

Media Reports on the Anti-Terrorist Coalition

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An article in the newspaper *Izvestia* (29 August 2003) offers an interesting point of view on Russia's place in the anti-terrorist coalition and analyzes Russia's relations with the United States and other Western countries.

Russia has been a member of the anti-terrorist movement for two years. This article explores the results of that membership. Has anything changed in Russia's relations with the West since 9/22? What results can we expect of the coming meeting of Putin and Bush in Camp David on September 24? The article is presented in the form of a discussion between *Izvestia* reporter G. Bovt and N. Zlobin, *Izvestia's* Director.



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N. Zlobin claims that the state of US - Russian relations is problematic. He says that relations between the two nations are now in a stage of "bankruptcy", by which he means that they lack fundamental philosophical, political, economic and cultural values shared by both countries. He concludes that there is no basis on which to build the relations. "We learned how to seek solutions on a number of problems (terrorism, energy policies, etc.), but contemporary relations can be characterized by the lack of a basic "concept". Having good relations between political elites and presidents does not mean having good relations between countries. Despite the fact that anti-American tendencies have recently increased, M. Zlobin says that "Russia is the most American-oriented Asian power".

N. Zlobin believes that having declared that the country has international terrorist groups on its territory; Russia made a big strategic mistake. According to him, trying to gain support for the military actions in Chechnya, Russia lost strategically by putting its name next to such countries as Pakistan, Libya, Iraq, etc.

Bovt writes that Russia's position on the war with Iraq was predictable from the very beginning. The decisions are shaped by people brought up in the Cold War environment. If America says "Yes", Russia almost instinctively feels like saying "No". Going back to N. Zlobin's words, maybe we should really give up the idea of trying to build our relations on the basis of old stereotypes and create a new foundation with the help of mutually shared values and beliefs?