

Contemporary Russia: national interests and emerging foreign policy perceptions

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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version

Forschungsbericht / research report

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Kortunov, A., & Volodin, A. (1996). *Contemporary Russia: national interests and emerging foreign policy perceptions*. (Berichte / BIOst, 33-1996). Köln: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-42550>

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ISSN 0435-7183

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2. Januar 1996

Dieser Bericht entstand im Rahmen des von der Volkswagen-Stiftung geförderten Projekts "Die Gemeinschaft Unabhängiger Staaten und die Europäische Sicherheit".

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Contemporary Russia: National Interests and Emerging Foreign Policy Perceptions

Bericht des BIOst Nr. 33/1996

Kurzfassung

Vorbemerkung

In den letzten Jahren waren die Grundprinzipien und Ziele der russischen Außenpolitik innerhalb Rußlands heftig umstritten. Auch für Außenstehende war das Verhalten der russischen Führung mitunter schwer zu deuten. Mittel- und langfristig ist aber eine kohärente außenpolitische Konzeption ein vitales Bedürfnis für Rußland. Die Gründe dafür sind elementar: Nur eine ausbalancierte und sorgfältig durchdachte außenpolitische Strategie, die von den relevanten gesellschaftlichen Kräften getragen wird, kann das Land vor "sektiererischen" ideologischen Schemata, unprofessionellen "Experten" und fragwürdigen internationalen Verpflichtungen bewahren.

Der vorliegende Bericht, der aus der Feder zweier namhafter russischer Wissenschaftler stammt, unternimmt den Versuch, den Rahmen für eine Außenpolitik zu formulieren, die die nationalen Interessen wahrt und die internationale Position Rußlands sichert. Vor den Präsidentenwahlen verfaßt, weist der Text in seinem grundsätzlichen Umgang mit dem Problem auch für die Zukunft mögliche Wege für eine russische Außenpolitik.

Ergebnisse

1. Es ist Zeit, daß die russischen politischen Eliten Rußlands nationale Interessen klar artikulieren. Das Fehlen einer solchen ausformulierten Position hat westliche Beobachter dazu veranlaßt, Sorge über eine mögliche Unberechenbarkeit russischen Verhaltens zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Eine neue russische außenpolitische Strategie kann aber nur das Ergebnis intensiver konzeptioneller Diskussionen innerhalb der russischen politischen und intellektuellen Elite selbst sein. Bekannt ist, daß die russische Gesellschaft gegenwärtig keine klaren sozialen, politischen und dementsprechend auch keine deutlich markierten ideologischen Unterschiede aufweist. Dennoch ist eine Reihe außenpolitischer Perzeptionen zu erkennen, die gewissermaßen als politische Plattformen aufgefaßt werden können: neokommunistische, radikal nationalistische und traditional konservative, die sich alle - in unterschiedlicher Weise - aus der russischen, bzw. der sowjetischen Vergangenheit nähren.
2. Die Politik der postkommunistischen Regierung war vor allem ein kontextuelles Phänomen. Sie entstand in Abgrenzung zur Außenpolitik der kommunistischen Ära, entwickelte aber bedauerlicherweise kaum eigene kreative Grundsätze. Es ist allgemein bekannt, daß nach dem Zerfall der UdSSR praktisch alle traditionellen Einflußsphären aufgegeben, neue aber

nicht gesichert wurden. Grundkomponente dieser Politik war die Aufgabe geopolitischer Ziele zugunsten von ideologischen Vorstellungen über eine abstrakte Demokratie.

3. Drei Jahre der Schwäche und Unsicherheit haben überzeugend die Notwendigkeit einer kohärenten, berechenbaren und dynamischen Außenpolitik demonstriert. Die Grundzüge einer solchen Konzeption können folgendermaßen zusammengefaßt werden: Erstens, eine dynamische und pragmatische Bewertung der globalen Entwicklung. Zweitens, eine stärkere Betonung von Geopolitik, auf deren Basis die internationale Rolle Rußlands stets bestimmt wurde und in Zukunft auch bestimmt werden wird. Geopolitisches Denken muß auch die Grundlage einer konstruktiven Suche nach Bündnispartnern im "nahen" und "fernen" Ausland sein. Dabei ist das Territorium der früheren Sowjetunion eine Region vitalen russischen Interesses. Drittens sollte Außenpolitik als Instrument für den Schutz der Russen außerhalb Rußlands eingesetzt werden können. Schließlich sollte Rußland nicht davor zurückscheuen, in geopolitischen Auseinandersetzungen mit allen Ländern - auch mit entwickelten Industrieländern - energische, dynamische und wirksame Schritte auf wirtschaftlichem, politischen und militärischen Gebiet zu unternehmen.
4. Regional sollte die vordringliche Aufgabe russischer Außenpolitik die Schaffung eines integrierten Wirtschaftsraums im "nahen Ausland" sein (sofern die Bevölkerung dies wünscht) sowie die Durchsetzung internationaler Menschenrechtsstandards, die auch der Verteidigung der Rechte der russischsprechenden Bevölkerung dienen. Rußland sollte eine führende Rolle dabei spielen, diese Standards in Verträgen zwischen den Staaten der früheren Sowjetunion durchzusetzen.
5. Mit den USA sollte Rußland insbesondere bei der Nichtweiterverbreitung von Atomwaffen und auf dem Gebiet der sicheren Beseitigung von Atomwaffen auf dem Territorium der früheren Sowjetunion zusammenarbeiten. Auch beim Schutz von Menschenrechten in den früheren Sowjetrepubliken, bei der Rüstungskontrolle zur Erlangung internationaler Stabilität und bei der gegenseitigen Verständigung im Vorfeld potentieller ethnischer, konfessioneller oder rassischer Konflikte ist eine Kooperation möglich. Insbesondere an der "Peripherie" des globalen Systems könnte dies ein wichtiger Beitrag zur Stabilisierung sein. Bilateral sollten Rußland und USA die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen ohne gegenseitige Diskriminierung ausbauen.
6. Im Blick auf Europa gibt es gewisse Hemmnisse, da einerseits einige westeuropäische Regierungen gegenüber der Integration Rußlands in den europäischen Prozeß Vorbehalte haben und andererseits in Rußland die Notwendigkeit dieser Integration nicht unbestritten ist. Nichtsdestoweniger gibt es einen breiten Konsens in der gegenwärtigen russischen Gesellschaft, daß bilaterale Zusammenarbeit mit den führenden kontinentalen Mächten (Deutschland, Frankreich, Italien) und mit dem Vereinigten Königreich unumgänglich ist. Der Ausbau der Beziehungen zu diesen Staaten wird es einfacher machen, die diskriminierenden Bestimmungen auf den Außenhandelsmärkten zu beseitigen und eine volle Beteiligung an der internationalen Arbeitsteilung zu erreichen. In diesem Sinne ist Rußlands Mitarbeit im Internationalen Währungsfonds, bei den G-7- und in den Post-CoCom-Institutionen sehr wichtig.
7. Die Reorganisation der sicherheitspolitischen Strukturen - insbesondere die Erweiterung der NATO - wird erhebliche Kosten für die Staaten Westeuropas nach sich ziehen. Eine wirkliche Diskussion der NATO-Erweiterung hat noch nicht begonnen. Daran werden sich auch die Staaten Südeuropas beteiligen, die vor allem Interesse am Ausbau der sozialen Sicherungen haben und die den Ausbau der NATO als kontraproduktiv empfinden. Es könnte zu einer Umgruppierung der politischen Kräfte in dieser Region kommen.

