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**The Russian Bear: Wounded,
Confused and Dangerous?**

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1 Introduction

According to the French Ambassador to the Western European Union (WEU), Jean-Marie Guehenno (1995), the European security order finds itself in „l'impossible statu quo“. Visionary designs for a broad, pan-European security system have not been realized. Neither have apocalyptic, Cassandra-like prophecies about a relapse into the dark Middle Ages or a „Back to the Future“ (Mearsheimer 1990) become real. However, it is a matter of fact that the European states system is under a high amount of stress. (see the contributions in Bredow/Jäger/Kümmel 1997) After the Iron Curtain fell, the further development and orientation of European integration, the transformation of Transatlantic relations and the transition to democracy and market economies in the former Soviet empire are important ingredients in the volatile European cocktail.

The object of the following analysis, however, is the role of Russia in the European order and its relevance and importance for European security. Does the Russian Federation hold the key towards the creation of a stable and peaceful European order? Is Russia a source of insecurity, even threat? Is Moscow conceivable as a genuine partner for the West? Is Russia perhaps even the linchpin of global security as Shlapentokh (1994: 31) indicates?

These questions will be addressed here by responding to them in a way which combines inside and outside. This approach is based on the assumption that domestic factors constitute „the big unknown of all propositions regarding Russian foreign and security policies“. Analyzing Russian foreign policy, therefore, has to „distinguish between what may permanently influence Moscow's foreign policy and short-lived arguments in an inner-Russian, person-related game of power, which is used for foreign policy goals“. (Plate 1995: 7) Among the multiple factors to be analyzed, the transformation process in Russia will be the starting point.

2 The antinomies of the transformation processes ...

2.1 ... in the economy

The decision to transform the Soviet economy into a market economy and to abolish the totalitarian political system in order to establish a more democratic one was taken at a period when socialism *à la* Moscow increasingly turned out to be a „grand failure“ (Brzezinski 1990). The Russian Federation, as the legal successor to the Soviet Union, opted for gradualism as one variant of the reform process distinct from shock therapy often advocated by Western advisers to governments of countries in transformation. To be sure, prior to this, in 1992, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Yegor Gaidar, and his associates tried to implement a big bang reform, but their attempt was successfully countered by a powerful political coalition. (Goldman 1994; see also Aslund 1995) Interestingly enough, they recognized their growing political isolation which can be seen in their self-description as ‘kamikaze pilots’. (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 905) In January 1994, then, Gaidar and Minister of Finance Boris Fedorov had to resign.

As a result, the transition to principles of market economy and, in particular, the way the former state property was privatized did not establish legions of private owners. Many firms were sold at the valuation of their managers who, for their greater part, had been managers in Soviet times. These managers were intent on acquiring the control of their enterprises and had every incentive to set prices low. According to the findings of a survey among general directors carried out in 1994 and 1995, these managers and directors - on average - paid 40 times less for their enterprises’ shares than they had assessed themselves their actual or real price. (Blasi/Kroumova/Kruse 1996; Cottrell 1997) This was possible by means of closed auctions, insider trading and exemption decrees signed by President Boris Yeltsin (Easter 1997: 197f.) and made a few people enormously rich. Privatization, then, can be overwhelmingly described as „privatisation of the *nomenklatura*, by the *nomenklatura*, for the *nomenklatura*“. (Birman 1996: 742) According to this, it is not by chance that privatization is often re-phrased with „piratisation“. (Brym 1996: 761)

When the banks entered the economy they did so not *via* pure credits, but *via* acquiring huge proportions of the shares of the companies concerned. Needless to say, the prices

paid for the shares were far below their actual valuation. This deserves some closer scrutiny. The *spiritus rector* of this procedure of dealing credits for shares deal was Vladimir Potanin of the Oneksimbank who was supported by Anatolij Chubais in charge of privatization in the Yeltsin government. Such transactions then were conducted on a large scale - with the tacit approval of Yeltsin and Prime Minister Chernomyrdin. Within a short period of time, Chubais became the symbol, the incarnation of corruption in the eyes of the Russian population. Although he was dismissed in early 1996, Chubais quickly returned center stage after he had put together the 'Group of Seven', the seven highest-ranking Russian business people, at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 1996 in order to support Yeltsin's electoral campaign. This group consisted of Michail Chodorkovskij (Bank Menatep), Vladimir Gussinskij (Media-Most), Alexander Smolenskij (SBS-Agro), Michail Fridman (Alfa-Bank), Vladimir Winogradov (Inkombank), Vladimir Potanin (Oneksimbank) and Boris Berezovskij (LogoVaz, ORT). Chubais then became Yeltsin's campaign manager. After the presidential election was won, Yeltsin appointed Chubais as Chief of Staff, Potanin as First Deputy Prime Minister and Berezovskij as Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council. (Hassel 1997; Götz 1997c; see also Potanin 1997)

The interpenetration of politics and economics - nothing new to Russians - reached a new stage. Chernomyrdin, a former top official of the petrochemical giant Gazprom, has obviously served the interests of his former company well since he became Prime Minister. In a tacit understanding the Russian state which held 41 % of the Gazprom shares is said to have agreed to surrender its shares to the Gazprom management in the fashion of administrative trusteeship. As a consequence, high-ranking Gazprom officials were enabled to buy Gazprom shares for very little money. (Götz 1997a: 4)

The consequences of such an interpenetration are far-reaching. Since the Russian business elite is still in a formative stage and because the state is an enormously influential actor in providing and shaping the conditions in which companies operate, enterprise - state relations are very valuable for the companies and thus they are eager to establish good relations to state and government officials. Competition in the market place, therefore, increasingly turns into competition for political and administrative support which may be a valid explanation why an effective economy in Russia has not developed yet. (Lapina 1997: 23; Petuchow/Wjunizkij 1997)

As a consequence of these developments, the financial and banking sector has acquired a good deal of control in industry and production. In the last few years, powerful financial-industrial complexes have emerged: Potanin's Oneksimbank (see Götz 1997c) established the industrial complex Interros which exercises control of a considerable number of large Russian companies like Norilskij Nickel (which controls about 35 % of the world's nickel), Lomo and the oil company Sidanko. Bank Menatep founded the Rosprom complex which counts Jukos, a large petrochemical enterprise, among its assets. Tokobank and Alfa Bank have also put together financial-industrial complexes. Critics interpret these developments as a process of eroding the various branches of industry and the political power of the industrial elites which is substituted by the financial and banking sector. (Lapina 1997: 24f.; see also Fadin 1997; Rutland 1997)

In recent months, there have been clear signs of serious differences and rivalries among the various financial-industrial complexes. Their former homogeneity has obviously passed away and has given way to intense conflicts within the oligarchy. Oligarchic structures *per se* can cause sincere problems for the Russian transition to democracy, and these problems could gain in destructive potential in the wake of fights within the oligarchy. (Lapina 1997: 23; see also Petuchow/Wjunizkij 1997 and Eigendorf 1997)

By the end of July 1997, the government decided to sell about 25 % of Swijasinvest, a telecommunication monopolist, for about 2 bio. USD to a business group led by Potanin's Oneksimbank. Potanin's competitors, Gussinskij and Berezovskij, were outraged that they lost this fight for Swijasinvest and therefore heavily criticized this move. They initiated a campaign against Potanin and his putative companion Chubais in the newspapers and TV stations that are under their control (NTA, ORT). They revealed that Oneksimbank paid no more than 250 mio. USD, something like a symbolic price, for a proportion of Norilskij Nickel, Russia's sixth largest company. Potanin fought back in the newly acquired *Izvestija* and in the course of events Berezovskij was dismissed as Deputy Secretary of the National Security Council in early November. (Hassel 1997)

As a result, the recent upheaval in the Kremlin around Chubais, who is close to Potanin, has to be seen in the context of oligarchical antagonism and conflict. The honorarium

affair dealt a serious blow to the position of Chubais and his co-authors within the government. The extraordinary advance payment of about 90.000 USD per author too obviously smacked of some dirty trick. At first, only Chubais' co-authors were dismissed from their positions, but, then, Chubais himself was partly dismantled and replaced as Minister of Finance though he remained First Deputy Prime Minister. In the course of these events, the „third attempt towards a ‘radical reform’ of the Russian economy“ which can be traced back to Yeltsin appointing (1) Chubais as First Deputy Prime Minister in charge of economic reforms and as Minister of Finance and (2) Boris Nemzov as Deputy Prime Minister in charge of, e.g., social policy, housing and anti-monopolist policies and as Energy Minister and (3) both men to the National Security Council in the first half of 1997 was severely hampered. (Götz 1997a) This, plus the assassination of Michail Manevic, responsible for privatization policies in St. Petersburg (see Mögel 1997), gives evidence that the economic reform project is under heavy attack.

Despite the gradual approach, but in part because of the way in which the policy of privatization was conducted, the economic and social costs of implementing market structures and elements turned out to be substantial, causing reason for grave concern. (see below) The socio-economic costs of the transition to democracy and market economic principles *à la* Russia are severely aggravated by the increasing preponderance of the banking sector and the financial oligarchy in the Russian economy. The Russian government has not yet imposed checks and balances to this, because the Russian banks are needed to finance government bonds and thus the state's budget deficit. The budget deficit absorbs more credits than anything else; the total amount of credits given to enterprises and the population at large is much lower than the huge amount of money provided by the banks for the deficit. In order to service the state's debts the government has turned to bills of exchange and bonded debts with interest rates as high as 240 %! The net effect of this is a crowding out on the capital market because credits to enterprises do not yield such huge returns. (Gumpel 1997: 764)

The data on the Russian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the 1990s show a dramatic decline, even if one takes into account the difficulties in gathering reliable data amidst turmoil and the variations among the sources. Furthermore, there is an ever more

significant shadow economy in Russia. So, in the years 1992 and 1993, about one fifth of the Russian oil and one third of the metal production had been illegally exported. (Glinkina 1997a: 352) Estimates of the extent of the shadow economy run from 20 % of the official GDP up to 50 % (Lapina 1997: 18); a 1995 World Bank study written by Kaufmann & Kaliberda puts forward an estimate of more than 40 %. (see Glinkina 1997b: 11) On the other hand, even in Western industrialized countries the shadow economy, the informal sector, is quite substantial. Despite these reservations against the data, these figures serve as sufficiently reliable trend indicators.

