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William Zimmerman: The Russian People and Foreign Policy

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Introduction

WITH THE collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the era of Soviet power in Russia came to a definitive end. Among its many features, the Soviet system was one in which political participation was minimal—Philip Roeder speaks of “forced departicipation”¹—and information was at a premium. The regime was insulated from society. The Soviet system was characterized by low trust in its citizenry by its leaders. The sorts and sources of influence to which mass publics were exposed were controlled by the regime’s near monopoly on the socialization process and the political system’s extensive penetration of the society. Though no longer totalitarian² and demonstrating a decreasing capacity to mobilize its citizens effectively,³ the Soviet Union remained until the last years of *perestroika* an effectively closed political system.

The Russian Federation that supplanted the Soviet system, by contrast, is considerably more open. Elite involvement in the policy process has been far greater than it was under Soviet power and is no longer restricted to persons on the *nomenklatura* lists of “the Party” (by which in the Soviet period one always meant the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or CPSU). Likewise, mass publics have been more involved in the policy process. A widely diverse and lively press has developed. Information about the workings of the political system and the attitudes and beliefs of the participants in that process is far more available than it was in the Soviet Union.

It is the greatly enhanced role of a broader circle of elites, the empowerment of mass publics, and the radically new opportunities for access to elites and mass publics that explain this book. This is a book about the foreign policy orientations of Russian elites and mass publics in the first decade after the December 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union—about *The Russian People and Foreign Policy*, to paraphrase the title of Gabriel Almond’s classic study of American foreign policy.⁴

¹ Philip G. Roeder, *Red Sunset: The Failure of Soviet Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 7.

² For an argument that the Soviet Union remained totalitarian virtually to the end, see William Odom, “Soviet Politics and After: Old and New Concepts,” *World Politics* 45, no. 1 (October 1992): 66–98.

³ Donna Bahry, “Politics, Generations, and Change in the USSR,” in James R. Millar, ed., *Politics, Work, and Daily Life in the USSR*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 61–99; William Zimmerman, “Mobilized Participation and the Nature of the Soviet Dictatorship,” in Millar, *Politics, Work, and Daily Life*, pp. 332–53.

⁴ Gabriel Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1960). First published in 1950.

The importance of these orientations to the study of Russian foreign policy flows directly from the increased openness of the political system. Along with the severe restrictions on political participation, another major feature of the old Soviet system was that it had many of the superficial facades of conventional democratic institutions. The USSR had a constitution, voting, federalism, a bicameral legislature, organized interest groups (Stalin's famous transmission belts), and the like. For the bulk of the Soviet period, all were essentially contentless and ineffectual mechanisms which, unlike their counterparts in "bourgeois democracies," did not perform the function of limiting executive power, in this instance the dictatorship of the CPSU. Ironically, much of the story of the collapse of the Soviet Union centers on the efforts, largely successful, to imbue these bogus institutions with genuine content.

New, or newly authentic, institutions have made for new politics. In the new circumstances brought on by the introduction of democratic institutions, elite and mass attitudes bear directly on the choices policy makers make about foreign policy. Moreover, the research for this book simply could not have been carried out in the absence of the changes that occurred in the Soviet Union in the Gorbachev era and then in Russia in the 1990s. As readers will quickly see, the book is based primarily on elite and mass surveys conducted in Russia during 1991–2000. (The major surveys are described in detail in chapter 1). At the dawn of the twenty-first century there are still Russians who regard such activities with suspicion—witness the Federal Security Service's arrest of Igor Sutiagin of the Institute for the Study of the US and Canada of the Russian Academy of Sciences in October 1999 in part, evidently, for collaborating with Canadian students of civil-military relations. Such acts, however, were infrequent in the first ten years of the Russian Federation. In the early 1980s, my behavior in commissioning elite and mass surveys dealing primarily with Russian foreign policy topics would have been regarded as espionage, and the active collaboration of my Russian colleagues, treasonous. Even in the late 1980s with *glasnost* in full swing, my efforts, based on data acquired through interviewing former Soviet citizens, to assess the changing ability of the Soviet regime over time to mobilize its citizenry were dismissed by scholars from the Institute of State and Law of the Soviet Academy of Sciences at a conference in Tallin (in what was then the Estonian SSR) as being "of interest only to Western intelligence sources." (It is an indication of the pace of change in the erstwhile Soviet Union in the late 1980s that a year later, others from the same institute would assert that they would never again come to an international meeting "without data.")

