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HANNES ADOMEIT

Russian officials are heard increasingly often to proclaim the country's status as a 'great power'. This article examines how the country's perceptions of its role in world affairs have evolved since the declining years of the Soviet Union. The author identifies two dominant paradigms, the 'Ideological and Imperial' and the 'New Thinking', and discusses the reasons for the ebb and flow of the latter in the years since Russia's establishment as a sovereign state after the collapse of the USSR.

There is hardly an opportunity let slip these days by Russian officials to proclaim Russia once again to be a 'great power'. But true greatness, whether among men or among nations, does not need advertising. It should be evident. Public assertions are therefore often indicative of the existence of reasonable doubt as to whether they accurately reflect reality. In fact, claims of a state's greatness will often proliferate precisely when international and self-perception coincide in the diagnosis that its status, power and influence in world affairs have declined. One example of such circumstances is France under General Charles de Gaulle who, faced with the loss of empire, persisting American influence in Europe, and the rising economic and political power of West Germany, excelled in playing many variations on the themes of *gloire* and glamour, and France as a *grande nation*. Another is the United States President Reagan, who reacted to the reality and widespread images of the decline of American power in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate, and growing Soviet military capabilities, with affirmations that the United States was still a 'great country' and 'number one' in the world.

Nations and governments engaging in 'great power advertising' typically embody more irrational, unpredictable and contradictory traits than the more self-assured and self-confident states. This also applies to Russia whose current policies are rife with confusing 'clarifications' and retractions, with denials and defensive reactions—amply demonstrated by the strange responses in Moscow to several seizures of contraband plutonium in Germany in the spring and summer of 1994. For many outside observers, Russia today is what the Soviet Union had been for Churchill, an 'enigma wrapped in a riddle'. Many of these contradictions can undoubtedly be explained by the continuing search for a new Russian national identity after the collapse of the Soviet empire. But

foreign policy also seems to have an erratic, haphazard and unprofessional quality. Some analysts have been tempted to have recourse to psychological categories of interpretation, diagnosing hurt pride, anger, resentment, frustration and inferiority complexes among Russian officials. Such frameworks of reference are being reinforced by the current trend of detecting ever more 'ethnic conflicts' and clashes of civilization after communism, rather than regarding them as conflicts of interest in international affairs. Other analysts of Russian foreign policy have been more sceptical of irrationality as an explanatory factor. In their diagnosis, the proponents of democratic reform in Russia and comprehensive cooperation with the West had always 'occupied an extreme position within the Moscow elite'.¹ A return to more assertive and unilateralist policies was therefore to be considered quite normal and indeed predictable. In extension of this view, new certainties are being discovered, a new consensus consisting of Russian nationalism, unilateralism and 'neo-imperialism' designed to restore the Soviet empire in one form or another.²

One variant of the last school of thought invests the evolution of Russian foreign policy with an aura of inevitability. It uncritically repeats convenient rationalizations of the new advocates of Russian 'greatness' and legitimate use of military power and pressure in the near and potentially far abroad, the *derzhavniki*, to the effect that the policies of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze in the last year of the Soviet Union's existence, and of their successors Yeltsin and Kozyrev in the first year of the new Russia, had essentially been full of illusions about some sort of Euro-Atlantic community, a strategic partnership with the West and large-scale economic assistance to be gained from the industrialized countries for the rapid modernization of Russia. In short, they argue, these leaders had conducted unrealistic, romantic and naive policies. In accordance with such perspectives, the purported new consensus is often portrayed by both Russian advocates and Western analysts as a predictable and necessary 'corrective'.³ As coup plotters are being pardoned and rehabilitated in Moscow

¹ Judith S. Kullberg, 'The end of New Thinking? Elite ideologies and the future of Russian foreign policy', paper prepared for the panel on 'Russian foreign and security policy', The Midwest Slavic Conference, 30 April–2 May 1993, published by the Mershon Center, Ohio State University, Occasional Papers, July 1993 p. 22.

² 'The spirit of Russian imperialism is making a dramatic comeback', was the conclusion drawn from an interview with Russian foreign minister Kozyrev by Therese Raphael and Claudia Rosett of the *Wall Street Journal*, and Suzanne Crow of RFE/RL Research Institute, as summarized by the first-named interviewer in 'Kozyrev doctrine: the CIS is our turf', *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 20 June 1994; the full text of the interview was published in *RFE/RL Research Report* 3: 28, 15 July 1994; similarly 'Back in the USSR': Russia's intervention in the international affairs of the former Soviet republics and the implications for United States policy toward Russia', Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, January 1994.

