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Democratization and Foreign Policy Change: The Case of the Russian Federation

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Abstract

The primary purpose of the following study is to explore the impact of the process of democratization on the international behavior of a post-authoritarian state. Suggesting the futility of any attempt to mechanically extend the "democratic peace" argument to the countries that experience the process of post-authoritarian transition, the study holds that the spread of democratic procedures has conflicting effects on the international security. Thus while admitting the long-term benefits of liberal democracy for the maintenance of international peace and cooperation, it is argued that, under the conditions of transitional crisis and in the absence of consolidated democratic institutions and liberal norms, the process of democratization makes governments more vulnerable to extremist pressures from below, thus inhibiting their ability to comply with those international interests that are at odds with the radicalized domestic preferences. Empirical evidence in support of this argument is provided through the analysis of the evolution of Soviet–Russian foreign policy.

Democratization and Foreign Policy Change:
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In recent years international relations scholars have seen the rise of the literature on "democratic peace" that breaks with the realist paradigm and elaborates the Kantian insight concerning the reduced propensity of democracies to fight each other.[1] Given the third and latest wave of democratization that has encompassed several dozen countries in Europe, Asia, and Latin America, the "democratic peace" argument supports the optimistic portrayal of the future of international relations by suggesting that more and more countries will become part of the "pacific union."[2]

This study, however, attempts to qualify such an optimistic scenario. The literature on "democratic peace" refers exclusively to the interactions among consolidated liberal democracies, while neglecting the impact of the process of democratization on the international behavior of post-authoritarian states. Nevertheless, paraphrasing Samuel Huntington who argues that, while modernity breeds political stability, modernization leads to political decay, it is not unreasonable to suggest that, while democracy promotes peace (with other democratic regimes), democratization may often lead to an increase in international conflicts.[3]

The difficulty of applying the "democratic peace" argument to democratizing states stems from the following two critical factors. First, as the third wave of democratization suggests, the implementation of the procedural requirements for democracy does not necessarily mean that liberal institutions, let alone liberal norms, are also being developed.[4] The mere occurrence of periodic free elections does not lead to the creation and consolidation of a liberal democracy. Liberal democracy presupposes a large number of other characteristics, including the rule of law, an effective court system, and cultural support for the position that minorities (political, ethnic, or religious) have the right to speak out and insist on their views.[5] When these requirements are not satisfied, it would be dangerously misleading to portray post-authoritarian regimes as liberal. And yet, it is exactly on liberal institutions and norms, which cushion radical foreign and domestic policy preferences, that the concept of "democratic peace" is based.[6]

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[1]. See, for example, Michael Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review* 80 (4) (1986): 1151–69; Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Rudolph Rummel, "Libertarian Propositions on Violence Between and Within Nations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 29 (3) (1985): 419–55; Clifton Morgan, "Democracy and War: Reflections on the Literature," *International Interactions* 18 (3) (1993): 197–204.

[2]. Depending on one's classification of cases, the "democratic peace" argument can be stated either as democracies rarely fight each other or as democracies never fight each other. It should be emphasized, however, that in their relations with nondemocratic regimes, democracies fight and initiate wars as often as do other types of states.

[3]. Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), p.!41.

[4]. According to O'Donnell and Schmitter, the "procedural minimum" of democracies consists of secret balloting, universal adult suffrage, regular elections, partisan competition, associational recognition and access, and executive accountability. See Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

[5]. For a comprehensive discussion of the notion of a consolidated liberal democracy, see J. Samuel Valenzuela, "Democratic Consolidation in Post-Transitional Settings: Notion, Process, and Facilitating Conditions," in Scott Mainwaring, Guillermo O'Donnell, and J. Samuel Valenzuela, eds., *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), pp. 57–104.

