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This present paper follows the English edition, published in 2011 by IB Tauris & Co. Ltd, London and New York. We consider this study to be important because we have to understand how all the levels of Russian policy have changed, especially after 1999. Also, the author explains how the relations escalated between Vladimir Putin and the Western world, how he has become increasingly authoritarian, how he defied the West and how the West defied him in return and how both of the sides failed to observe the concerns and fear of each other. These facts led to a carousel of mutual mistrust and missed opportunities.

Angus Roxburgh, former BBC Moscow correspondent and public relations advisor for Putin, proposes the image of a president who often escapes the West it saw - too early - in Russia a country willing to communicate and relate fruitful. The volume is divided into 14 chapters, as follows.

In the first chapter, The Secret Policeman’s Ball, we are presented to Boris Yeltsin’s relations with the Western world, but also extremely fast ascension of Vladimir Putin to the top of power in Russia. Despite the fact that this is a book about Putin at the helm of the Russian Federation, the author proposes a sneak peek into the first part of his life. This was made by considering the environment in which he lived and the road on the way to the highest office of the state may provide clues relevant to discerning a behavior full of contradictions that he displays as a president. In one hand acting as a Democrat, who has no full confidence in democracy, as a sympathizer of the West, about which he has incomplete and limited understandings, a man who believes in the market economy, but whose perspective about the world was formed during the communist era, and a staunch defender of the very Russian state, with a glacial and unscrupulous attitude that is specific for a former KGB agent against its former adversaries.

The second chapter, Courting the West, shows us the first steps taken by Vladimir Putin as president of Russia in order to normalize his country’s relations

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with the Western world. With his election in 2000, the West have seen in Putin a new type of politician who often mentioned in his speeches that he wants “to make Russia part of Europe”. However, he seemed extremely keen to cooperate on many planes, with all states, and decided to fight alongside the Americans to eradicate terrorism. Although, he set out not to get involved during the period that Bill Clinton had to spend as the President of the United States, with the coming of George W. Bush at the White House, Vladimir Putin began a collaboration with him which seemed to be beneficial to both sides.

Chapter three, The Battle for Economic Reform, presents the measures undertaken by Vladimir Putin to lead to an economic growth that he had expected – and was not delayed. With the accession to power, the new Kremlin leader began to form a team for fundamentally restructures of Russia. Thus, Gherman Gref, a 35 years old lawyer, was appointed head of Strategic Research Center, which was the engine of all reforms. The initial effect of the set of reforms was impressive, the Russian people started to pay taxes (the tax reform was benefic for business environment) and the Russian state recorded a significant economical growth and started it’s path on the road to stability.

In the next chapter, The Dark Side, the author analyzes the change that began to manifest itself in Putin’s ways of thinking and in his actions. Thus, Putin begins to commit a series of abuses, such as the suppression of the free press (through extreme pressure on some television stations and newspapers of the opposition), which led to a rapid flattening of the enthusiasm shown by the West with he’s arrival to the power. One of the first decisions taken by Putin was to begin the creation of what he himself called “spiral of power”, centralizing the whole political power by naming his cronies in key positions. He believed that the lack of centralized control was the element which that generated shortcomings in the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union. But one of the most drastic measures was what the author of this volume called “taming the oligarchs”, a measure which refers to the actions of Putin to undermine the power of the most influential people of Russia who chose to question the authority of the leader of the Kremlin. Thus, Vladimir Gusinsky and Boris Berezovsky chose to leave the country in fear of being imprisoned, as would happen with Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who was the protagonist of a process that that resembled a process from the Stalinist era.
New Europe, Old Europe, the fifth chapter, exposes the efforts made by NATO to draw Russia into a partnership. Thus, in 2002, on the initiative of British Prime Minister Tony Blair, at the sumptuous summit organized by Silvio Berlusconi in Rome, a NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was formed. Also, they signed a treaty on reducing nuclear weapons, designed to bring the Russians closer to the Western alliance by a measure similar to the membership, giving the impression that they belong to the club. But the crisis in Iraq would alter relations between Russia and the United States of America, proving that when it came to pursuing foreign policy objectives, the Americans hardly could pretend that Russia is a superpower that should be taken into account in its actions.

