

Introduction

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This volume offers unusual access to the complexities of Russian foreign policy, both as it has emerged in the 13 months since March 1993 and as it continues to develop. Either implicitly or explicitly, the various contributions to this book affirm 1993 as the formative period of Russian foreign policy, that is to say, the period during which the essential issues of the debate were raised in durable form and during which the general structure of the debate—the principles, the rhetoric, if you will, the boundaries—attained a kind of permanence that will not be substantially altered for some time.

With the exception of Leon Aron's contribution, which was written in the fall of 1993, the essays in this book (although updated since) were originally conceived during the late winter and early spring of 1993—that is to say, during the critical stage in the conflict between President Boris Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament that ended temporarily with the referenda supporting Yeltsin in April and that ultimately culminated in the prorogation of parliament in September. Inasmuch as the parties to the struggle between Yeltsin and parliament held opposed views in the ongoing Russian foreign policy debate, the Russian contributors to this volume were bound to reflect them—or, if not *reflect* them, then *reflect on them*. Their essays and remarks here stand as documentation of the *manner* in which the Russian foreign policy debate was conducted in the spring of 1993.

The principal opposing views that obtained during 1993 surely still obtain. On the one side is the view that Russia's best interests lie in pursuing democratic internationalism and rapprochement with the West,

as well as conciliation toward and accommodation with the former Soviet republics, collectively known as the "Near Abroad." On the other side is the view that Russia must find its way to being a strong presence internationally, take a "tougher" line toward the Near Abroad, pursue a more resolute defense of Russia's national interests, and conduct a more independent foreign policy, one that is at times even divergent from, if not hostile to, the United States. More often than not, these views are still articulated in very much the same manner in which they were articulated in 1993. They have developed—on their own and in response to events—to be sure. The "strong Russia" position is now nearly as well articulated as the more accommodationist view, which developed earlier. Such events as Russian intervention in the Georgian civil war and Russia's attempts to play a more forceful role in Bosnia in 1994 bring the meaning of "strong Russia" home to us. But for all that, the two positions remain fundamentally the same as they were in the spring of 1993.

Although the two views are seemingly further apart now, one has hardly overwhelmed the other. This fact suggests that they are inextricably bound to one another and that they are likely to remain so even as they develop and diverge further. In early 1993, the "derzhavniks," as the advocates of a strong Russia were known at the time, proceeded cautiously in their public statements. They most often couched their advocacy in the rhetoric of their opponents, giving more than a nod of support to the basic accommodationist premises of foreign policy as articulated by Yeltsin and Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev. Indeed, two of the most notable derzhavniks, Evgenii Ambartsumov and Andranik Migranian, had their feet planted firmly in both camps. In March 1993, Ambartsumov was chairman of the Supreme Soviet's Committee on Foreign Affairs and Migranian a senior advisor to that committee; at the same time, both sat on Yeltsin's 12-man Presidential Council. Interestingly, they remain in roughly the same position even now, more than a year later. Both are members of the [now 25-man] Presidential Council, and Ambartsumov has been elected to the new Duma and sits on its Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The reader will notice in the tone and substance of the essays by the Russians in this volume a reluctance to portray the various broad tendencies in Russian thinking as being fundamentally incompatible with one another. In proceeding, these authors show an inclination to regard domestic reform as Russia's key foreign policy problem. They also evince a marked preference to break foreign policy down into a series of discrete problems, each of which should be addressed in and for itself, rather than

to focus on those problems as, for example, part of the larger problem of finding a strong Russian or accommodationist general course.

Apart from documenting the manner of the debate, perhaps the chief virtue of this volume is that it lays out in some detail most of the major problems to be faced in developing a foreign policy for the new Russia. Those issues addressed in the following essays include sorting out the sources and developing the mechanisms of foreign policy; determining Russia's relationship to the former Soviet states and to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as an institution; dealing with the problem of Russians outside the Russian Federation; establishing Russia's role in maintaining order in the former Soviet space; developing Russia's regional relationships in the Far East; determining a new role for Russia in international arms control; and developing new strategic and technical-intellectual relations with the United States.

Sources and Mechanisms of Russian Foreign Policy

We have organized the essays under three rubrics. Under the first—on the sources and mechanisms of Russian foreign policy—Leon Aron launches the volume with a look at what he calls “the Yeltsin revolution in foreign policy.” In examining the priorities that have emerged from that revolution, Aron makes explicit the argument regarding the import of 1993 to the future of Russian foreign policy.