In the heyday of Soviet power, it would have been impossible for anyone—Russian or Westerner—to acquire data concerning elite and mass

foreign policy attitudes through direct face-to-face interviews. Those of us who were concerned with the systematic assessment of Soviet perspectives on international relations were forced to wade through a precensored press in a search for evidence.⁵ The idea of American and Russian social scientists collaborating in a study that systematically interviewed both foreign policy elites and mass publics about their basic dispositions to the international system would have been risible. By the mid-1990s all that had changed, with the consequence that the data from six surveys, three of foreign policy elites and three of mass samples, constitute the evidentiary basis for this book. The surveys of Moscow-based foreign policy elites were conducted in 1992/1993 (usually referred to as the 1993 survey), 1995, and 1999. The mass surveys were conducted at the same times: 1993, 1995/1996 (or, referred to more economically, 1995), and 1999/2000 (or 1999).

The 1993 survey was based on a sample of mass publics in European Russia, while the 1995/1996 and 1999/2000 panel studies were based on national samples consisting of three waves each—before and after the 1995 and 1999 Duma elections and after the final balloting for the president in 1996 and 2000. (Readers will recall that there were two rounds to the presidential election in 1996.) With respect to NATO expansion, in addition, I further benefited considerably from items included in ROMIR's (Rossiiskoye Obshchestvennoe Mnenie i Rynok) omnibus surveys conducted in 1996 and 1997.

This book contains a great deal of descriptive material. I do not intend to engage in what Stalin termed "vulgar factology." Rather, the purpose is to convey to readers how Russian foreign policy is likely to vary in response to changes in the configuration of domestic political coalitions or in the nature of the political system. My theoretical take on this is that providing answers to three sets of questions about elite and mass orientations is crucial in this respect.

The first set concerns "democratization" and Russian foreign policy. I find myself in something of a quandary with respect to terminology in this context. Generally I follow the practice of Freedom House, a nonprofit organization that has published annual assessments of the level of freedom in various countries since 1972, and refer to Russia as being "partly free."

⁵ William Zimmerman, *Soviet Perspectives on International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); William Zimmerman and Robert Axelrod, "The 'Lessons' of Vietnam and Soviet Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 34, no. 1 (October 1981): 1–24; Allen Lynch, *The Soviet Study of International Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Frank Griffiths, "Ideological Developments and Foreign Policy," in Seweryn Bialer, ed., *The Domestic Context of Soviet Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981), pp. 19–48; William Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

But I follow the practice of comparativists studying the transitions from authoritarian systems in referring to “democratizing states,” despite my reservations about the use of this term. I am guardedly optimistic about the long-term prospects for Russian democracy. But by my use of the term “democratizing” in no way do I mean to connote any kind of teleological quality to what is most assuredly an open-ended process. Moreover, I do not use the term to imply that my data with respect to Russian elite and mass attitudes bear out the propensity for assertive behavior Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder associate with democratizing rather than fully democratic states.⁶ Indeed, I present evidence that calls into question how transferable some of their findings are to the Russia of 1991–2000. Russian elites were more disposed to use force internationally than were mass publics, and that disposition to use force increased between 1993 and 1995. Mass publics were a drag on such inclinations. They were no more inclined to use force abroad in 1995 than they had been in 1993—they did not respond to elite attitude shifts—and their response to NATO expansion was restrained.⁷

What are the consequences for Russia’s foreign policy of the transformation of the political and economic system with its concomitant increase in political participation by a more diverse elite and by mass publics? How, for instance, did Russian foreign policy differ from Soviet foreign policy as a result of the change in domestic political and economic institutions?⁸ What is the impact of institutional changes on the participants in the policy process and how does that in turn shape foreign policy outcomes?

The second set of questions relates to those Russians, both in the leadership and in the public, whose views about the domestic political economy may be properly classified as liberal democratic in a sense recognizable to Western scholarly literature.⁹ How do elite and mass orientations to for-

⁶ Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War,” *International Security* 20, no.1 (Summer 1995): 5–38; Snyder, “Democratization, War, and Nationalism in the Post-Communist States,” in Celeste Wallander, ed., *The Sources of Russian Foreign Policy after the Cold War* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 21–40; Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democracy and National Conflict* (New York: Norton, 2000).

⁷ See chapter 6.

⁸ For comparisons, both drawn from the study of environmental policies, of the impact on Moscow’s policies of the changes in institutions brought on by the collapse of the Soviet Union, see Jane I. Dawson, *Eco-nationalism: Anti-nuclear Activism and National Identity in Russia, Lithuania, and Ukraine* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); William Zimmerman, Elena Nikitina, and James Clem, “The Soviet Union and the Russian Federation: A Natural Experiment in Environmental Compliance,” in Edith Brown Weiss and Harold K. Jacobson, eds., *Engaging Countries: Strengthening Compliance with International Accords* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), pp. 291–326.

⁹ J. Roland Pennock, *Democratic Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); John L. Sullivan et al., “Why Politicians Are More Tolerant: Selective Recruitment

eign policy correlate with orientations to democracy and the market? In what ways did it matter that it was those who overtly favored democracy and the market who dominated foreign policy decisions? How would Russia's foreign policy differ if, for instance, an ideological communist or others of a strongly statist or authoritarian bent were to win the presidency, even if such a victory were not accompanied by a return to conventionally Soviet political institutions?