8. Rußlands strategische Interessen im Raum Asien und Pazifik bestehen vor allem in der Aufrechterhaltung der territorialen Integrität der Rußländischen Föderation im Fernen Osten. Dazu sollte der Aufbau eines regionalen Sicherheitssystems angestrebt und Rüstungslieferungen in diese Region zu einem Thema der Kooperation mit den USA gemacht werden. Die innere Stabilität von China und Indien, den beiden bevölkerungsreichsten Staaten, ist für Rußland von grundsätzlichem Interesse.

Introduction

During the past decade or so, the life of political sciences, foreign policy analysis in particular, has become more complex and, consequently, less predictable. The reason is quite obvious: the recent world development itself has become much more controversial than, say, 30 or even 20 years ago. We do not see (some of us, perhaps the most perceptive, sense) how the world changes, how influence shifts between countries, regions or "actors"/participants in the economic and political process, or how institutions adjust to newly-emergent realities. During the time of relative stability, that is the Cold War period, social scientists normally exploited established cognitive paradigms to help our interpretation and understanding. Still, when change has accelerated, new approaches are required, new modes of analysis then need to answer recently emergent sets of questions.

It is, therefore, quite problematic to advance a simple explanation for such a controversial and heterogeneous phenomenon as Russia's national interests and foreign policy perceptions. Consequently, the analysis of this phenomenon will inevitably reflect a corresponding degree of complexity, itself being part and parcel a manifestation of fundamental social, political and geopolitical transformations during the last decade.

From the mid-80s on, Russia's intellectual life has become more intricate in several respects. It has developed unevenly in the country's regions and with different rhythms and intensities in various social and professional groupings. Within this period, the "political society" has also diversified its institutional models, value orientations, social activities and analytical approaches.

In discussing foreign policy, one may assume that the country's mode of international behaviour should be based on the following fundamental and uncompromised principles:

- rigorous definition of contemporary Russia's national/civilizational identity;
- precise formulation of foreign policy priorities, vital interests and threats to its security;
- perceptive understanding of the forces (economic, political, cultural, demographic etc.) shaping the world system and the capacity, sustained by political will, to act accordingly in the outer world;
- national consensus existing among the politically significant interest groups of Civil Society on the main foreign policy goals as well as conscious abstention from exploiting foreign policy for egoistic promotion of vested "sectional" interests.

Apparently the whole process of foreign policy elaboration will have a positive character to ensure the real possibility for a creative renovation of "Soviet" and "post-Soviet" paradigms, especially since the dominant philosophy of foreign policy (which may be regarded as "cosmopolitan") most likely corresponds to the transition period of formation of the Russian government-and-politics system, which has come to a close.

The formation of a new democratic, and at the same time genuinely national, political philosophy is vitally important to Russia. Connected to both local and world politics, this affects the country's ability to influence the course of international events. Without conceptual deliberation of a new foreign policy and all the while preserving the course under which the national specifics of Russia's foreign interests remain unclear, the desired international solidarity of democratic societies and serious discussion with potential partners cannot begin. Nor can a suspended line of communication with potential adversaries be resumed.

For obvious historical, political and ideological reasons, the post-Soviet foreign policy has remained obscure and, in essence, has become a hindrance to the development of the nation's relationship with the world.