[6]. The current literature on "democratic peace" distinguishes between structural and cultural explanations of the democracy–war relationship. According to the structural model, it is democratic institutional constraints that prevent democracies from fighting with each other. See, for example, Clifton Morgan and Sally Campbell, "Domestic Structure, Decisional Constraints, and War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35 (2) (1991): 187–211. In contrast, the cultural model posits that an outbreak of war between democratic states is prevented by deeply rooted democratic norms operating in the political

Second, in contrast to well-established liberal democracies, many of the countries engaged in the process of democratization experience severe political, socio-economic, ethnic, and security problems. In this situation radical foreign policy preferences are quite likely to gain popularity among masses, as well as among elites. As the "diversionary" theorists postulate, under the conditions of crisis, political leaders are likely to embark upon an adventurous foreign policy in order to distract popular attention away from internal social and economic problems and to consolidate their own domestic political support.[7]

Thus it appears that in democratizing states, which are faced with a large number of intense social problems, nascent liberal norms and unconsolidated democratic institutions are not strong enough to assure the "democratic peace." Most importantly, however, the process of post-authoritarian transition can actually contribute to an increase in international conflicts. For the purpose of this study, the successful process of post-authoritarian transition is considered as being divided into three major stages: liberalization, democratization, and democratic consolidation.[8] During the liberalization stage, the government, although remaining essentially authoritarian in form and substance, starts the process of reforms by endowing the population with some political freedoms. The process continues to the second stage, democratization, when a new government is freely elected and the procedural requirements for democracy are more or less implemented. Finally, during the last consolidative stage, democratic institutions and liberal norms become a normal and integral part of political life.

It is suggested in this study that it is exactly the second stage of post-authoritarian transition that can be most threatening to the maintenance of international stability. During this stage embryonic liberal norms and institutions have not yet been developed well enough to cushion radical pressures on the process of foreign policy making that flourish under the conditions of transitional crisis. At the same time, however, because of the implementation of the procedural requirements for democracy (most importantly, free elections) the democratizing government becomes more accountable and, therefore, vulnerable to such pressures from below. As a result the government of a democratizing state, while perceiving long-term interests in upholding the rules, principles, and norms established by the international community, is, nevertheless, forced to "defect" primarily because of the unleashed radical domestic influences.

In game-theoretical terms, while virtually any government is forced to play a "two-level game" responding simultaneously to domestic and international imperatives, the process of democratization takes away the unique ability of the authoritarian government temporarily to ignore domestic exigencies.[9] As the unfortunate example of the Weimar Republic suggests, however, under the conditions of a severe socio-economic crisis, domestic preferences can often fall prey to power-hungry demagogues and political con artists who promise a confused and suffering nation easy solutions to complex problems. Paradoxically enough, in such a situation the spread of democratic procedures facilitates the conversion of radical domestic demands unconstrained by embryonic liberal institutions and norms into a more aggressive foreign policy toward democratic as well as nondemocratic regimes.

What follows is an attempt to develop more fully the counterintuitive argument linking the process of democratization to an increase in international conflicts. Note that this argument shifts the level of analysis from the interactions between consolidated democracies to the foreign policy of a democratizing state. While potentially generalizable to other cases (for example, Ukraine), this study confines its empirical scope to the evolution of Soviet–Russian foreign policy.

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process of these states. See, for example, William Dixon, "Democracy and the Peaceful Settlement of International Conflict," *American Political Science Review* 88 (1) (1994): 14–32.

[7]. For a detailed discussion of the "diversionary" theory of war, see Jack Levy, "The Diversionary Theory of War: A Critique," in Manus Midlarsky, ed., *Handbook of War Studies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), pp. 259–88.

[8]. This classification roughly parallels the three stages of the overall process of democratization outlined by Huntington. See Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 9.

[9]. For an excellent discussion of "two-level games," see Robert Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42 (3) (1988): 427–460.

The Gorbachev Era:
Political Liberalization at Home and "New Thinking" Abroad

One of the few Western observers who did not rule out the possibility of the nonmilitary demise of the communist regime in the former Soviet Union was George Kennan. In his essay written shortly after the end of World War II, Kennan suggested that, under the conditions of containment, the Soviet Union would gradually "mellow," with its communist ideology proven inferior both domestically and internationally to the Western ideas of democracy.[10]

Such an emphasis on the role of ideas in bringing down the communist regime and ameliorating Moscow's relations with the West has turned out to be quite insightful. Today, a number of analysts trying to identify the sources of Soviet change *ex post facto* emphasize that, although by mid-1980s most of the people in the USSR remained isolated from Western cultural influence, a relatively small but influential stratum of Soviet population occupying high-ranking positions in the state became intensively exposed to pro-liberal ideas coming from the West.[11] Indeed, by the end of Brezhnev's rule, pro-liberal ideas, while always to a certain degree nourished by the social group that is usually referred to as intelligentsia, gradually penetrated many Soviet technocratic circles directly involved in the policy-making process.