The third set involves the relevance of the literature on American foreign policy, principally that on the role of elites and mass publics in Western democracies, to the understanding of Russian foreign policy. A radical change in thinking about the role of mass publics in the American foreign policy process took place beginning roughly 1985. (Ole Holsti dates the change from the end of the Vietnam War. He may be right in ascribing the change in thinking to that war but the publication dates of most of the relevant scholarship are largely post-1985.)¹⁰ Prior to 1985, what Holsti has termed the Almond-Lippmann consensus dominated scholarly thinking about American foreign policy. In that consensus, foreign policy was of limited relevance to the daily lives of plain folks. Public opinion, especially about foreign policy, lacked "structure and coherence,"¹¹ so much so that in a classic paper Philip Converse questioned whether it was even appropriate to speak of mass "attitudes" toward foreign policy.¹² Survey after survey demonstrated that sizable fractions of the public knew virtually nothing about the subject.¹³ From the point of view of effective foreign policy making in a democracy, the only good news was that mass opinion played little role.¹⁴

Beginning roughly in the late 1980s, however, the overall consensus about the role of the public in American foreign policy changed dramatically. To be sure, no challenge has occurred concerning the ignorance of large segments of the American public. Most of the remaining consensus, though, has been sharply challenged. Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro have argued that in the aggregate, the American public judges foreign

and Socialization among Political Elites in Britain, Israel, New Zealand, and the United States," *British Journal of Political Science* 23 (1993): 53–76; Robert Dahl, *On Democracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹⁰ Ole Holsti, "Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: Challenges to the Almond-Lippmann Consensus," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (December 1992): 439–66; Ole Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).

¹¹ Holsti, "Public Opinion," p. 443.

¹² Philip Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," in David Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent* (New York: Free Press, 1964), pp. 206–261.

¹³ Holsti, "Public Opinion," p. 443.

¹⁴ Bernard C. Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973).

policy issues rationally. Miroslav Nincic speaks of a “sensible public” and Bruce Jentleson found the American public “pretty prudent” in 1992 and “still pretty prudent” in 1998.¹⁵ Moreover, there has been a shift in the direction of emphasizing the impact of mass opinion on foreign policy¹⁶ and in assessments of the role of foreign policy in explaining the outcomes of presidential¹⁷ and congressional¹⁸ elections.

How “portable” are these relatively recent findings about the role of mass and elite public opinion in American foreign policy? There is a vast discrepancy between the consensus about American foreign policy in the first quarter century after World War II and the consensus as the twentieth century drew to a close. Which, if either, of these alternative perspectives better contributes to an understanding of Russian foreign policy at century’s end?

In short, this is a book intended for relatively diverse audiences. It is targeted first at those interested specifically in Moscow’s foreign policy after the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union. But I have other audiences in mind as well. My intention is to explore the extent to which support for democracy and markets in Russia is a mile wide and an inch deep—the subject of a long-running discussion between James Gibson and me¹⁹—and the implications for the workings of Russian de-

¹⁵ Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, *The Rational Public* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Miroslav Nincic, “A Sensible Public: New Perspectives on Popular Opinion and Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36, no. 4 (December 1992): 772–89; Bruce Jentleson, “The Pretty Prudent Public: Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force,” *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (January 1992): 49–74; Bruce Jentleson and Rebecca L. Britton, “Still Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Opinion on the Use of Military Force,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 4 (August 1998): 395–417. For empirical support that public reaction is of an appropriate magnitude and timeliness, coupled with a cautionary note, see Jeffrey W. Knopf, “How Rational Is ‘The Rational Public?’” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 5 (October 1998): 544–71.

¹⁶ Thomas W. Graham, “The Politics of Failure: Strategic Nuclear Arms Control, Public Opinion, and Domestic Politics in the United States, 1945–1980” (Ph.D. dissertation, MIT, 1989).

¹⁷ John H. Aldrich, John L. Sullivan, and Eugene Borgida, “Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting: Do Presidential Candidates ‘Waltz before a Blind Audience?’” *American Political Science Review* 83, no. 1 (January 1989): 123–42; Jon Hurwitz and Mark Peffley, “How Are Foreign Policy Attitudes Structured?” *American Political Science Review* 81, no. 4 (December 1987): 1099–1120.

¹⁸ R. Michael Alvarez and Paul Gronke, “Constituents and Legislators: Learning about the Persian Gulf War Resolution,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 22, no.1 (February 1996): 105–127.