Aron argues, in effect, that 1993—as a discrete period in the development of Russian foreign policy—can be best understood by what occurred at its beginning, rather than by what occurred at the end (the victory of Zhirinovskiy, the resurgence of Russian nationalism, and so forth). He tells us that the confusion that characterized the fall of the Soviet Union gave way to a clear and clearly meaningful government position on Russian foreign policy in early 1993. The basic international posture of the Yeltsin regime that had been articulated variously after the 1991 coup was pulled together in a systematic fashion by a cooperative effort of foreign policy agencies headed by the Foreign Ministry. Beginning in March 1992, this endeavor resulted in a 58-page report that was forwarded to parliament by Kozyrev on January 25, 1993. During the last week in April, after extensive review and redrafting in the National Security Council, Yeltsin signed into law a document (what in the United States would be called a National Security Directive) entitled “The Key Tenets of the Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation.”

Aron examines the key elements of the Yeltsin revolution, which preceded the “Key Tenets” by almost two years: reversal of the relative priority assigned by the Moscow leadership to domestic versus national security/foreign concerns; the elimination of the “messianic” component in Russian foreign policy; weakening and destruction of the empire (as opposed to its strengthening and expansion); and drastic cutbacks in resources going to the military. He also details the difficulties that have attended the Yeltsin position, giving the responses to it that have helped to establish the “poles” of the Russian foreign policy debate. He argues that the debate should not be characterized solely by its potential extremes but also by the fact of the struggle itself. According to Aron, what has emerged from “a debate unprecedented in Russian history” is a consensus on “the fundamental priorities and concerns” of Russian foreign policy—a consensus that will “inform Russian foreign policy for years, if not decades, to come.”

Aron breaks that consensus down into three national security priorities: Russia as regional superpower, Russia as nuclear superpower, and Russia as “great power.” Inasmuch as Russia will propose to be all these things, it must discover what they mean. In Aron’s view, the answer to this question depends upon how, in Russian thinking, the need for change posited in the Yeltsin revolution in foreign policy will be blended with the imperatives of continuity, which derive from a powerful tradition and geostrategic circumstances. In the last analysis, what Russia’s foreign policy will become cannot be understood unless one recognizes the consensual priorities and the struggle between change and continuity.

The three essays by Martin Malia, Charles Fairbanks, Jr., and Mikhail Bezrukov, which follow Aron’s, treat other sorts of sources and mechanisms of foreign policy. In contrast to analysts who treat in a broad geopolitical and historical fashion the problem of how its Soviet and pre-Soviet past will shape Russia’s future international identity, these authors focus on specific parts of the legacy that will determine how the past will be distilled. In doing this, they offer fresh and unusually useful perspectives.

For his part, Martin Malia argues that the formation of any Russian, as opposed to Soviet, foreign policy cannot be properly understood without a proper perception of the tradition of Russian *government*. Malia contends that Russian despotism is not exceptional when viewed in the context of European history generally. Further, he argues that Russia’s expansion was achieved in fits and spurts rather than, as is commonly believed, through a process of constant enlargement. If one studies the history of

Europe prior to World War I, one can only conclude that the liberal West was concerned not with Russia's expansion but with its autocratic form of government. Except for the Soviet interlude, Russia's foreign policy has historically been fueled more by pragmatic considerations than by ideology or tradition. Inasmuch as tradition has played a role, says Malia, its content and expression are by no means unusual when viewed in the context of Western history. Malia finds Russia in every important way comparable to Western states in exerting itself to establish a place in the world. Absent communism, one can expect a return to pragmatism and geopolitical considerations in Russia's search for a foreign policy. Finally, Malia argues that the outcome of that search will depend as much on the other countries of the former Soviet Union, which together constitute the region in which Russia must first exercise its pragmatic and geopolitical considerations, as on Russia itself.

In treating the legacy of Soviet policy as a source of Russian foreign policy, Charles Fairbanks, Jr., argues that there is a symmetry between communist and postcommunist attachments to the past. For him, the current Russian foreign policy debate may be characterized in part as a struggle to discover which policymaking practices of the Soviet period should be retained and which relegated to the past. Fairbanks focuses on two practices that have clearly survived the collapse of Soviet rule: shapelessness and *sviazy*. Shapelessness is the practice of dividing one task among several persons or government agencies without clearly defining the responsibilities of each. According to Fairbanks, despite the heavy price that shapelessness wrought from the Soviet system in terms of efficiency and hopes for a smooth transition to a market economy, it still seems to be regarded as desirable. *Sviazy*, the Russian term for the extensive use of personal contacts in order to get things done or procured, is also still regarded as desirable. The point of Fairbank's argument is not that it despairs at the presence of old habits in decision making, but that it exposes the fact that such habits may have to be accepted—by Russians and non-Russians alike—in effecting and dealing with change.