This increasing pro-liberal orientation was especially conspicuous in those state institutions whose activities were exposing them to the outside world. Some of the major Soviet "think-tanks," such as the Academy of Sciences Institute of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), were unofficially promoting the ideas of nonclass-based foreign policy for nearly twenty years before Gorbachev's New Political Thinking.[12] Communication with Western colleagues, participation in international conferences, official and private visits abroad, were undoubtedly contributing to the rejection of the communist orthodoxy. It should be noted, however, that such progressively popular pro-liberal ideas included not only the principles of domestic democratic governance and the nonclass vision of international relations but also the promise of a new lifestyle based on Western consumerist culture.

And yet, this is not to say that immediately before and during Gorbachev's years in power the whole state apparatus was "mellowing." In fact, the process of the acceptance of pro-liberal values and norms proceeded quite unevenly. Thus, for example, the persisting standard operating procedures, as well as the nature of activities, were firmly securing such organizations as the Ministry of Defense from the penetration of Western ideas. And yet, ironically enough, it was exactly the strength of the communist regime that was contributing to the popularity of Western cultural influence. Samuel Huntington refers to this paradox as "negative legitimacy" that strengthens the support for pro-liberal orientation by emphasizing the inadequacies and shortcomings of the existing authoritarian regime.[13]

In sum, the phase of political liberalization was characterized by favorable domestic conditions for the integration of Gorbachev's Soviet Union into the international community dominated by the West. Most importantly, an increasingly powerful but still not prevalent pro-liberal orientation was combined with the essentially authoritarian style of Gorbachev's leadership that enabled him to fend off the conservative interests of those individual and institutional actors who were still loyal to the communist dogma. Gorbachev, for example, wasted no time using his initially unconstrained power to make sweeping personnel changes in order to undermine any potential opposition to his policies by appointing less conservative individuals to the most critical positions in the party and state apparatus. A year after Gorbachev took office he appointed a new Minister of Defense, a new Chief of the General

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[10]. George Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25 (4) (1947): 566–582.

[11]. See, for example, Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "The International Sources of Soviet Change," *International Security* 16 (1991/1992): 74–118; Roger Kanet, "Reassessing Soviet Doctrine: New Priorities and Perspectives," in Edward A. Kolodziej and Roger E. Kanet, eds., *The Limits of Soviet Power in the Developing World: Thermidor in the Revolutionary Process* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 397–424.

[12]. Jeff Checkel, "Ideas, Institutions, and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution," *World Politics* 45 (1) (1993): 271–300.

[13]. Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 49–50.

Staff and installed new men at the top of the Foreign Ministry and the Communist Party International Department.[14]

Thus it was exactly Gorbachev's authoritarian power base at home that safeguarded more or less effectively the policy of New Political Thinking that stressed the nonclass, interdependent nature of the international system from the assaults of hard-line communists. In other words, Gorbachev's New Political Thinking was the policy of a liberalized, but still authoritarian, elite that, for a variety of reasons, was willing to make concessions in the international arena in order to achieve a more complete integration of the Soviet Union into the "civilized international community" and that was ready to resort to authoritarian power to get around all domestic obstacles in pursuit of this policy.

Yeltsin and the Process of Democratization

The first year of Boris Yeltsin's presidency was characterized by conditions that were also highly conducive to the liberalization of Russian foreign policy. The democratic euphoria and expectations of a better life under the new regime were still strong among the masses, and the conservative political elements were still in shock after the defeat of the communist putschists in August 1991. Encouraged by these favorable circumstances and motivated by the desire to convince the West that Russia is even more liberal than Gorbachev's Soviet Union, the Russian Foreign Ministry based its initial policy on the statement that Russia "has no enemies and wants to be friends with all countries."[15] Nevertheless, shortly afterwards, the domestic situation started to change drastically, bringing about a dramatic foreign policy shift.