¹⁹ James Gibson, “A Mile Wide but an Inch Deep (?): The Structure of Democratic Commitments in the Former USSR,” *American Journal of Political Science* 40, no. 2 (May 1996): 396–420; William Zimmerman, “Synoptic Thinking and Political Culture in Post-Soviet Russia,” *Slavic Review* 54, no.3 (Fall 1995): 630–42.

mocracy of foreign policy–relevant behavior by Russian elites and mass publics. In this respect, my aim is to reach the much larger community of scholars, policy makers, and the general public with interests in the prospects for democracy and a market economy in Russia. I use foreign policy, rather than, say, social welfare or economic reform, as my policy entry wedge.²⁰

At the same time, I intend this book for those whose interest is primarily in the role of mass and elite opinion in democratic policy processes generally. Overwhelmingly, this literature has taken the American experience as its reference point. By focusing on post-Soviet Russia I hope to move the study of comparative foreign policy some distance in discriminating between those propositions about elite and mass opinion and foreign policy that are American-specific, or specific to Western democracies, and those that are of relevance to a broader class of open political systems.²¹

The evidence of this book reinforces the position of those who would characterize Russia in the first decade after the collapse of the USSR as having many democratic aspects. Nevertheless, the historically brief hiatus between the present and Russia's authoritarian past and the persistent nostalgia for the Soviet Union and the Soviet political system among a sizable proportion of the Russian citizenry²² are among the unpleasant realities that serve to explain why knowledgeable scholars characterize Russia at the dawn of the new century as “proto-democratic,” as a “consolidating” rather than a “consolidated” democracy, or as “partly free.”²³ If one views democratic and authoritarian systems as being located at the low and high

²⁰ On economic reform, see Anders Aslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1994); Thane Gustafson, *Capitalism Russian-Style* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

²¹ James Rosenau deserves much of the credit for advocating the comparative study of foreign policy. See, for instance, *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1971). See also Harold K. Jacobson and William Zimmerman, eds., *The Shaping of Foreign Policy* (New York: Atherton, 1969), and Charles Hermann, Charles Kegley, and James Rosenau, *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987). Although there has been a proliferation of studies based on aggregate data in the generation since Rosenau's seminal papers in the 1960s, many areas relevant to the comparative study of foreign policy—elite-mass interactions and their links to foreign policy, public opinion, and foreign policy, for instance—retain a primary focus on the United States and are rarely comparative.

²² For greater detail, see chapter 2. See also Judith Kullberg and William Zimmerman, “Liberal Elites, Socialist Masses, and Problems of Russian Democracy,” *World Politics* 51, no. 3 (April 1999): 323–59, and Judith Kullberg and William Zimmerman “‘Perezhitki proshlogo’ and the Impact of the Post-Soviet Transition” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, April 1999).

²³ The term “proto-democratic” is Timothy Colton's. See Timothy J. Colton and Jerry F. Hough, eds., *Growing Pains: Russian Democracy and the Election of 1993* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), pp. 75–114.

ends, respectively, of a seven-point scale, rather than as constituting dichotomous choices,²⁴ then it is difficult to quarrel with Freedom House's rankings of Russia in the decade after the collapse of Soviet power. For those years, Freedom House categorized Russia as either a 3 or a 4 or a 5 with respect to both civil liberties and political freedom. These rankings, which are made using explicit criteria, constitute recognition of both how much Russia in the 1991–2000 decade differed from the Soviet Union of the mid-1970s and how it has fared in comparison with other European and Eurasian post-communist systems in that time period.²⁵ In the 1970s and through the mid-1980s, the Soviet Union was literally at sixes and, largely, sevens by Freedom House criteria. By that standard the Russian Federation has been a far more open political system. Viewed in comparison with almost all the formerly communist states of Europe, Russia does not fare as well, however. Table I.1 presents the average of Freedom House's civil liberties and political freedom scores for many of the formerly communist states of Europe and Central Asia. The Freedom House rankings reflect not only the changes since the years before *perestroika* but also an awareness of Russia's obvious warts—the grossly inadequate judicial system, the enormous asymmetry in the powers of the president and the Parliament, the role of the mafia. They also distinguish the Russian Federation in the first decade after the collapse of the USSR from the Baltic states or most of the members of the former Warsaw Treaty Organization, on the one hand, and a Central Asian country like Tadjikistan, on the other. Most of the former were consistently being accorded 1's and 2's on both the civil liberties and the political freedom scales that Freedom House requires to label a country “free” rather than “partly free” or “not free,” whereas at the beginning of the twenty-first century the Central Asian countries were all coded as “not free.”

In short, on the basis of Freedom House's evaluation of behavioral indicators, the long-term prospects for democracy in Russia are problematic. The survey data reinforce this observation. To take but one case in point—discussed in more detail below—immediately after the July 1996 presidential election, the Russian citizenry was almost equally divided between those who said the old Soviet system was more suitable for Russia and those who preferred the current situation or Western-style democracy; re-

²⁴ A strong argument for dichotomizing the concepts is Raymond Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism: A Theory of Political Systems* (Ann Arbor: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1990).