Putting it shortly, the time has come for Russian political elites to clearly and unequivocally define Russia's national interests, making a clear statement that the interests of Russia and of all advanced members of the world community can not coincide altogether. In fact, Russia has no other option now than to unambiguously articulate the specific national interests of the country and to clearly explain that these interests are vital to its foreign policy and to the very existence of Russian society. The absence of coherent foreign policy doctrine has even compelled Western counterparts to express a concern about a potentially unpredictable international behaviour of our country. At first glance, the primary reason for the complicated, paradoxical situation with Russian foreign policy is Moscow's persistent appeal for partnership with industrially advanced nations. However, these same countries have not yet set a definition in their foreign policy strategies for such a partnership with Russia or any optimal way to facilitate such a partnership. The interest of mature spheres of international association with the Russian Federation for the most part is painted in negative shades. An idea what a new Russia should not be is not a coherent substitution of the notion of what Russia can and should be.

However, it is hardly reasonable to reproach the West because no "outsider" can explain to us how our foreign policy should be defined and performed. It is the fundamental responsibility of the Russian intellectual and political elites to elaborate and articulate the views concerning international relations at this new stage of world development. Russia also should clearly indicate the contours of its own national (strategic) interests. These interests should be the systemic basis for foreign policy tasks and priorities. Russia's incorporation into the advanced field of world association (which may juridically hasten the formation of a viable system of partnerships) should be implemented by productive and equal cooperation on a diverse number of fundamental problems of foreign policy.

Russian Political Elites: Basic Approaches to New Foreign Policy

Russia's new foreign policy strategy can only emerge out of the sharp and conceptual debates within Russian political and intellectual elites in an arena occupied by the institutions of legislative power despite the essentially deliberative character of the State Duma and the actual intellectual potential of this body.

Although the dichotomy (communists vs. anticommunists) still persists in the intellectual discourse, a kind of atomization has already emerged in both ideological camps. For objective historical reasons, Russia (at least for the last 7 decades) has not experienced the influence of foreign policy philosophy sustained by common sense and directed towards the rational comprehension of fundamental requirements of the indigenous state and society. The state ideology shaped relationships not only between ruling elite and civil society but, also, between abstract political goals, on the one side, and the necessity to act in the World System on the principles of realpolitik and the actual figuration of the main forces, on the other. Nowadays, the time has come to renovate the obsolete mode of thinking and to understand that Russia is not simply the ideological framework of some political regime but a subject in the arena of international relations and the embodiment of a certain national ("civilizational") identity.

From the medium- and long-term perspective, a coherent foreign policy philosophy is a vital requirement for Russia. The reason is quite obvious: a well balanced and carefully deliberated

foreign policy strategy enjoying the support of Society's main socio-political forces can protect the country from imposition of "sectional" ideological schemes (in this case the shattering of Russia's international standing is inevitable), non-professional handling by international relations "experts" and disputable foreign political assignments, to quote just a few.

It is well-known that contemporary Russian society has no clear-cut social, political and, consequently, ideological distinctions. Still, one can easily distinguish a series of foreign policy perceptions that can be regarded as political platforms - naturally, with certain reservations. Following the well established Russian historical tradition, we will begin with the radical leftist tendencies, to move gradually to the right side of political spectrum.

The *neocommunist "paradigm"*. The neocommunist perceptions originate, first and foremost, from two ideological sources: 1) continuity of the "Third Rome" political philosophy modernized by the communist elite and adapted to the realities of configuration of forces existing in world politics in the first half of the 20th century and 2) necessity to reestablish the former Soviet Union (not so explicitly now than, say, 2-3 years back) and, accordingly, Soviet foreign policy to retain pre-1985 equilibrium in world politics. Within this mode of thinking, the principal menace to Russia's security is, naturally, the West, the United States in particular. Being emotionally attractive, especially for elder demographic groups, neocommunist "platform" is open to criticism. Worth mentioning are two points. Firstly, the most vulnerable position for the neocommunists is their inability to deliver the true "Russian idea". In public opinion, the neocommunists are still regarded as Soviets, not Russians.¹

Secondly, communists being remnants of the Soviet past, their proposals (including foreign policy projections) are obsolete and impractical and as a whole are not supported by the intelligentsia or the economically active segments of the People.

Russian traditionalism is more socio-cultural than political phenomenon. Nevertheless, it is relevant here for the purposes of political analysis to recognize at least two trends of political significance - radical nationalism and traditional conservatism (Pochvennitchestvo).

Radical nationalism. In distinction from cosmopolitan slogans of the neocommunists, radical nationalism appeals to the Russian national consciousness and therefore will have a formidable say in the formation of Russian foreign policy philosophy. In our humble opinion, the statements that: 1) criticism by radical nationalists of the post-Soviet Russia's foreign policy was based on skill and knowledge and 2) that these attacks were the factor of a certain evolution of foreign policy perceptions in the last 2 years are no exaggeration. Radical nationalists efficiently exploited such blunders in the Russian foreign policy as the violations of human rights of the Russian-speaking population in the "near abroad", the Baltic States in particular, and also vulnerability of the Russian consciousness due to the loss of superpower status and the country's loss of territory.²

"However, radical nationalism has a weak side, the incorporation of the idea of territorial re-vanchism... The implementation of such a task would require truly colossal costs."³ In our view,

¹ It is not accidental that Communist leaders prefer to identify themselves with the "Patriotic" segment of Russian society. One can easily guess that conflicts of interests between Communists and "Patriots" (in fact Russian traditionalists) are irreversible and will affect the party's performance in the 1995 State Duma elections.

² The notion of regaining the lost Russian territories is disputed by the proponents of the concept of the "Russian Ethnic State" (though Byelorussia, Eastern and Southern Ukraine as well as Northern Kazakhstan are considered to be organic parts of the Russian Federation). The idea of "ethnic purity" propagated by some sections of the nationalists has a substantial social following in Russia.

the notion of reestablishing the Empire⁴ is undoubtedly the undermining point of radical nationalist doctrine.