Table 1: Russian Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
GDP (bio. USD) (Götz 1997b: 775)				735.0	656.0	626.0	601.0
GDP-Index (Götz 1997b: 775)			100.0	91.6	79.4	76.3	71.8
GDP-Index (World Bank & Goskomstat data, cited in Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 889)	100.0	95.0	81.2	74.2	64.8		
GDP-Index (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 889)	100.0	87.2	70.5	62.0	52.7		
GDP: Annual change (Götz 1997b: 775)				-8.4	-13.3	-3.8	-6.0
GDP: Annual change (Götz 1997d: 2, estimates taken from a graph)	-3.0	-5.0	-14.5	-8.5	-12.9	-4.0	-5.0
GDP: Annual change (IMF 1996: 177)		-13.0	-19.0	-12.0	-15.0	-4.0	

The significance of this development becomes obvious when compared to the economic decline the U.S. suffered from during the Great Depression of 1929-33: The American GDP dropped by almost 31 %, whereas the Russian decline between 1989 and 1995 comes up to more than 50 %. For this Russian phenomenon Steven Rosefielde coined the term of 'hyper-depression'. (see Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 889f.) The present Russian GDP losses also surpass former Russian and Soviet GDP reductions during World Wars I and II, and Russian GDP per capita fares bad compared to other countries and is now below the figures for Bulgaria and Romania, but also for countries like Jordan, Botswana and Gabun. In contrast to this, e.g. Armenia, Georgia and Lithuania, all of them successor states to the Soviet Union, experienced real economic growth in recent years. (Gumpel 1997: 762)

Data on industrial production also show an impressive drop, since industrial production was cut by about 50 % between 1989 and 1996. This can be seen as a remarkable de-industrialization process. Although in 1995/96 the reduction lost momentum, it has not yet reached its bottom as can be seen in the following table.

The precariousness of this situation is aggravated by the fact that it has become commonplace throughout the economy not to pay the bills. In early 1997, on average between 70 and 80 % of all the bills within industry have not been paid, and in some branches such as the coal industry the percentage has even reached 90 %. (Gumpel 1997: 765) It should be added that the table below also displays the data for the production in agriculture. Although there is a considerable reduction, it does not reach the extent of the drop in industrial production.

Table 2: Industrial and agrarian production in Russia

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Industrial production index (Götz 1997b: 775)	100.0	86.2	67.8	65.8	61.8
Industrial production: Annual change (Götz 1997b: 775)		-13.8	-21.4	-2.9	-6.0
Industrial production: Annual change (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 889)	-18.0	-16.0	-21.0	-3.0	
Agrarian production index (Götz 1997b: 775)	100.0	96.1	84.5	77.5	72.1
Agrarian production: Annual change (Götz 1997b: 775)		-3.9	-12.1	-8.3	-7.0

Looking at the development of production in specific industries reveals striking differences:

Table 3: Annual change in output in specific industries in Russia (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 901)

	1992	1993	1994	1995
Natural gas	-1.4	-3.0	-2.0	-2.0
Electricity generation	-4.0	-5.3	-8.8	-3.2
Coal	2.2	-8.0	-11.0	-3.0
Oil extraction	-16.0	-14.0	-10.0	-3.0
Oil processing	-11.2	-18.0	-16.0	-2.0
Iron & steel	-17.4	-16.6	-17.4	8.7
Non-ferrous metallurgy	-26.8	-18.1	-9.1	2.1
Chemical & petrochemical industry	-22.3	-21.5	-28.9	7.7
Wood, wood processing & paper industry	-14.6	-18.7	-31.2	-6.9
Building materials industry	-24.7	-17.6	-28.9	-8.2
Machine building	-14.9	-16.6	-39.4	-9.7
Food industry	-18.7	-9.2	-21.9	-8.7
Light industry	-26.4	-23.4	-47.3	-30.7

The general picture emanating from these data shows the extractive industries gaining ground relative to other industries between 1992 and 1994. During these years they increased their share of Russian production (and Russian exports). For this period of time there is a correlation between the degree of processing in a given industry and the extent of the drop in its output: the higher the processing degree, the greater the output fall. In the final analysis and in the view of these data, it is justified to speak of a „primitivisation of the Russian economy“ as Hedlund & Sundström (1996: 900) have done.

In addition, inflation gives reason for sincere concern. Here, the speed in increase has been reduced in the recent past, but inflation is still a major problem. In 1991, for example, the situation was very serious, because, in that year alone, the Russian authorities printed more money than in the previous 30 years. Although it would be mistaken to speak of some sort of hyper-inflation, it is still justified to describe inflation in Russia as high or chronic.

Table 4: Inflation, debt and debt service in Russia

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Inflation rate (Götz 1997b: 775)				840.0	215.0	131.0	22.0	
Inflation rate (Götz 1997d: 2, estimates taken from a graph)	0	100.0	2500.0	800.0	250.0	200.0	30.0	<10.0
Inflation rate (IMF 1996: 185)		92.7	1353.0	896.0	302.0	190.2		
External debt (bio. USD) (Götz 1997b: 775)				83.9	94.2	120.4	130.0	
External debt (bio. USD) (IMF 1996: 226)		95.3	105.4	110.4	119.8	124.1	125.2	136.8
Debt service payments (bio. USD) (IMF 1996: 226)		16.3	12.6	5.0	3.0	6.6	9.1	9.3
Debt service payments (bio. USD) (Gumpel 1997: 766)						6.7	7.6	

Another perturbing development in the economy is the substantial brain drain which started in 1990/91. Since then, more than one third of the people working in R&D have left Russia. In 1991, R&D expenditures were 15 times higher than in 1996, and the Ministry of Science has even been abolished. Russian R&D institutions have experienced an exodus of their staff, because a ratio of 40 up to 70 % of them have left their jobs in order to find better jobs, many of them in foreign countries. It is hardly surprising, then, that the number of patents dropped from 180.500 in 1987 to a mere 23.000 in 1994. (Lynch 1995: 28f.; Lysenko 1997a: 2f.) What follows from this is that there has been very little innovative production in the last half decade.

Moreover, state debts are mounting. This can partly be explained by the plummeting of tax revenues. (Höhmnn 1997: 15) This means that the Russian state is increasingly in need of international loans and Moscow has even been accused of wilfully deceiving and manipulating the negotiations of loans to Russia. (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 908) These loans are provided by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the London and the Paris Club which can and do resort to moratoria on these loans to reach Russian compliance. (see Höhmnn/Meier 1996) Indeed, within a couple of years, the Russian Federation has overtaken Brazil as the most heavily indebted country in the world. At present, Moscow has to pay between 0.5 and 1.0 bio. USD per month in servicing its debts. State indebtedness within the country has doubled each year since the early 1990s and is projected at 15 % of the Russian GDP in 1997. (Hishow 1997)

As a consequence, investment by the state, and thus its leeway for political engineering, is meagre. (Gumpel 1997: 766) According to the calculations of Hedlund & Sundström (1996: 890) investment in the Russian economy declined by more than 60 % between 1992-94. This picture is completed by the fact that - except for the energy sector - there has been little foreign direct investment in Russia - only 1.0 bio USD in 1994 and 1.2 bio. USD in 1995. If there is any at all, it is placed in strategic sectors such as the energy complex (in 1995 1.0 bio USD out of a total of 1.2 bio. USD) or in sectors where only minor portions of investment are necessary and where short spans of amortisation are to be expected. Compared to Eastern European countries, foreign direct investment in Russia is quite small. Simultaneously, capital exports from Russia surpass capital imports several times: Russian capital flees the country. For 1993 alone, the Russian capital flight abroad is estimated at 15 bio. USD. According to information provided by the Russian Ministry of the Interior, 50 to 80 bio. USD have fled the country in 1994, and about 100 bio. in 1995. By contrast, foreign direct investment in Russia between 1992 and 1995 is calculated as 1-2 bio. USD on average per year. (Götz 1996a; Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 910; Lynch 1995: 24, 28f.; Beitel 1995: 6, 25; Shlapentokh 1994: 3)

Table 5: Investment in Russia

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Investments in kind index (Götz 1997b: 775)	100.0	88.6	66.9	60.2	49.4
Investment: Annual change (Götz 1997b: 775)		-11.4	-24.5	-9.9	-18.0
Investment: Annual change (Birman 1996: 740)	-40.0	-12.0	-26.0		
Investment: Annual change (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 889)	-40.0	-15.0	-25.0	-13.0	

It is interesting how business people themselves view the situation. Table 6 below presents the findings of a survey among the participants of the Second Conference of Russian Entrepreneurs in November 1995 and shows considerable discontent in the business elite. The political, legal and economic conditions are seen as unsettled, insecure and unpredictable.

Table 6: The most serious threats to business (Damaskin 1997: 55)

Business threats	Percentage
Russian business partners are not reliable	61
Blackmailing by civil servants	57
Political instability	54
Financial instability	53
Administrative and institutional constraint of entrepreneurial rights	44
Growing criminalization of the economy	44
Blackmailing by criminal groups	34
Problems with the right of ownership concerning land and ground	30
Criminals threatening the personal security	28
Foreign business partners are not reliable	11
Low expertise of own personnel	10
Industrial espionage	6
Corruption of own personnel	4

To summarize, then: The macroeconomic data provided here could point to „hysteresis effects“. This means that „processes where macroeconomic variables that are subjected to a shock do not return to their original position but remain instead at the new level, in a new equilibrium“. (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 910) However, various indicators show that the downturn seems to have come to a halt, thus a modest upswing is conceivable. (For such a less sceptical interpretation see Götz 1996c: 6; 1997d) Nevertheless, all things considered and in view of the insecurity among the Russian business elite, one cannot avoid the impression that, economically, the Russian Bear is still standing on feet of clay which leaves plenty of incentives for perceptions of insecurity and unpredictability. Therefore, within most parts of the society a profound ‘de-mythification’ of market economic principles and capitalism has developed. This is aptly epitomized in a Russian (half-) joke: „We know now that everything they told us about Communism was false. And everything they told us about capitalism was true.“ (cited in Cottrell 1997: 30) The impact of such a mood may be far-reaching.

2.2 ... and society

The economic problems of the Russian Federation have considerable repercussions in the society; the number of people who are losers of the modernization process has swollen to large portions of society. A number of indicators may be cited to illustrate this: according to Victor Iljuschin, First Deputy Prime Minister in 1996, real income has dropped by 40 % in the time period since the dissolution of the Soviet Union up to 1996. In 1996, the average monthly income amounted to 779.000 Rbl., which is about 5 USD per day. The subsistence minimum is calculated at 47.4 % of the average income and 22 % of the population lived below this threshold in 1996. (Lysenko 1997b: 2)

This, however, is only one part of the story. The real extent of poverty in Russia is much higher and has been calculated at no less than 54-58 % by Tatyana Zaslavskaya of the Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion (VTsIOM). According to her findings, poverty is increasingly produced by low wages. (see Mikhalev 1996: 15) To give some examples, branches in which people are paid less than the subsistence minimum are: non-ferrous metallurgy (-11 %), iron metallurgy (-18 %), machine building (more than -20 %), petrochemical industry (-27 %) and paper (-30 %). (Lysenko 1997b: 5) Although Zaslavskaya's figures seem somewhat too far-fetched, even Western experts assume that about a fifth up to one third of the Russian population lives below the official poverty line. (Götz 1997d: 4) On the other side of the coin, there has emerged a class of extremely rich Russians, the *Nouveaux riches*, the new Russians. This increasing gap between rich and poor is illustrated by the following table:

Table 7: Russian income distribution per quintiles (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 898)

(in percent)	1993	1994	1995
Group I (lowest)	5.8	5.3	5.5
Group II	11.1	10.2	10.2
Group III	16.7	15.2	15.0
Group IV	24.8	23.0	22.4
Group V (highest)	41.6	46.3	46.9

As can be seen, the richest 20 % of the Russian population have increased their share of the Russian income between 1993 and 1995 at the expense of the remaining four fifths. The gap between the poorest and the wealthiest fifth increased from 1 to 7.2 to 1 to 8.5.

