

Russian Negotiating Behavior

CONTINUITY AND TRANSITION

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Foreword

For anyone planning to travel to Russia for business—be it the business of finance and industry or of politics and diplomacy—this book deserves to be among the first things packed. Pragmatic and forthright throughout, Jerrold Schecter dissects the characteristic Russian approach to negotiation, laying out the stages through which negotiations typically will pass, assessing the tactics that one's Russian counterparts will likely deploy, and offering advice on how one should respond. Furthermore, this nuts-and-bolts analysis is set squarely within the broad framework of Russian history, culture, and enduring values and norms. Schecter's objective is to give the reader a sense of the cultural context within which Russian negotiators operate, and thus of how to avoid misjudgments and misunderstandings in order to reach mutually beneficial agreements. These qualities make *Russian Negotiating Behavior* an indispensable primer for those new to the Russian negotiating game as well as a valuable reference for veterans.

These same qualities also help to make this book an appropriate volume with which to launch the Institute's series of country-focused studies on cross-cultural negotiation. Several years ago, the Institute committed itself to explore the field of cross-cultural negotiating behavior, an understanding of which is clearly essential to strengthening prospects for resolving international disputes by political, rather than military, means. The objective of our cross-cultural negotiating project is to illuminate the apparent inscrutability of distant and unfamiliar cultures, to remove the mysteries and enigmas of outlook and behavior that can confound American—or other foreign—interlocutors, thus clearing the way for more productive negotiating encounters.

In addition to Russia, other countries that are a focus for this effort now include China, North Korea, Japan, and Germany. Together with subsequent studies of other countries that play important roles on the

world stage but often seem culturally bewildering to their would-be negotiating partners, these volumes will be used by the Institute in training programs in the theory and the practice of negotiating across cultural divides.

The kind of cross-cultural insight the Institute will provide to government, academic, and nongovernmental constituencies requires, of course, authors who are intimately familiar with their subjects. Jerrold Schecter fits the bill. A Russian-language speaker, Schecter began his firsthand acquaintance with Russia in 1968 when he became *Time-Life's* bureau chief in Moscow. During his two-year residency, he traveled extensively in the Soviet Union, making the sort of contacts that ultimately enabled him to play an instrumental role in acquiring Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs. After working as White House correspondent and diplomatic editor for *Time* magazine, Schecter entered government service and, during the Carter administration, participated in negotiations with the Soviets as a member of the National Security Council staff. He has since visited Russia frequently, and in the early 1990s was a founding editor of a joint venture between the Hearst Corporation and *Izvestia* to launch a U.S.-Russian newspaper.

For this book, Schecter has drawn on a wealth of academic studies and ambassadorial memoirs to produce an analysis that not only explores the historical and cultural roots of Russian negotiating behavior but also captures the current negotiating trends in a country that, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, has witnessed remarkable political, economic, and social dynamism and dislocation. The end of the Soviet empire also has given Schecter access to unique and uniquely well-placed sources—namely, former Soviet diplomats who, in interviews with the author, have provided an insider's perspective on how the Soviet foreign ministry managed negotiations with the United States. This behind-the-scenes information has been complemented by numerous interviews with important players on the American side of the negotiating table.

Schecter's study underscores the endurance of negotiating patterns across decades and across political regimes. Culture changes only slowly, and so the patterns of thought and behavior that culture shapes are likewise resistant to swift transformation. After pinpointing the origins and nature of key Russian cultural traits, Jerry Schecter shows how

those traits have endured beyond the tsarist and the Soviet eras. He demonstrates the marked degree of continuity from the Soviet period to the present, and the persistence in today's Russian Federation government of negotiating expectations, strategies, and tactics that were ingrained into the apparatchiks of the Soviet regime. That said, however, he sees a generational process of change now beginning, a process powered by a younger generation of Russians in business and diplomacy who are eager to engage the outside world and are able to do so without the heavy ideological and bureaucratic encumbrances of the Soviet era.

Russian Negotiating Behavior is, in short, an analytically fluent and eminently practical guide to what Western negotiators can expect from their contemporary Russian counterparts. As such, it serves not only as a valuable resource for government officials and private entrepreneurs alike, but also as a fine introduction to the series of country-focused studies in cross-cultural negotiation that will be forthcoming from the United States Institute of Peace.

Richard H. Solomon, President
United States Institute of Peace

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