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**UNHEALED WOUNDS:  
THE STRUGGLE OVER THE MEMORY OF  
WORLD WAR II\***

The recent steps by the Kremlin to combat the “falsification” of history (particularly criticism of the Soviet Union immediately before and during World War II) in the West and in Russia itself have received little attention in the United States due in part to Washington’s preoccupation with daunting economic and foreign policy problems but also due to recent efforts by President Barack Obama to avoid confrontation with the Kremlin. This lack of attention is unfortunate, particularly because the Kremlin’s efforts to control disputes over history mark a further contraction of multivocal discourse in Russia and a significant decline in already strained relations between Russia and the West. Do such harsh efforts comprise the building blocks – intentionally or inadvertently – of an expansionist, authoritarian ideology with the capacity to destabilize post-Soviet space and further weaken political pluralism in Russia? Or is the Kremlin primarily concerned with deflecting external and internal criticism of Soviet behavior in World War II in order to safeguard the normative standing – and power – of the Russian regime?

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\* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not reflect the position of the United States Military Academy or any other government agency.

Although it is impossible to answer these questions with any precision, it is not surprising that Russia has moved so forcefully against criticism of the Soviet Union in World War II. In the language of the social scientist, this outcome was “overdetermined”: it was likely to occur, in one form or another, given the powerful political, social, and cultural factors that have been pushing in the same direction for some time.

The most obvious political factor is the increased instrumentalization of history by the Kremlin, in particular attempts to shape the memory of World War II in ways that support its rule. Over the past several years, Moscow has stepped up efforts to preserve an idealized memory of the Great Patriotic War, culminating in the creation of the “falsification” commission shortly before the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of a number of controversial dates, particularly August 23 and September 1, 1939.

The self-regarding behavior of Russian elites helps explain the defense of Stalinism and Soviet behavior during World War II. Western and domestic criticism of Stalinist foreign policy threatens to tarnish the long-standing heroic assessment of the Soviet role in World War II, which remains the central legitimating myth of the Russian state. As the political system that ensured the survival of the USSR in its struggle with Nazi Germany, Stalinism is a vital component of a new official narrative that portrays the Russian state as threatened throughout its history by the external environment, particularly the West. Calculated to mobilize nationalist sentiment, the image of Russia as a “besieged fortress” allows the Kremlin to justify its accumulation of political and economic power at the expense of Russian society.

Growing socioeconomic difficulties in Russia have also led the regime to safeguard its authority and power by rejecting criticism of the Soviet role in World War II. All regimes use a combination of three means to obtain political obedience: coercion, material incentives, and normative inducements. The current economic crisis in Russia has obviously frayed the social contract between the Kremlin and the populace, and although the Russian leadership still commands high approval ratings, the prudent politician knows that political support based primarily on “delivering the goods” can suddenly evaporate. As a result, coercion and normative incentives have become relatively more important in the Kremlin’s calculus of power. In its recent offensive on the memory front, the Kremlin has joined these two elements, wielding the threat of coercion to protect the normative supports of the regime, particularly the official memory of World War II as an event of shared suffering and triumph.

Yet it would be a simplification to explain the Kremlin's attack on the "falsification" of history solely in terms of the behavior of self-seeking elites. Polls in Russia reveal that the symbolic significance of Great Patriotic War has grown steadily among all age groups in the post-Soviet era. Over 85 percent of Russians identify the victory over Nazi Germany as the central event of the twentieth century, and perhaps three-quarters of Russians believe that the Soviet Union could have defeated Nazi Germany alone.<sup>1</sup> Although it is difficult for most Americans to grasp the existential nature of the Nazi threat to the Soviet Union or comprehend the magnitude of the loss of human life endured by the Soviet population, it is understandable that a majority of Russians reject the efforts of the OSCE and individual states in former Soviet space to equate Stalinism and Nazism primarily on the basis of the events of World War II. Unlike other international historical controversies that are primarily elite-driven (top-down), including the ongoing dispute between China and Japan over Japanese atrocities during World War II, the Russian case demonstrates that Russian elites have strengthened, but did not create, mass nostalgia for the Soviet period, particularly the Soviet role in World War II.