²⁵ It has been objected that Freedom House evaluates former Soviet republics with close ties to the United States uncritically. There is some merit to this charge with respect to individual scores for particular countries in particular years. In my judgment, though, Freedom House scores nevertheless serve reasonably well as an indication of cross-national progress or lack thereof by former Soviet republics and formerly communist East European states. I think the trajectory for Russia in the 1990s is exactly right.

Table I.1.

Democratic Evolution of Selected Former Soviet Republics and Members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, 1991–2001

Country	Year								
	91–92 ^a	92–93	93–94	94–95	95–96	96–97	97–98	98–99	99–00
Russia	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	4	4.5
Estonia	2.5	3	2.5	2.5	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Ukraine	3	3	4	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Armenia	5	3.5	3.5	3.5	4	4.5	4.5	4	4
Tadjikistan	5	6	7	7	7	7	6	6	6
Poland	2	2	2	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Hungary	2	2	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Bulgaria	2.5	2.5	2	2	2	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5

Sources: For 1991–2000, Freedom House [<http://www.freedomhouse.org/rankings>] for 2000–2001, Aili Piano and Arch Puddington, “Gains Offset Losses,” *Journal of Democracy* 12, no. 1 (January 2001): 87–92.

Note: These scores represent the average of Freedom House’s civil liberties and political freedom scores for each country in each year.

Free: 2.5 and below.

Partly free: 3 to 5.5

Unfree: greater than 5.5.

^aFor 1990–91, the USSR was scored 4.5 overall.

spondents were even more prone to say the Soviet system before *perestroika* was most suitable for Russia in December 1999 (below, chapter 2).

Evaluations such as those done by Freedom House should not, however, encourage us to accept uncritically some of the more disparaging characterizations of the Russian political system and the rather widespread view expressed in Western public commentary that Russia is inherently authoritarian. Assertions, for instance, in the popular press that the West and the Russians do not have anything even approximating a common understanding of the key concepts associated with democracy or that the Russian attachment to order dominates any desire for freedom are not substantiated by the data at hand. (See chapter 2.) There are those in Russia whose dispositions are overwhelmingly authoritarian and those whose concepts of democracy are far afield from perspectives conventional in the West. These orientations, however, are not the only views one encounters among Russian elites or mass publics but rather illustrate one strand in the overall distribution of views in the Russian Federation. Support for

democracy in Russia is substantial; especially among the beneficiaries of the present system, there are those for whom support for democracy is a constituent part of an overall way of thinking about people and politics (chapter 2).

But there are also many who have not benefited from the post-Soviet political economy. One scarcely needs to be a vulgar Marxist to recognize that benefiting materially and having favorable opportunities contributes mightily to support for democracy. The introduction—indeed, the imposition—of democracy in Japan and erstwhile West Germany after World War II was enormously facilitated by the economic success that attended it.

Nothing like the German or Japanese miracles occurred in Russia in the 1990s. Although at the dawn of a new century there were glimmers of hope for the economy, the preceding decade had been one in which the material position of sizable numbers of Russians declined, often precipitously. Timothy Colton has provided a balanced summary of the good and bad features of that decade for Russia. “True,” he observes, “the reforms pursued under Boris Yeltsin’s aegis did bear some fruit: a price liberalization which eliminated most queues in retail trade; stabilization and internal convertibility of the ruble from 1994 to 1998; membership in the International Monetary Fund; a spike in foreign investment; the gutting of the USSR’s planning bureaucracy and the extrusion of many facilities from state control; and the startup of thousands of businesses, banks, a stock exchange, and a bond market. That said, the reform ledger also overflows with mishap and mismanagement. The bankers and industrialists at the heart of Russia’s ‘crony capitalism’ excelled at asset stripping and currency speculation, not at investment and growth. National output fell every year in the decade but 1997 and 1999, and the ruble devaluation and stock-market crash that hit in 1998 were . . . a devastating reminder of the fine line between an emerging and submerging market.”²⁶

Moreover, the benefits and costs of the decade were borne quite asymmetrically. Elites benefited, sometimes enormously, from the turn to the market and to democracy; huge sectors of the ordinary Russian population did not.²⁷ Not surprisingly, Russian elites in the 1990s were far more supportive of democracy and particularly the market than were average citizens.

In asserting that recognizably democratic features existed in Russia in the 1991–2000 decade, I intend several points about the nature of elites,

²⁶ Timothy J. Colton, *Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 90. It should be added that the devaluation of the currency in 1998 has clearly benefited the economy by making Russian products relatively more attractive than foreign goods to Russian consumers.