³ Some of the best examples of Russian support for the theory of necessary 'corrective' are the Council on Foreign and Defence policy's 'theses' on a 'Strategy for Russia', published in *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 19 August 1992; Sergei Stankevich, 'Derzhava v poiskakh seb'ia', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 28 March 1992; Evgeny Ambartsumov, 'Vneshnepoliticheskaia doktrina novoi Rossii', interview conducted by V. Ostrovskii, *Modus vivendi* (Moscow), No. 7, May 1993; Aleksandr Vladislavlev and Sergei Karaganov, 'Tiazhkii krest Rossii', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 17 November 1992. Concerning, more specifically, the assertion that a correction of Russian policies in the 'near abroad' had been necessary see Andranik Migranian, 'Rossiia i blizhnoe zarubezh'e', *ibid.*, 12 January 1994.

today, it is not only of considerable intellectual interest, but also of great political importance, to take issue with such perceptions and thus to try to prevent the hardening of new myths about the causes of the collapse of the Soviet empire and the Soviet state, and to forestall the emergence of new misconceptions about Russia's role in world affairs.

In order to explain the current and likely future state of affairs, the approach adopted here is to look at five phases of Soviet and Russian foreign policy with the help of two paradigms. One will be called the Imperial and Ideological paradigm, and the other the paradigm of New Thinking. The first paradigm, it will be argued, consistently guided Soviet foreign policy from the end of the Second World War until the late 1970s and early 1980s. Its constituent elements were competitive and confrontational, with ideological, geopolitical and military-strategic factors playing the dominating role in policy formulation and providing the rationales and rationalizations for global expansion and imperial control, notably in central and eastern Europe. Power and ideology in this paradigm reinforced each other.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, that is, in the last years of the Brezhnev era and the Andropov and Chernenko 'interregnum', this paradigm underwent a serious crisis. In this second phase of Soviet foreign policy, it will be shown, significant failures and setbacks coincided in all dimensions of state activity. There was widespread recognition among Russians at all levels of the state, society and the Party that 'administrative streamlining', the replacement of incompetent officials and correction of 'mistakes' were no longer sufficient. Imperial decay, they realized, required fundamentally new conceptual approaches and systemic reform.

A third phase of Soviet and Russian foreign policy was based on a new paradigm—the New Thinking—and lasted from the mid-1980s to the end of 1992. This new foreign policy approach in both its philosophical and its practical aspects, evolved tentatively and hesitatingly at first and then precipitously. Moscow often improvised and reacted to unplanned and unforeseen events. But in contrast to schools of thought that see the Gorbachev era as one of blundering and bungling, which is undoubtedly true to an extent of domestic affairs, the emphasis here is on relative consistency and conceptual guidance in both Gorbachev's and, later, Yeltsin's foreign policy.

A fourth phase, of increasing attacks on the new paradigm and corresponding changes in policy, started in 1992 and gathered momentum in the spring of 1993. This interval will not be characterized here as yet another comprehensive crisis of paradigm, but as a response by the Russian political leadership to a determined attempt by conservative and reactionary political forces to reassert themselves and regain power. The response included, in domestic affairs, a slowing down of the processes of democratization, federalization and market-oriented reforms, and in international affairs, a return to military and geostrategic frameworks of analysis.

To complete this overview, the fifth and present phase of Russian foreign policy consists of a moderation and mitigation of the assertive nationalist and unilateralist

stance. The conservative and reactionary opposition had made their point. They had enhanced their domestic power position and could now warn and act against those who might become 'dizzy with success'.⁴ But some of them may also have come to realize that any reconstitution of empire and reassertion of influence through military–political pressures would be costly and counterproductive.⁵

Much has been written about the first three phases of Soviet foreign policy. Analysis here will therefore concentrate on the last two phases: the transition from Soviet to Russian foreign policy after the collapse of the USSR and the meaning of the subsequent conceptual and political changes.

The Imperial and Ideological paradigm

The essence of the conceptual approach to international affairs in the period from Stalin to the end of the Brezhnev era was that of a close interrelationship between power and ideology: Marxist/Leninist ideology had mobilizing and motivating functions in Soviet foreign policy and contributed to the construction of empire; imperial control in turn was legitimized by ideology. There was no particular preference in Marx's body of thought for the use of military power in order to advance 'world socialism'. But as non-military instruments of state power remained blunt and military power grew both in relative and absolute terms, the foreign policy practice under Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev increasingly came to be one of using the military boot to kick history forward. Military and geopolitical factors took precedence over economic considerations. As if in crude application of Western realist theories of international relations, power came to be seen as the addition of quantitative indicators, such as size of population, the volume of industrial output, the geographical expanse of empire, and the number of divisions, tanks, aircraft, missiles and nuclear warheads. Parity meant having just as many divisions and arms as all other potential adversaries combined. The emphasis on quantitative indicators, furthermore, was not contradicted by the idea that these weapons, produced in great numbers, should also embody the latest in technology and perform as well as Western systems. The *ultima ratio* of the paradigm, finally, was the idea that military power could be transformed into political influence and that growing arsenals translated into enhanced status, prestige and power in international affairs.⁶

⁴ 'Dizzy with success', is the charge Stalin made on 2 March 1930, after he realized that forced collectivization had produced disastrous consequences, blaming subordinate officials for excesses and calling for restraint: J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, authorized English translation of the eleventh Russian Edition (Moscow: Politizdat, 1945), pp. 326–9.

