

# Putin Tells Bundestag: ‘The Cold War Is Over’

*Here is the text of President Vladimir Putin’s Sept. 25 address to the German Bundestag (lower house of parliament). The translation is from the Russian text posted on the Russian President’s website. The President delivered only the first several paragraphs in Russian, and spoke in German for the rest. Subheads have been added.*

Dear Mr. Chairman, dear ladies and gentlemen,

I am sincerely grateful for this opportunity to speak in the chambers of the Bundestag. This is the first time that a Russian head of state has had such an opportunity, in the entire history of Russian-German relations. And this honor, extended to me today, only goes to confirm that Russia and Germany are mutually interested in having a dialogue.

I am moved to be able here, in Berlin, to talk about Russian-German relations, about the development of ties between my country and a united Europe, and about questions of international security—here in this city with a difficult destiny, a city which more than once in the modern history of mankind became the center of confrontation with practically the entire world. But it is also a city where, even in the darkest times, no one ever succeeded in snuffing out the humanistic spirit of freedom, instilled by Wilhelm von Humboldt and Lessing.

This did not happen, even during the hard years of Hitler’s tyranny. The memory of the anti-fascist heroes is deeply honored in our country.

People in Russia have always had special feelings for Germany, and have seen your country as one of the most important centers of European culture—a culture, to whose development Russia has also made no small contribution. A culture that knew no borders, and which always belonged to us in common, and united our peoples.

Therefore, I shall permit myself to deliver the main part of my remarks today, in the language of Goethe, of Schiller, and of Kant—in German.

[He switches to speaking German.]

## **A United And Secure Europe**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have just mentioned the unity of European culture. At a certain point, however, this unity did not prevent the unleashing of two terrible wars on this continent—two world wars in the course of one century. It did not prevent construction of the Berlin Wall, which became a terrible symbol of the deep division within Europe.

In our day, the Berlin Wall no longer exists. It has been destroyed. And today, it would be appropriate to remember

once again, why this became possible. I am certain that the grandiose changes in the world, in Europe, and in the area of the former Soviet Union, would not have been possible without certain essential preconditions. Specifically, without the events that took place in Russia ten years ago. These events are of great importance, for understanding just what happened in our country, and what may be expected from Russia in the future.

Actually, the answer is simple: Under the influence of the laws of development of the information society, totalitarian ideology of a Stalinist type could no longer withstand the ideas of democracy and freedom. The spirit of these ideas won over the minds of the overwhelming majority of Russian citizens. It was the political choice of the Russian people, that made it possible for the leadership of the U.S.S.R. at that time to take the decisions, which ultimately led to the tearing down of the Berlin Wall. It was that choice, that extended the boundaries of European humanism many times over, and permits us to assert that nobody will ever be able to turn Russia back to the past. [Applause.]

As for European integration, we not only support these processes, but we look upon them with hope. We look upon them, being a people who learned very well the lessons of the Cold War, and the ruinous results of an occupation ideology. But here, it seems to me, it would be appropriate to add that Europe also gained nothing from its division.

I am firmly convinced that in today’s fast-changing world, where truly dramatic demographic changes and unusually high economic growth are observed in some regions of the world, Europe, too, has a direct interest in the development of relations with Russia. [Applause.]

No one is casting doubt upon the great value of Europe’s relations with the United States. It is just that I am of the opinion, that Europe will consolidate its reputation as a powerful and truly independent center of world politics, firmly and for the long term, if it can join its own capabilities with Russia’s possibilities—with the human, territorial and natural resources, and the economic, cultural, and defense potential of Russia. We have already taken the first steps in this direction together. Now it is time to think about what can be done, in order that a united and secure Europe become the harbinger of a united and secure world.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have accomplished a lot in recent years, in the field of security. The security system, which we had created over the past decades, has been improved. One of the achievements of the last decade is the unprecedentedly low concentration of armed forces and weapons in Central Europe and the Baltic region. Russia is a friendly European country. For our country, which has suffered through a century of disastrous wars, stable peace on the continent is the main goal.

As is known, we have ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, as well as the START II agreement. Unfortunately, not all NATO countries

have followed our example.

Ladies and gentlemen, since we have begun to talk about security, we should clarify first and foremost, against whom, and how, we should defend ourselves. In this connection, I cannot fail to mention the catastrophe that took place on Sept. 11 in the United States. All over the world, people are asking themselves, how such a thing could happen and who is to blame. I shall answer those questions.