In another calculation, the extent of this widening mismatch becomes still more impressive. In 1991, the incomes of the wealthiest 10 % of the population were 4.5 times higher than the incomes of the poorest 10 %; in 1992 the figure was 6.5 - 8 times and in 1994 it even grew to 15 times. Since then it has been reduced somewhat to about 13 times in 1996 and 1997. (Birman 1996: 745; Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 898; Höhmann 1997: 15; Götz 1997d: 4) The Russian people are increasingly worried about this. As the findings of the *World Values* survey indicate, the percentage of people who placed themselves in the first five categories thus favouring a closure of the income gap raised from 26 % in 1991, to 50 % in 1993 and to 61 % in 1996.

Table 8: The issue of income equality (in percent; Kääriäinen 1997: 17)

Incomes should be made	1991	1993	1996
More equal: 1	4	9	15
2	2	4	8
3	4	8	11
4	4	8	9
5	12	21	18
6	8	8	6
7	13	12	9
8	15	12	7
9	6	4	4
More unequal: 10	22	10	9
Don't know	11	4	4

Other items point to substantial social upheaval and elementary insecurity. In 1994, the number of suicides has risen by 50 % compared to one year earlier and the birth rate declined from 2.2 % in 1987 to a mere 1.3 % in 1993. (Shlapentokh 1994: 10) Male life expectancy declined from 64 years in 1990 to 57 years in 1994, but is improving now, though very slowly. (Götz 1997d: 3) Alcoholism is a bigger problem than ever and the number of people who are addicted to drugs is estimated at 1.5 to 6.0 million (1995). (Heinrich/Pleines 1997: 69) Homelessness is on the rise and is accompanied by comparatively new phenomena like street children and child prostitution. (UNICEF 1997)

When it comes to unemployment, it is worth noting that official Russian data on unemployment are much too low according to Western experts. When one employs the

criteria and calculation standards of the International Labor Organization (ILO) unemployment as shown in the following table is still very modest compared to Western data. However, one has to bear in mind that quite a few Russians simply do not register themselves as unemployed. Thus, there is a broad twilight zone. Also, there are huge regional differences. In December 1995, for example, the (official) unemployment rate for Ingushetia was at 22 %, at 11 % for Ivanovo and only at 0.5 % for Moscow. To these figures, the people have to be added who (again according to official data) are just short-time workers. In January 1996, they were 4.5 mio. or 6 % of the working population. (OECD 1996: 119f.) Furthermore, it should be mentioned that in 1994, 20-30 % of those who had jobs were on forced leave for months (Birman 1996: 745) and that according to the findings of the *World Values* survey 5 % within the age group 18-28 never had a job (Kääriäinen 1997: 8) If the assumption of the American economist and economic adviser in Russia, Joseph Blasi, and his colleagues is valid - that more than 4.000 Russian companies will go bankrupt leaving hundreds of thousands of people out of work (Blasi/Kroumova/Kruse 1996; Hassel 1997; Cottrell 1997) - , then the outlook is bleak, indeed.

Table 9: Wages, income, poverty and unemployment in Russia¹

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Real wages: Annual change (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 897)	-7.0	-4.0	-16.0	-26.0	
Real incomes: Annual change (Hedlund/Sundström 1996: 897)	-46.0	13.0	15.6	-13.0	
Poverty rate (Götz 1997b: 775)		28.6	22.5	24.7	21.4
Unemployment rate, according to ILO criteria (Götz 1997b: 775)		5.7	7.5	8.8	6.8

To make a living, people often have second or even third jobs. In addition, it is quite commonplace that people receive their wages as a payment in kind, which reflects that barter makes up for up to 40 % of the companies' overall business and trade. (see also Kirkow 1997b; *Economist*, May 15, 1997: 77f.) The Russian economy apparently develops backward, into some kind of pre-industrial stage. However, in the face of the

¹ Note: To clarify the distinction between real wages and real incomes Hedlund/Sundström (1996: 897) write: „While figures on real wage trends measure the officially registered wage rates, irrespective of when or whether the wages are actually paid out, figures on real incomes measure what households actually have to spend, and thus provide a better picture of the social dimension of systemic change.“ And they go on commenting the data: „The recovery of real incomes that occurred during 1993 and 1994 reflects the fact that households were finding alternative sources of income, most probably in various forms of ‘private’ ventures. But the renewed downward trend in 1995 indicates the limited

common, sometimes months-long delays in the payment of wages - the most important problem for the people according to public opinion surveys (see table 10 below) - most people welcome this procedure since it means getting at least something for one's work.

The data in the following table present the findings of a VTsIOM survey on the worries of Russians in 1995 compared to 1997. This survey was conducted with 1.600 respondents across Russia, with each citing up to six worries.

Table 10: What worries Russians (Economist, March 8, 1997: 55)

(in percent)	December 1995	February 1997
Delays in paying wages and pensions	31	66
Rising crime rate	35	42
Slump in industry and farming	23	40
Rising unemployment	26	39
Rising prices	43	37
Declining public health	16	29
Gap between rich and poor	20	28
Weak government	19	27
Corruption	15	24
Moral and cultural decline	14	18
State of armed forces	15	16
War in Chechnya	33	13

Although discontent among Russians is growing, and although one is inclined to expect large-scale social protests, there still is a general apathy in Russian society when it comes to undertaking action. *Prima facie*, it is very surprising that the vast majority of the Russian population seems to have come to terms with the present turmoil and to have psychologically accepted the present *malaise* as quite 'normal'. Russian policymakers are fast in pointing to comparable conditions in the U.S. in order to confirm this mood. (Shlapentokh 1996a) The majority of the people even submits to the ubiquitous corruption and the rise of organized crime as something like a divine ordinance. Those who are better off have their private security guards, whereas general confidence in the police forces has been eroded. Despite the privatization of personal

sustainability of such endeavours. "According to Birman (1996: 743) the average wage level in March 1995 did only reach 71 % of the March 1994 level.

security, however, roughly 200 bankers and business people have been killed in 1995-96. (Shlapentokh 1997b: 2)

2.3 The octopus of organized crime

The significance of the Russian mafia deserves more detailed treatment. According to the Surikov Report (Surikov 1995), which is based upon data provided by the Russian intelligence unit FSK, since 1990 there has been a number of recorded attempts by the Italian mafia, the Columbian drug cartel and the Mexican *Tihuana Group* to establish contacts with first the Soviet and then the Russian mafia. A notable increase in activities has been recorded between 1991 and 1993 which indicates that the desintegration of the system of law enforcement due to the decay of state institutions and institutional 'shapelessness' (Fairbanks 1994: 61) provided fertile ground for criminal activities. The substantial increase in drug-trafficking from the Near East, Central Asia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and even the 'Golden Triangle' to Western countries *via* Russia, Ukraine and the Black Sea, and also the growth in drug-related crimes are proof of this as well as the seizing of 40 tons of narcotics in 1993 alone - despite increasing leaks in the security and police network. (Aves 1995: 3f.; Heinrich/Pleines 1997: 66-68)

One may catch a slight hunch of the extent of the problem by looking at the so-called *Solncevo-Group* from Moscow which tried to organize drug-trafficking from South America into Russia. When Russian police forces raided this group in August 1995, they found out that this group consisted of more than 2000 active members, was in control of a couple of banks and financial organizations and ran about 100 small businesses for purposes of money laundering. (Heinrich/Pleines 1997: 68)

To broaden the view, no less than 40.000 Russian enterprises, including roughly 500 banks, are either controlled or have been established by major criminal groupings, the number of the latter being calculated as exceeding 200.000. They hide their criminal activities by running about 1.500 legally operating export and import companies. 70 up to 80 % of the companies and banks operating in the Russian Federation pay protection money, according to information by the Russian Ministry of the Interior. The whole production process is characterized by criminalization (Glinkina 1997a: 348, 352; Glinkina 1997b: 7, 30f.; Lapina 1997), which explains the booming body guard

business for business people (and also politicians) and the huge sums of money companies spend on intelligence, counter-intelligence and CEO protection. (see Shlapentokh 1997b: 3)

As the Surikov Report (1995) points out, privatization and the sale of former state properties offered plenty of opportunity for money laundering. Another incentive for international crime organization was provided by the lacking border controls between Iran and Byelorussia, thus opening ample opportunities for profitable trading routes for drugs coming from the Near and Far East and also contributing to the spread of economic crime, corruption, and mafia-like groupings to Georgia, Abkhazia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Tajikistan, Moldova, the Crimea and other countries of the former Soviet Union. An important center for this drug-trafficking purportedly was the Chechnya of General Dudayev. The further route of these drugs can then be traced to the Lithuanian port city of Klaipeda from which they were transported to Great Britain and other European countries.

Though one has to take into account that the Surikov Report may not be totally reliable,² this does not mean to underestimate the serious threats posed by organized crime in Russia and its transnational partners to Russian politics, the economy and the society. (The European dimensions of transnational risks are dealt with by Politi 1997) Following the Surikov Report (but with due reservations) organized crime could establish control over the Russian financial system by reaching a dominant influence in three to four of the biggest banks and 15 to 20 of the second ranking ones. Together with an increasing say in important economic sectors and especially in the export sector, this could be synonymous with the mafia taking over the political power. (Surikov 1995: 12, 17, 20) According to a different source, a top official in the Russian Ministry of the Interior named Alexander Gurov, this has long been achieved because from his point of view the Russian mafias controlled about 70 % of the Russian banks already in 1994. (Shlapentokh 1994: 16)

² It is conceivable that one of its intention was to provide a legitimization for Russian interventions in the Caucasus and in Central Asia. One strong indicator for this is that the report presented the Russian intervention in Chechnya as being in perfect consonance with the West precisely because of the interruption of drug trading routes. One may also speculate whether a further covert intention of the report might have been to provide arguments to install a distinctly authoritarian or even dictatorial regime in Moscow which might have gained the approval of the West as it wavers the flag of fighting the mafia and international drug-trafficking.