⁵ See, for instance, the follow-up document of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy to their August 1992 'theses', 'Strategiia dlia Rossii (2): Tezisy Soveta po vneshnei i oboronnoi politike', *Nezavisimaaia Gazeta*, 27 May 1994.

⁶ See Hannes Adomeit et al., *Die Sowjetunion als Militärmacht* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987); 'The political rationale of Soviet military capabilities and doctrine', in *Strengthening conventional deterrence in Europe: proposals for the 1980s*, Report of the European Security Study (ESECS) (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 67–104.

The crisis of paradigm

By the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, all the major premises on which the paradigm was built had turned out to be inaccurate or inapplicable. The two major pillars on which it was built—ideology and military power—began to crumble and threatened to collapse due to the convergence of basic structural deficiencies and acute shocks emanating from specific domestic and international conditions of this period.

The problem with the ideology was that each and every one of the major cognitive and predictive elements of Marxist/Leninist ideology turned out to be erroneous. These included the notions that the 'contradictions' between the 'power centres of imperialism' were more basic than the links that unite them; that the 'correlation of forces', in the long run, would shift in favour of socialism; that conflict would end with the victory of socialism; that the socialist mode of production is superior to that of capitalism; that the 'national-liberation movements' would bring about states with anti-imperialist, non-capitalist and ultimately socialist orientation; that class relations are the determining factor of international affairs; and that nationalism would wither away.⁷

The widening gap between ideology and reality and the decline in the effectiveness of the Soviet system led to a world-wide diminution of the attractiveness of the Soviet model of development. In western Europe, in the late 1970s, ideological insurrection and resistance against the model took place under the label of 'Eurocommunism'. In central and eastern Europe, similar developments occurred under the slogans of 'market socialism' and 'socialism with a human face'. In the Third World, Moscow's military support could often decide the question of power, but its economic assistance was incapable of contributing meaningfully to long-term socioeconomic development. More often than not, after a period of cooperation with the Warsaw Pact in security matters, these countries turned to the West for development aid. As Aleksandr Yakovlev later told a conference of Communist Party secretaries for ideological questions, the model of socialist development as exemplified by the Soviet Union before the advent of perestroika had essentially 'exhausted' itself.⁸

As for military power, the second main pillar of the paradigm, failures occurred more or less simultaneously in Soviet policies towards the United States, western Europe, central and eastern Europe, Japan, China and the Third World. The use of force by the Soviet Union in neighbouring countries had—from Moscow's perspective—often helped 'normalize' adverse conditions at relatively low political, military and economic cost. But the 'quick fix' was not

⁷ For a detailed study of these failures of ideology see Jonathan C. Valdez, *Internationalism and the ideology of Soviet influence*, Cambridge Russian, Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), and Sigmund Krancberg, *A Soviet postmortem: philosophical roots of the 'Grand Failure'* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994).

⁸ Speech by Aleksandr Yakovlev at the conference of Communist Party secretaries for ideological questions, held in Varna (Bulgaria), 26–8 September 1989, included for agenda item 8 of SED Politburo meeting of 17 October 1989; SED, Central Archives, Politburo, *Arbeitsprotokolle*, J IV 2/2A/3247.

working in Afghanistan—a fact that had a major impact on Soviet domestic politics and affected Soviet choices on how to cope with the rise of Solidarity and the demise of the communist system in Poland: faced with the high probability that the Poles would fight back in the event of Soviet military intervention and that the West would react with another round of economic sanctions, the Soviet leaders were facing agonizing dilemmas. Although the imposition of martial law by General Jaruzelski made it unnecessary for Brezhnev to intervene, the internal ferment in Poland did not end. No stable solution was achieved.

Soviet policy in western Europe also reflected the overall crisis of the paradigm. The supreme failure in this area was the campaign against the stationing of intermediate-range nuclear missiles—the Pershing II and cruise missiles. With the help of a ‘peace movement’ that reached impressive strength in 1983, the Soviet leaders sought to delay or prevent NATO counter-deployments in western Europe. But whereas they came out of the INF controversy with military advantages, politically the end result of the campaign was loss of influence in Europe, the demise of the SPD–FDP government under Schmidt and the formation of a CDU–CSU–FDP coalition government under Kohl. The ‘peace movement’ decreased in strength and ceased to be a useful instrument of Soviet policy.