In the next chapter, Putin II, Angus Roxburgh examines Putin’s relationship with Georgia, given in particular the events of 2004, when President Mikhail Saakashvili attacked the breakaway region of Adjara, which he joined with the Georgian state. Nevertheless, Putin was expeditious with Saakashvili, stating that it will not offer concessions regarding South Ossetia and Abkhazia, another couple of secessionist territories of the Georgian state. With the tragedy in Beslan (when a terrorist group gathered more than 1,100 people in a school building, which has killed 334 of them, in addition to the 28 terrorists) took place a major change in the internal Russian politics, Putin pulling the conclusion that these attacks occurred because of the inability of the regional governors considered “out of control”, which is why he decided that in the future the President would nominate the persons in those jobs. Thus, the author believes that it was the beginning of a new isolationist era, because Putin believed that Russians let their guard down and that he needed to defend the country against terrorism and Western-style democracy.

The seventh chapter (Enemies everywhere) aims to establish the factors that have prompted the Kremlin leader to engage so deeply in Ukrainian policy, with the election of 2004, and the way he reacted to the Ukrainian state during elections (first round was restored following the Western protests against abuses that took place then). Although Viktor Yushchenko – the candidate supported by the West – won the election, he turned out to be another collaborator with whom Putin was ready to make arrangements. In the spring of 2005, Putin decided to punish the Ukrainians for the Orange Revolution, announcing that he intends to increase gas prices by 4 times, from $ 50 to about $ 225, which is when it became clear that Gazprom had become the most effective instrument of Russian power in
the media, the economy and foreign politics. But stopping gas supply for several days in early 2006 caused a panic all along Europe, triggering a radical reassessment of European Union energy policies.

The eighth chapter, **A New Cold War**, it depicts the image of Russia led by an elite who does not accept compromise. The murder of former KGB officer Aleksander Litvinenko, is one of the most outrageous actions that may be imposed to the FSB, the Russian intelligence service, the KGB’s successor. Litvinenko, after refusing to assassinate Boris Berezovsky during the presidency of Vladimir Putin at the head of the Russian secret service, had gone to Britain in 2000, where he entertained activities aimed to defy the Kremlin. In 2006, after meeting Andrey Lugovoy and Dmitry Kovtun – both former intelligence officers – became ill and died within a few weeks, setting investigators he had been poisoned with a radioactive substance. Moreover, the string of murders would continue alongside Putin's attempts to present his country as free democratic and modern. Dozens of journalists have been assassinated (even though not all the cases had the resonance of the case of Anna Politkovskaya - known worldwide for the bold reports in Chechnya and virulent criticism about the Kremlin), but very few of these cases have been solved, Putin's Russia leaving the impression of a country where journalists can be killed without risk, especially if they upset the authorities.

In the ninth chapter, **Media, Missiles, Medvedev**, the author analyzes how Putin has sought to manage its relationship with the United States regarding to their intention to create a radar station in the Czech Republic (with the aim of detecting missiles in the initial phase of launch) and a base for a missiles interceptor in Poland (the objective being the destruction of the missiles). Despite some attempts to prevented the establishment of these bases (Putin considered that they jeopardize the safety of its State) to Russia's borders and providing alternatives to the US plans, the Bush administration did not take into account the opinions of Russia, signing the agreements that they needed with Prague and Warsaw. In this chapter is pictured the scene that described the end of the second term of Vladimir Putin’s, when he was not decided whom to support in the upcoming election campaign. Dmitry Medvedev would be the one to get the support of the former president, succeeding election victory with a score of 70%.

Although the West foresaw – again – a possible change of the tough policy dictated by the Kremlin during the former president, the tenth chapter of the present paper, **Outbreak Of The War**, shows how any hope of liberalization
would be broken with the entry of Russia in a war with one of its neighbors. The invasion of Georgia in August 2008 would shatter with a single shot all Putin’s and Medvedev’s efforts to present their country as a European power, democratic, reliable which truly surpassed the Soviet traditions. The events that are analyzed here give us an extraordinary analysis of Russia and the West's inability to understand each other and their inability to take account of everyone's concerns and fears. Thus, it seems that we are witnessing a sterile dialogue, where Bush delivered sermons and lessons, Putin threatened and was enraged, America wanted Russia to abandon the “sphere of influence”, Russia has demanded that America no longer would behave as if they rule the world, Bush accused Putin that he has an authoritarian communist behavior, and he replied that Bush is not thinking beyond Cold War paradigms.

In the eleventh chapter, **Reseting the relations with the West**, the author analyzes Russia's relationship with the United States in the context of the war against Georgia, the Russians accusing the Americans that they had maintained all the conflict to strengthen the position of Senator John McCain, who had to face Barack Obama in the race for the White House. But with the coming of Barack Obama in the US forehead, it seemed that Russian-American relations will enter again on a positive track. An important reference to this new approach is the one that took place in 2009 when, at the Security Conference in Munich, Vice President Joe Biden spoke about resetting relations between the two countries. Despite meetings between Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama, the situation would become – again – tense when, in summer 2010, took place an impressive exchange of spies at Vienna airport, a scene worthy for the Cold War.