The relations between corruption and crime seem to be symbiotic drawing ever more sectors of the economy, of society and politics into their orbit, thereby pointing towards the adaptation of the Columbian model in Russia or to the renaissance of feudalism. (Shlapentokh 1994: 20; see also Glinkina 1997a: 348) Public administration is able to offer various privileges to corrupt citizens. These may be: rebates on taxes, export licenses, cheap credits, protection by special military units and positions within the political system. Citizens, for their part, and especially businessmen, bribe politicians by providing money for their election campaigns or making substantial presents. Criminal groupings, eventually, offer politicians and businessmen ample possibilities for money laundering, and they offer protection, a so-called *krysha* (= roof). Companies have to pay for this protection with 10 up to 30 % of their profits, and indeed, they are in general not very reluctant to do so since a *krysha* is at present the single most effective instrument to find solutions to problems with customers or suppliers and business partners who do not pay their bills. The decomposition of state institutions implies a decay of state functions, and this gap is being filled by criminal organizations. Organized crime, then, produces - for a good deal of money - the stability required by companies to do business. This means that central state functions are privatized, thus in turn further undermining the stability of state institutions.

A *krysha* is both a shield and a weapon; it can be used for offensive as well as defensive means. It is an instrument to hold the field against rivals - in politics as well as in business - and 'neutralize' them when necessary. In some sense, then, a *krysha* becomes the lifestyle of a corrupt and decomposing society. The organizations providing a *krysha*, in turn, receive money, protection against police and juridical prosecution, and even political offices. (Shlapentokh 1996b: 401ff.; Shlapentokh 1996a) This means that the tentacles of the Russian mafia increasingly reach out to the political system. According to the estimate of some Moscow political scientists from August 1995, 10 up to 15 % of the members of parliament had direct contacts to organized crime (Shlapentokh 1995: 24, 26, 33); and following Glinkina (1997a: 351; 1997b: 32) about 70 % of Russian civil servants including the customs controls are deemed corrupt.

For quite a number of people, the mafia nowadays is even more powerful than parliament and public administration. *Mafiosi* increasingly become legally untouchable; they enjoy a kind of immunity similar to that of Soviet functionaries in the past. This perhaps explains the widespread feeling of helplessness in the face of the criminal activities. And sometimes, this feeling is even transformed into quite the opposite:

according to such a perspective, the mafia has to go through some kind of *Al Capone* or *Chicago* period before it can become a truly and incredibly powerful instrument for social order in the future. (see Shlapentokh 1994: 18)

2.4 Apathetic society

The prevailing mood in Russian society can be characterized as apathetic, as it has been mentioned above. To illustrate this point, the presentation of two items of the *World Values* surveys may be in order:

Table 11: Issues considered most important (in percent; Kääriäinen 1997: 21)

	1991	1993	1996
<i>If you had to choose, which one of these things would you say is most important?</i>			
Maintaining order in the nation	57	61	64
Giving people more opportunities to influence important government decisions	23	13	15
Fighting rising prices	14	23	18
Protecting freedom of speech	2	1	2
Don't know	3	2	1
<i>Here is another list. In your opinion, which one of these is most important?</i>			
A stable economy	63	65	67
Progress towards a less impersonal and more humane society	9	8	6
Progress toward a society in which ideas count more than money	5	3	4
Fighting crime	20	22	21
Don't know	2	2	2

Indifference and apathy also cover politics. Indeed, there is a profound disenchantment with politics to be found in Russia. The attitude towards the executive and the parliament is predominantly characterized by feelings of disappointment, anger and indifference. (Schröder 1997a: 6) Not only does the present government underlie a process of erosion of its political legitimacy, but the *maelstrom* of political disenchantment has also reached the concept of democracy as a political tool of governing a country and led to a withdrawal from the public into the private sphere. (Shlapentokh 1995: 14) This passivity is being enhanced by

- (1) the long history of autocratic political rule in Russia. This is tantamount to an almost complete absence of democratic or quasi-democratic traditions (for an opposite view see Petro 1995);
- (2) the patrimonial tradition of the country. This incorporates the - in a sense feudal - conviction that the state somehow belongs to the government;
- (3) the lack of a tradition of a state of law. Instead, there is arbitrary law devoid of justice which reminds us of a quotation by Count Benckendorff, Chief of the Secret Police under Tsar Nicholas I (1825-55), that „laws are written for subordinates, not for the authorities“. (quoted in Kennaway 1997: 3); and
- (4) the assumption that a recourse to violent action would only aggravate the plight of present-day life.

Taking up the character of Ilya Ilyich Oblomov as created by the Russian author I.A. Goncharov in 1858, this has been termed the *Oblomov-Syndrome* or *Oblomschina*, the state of being Oblomov. It fits into this picture that there is a widespread belief in miracles and, indeed, fairy tales often become social utopias. (Kennaway 1997) It is the daily fight for survival which apparently determines social life, and this fight - oddly enough in a country which could have been supposed to have a strong, historically grounded sense for solidarity - often enough is a war of all against all, the Hobbesian nightmare. This is reflected in the following table on social trust and mistrust.

Table 12: Social trust (in percent: Kääriäinen 1997: 23)

	1991	1993	1996
<i>Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you have to be very careful in dealing with people?</i>			
Trust	35	29	19
Mistrust/suspicion	58	66	73
Don't know	7	5	7

In a sense, the privatization in the economy goes hand in hand with an extreme privatization of social and political life in Russia. Social norms and values crumble under the given conditions of 'jungle individualism': „Russians have been transformed into people who are almost totally indifferent to any social value, to any public issue, and are reluctant to make even the slightest sacrifice for the public good.“ (Shlapentokh 1996b: 397; Shlapentokh 1995: 10-13, quotation 12; see also Shlapentokh 1996a: 5) Kääriäinen (1997) somewhat modifies this analysis by pointing out that the Russians individually, in their *lifeworld* - to take up a notion of Jürgen Habermas - adhere to moral principles which can be termed 'normal', but that the conditions - *systems* (Habermas) - are perceived by them as preventing them from implementing these principles.

3 Stagnation of the political system

The Russian political leadership is relatively inactive in fighting the *Oblomov-Syndrome*. Thus, „*Bonjour, stagnation*“ was the essence of Shlapentokh's comment on the outcome of the Russian presidential elections of July 3, 1996, which confirmed Boris Yeltsin's presidency. (Shlapentokh 1996a. For an opposite view see Rahr 1996a, 1996b) In this perspective, the electoral result was to be interpreted by the Russian population as a mandate to prolong the policy of stagnation because almost all of the negative developments in politics, society and economy are apparently accepted as normal. The background of Yeltsin's victory which was overwhelmingly based on the electoral outcome in the cities should also be mentioned:

- (1) Yeltsin's campaign machine exerted a large-scale pressure on the Russian media to report foremost and positively on Yeltsin;

- (2) his campaign advisers convinced him to use state funds to distribute election presents and make election promises;
- (3) Yeltsin himself threatened the Russian mayors and the presidents of non-Russian territories with demission in case that the electoral results in their electoral districts would not turn out the expected results;
- (4) the election team assembled by Yeltsin succeeded in overcoming the stalemate among the three prevalent political orientations in the country (capitalism, socialism, and Swedish-style social democracy) by gathering the support of the majority of the voters leaning towards the Swedish model; and
- (5) Yeltsin's electoral slogan was intelligently chosen: *Vote or you will lose* successfully transported the image of grave losses for almost everybody in Russia in case that Gennadij Sjaganov of the Communist Party should win the vote. (Shlapentokh 1996a: 2f., 6, 13)

Nevertheless, the electoral outcome did not constitute a blank cheque for Yeltsin. The capability of the Russians to suffer, though impressive and arguably the single most important resource in the transformation of the country, certainly has its limits. It may be argued that the Yeltsin Administration can not afford little or no socio-economic progress over time. Also, a further increase in unemployment is to be avoided. Taken together, there may be a point, a threshold or a limit when apathy turns into protest. Various strikes of the workers, particularly of the mine workers who have, at several times, striked for weeks and months, but also the September 1996 strikes of thousands of workers in the energy sector and in defence industries, may be just the tip of the iceberg. However, Yeltsin's electoral campaign put a heavy additional strain on state resources, money which is now lacking for steering and governing functions which are on the whole not very developed either. The governing crisis may be even more propelled by the severe health problems of the president which raise serious doubts about his ruling capacity. According to most observers, the decay of state institutions has been steadily advancing; since 1989/90, it has been impossible to establish some kind of a new social contract. (Segbers 1994: 23, 26)

Therefore, the central challenge to Russia is to create or re-create at least minimally efficient state and administrative structures. (Lynch 1995: 33) As the federal level increasingly becomes fictitious, not only criminal groupings, as we have already seen,

but also various politically relevant spaces, administrative units and economic units assume more steering functions than before. (Segbers 1994: 20) Prolonging the mounting regionalism within the Russian Federation into the future, a scenario becomes conceivable in which the factual disintegration of Russia is likely and in which the maintenance of the territorial integrity for the coming 20 to 25 years is increasingly to be doubted. The process of the breakdown of the empire, including the decomposition and decay of the Russian Federation might not have come to an end yet. (see Lynch 1995: 31; Belkin 1993: 17; Gumpel 1997: 771)

The diagnosis of declining legitimacy of the political leadership plus the lack of democratic traditions may successively lead to an ever-louder call for a strong leader directing and commanding the future of the country. The widespread belief in miracles and fairy tales is resonating with this. The Yeltsin-type presidential democracy is busily trying to create an aura of strong leadership, but the President's impaired health is largely spoiling these efforts.

In 1996, former General and Security Adviser in the National Security Council Alexander Lebed was more successful in conveying leadership qualities to the people. With a determined call for law and order, he was able to gather a certain popularity which he tried to translate into political influence and power. At the same time, he publicly declared democracy to be inappropriate for Russia. From the evidence available, he seemed to be perceived as authentic by the people. They took his concern for the country for real and not for a concealed pursuit of his own personal interests; his advocacy and fight for *poryadok* (order) is seen as sincere. His autobiography where he draws an almost romantic picture of Russia as a great power and tries to ground present-day Russia mainly on the heroism and glory of the army, is full of situations showing him as openly and heavily criticizing his superiors. This earns him sympathy from the part of ordinary people. (see Kennaway 1996; Lebed 1997a) According to surveys of September 1996 and early 1997, Lebed can be identified as the most trusted Russian politician only recently to be overtaken by Boris Nemzov, First Deputy Prime Minister and Energy Minister. (Schröder 1997a: 4f.; Economist, January 18, 1997: 47; see also Lebed's 1997b estimate of Nemzov)

Despite his demission in mid-October 1996 - it is quite certain that this was something Lebed reckoned with because the National Security Council had not met since June 1996 and because a parallel institution not to be headed by Lebed was created in early October 1996 - he still might be one of a couple of strong men trusted in - more than in any laws or parliamentary proceedings - by about 55 % of respondents of a survey by the *United States Information Agency* (USIA) in the fall of 1992, and expected to master an improvement of the country's situation. (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe 1993: 49) Thus, a turn to authoritarian and autocratic political structures in Moscow is by no means to be ruled out.