²⁷ Kullberg and Zimmerman, “Liberal Elites.”

attentive publics, and other mass publics in contemporary Russian politics. As discussed further in chapter 1, post-Soviet Russian elites were as much like the characterization of American elites in Almond's classic work as they were like Soviet elites in the heyday of Soviet power.²⁸ Gone were the days in which there was a "single point in the policy-making process where the strings of influence . . . are held in a single hand."²⁹ The functional coordination of which Almond spoke in respect to Soviet decision making was gone. Elite controls over the rank and file were a contingent rather than a command relationship. Elite selection was by no means exclusively top down.³⁰ Russian elites, like American elites,³¹ were on many dimensions ideologically heterogeneous. These elites presented mass publics with meaningful—and in the case of the 1996 presidential election, stark—choices.

Moreover, while Russian mass publics were less constrained in their beliefs than were Russian elites, the former turned out, in the aggregate, to have belief systems that were sufficiently patterned and stable to warrant their being depicted as attitudes or preferences (chapter 3). Mass publics have been able to link their preferences and the preferences of leaders. In the 1996 presidential election, though less clearly in the 2000 election, the country's voters played the role they should in a democracy. They constituted an audience that could be reached by Russian elites. In response to elite assertions—and an enormous media campaign—the citizenry knew what they liked and made their choice (chapter 4).

At the same time, it bears emphasizing that sizable sections of the Russian mass public turn out to be every bit as ignorant of the world outside as their American counterparts, and foreign policy, narrowly construed, plays a small role in their lives. (For an elaboration, see throughout, especially chapters 1 and 4.) As in the United States, the role of the attentive public—those who are knowledgeable and interested in politics—proves to be crucial in connecting the views of other parts of the mass public and foreign policy elites. More problematic, though, is when elites successfully mobilize mass opinion and when mass dispositions (which may be carryovers of prior elite socialization) are so intensely held or widespread as to be accepted by those most exposed to elite cues and are ultimately reflected in elite dispositions as well. In chapter 3 I develop an argument about the links between resistance to, and acceptance of, elite cues by those who are least connected to the realm of national and international

²⁸ Almond, *The American People*, pp. 143–45.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

³⁰ David Lane and A. Cameron Ross, *The Transition from Communism to Capitalism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Sharon Werning Rivera, "Elites in Post-Communist Russia: A Changing of the Guard," *Europe-Asia Studies* 52 (2000): 413–32.

³¹ Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida, "Foreign Affairs and Issue Voting."

politics and attitudes among various sectors of the Russian public. That argument implies that on some dimensions mass resistance has contributed to the reorientation of elite dispositions even in conditions where elite consensus had been high previously. This is good news for the proposition that masses matter in relatively open systems. But it suggests a cautionary note about extending a reception-acceptance model—which implies a central role for elites in the determination of mass responses to survey items about policy—across a wider spectrum of responses than the policy issues John Zaller brilliantly explored, at least for Russia.³²

By terming Russia as partly free, proto-democratic, or democratizing I also mean that the distribution of politically relevant attitudes differs in the Russian Federation from what would have obtained under Soviet power and that these differences flow from the transformation of the political and economic system with its concomitant increase in political participation. Notably, the changes in the Russian political economy in the 1990s altered the structure of elite composition. Operationalizing the notion of eliteness is always a difficult matter, even in stable systems. Determining eliteness is an especially problematic matter for a country undergoing radical sociopolitical transformation; one usual consequence of such transformations is that power relations are fundamentally reconfigured in the process. So it has been in Russia. New terms reflect new realities. The former Soviet Union was, after all, a place where capitalism, the capital market, and capitalists—foreign and domestic—had been eliminated. Certainly there was no role for powerful entrepreneurs in the USSR, whereas in contemporary Russia the emergence of a “*biznes-elita*”³³ is a phenomenon that must be reckoned with in thinking about decision making. That elite represents players who, as role occupants, would not have participated in decision making under Soviet power.³⁴ The transformation of the political and economic system with the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in elite roles that had not existed under Soviet power.

Moreover, persons who would have played no part in the Soviet system have occupied key foreign policy roles in the Russian Federation, even in

³² John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992). But see also Zaller’s more recent and somewhat self-critical “The Impact of Monica Lewinsky on Political Science,” *PS* 31, no. 2 (June 1998): 182–89.

³³ Olga Kryshтанovskaia, “The Russian *biznes-elita*,” manuscript, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1992.

