

## Con Case

“Adversity is the touchstone of friendship.” As this age-old proverb implies, no friendship is perfect, but disagreement is a natural part of friendship, overridden by mutual cooperation and help. Because my partner and I believe that Russia’s current cooperation with the United States in the fields of counterterrorism, nuclear security, and the economy outweighs any minor differences of opinion, we stand in firm negation of the resolution *Resolved: That Russia has become a threat to U.S. interests.*

In order to understand whether Russia has become a threat to US interests in general, one must look at the big picture and address the two main US interests: national security and economic prosperity. All other interests can be subcategorized into one or both of these categories. Therefore, this debate centers on whether or not Russia has become a danger to America’s national security and economic prosperity.

### **Contention 1: Counterterrorism**

According to the FBI, counterterrorism is the number one priority of the United States, and Russia has helped address it. According to the US Embassy in Moscow, Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service has provided the US with valuable information about terrorist financing and bank accounts, leading to cutting off funds for terrorist groups. The US-Russia Working Group on Counterterrorism has achieved several remarkable milestones, such as the 2006 agreement to prevent terrorists from obtaining shoulder-launched anti-aircraft rocket launchers. The FBI and its Russian counterpart, the Russian Federal Security Service, have exchanged valuable information leading to the prevention of several bombings. Russia has used its international power to make counterterrorism a priority in many international organizations, such as the

Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the G8, and the United Nations. Russia is currently working *with* the US to counter the most serious threat to both countries.

### **Contention Two: Nuclear Security**

Nuclear terrorism is one of the most serious threats to the world today. The US and Russia are cooperating to eliminate this threat. In 2005, Presidents Bush and Putin issued a joint statement saying that they would work together to increase nuclear security and in 2006 launched the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, the first step in increasing security of nuclear facilities and eliminating the threat of nuclear terrorism. The US Department of Energy Material Protection is working with Russia to increase the security of its nuclear facilities. According to the IAEA, there were 18 thefts of nuclear material from Russian sites in the 10 years prior to the US aiding the security of Russian facilities. *Even one theft is one too many.* Since the beginning of US-Russia cooperation, there have been *zero* thefts. The United States and Russia are cooperating in order to reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism in both nations and around the world.

### **Contention Three: Economy**

The United States has always placed a special emphasis on its economy. As President Calvin Coolidge once said, “The business of America *is* business.” Russia continues to become more conducive to American business interests. According to William J. Burns, US Ambassador to Russia, trade between the US and Russia has risen by almost 50% per year recently. ExxonMobil, through a partnership with Rosneft, a Russian oil company, produces 250,000 barrels of oil per day from Russia. This is especially significant given the current situation of oil and gas prices worldwide. The present crisis would be indescribably worse without Russia’s trade in the oil industry. Ambassador Burns also states that with the recent agreement between

the US and Russia, Russian membership in the World Trade Organization will not only stabilize Russia's economy, but the oil and gas industries worldwide, reducing American dependence on the Middle East for oil and ensuring a reliable energy source for years to come.

In this debate, we must look at the big picture. Rather than concentrating on insignificant nuances and rhetoric, we must determine whether or not Russia has become a threat to US interests in general. The most effective way to do this is to perform an aggregate analysis of the two broad US interests: national security and economic strength. When you do this, it is clear that the cooperation in these two areas means that Russia is a friend, not a threat.