However, it is to be questioned whether Lebed commands sufficient power resources and personal relations after his clash with Anatolij Kulikov, Minister of the Interior, who suspected Lebed to plot a *coup d'état*, and after Lebed's demission which is commonly ascribed to the activities of Chubais. On the other hand, Lebed's quite recently established contacts to Aleksander Korzhakov, the former chief body guard of the president, may be an important asset. Lebed's popularity in society can be seen from his good performance in the presidential elections when he gained 15 % of the votes (= 11 mio.), and it keeps him within the political power struggle in Russia as a heavyweight. The same applies to the substantial support he finds in the army.³ The backing of the armed forces which are obviously destitute and demoralized because of the world political changes and highly dissatisfied because of considerable delays in payments, aging equipment and the lack of resources for the modernization of the weaponry - which, as may be added, give reason for concern in terms of the secure control of weapons of mass destruction in Russia - may be crucial in the political power struggle. (Shlapentokh 1997)

Also, Lebed might profit from the present turmoil and rivalries among the 'Group of Seven'. Either, various economic and financial groupings which are currently not center stage and within the cartel of power may gather around Lebed for political influence and - in the wake of it - improved economic opportunities. Or Lebed, who currently does not find support within the 'Group of Seven', but who finds considerable backing

³ Lebed also had close ties to the former Defence Minister Igor Rodionov. Since Rodionov has been replaced by Igor Sergejev (May 22, 1997), however, this asset has been substantially reduced. (see Schmidt-Skipiol 1997. On Rodionov and his position on the overdue reform of the Russian military see Orr 1997; Rogov 1997; Banks 1997/98)

among small- and medium-scale businessmen and among regional economic elites, especially in depressed areas in Central and South Russia, may be approached by parts of them if this group should increasingly fall apart. The fights for the succession of Yeltsin have obviously been going on for quite a while and it may be assumed that this fight will be fought out in the triangle Chernomyrdin - Lebed - Chubais, plus arguably some outsider chances for Jurij Lushkow, the Mayor of Moscow, who is supported by the Most group, and Boris Nemzov. (Petuchow/Wjunizkij 1997) Currently, however, Chernomyrdin presumably stands the best chances.

A miraculous belief in a strong man like Lebed, a belief currently adhered to by about 70 % of the population (Shlapentokh 1997b: 4) may induce the people to turn their back on democracy, the more so since they are substantially disillusioned about democracy. Within critical political conditions there is considerable 'fluidity' (Dobry 1986) leaving space for unexpected manoeuvres, alliances and political coalitions. Under the pretext to prevent the complete collapse of the Russian economy, to provide jobs and to forestall the imminent 'Lebanonization' of the country, an authoritarian-dictatorial system of conservative-nationalist forces or a military regime may become acceptable forms of political regime. (see Karaganov 1994: 225)

4 The restoration of the empire? Or: Phoenix from the ashes?

When it comes to Russian foreign and security policies, one may start from the assumption that the points raised in the preceding analysis do have an impact on how Russians - the elites as well as the society at large - think about issues of foreign and security policies. In the face of large-scale socio-economic and political insecurity it may be assumed that foreign policy is a contested policy arena and is often conceived in terms of domestic politics and for domestic purposes. This presumably leaves some room for sudden and erratic twists and turns making it hard for the outside world to calculate the Russian factor. In addition, the process of geopolitical minimization that has shrunk the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation is deeply affecting the image Russians have of their country, adding to the Russian identity crisis and fundamentally affecting the views and attitudes of Russians towards foreign policy.

4.1 The loss of the empire: The Russo-Soviet 'de-colonialization'

In the 20th century, the de-colonialization of the Russo-Soviet empire took place in several steps. By looking at the period following World War II, we see that in the aftermath of a longer-term period of relative stability where the uprisings in the German Democratic Republic in 1953, in Hungary in 1956 and the Prague Spring of 1968 can be interpreted as attempts at de-colonialization, this process regained momentum in the 1980s. *Solidarnosc* in Poland at the beginning of the decade first comes to mind. In the second half of the 1980s - and to a large extent as a result of Gorbachev's *perestrojka* - the countries in Eastern Europe became independent. At last, in 1991 and 1992, independence was also given to the 14 non-Russian Soviet republics.

For the Russian military, the erosion of the empire meant both a loss of prestige in the domestic setting and a loss of influence in the area of foreign policy. The closure of military bases all over the globe also has to be mentioned in this context. (Clayton 1995: 2f.) The socio-psychological consequences of this minimization process - compared to the territory of the former Soviet Union the Russian Federation is about 25 % smaller - are not to be underestimated. The post-imperial (or neo-imperial?) elements of the Russian political culture tend to complicate the processes of reform and democratization. In particular, they impede the civilian control of the military, since de-colonialization is perceived as a destabilization of national security. In military and political leadership circles, but also within the population at large, Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic states and the Caucasus are - to various and significantly differing degrees - viewed as 'ours'. Ukraine usually receives a particular attention since the Kiev *Rus* of the 10th century is still regarded as the cradle of the Russian state and of Russian Orthodox Christianity. (Kennaway 1997; Clayton 1995: 11, 19. On the Baltic states see Girnius 1994: 33) Ukraine is not only of ethnic and cultural, but also of economic importance to Russia since it delivered about 25 % of the Soviet Gross National Product and 21 % of its agricultural output. Simultaneously, Ukraine is dependent on working relations with Russia in terms of the economy and the energy sector. (see Ham 1994: 5) Quite the same applies to Byelorussia; 80 % of its energy imports are provided by Russia. In addition, the process of *nation-* and *state-building* is not yet settled in this country. (Lindner 1995: 36, 38)

In view of this, there might be a Russian rump state at the end of the de-colonialization process which may form some kind of Slavic Confederation most likely with Byelorus, but perhaps also with Ukraine. (Clayton 1995: 7, 10) In this context, the following 1994 survey is quite instructive: according to the respondents, improved relations should be established with: Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kirgisia (1 %); the Caucasian republics (4-5 %), Ukraine (70 %) and Byelorus (43 %). (Shlapentokh 1994: 26) Even more instructive are the findings of John Dunlop concerning the idea of creating a full-fledged union with certain states:

Table 13: The idea of *Greater Russia* in Russian society (Dunlop 1997: 57)

Moscow should form a union with	September 1992	March 1994
Ukraine	24 %	31 %
Byelorus	23 %	21 %
Kazakhstan	12 %	-

Within the military, such nationalistic views were - and still are - even more virulent. After the demise of the Soviet union, the armed forces indulged in a state of psychological disarray because of the prior „conjoining of the concepts ‘Russian’ and ‘Soviet’“⁴ which was tantamount to a strong inclination to save the empire based on what can be termed ‘Soviet patriotism’. In February 1992, 71 % of the Russian officers were in favour of a reestablishment of one state within the former Soviet border and heavily criticized Russian foreign policy; in 1994 the empire-saving-sentiment was on the rise within the officers group with 80 % wanting the restoration of the great power status; thus, in the same year, 40 % of them expected Zhirinovskiy to win the 1996 presidential elections; also, 62 % opted for an authoritarian political system along the lines of Pinochet’s Chile. (Dunlop 1997: 63f., quotation 29) The reason for this is a sense of degradation and humiliation within the armed forces and the ensuing „hyper-sensitivity to issues of international status“ (Mandelbaum 1997: 85) at times combined with a ‘thirst for revenge’. According to the observations of Richard Pipes (1997: 72), „(a)nyone who spends an hour with Russian generals cannot but feel the intensity of their resentment against the West as well as their own democratic government for

⁴ This conjoining is also indicated by the fact that prior to 1990 there was no Russian Communist Party. (Dunlop 1997: 29)

reducing to the status of a negligible force the army that defeated Nazi Germany and was acknowledged by the U.S. military as a peer“.

There are some variables which clearly favour such sentiments. Among them, the most important one is the strong consensus within the political leadership as well as in the Russian elite at large - despite all internal differences - that Russia is a great power and doubtlessly should uphold this status. (see also Russell 1995: 65) Taken from this perspective, the present state of affairs is far from being palatable. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) has been created to secure Russia's interests as a regional great power. In 1992, due to Russian insistence, a mutual security treaty was signed, which in effect entrusted the defence of the member states to the Russian army. Nowadays, Russian troops are deployed in almost all of the former Soviet republics except for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Azerbaijan. To ensure compliance, Moscow has also resorted to the instigation of civil wars - as in the case of Georgia - to weaken, if not topple the governments. (see Kreikemeyer/Zagorskij 1997) This led Pipes (1997: 71, 73) to conclude that though „Moscow acknowledged the sovereign status of the former Soviet republics, (...) it is a recognition that comes from the head, not the heart“ and that „a modified Brezhnev Doctrine is still in force“.

Yet, despite Russia's intention and determination to enhance CIS cohesiveness and integration by Russian dominance, if not hegemony, the CIS at present resembles the British Commonwealth more than a neo-Russian empire. (On the following see Alexandrova/Timmermann 1997) When Presidents Yeltsin and Lukashenko signed a treaty on the union of their countries in April 1997, Moscow was aiming at an absorption of Byelorussia, whereas Lukashenko's strategy can be described as dealing pieces of national sovereignty for the creation of supranational institutions by which Russian imperialist ambitions could be tamed and the Russian influence could be reduced. Officially, however, Moscow adopted a model of Western European integration and proclaimed a multispeed integration. In this view, Moscow would be the center, the union with Byelorussia the first tier, and the Union of Four within the CIS (Russia, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) - established at the end of March in 1996 and based on a customs union - the second tier with the rest of the CIS member states grouped around these core countries. Most of these countries, however, are lukewarm at best when it comes to strengthening integration within the CIS because of the

perception of Russia as an imperialist country. Since, in addition, the economic ties within the CIS are by no means existential for most of the member states, it can be expected that the desintegrative tendencies within the CIS may well become stronger in the future. There are clear signs pointing to this direction:

