with us! You don't have to have these nasty laws to open up your books. And deal with this in a transparent way that the West does. It's a lot easier, we know each other, we've worked together for a long time. You know how it's done. Stick with us!" Again I am exaggerating, but not really. I think that was very much the message. And think of a lot of people in Ukraine, think of people in Russia, think of people in other countries of the former Soviet Union who are not doing that well, who do not feel welcome. They don't feel that they can really compete. And when you have somebody who feels less sound, a lot of fear is engendered that we really can't compete, so maybe we ought to stick with Russia. And you also get a lot of anger and frustration and all of these emotions you have in Ukraine unfortunately.

I'm sorry, I don't think I answered that question on soft power. I don't think people in Washington really understand that. Russians don't explain a lot, that's one of the things. I really believe Russians don't believe in explaining things. You either get it or you don't. But we're not going to explain. And I'm serious. Here, this is our history this is why we do things, and for all of this explaining. Russians do it and then if you question it they might explain, and they don't apologize. And so, I don't think that a lot what makes Putin tick or the Russian mentality. There are people who are in this city who understand. There are. Because people study in St. Petersburg and in Leningrad, and people who know former ambassadors. But to really explain that when there are a lot of people. I think a lot of people who just want to stick it to Russia and to other countries that have not been able to compete with us the way they've wanted to.

**Question:** My name is Casey James and I'm from the International Trade Commission. I thought it was interesting what you were saying on soft power and the way Washington handles it. And I'm wondering what you think we could do to go in the right direction because I think even when looking at the media, the way they've portrayed Putin is like a Bond villain, or this evil guy. And it's obviously more complicated than that but we don't really go into the fact that it seems that people act out of fear and they have motivations to start doing things. And I was wondering if there was anything we could do to try to work on dealing with someone who you might not understand where they're coming from, and how we can make progress.

**Question:** My name is Piotr Bonislawski, I'm Polish. I'm studying now to be counsel in Martha Castle's office. I'm here to learn about Washington. [Laughter.] My question also relates to soft power and the ability of the Russian government to use this tool. And I spent six years in Brussels where I was working in one of the public affairs firms. And in my experience, the Russian government was very smooth in using modern PR tools. I would be interested to get to know about your take about similar activities in this town.



**Dougherty:** You mean similar activities that the Russians are carrying out?

**Bonilawski:** Yes.

**Dougherty:** Oh, okay.

**Question:** *[Inaudible question regarding how Western nations should engage with Putin.]*

**Dougherty:** We have a few questions that are kind of similar. One of the questions is, if you try to understand—let's say you try to understand where he's coming from and his desire not to be surrounded. It comes into conflict with Western values of allowing Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Georgia, etc. to define their own future and to protect their own sovereignty. And this is one of the problems. And the United States went through that with the Monroe Doctrine where we said there are areas where we don't want you to mess around that are close to us. And so, I think that could build in conflict and I'm not sure how to resolve that. In the modern world, there is no more Monroe Doctrine. But the United States does have a sphere of influence. However in the modern world, there's a lot more respect for your neighbors. And, we cannot forget that the Soviet Union existed just 20-some years ago. This is all very recent. And to me, Ukraine is a terrible but real example that the Soviet Union did not simply fall apart. We all say, the Soviet Union fell apart in 1991. It did not. Technically, yes. But we are living through the end of the Soviet Union. These countries are still tied to the mentality, are still tied to what that was. I had a producer in Moscow, a guy who's like in his mid-40's, so let's say six to seven years ago. And we went to Ukraine to do a story and he didn't take his passport. And I said "We're at the airport. How could you forget your passport?" And he said, "You know, I'm just not used to the fact that it's another country." I'm serious! This is a great example. So what do we do?

So understanding Russia—I think there's a balance that we have to have between understanding and then not lecturing, but telling them that the world works kind of differently. We all have these things, but we can move on to a different way of constructiveness. But Putin is realpolitik. He's going to do what he thinks is in the best interest of Russia. And that comes from his experience. So I think maybe a better understanding of trying to predict what he will do and being ready with diplomacy to answer—that might be the best way to do it. I don't think you can stop Putin from being Putin. You can't stop him from doing what he wants to do. But I think we can be smarter in predicting various habits and do what is important [and] not to let that get out of control. Somebody should have gently urged Ukraine to say that idea.