I think that we are all to blame for what happened. And, above all, we politicians, to whom the ordinary citizens of our countries have entrusted their security. And this is the case, primarily because we have not yet managed to recognize the changes that have taken place in our world during the past ten years. We continue to live by the old system of values—we talk about partnership, but in practice we have not yet learned to trust each other.

Despite a great number of sweet speeches, we still secretly oppose each other. One minute we demand loyalty with respect to NATO, the next we argue about the wisdom of expanding it. And, we have not yet reached agreement on questions of anti-missile defense, and so on, and so forth.

Indeed, for many decades of the last century, the world lived under conditions of the antagonism of two systems—an antagonism, which repeatedly brought humanity to the brink of annihilation. This was so horrific, and we became so used to living in this expectation of catastrophe, that we are still in no condition to understand and evaluate the changes taking place in today's world. It's as if we don't notice that the world is no longer divided into two hostile camps.

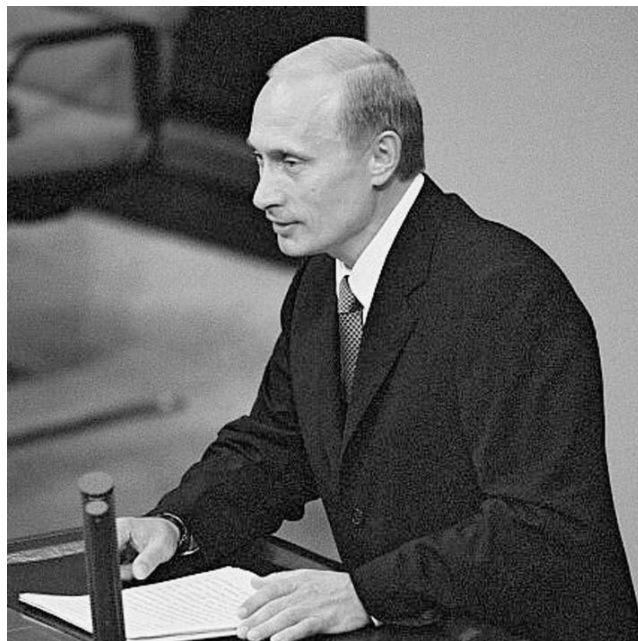
### Reject A 'Clash of Civilizations'

The world, dear ladies and gentlemen, has become significantly more complex.

We do not want to or cannot realize, that the security structure created over the preceding decades, which was effective for neutralizing the old threats, is unable to handle the new threats of today. Often, we continue to quarrel about issues that still seem to us to be important. Probably, they still are important. But, at the same time, we fail to recognize real threats and are unable to anticipate acts of terrorism. And what brutal acts of terrorism! But, while doing this, we fail to see the new, real threats and overlook attacks—and what brutal attacks.

Hundreds of civilians were killed as a result of the explosions in apartment buildings in Moscow and in other major Russian cities [in 1999]. After seizing power in Chechnya and taking the ordinary citizens hostage, religious fanatics launched a brazen, large-scale armed attack on the neighboring republic of Dagestan. The international terrorists openly, completely in the open, proclaimed their intention to create a fundamentalist state across the territory from the Black Sea to the Caspian. A so-called Caliphate, or "United States of Islam."

Here I would like to stress right away, that I consider it unacceptable to talk about a "clash of civilizations." It would



*"The terrorist organizations have many weak points. First of all, it is necessary to shut down all their flows of financing. It is necessary to locate the sourcing of financing, make the relevant demands, whether it is question of countries or . . . legal entities, and then tightly close the borders to such financial flows."*

be wrong to equate Muslims as a whole, with religious fanatics. In our country, for instance, in 1999 it was precisely the courageous and tough response by the inhabitants of Dagestan that caused the defeat of the aggressors, and the population of Dagestan is practically 100% Muslim.

Shortly before my departure for Berlin, I met the spiritual leaders of Muslims in Russia. They put forward an initiative to hold an international conference in Moscow, under the slogan of "Islam Against Terror." I think we should support this initiative. [Applause.]

Today we confront not so much the aggravation of the international problems we already know, as the emergence of new threats. Russia, together with some CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries, is acting to create a real barrier to the passage of drug trafficking, organized crime, and fundamentalism from Afghanistan, through Central Asia and the Caucasus, into Europe. Terrorism, national intolerance, separatism, and religious extremism have the same roots everywhere and bear the same poisonous fruits. That is why the methods for combatting these problems should also be universal. First, however, we should agree on a fundamental matter: We should not be afraid to call things by their names. It is extremely important to understand that criminal acts cannot be used to achieve political objectives, regardless of how noble these goals might look. [Applause.]