Shapelessness is also a focal point of Mikhail Bezrukov's essay on the institutional mechanisms of Russian foreign policy. In Bezrukov's formulation, a principal foreign relations legacy of the Soviet past is the tension among the main mechanisms for policy formation. Without the ultimate control and discipline previously exercised by the Politburo and the Central Committee, this tension no longer constitutes a fruitful way of developing foreign policy alternatives. Bezrukov not only points to the

tension between the Foreign Ministry and the parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, but also to the tension between these combatants and the Security Council, which at the time Bezrukov was writing was proceeding with undefined goals and means of influence. Shapelessness in Bezrukov's analysis is a means of "bypassing," that is, of keeping power over one or another area policy from residing for too long in any one place under any one individual's direction. If this was helpful in managing the Soviet elite, it is not helpful now, according to Bezrukov, as it is the principal factor slowing the development of effective institutions and structures of decision making. In a final point, Bezrukov argues that, above all, it is the Russian president who must support the development of proper institutions and structures.

The Near Abroad and Commonwealth of Independent States

This part of the book, which includes essays by Elizabeth Teague, Igor Kliamkin, and Susan Clark, offers useful perspectives on the relationship between Russia and its nearest neighbors. Echoing Leon Aron's themes, these authors address both the matter of emerging priorities and the subject of continuity and change.

Elizabeth Teague offers a substantial primer on Russians outside Russia and a perspective on the problems involved that take the subject beyond the usual realm of discussion. Teague points out that the 25 million Russians living beyond the federation's borders do not everywhere conceive of themselves as linked to one another. This, however, is in contrast to the attitude of the Russian government, which regards Russians abroad as an undifferentiated mass, at least insofar as their existence presents the government with a formidable threat to the stability of the federation. If conflict develops between Russians and non-Russians in the Near Abroad, either the Russian government will have to exert itself to protect them or it will have to support a large migration "home." In either case, the government would be hard pressed to project force on their behalf or to provide the housing and infrastructure to accommodate them. Teague predicts that the evolution of policy regarding Russians outside of Russia will continue to be slow and painful. Originally drawn to foster strife among the peoples of the former Soviet Union, the borders that now separate Russians from Russians are sure to be debated and contested. The non-Russian parties to this debate will not be easy interlocutors and armed struggle may ensue. This problem of finding and securing its

borders, of defining itself geographically, is the most basic problem faced by the Russian Federation.

In addressing in his own way the problem of Russia's definition, Igor' Kliamkin speaks to what has become in the period since he wrote his essay perhaps the most interesting and disturbing development in the former Soviet space: the development of "reintegration." For Kliamkin, the chief problem that exists in the former Soviet space is the potential for conflict among the former republics of the Soviet Union. While acknowledging such contributing factors as ethnic conflict, the struggle to control former Soviet nuclear weapons, and economic chaos, Kliamkin focuses on the plain fact that the states of the former USSR are not viable in isolation from one another. Depending on one's disposition and the assumptions one might make regarding for whom he speaks, Kliamkin's essay can be read in a number of ways, some of them distressing. The fact is, however, that Kliamkin's insight is valuable. If the former Soviet states are not viable, then the self-affirmation of their statehood through the pursuit of strict independence is apt to lead them from nonviability into a chaos of conflict. The reader will decide if Kliamkin's remedy—making a truly useful supranational structure out of the CIS—could be a means to facilitate national self-affirmation without either reviving the Soviet Union or fostering Russian imperialism.

Looking at yet another aspect of the relations among the various parts of the former Soviet Union, Susan Clark discusses the troublesome and complicated matter of Russian peacekeeping. In an essay detailing the mechanisms in place and Russia's performance, Clark places matters within the larger international debate over peacekeeping and peacemaking, the former occurring with the blessing of the parties to a conflict after the cessation of hostilities, and the latter occurring to halt conflicts when they break out or when cease-fires fail. In contrast to the world of conflict as seen from a UN vantage point—where peacekeepers and peacemakers must intervene from the outside—Clark shows the world of the former Soviet Union to be one in which the Russian military intervenes from within and from a position that severely compromises its ability to serve as a neutral force. Clark brings home the reality that the Russian claim to peacekeeping in the territory of the former Soviet Union cannot be effectively disputed by an international community that lacks the means to offer an alternative. She calls for new, broadly based mechanisms of peacekeeping and peacemaking that will involve all of the appropriate countries of the former Soviet Union in any given case, as well as regional

states outside the former USSR and the Western nations. Only in this way can Russia be a resource that does not dominate in peacekeeping and peacemaking. If Russian activities in Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in the time since Clark's essay was written complicate the picture of Russia's interventionist role outside the federation, they do not contradict the basic analysis of the essay.