Traditional conservatism. This ideological trend was formerly referred to as "Pochvennichestvo" (the "back-to-the-soil" movement). So far as political orientations of Russian traditionalists are concerned, the conservatives concentrate on the preservation of territorial integrity of the Russia that exists nowadays; they are not enthused by the notion of Russia reemerging as a superpower⁵. The strong suit of this school of thought is the preservation of Russia's civilizational identity and national characteristics as well as the notion of economic, political and cultural independence of Russia. According to the traditional thinking, Russia is self-valuing and, therefore, has particular "moral" mission of its own.

Being psychologically attractive, the traditional approach has a number of weaknesses. First, traditionalists underestimate Russia's involvement into the global economic and political processes. "Self-reliance" as a kind of economic autarchy is hardly an option for a rapidly developing industrial society like that of contemporary Russia's. Second, the rapid industrialization, enforced by successive governments before and after 1917, laid the foundations for industrial society. Within industrial society, basic elements of civic culture have started to develop. Thus, being emotionally appealing, the traditional conservatism does not address basic trends regulating the development of a modern industrial (and post-industrial) society.

"Post-Communist" Foreign Policy Perceptions

The present government's foreign policy philosophy is mainly a contextual phenomenon. Being a rebuttal to communist foreign policy this course initially incorporated a great deal of anti-communist zeal but, unfortunately, few creative principles. It's common knowledge, that after the demise of the Soviet Union practically all traditional spheres and regions of the country's influence were abandoned while new ones were not secured.⁶ The basic components of this foreign policy were: geopolitical consideration were sacrificed in favour of ideological notions of an abstract democracy (democracy is always concrete, its form and content are usually related to historical experience of the Society, to the interests articulated by various nascent social, professional and other groups);

³ S. Kortunov/A. Kortunov: From "Moralism" to "Pragmatics": New Dimensions of Russian Foreign Policy, - "Comparative Strategy", Washington, Vol. 13, 1994, p. 263.

⁴ One of the most ardent proponents of the "Great Russia" (Velikaya Rus') is the former Russian vice-president Alexander Rutskoi. However, his views on the future of the post-Soviet field have become less consistent/militant. According to Rutskoi, the reintegration of the post-Soviet economic and political terrain should develop peacefully, i.e. "from below". In our opinion, such an evolution is a positive indicator of developing civil consciousness and "reconciliatory" political culture in Russian society.

⁵ Curiously enough, this notion may prove to be perceptive and innovative in the not too distant future. The passing of "International hegemonic regimes" is an objective process dating to the late sixties (Keohane R.O. After hegemony. Cooperation and discord in the World Political Economy. Princeton, 1984). Moreover, "Superpower" is basically a rather vague category whilst the international power relationships have been profoundly transformed in recent years.

⁶ For an unbiased observer, this kind of broken continuity seemed to be unreasonable since Russia was an official successor of the former Soviet Union. In a country of a transcontinental dimensions like Russia, foreign policy was always regulated by the rule of inertia. Allies and strategic partners might change but principles of national security basically remain intact.

- inability and reluctance to define and defend Russia's vital interests in the "near abroad" (i.e. the post-Soviet geopolitical field), with particular reference to the human rights of the Russian-speaking people;
- unreserved identification of Russia's interests with those of the West. The latter was uncritically considered as a model structure functioning on the basis of universal cultural norms, principles of democracy, humanism, altruism, and social progress. Hence, the unconditional support to various Western foreign policy imitatives, including those highly controversial for the common people;
- an isolationist approach to Russia's conduct of foreign policy on the Asian continent. This approach was indicative of the extremely passive policy with regard to such influential actors of international system as China and India, and towards such "new influentials" as South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, etc. There arose impression that Russia was seeking to sacrifice its economic and political interests in the Third World for the sake of being incorporated into "Euroatlantic" civilization⁷.

From 1992 onwards, certain actions and initiatives of the Russian government (civil and human rights of the Russians living in the "near abroad", political aspects of Russian-Japanese relations, attitude to the developments in former Yugoslavia, etc.) proved to be rather controversial and were efficiently exploited by the forces of radical nationalism. It became clear that the people and a significant part of intelligentsia were beginning to question the philosophical and moral foundations of the official foreign policy platform (the 1993 general elections and numerous public opinion surveys were convincing indicators of this trend). This makes the elaboration of a new foreign policy paradigm an urgent task responsible both for the modern realities of world politics and establishing a genuine role for the Russian Federation in the rapidly transforming international system⁸.

Alternative Foreign Policy Mode of Thinking

Three years of uncertainty demonstrated convincingly the necessity of a coherent, predictable and dynamic foreign policy. The pillar principles of a new foreign policy mode of thinking and acting can be summarized as follows.

First, a quick recovery from contemplative passivity to a dynamic, realistic and pragmatic assessment of world development. A new dynamism could be a substantial element of foreign policy consensus in Russian society. In our opinion, certain events in the outer world will quicken the process of "coming together" for the main "actors" of Russian society and polity.

⁷ The present authors distinguish at least two "versions" of "Euroatlantism". The first mode of thinking can be identified as an uncritical emulation of Western models of social organization and principles of foreign policy. The second regards Russia as a "vital" European power having strategic interests in Europe and in Asia as well. See, for example: Silin Ye. Ideya evroatlanticheskogo sotrudnichestva v evroasiatskoi strane (The idea of euroatlantic cooperation in a euro-asian country), - "Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodniye otnosheniya" ("World Economy and International relations"), 1993, No. 10, pp. 39-49.