Naturally, evil must be punished, and I agree with that. But, we should also understand that no retaliatory strikes can substitute for a full-fledged, deliberate, and well-coordinated

struggle against terrorism. In this sense, I am in full agreement with the President of the United States. [Applause.]

## Principles Of Effective Cooperation

I think that the readiness of our partners to pool efforts against real threats, as opposed to fabricated ones, will show how serious and reliable they are as partners. These threats are entirely capable of spreading from the remote perimeters of our continent, right to the heart of Europe. I have talked about this more than once, but after the events in the United States, no proofs are needed.

What do we lack nowadays for effective cooperation?

Despite all the positive achievements of the past decades, we have not yet managed to work out an effective mechanism for cooperation. The coordinating agencies, established so far, do not give Russia any real opportunity to participate in the process of preparing and adopting decisions. Today, decisions are frequently taken essentially without our participation, and only afterwards are we insistently asked to approve them. Then, once again, comes talk about loyalty to NATO; it is even said that the decisions cannot be implemented without Russia. Let's ask ourselves: Is this normal? Is this a real partnership?

Yes, the affirmation of democratic principles in international relations, the ability to find the right solutions, and the readiness for compromise—these are difficult things. But, after all, it was the Europeans who first understood how important it is to seek consensus solutions, rising above national egotism. We agree with this! These are all good ideas. However, the quality of decisions that are adopted, their efficacy, and, ultimately, European and international security as a whole, depend on the extent to which we can bring these clear principles to life as practical policies.

Not so long ago, it appeared that, soon, a truly common house would be built on the continent, a house in which Europeans would not be divided into eastern and western, or northern and southern. Yet, these “fault lines” will continue to exist. And this is primarily because we have still not yet been able to free ourselves for good from many of the stereotypes and ideological clichés of the Cold War.

Today we must state firmly and finally: The Cold War is over! [Applause.] We are in a new stage of development. We understand that without a modern, lasting, and firm security architecture, we shall never create an atmosphere of trust on the continent. Yet without that atmosphere of trust, a united Greater Europe cannot exist. We are obliged to say today, that we give up our stereotypes and ambitions, and that from now on, together we shall provide security for the people of Europe and the whole world.

## ‘Painful Path of Reform’

Dear friends, today, thank God, people in Europe mention Russia not only in connection with oligarchs, corruption, and the mafia. Still, there is a great lack of objective information on Russia. I can state definitively, that the main objective of

Russia's domestic policy is, first and foremost, to guarantee democratic rights and freedoms, a decent standard of living and security, for the people.

However, dear colleagues, let us take a look back at the events of the recent past. Russia embarked on a painful path of reform. The scale of the challenges we had to face was unparalleled in history. Of course, mistakes were made. Not all problems have been solved, but today Russia is an extremely dynamic part of the European continent. This dynamism is not limited to the political sphere, but can also be seen in the economic area, which gives us great hope.

Political stability in Russia is being achieved thanks to several economic factors, and, not least of all, thanks to one of the most liberal tax systems in the world. Our income tax is 13%, and the profit tax is 24%. [Applause.] Thank you. And, this is really the case. Economic growth last year reached 8%—8.3%, to be more precise. This year, we were planning on 4%, but the economy will most likely grow by about 6%, maybe 5.5% or 5.7%; we shall see.

At the same time, I am convinced that only broad, all-European cooperation on equal terms will make it possible to achieve qualitative progress towards solving problems such as unemployment, environmental pollution, and many others.

We are ready for close trade and economic cooperation. We are also planning to join the WTO in the very near future. We count on the support of international and European organizations in this. [Applause.]

I would like to turn your attention to things that you, as legislators, are certainly in a position to evaluate better, and that cannot be considered propaganda. In essence, a change of priorities and values has taken place in our country.

In the consolidated budget for 2002, social spending occupies first place. I would like especially to emphasize that, for the first time in Russian history, spending on education exceeds defense spending. [Applause.]

## Centuries Of Russian-German Relations

Dear colleagues, let me say a few words about Russian-German relations. I would like to discuss this as a separate topic. Russian-German relations are as old as our countries. The first German tribes appeared in Russia at the end of the First Century. At the end of the 19th Century, Germans were the ninth largest ethnic group in Russia. But here what is important is not only the numbers, but the role these people played in the development of our country and in Russian-German relations. They were farmers, merchants, members of the intelligentsia, military people, and politicians.

