

## FOCUS ON: American elections

### Trouble Ahead for the Next U.S. President

*Strobe Talbott, President*

When taking the oath of office on January 20 2009, the next president of the United States will be assuming responsibility for the most difficult, dangerous and complex set of foreign policy challenges ever to face a newcomer to the White House. Whatever is then happening in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Arab-Israeli peace process, it is safe to predict that George W. Bush will, in each case, be passing on to his successor either a daunting piece of unfinished business or a full-blown crisis...

<http://www.brookings.edu/>

### Riding the Change Horse

*By David Ignatius*

This is a "change" election – for a country that loves change in principle but not so much in practice...

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

## TRANSATLANTIC

### Maintaining A Base

Trouble in Poland's defense industry.

*By Reuben F. Johnson*

One of the more capable of the new NATO nations and one that possesses a rather robust defense industrial sector is Poland.

<http://www.weeklystandard.com/>

## RUSSIA

### Putin-3

*By Leon Aron*

In the past nine years, Russian foreign policy has been examined several times in these pages. At no other time, however, has its direction been as troubling as it is today. To understand the causes of this disturbing evolution and to gauge its future course, the changes have to be examined in the context of the regime's ideological and political transformation since 2000, when Vladimir Putin was elected president...

<http://www.aei.org/>

### Almost two-thirds of Russians Believe Democracy is the Best Political System

*By Jonas Bernstein*

A poll take by the Russian affiliate of a leading international polling organization has found that Russians believe in democracy but are less certain that it exists at home. The poll, taken by Romir, the Gallup International Association's exclusive representative in Russia, was conducted June 15 – 21 as part of Gallup International's annual Voice of the People Survey, for which

more than 60,000 people in 57 countries were surveyed...

<http://www.jamestown.org/>

## UKRAINE

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### **Ukraine's Top Three Leaders Request NATO Membership Action Plan**

*By Vladimir Socor*

On January 16 Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko, Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, and Parliament Chairman Arseny Yatsenyuk made public a joint letter to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, declaring Ukraine's readiness to advance to a Membership Action Plan (MAP) with NATO and requesting a decision to that end by the Alliance at its Bucharest summit in early April...

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