⁸ It goes without saying that foreign policy of "universal human values" was based partially on a perfectly reliable moral formula "the priority of security for the individual should be superior to the interests of the state". Partially this foreign policy approach was a response to the demolition of an archaic state superstructure (i.e. the Soviet State) and the objective weakening of forces of internal stability in Russia. Nevertheless, the passivity of foreign policy was a reflection of the lack of a theoretical approach to the global trends shaping the international system (fragmentation of world economy and its political consequences, disintegration of the Soviet Union as a factor politically consolidating controversial economic interests etc.).

Second, the emphasis on geopolitics, from which Russia's international role was, is and will be defined. Geopolitics is the fundamental centre of force in the post-Soviet geopolitical field and also the foundation for a consistent and constructive search for geopolitical allies both in the "near" and "far abroad". The territory of the former Soviet Union is a sphere of vital interest for Russia, which should maintain its geopolitical coordination in this area.

Third, foreign policy attention should be concentrated on the Russians outside Russia, the protection of their rights should be supervised according to universally accepted international standards.

Fourth, Russia should not hesitate to use strong, dynamic and efficient tactics in the economic, political, and military spheres in geopolitical conflicts with any country, including with those which are industrially developed. Russia should exploit the potential of newly-emergent international system, particularly coming into vitality of "new influentials", not necessarily in the North Atlantic area (Brazil, etc.).

According to us, the new foreign policy platform should creatively combine the priority of Russian geopolitical interests, on the one hand, with the consistent democratization and liberalization of the economy and polity, on the other. The open political system is equally important for Russia for the obvious reason that such a model of state/civil society relationships will create preconditions for intellectual, cultural, economic and technological potential of the society to be fully utilized.

In our view, this geopolitical pragmatism better represents the interests of Civil Society and has a greater chance of becoming the foundation for national consensus on matters of foreign policy. Consequently, this approach can facilitate stabilization of the political situation in Russia, something in which the entire world community has a stake.

In any society, foreign policy perceptions exist and function at a minimum of three levels, namely state policy, elitist debate and that of mass consciousness (i.e. acceptance/opposition by the people to the current political course on the basis of their objective interests). Nowadays, all the three levels are prepared to accept a "geopolitical pragmatism" as a philosophical foundation of Russian foreign policy.

This kind of foreign policy orientation, first and foremost, denotes the security interests of the country and in no way questions the importance of relations with the industrially advanced nations. Moreover, this approach emphasizes the role of Western Europe and the United States to an even greater extent than the "Euroatlanticists" do, but only within the context of Russia's national interests.

Further, "pragmatic" foreign policy should take into consideration the geographical location of Russia. The country was and remains not merely a European power, but also a significant "Eurasian" power that possesses a substantial amount of strategic interests in Asia, foremost in the realms of economy and security. Therefore, Russia needs to develop partnerships with states that can exert an influence on a "Eurasian" scale. Naturally, "Pragmatic" foreign policy is inspired by historical reasons. Pre-1917 Russian Empire successfully operated on both Occidental and Oriental directions gaining substantial political advantages and compensating for the

serious defects of its economic and political system. "Pragmatists" will seek to preserve, if not a global role for Russia, then one of a common continental importance.⁹

Further, the pronounced role of Russia as a vital Asian and Pacific power increases Russia's strength in European affairs. Preservation of Russia's age-old geopolitical role as civilized and strong equalizer is a main resource against geopolitical chaos, for the benefit of Europe and the world.

It's an open secret that the end of the militaristic confrontation between the two superpowers was a watershed in the world history in the sense that various other political "actors" are attempting to fulfill their own interests, not infrequently at the expense of the others. This development can unleash an avalanche of potentially uncontrollable geo-political changes. Such a chain reaction would threaten to spread across the entire globe. This is the reason why the industrially advanced nations of Europe, Asia and North America are vitally interested in preserving and strengthening the unity and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. And this is precisely why they should be interested in the reemergence of a strong Russia.

In addition, there exists at least one factor of fundamental importance that favours the "comeback" of pragmatism and geopolitics in Russia's foreign policy thinking. However paradoxical this may seem, the end of the Cold War paved the way for the sudden growth of peripheral conflict and "national egoism" which previously had been restrained by the conditions of uncompromised ideological and military confrontation between the two superpowers. The "Condominium" system objectively contained the development of inter-ethnic contradictions in the "peripheral" zones of the international system. By mid-90s, it has become clear that the regulation of international relations the way it was done under the conditions of classic bipolarity (by "the projection of military strength") and the re-creation of a manageable multipolar world model had proved to be illusory.

Under the conditions of growing uncertainty in the international system, it is once again time to creatively reassert the notion of fundamental share of responsibility of the United States and Russia for the world order. Under new conditions, this notion can be implemented not by the reemergence of ideological dispute, but by means of coordinated efforts between the United States and Russia.

Regional Priorities of Russia's Foreign Policy

In our opinion, Russia's foreign policy should resolve the following tasks in relation to the following principal countries and regions.

The "Near Abroad". The primary tasks of the Russian foreign policy in the region are the creation of an integrated economic space (where it is the will of the people) within the post-Soviet field and persistent introduction of the international standards of human rights attitudes, including consistent defense of the rights of the Russian-speaking population. Russia should play a leading role in initiation of such norms in implementing interstate agreements.

⁹ For the coming century, the term "global power" (or "superpower") seems to be outdated for at least two reasons. First, superiority is normally exercised through leadership in opposing ideological coalitions. In this case, the disintegration of the one coalition annihilates preconditions for the very existence of its rival and, subsequently, for the hegemonic power. Second, the growing regionalization and fragmentation of the international system and, consequently, the diminishing "governability" of the latter- these factors are a plausible occasion for elaborating basic criteria of a novel type of "world actors", namely those of "vitality" and of "competitive advantages".