Other societal and cultural factors weaken the willingness of Russians to accept well-founded criticism of Soviet behavior immediately before, during, and immediately after World War II. It is particularly useful to recall the social and psychological functions of collective myths. Although society needs myths to survive and grow, myths are not necessarily rooted in the past. Rather, individuals and societies need cognitive and normative frameworks – which may or may not be embodied in narratives of past events – that provide order and purpose in a world marked by ambiguity and threat.

Rejecting the Soviet past at first seemed acceptable to many Russians in 1990 and 1991 in part because of the widespread, almost euphoric expectation that the collapse of the Soviet Union would enable Russia to quickly join the ranks of the prosperous and democratic powers. Indeed, the Soviet Union collapsed in large part because foreign models of socioeconomic and political development had become increasingly legitimate while the Soviet model was rapidly desanctified in the eyes of multiple Soviet audiences. Western models of democracy and economic development served as a functional substitute for national historical myths, providing a vision of a stable, just, and affluent society. In this sense, many Russians rejected the Soviet past because they felt it was no longer relevant to their present or future.

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<sup>1</sup> Lev Gudkov quoted by ITAR TASS, May 20, 2009.

The harsh reality of life in the new Russian Republic soon overturned these sanguine expectations. The political disorder and economic decline of the early 1990s gradually stripped Russians of their belief that a prosperous and democratic Russia would emerge in the near future. In this context, the Soviet past was increasingly reassessed in positive terms, either as a relegitimated model for social and political development or as a historical frame with the capacity to stimulate pride and reinforce individual and group identity. This normative shift provided powerful support for the patriotic official discourse of the Putin decade and left society less willing to contemplate a narrative of World War II that depicted Russia's role in that conflict as morally ambiguous or even bankrupt.

A looming danger is that Russians who agree with the Kremlin's heroic interpretation of the Great Patriotic War may also eventually accept the Kremlin's increasingly strident criticism of the behavior of the Western allies during World War II. For example, history textbooks and teachers' manuals approved by the Kremlin over the past two years portray the United States and Britain after June 22, 1941, as duplicitous partners who sought to shift as much of the burden of the conflict as possible to the Soviet Union. Equally unfortunate is the widespread use of equivalency arguments designed to neutralize criticism of the Stalinist state during World War II. For example, in their discussion of atrocities committed by the Soviet regime against Soviet citizens, foreign nationals, or war prisoners during World War II, the textbooks ask the reader to frame these events in a comparative setting, maintaining that "the severe laws of war applied to all countries and with the same harshness."<sup>2</sup> To support their point, the authors suggest that the Soviet massacre of thousands of Polish officers and civilians at Katyn and elsewhere in 1939–1940 was no worse than Polish treatment of Red Army soldiers who were captured during the Russian–Polish war of 1920 and that Stalin viewed the Katyn massacre as just retribution. Yet the implication that Poland had engaged in the deliberate extermination of Soviet prisoners is not supported by the historical record. A joint investigation by the state archival agencies of Russia and Poland recently produced a volume of documents providing credible evidence that the high mortality rates of Soviet prisoners in Polish prisons and camps was overwhelmingly due to disease, epidemics, and the shortage of food, conditions that also afflicted with similar intensity the surrounding Polish population as well as Polish

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<sup>2</sup> Danilov and Filippov (Eds.). *Istoriia Rossii. 1900-1945. Kniga dlia Uchitelia*. Moscow, 2009.

prisoners of war in Soviet and Lithuanian camps.<sup>3</sup> The new Russian textbooks also fail to mention that in August 1937 Stalin's regime conducted a massive purge of Soviet Poles under Directive 00485. Almost 140,000 Soviet citizens of Polish background were either shot or sent to labor camps over the following months.

The new textbooks also refer to American behavior during World War II to support their argument that countries often engage in repressions during wartime against their own population, particularly minority ethnic and religious groups with potentially divided loyalties, and that the Stalinist regime should not be singled out for its harsh treatment of various groups of non-Russian Soviet citizens. Specifically, the authors cite U.S. internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II as evidence that the United States was no better than the Soviet Union in its treatment of its own citizens.