Russia and the Far Abroad

Whereas Susan Clark asks us to address the problem of transforming Russia into a force for peace within the space of the former Soviet Union, Vladimir Ivanov invites us to consider assisting Russia in developing a positive role as a regional power—in this case, in Northeast Asia. Ivanov deplores the fact that outside of discussions of military power and strategic nuclear weapons Russia is rarely mentioned as a northern Pacific country despite its vast amount of territory there. Ivanov would have the United States and its friends in the region consider the opportunities to engage Russia internationally. Russian strategic and security postures with regard to the Pacific region are in transition and the opportunity to influence the process through cooperation must not be wasted. Ivanov argues that bringing Russia into security and development discussions could enhance the possibilities of resolving regional conflicts and disputes. Involving Russia in Asian-Pacific affairs could help it to develop economically, as similar involvement helped China. In this way, the United States and Japan could assist Russia in establishing a prosperous market democracy. If, however, Russia remains isolated, it could become an obstacle to the establishment of post-Cold War security and market economies in the region.

Surveying the general international response to emerging Russian foreign policies and the development of U.S.-Russian relations, Andrei Kortunov focuses on strategic issues and the nuclear world of the post-Cold War period. For Kortunov, Russia may have inherited from the Soviet Union a vast store of nuclear weapons and the role of chief negotiator in arms control agreements involving the former USSR, but both parts of this inheritance are rapidly becoming obsolete. Moreover, with Third World countries acquiring nuclear weapons, the dangers of proliferation may be greater today than they were during the Cold War. This fact of the new world order has made bilateral arms control negotiations a thing of the past. According to Kortunov, it is no longer realistic to pursue the goal of preserving the "nuclear club." Instead, the

United States and Russia should seek to engage other nuclear powers in the arms control process, thereby internationalizing arms control. Cooperation and leadership are key in this endeavor as there is no overarching authority in modern global politics and no way to enforce global law and order. A process must be devised to combine multilateral, bilateral, parallel, and unilateral actions for creative problem solving at each step of arms control negotiations.

If arms control and nuclear nonproliferation offer the United States important opportunities to influence the development of Russian foreign policy, they should not be regarded as the only subjects for joint U.S.-Russian consideration, according to Evgenii Volk. Western understanding of the formation of Soviet national security doctrine was always quite limited, he argues. In the Soviet Union, this was considered a strictly military affair rather than a broader issue of national defense requiring the participation of a wide variety of decision makers. As *glasnost* and “new thinking” began to permeate the Soviet Union, however, nonmilitary experts were permitted to contribute to national security discussions. “More mature and democratically oriented approaches toward arms control and disarmament” began to arise. The lack of a legitimate constitution had been an impediment to the construction, by democratic processes, of a broader-based national security doctrine. Although this is no longer the case, Volk says, Western analysts could be instrumental in locating the remaining contradictions and antagonisms that exist within the Russian political scene with regard to national security doctrine. Closer cooperation between Russian politicians and Western scholars could produce not only creative solutions to old problems but also new questions and answers.

The Future of Russian Foreign Policy

If Leon Aron is correct, it is extremely important for U.S. and other Western policymakers to study the substance and manner of the Russian foreign policy debate as it coalesced in 1993. The consensus wrought in 1993 has endured. The great priorities—Russia as regional superpower, nuclear superpower, and great power—continue to be raised and dealt with by crucially placed officials in the same manner, despite the surfacing of public xenophobia. The poles of the debate—traditionalist and accommodationist—remain fixed, the position—indeed, the very existence—of each extreme determined by its distance from the other.

Given the outcome of the December 1993 parliamentary elections, many observers might conclude that the consensus has broken down or been transcended. Looking back at the period since the fall of the Soviet Union, the temptation is very great to predict steady progress toward an aggressive new posture for Russia vis-à-vis its neighbors near and far. While it would be folly not to be wary of the disruptive potential of Russian nationalism, it would be equally imprudent not to assess the overall character of official Russian behavior and rhetoric.