As for relations with the United States, in the early to mid-1970s it may have appeared to Soviet political leaders and analysts that Washington was no longer able successfully to compete with the Warsaw Pact in the arms race; that it was primarily reacting to Soviet initiatives; and that it was increasingly putting faith in arms control negotiations to redress a military balance seemingly tilting in Moscow’s favour. But, starting from the late 1970s, these trends were reversed. Defence outlays in the United States began to rise sharply. New challenges were issued to the Warsaw Pact with the development of more sophisticated, computerized conventional weapons and command and control systems, and Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative. It was now the Soviet Union which was put into a position to respond—and to do so in the area of high technology, in which it could not compete as easily and effectively.

The likely outcome of the competition crucially depended on improvements in the performance of the Soviet economy. Yet Soviet economic growth rates took a sharp downturn at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. Even for political leaders ignorant of economic affairs—essentially, all of the Soviet leaders from Stalin to Gorbachev—it was becoming impossible to ignore the fact that the share of military expenditures in the gross national product could not continue to rise indefinitely; that a technologically advanced military sector could not exist in isolation from the economy; that the future effectiveness and modernity of the Soviet armed forces were being eroded by economic decline; and that basic structural reforms were needed to address these serious problems.

The corrosion of the ideological and military pillars of the paradigm was intertwined with severe problems of leadership and succession. An embarrassing procession of the infirm and incompetent at the apex of power contributed to the

by then almost universal international isolation of the Soviet Union. Incapable of or unwilling to embark on fundamental change, the leaders in Moscow adopted the attitude of 'insulted giant'.⁹ They broke off arms control negotiations on strategic and medium-range nuclear weapons and conventional arms. They removed the last vestiges of selective detente from the west European diplomatic agenda, attacking not only American 'adventurism' and Japanese 'militarism' but also the West German government for allegedly abetting 'revanchist' and 'neo-Nazi' tendencies. Faced with this hostile posture and possibly dangerous policies, China and the West moved closer to each other. In the Islamic world, the standing of the Soviet Union remained as low as ever. The Imperial and Ideological paradigm, in short, had finally relegated the Soviet Union to the role of mere irritant in international politics. Moscow still had sufficient power to obstruct and threaten, but no longer actively and constructively to shape world affairs.

The paradigm of New Thinking

The Gorbachev era began with only minor revisions of theory but culminated in the complete replacement of the Imperial and Ideological paradigm. The new paradigm, constructed under the heading of New Thinking, was carried forward and applied also in the first year and a half of Russian foreign policy under Yeltsin and his foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev. The fact that the 'Gorbachev revolution' did not start out as a revolution and was initially not even admitted to be radical reform has frankly been admitted by the then Party leader and his chief advisers. 'It would be a great exaggeration to say that we envisaged from the very beginning the scope and difficulties of perestroika,' Gorbachev has acknowledged in retrospect. 'Its starting designs, furthermore, did not go beyond the framework of the system, neither ideologically nor politically. For us it was then a matter of improving the existing society, "forcing the system to work".'¹⁰ Similarly, Yakovlev remembers that, 'at the beginning, we had little idea where events would take us';¹¹ there was only a general 'understanding of what needed to be cast aside'.¹²

This general understanding, however, is precisely what explains the progressive, in its ultimate scope unintended, dismantling of the Imperial and Ideological paradigm and its replacement by the New Thinking. As in the 'left'–'right' dichotomy of the traditional Marxist/Leninist approaches, with its inner logic that linked a set of policies to either one or the other orientation of domestic and foreign policy,¹³ the theoreticians and practitioners of the new

⁹ Thus an aptly named title story in *The Economist* of that period.

¹⁰ M. S. Gorbachev, 'Mir na perelome', *Svobodnaia mysl*, 16 November 1992, p. 10.

¹¹ Lecture at Harvard University, 7 November 1991.

¹² Aleksandr N. Yakovlev, *Muki prochteniiia bytiia: Perestroika—nadezhdy i real'nosti* (Moscow: Novosti, 1991), p. 330.

¹³ This 'inner logic' was best described by Alexander Dallin, 'Linkage patterns: from Brest to Brezhnev', in Seweryn Bialer, ed., *The domestic context of Soviet foreign policy* (Boulder, CO, Oxford: Westview, 1981), pp. 344–7 and earlier in his 'Soviet foreign policy and domestic politics: a framework of analysis', *Journal of International Affairs*, 2, 1969, pp. 250–65.

paradigm recognized that the effectiveness of the new approaches depended upon conceptual coherence.

What, then, were the main ingredients of Gorbachev's New Thinking? The new paradigm essentially included the following major elements:¹⁴

- 1 The use of military power, geopolitical expansionism and empire building are outdated forms of international conduct. They impose significant costs and impede socioeconomic development.
- 2 Status and power in international affairs are determined by qualitative indicators, such as the effectiveness of the political system, economic efficiency and the ability to adapt to rapid scientific and technological progress.
- 3 The internal resources of a nation, including a high level of education and technical skill of the population, as well as the country's quality and way of life, are important factors in international influence.
- 4 Interests in world affairs are to be promoted through multilateral approaches and participation in international institutions. This applies also to security, which cannot be safeguarded unilaterally or through military/technical means but only politically and cooperatively.
- 5 Although the nation-state continues to be an important organizing principle in the international system, nationalism is one of the many forms of unilateralism that needs to be replaced by processes of integration.
- 6 The main actors and factors of stability in the international system are the industrialized countries (G7), who adhere to a common system of values, laws and norms.
- 7 The main factors of instability and threats to world peace are nationalism, ethnic conflict, religious fundamentalism, political extremism, migration, terrorism, environmental catastrophes, weapons proliferation and armed aggression from the south.