The idea of the "Euro-Asiatic Union" actively supported by President Nazarbaev of Kazakhstan can be an important direction for Russia's foreign policy. The notion of the "Euro-Asiatic Union" being the continuation of the ideas of the late Academician Sakharov includes such principles as reestablishment of cooperative ties between the former Soviet republics, the protection of the outer borderline of the CIS, the reasonable integration of monetary systems of the newly independent States, the unification of the policy in such vital spheres as information, education, science and technology and so on. Such a policy approach, no doubt, will serve the best interests of Russia and the former constituent parts of the ex-Soviet Union.

The United States. Cooperation between Russia and the United States is envisioned in:

- the strengthening of conditions for nonproliferation throughout the world and the safe dismantlement of nuclear weapons on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Russia is not in a position to resolve these problems on its own. At the same time, the fundamental interests of Russia and the United States in this area of foreign policy greatly coincide;
- bilateral cooperation in protecting human rights in the former Soviet republics, including, most certainly, Estonia and Latvia; arms control, and, in the final analysis, the attainment of mutual control over military potential. That is, cooperation in military efforts at the early stages of adoption of political agreements in the interest of strengthening international stability;
- reciprocal understanding as a prerequisite for a creative collaboration in the areas of potential or actual ethnic, confessional and racial conflicts. Such a cooperation could be a significant contribution to the maintenance of stability, particularly in the "peripheral" zones of the world system;
- development of mutually beneficial bilateral economic relations on a non-discriminatory basis.

In short, a possible collapse of the Russian-American cooperation would aggravate already existing problems such as various regional conflicts, military tensions in the Third World, nuclear proliferation, international arms trade and political terrorism. Though these threats are much less spectacular than the prospect of a US-Soviet nuclear annihilation, they do deserve a serious consideration.

Europe. For various reasons, there exist among the West European governments certain reservations concerning Russia's integration into the West European economic process. On the other hand, for many Russians, the necessity of such an integration is not indisputable. Nevertheless, there is a broad consensus in contemporary Russian society on the main directions of Russia's West European policy. According to widely shared notion, an orientation to bilateral cooperation with the three leading continental powers (Germany, France, Italy) and the United Kingdom is vitally important. Also, great importance is being attached to the nations of Southern Europe like Spain and Greece.

Cooperation with the aforementioned states will facilitate to demolish discriminatory regulations existing on foreign markets and to attain full-value participation in international division of labour. In this sense, Russia's collaboration with G-7, IMF and Post-COCOM institutions is quite relevant.

The process of transition in Europe, that is its cultural, economic and political dimensions, is still an object of rather animated debates in the country. With respect to Transition in Europe, three main ideological camps can easily be identified in contemporary Russian "political society"¹⁰.

1. "*Romantic Democrats*"¹¹ are culturally and politically exposed to the West and are keen on Russia's involvement into NATO network. Such a policy is considered a pre-condition for an efficient Pan-European security system. Until recently, this elite group has ardently supported spontaneous convergence of erstwhile military blocs. According to such beliefs, NATO institutions and structures are well-equipped for gradual unification of its participants' controversial interests¹². Not long ago, "Radical Democrats" refuted as erroneous criticism emphasising that NATO is obsolete - both politically and militarily and that this organization had proved entirely unhelpful in various crises, the former Yugoslavia in particular.
2. "*Pragmatists*" ("Centrists") are heavily represented in the Federal legislative and executive bodies as well as in the Ministry for External Affairs and the Ministry for Defense. Their basic "European" perceptions can be summarized as follows:
 3. the Warsaw Pact is non-existent now, so the threat to the West and its basic values is merely hypothetical. Hence, the territorial extension of NATO is logically and motivationally vulnerable;
 4. Russia's contemporary military doctrine is entirely defense oriented. This doctrine is part and parcel of the country's modernization strategy aimed at strengthening internal stability and developing Civil Society;
 5. territorial extension of NATO will inevitably consolidate nationalistic sentiments within Russian Society and create a legitimate basis for significant reorientation of foreign policy resulting in a conspicuous shift from the principle of conflict resolution to the concept of conflict "engineering";
 6. geopolitical changes, now under way in Europe, may be effectively exploited by the nationalists to remilitarize Russian Society and the very process of decision-making;
 7. Russian economic and foreign policy cannot be exhausted by the European direction. Thus, Russia is equally interested in developing relations with Asia and the Pacific. These countries are considered as lucrative and capacious markets for the Russian industry. Some areas of the region are highly dynamic as far as economic growth is concerned. Besides, the Russian establishment is fascinated and intrigued by the notion of transcontinental transportation system ("Rotterdam-Shanghai Cut"). This communication network is supposed to invigorate the whole process of economic transformation in Siberia and the Far East.
3. "*Patriots*" are traditionally suspicious of the West and its intentions, allegedly directed against Russia - from times immemorial onwards. Power captured, this grouping of Russian political elite will seek an adequate "counter-balance" to NATO extension. Naturally, if governed by

¹⁰ Here, "Political Society" is referred to as an entity consistent of elite groups operating on federal and regional levels and shaping ideological platforms of political parties. We presume that for the analysis of foreign policy perceptions this narrow ("elitist") definition seems more relevant than a broad sociological interpretation.

¹¹ "Democrats" and "Patriots" are vivid examples of political self-identification in contemporary Russia. The present authors apply both terms neutrally, in a non-cognitive fashion.

¹² It's worth noting in this context that the social support base of such perceptions is progressively shrinking.