And soft power in DC, they had a PR agency as you know. They spend a lot of money on that. I don't think they're doing as much of that right now. I don't think they're very good at getting out their message in DC. Many times I've gone to the embassy, sometimes they want me to talk, but a lot of times they don't. They're not half as open as many other embassies just to talk with people and have a couple of events. And even their soft power is like a Russian club. It's all Russians. There are no Americans that I can see. So, I think they could do a better job.

**Question:** Stanley Kober. Like you, I also attended Leningrad University in the 70's. I want to talk about media influence. My Soviet counterparts seemed to not really believe in the ideology anymore. I don't know if you've experienced this, but I have the sense that they want to be part of the world. They resent being cut off from the world. They were envious of our ability to study there. They were hoping they would have such opportunities. You could tell with the music—they knew our music better than we did. I was in Moscow 1990 for a time, very optimistic, end of Cold War. I was back there in '95. At the time I was at the USAID event. At the end of it they had a briefing for the press. The first question from a Russian journalist was, "How do you explain the rise of anti-Americanism in Russia?" '95. The answer from the head of the American delegation and the good pastor from the Atlantic Council was "Oh, it's just the media, what we hear now." The answer from the head of the Russian delegation, "The West is.."

**Ellis:** Stanley, is there a question?

**Kober:** It's not just Putin. This predates Putin and I don't think you can blame it just on—people are blaming it on the media, and in my mind, that's too easy.

**Question:** [*Inaudible question regarding the “sandwich generation” (the generation that has lived both under Putin and the Soviet Union) and how they feel about Russia’s relationship with the rest of the world.*]

**Ellis:** I would to also like to throw in a question about energy and how much longer can Putin play the energy card. Russia has a lot of gas and oil and we know the winter's coming; however, the Russians have just included a big deal with the Chinese—they're looking towards Asia. In fact, some people are calling it an Asia pivot. So is this in anticipation of decreased demand from Europe ultimately, or, if you could just talk about that?

**Dougherty:** We're getting into kind of philosophy. I think if your country is very influential and it's feared around the world, maybe not loved, but feared around the world, and you're a kickass country, and you're the Soviet Union. And then you lose it. And then you are ignored during Bosnia. And then you see your economy falling to desperate situations—it can make you angry. And I think that that's more what's going on. Russians aren't cut off from the West. They travel more. There are more Russians in Spain than Americans at this point. But they do long—and I think there is a nostalgia for being a big influential country. And I think that is what is in play right now. I think people really make trends kind of negative, but, people are paying attention to Vladimir Putin. People are paying attention to Russia. And there's very much that feeling—we're back on the world stage and we matter. And maybe as Americans we don't like the way they matter because it's still all very negative. But, they matter. So, that fuels some of the ideas among Russians.

Energy, not just the Russian media. True. It's true. But it's kind of a loop. If they know what motivates people and they play on that. I'll tell you, Russian TV is a great example on which we can go on forever on RT Television which I won't. I'll just give one aside. If you've never watched RT Television, it started out as Russia Today. Then they rebranded and the head of RT said the reason they rebranded was because they realized that nobody was really interested in Russia. This was two and a half years ago when I did an interview with her. So they rebranded and they turned into RT which is kind of what CNN did with headline news. It used to be CNN Headline News then it became HLN and nobody knows it's part of CNN because it was considered like it will be more successful if it's not linked with CNN. Same thing with RT. I'm kind of getting off on a tangent, but they know what works with their people. And so, it is kind of a loop—a closed loop.

**Ellis:** I think there was a question on the sandwich generation.

**Dougherty:** Oh right, the sandwich generation. I was trying to get a little focus on what it was. In other words, can they succeed, do they have a role economically, is that basically it?

