people in the course of all these years have had many bad turns and
difficult situations [...] in the end, one way or another, they have
tried to get out of these situations; but now things have changed.
We are here to talk about geo-strategic consequences: well
now the Russian people have less and less say, so if there is ever
to be a renaissance of the Russian people, we need a leader: a
moral, serious, professional leader. Unfortunately, I do not see
this leadership. [...] 

ROBERT LEGVOLD, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

[...] When the post-war international system perished between
November 9 1989 and December 1991, it exposed three hopes for
what the future would bring. These three hopes were mas-
quandering as assumptions at the time. The hopes were never clearly
articulated and they were disembodied; that is they were never
tied together.
The first of those, primarily in the West, including [...] the Unit-
ed States, was that relations among the major powers and the
orders in the world outside, in the world at large, would be man-
aged through cooperation among the major powers. This was not
so much the failed idea of collective security that had underlain
the League of Nations and the United Nations; it was, if anything, akin
to the nineteenth century notion of the Concert of Europe. The
Russian version of that, in the early years under Yeltsin and his For-
eign Minister Andrei Kozarev, was a notion of a zone of peace and
stability from Vancouver to Vladivostok, as they used the expres-
sion. It was a kind of 'Concert of the Northern hemisphere'.
The second hope that masqueraded as an assumption was that
peace and stability among the major powers would be under-
pinned by the spread of democracy in the post-socialist world,
and the most important case in point was Russia. The theory of
democratic peace was not only the core of the Clinton adminis-
tration's policy towards Russia, but it was one of the critical pil-
lars of the Clinton foreign policy in general.
The third hope masquerading as an assumption was that the
powerful forces of globalization were sweeping aside traditional
power politics and therefore traditional security concerns, and
with it the risk, the likelihood, even the possibility of war among
the major powers. I stress war among the major powers in inter-
national politics. [...] 

Between 1993 and September 11 2001, the three hopes dis-
solved. And to the extent that the assumptions were real in any
fashion, they turned out to be very shallow and in important re-
spects, even false. Globalization's negative dimensions turned out
to be more than mere inconveniences. They turned out to be a
genuine threat to the positive features of globalization. There
were things like 'globalized crime' and 'globalized drugs' and
then it crossed that qualitative and historic threshold to become
'globalized terror'.

Democratic peace theory grew cloudy when the process of de-
mocratization in the former Soviet Union faltered, beginning in
1994 in central Asia and in parts of the Caucasus and then when
the faltering, when the trend toward illiberalism accelerated after
1999 and 2000 throughout the post-Soviet space.

And the Concert [...] never took shape [...] for a series of rea-
sons. It did not first of all because of the irresolution and the self-
preoccupation of the Europeans. It did not not because of the ab-
stention of the Chinese and I believe the Japanese. It did not be-
cause of the ambivalence of the Russians and it did not because of
the destructive unilateralism of the Americans. In this case, the
adjective is important: 'destructive'; because in a world where the
objective reality, whatever else has been said around this table in
the course of the conference, is unipolarity, is American prepon-
derence, that doesn't necessarily mean that unilateralism has to be
destructive. Under American preponderance, unilateralism could
be positive, it could even be necessary. But it has been destructive
because of three principle qualities associated with it. It has in-
volved consultation without deliberation. It has involved coalitions
of the willing rather than coalitions of the necessary. It has ex-
empted the United States from international rules and regimes
and, more than that, it has led the United States to obstruct the
creation of rules and regimes. And finally it has privileged US se-
curity, insisting that US security be enhanced even at the expense
of the security of our friends, at least the way in which our friends
define security. This [...] destructive unilateralism was manifest
long before the Bush administration was elected and long before September 11.

I call this, this combination of factors that I just listed about why the Concert failed: 'great power irresponsibility', by which I mean the failure of major powers to assume responsibility after the end of the Cold War and the transformation of the international system. I am what the Chinese used to call in the Chino-Soviet split a 'great power chauvinist'. But in my case, what I mean by 'great power responsibility' is that if there is to be a lead in forming, in controlling outcomes, as the new order takes shape, then it has to be as a result of the lead by the major powers. I think there have been major costs that have stemmed from great power irresponsibility, and I'll point to two of them.

The first is the ineffectiveness in dealing with the new world disorder, and I'll say no more because we've been talking about it for two days now at this conference.