With the intensifying socio-economic crisis, as well as the harsh psychological and material repercussions of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian public espoused an increasingly negative view of the process of democratization at home and rapprochement with the West abroad. It became quite common for many Russians to argue that the government's policy of economic liberalization had a more ruinous effect on the country's economy than did four years of war against Nazi Germany about half a century ago. One of the leading Russian daily newspapers, *Izvestiya*, emphasized the severity of problems facing Yeltsin's administration by citing the rapid economic decline as a primary explanation of the fact that for the first time since World War II the rate of mortality in the Russian Federation exceeded the rate of birth.[16]

This growing dissatisfaction with the process of change was closely paralleled by the rise of nationalist sloganeering that gave the Russian people an illusive sense of purpose and identity in a rapidly changing environment. The progressively popular nationalist sentiments, however, often spelled not only the end of domestic political and economic reforms, but also the beginning of an aggressive policy abroad. Indeed, implementing a successful foreign policy campaign to defend the "national interest" became more realistic and much more politically profitable for many aspiring, as well as established, politicians than any, inevitably painful, attempt to resurrect the collapsed economy. The "diplomacy of smiles" and the "policy of yes" became favorite targets for the right-wing opposition that attacked Yeltsin's government for "selling out" Russian interests to the West.[17] The primary focus of the most violent criticism of Russian foreign policy was, however, Moscow's allegedly liberal position toward other Soviet successor states.[18]

It should also be emphasized that since the collapse of communist structures, the Russian political arena has been characterized by a low degree of institutionalization. Indeed, as the dramatic culmination of the protracted power struggle between President Yeltsin and the Russian Parliament in fall 1993 clearly illustrated, the process of development of a stable, consolidated system of government that is

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[14]. Neil Malcolm, "New Thinking and After: Debate in Moscow about Europe," in Neil Malcolm, ed., *Russia and Europe: An End to Confrontation?* (London and New York: Pinter Publishers, 1994), pp. 151–181.

[15]. Alexei Arbatov, "Russian Foreign Policy Priorities for the 1990s," in Teresa Pelton Johnson and Steven Miller, eds., *Russian Security After the Cold War* (Washington and London: Brassey's, 1994), pp. 1–42.

[16]. *Izvestiya*, 30 March 1992.

[17]. See Alexei Arbatov, "Russia's Foreign Policy Alternatives," *International Security* 18 (4) (1993): 5–43.

[18]. Jeff Checkel, "Russian Foreign Policy: Back to the Future?" *RFE/RL Research Report* 1 (41) (1992): 17–18.

capable of representing a variety of different interests is at its embryonic stage. As pointed out by a number of analysts, political parties in Russia are largely underdeveloped. Rather than being "protoparties" that will naturally evolve into full-fledged political parties, the majority can be better categorized as "pseudoparties" in all probability doomed to wither away after a short period of existence.[19]

Such a lack of political institutionalization, combined with intense socio-economic problems associated with the transition to a free market economy, has created a situation in which the pendulum of popular preferences rapidly goes from one extreme to another and militant programs (both in the domestic and foreign realms) championed by extremist groups receive a frightening amount of popular support. For instance, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who promised to restore Russia's territory to the borders of the former Soviet Union and expel "southerners" (that is, Armenians, Georgians, Uzbeks, and so forth) from the Russian homeland, emerged as one of the major winners in the 1993 Parliamentary elections.[20]

In fact, the situation in Russia has become quite similar to that in the Weimar Republic in which a deep socio-economic crisis and psychological humiliation of losing World War I led to the soaring rise of right-wing forces. For millions of Soviet people who proudly regarded the USSR as their own state and homeland, its disappearance is a disaster. But for imperially minded Russians, it is also a "national" catastrophe that is causing a deep psychological trauma.[21] Russian grievances over the collapse of the USSR have become further intensified by the highly publicized stories of violations of human rights of those ethnic Russians (or more generally, Russian-speakers) who found themselves outside the boundaries of the Russian Federation after the Soviet disintegration. Various constraints on acquiring citizenship imposed by local authorities, language discrimination, the loss of former privileges, and other explosive issues concerning the rights of Russians in the "near abroad" have substantially radicalized the political process within Russia itself, thus providing a fertile soil for the growth of nationalist sentiments.