How often during the past year or two did the official line swing from reform to retreat and back again? How often did the line in foreign policy swing from accommodationist to nationally assertive positions and back again? Frequently, toughness one day was followed by softness the next. Despite growing self-assertion, the rhetoric of democratic internationalism and rapprochement has hardly been abandoned. One might consider, for example, the late winter and spring of 1994 and the character of Russian involvement in Bosnia or Russia's restated interest in NATO's offer of a "Partnership for Peace." In both cases, there is an undeniable tentativeness of intention and a cautiousness to be seen as moderate that matches the cautiousness of the United States and Europe with regard to *their* intentions regarding these things. I would argue that this means that the consensus underlying, and boundaries delineating, the new Russian foreign policy remain intact.

An opinion piece by Russian Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Vladimir Lukin that appeared in *The Washington Post* in April 1994 seems to support this view.¹ Lukin devotes the first part of his remarks to U.S. and Russian delusions regarding the place of postcommunist Russia in the world. Although guilty of overstatement in claiming that U.S. policymakers expected Russia to be "a loyal junior partner of the United States" in foreign policy and that Russian policymakers expected America to be "eternally grateful to Russia for having done away with communism," Lukin argues persuasively that such expectations arose from a faulty analysis of Russia's circumstances and options. The reality, in his view, is that Russian reform has "turned out to be much more contradictory, painful, and slow than was generally expected"; that U.S. aid has been "too little and too late"; that Russia has a host of serious foreign policy problems, especially regarding other former Soviet states; and that the outside world has been reluctant to pursue "harmony in trade and economic relations or [to give] due regard for Russian traditional interests such as those in the Balkans." It should not be surprising, according to

Lukin, that Russia has taken “a more active role” within the CIS and has become “more serious about its reshaped national interests” and has “defend[ed] them more assertively.” For him, “this has been a process of normalization of Russian foreign policy, proceeding in a fairly democratic way through public pressure, policy debates, and consensus building.”

The foregoing is a reasonably clear statement of that part of the Russian foreign policy consensus that relates to Russia as a power (in this case, as a regional power and great power). The use of the word “normalization” is key: it suggests that Russia has a right to national interests and to use its power beyond its borders after the fashion of other “normal” (read “fairly democratic”) states.

Lukin, however, does not leave the matter at this. His piece continues, and closes, with assertions fully in accord with the Yeltsin-Kozyrev language of democratic internationalism and rapprochement. “Russia today has neither aspirations nor resources to again become a global rival of the United States—not today and not tomorrow. In fact, my country is in the process of redefining its national interests in a democratic, nonexpansionist way.” Lukin emphasizes the fact that “pre-Soviet Russia and the United States were among the very few great powers that never fought each other and cooperated more than they competed.” Now that the Cold War is over: “We are returning to this historical norm. In fact, we can improve on it, since the new Russia is closer to the United States politically and culturally than its predecessor.”

All this, the reader may fairly protest, is only rhetoric. Yet, notwithstanding evidence of growing xenophobic and imperialist tendencies in Russia, there is a marked correspondence between Russian official rhetoric and reality. The fact of the matter is that Russia cannot afford, at least for the moment, to abandon its push to join the community of democratic, free-market nations or to neglect its attempt to establish firm borders and power relations with other former Soviet states.

Additionally, one might keep in mind that Russia may not have shed a peculiarity of its Soviet past: the high level of discipline in political rhetoric. During the Soviet period, Western scholars and policy analysts labored constantly to detect new subtleties in what was said and by whom. When the rhetoric changed, so invariably did the political hierarchy and/or the political agenda. These days, the rhetoric shifts from self-assertive one day to accommodationist the next. As Lukin’s piece illustrates, subtle adjustments are being made within the Russian foreign policy consensus. The fact that such adjustments are made as much in the rhetoric of rapprochement as

in the rhetoric of national self-assertion supports the view that a meaningful balance still obtains in Russian foreign policy.

Whether or not that balance actually dictates the content and conduct of Russian foreign policy, we perhaps should treat it as though it does. Such an approach will help to foster a measured debate within Russia on how best to chart a moderate course—a course in which, to recall Leon Aron's formulation, the old and the new are blended to produce a Russia useful as an international citizen and restrained in response to geopolitical realities.

Note

1. Vladimir Lukin, "No More Delusions," *The Washington Post*, April 3, 1994, p. C7.