- (1) Already in early 1994, Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan and Uzbekistan decided to build up a closer cooperation in economic terms and so they formed the Central Asian Economic Space. They also agreed on extending this cooperation into the military sphere;
- (2) in March 1997, Moldova and Ukraine established a customs union;
- (3) one month later, in April 1997, Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan agreed on closer military cooperation and even on a joint defence plan;
- (4) there are less formal forms of cooperation such as the strategic partnership of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine based on the common interest in realizing the Eurasian transport project;
- (5) a process of „de-Russification of the periphery“ (Dunlop 1997: 46) can be observed. Although the origins of this break in the migration pattern - a net outflow is turned into a net influx - date back to the late 1970s and the war in Afghanistan, the desire for repatriation and a return of Russians and Slavs from Central Asia and Transcaucasia to Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia reached new heights in the early 1990s (see also Hyman 1997);
- (6) Ukraine, associated CIS member, cut its financial contributions to CIS institutions by 50 % in 1997;
- (7) in August 1997, Ukraine together with Georgia, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey participated in *Sea Breeze 97*, a NATO manoeuvre in the Black Sea;
- (8) trade within the CIS dropped by 10 % in 1997 compared to 1996;
- (9) Kazakhstan, once very close to Russia, is trying to become more independent which can be seen in its oil policies, its claims concerning the space station Baikonur and the joint military exercise with American forces in September 1997 (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, October 23, 1997: 4); and
- (10) in January 1998, on their meeting in Turkmenistan's capital Ashgabat, the heads of state of five Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgystan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, agreed upon a closer cooperation in political as

well as in economic terms. By doing so they hope to become more independent from the integration within the CIS on the one hand, and from Russian energy and natural resources policies on the other. (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, January 7, 1998: 2, 12)

Even the regionalization within the Russian Federation is growing and sometimes there are even secessionist tendencies which persuaded Korowkin (1995) to advocate a confederate political structure for the country. So Sakha (formerly the Yakut ASSR) is a dynamic and fastly developing region of the Russian Federation which is rich in natural resources, particularly gold, diamonds, coal, timber, oil and gas. In the past, these economic assets in association with nationalist sentiments have proved to be helpful in acquiring more autonomy and sovereignty from Moscow. But the secessionist rhetoric of the past has more or less ebbed away. This can be regarded as a sign that it was used as an instrument, a bargaining chip to gain a greater amount of independence without ever seriously aiming at full sovereignty because of important political and economic linkages with Moscow. (see Fondahl 1997: 212-215; Gossmann 1997; Treisman 1997)

A similar pattern can be observed in other regions which are often characterized by manifestations of regional presidentialism and which display a strong personal, though not ideological or attitudinal continuity in leading positions. (see Kirkow 1995; Schneider 1997; Heinemann-Grüder 1997; also Bremmer/Taras 1997; on the negotiations between center and regions see Kirkow 1997a)⁵

As a consequence, one cannot escape the conclusion that the „deimperialization“ (Dunlop 1997: 42) of the Russian people and the Russian psyche will presumably remain a thorny, shaky and insecure undertaking with an end not yet to be determined,

⁵ As the following table shows, the personal continuity is strongest among the regional elite (see also Lane 1996):

Recruitment of Russian elites from the Soviet *nomenklatura*, 1995 (Brym 1996: 761)

Russian elites	Percentage
Presidential advisers	75.0
Political party leaders	57.1
Regional elite	82.3
Government	74.3
Business elite	61.0

an end which could, however, well be an assertive, nationalistic and confrontational one.

4.2 Russian threat perceptions

It may be conceivable that the Russian leadership, and even more so a more authoritarian-dictatorial one, may be tempted to employ a strategy of social imperialism, i.e. aiming at foreign policy and military successes to regain domestic support and legitimacy, in order to divert the Russians from the failures and vicissitudes in domestic politics and in making-up for socio-economic modernization. These ambitions potentially cover the whole territory of the former Soviet Union and may even transcend it. Such an end may well be fuelled by the assumption that Western economic and technical help is driven by the motivation to humiliate Russia and to permanently degrade it to a secondary power. (Baranovsky 1995b: 16) Richard Pipes (1996: 35) supports this interpretation and diagnoses „a great deal of paranoia about foreigners“ in Russia. He locates the „sense of isolation and uniqueness“ way back in Russian history and, in particular, in Orthodox Christianity. As a result, the Russians face a fundamental identity problem: „Present-day Russians still feel themselves to be outsiders, a nation *sui generis*, belonging neither to Europe nor to Asia.“

In such a context, there is ample space for misperceptions of the international environment and ensuing attempts to assert one's own position. Zhirinovskiy may be cited as a distinct and extremely nationalistic example. Equally instructive is a report by the Research Institute for Defence in Moscow (INO BIS) published in October 1995 in *Segodnja*. According to this report, the Western states, foremost the U.S. but also its allies, and especially Germany which is viewed as vehemently longing for expansion towards the east and southeast, pose potential and actual threats to Russia. It is their goal, so the report says, to prevent the Russian Federation from remaining a military, political and economic great power and to turn it instead into a Western colony with the fate to deliver natural resources to the Western industries. Parts of the Russian elite and businessmen, in particular in the export sector, as e.g. the oil exporters at the Caspian Sea, serve as bridgeheads of the West within the country. This amounts to saying that these people are national traitors violating the national interests of the Russian

Federation. In this regard, it is cited and criticized that the 'New Russians' gaining from collaboration with the West transfer 1-2 bio. USD a month to their offshore bank accounts.

Treaties on arms control like START-II or the ABM Treaty of 1972 are judged as being disadvantageous since in the long run they open avenues to Western attempts towards nuclear blackmail. Consequently, the INOBIS report is highly critical of NATO's enlargement towards the East. Since NATO surpasses Russia in Europe two- to threefold in terms of personnel and equipment, the integration of the Visegrad countries into NATO would enhance these asymmetries even further. As a result, NATO expansion is to be prevented by all means, even if this should entail the use of nuclear weapons. If the Baltic states became members of NATO, a situation compared in its meaning to the American perception of the deployment of Russian nuclear missiles on Cuba, the Russian Federation should march into the Baltic states which are, in addition, viewed as hosting mafia groupings. Since Lithuania did not acknowledge the validity of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Russia (and Byelorussia) were entitled to annex the Klaipeda and Vilnius regions. Besides, there were no signs indicating a Western commitment to fight for the Baltic states.

The report identifies the integration within the CIS, in particular with Ukraine, Byelorussia and Kazakhstan, as the most important task in order to create a renewed federation state within 5 to 10 years. A further means of reaching Russian policy goals is the threat that Russia would engage in the proliferation of nuclear weapons and of nuclear and missile technology. Even military alliances with countries like Iraq, Algeria and, foremost, Iran are not ruled out. Quite recently, there is also a more substantive military cooperation with the PR China. In doing so, Russian troops and tactical nuclear weapons could be deployed in the coastal regions of the Persian Gulf and along the Hormuz Strait, thus giving Moscow a leverage on Western oil supplies. In economic terms and as regards foreign policy, the INOBIS report recommends to refrain from cooperation with the IMF and the World Bank, to reconsider Russian privatization policies, to establish central control over domestic and foreign trade and over the banking sector, to introduce effective import duties and tariffs for a period of 15 to 20 years, to expropriate wealth gained by criminal activities, and to enhance the economic integration within the CIS. (see Royal Military Academy - Conflict Studies Research Centre 1995)

4.3 The formation of Russian counter-balancing power

In 1993, Alexei Arbatov who is the Director of the Center for Geopolitical and Military Forecasts in Moscow identified basically four foreign policy positions within Russia. Initially, the decidedly pro-Western group around Foreign Minister Kozyrev had the upperhand. Due to its unconditional linkage with a radical market reform and a growing disenchantment with 'insufficient' Western support, an anti-Western sentiment emerged undermining the dominance of this position and helping two centrist groups, the moderate liberals and the moderate conservatives, to become more influential. While the former aim at a distinctly Russian foreign policy based on pragmatism and on a realistic assessment of Russia's national interests, the latter cling to maintaining Russia's status as a great power. Although these two positions nowadays constitute the foreign policy mainstream, the fourth position which strives to rebuild Russia as a superpower, a concept which forms a bizarre alliance between the radicals both left and right, is set to leave its former marginal and isolated stance within the political process. (Arbatov 1993; see also Tsygankov 1997)⁶

Put into a bipolar framework with conceptions of Eurasianism on the one end of the spectrum and Atlanticism on the other, one may state that within the past half decade Atlanticism has suffered from substantial drawbacks whereas Eurasianism seems to be advancing. Historically, the singular position of Russia between Europe and Asia represents a constant ingredient of Russian political culture which has already gained in importance during the communist rule of the country. The ratio of the country's proportions distributed between Europe and Asia was 25 : 75 in the Soviet Union and this distribution applies to the Russian Federation as well. In times of contracting Russian influence Eurasianism, materializing in Russia's self-assertion in the Near Abroad and seemingly dictated by geopolitics, has increasingly become a conception to uphold the Russian status of a great or even superpower. (Kerr 1995) The image of the bridge between East and West is often referred to as, for instance, Bogaturov et al. did:

⁶ The official foreign policy foundation can be found in the Key Tenets of Concept of Foreign Policy of Russian Federation of April 1993. (see Aron 1994) The Russian military doctrines of early November 1993 and of May 1997 which do not identify imminent threats of war to the Russian Federation are dealt with by Fitzgerald (1994), Chernov (1994), Bakich (1997) and Rogov (1997).

„the Russian state has not lost its paramount international role arising from, firstly, the stabilising capacity it possesses within the area of Eurasia and, consequently, globally; secondly, its connecting, integratory function in relation to a united and well-established Europe and what is still a poor and disunited Asia; thirdly, its ability to partially depreciate and extinguish the negative impulses on both sides, which are inevitable in the process of rapid global changes, by laying a Eurasian bridge through Russia“ (cited in Kerr 1995: 982)

If David Kerr's (1995: 986) proposition „that Eurasianism in the past was conservative, chauvinistic and isolationist, and that it also persists in this guise today“ proves correct, then there is reason for concern. Hitherto, dark scenarios as those of the radical right and left, or like the one presented in the INOBIS report above, are relatively marginal phenomena. But they reflect part of Russian reality and they often gain considerable publicity. Also, there seems to be a growing number of people, especially in the Russian elite, who adhere to these kinds of scenarios. Despite their marginal position, in the face of the unstable and fluid political and economic situation in the country it seems appropriate to take them seriously. A political strategy based on social imperialism, with the restoration of the empire at its core, could rally support for the ruling elite and unite the government, the opposition and the population in a national task and undertaking. This would definitely affect European security. (Shlapentokh 1994: 24-26)

In the conduct of Russian foreign policy over the last half decade some elements corroborating such an interpretation can be identified. Russian foreign policy can be described as ambivalent, inconsistent and characterized by double standards. (Blank 1995: 75) *Prima facie* it is characterized as a democratic foreign policy aiming at the democratization of international politics in the region as put forward, e.g., in the proposition that „the fortification of the CIS today is the most important guarantee not only of security but also of democracy in the nations of the commonwealth.“ (Kliamkin 1994: 109) However, the actual Russian policy within the CIS, but also in the Caucasus and in Central Asia - regions which are considered as, in one way or another, falling into the legitimate Russian sphere of influence - is worrying. Besides aspects of power, prestige and political influence, Russian policy is also attributable to economic issues, especially when it comes to the vast energy resources (oil, gas) in the Transcaucasus and in regions adjoining the Caspian Sea where frictions with the U.S. have already

emerged. Unilateralism marks Russian foreign policy in specific cases like Nagorno-Karabakh or Chechnya; Moscow deliberately violates treaty obligations stemming from the Russian membership in OSCE and in the Council of Europe, for example. This, in turn, nourishes reasonable doubts concerning the hidden agenda of Russian peacekeeping/-making objectives, to whom the CIS-member states should provide the scapegoat of multilateralism, and concerning the official statements of Russian foreign policy which constantly advocate the OSCE as the pan-European security organization. Moscow, to be sure, seeks an OSCE mandate for its actions whenever possible, but at times denies the OSCE the right to supervise and control the Russian activities through OSCE representatives on site. Thus, the OSCE is far from being a *conditio sine qua non*. Whenever necessary, as e.g. in Nagorno-Karabakh, Russian policy circumvents the OSCE. (see Blank 1995) Obviously, the Russian Federation tries to control or to selectively steer the influence of the OSCE in areas which are deemed as naturally falling into the Russian sphere of influence.