At the same time, however, because of the spread of democratic procedures and the concern for electoral support, Yeltsin's government has become extremely vulnerable to the nationalist pressures from below. Although such actions as the crack-down on the rebellious Parliament and the espousal of a super-presidential constitution were intended to relax the impact of internal influences on domestic and foreign policy formulation, the behavior of Yeltsin's Russia abroad became increasingly reflective of the strength of nationalist sentiment at home. "That which is now taking place," wrote Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in *Izvestiya* in June 1992, "is reminiscent of 1933 in Germany, when some democrats began to adopt nationalist stances."[22]

Perhaps, the most conspicuous example of such a change in Yeltsin's foreign policy is a more assertive, if not aggressive, stance toward the countries of the "near abroad."[23] The dominant nationalist theme in Russia is that of "Moscow as the Third Rome," uniting not only ethnic enclaves of the Russian Federation but also the republics of the former Soviet Union. By effectively playing on Russian nationalist feelings that have traditionally been associated with the idea of strong, unified state leadership and by reviving imperial symbols (for example, a double-headed eagle), Yeltsin and other politicians attempt to solidify their power. For example, in his speech in spring 1993 to the Civic Union (an *ad hoc* coalition of former communist party apparatchiks and managers of state enterprises), the Russian President argued that "the time has come for distinguished international organizations, including the UN, to grant Russia special powers of a guarantor of peace and stability in regions of the

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19. Richard Sakwa, "Parties and the Multiparty System in Russia," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2 (31) (30 July 1993): 7–15.

20. Moscow Radio (8 December 1993).

21. Igor Torbakov, "The 'Statists' and the Ideology of Russian Imperial Nationalism," *RFE/RL Research Report* 1 (49) (11 December 1992). On the rise of Russian nationalism, see Robert Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism in Russia and the USSR* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

22. Quoted in Lena Jonson, "The Foreign Policy Debate in Russia: In Search of a National Interest," *Nationalities Papers* 22 (1) (1994), p. 190.

23. The very term "near abroad" is highly nationalist. It can be interpreted to imply that Russia treats other post-Soviet republics as semi-foreign and hence semi-independent entities.

former USSR."[24] The essence of this statement is not much different from the declarations of more conservative politicians who play the same nationalist card using, however, a more explicit vernacular. For instance, as former Vice-President, and now active political figure, Aleksandr Rutskoi put it, "the historical consciousness of the Russians will not allow anybody to equate mechanically the borders of Russia with those of the Russian Federation and to take away what constituted the glorious pages of Russian history."[25]

The "nationalist shift" in Russian foreign policy, however, manifests itself not only in more assertive statements. This rhetorical "toughness" is supplemented by the actual expansion of Russia's influence in the "near abroad." Thus, for example, one of the major objectives of Russia's increased military involvement in the intense localized conflicts that have erupted in the former Soviet region is to glue together the remnants of the collapsed union. Military presence in the republics of the "near abroad" combined with their membership in the Russia-dominated Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) provides Moscow with a perfect opportunity to control domestic processes in the former Soviet region. It is not surprising that other former Soviet republics have strenuously resisted Russia's efforts to establish permanent military bases on their territory;[26] only after intensive economic pressure bordering on blackmail do they concede.

For instance, the republic of Georgia, which is plagued by civil unrest, economic instability, and a war against the secessionist Abkhazia, has been a relatively easy target for Moscow. The fall of Sukhumi in September 1993 bolstered the strength of not only secessionist, but also anti-government forces that supported former Georgian President Zviyad Gamsakhurdiya. Under these conditions, Georgian leader (former Soviet Foreign Minister) Eduard Shevardnadze had no other option but to cave in to Russian economic pressure.[27] Until then Georgia had declined to join the CIS because it viewed the organization as infringing upon its sovereignty. However, upon becoming a CIS member, Georgia received the much-needed Russian logistical support against anti-government forces. Furthermore, Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev held talks with Shevardnadze on the "creation of three permanent Russian military bases in Georgia in 1995 on the expiry of the present temporary agreement on the status of the Russian troops currently deployed there."[28] Shortly afterwards, Russian field engineers also began to prepare for the stationing of about 2,500 peacekeepers to be deployed between Georgian and Abkhazian forces.