"Patriots", Russia will join the "exploited" South against the "exploiting" North, will actively participate in various regional conflicts in areas of strategic importance and will openly side with the states considered as sources of permanent menace to the West. The transfer of power to "Patriots" is more a loud thinking than a political probability. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind: Russian foreign policy will in the final analysis be shaped by the "figuration" of political forces to emerge after Parliamentary and Presidential elections. It is relevant here to remind: "pendulum tendency" cannot be entirely excluded.

The world is changing rapidly. Fastly transforming are such vital spheres of human activities as interest aggregation, ideological orientations and intellectual paradigms. Evidently such changes will sooner or later acquire new political dimensions.

In our opinion, a new intellectual "paradigm" will be of crucial importance for removing "barriers between East and West" in the years to come. This "paradigm", cosmopolitan and common sense oriented, is wholly based on newly-born geopolitical and geocultural perceptions gradually gaining strength within societies after the end of the "Cold War". Among these perceptions: diminishing unity of security policies, growing autonomy of international behaviour patterns, development of cooperative interests among nations and states, etc.

So far as Transition in Europe is concerned, one can easily enumerate 5 basic points, or intellectual "pillars", of the aforementioned concept:

- a) comprehensive understanding of traumatic historical experience of Eastern Europe that since the Napoleonic Wars was exploited as a regular battle area and a territory of massive deployment and employment of military forces. The region suffered economically, politically, morally. After the Second World War, the states of Eastern Europe were hostages of the doctrine of "restricted sovereignty" that was brutally put into force several times (Hungary and Czechoslovakia, for example);
- b) territorial extension of NATO will definitely involve substantial financial responsibilities - re-armament, re-training of personnel and, most of all, creating new operational and logistical infrastructure. Speaking realistically, the overwhelming share of these expenses can be reimbursed only by West European governments. It seems very easy to conclude that it is the West European electors/taxpayers who will ultimately decide the fate of such expenses and NATO extension. Further, a really professional discussion on NATO extension and its expected consequences has not yet started in the West. In this discussion, four nations will be perhaps more vociferous than others. Spain, Portugal, Greece and, to a lesser extent, Italy face certain problems of accelerating the pace of modernization and of surmounting the economic model of "dualistic growth".

Admittedly, NATO extension is interpreted by some interest groups in Southern Europe as a counterproductive diversion of resources vital for economic and social transformation;

- c) an influential part of the West European political and economic elite has a feeling that NATO extension and economic integration go together. The latter denotes a more intensive competition in commodity and labour markets¹³ and eventual aggravation of existing social situation in Western Europe. This may result in serious regrouping of political forces in the direction opposite to the interests of ruling parties/coalitions in the region;

¹³ According to Western estimations, the joining of the EC by the "Vyshegrad Group" will increase migration inflow by 2-3 mln. people annually.

- d) transition in Europe is a "contextual" phenomenon, it is closely interrelated with the build-up of a new "exhaustive" security system sustained by common interests and universally shared attitudes to such "eternal" issues as ecology, demography and the "Third World";
- e) for the nearest future a "newcomer" phenomenon is already discernible. This phenomenon may be of crucial importance for the European political process. The "newcomer" is the biological "renewal" of European "strategic" elites. Normally, this kind of "renewal" means eventual disappearance as political actors of public figures "parented" by the "Cold War" and accustomed to "ally-enemy" dichotomous mode of thinking. It is values and orientations of the "strategic" elites to come that will undoubtedly shape the basic features of domestic and foreign policies of the European powers.

Probably, three main factors, if operated properly, will help put an end to the historical division of Europe.

Firstly, the basic precondition for united Europe is the economic space being evenly developed. Putting it differently, integration into the West European economic mechanism suggests that potential aspirants (i.e. nation-states) should transform national economy of the existing industrial-agrarian type into the entity shaped and regulated by laws of Revolution in Science and Technology. The tasks for Russia and Eastern Europe, it is easy to guess, are identical.

Secondly, Russia and Eastern Europe are now facing exactly the same set of urgent problems relating to the domain of politics. Let us distinguish but a few of them: developing Civil Society and seeking the latter's reciprocally suited balance with the State, strengthening feedback communication and sophisticating mechanisms of its self-sustained development, namely parties and party systems. The Political Institutionalization in Russia and Eastern Europe will make these countries' internal and external policies more clear-cut and predictable.

Thirdly, in a historical sense, Eastern Europe's Manifest Destiny is to re-emerge as a kind of geopolitical "bridge" connecting Western and Southern Europe with Russia, and exploiting to the full advantages of its geographical location and recapturing very capacious Russian market. That mode of behaviour is politically relevant for the obvious reason that economic integration into the West European institutions still remains problematic, at least for the time being. Economic cooperation based on vital mutual interests will ultimately displace deep-seated anti-Russian fears and prejudices in the region. Most certainly, this process will solidify psychological confidence and a sense of personal and collective security among the East European nations.

Asia and the Pacific. Russia's strategic interests in the region (first and foremost, the maintenance of unity and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation in the Far East) dictate establishing the system of regional security by taking on coordinated strategic functions. The problem of weapons delivery to the APR also ought to be subject for mutual agreement with the United States.

Russia is fundamentally interested in internal stability in the two most populous countries - China and India. The three countries' long-term interests intersect. They are: the prevention of fundamentalist challenge in neighbouring areas, namely in Central Asia; maintenance of strategic balance existing in the APR and the Indian Ocean; reciprocal economic cooperation, including transportation and other means of communication.