This reveals, at least for this region, the Near Abroad, a definition of Russian foreign policy interests and foreign policy roles which operate on the assumption of a zero-sum game where there is no space for win-win situations, i.e. in which there are only losers and winners. Moscow seems determined to prevent access of external actors to this region, or at least to curtail it. Indeed, there has been talk of a Russian Monroe Doctrine. (Baranovsky 1995a: 43f.)

However, for most of the time, this is hardly troublesome for the West. Rather to the contrary, there seems to be a „growing *de facto* recognition by the international community of Russia's stabilizing role in the post-Soviet space“. (Baranovsky 1995b: 21) In 1993, for instance, U.S. President Clinton acknowledged the Russian peacekeeping role on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Moscow can thus be quite confident that - Western observers aside - no other country is willing to do the job. (Clark 1994; Shearman 1995) To a certain extent, then, it appears that some kind of a Russian *mission civilisatrice* within the CIS is readily acknowledged; it seems to be conceded that the CIS largely falls into the Russian orbit, by which Russia, without any doubt the political, economic and military hegemon in the region, makes its voice to be heard in the world. (Lucas 1994: 34; see also Crow 1994: 38)

The situation is different, however, when it comes to Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Though, for all available evidence, Russia does not seek to establish direct control over this region, these countries are nevertheless seen as some kind of no-man's land where the formation of a potentially hostile coalition is to be prevented. (Baranovsky 1995b: 24) This was crucial in the issue of NATO enlargement, then. Since the November 1993 report of the Russian intelligence unit *SVR* had been published in the journals *Izvestija* and *Nezavisimaja Gazeta*, the stereotype Russian line of reasoning was that the Russian population was opposed to NATO enlargement - a remarkable contrast to the passivity in society discussed above. Also, it was argued, an eastward extension of NATO, the former enemy and arch rival, and its sphere of influence to the Russian borders would strengthen anti-Western and anti-reform forces and substantially challenge Russian national security.

The latter sometimes assumed curious forms. So Vitaly Tsygichko, Professor of the Geopolitical Section of the Russian Academy of the Natural Sciences, has even tried to assess the loss of Russian security in case of NATO enlargement in strictly mathematical terms. According to his calculation, Russian security would be reduced by up to 34 %. Since national security is calculated as sufficient if there is at least a 90 % probability of a successful defence against potential aggressors, this was seen as unacceptable. (see Huber 1996) Despite obvious reservations against Tsygichko's mathematical calculations, this example graphically illustrates the dimensions of NATO's expansion for Russians.

On June 21, 1996, *Nezavisimaja Gazeta* published *Russia and NATO*, a report by the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy (SVOP), a foreign policy think tank headed by Sergej Karaganov. This report was opposed to NATO enlargement in general and tried to postpone it for at least a couple of years. Instead, the report focused on the Partnership for Peace (PFP) and, even more, on OSCE as a pan-European system of collective security. (Royen 1995) The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) would have to be added in this context.

After a period of diplomatic manoeuvring, the Russian Federation eventually became a member both of NACC and PFP (Rynning 1996) and afterwards tried to stop NATO from expanding from within these institutions. Russian membership, then, was also

used as an instrument for postponing NATO enlargement. Simultaneously, Russian membership was used as an instrument for opening NATO decision-making processes and thereby for reducing the Atlantic component within the alliance. Such a breakup of the close Transatlantic ties would constitute the accomplishment of a major foreign policy goal of the Soviet era: „Moscow aims at a Europeanization of security issues, thus strengthening Russia’s influence and at the same time marginalizing the American role in Europe.” (Plate: 14, quotation 5; see also Mihalka 1994: 45; Thränert 1997: 7f.) Yeltsin’s proposal to have regular troika meetings of the French and Russian presidents and the German chancellor as put forward in the Council of Europe meeting in early October 1997 does contain some elements of such a strategy, and since French-American relations are strained, these elements may fall on fertile French ground. (see Frankenberger 1997)

In late 1996, the Russian officials reiterated their opposition towards NATO enlargement *ad nauseam*, like a litany, and they pointed to the turbulences such a move might trigger. In quite the same manner, the U.S. and also countries like Germany reiterated (1) their firm intention to enlarge the alliance, and (2) their conviction that Russia is not entitled to veto this. Seemingly, a stalemate had been reached. Yet, with NATO’s Madrid summit (July 1997) approaching, frenzy diplomatic activities could be observed. So U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright proposed a joint brigade with Russia for peacekeeping purposes in Europe. To alleviate Russian fears concerning the enlargement of the alliance, NATO offered a charter on security cooperation and security partnership. The Russian Federation, in turn, increasingly recognizing that the question was not whether NATO were enlarged, but only what price Russia could get for its approval of a full-fledged treaty. Among the Russian bargaining chips were (1) the union with Byelorussia, (2) the deployment of nuclear weapons, (3) the adherence to a nuclear first strike option, and (4) the prospect of permanently unstable relations between Russia and the West. In this context, Defence Minister Rodionov cancelled the exchange of liaison officers with NATO.

The Russian position suffered from the fact, that in an apathetic society the alleged national consensus against NATO enlargement was nothing but an illusion, a myth which had been used to serve Russian foreign policy interests. In a VTsIOM survey taken in December 1995, less than 1 % of the Russian population were concerned about

an eventual enlargement of the alliance though 61 % wanted Russia to re-establish superpower status and 77 % longed for the regeneration of Russia's national prestige. One year later, when this topic was on top of the political agenda and the focus of talks between Russia and the West, the Russian population opposed NATO enlargement to a greater extent, but the figures were still far from reflecting a homogeneous nationwide position. Close to a third of the population (31 %) uttered a strong opposition whereas 35 %, the biggest group, were indifferent towards this topic; even more than one fifth (22 %) wanted Russia to join NATO itself and 10 % were willing to have NATO have its way if a treaty on cooperation with Russia could be signed. (Parchalina 1997: 12) In yet another survey published by *Segodnja* by the end of January 1997, close to a quarter of Russian society (23 %) perceived NATO enlargement as a threat to Russia while 44 % could not agree to this position. (Schröder 1997b: 427)

In addition, the opposition against NATO enlargement was in a curious contrast to the Russian position not only towards the eastward enlargement of the European Union (EU), but, even more important, also towards the WEU association programme for the Central, Eastern and Southeastern European countries. Here, opposition and critique were largely absent, which implies that within the Russian debate the enlargement issue was focused on NATO. The westward re-orientation of the Eastern and Southeastern European countries itself appeared secondary to this, since this kind of institutional 'Westernization' was obviously acceptable to Russia. This, in turn, raised doubts as to whether the security-related political implications of NATO enlargement were really at the center of the Russian position. Though they were doubtlessly important, it could be argued that it was fundamentally an issue of symbolic politics. The Russian demand for special status within PfP, for instance, was satisfied by a relatively meaningless memorandum of consent. This was taken as indicating a „relative marginalization of security concerns *per se*“. (Baranovsky 1995a: 41, 46f., quotation 49)

Supporting this view are the Russian media reports after the Russian Federation and the West had signed the Basic Act (May 1997) and thus after Russia had agreed to NATO enlargement in return for a seat on the alliance's Permanent Joint Council which assures Moscow not of a veto, but of a voice in NATO affairs. Though discussing a broad range of potential approaches to Russian foreign policy, the majority of the comments were surprisingly indifferent regarding the agreement's implications. Most of the media

favoured a constructive dialogue with the West on security issues instead of a Russian policy of isolation. Nevertheless, a future, perhaps *the* future trouble spot in East-West relations, namely the question of a second enlargement of the alliance including presumably former Soviet republics like the Baltic states was also raised. (Beyer 1997)⁷

The Russian debate on NATO enlargement therefore displays the following pattern: Until the beginning of 1996, national, nationalistic and anti-Western attitudes predominated the scene, partly, to be sure, for reasons of domestic politics like the mobilization of the electorate and the dismantling of Kozyrev, Foreign Minister at that time, who untimely in 1993 spoke of ‘eventually allied relations’ between Russia and the West. After the presidential elections, a more pragmatic approach emerged, only to be followed by a return to a more uncompromising stance towards the end of the year which could be ascribed to negotiation tactics, at least partly. Also, in the end, it has to be conceded that it is extremely difficult to distinguish legitimate national interests and ensuing foreign policies from hegemonic or imperial policies. (Weiss 1995) With the Basic Act agreed to in May 1997 there is sufficient reason to assume that, for the time being, a pragmatic, realistic and rational conception of foreign policy is prevalent which tries to minimize Russian threat perceptions by ways of cooperation and negotiation. (Schröder 1997b: 423, 426; Kümmel 1997) This Primakov Doctrine aims to combine a working relationship with the U.S. (‘civilized partnership’) with a distinct emphasis on Russian independence and sovereignty. The world is perceived as basically multipolar, and attempts toward unipolarity are certain to meet Russian opposition. Simultaneously, this conception resorts to rhetorical means for achieving foreign policy goals which, at first sight, might not match a rational-realistic approach and should be taken as expressions of symbolic politics. (see Simon 1997: 28)

Nevertheless, the issue of NATO’s second enlargement is definitely a major, perhaps even the crucial issue in relations between Russia and the West in the months and years to come. Thus „(d)eveloping a strategy toward the have-nots [like the Baltics] is far from a side-issue in the NATO enlargement debate; it is front and center. Over the next few years there will be no more visible barometer of the alliance’s true priorities and

⁷ It should be mentioned that on the occasion of his visit to Oslo in late November 1997, the Russian

leadership - or lack thereof.“ (Asmus/Larrabee 1996: 20) Although the sovereignty of the Baltic states has been implicitly acknowledged by Moscow in the so-called Sinatra doctrine since Gorbachev’s foreign policy spokesman Gennady Gerasimov in 1989 proclaimed the abandonment of the Brezhnev doctrine, the question of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia joining NATO may carry the risk that the country becomes a source of turbulence and insecurity in international politics, the more so since in the wake of NATO’s enlargement a unifying process concerning foreign policy fighting the Russian Federation’s decline to Third World status seems to have taken place. (Simon 1997; Pipes 1997: 68)

The inclusion of the Baltic states into the Western alliance might be one Eastern domino effect too much. In the same vein, the West would be well advised to be sensitive and careful in its relations with the Transcaucasian republics. (Puschkow 1997: 33, 35) Joint military exercises of American and Central Asian forces within the PfP framework - like those of September 1997 in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan - are viewed by Moscow as provocative.