The second, we don't talk about very much -- and partly because I think it's something we take for granted -- the second cost of great power irresponsibility is that we have jeopardized one of the great historic blessings of contemporary international politics, for a unique moment in the last three-hundred years of modern international relations we do not have strategic rivalry among the major powers. That's very unusual. By that I mean that now, during this period of time, there is no major power that defines one or more of the other major powers as the principle threat to national security. By that I mean that no major power organizes its defence and develops its arms against one or more of the other major powers. And by that I mean no major power mobilizes alliances against one or more of the other great powers. We are simply taking this unusual historic blessing for granted and we do so, I think, for the most part, as a result of a stunning historical illiteracy, an illiteracy that is based on the notion, the foolish notion that the US preponderance is or can be made permanent.

It also, from my point of view, involves a dangerous failure of imagination, because it doesn't take much imagination in looking at the contemporary world to see that the seeds of the demise of this historic blessing are already there. They are there in the limbo of US-Chinese relations between the troubled co-operation of the moment and the constant temptation to think already about this as a strategic competition. And that's only going to grow stronger in the next ten to fifteen years. And when that begins to develop in such a direction of strategic competition, it'll either be preceded or it'll be followed, but certainly will be accompanied by strategic rivalry between China and Japan.

Secondly, the seeds are evident in the tendency now to move toward rather than away from strategic rivalry between Russia and the West in the post-Soviet space. And that's now particularly evident in the western portions of the former Soviet Union in the context of the Ukrainian elections and many things that complemented it.

I see this as a great pity, because I think we have squandered a conceivable historical opportunity to have created a US-Russian alliance during this period of time. What would that alliance have been about? What would have made sense as its foundation? The struggle against weapons of mass destruction, the struggle against global terrorism, the need to deal with regional instability: these are the basis for the new NATO-Russia Council. They would not be the basis for a US-Russia Alliance, or would not have been. The basis for a US-Russia alliance would have been stability and mutual security in and around the Eurasian landmass. That would have been the basis for the alliance. That should be the alliance.

And I stress mutual security because it could not have been an enterprise that was over the heads or behind the backs of Russia's neighbours within the area.

Finally, there is a list of other more specific costs. [...] We are deeply worried these days about controlling the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction the wrong hands and we have stopped thinking about the strategic regime that will govern those states already having or possessing nuclear weapons. Fundamental things are happening at the moment. The strategic regime which we have failed to modernize is now being transformed unilaterally by the United States as it imposes its notion of what that strategic nuclear regime should be.

It has two critical, I think very deleterious effects at this point. The first of those is the movement for the 'weaponization' of space and the second is lowering the nuclear threshold, which is making nuclear weapons usable, and that is something that the Russians have joined us in doing since 1998-1999. But that is only a part of
the problem. We have also failed to begin developing a strategic nuclear regime to deal with a world that has India and Pakistan. And we are not preparing ourselves for a strategic regime where North Korea has nuclear weapons and then Japan becomes nuclear and then China responds to Japan, India and Pakistan. The list is much longer than that. [...] My view is that the twenty years since 1985 are only the first twenty years and the end of this story is only going to be told in the next twenty years. And it is in the course of the next twenty years that we are going to find out just how large the costs are of the great power irresponsibility of the last ten to fifteen years. The thing is, however, it'll be our grandchildren, not us who will be paying those costs. [...] 

WILLIAM PFAFF, JOURNALIST, INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, FRANCE

[...] We all agree that since the collapse of an unpleasant but stable bipolar system, we have been confronted with the search for alternative international systems, or a system able to win a consensus of support from the international community. This search, so far, has failed – provisionally failed let us say. At the same time during this period, with the contribution made by terrorism in 2002, it has served to unleash certain fantasies or dreams with a sense of destiny that has accompanied the United States since its colonial founding. I say this, which is obviously a comment on the Bush Administration, not for polemical purposes but as an analytical statement. And I would add that while American policy is currently dominated by the specific acts and judgements of this administration, it is also largely in continuity with the policy of the Clinton Administration, which preceded it. Indeed the programme enabling the creation of a system of United States global military commands and a policy of base building and of cultivating close relations with the military, particularly of countries of the non-Western world, originated in the time of Jimmy Carter.

The belief that dominates American policy at the present time is articulated by Brzezinski did his recent book [...] that the seemingly unique American power predominance has provided