Several important examples of the consistent application of the various parts of the paradigm can easily be adduced. These include the agreement to on-site inspection of military facilities at the Stockholm CSCE conference in 1986; the scrapping of the Soviet Union's superiority in intermediate-range nuclear weapons in accordance with the 1987 Washington treaty; the dismantling of preponderance in conventional power in Europe in the 1990 conventional forces in Europe (CFE) treaty; the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in 1989; the refusal to intervene in the internal changes taking place in central and eastern Europe in the same year; the consent to German unification and to united Germany's membership in NATO in 1990; and the support in the UN

¹⁴ On the origins, content and evolution of the new paradigm through the eyes of their architects see M. S. Gorbachev, *Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlia nashei strany i dlia vsego mira* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1988); Eduard A. Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor. V zashchitu demokrati i svobody*, 2nd edn (Moscow: Novosti, 1991); Yakovlev, *Muki procheniia bytiia*; and A. S. Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym: Po dnevnikovym zapisiam* (Moscow: Izdatel'skaia gruppa 'Progress', 'Kultura', 1993).

Security Council for economic sanctions and later the use of force against Iraq in 1990 and 1991.

But what about Russia under Yeltsin? What have been its foreign policy principles? In June 1990, a year and a half before the official collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation (then the RSFSR, one of the fifteen Union republics) declared state sovereignty and began to develop domestic and foreign policy agendas distinct from those of the Soviet Union.¹⁵ This process was driven not only by institutional emancipation, with the establishment of separate Communist Party and government structures, including the ministries of foreign affairs and foreign economic relations in September 1990, and the appointment of Andrei Kozyrev as foreign minister one month later, but also by the personal and political rivalries between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet in June 1990 and popularly elected president a year later. Yeltsin's and the Russian Federation's political orientation in domestic and foreign policy was clearly *left* of Gorbachev and the then still existing CPSU and USSR, that is, more market-oriented, more democratic, more in favour of devolution of power to the republics, and more European and Atlanticist.¹⁶

Some of the more important indications of this orientation, even before the August 1991 coup attempt, were the conclusion of treaties on inter-state relations between the RSFSR and Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Kazakhstan and Moldova; the trips by Yeltsin to the European Parliament in Strasbourg and Paris in April, Prague in May, and Washington in June 1991; and the visit by the chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet's Security Committee, Sergei Stepashin, to NATO headquarters in Brussels, with the idea in mind to gain observer status for Russia in the Atlantic alliance.¹⁷ Reflecting on the conceptual basis of early Russian foreign policy, Yeltsin's foreign policy adviser Gennady Burbulis explained that none of the pressing domestic problems of the Russian Federation could be 'solved without learning from the European experience'. A revival of Russia, in his view, was 'impossible outside the renewed Europe', whereas a renewed Europe in turn could not fully realize its destiny unless it took 'Russia into consideration'.¹⁸

But despite their staunchly reformist and Atlanticist course, Yeltsin and Kozyrev had great difficulty in persuading Western governments to abandon their exclusive concentration on the Soviet Union and to deal simultaneously with the USSR and the RSFSR, and to embark on what the Russian foreign minister called 'constructive parallelism'.¹⁹ The international community, as

¹⁵ The text of the Russian sovereignty declaration as published in *Vedomosti RSFSR*, 14 June 1990.

¹⁶ Later, Kozyrev was to reply to the question of 'Why did you take the job of RSFSR foreign minister in October 1990?' by saying that 'My feeling was that the momentum of democratic reform in the country was shifting from the group around Gorbachev to the group around Yeltsin': 'An interview with Russian foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 3: 28, 15 July 1994, p. 36.

¹⁷ See the apt description and analysis of this period by John Löwenhardt, 'The foreign policy of the Russian Federation', paper presented to the International Symposium 1991 in Tokyo, November 1991.

¹⁸ 'Obnovlennaiia Rossiia i obnovlennaiia Evrope. K poezdke B.N. Eltsina vo Frantsiiu' (interview with G. Burbulis), *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 20 April 1991.

¹⁹ V. Razuvaev, '100 Days at the Post of Foreign Minister' (interview with Andrei Kozyrev), *New Times* (Moscow), 9 March 1991, pp. 8–10, as quoted by Löwenhardt, 'Foreign Policy', p. 6.