In the next part of this paper, **The tyrant and his friends**, are analyzed main causes that led to the poor economic situation in which the giant state of Russian finds itself, a country whose income lies in mostly in exports of subsoil resources, which it is not able to develop a strong economy, like other developing economies. The conclusion reached by the author - based on studies developed by various agencies and institutions, as well as the statements of Medvedev - is that corruption is widespread, along with excessive bureaucracy, reasons that make the Russian economy a static economy where the investors are not attracted to the market. The author also shows that the strong network of corruption that engulfs so much of the wealth of Russia influence the life of every Russian citizen, starting with the “driver who bribes a cop, the small shop owner who gives money to an
agent from the Department of Public Health to get a license, to the Kremlin official who swindled millions of dollars from a foreign company”.

In the chapter Tandemology, the author follows the relationship between Putin and Medvedev over Medvedev’s mandate. Dmitry Medvedev has oscillated between his own ideas he wanted to implement in Russia and the ideas inherited from his predecessor. Although there were no significant differences between the approaches of the foreign policies of the two, the visions were different in terms of the economy and human rights. By Medvedev’s mid-term, these differences became more emphasized when each of the two seemed to try to become a core that requires support in the elections of 2012. Thus, Vladimir Putin decided to form a new political party, Russian Popular Front, where there were invited to join in a bunch of independent organizations and individuals. This initiative came using as a background the decreasing popularity of United Russia, the party that supported Medvedev at the elections of 2008. Angus Roxburgh thinks that the initiative of Vladimir Putin undermined the Russian party system, a system lacking any firmness. This approach aimed to lead to the marginalization of president Medvedev and was aimed to place Putin as "national leader”.

Finally, the last chapter, Putin III, focused on the state of mind of the people in Russia before the elections, when it was not very clear whether Putin will choose to run for another term or if he will support the President at the time. Although Vladimir Putin has left some state of doubt, he decided that he would run for another term as president, this time for a period of six years, according to the Constitution. The elections for the State Duma on the 4th of December 2012, were not disturbed by a changing atmosphere and expectation came true: United Russia won a great victory, even if this meant an outrageous election fraud. The author states that there were found several cases of voting “carousels”, where several groups of voters were transported by bus from one polling station to another in order to vote multiple times for the candidates of United Russia. Fraud phenomenon has generated a large protest on December 10, when about 50,000 people waved white ribbons and demanded the resignation of Putin. But he did not seem to be distracted by the protestors and on the 4th of March 2012, obtained a new term as president. Although there was a new protest against Putin, there was no concrete action from the opposition, fact that shows the weakness of the Russian political class, according to the author.
At the end of the book, the former Putin’s adviser for public relations urges Russia and the West to try to understand each other’s fears. However, the author considers that no other Russian leader in the future will be more willing, than the current president from Kremlin, to receive sermons or lessons from outside.

Through this study, the author has analyzed some of the most thorny details of Russian policy, both domestically and especially in its external relations. This volume offers a thorough picture of the events that gravitated around Vladimir Putin, from his first term until his re-election – for the third time – to the Russian head of state in 2012. Many information used by the author were extracted from interviews held by officials of the first rank not only from Russia but also from USA, Germany, France, UK, Ukraine and Georgia, information that reveal details that have escaped over the time. The thorough analysis of sources, the personal experience as advisor for public relations and concise style of writing make us say that the volume of Angus Roxburgh is particularly important for the historiography about the period of the first two presidential terms in which Putin was the main architect of Russia’s policy.

Angus Roxburgh study attempted to highlight the stormy political life of the Kremlin, after the withdrawal from the power of Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin’s accession to the highest office of the Russian state. Despite the fact that it is a book about Putin during his first two terms at the Kremlin, we believe that if correctly interpreted, this would provide alternatives for better cooperation with the current Kremlin leader.

Stanislav Belkovsky, Putin: biografia interzisă (Putin: the man who wasn’t there), translated by Antoaneta Olteanu, Corint Publishing House, Bucharest, 2014

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By then in Russian, but also in numerous translations, the paper sparked controversy and a series of polemics, being widely publicized and discussed in the issues addressed by the author both by non-specialist readers and scientific or political world. Given that the volume is divided into 22 chapters, I preferred a

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