It is worth emphasizing that, with Georgia joining the CIS, the Commonwealth now includes all former Soviet republics except the Baltics. In the opinion of some leaders of the newly independent states (for example, Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev), the CIS is needed to preserve the existing links of inter-republican cooperation mainly in the economic sphere. In the opinion of others (for example, former Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk), the Commonwealth's sole purpose should be to solve the temporary logistical problems associated with the disintegration of the USSR. For Russians, however, the CIS is primarily a political, economic, and military mechanism to secure the republic's dominant role in the region. Not surprisingly, Russian diplomats have been actively promoting the idea that the Commonwealth should be recognized as a regional and international organization by such authoritative international bodies as the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).[29] With such a recognition, the Russian Federation's peacekeeping operations in the former Soviet Union conducted under the banner of the CIS would be

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[24]. Quoted in "Russia Has No Special Minority Rights Claim," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 April 1993.

[25]. *Pravda*, 30 February 1993.

[26]. The chief of the Russian General Staff, Mikhail Kolesnikov, announced that Moscow was planning to sign bilateral agreements with every former Soviet republic except Ukraine and the Baltic states on the establishment of some thirty military bases throughout the CIS. Quoted in Bruce Porter and Carol Saivetz, "The Once and Future Empire: Russia and the 'Near Abroad,'" *The Washington Quarterly* 17 (3) (1994): 87.

[27]. Elizabeth Fuller, "The Transcaucasus: War, Turmoil, Economic Collapse," *RFE/RL Research Report* 3 (1) (7 January 1994): 57.

[28]. Elizabeth Fuller, "Grachev Visits Georgia," *RFE/RL Daily Report* (13 June 1994).

[29]. Suzanne Crow, "Russia Promotes the CIS as an International Organization," *RFE/RL Research Report* 3 (11) (18 March 1994): 33–38.

legitimized by the international community, thus institutionalizing Moscow's preponderant role in the region.

It is interesting to note that even Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev, who just a few ago became famous in the West for his liberal views, now refers to the former Soviet republics as comprising a *de facto* Russian dominion. Thus, for example, supporting the decision to send Russian troops to Georgia on a peacekeeping mission Kozyrev has emphasized that "there is never a vacuum—if we refuse to live up to our geopolitical role, someone else will try and clean up the mess in our home."[30] In fact, even the high human (as well as financial) cost of Russia's involvement in the "near abroad" does not deter the implementation of Moscow's grand plans nurtured in the atmosphere of flourishing nationalism. Thus, for example, the Russian policy of bolstering the Tajik government in its war against the opposition came under emotional attack in Moscow when 25 Russian soldiers were killed on the Tajik–Afghan border. Instead of curtailing Russia's military presence, however, this incident had a completely opposite effect. At once, reinforcements of Russian troops were flown into Tajikistan and Russian missile attacks mounted across the border into Afghanistan.[31]

The progressive "toughening" of Yeltsin's foreign policy, as well as the results of the 1993 Russian Parliamentary elections indicating the victory of the ultra-nationalist bloc, suggest what often has gone unnoticed in the West; it is exactly the severity of Russia's problems at home that has been driving Russia to behave more assertively abroad.[32] Nostalgia for the old empire is growing among many Russians disillusioned by the harsh reforms. Although Andrei Kozyrev, one of the most consistent advocates of a Western orientation, has repeatedly denied any shift in his policies after the recent Parliamentary elections, it has become increasingly clear that Moscow is much more eager to respond to the nationalist mood of the Russian public than to the preferences of the international community.[33] Besides a more assertive stance with respect to the "near abroad," Russian foreign policy has also shifted perceptibly on a number of other issues. On the matter of fighting in former Yugoslavia, for example, the Russians raised the issue of possible sanctions against Croatia, and strongly opposed any international intervention against Serbia. As part of an effort to have Iraq pay its outstanding debt to Russia, Yeltsin instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to improve relations with Iraq.[34] Moreover, Russia has also become extremely critical of what it perceives as the U.S. tendency to dictate its own terms on the international arena.[35]