Russian officials realized, was reluctant to deal with Yeltsin. It was concerned about Russian nationalism and a possible breakup of the Soviet Union, and wanted to avoid everything that could potentially undermine Gorbachev's authority. It was only the August 1991 coup attempt that cast serious doubt on the domestic and foreign policy effectiveness and legitimacy of the Soviet leader's rule and the wisdom of putting all Western eggs into the Union basket. The coup attempt in Western eyes also discredited the Soviet foreign minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh and his first deputy, Yulii Kvitsinsky, and enhanced the Russian foreign minister Kozyrev's stature. Whereas the two top USSR foreign ministry officials had signed orders to their ambassadors to disseminate the communications of the Emergency Committee to foreign governments, the Russian foreign minister, who was in Paris on the first day of the putsch, had discussed the idea of a Russian government-in-exile and sought Western backing for it if the need arose.²⁰

The coup attempt reinforced the democratic and reformist credentials of the Russian leadership, rallied popular support behind it and demoralized the communist, conservative and nationalist opposition. As a result, Russian foreign policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 constituted a continuation and broadening of the New Thinking paradigm. Devolution of empire, eradication of regional military preponderance, abandonment of military-strategic parity, pursuit of broad political cooperation with newly found partners in the UN Security Council, full participation in international economic institutions such as GATT, IMF and the G7, and even membership in NATO, came to be the declared goals of the new Russia.²¹ In the period from the end of 1991 to mid-1992, Yeltsin's visits to Germany, Italy, France, Britain, the United States, Canada and the UN Security Council, and plans for visits to Japan and South Korea, as well as his participation in the G7 economic summit in Munich, accurately reflected these preferences. Yet another failure 'to integrate into the democratic community of states and thus the world economy', Kozyrev warned, 'would amount to a betrayal of the nation and the final slide of Russia down to the category of third rank states'.²² The complete departure from Soviet conduct in international affairs and the ambition to forge a 'strategic partnership', both economically and militarily, with the United States was emphasized also by Yeltsin. In his address to the United Nations at the beginning of 1992, he

²⁰ Statement by Boris Pankin, Bessmertnykh's successor, on Central Television, 30 August 1991, as quoted by Löwenhardt, 'Foreign policy', pp. 6–7.

²¹ During his visit to the United States, in June 1992, Yeltsin *expressis verbis* abandoned the 'ominous parity' on which the Soviet Union had insisted for so long; see the excerpts from the Bush–Yeltsin summit press conference, *The New York Times*, 17 June 1992. On NATO membership as a long-term goal of Russian foreign policy see *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 1, 15 January 1992, p. 13; for an analysis see Hannes Adomeit, 'The Atlantic alliance in Soviet and Russian perspective', in Neil Malcolm, ed., *Russia and Europe: an end to confrontation?* (London: Pinter for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1994), pp. 31–54.

²² 'Preobrazhenie ili kafkianskaia metamorfoza', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 20 August 1992; similarly in his interview with *Izvestia*, 10 October, 1991.

stated that Russia regarded the Western countries as 'allies'.²³ Such perceptions found some practical expression in an agreement reached at the June 1992 Russian–American summit in Washington 'to work together, along with the allies and other interested states, to develop a concept for a global protection system against limited ballistic missile attack'.²⁴

Revision of paradigm: the new assertiveness

As if in a replay of Haydn's Surprise Symphony, foreign minister Kozyrev in December 1992 rudely awakened the slumbering audience of his CSCE colleagues assembled in Stockholm by denouncing Western interference in the Baltic states, telling the conference to keep its nose out of the territory of all former Soviet republics, demanding an end to UN sanctions against Serbia and stating that Belgrade could count on full military support from Russia. He also shocked his listeners by stating that 'the territory of the former Soviet Union cannot be considered a zone in which CSCE norms are wholly applicable'. It was in essence a post-imperial area in which Russia had to protect its own interests through the use of all available means, including military and economic.²⁵ To the relief of the stunned listeners, Kozyrev went on to clarify that he had only pretended to be uttering a hard line to show what would happen if Yeltsin were defeated by the domestic opposition.²⁶ However, the Kozyrev of 1993 and 1994 reiterated such statements, and apparently no longer in jest but in all seriousness. His new approach was part of a shift in Russian domestic and foreign policy that became evident in the second half of 1992. Several elements of the Imperial and Ideological paradigm received a new lease of life among the top Russian political leaders. Although monolithic and absolutist Marxism/Leninism remained discarded, neo-imperialist tendencies reappeared in Russian foreign policy, notably in the area of the former Soviet Union, and were supplemented by a quasi-ideological melange of nationalism, pan-Slavism, 'Eurasianism' and Western-style neo-realism. According to this medley, 'Russia was and continues to be a great world power'²⁷ that should rid itself of the 'anti-imperialist syndrome' and not 'shy away from defending our own interests', even when such action would be criticized as 'imperialist'.²⁸

²³ *Diplomaticheskii vestnik*, 4–5, 29 February–15 March 1992, p. 49 (emphasis added).