The German historian Michael Stürmer once wrote, “Russia and America are divided by oceans, Russia and Germany are divided by a great history.” I would say that, just like the oceans, history not only divides, but also unites. [Applause.] It is important to interpret this history properly.

As a good western neighbor, Germany often embodied Europe for the Russians—European culture, technical thinking, and commercial competence. It was no coincidence that,

at first, all Europeans were called “Germans” in Russia, and the European district in Moscow was called *Nemetskaya Sloboda*, the German settlement.

Cultural influences among the two peoples were, of course, mutual. Many generations of Germans and Russians studied and still today enjoy the works of Goethe, Dostoyevsky, and Lev Tolstoy. Our two peoples understand each other’s mentality very well. A good example of this are the excellent Russian translations of German writers. These translations are very close to the original texts, maintain the rhythm of narration, the atmosphere, and the beauty of the originals. Boris Pasternak’s translation of *Faust* is just one example of this.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There are various pages in our common history, and sometimes painful ones, especially during the 20th Century. But, before that we were often allies.

The relations between these two European peoples were repeatedly consolidated by marriages between dynasties. In general, women always played a major role in our history. [Applause.] Think, for example, of the daughter of the Archduke of Hesse-Darmstadt, Ludwig IV, known in Russia as Princess Elizabeth. Her fate was tragic. After the murder of her husband, she founded a nunnery. During the First World War, she nursed the wounded—Russians and Germans alike. The Bolsheviks executed her in 1918, but not long ago she was rehabilitated and canonized—for general veneration. A monument in her honor now stands in central Moscow. Neither should we forget the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst. Her name was Sophie Auguste Friederike, and she made a unique contribution to Russian history. Simple Russian people called her “*matushka*,” but she went down in history as the Russian Empress Catherine the Great.

Today, Germany is the main economic partner of Russia, our biggest creditor, one of our main investors, and a key interlocutor on matters of foreign policy. Let me give an example: Last year, trade between our countries reached a record DM 41.5 billion. This is comparable with the total trade of the Soviet Union with both German states. Should we be satisfied with that and rest on our achievements? I think not. Russian-German cooperation still has quite some potential to develop.

I am convinced that today we are opening a new page in our bilateral relations. By doing this, we are making a joint contribution to the construction of an all-European home.

In conclusion, I would like to speak the words which were used in the past to characterize Germany and its capital. I would like to apply this idea to Russia and say this: Of course, we are at the start of our path to building a democratic society and a market economy. There are hurdles and obstacles on that road, which we must surmount. But, if we free ourselves from the objective problems and from our own inexperience, which we sometimes exhibit, we shall see how the strong and vital heart of Russia beats. And this heart is open to genuine cooperation and partnership.

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## Documentation

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### Putin’s Hard-Hitting Interviews In Germany

*On the eve of his trip to Germany, Russian President Vladimir Putin gave three interviews to German media. An interview with the newspaper Bild was given Sept. 18, followed by interviews for ARD-TV and Focus magazine on Sept. 19. These excerpts are translated from the Russian versions, posted on Putin’s website.*

#### The Tasks Of Intelligence

**Focus:** You have already told us, that around a year ago you warned about the existence of a terrorist international. Did you know more than the Americans did? Did you not tell them, or did they not listen to you? Or were your intelligence agencies also in the dark?

**President Putin:** You know, it seems to me that what we lack most of all at the moment, is a realization of how much the world has changed. I think that our intelligence agencies, too, have a fair number of people who are living by an old system of priorities. The same goes for Western intelligence services; they are still fighting the Soviet Union, failing to notice that it no longer exists. Sometimes I have the impression, that this is not even because they are so stupid, but because they have to earn a paycheck and feed their families, but they don’t know how to do anything but fight the Soviet Union. So they pretend that nothing has changed, that the same work can just be continued. There are plenty of such people in the foreign policy agencies of our country, as well as in the West. Therefore when people send each other, say, some reports and so forth, they don’t know what to do with them. They go round and around, and finally throw it in the trash.

I hope very much that the recent tragic events will confirm the necessity of understanding what it means really to pool our efforts, to increase mutual trust, and will not only inspire, but actually result in a qualitative transformation of work in this area.

**Focus:** If your intelligence agencies had possessed some information . . . would they have given this information to the American intelligence services, that is to another country? Or did they hand over this information, but it was ignored?

**Putin:** I would not like my reply to sound like an accusation against any one of our partners, for insufficiently deep study and evaluation of the material we did pass to them. And we really did give them reports. This is not the time to exchange recriminations. What we should do now, evaluating the situa-