Although some Japanese-Americans died as a direct result of U.S. resettlement policy, including three shootings by sentries at three different relocation camps, such events were not common. If we compare the fate of the German minority in the Soviet Union and that of Japanese-Americans during World War II, the flaws in Russian equivalency arguments become apparent. Approximately 640,000 Soviet citizens of German extraction were deported from the Volga region and elsewhere to Siberia and Central Asia during the period September–December 1941. Two other waves of forced resettlement took place during the period 1942–1945, reaching a total of over 900,000.<sup>4</sup> Mortality estimates put the number of deaths of German deportees from 100,000 to approximately 180,000.

It is also significant that the plight of Japanese-Americans, unlike that of numerous Soviet minorities, including the Germans, was ameliorated by a vibrant civil society exerting significant pressure on U.S. legal institutions, which eventually took action to overturn the policy of internment of Japanese-Americans. After upholding the incarceration of Japanese-Americans in earlier cases, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision in December 1944 that a Japanese-American woman could not be held in a concentration camp without being charged with an offense, nor could she be denied the right to return to her residence in California. After this ruling by the high court, most of the internees were released

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<sup>3</sup> Krasnoarmeitsy v polskom plenu v 1919–1922 g. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov. Moscow, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Pinkus. *The Deportation of the German Minority in the Soviet Union, 1941–1945* // Bernd Wegner (Ed.). *From Peace to War. Germany, Soviet Russia, and the World, 1939–1941*. Oxford, 1997. Pp. 449–462.

from confinement.<sup>5</sup> In the 1960s, a “redress movement” led by Japanese-Americans demanded an official apology and restitution for the massive wartime miscarriage of American justice. The U.S. government eventually pursued a policy of reconciliation that recognized the widespread violation of Japanese-American civil rights during World War II. In 1988 President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act, which contained an apology to the survivors of internment and also provided for restitution in the form of individual payments of \$20,000. Perhaps most important, the new law blamed racial prejudice, war hysteria, and a “failure of political leadership” for the discredited policy of internment, not the exigencies of war.<sup>6</sup>

In comparing the emergence of the militarized, repressive Stalinist system to the political developments in other countries, Alexander Filippov, the author of a controversial teachers’ manual published in 2007 and supported by the Kremlin, argues that “in similar conditions of serious threat... an evolution occurs... in the direction of restricting individual rights in favor of strengthening the state, as happened in the United States after the events of September 11, 2001.” Filippov also compares Stalin to Bismarck, observing that just as the German leader forged with “blood and iron” a unitary state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “so too did Stalin ruthlessly strengthen the Soviet state.”<sup>7</sup>

Such comparisons are exceedingly strained but politically useful because they tend to obscure the institutionalized violence of the Stalinist regime and avoid the central question: what variables explain the presence in the Soviet case, and the absence in the American and German cases noted above, of sustained mass repression? The failure of the Kremlin to grapple with this question distorts the moral capacity of Russian society to properly evaluate acts of injustice committed by different political regimes.

Although domestic factors are most important in understanding the Kremlin’s strident defense of Soviet behavior during World War II, two related external pressures also strongly motivate Russians to defend Stalinism during World War II. First, many of the new states in post-Soviet space and the former Soviet “outer empire” in Eastern Europe use anti-Soviet narratives

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<sup>5</sup> Roger Daniels, Sandra Taylor, Harry Kitano, and Leonard Arrington (Eds.). *From Relocation to Redress*. Seattle, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Roger Daniels. *Incarcerating Japanese-Americans*. *Organization of American Historians // Magazine of History*. Spring 2000. Vol. 16. See <http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/w22homefront/daniels.html>. Accessed December 2, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Filippov. *Noveishaia istoriia Rossii, 1945–2006: Kniga dlia uchitelia*. Moscow, 2007. Pp. 91-92.

to mourn the suffering of the Soviet occupation, forge Western-oriented identities, and mobilize regional support against the possibility of renewed Russian expansionism. Yet the history of World War II is also exploited by self-regarding politicians to attract public support by generating nationalist fervor. Although Western commentators maintain that the formation of the Russian “falsification” commission was an unjustified response to “steps by neighboring governments in Estonia, Poland, Ukraine, and elsewhere to talk openly about Soviet repression,”<sup>8</sup> it is clear that history has been highly politicized in these countries in the post-Soviet period. The efforts of politicians in Ukraine to criminalize denials of the Ukrainian famine are a case in point. For the Kremlin and many Russians, the “othering” of the Soviet Union in these counter-narratives is part of a campaign with the malicious intent of branding contemporary Russia as an imperial, immoral state.