[*Inaudible question clarification*]

**Dougherty:** Well, I think that's the problem. And I think that's the weak link for Putin. Because if he really does have Russia cut off from the international economic system, it's going to be very difficult for young people right now to survive. I just went on a tour. I lectured on a tour and we went to the Baltics and we went to St. Petersburg. And I was talking to some people who were in tourism and they're very worried. Luckily, for the Russians, they were quite a lot of tourists still. But there are companies that are very, very worried. Russian companies are worried. Long term what Putin is trying to do is to regenerate or generate the Russian businesses that can compete internationally. Food products, by banning American products and food, chicken, etc. What they want to do is jumpstart Russian production. Which he actually should be doing. But maybe not exactly this way. So, short term, I think the people in between are caught. Long term maybe will help. But boy, Russia right now, people are not

long-term thinkers. The friends that I have, they're thinking about like a year from now. Can I go on vacation? A year from now, will I have the job? A year from now can I afford an apartment? They're not thinking 20 years down the road.

And energy, it's huge. I think dependence on China is very interesting, but I think it's fraught with danger for Russia because China can eat their lunch if they don't watch out. [Laughter.]

**Ellis:** Are there any last questions? Any ambassadors in the room who want to say or ask anything?

**Ambassador Joško Paro:** There are so many questions. [Laughter.] Putin is obviously the greatest westernizer after Peter the Great in Russia. And now he is the greatest de-westernizer. My questions are first, why he does this, because it is obvious that the economic growth and the might of modern Russia is deeply pressured by the West, with sanctions. Second question, what are the gains from snatching parts of other countries for Russia? When talking about Putin, are the Russians going to get better now? I think the answer is obvious, but why does he do it? Obviously he has neutralized the position in the meantime, and, one of the answers is obviously he needs to maintain himself in power. His democratic accountability is almost zero. Again, the questions are why he does it and how long it may take for him to see his own end. And what kind of end is that going to be? Are we going to be stupid enough to play into that game and keep him on and on in power or similar people to him? These are questions very good for the end of today.

**Dougherty:** Well, that's a great last question. Why does he do it? I said I had no answer. And I'm not too sure that I do at this point. But I'll give you some ideas. I think it's triage right now. What's the most painful thing in his universe? The most painful thing in his universe is NATO coming up to his borders. And the EU—economic structures that will compete with the system he has. It's very painful. I think NATO definitely. I don't think he really trusts the West. I think he feels he's been deceived by the West many times. And ultimately, there are a lot of people in Moscow, the old thinkers, who do believe that the United States, the West, want to take over Russia's energy resources. They just absolutely believe that. I will tell you very quickly, I did a story on the youth organization called *Nashi*—"our guys". They had a brochure. And these were the guys they created them in the rabid dog—almost like the Hitler youth movement you could say to really support Kremlin policy. And, as young people sometimes do, they took it out of control and the Kremlin eventually disbanded it. But they had a brochure. And on this brochure they showed a picture that was Photoshopped, but it was a picture of a soldier on Red Square in night vision goggles, the whole nine yards. And I thought it looked suspiciously like a NATO soldier. So I said "What's a NATO soldier doing on Red Square?" And they said "Well obviously they want to take over our natural resources." And he was this guy who's plugged into the Kremlin, absolutely said it with a straight face. And maybe there is somebody in Washington who wants to do that. But, I think it is a bit hounding. So, I think that's some of the mentality that goes on among some people.

So what does he gain? I don't know. I think he gains support at home, I think he gains 84% approval ratings. 84% approval ratings. Now, will they last? I don't know. The best offense for him is to have an enemy. Everybody does it. Every country does that. And his enemy right now NATO coming to the barricade of Russia. And the fascist Ukrainian government. He uses that word because it has an emotional resonance. And, also, don't forget, last thought is that the Russian government is not transparent and the people who are around Putin are economically tied to him, and him to them. And so you have to look, it's not just Putin. There's this kind of web of people who are related in various ways. People who run companies, especially the big mineral companies who are tied into Putin. So some of this could be protecting his guys and control of the economy. I think there are a lot of different reasons but those are just some thoughts.

**Ellis:** Well we've come to the end of a really fantastic program. Jill, thank you so much. [Applause.] We look forward to seeing you soon.