This is not to argue, however, that domestic developments in Russia are the sole determinants of its foreign policy. In fact, as pointed out by the rapidly expanding group of scholars advocating the integration of several levels of analysis, the role of international and domestic factors in shaping interactions among nations is simultaneous and mutual.[36] And yet, under current conditions, the external pressure on Russian foreign policy formulation is far from being extensive. Therefore, this study's primary emphasis on domestic developments in explaining foreign policy change is not unreasonable.[37]

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[30]. Quoted in Leonid Bershidsky, "Georgia Peace Force Riles Duma," *The Moscow Times*, 18 June 1994, p.3.

[31]. Anthony Hyman, "Russians Outside Russia," *World Today* 49 (11) (November 1993): 205–7.

[32]. See Paul Goble, "The Situation in Russia," *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords* (October 1993). Briefing of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Washington, DC.

[33]. Celestine Bohlen, "Nationalist Vote Toughens Russian Foreign Policy," *New York Times*, 25 January 1994.

[34]. Suzanne Crow, "Processes and Policies," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2 (20) (1993): 50, 52.

[35]. Suzanne Crow, "Russia Seeks Leadership in Regional Peacekeeping," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2 (15) (1993): 28–32.

[36]. See, for example, Peter Evans, "Building an Integrative Approach to International and Domestic Politics: Reflections and Projections," in Peter Evans, Harold Jacobson, and Robert Putnam (eds.), *Double-Edged Diplomacy* (University of California Press, 1993), pp. 397–430; Helen Milner, "International Theories of Cooperation Among Nations: Strengths and Weaknesses," *World Politics* 44 (3) (1992): 466–96.

[37]. The Gorbachev foreign policy revolution can also be largely (though not exclusively) explained by referring to the domestic processes alone. Thus, for example, criticizing those analysts who adopt the "external pressure" argument in identifying the sources of Soviet foreign policy change, Raymond Garthoff convincingly demonstrates that Reagan's tough arms control stance, offensive on human rights, the SDI, and other military programs made Soviet movement toward rapprochement with the United States more difficult rather than more likely. Raymond Garthoff, *The Great Transition: American–Soviet Relations and the End of the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994).

Thus, for example, for a variety of reasons most Western countries refrain from explicitly criticizing Russia's military involvement in the "near abroad." In fact, as noted by a number of analysts, the United States' position on this issue is moving increasingly toward the idea of "Baltic exceptionalism" according to which the Russians are expected to behave in complete accordance with the norms and principles of international law in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in exchange for an implicit *carte blanche* in other parts of the former Soviet Union.[38] Such a position has not been unnoticed in Russia, where Boris Yeltsin has repeatedly declared that "the world community" sees Russia as having a special responsibility for keeping peace in the region.[39]

Moreover, the West has not attempted to influence Russian foreign policy by offering (not merely promising) "carrots" either. Immediately after Russia's independence, Russian liberals expected that their accelerating rapprochement with the West would result in the blossoming of trade and massive financial aid.[40] Confronted with the discouraging indicators of their own economic performance, Western countries have been, however, quite reluctant to extend their helping hand to Russia, thus missing an opportunity to mold Moscow's international behavior.

The more serious resistance to Russia's more assertive foreign policy comes from the "near abroad" states. Discussions have already taken place concerning the establishment of a common security system for Eastern Europe that would include the former western republics of the USSR and the former Central European members of the Warsaw Pact. According to Dmitrii Volskii, a liberal Russian commentator, "the anti-Russian direction of the planned association of East European states is absolutely clear." He attributes the plans to nationalist political forces in Ukraine.[41] Although Volskii is correct that nationalists in some of the new states are motivated by anti-Russian attitudes, those attitudes cannot but be reinforced by statements and actions of high-level Russian officials, including the President, that imply a desire to recreate aspects of the old Russian–Soviet empire. In other words, the Ukrainians and other East and Central European leaders are responding to views expressed in Moscow—and to Russian behavior patterns that they see as threatening.