Traditionally Russia had good-neighbourly relations with Iran. Now, the latter is interested in the active economic and scientific exchange with the Russian Federation. This exchange is especially important for the Volga River regions like Nizhny Novgorod, Saratov and Samara possessing a large amount of highly qualified workforce and sophisticated technical and scientific cadres. The

development of Russian-Iranian relations will help to reintegrate the latter into the international system and to make Iran's behaviour more predictable.

Pursuing a policy of sober, geopolitical "pragmatism", Russia is supposed to develop relations with those who truly support stability and do not threaten Russian national interests and security. Three pillars should lay the foundation of the long-term foreign policy strategy. First, the establishment of its new identity which will ultimately help define Russia's place in the post-Cold War international system. Second, successful implementation of economic reforms. Third, elaboration of an adequate decision-making and conflict resolution mechanism between the executive and the legislative branches as well as among diverse group interests in Russian Society.

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Contemporary Russia: National Interests and Emerging Foreign Policy Perceptions

Bericht des BIOst Nr. 33/1996

Summary

Introductory Remarks

In recent years, the basic principles and objectives of Russian foreign policy have been the subject of controversial debate within Russia. For outsiders, too, the actions of the Russian leadership have at times been difficult to comprehend. In the medium to long term, however, a coherent foreign-policy design is vitally important to Russia. The reasons for this are elementary: only a balanced and carefully deliberated foreign-policy strategy enjoying the support of society's main socio-political forces can protect the country from the imposition of "sectional" ideological schemes, from non-professional "experts", and from disputable international commitments.

The present report, from the pen of two prominent Russian scholars, attempts to formulate a framework for a foreign policy that preserves Russia's national interests and secures its international position. Written before the presidential elections, the text and its fundamental handling of the problems involved point out possible paths for a Russian foreign policy for the future, too.

Findings

1. The time has come for Russian political elites to clearly define Russia's national interests. The absence of a coherent foreign-policy doctrine has compelled Western observers to express concerns about Russia's potentially unpredictable international behaviour. However, a new Russian foreign-policy strategy can only emerge out of intense conceptual debate within the Russian political and intellectual elites themselves. It is a well-known fact that contemporary Russian society has no clear-cut social, political and, consequently, ideological distinctions. Still, one can easily distinguish a series of foreign-policy perceptions that - naturally, with some reservations - can be regarded as political platforms: neocommunist, radical nationalist and traditional conservative paradigms, all feeding - in their different ways - on the Russian and/or Soviet past.
2. The post-communist government's foreign-policy philosophy has been mainly a contextual phenomenon. Having emerged as a rebuttal to the foreign policy of the communist era, it has unfortunately developed few creative principles of its own. It is common knowledge that, after the demise of the Soviet Union, practically all the country's traditional spheres of interest were abandoned, while new ones were not secured. The basic component of this foreign policy was the sacrifice of geopolitical considerations in favour of ideological notions of an abstract democracy.
3. Three years of weakness and uncertainty have convincingly demonstrated the necessity of a coherent, predictable and dynamic foreign policy. The pillars of such a new design can be

summed up as follows: firstly, a dynamic and pragmatic assessment of world development. Secondly, stronger emphasis on geopolitics, from which Russia's international rôle has always been and will in future continue to be defined. Geopolitical thinking must also be the foundation for a constructive search for allies in both the "near" and the "far abroad". For the territory of the former Soviet Union is a sphere of vital interest to Russia. Thirdly, foreign policy should be used as an instrument to protect the Russians living outside Russia. And finally, Russia should not hesitate to use strong, dynamic and efficient tactics in the economic, political and military spheres in geopolitical conflicts with any country, including those which are industrially developed.

4. At the regional level, the primary task of Russian foreign policy must be to create an integrated economic space in the "near abroad" (provided this is the will of the people there) and to insist on the observance of international standards of human rights, also with a view to defending the rights of Russian-speaking populations elsewhere. Russia should play a leading rôle in implementing such norms in agreements between the states of the former Soviet Union.
5. Russia should cooperate with the USA especially in ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the safe dismantlement of nuclear weapons on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Cooperation is also possible in protecting human rights in the former Soviet republics, in arms control to achieve international stability, and in reaching a reciprocal understanding as a prerequisite for de-fusing potential ethnic, religious or racial conflicts. Such cooperation could be a significant contribution to the maintenance of stability, particularly in the "peripheral" zones of the world system. In their bilateral dealings, Russia and the USA should further develop their economic relations on a non-discriminatory basis.
6. As regards Europe, there are certain obstacles in that some West European governments have reservations about Russia's integration into the West European economic process while, on the other hand, for many Russians the necessity of such an integration is itself not indisputable. Nevertheless, there is a broad consensus in contemporary Russian society that bilateral cooperation with the leading continental powers (Germany, France and Italy) and with the United Kingdom is vitally important. An extension of relations with these countries will facilitate demolishing discriminatory regulations still in place on foreign markets and attaining full-value participation in the international division of labour. In this sense, Russia's collaboration in the International Monetary Fund, G-7 and the post-CoCom institutions is highly relevant.
7. The re-organisation of security structures - in particular the territorial expansion of NATO - is bound to involve considerable costs for the countries of Western Europe. The real debate about the extension of NATO has not yet got under way. The countries of Southern Europe, which are interested above all in continuing their own economic and social transformation and see the expansion of NATO as counter-productive, are also going to take part in that debate. This may result in a regrouping of the political forces in the region.
8. Russia's strategic interests in Asia and the Pacific are first and foremost the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation in the Far East. This entails establishing a system of regional security and making the supply of weapons to the APR the subject of mutual agreement with the USA. Russia is fundamentally interested in the internal stability of the two most populous countries - China and India.