The failure of the Russian government to acknowledge in a forthright way the Soviet repression of the former republics of the Soviet Union and the satellite countries of Eastern Europe is the fundamental reason for the growing external criticism of the Kremlin’s narrative of World War II. Yet the drumbeat of this criticism – and the political motives that often drive it – have reinforced the proclivity of the Kremlin to diminish wrongdoing on the part of the Stalinist regime and to increasingly view the legitimacy of the Russian regime as intertwined with the historical reputation of the Soviet Union. The Kremlin has also responded by raising anew the problem of Baltic and Ukrainian collaboration with Nazi Germany, culminating in the formation of the “falsification” commission. Another issue that for the most part has remained in the background is the willing participation in the Jewish Holocaust of elements of the Soviet subject populations under German occupation.

It is therefore highly unlikely that Moscow will respond to the growing demands, particularly by the three Baltic states, that the Russian government enter into negotiations over monetary compensation for the demographic, ecological, economic, and cultural losses suffered under the Soviet occupation. In these attempts it is the Russian state, as the heir of the Soviet Union, which is held responsible for the crimes of the antecedent state and regime. In the mid-1990s the Yeltsin regime intimated that such negotiations might be possible, but no progress was ever made on the issue.

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<sup>8</sup> Janusz Bugajski. *Kremlin’s Crimes // The Wall Street Journal (Europe)*. 2009. June 11. P. 14.

Due in large part to the mobilizational efforts of several former Soviet republics, particularly the Baltic states, the Kremlin has been under increasing pressure from Europe as a whole for a more honest accounting of the Soviet past, providing Moscow with additional reason for the new historical commission and the legal penalties against “falsification.” On April 2, 2009, the European Parliament voted 533–44 (with 33 abstentions) for a resolution condemning totalitarianism. According to the resolution, the European Parliament acknowledged that “Europe will not be united unless it is able to form a common view of its history,” and unless it “recognizes Nazism, Stalinism and fascist and Communist regimes as a common legacy and brings about an honest and thorough debate on their crimes in the past century.” The European Parliament noted that “the ultimate goal sought through the disclosure and assessment of the crimes committed by the Communist totalitarian regimes is reconciliation, which can be achieved by admitting responsibility, asking for forgiveness and fostering moral renewal.”<sup>9</sup>

Given the Kremlin’s unwillingness to level fundamental criticism against the Soviet regime, the actions of the European Parliament and other multilateral institutions represent a profound psychological, political, and moral rebuff. Although it is not entirely clear who or what would be the object of the Parliament’s calls for admissions of responsibility, it seems likely that the Russian state itself is expected to ask for forgiveness as the successor to the Soviet regime. Similar admissions are clearly expected from the surviving communist parties in the region. Yet it is also unclear whether the European Parliament, responding to the dramatic approach of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, will retain the political will to implement the proposals of the resolution. Even if it does not, the Parliament nevertheless has significantly increased the ideological and political isolation of the Russian regime and provided important political capital to the frontline states that confront Russia.

The second important external factor that has shaped Russian historical narratives on World War II is the broader deterioration of Russia’s relations with Europe and particularly the United States over the past decade. Anti-Western sentiment in Russia is not solely the preserve of the Kremlin or the *siloviki*, the powerful elites drawn from the uniformed services. For Lilia Shevtsova, “even pro-Western analysts are trying to convince themselves and

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<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=B6-2009-0165&language=EN> (last accessed September 30, 2009).

the world that Russia should play by its own rules, and that the responsibility for the crisis in Russian-Western relations lies with Western capitals.”<sup>10</sup>

Three important changes in the international system provide the background for Russia’s clash with the West. First, the collapse of the Soviet Union left the United States as the sole, undisputed superpower in a world with little prospect that its power might be balanced by other states. American military spending soon outstripped the collective military budget of the rest of the world.