In sum, the spread of democratic procedures to the countries experiencing severe political and socio-economic problems creates a potentially dangerous situation. Under the strong authoritarian rule, as evidenced by the initial years of Gorbachev's leadership, the government always has an option of suppressing certain domestic preferences. Once in the process of transition, however, the democratizing government essentially loses this "luxury." As long as such preferences are not directed at the radicalization of foreign policy, they do not present any considerable threat to international cooperation and security. However, as the case of the Russian Federation suggests, this is not always the case, especially under the conditions of transitional crisis.

Dilemma of Transition

The preceding discussion suggests an interesting dilemma. On the one hand, it is not unreasonable to argue that the extension of democratic procedures to the Russian Federation can in the long-run contribute to the convergence of domestic societal preferences of Russia and the West. Note, for example, that Karl Deutsch's notion of "peaceful change"—the resolution of social problems between states without resort to large-scale physical force—depends largely on the convergence of societal

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[38]. See, for example, Goble (fn. 32).

[39]. Cited in Suzanne Crow, "Russia Seeks Leadership in Regional Peacekeeping," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2 (15) (1993): 28–32. While the "near abroad" republics lack sufficient power to exert on their own an effective diplomatic pressure on the Russian Federation, many of them waste no time appealing to the West and major international organizations in their attempt to protect themselves from what is perceived (often rightly) as the direct interference by Russia in their domestic affairs. As a result, Russia's repeated efforts to gain an explicit imprimatur of the United Nations and CSCE to act as a "peacekeeper" in the former Soviet region have been largely unsuccessful.

[40]. Suzanne Crow, "Russia Asserts Its Strategic Agenda," *RFE/RL Research Report* 2 (50) (17 December 1993): 1–8.

[41]. Membership would supposedly include Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Baltic States, Belarus, Moldova, and possibly Georgia. See Dmitrii Volskii, "Eastern Europe—Counterbalance to Russia?" *New Times* (21) (1993): 22. Although plans for an East–Central European security organization have not been pursued, some of these countries see NATO's Partnership for Peace as a possible bulwark against Russia. See Alexei Pushkov, "Building a new NATO at Russia's expense," *Moscow News*, no. 39 (24 September 1993): 1.

preferences.[42] Deutsch argues that "peaceful change" cannot be assured without "we-feeling" between nations, the sense of community involving partial identification in terms of self-images and interests, the creation of what can be called an international civil society. It is important to emphasize that only liberal democracies, with their support for civil societies at home, can allow for the convergence of civil societies at the international level.[43]

On the other hand, however, the democratizing Russia is characterized by a substantial degree of political instability and severe socio-economic problems. Under these conditions and in the absence of consolidated democratic institutions as well as liberal norms, the spread of democracy (at least in the short-run) makes the government more vulnerable to the radical pressures from below, thus inhibiting its capacity to maintain international cooperation. The trick of resolving this dilemma involves getting past the process of transition as soon as possible by finding a solution to the socio-economic crisis and consolidating liberal institutions and norms. Until then, however, the democratizing government of the Russian Federation, even while perceiving long-term interests of cooperating in the international arena, remains, nevertheless, a hostage of virulent domestic preferences unconstrained by the embryonic liberal institutions and norms and intensified under the conditions of transitional crisis.

The failure of the West to recognize this dilemma is likely to be fraught with grave repercussions for international security. While the future of democracy in Russia as well as other countries experiencing the process of post-authoritarian transition is primarily dependent upon their own inner strength and resolve, Western countries can greatly facilitate the transition process and thus ultimately promote international security by offering financial and technological assistance to the reforming societies. After all, the cost of expanding the "pacific union" of democratic states appears to be much less than the cost of the broken peace.

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[42]. Karl Deutsch *et al.*, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 3–69.

[43]. Another factor that can be highly conducive to the convergence of domestic societies at the international level is a common religion. And yet, since today's world is characterized by a variety of different (often mutually hostile) religions, it can be argued that the in-group cohesion among several nations bound by a common religion does not prevent and, in some cases, actually exacerbates their conflict with an out-group. For the discussion of such a pessimistic scenario, see Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72 (3) (1993): 22–47.