³⁴ In so saying, I grant immediately that many of the people who constituted the business elite in Russia in the 1990s were persons who had been in the CPSU *apparatus* and especially among the Komsomol leadership. See Steven Solnick, *Stealing the State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997). Nevertheless, these people have to be seen as the occupants of roles that did not exist in the Soviet system. I have no way of assessing the counterfactual question of what their views might have been had they become ministers in the USSR or regional secretaries of the CPSU.

roles that existed in both Soviet and post-Soviet Moscow—editors of major newspapers that existed under and after Soviet power, military officers, senior officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the like. Most obviously, about a quarter of the foreign policy elites interviewed had never been members of the CPSU. Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, CPSU membership and indeed being a member of the *nomenklatura* of the Central Committee had been sine qua non for effective participation in the policy process. Chapter 5 explores, among other things, whether CPSU membership is an important predictor of foreign policy attitudes. It concludes that CPSU membership or absence thereof played a modest role in the early 1990s but finds that role had increased by 1999. A larger determinant in the 1990s of foreign policy attitudes than formal membership in the CPSU, it turns out, was how those with orientations to the political economic system that were congruent with core strands of Leninist thought differed from other elites, especially those whose orientations were characteristically liberal democratic in ways recognizable to Westerners. A descriptably Leninist ideological orientation with socialist, authoritarian, and autarkic (“national bolshevik”) tendencies implied systematic differences in orientation to many, but scarcely all, foreign policy–related themes when compared with the responses of other elite members.

Along with the change in the composition and orientation of elites, an additional important consideration in assessing the consequences of the transformation of the political and economic system for Russia’s foreign policy was the emergence of the public. I don’t wish to over-claim in regard to the public’s role. Chapter 2 provides ample evidence of the perceived domination of elites in the policy process. At the same time, domination does not mean “exclusive role.” It is instructive to recall Almond’s *American People and Foreign Policy*. In 1950, when it was first published, Almond was at pains to compare and distinguish between the nature of elites in the Soviet Union and in the United States in order to make a normative case for American democracy, while at the same time coming to grips with a fundamental reality. That reality is that there is a nontautological sense in which elites everywhere dominate the foreign policy process. (There is clearly a tautological sense: it is an easy trap to define elites as those who make crucial decisions and then to declare that elites play a crucial role in decision making.) In Almond’s treatment of mass opinion, by contrast, he makes no mention at all of the role of mass publics in Soviet foreign policy. I assume that he did this for a good reason. It likely never even occurred to him to imagine that they played any role in Soviet foreign policy making. There are grounds for serious dispute over the impact of mass publics in Russian foreign policy, 1991–2000. What is not at issue, though, is that Russian publics did play some role. As discussed in chapter 4, broad-gauged concerns about Russia’s relation to the outside world had

a demonstrable impact on the outcome of the 1996 presidential election. In addition, I provide evidence to suggest that mass publics were sometimes nicely situated to serve as arbiters of the discrepant preferences of discordant elites. In some instances, furthermore, the movement of opinion over time has been in the direction of the responses of Russian citizens, rather than the other way around. And even the somewhat truculent and skeptical comments of Russian policy makers about the role of mass publics have revealed the impression that the latter must be mobilized in order for Russia to engage in an effective foreign policy.

In short, change in Moscow's political and economic institutions changed the mix of relevant players in the policy process. This is an obvious point, though one sometimes ignored by enthusiasts for the new institutionalism in political science, but nevertheless an important one to keep in mind. The distribution of attitudinal "considerations"³⁵ was altered by broadening the selectorate beyond the confines of the *nomenklatura* of the CPSU and by moving in the direction of a market economy. Likewise, it also mattered in important ways that those who were largely disposed to market democracy have dominated the political system. Chapter 5 argues that with respect to East-West relations the pattern at the elite level was quite clear: despite a sharp increase in negative views of the United States, in support for military spending, and in support of balancing against the West's military power across the board in the 1990s, those who favored market or liberal democracy in the Western sense were noticeably less inclined to regard the United States as a threat, less concerned about NATO expansion, less prone to increase military spending, and less disposed to assert that Russia could solve its economic problems without the aid of the West. Those I have termed socialist authoritarians—those whose statist and authoritarian responses are characteristically Leninist—by comparison were far more likely to desire increased military spending, to assert that Russia can solve its economic problems without the aid of the West, to express concern about NATO expansion, and to be much more disposed to regard the United States as a threat. Similar results hold for mass publics as well. As we shall see, though, orientation to the domestic political economy was far less clearly associated with orientation to foreign policy matters involving Russia's relations with the states on its periphery, for both elites and mass publics.