Second, the emergence of a unipolar world, at least in military terms, coincided with the progressive decay of norms of state sovereignty. The decline of the authority of the Westphalian system is due in large part to the rise in the international legitimacy of intervention in the internal affairs of states. However, in the absence of new, clear norms and agreements governing the conditions of intervention, the United States now enjoys fewer normative constraints on its international behavior, creating considerable global fear of American power given that all other states are weak by comparison. Third, much of the world views globalization as a process of Americanization, threatening national cultures and economies.<sup>11</sup>

Western analysts and some Russian liberals argue that the radical change in the power and status of Russian elites in the post-Soviet international system (“imperial overhang”) inevitably led these elites to develop distorted, negative assessments of the behavior and motives of the West as well as feelings of victimization. Yet the dramatic loss of power and prestige on the part of Russia did not necessarily have to breed fear and feelings of humiliation. As Roger Petersen argues, a sense of subordination does not always produce resentment. “Under certain structural conditions, individuals accept a subordinate status as ‘just.’”<sup>12</sup>

In the early 1990s a significant segment of the Russian elite embraced Western values and leadership, and anticipated close ties with the United States. Indeed, Russian resentment emerged only slowly in the post-Soviet period, often as a response to the behavior of the West. To be sure, the expectations of many Russians, including Boris Yeltsin, that Washington would treat Moscow as an equal partner and provide extensive support for Russian democratization and marketization, were unrealistic. The dashing

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<sup>10</sup> Lilia Shevtsova. *Anti-Westernism Is the New National Idea* // *Moscow Times*. August 7, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Mitchell B. Reiss. *Restoring America’s Image: What the Next President Can Do* // *Survival*. Vol. 50. No. 5 (October-November 2008). Pp. 99-114.

<sup>12</sup> Rober D. Petersen. *Understanding Ethnic Violence*. New York, 2002. P. 51.

of these false hopes inevitably fostered anger and feelings of humiliation among Russia's elites. Yet it also seems clear that the West could have done much more to cushion Russia's precipitous international decline by providing significant and sound economic and political support to Russia. In his authoritative biography of Yeltsin, Timothy Colton observes that the West never seriously contemplated forgiving Russia's foreign debt, which the Yeltsin government had undertaken from the Soviet state and whose negative impact Colton compares to "that of World War I reparations on Weimar Germany." From 1993 to 1999, American aid to Russia was about 1 percent of Washington's defense budget in 1996 – or approximately one-quarter of the cost a modern American aircraft carrier.<sup>13</sup>

Boris Yeltsin's ambivalent and haphazard support for political and economic reform, and the absence in Russia of most of the conditions often seen as necessary for successful political and economic transitions, including a vibrant civil society, may have been sufficient to condemn Russia's efforts at democratization and Westernization to failure. Nevertheless, U.S. policies toward Russia in the 1990s did little to strengthen the slender shoots of reform, but instead worked to undermine domestic support for Russia's already weak liberal parties and groups. For example, the expansion of NATO to the borders of Russia emerged as an important roadblock to normal relations. Knowledgeable Western observers had earlier warned against expanding the alliance, arguing that it would fuel anti-western sentiment and increase the influence of authoritarian nationalists in Russia. George Kennan, the dean of America's Russia experts, called NATO enlargement a tragic mistake that "shows so little understanding of Russian history and Soviet history. Of course there is going to be a bad reaction from Russia, and then [the NATO expanders] will say that we always told you that is how the Russians are – but this is just wrong."<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, this policy and others – including the unilateral abrogation of the ABM Treaty – has enabled the Kremlin, which enjoys extensive control of the Russia media, to portray the United States as a threat to Russian national security (which is questionable) and to Moscow's regional influence (which is certainly the case). Matters are made worse by the long-standing perception in Russia (and elsewhere) that the United States engages in double standards in its efforts

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<sup>13</sup> Timothy Colton. *Yeltsin. A Life*. New York, 2008. P. 268.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Thomas L. Friedman. *Now a Word From X*. New York Times. May 2, 1998. At <http://www.nytimes.com/1998/05/02/opinion/foreign-affairs-now-a-word-from-x.html?scp=1&sq=Thomas%20Friedman%20Now%20a%20Word%20From%20X&st=cse> (last accessed September 30, 2009).

at promoting democracy. Although Washington often lectures Moscow at length for failing to support democratic values, its dialogue with Beijing is largely restricted to the economic realm.