²⁴ 'Excerpts from Bush–Yeltsin Summit Conference', *The New York Times*, 17 June 1992.

²⁵ Craig R. Whitney, 'Russian carries on like in the bad old days, then says it was all a ruse', *The New York Times*, 15 December 1992.

²⁶ Interfax (Moscow), 14 December 1992. Earlier, in an interview with *Izvestia*, Kozyrev had warned in all earnestness that pressure for the Russian army to intervene in support of ethnic Russians living outside Russia's borders was being orchestrated by politicians opposed to Yeltsin. What was 'happening in Russia today' reminded him very much of the events in Germany in 1933, when 'democrats began to change over to nationalist positions'. He feared that in Russia the 'party of war, the party of neo-Bolsheviks, are raising their heads' and that there was an acute 'threat of an anti-democratic coup': Andrei Kozyrev, 'Partiia voyny nastupaet—i v Moldove, i v Gruzii, i v Rossii', *Izvestia*, 30 June 1992.

²⁷ Yeltsin in a speech to the collegium of the defence ministry, *Krasnaia zvezda*, 25 November 1992.

²⁸ Yeltsin in an address to foreign ministry officials, Interfax (Moscow), 28 October 1992.

There are several important manifestations of neo-imperialist restoration and nationalist revival. Some of these are limited to the period from autumn 1992 to spring 1994. Others still persist. What, then, have been some of the indications for this new—fourth—phase of Russian foreign policy?

Russian relations with Japan provide a first major indication. In February 1992, before the new line had become effective, Yeltsin had sent a letter to Japanese prime minister Miyazawa, in which he had referred to Japan as a potential alliance partner.²⁹ Furthermore, in August 1992, deputy prime minister Mikhail Poltoranin had acknowledged at a news conference in Tokyo concerning the contentious issue of the Kurile islands that Yeltsin supported a formula, agreed upon in 1956 but never implemented, according to which the two smaller islands of the chain would be returned in exchange for the conclusion of a peace treaty and a normalization of relations.³⁰ However, on 9 September, reflecting the policy change, a well prepared visit by Yeltsin to Japan was abruptly cancelled only four days before it was scheduled to take place. Opposition in Russia to making any concessions to Japan on the disputed islands had evidently hardened. Such opponents included senior officers and officials from the military and intelligence establishment in the Russian Security Council. Yeltsin's spokesman hinted at this shortly before the official announcement on the cancellation of the trip, when he stated that a meeting of the Council on that issue was 'proceeding with great difficulty'.³¹ A subsequent visit scheduled for May 1993 was also cancelled.

Russian policy towards the conflict in the former Yugoslavia provided another example of change. The ostensible aim of the shift in policy was for Moscow to adopt a more 'evenhanded' approach towards the war, that is, a more pro-Serbian stance. This was reflected in Kozyrev's eight-point peace plan of February 1993, which called for a tightening of the arms embargo against the Muslims, Serbs and Croats in Bosnia and for the imposition of UN economic sanctions on Croatia if the Zagreb government continued to attack Serb-controlled enclaves in that republic.³² Moscow subsequently remained adamantly opposed to lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia and to the adoption of military measures against the Bosnian Serbs, above all NATO air strikes on Serb gun positions.

The policy change was particularly evident in Russia's approach to the newly independent countries of the region—the 'near abroad' in current Russian parlance—and in the assertion of 'special rights' in that area. In February 1993, Yeltsin said that Russia 'continues to have a vital interest in the cessation of all armed conflicts on the territory of the former USSR', adding that 'the moment

²⁹ See Kyoji Komachi, 'Concept building in Russian diplomacy: the struggle for identity', Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 3 May 1994, pp. 3–4.

³⁰ James Sterngold, 'Japan and Russia end talks on disputed isles', *New York Times*, 6 August 1992.

³¹ Serge Schmemann, 'Yeltsin cancels visit to Japan as dispute over islands simmers', *New York Times*, 10 September 1992.

³² 'Russia offers Balkan peace plan with pro-Serb tilt', *Washington Post*, 25 February 1993.

has come when responsible international organizations, including the United Nations, should grant Russia special powers as a guarantor of peace and stability in the region of the former Union. Russia has a heartfelt interest in stopping all armed conflicts on the territory of the former Soviet Union.³³ Russian representatives at the UN and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) later tried to dispel the notion that Russia was intent on pursuing neo-imperialist policies and wanted to proclaim the equivalent of a Monroe Doctrine for Eurasia. Such denials are not entirely convincing. The problem is that Russia's 'peacekeeping' can hardly be regarded as a neutral exercise. Its military operations and even the mere presence of its armed forces in the CIS, the Baltic states and Georgia (in some of the countries affected without any stationing of forces agreements) are not coordinated with the international community and serve more or less well-conceived Russian interests.³⁴