That qualification notwithstanding, on many important matters relating to Russia's relationship to East-West political relations, to the reunification of Russia with Ukraine and Belarus, and to the global economy as well, those (both among elites and mass publics) whose orientations to Russia's domestic political economy were congruent with traditional Le-

³⁵ Zaller, *The Nature and Origins*, p. 59.

ninist norms viewed the world differently from other Russians. The old joke during the period of stagnation, what the Russians termed *zastoi*, concerning Brezhnev's mother, who, on seeing all the expensive cars accumulated by her son over the years, ostensibly asked him, "But what will happen if the Bolsheviks return?" is relevant here. Assume for the moment—*arguendo*, as the lawyers say—what would probably be a counterfactual: that the election of an attitudinally communist President in Russia would not result in shifts in the political and economic institutional makeup that had begun to take shape in Russia by the mid-1990s.³⁶ Even so, were those who think like conventional Bolsheviks, though not necessarily some specific member of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF), to come to power, it would have profound implications for East-West relations, unless one assumes utterly no relation between what politicians say out of power and what they do in power. Moreover, chapters 5 and 6 muster evidence that suggests that with respect to East-West relations and Russian reunification with Ukraine and Belarus, having been a member of the CPSU had in 1999 become an important discriminator among elite responses, something that had not been the case in 1993 or 1995.

The argument I develop with regard to the first two sets of questions—those concerning democratization and foreign policy and those pertaining to Russian liberal democrats and foreign policy—has implications for my answers to the third set of questions. All things considered, the current consensus about the role of the public in American foreign policy in 1999 bears some resemblance to the role of mass publics in Russian foreign policy. It is certainly more appropriate than extrapolations drawn from Soviet experience. Like my Americanist counterparts, I issue no challenge either to the view that sizable fractions of the mass public are enormously ill informed or to the proposition that, narrowly construed, foreign policy issues were way down the list of those matters that seized the attention of Russian mass publics; indeed, I document them in chapters 3 and 6. Nor do I claim to have undertaken in this book an effort that parallels Thomas Graham's 1989 dissertation which directly links public opinion about arms control issues to American foreign policy behavior.³⁷ That is another volume. I do, though, present strong evidence to bear out the portability to Russians' partial democracy of John Aldrich's proposition, based on American data, that leaders in a democracy do not waltz before a blind

³⁶ Note that this statement refers to someone who is attitudinally communist—that is, endorses the kind of socialist authoritarianism we associate with traditional Leninism—not to someone who was a member of the CPSU or is currently a member of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Among elites in particular, these are not necessarily the same.

³⁷ Graham, "The Politics of Failure."

audience. Russian respondents turn out to be able to make grossly accurate characterizations of their leaders. They were, moreover, able to link their preferences about foreign policy to the intensity of their feelings pro and con for Russian presidential candidates in 1966 and, less clearly, in 2000 (chapter 4). I also argue that for mass publics their orientations to Russia's place in the world broadly conceived—though much less to specific foreign policy issues—hang together in a way that justifies these utterances' being described as making up alternative belief systems and that these orientations bear substantially on their electoral behavior.

Moreover, when the gravamen of mass views differed from the consensus of elites, it is easy to tell a story about the consequences of policies that touch directly on such matters for mass publics that is different from the story about the consequences of policies for elites. In this story, we witness a kind of rationality to the mass publics' collective judgment akin to that observed of American mass publics in Page and Shapiro's *Rational Public*. Indeed, this produces some instances where mass views preceded rather than followed elite assessments.

The differences reported between elite and mass orientations to foreign policy may have impeded Russia's integration into the international economy, but they also served as a constraint on foreign policy activism. Moreover, as the response to NATO expansion vividly illustrates (chapter 6), there is little evidence for the kind of impetuous and overreactive behavior among Russian mass publics of which George Kennan and other realists were so fearful concerning the role of mass publics in *American* foreign policy in the early years of the cold war.³⁸

In short, the argument of this book is that the opening up of the Russian political system has identifiable consequences for Moscow's foreign policy. A more heterogeneous elite enlarges the range of possible policies the country might adopt, and the orientation to the political economy of those who dominate policy decisions has huge implications for Russia's relations with the West, though considerably less for its behavior on its periphery. Mass publics in the 1990s played the minimal role one would expect them to play in a democracy; on the average and in general they were able to sort out the policy preferences of elites and to link those preferences to their own. By and large, they were more isolationist and noticeably less activist than were Russian elites (chapter 3).³⁹ At the same

³⁸ George Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

³⁹ On isolationist and internationalist attitudes in American foreign policy, see Eugene Wittkopf, "On the Foreign Policy Beliefs of the American People: A Critique and Some Evidence," *International Studies Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (1986): 423–45. For fresh and innovative thinking about isolationism in general, see Bear Braumoeller, "Isolationism in International Relations" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1998).

time, their policy preferences in response to actions taken abroad appear proportionate. What this suggests in policy terms is that, both because of the policy orientations of the predominant elites and because mass publics played a modest but real role in foreign policy decision making, the outcome of the two great choices facing Russia concerning its political economy—democracy versus dictatorship and market versus the state—matter fundamentally for Russia's relations with the West. For students of foreign policy, the evidence of the book is to strengthen the view that conclusions about mass-elite interactions and foreign policy drawn largely from data generated in the United States are transferable to other, less stabilized, partly free political environments.