The deterioration of Russia's relations with the West has worked to magnify conflicts over Soviet history. The resentment of Russia's elites, the overwhelming economic and military power of the West, and the relative weakness of Russia have made the Kremlin highly sensitive to representations of the past that undermine its international and domestic legitimacy by portraying the Soviet Union in World War II as having brought great harm to humanity. Yet although the Kremlin's recent efforts to bolster its prestige by combating the "falsification" of history might have some domestic political benefit, this approach clearly weakens rather than strengthens the standing of Russia in the eyes of the international community.

Despite the contentious nature of the debates over World War II, dialogue is still possible. Perhaps surprisingly, even the new Russian history textbooks provide some room for discussion on the Soviet period. Despite their anti-Western tenor, the new books are guided by assertive nationalism, not by revanchism or neo-imperialism. They are not informed by a Manichean, expansionist ideology, as were Soviet-era texts, but by the concepts of market economics and democratic politics (however fictive). If anything, the textbooks lean toward a defensive view of the external world that contains elements of isolationism.

Unfortunately, the textbooks are deeply marred by their assertion that Stalin's rule was necessary for the survival of the Soviet Union in World War II and by their failure to offer a significant moral assessment of Stalinism. The textbooks are also problematic in their portrayal of contemporary Russian politics as firmly grounded in democratic principles and practice.

Although the shared understandings of history that prevailed during the first post-Soviet years no longer exist, debate between Russia and the West is still possible. If this admittedly fragile opportunity for dialogue is to be seized, the past must become less of a public and political battleground, and the West and Russia must strengthen the interests they hold in common, including arms control, antiterrorism, energy security, and antiproliferation measures. The harsh, anti-Western tenor of Russian political discourse is likely to abate if the West takes into greater account Russia's perceived interests, particularly on the issue of NATO expansion. This approach would reflect strategic patience on the part of the United States, not appeasement, and would include other forms of engagement with Ukraine and Georgia that effectively protect their sovereignty, drawing them closer to the West.

Perhaps most important, a less confrontational approach would reduce the siege mentality of the Russian political class and its proclivity to engage in self-encirclement, particularly in debates over controversial and painful historical issues.

## SUMMARY

Томас Шерлок считает, что нынешняя кампания против “фальсификации истории” была, говоря языком социальных наук, predetermined (*overdetermined*). Он анализирует политические, социальные и культурные факторы, которые сделали ее неизбежной. Разочарование населения в демократических и либеральных ценностях создало основу для идеологических манипуляций путинского времени. Согласно социологическим опросам, символическая значимость Второй мировой войны постепенно возрастала во всех возрастных группах населения России, что и использовали политические элиты. Образ России как “осажденной крепости”, у которой враги пытаются отобрать славное прошлое и основанное на нем место в современном мировом порядке, мобилизует национализм и оправдывает концентрацию политической и экономической власти государством в ущерб обществу.

Автор анализирует репрезентацию Второй мировой войны в новейших российских учебниках истории. Он демонстрирует, как выборочно и предвзято преподносится информация по таким вопросам, как расстрел польских офицеров в Катыни. Шерлок разоблачает метод сравнительного оправдания, используемый в современных российских учебниках (прежде всего, в продвигаемом Кремлевской администрацией учебнике А. Филиппова), указывая на существенные различия в мотивации, численности жертв и отношении государства к своей роли в случае преследования советских немцев и американских граждан японского происхождения в годы Второй мировой войны. Подобные сравнения уводят от проблемы институционализированного насилия как основы сталинского режима.

Далее автор рассматривает внешнеполитические факторы, влияющие на нынешнюю российскую политику истории: политику истории и идентичности в странах бывшего соцлагеря и общее ухудшение отношений России с Европой и США, стимулирующее антизападные настроения в российском обществе. Шерлок критикует американскую экономическую и политическую (прежде всего, расширение НАТО)

линию в отношении ельцинской России, которая не способствовала укоренению демократии и либеральных реформ. Тем не менее даже в новых российских учебниках по истории он видит возможности для диалога, поскольку в основе их нарратива лежит не реваншизм и неоимпериализм, а национализм, концепция рыночной экономики и демократической политики (пусть последняя и приписывается современной России необоснованно).