5 What to do?

It has to be acknowledged that it is appropriate to bid farewell to some most loved designs for the European order. For the foreseeable future there will be no major breakthrough towards a working pan-European security organization; the security landscape in Europe will remain fragmented. (Bredow/Jäger/Kümmel 1997: 214f.) Nevertheless, if the foregoing analysis is valid, the points raised above should have repercussions on the Western position towards the Russian Federation.

In January 1997, *Segodnja* published a survey revealing 72 % of the population giving priority to order and considering democracy as less important. Also, almost half of the respondents (48 %) preferred socialism to capitalism. (cited Schröder 1997b: 427) Though democrats do not emerge from a scratch and are often produced in the process of democratization itself (see Fleron 1996: 250), one cannot escape the impression that Russia is not moving decisively towards liberal democracy. Instead, Russia seems

Foreign Minister Sergejev excluded the use of military force against the Baltic states.

„likely to experience authoritarian rule of one type or another, with formal ‘democratic’ interludes“. (Lane 1996: 544) This is corroborated by the fact that President Yeltsin is much too often governing ‘at the edge of constitutionalism’ (see Brym 1996; Easter 1997: 209) in trying to strike a delicate and fragile balance between the competing political forces. (Simon 1997: 18f.)

In such a context, there might be a reversal of democratization and a return to more nationalistic, chauvinistic and militaristic policies in Russia. (For a different view see Weiss 1995: 20) The Russian public taking interest in issues like national prestige, great or superpower status may well provide fertile ground for such a venture and politicians playing on this: By the end of May 1997, Lebed referred to NATO enlargement as something that would happen in any case „because the West is healthy and rich, but Russia is small and poor“. (cited in Simon 1997: 26) In a recent interview he gave absolute priority to the regeneration of the hurt national prestige and pointed to the German experience in the aftermath of the Versailles Treaty for the potential consequences in the contrary. Normally, so to speak, it is not wise to tease a wounded bear.

In this regard, it should be added that Simon (1997) points to the emergence and existence of a Russian patriotic consensus across the political camps which is based on 19th century emotions and nostalgia for Russia, emphasizes continuity and, in terms of power politics, is quite easily compatible with the communist past of the country. According to this view, Russia is a great and world power (that has to develop its own economic approach), constitutes a genuine ‘civilization’ and a gravitational focus of integration within the Eurasian space which implies to take care of the Russian speaking segments of the (politically, not ethnically defined) Russian nation living outside the national territory.

Moreover, it is conceivable that the Russian industrial decline and its attribution to a Western conspiracy may quite easily be used as a tool for exploiting latent nationalism and xenophobia. Indeed, mistrust and suspicion of foreigners and foreign ideas is widespread. Western engineers, for example, whose aims are to assist the Russian economy in its attempt towards modernization, are often charged with industrial espionage, especially in defence industries. The putative sellout of Russian natural

resources to the West is also heavily criticized in society. Taken together this sometimes leads to seeing the West and Western policies as the origin of all evils. Conspiracy theories which attribute Russia's *malaise* to the old enemy in the West are clearly growth industries in present-day Russia. (Kennaway 1997: 5f.) According to surveys taken in 1996, roughly 60 % of the Russians believe that the West is offering economic advice and aid just for the purpose of weakening the country. (Pipes 1996: 35)

Furthermore, there are serious doubts to be raised as to whether the emerging idea of Russia combined with a Russian patriotism is powerful, dynamic, skillful and modern enough to cope with the political, economic and social challenges of the age of intense globalization. The identity crisis in Russia is far from over. (Simon 1997: 31; see also McDaniel 1996) Add to this the socio-economic problems Russia faces, it may become evident that not by virtue of its strength, as in former times, but its weakness does Russia pose a potential threat, or less dramatically as Alexandrova (1997: 51) put it, a problem to European security. Thus, a reinsurance against a potential reversal of democratization in Russia and against a return to confrontational foreign policies is necessary (Kamp 1997: 41) combined with a pragmatic and rational Western support for the transformation process. This might help to further the 'symmetrification' of the European order in the sense of creating increasingly symmetrical and compatible potentials and relations between Eastern and Western societies as a peace-strategy. (Czempiel 1997: 43)

A look into the past might be helpful here, too, because the year 1989 marks a similar historical caesura as the Vienna Congress of 1815 and the Paris Peace Treaties of 1919. Hence, 1989 is often referred to as *annus mirabilis*. Looking at the historical experiences of 1815 (inclusion) and 1919 (exclusion) (see Bredow/Jäger/Kümmel 1997: 215), it can be argued that the creation of a peaceful European order, though fragmented, requires the formal recognition of the Russian Federation as a constitutive element - for the present and for the future. Moscow is too important an actor and factor in international relations to be neglected in issues of world order. This implies that assistance towards the transformation process and participation in the modernization of Russia is an enlightened self-interest of the West. It equally implies that Russia's strive for great power status - though great power criteria such as an attractive model for society, an efficient economy and a strong army are lacking (Thränert 1997: 4) - has to

be adequately accommodated. As Vladimir Baranovsky, project leader at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) put it: „Today, the imperative should be to ‘keep the Russians in’.“ (Baranovsky 1995a: 50)

To exclude Russia could have negative effects on the still precarious political and economic transformation process and might be damaging in the volatile political, economic and social situation. The democratization of the country could experience serious setbacks. To handle matters of European security unilaterally, without Russia - a prescription which has been put forward by the former German Ambassador in Moscow, Jörg Kastl (1997: 38), in early 1997 - could be counterproductive and even destructive. To leave Russia out will presumably lead to heightened tensions in its relations to Europe and North America; the Russian perception of being rebuffed by the West has already led Moscow to turn to the Middle East and East Asia as it can be seen from Russian cooperation with and policies towards Iran, Iraq and China. As a consequence, there is the real possibility that „a new East-West geopolitical fault line, running somewhere across Central Asia and the Caucasus“ might emerge. (Pipes 1997: 76; see also Thränert 1997: 3, 6f.; Brzezinski/Scowcroft/Murphy 1997: 20f.)

The problems of nuclear proliferation, nuclear terrorism and denuclearization also require Russia's cooperation. (see Mandelbaum 1997: 83) For the future, then, a strategy of „engaging Russia“ (Blackwill/Braithwaite/Tanaka 1995) is appropriate. In the past, there have been several initiatives to serve this purpose. To mention just a few: in June 1994, the European Union and the Russian Federation signed a *Partnership and Cooperation Agreement* that went into effect on December 1st, 1997; in September 1994, the American and the Russian militaries undertook a joint peacekeeping exercise, Russia joined PfP in mid-1994 and both sides recently signed the Basic Act. Besides the G-7 enlargement to a G-7½ or G-8, encompassing Russia, a solution to this problem could also be seen in the establishment of a more informal than institutionalized concert in Europe securing Russia's great power status and the ensuing adequate influence in European politics (and beyond). By this, cooperation and joint conflict management in European as well as in global politics could be fostered. (see, e.g., Baranovsky 1995b: p. 28. Sometimes this opinion is shared by Russians, too: Gratschow 1993: 21)

The Contact Group on Bosnia and the Russian participation in IFOR/SFOR may be regarded as predecessors to such an informal cooperation. A Western commitment to rule out a nuclear first strike as well as the preparedness to agree to a renegotiation of the CFE Treaty may be important elements to induce Russia to a more cooperative position. Postponing the second wave of eastward enlargement of NATO for a longer period is another element (Kamp 1997: 38), though it is clear that the respective countries longing to become members of the alliance may not be willing to wait that long. Nevertheless, „(t)he ambiguity of a ‘gray zone’ between Russia and the present members of NATO would actually help assure Russia that even if it is not politically and militarily part of Europe, it is also not categorically excluded“. (Pipes 1997: 78)

These elements may fall on fertile ground, if the Russians realize that the system change was brought about by deep structural problems and that because of structural reasons there is no working alternative to a cooperation with the industrialized countries of the West. To hastily declare dead a strategic partnership with the West (as the incoming Russian Foreign Minister Jevgenij Primakov did in March 1996) shows the difficulties to achieve this. Nevertheless, it is quite obvious that making-up for modernization under conditions of globalization requires open and cooperative structures.

In conclusion, Winston Churchill’s *bonmot* that Russia is a riddle for the West may never have been more appropriate than today. The Russian identity crisis has produced something like two Russias. As Richard Pipes put it: „Fledgling democracy contends with ancient authoritarian traditions; private enterprise struggles against a collectivist culture; frustrated nationalist and imperialist ambitions impede the enormous task of internal reconstruction. (...) The new coexists with the old in an uneasy symbiosis. (...) The popular base of democracy in the country is thus thin and brittle; the political climate can change overnight. Countries like Russia (...) are capable of swinging wildly from one extreme to another, often in response to a demagogue who promises quick and easy solutions.“ (Pipes 1997: 65, 67, 70)

The West, therefore, seems well advised to subtly combine readiness to cooperate and steadfastness, to mix toughness with sensitivity and understanding, and to reconcile assistance to Russia with necessary delimitations. Such a strategy could be termed nuanced or „tacit deterrence“. (Mandelbaum 1997: 93) The Russian Federation remains

and will remain for a considerable period of time - specifically because of its weakness - a factor in European and global politics that by no means is and will be easy to calculate; a potential for latent threat posed by Russia can hardly be denied. This potential for turbulence, as it has been shown, resonates with the national decline and the loss of superpower status and with the deeply ingrained conviction of the overwhelming majority of the Russian elite that Russia has to remain a great power well into the future. Next, the tiresome progress of the transformation process produces a widespread atmosphere of insecurity and instability. Neither the economic nor the political transition can be termed as 'successful'. Dealing with Russia, then, remains deeply precarious and requires intelligent statecraft and the power of judgement.

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