Specific examples of the trend of military-political pressures in the post-Soviet geopolitical sphere, notably in 1992–3, have included Tajikistan, where Russian forces helped stabilize a pro-Russian government and openly intervened to close the border with Afghanistan; Georgia and Abkhazia, where 100,000 Abkhaz took on four million Georgians and won, and where the threat to Georgia's survival as a state posed by the forces of Gamsakhurdia was averted by the timely appearance of Russian marines at Poti; Moldova, where the Russian 14th Army helped establish and guarantee the continued existence of the separatist Trans-Dniester region; and Latvia and Estonia, where Moscow condemned 'mass violations of human rights' and openly supported the 'rights' of the Russian minority, by linking the withdrawal of Russian forces in Estonia to a 'satisfactory' resolution of the minority issue.³⁵

The more assertive stance in the 'near abroad' has intimately been connected with the issue of military bases. Part of the settlement of the conflict in Georgia in November 1993 was the legalization of the presence of 20,000 Russian troops at three major bases in Georgia, with no date set for their withdrawal. Russia also gained the right to use the Black Sea naval base of Poti. Yeltsin was reported as having approved, in April 1994, a Russian defence ministry plan to create military bases in other CIS countries and Latvia 'for the security of those states and for the testing of new weaponry and military technology'.³⁶

Russia supported its claims for 'special rights' and military bases by the alleged need to 'protect the rights' of the 25 million ethnic Russians (according to the

³³ In a speech to a congress of the Civic Union, a centre-right alliance, in late February 1993: ITAR-TASS, 1 March 1993.

³⁴ See Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, 'Russia's "Monroe Doctrine": peacekeeping, peacemaking, or imperial outreach', in Maureen Appel and Harald von Riekhoff, eds, *Russia among nations* (Ottawa, ON: Carleton University Press, 1994).

³⁵ Yeltsin participated in the mobilization of pressures against the Baltic states. In July 1993, for instance, when he met Chancellor Kohl in Irkutsk, he said that the 'withdrawal of troops from these states' would 'take place strictly according to plan if the problems of the Russian speaking population were solved in a just manner and if there were no discrimination in these states against the Russian population': ITAR-TASS and DPA (German press agency), 11 July 1993 (emphasis added).

³⁶ The text of the presidential approval, as published in *Rossiiskie vesti*, 7 April 1994.

1989 and last Soviet census) living outside the Russian Federation. It included in that category of 'Russians' the much larger number of ethnically non-Russian, but culturally assimilated, citizens in the new independent states—the 'Russian-speaking' or *russko-iazychnie*—group of persons, thereby increasing the number of persons eligible for Russian 'protection' to at least 30 million.³⁷ The ethnically Russian and *russko-iazychnie* outside the Russian Federation in principle provide Moscow with an instrument that can be used for the assertion of larger foreign policy and strategic objectives, including the re-establishment of a greater degree of political control in the area covered by the former USSR.

The law on defence adopted by the Russian Supreme Soviet in February 1993 ordered the military to cut the overall strength of the armed forces by nearly half to 1.5 million men. However, in December 1993, defence minister Grachev announced that the figure decreed by the now defunct parliament was far too low and that Russia needed a force totalling 2.1 million officers and men.³⁸ Furthermore, the coup attempt of August 1991 and the violent confrontation of October 1993 demonstrated yet again the importance of the armed forces in the domestic power struggle. Both events enhanced the role of the military in domestic and foreign policy decision-making. In recognition of this fact, Yeltsin raised soldiers' salaries and pensions, exempted them from income tax, paid high-profile visits to military bases and scaled back plans for converting factories from defence to civilian production.

The Russian military repositioned forces returning from central and eastern Europe along the country's northern and southern flanks. The redeployment at present exceeds ceilings scheduled to take effect in 1995 under the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty. It is still unclear at this stage whether the limits will indeed be broken unilaterally as part of an overall strategic concept to re-establish greater military power at Russia's flanks *vis-à-vis* Georgia and Ukraine and the Baltic states. It is possible that Russia's CFE partners will agree to modest treaty revisions to help Russia cope with instability in the south. However, the Russian requests for revision may also fit into the pattern of greater emphasis on military power in foreign policy.

Russia has made more stringent attempts at maintaining its military-industrial research, design and production capacity by increasing arms exports. Advocates of a return to 'great power' policies have claimed that the military-industrial complex, despite all the evident disruptions, is the only sector of the economy capable of successfully competing with Western industrialized countries. In a shift that may have negative strategic implications for Russia itself, Moscow has stepped up shipments of substantial amounts of military high technology to

³⁷ See, for instance, the 'programme' formulated in the Russian foreign ministry 'for the protection of 30 million Russians in the near abroad': 'Moskva razrabotala programmu za zashchity 30 millionov russkikh v blizhnem zarubezh'e,' *Izvestia*, 17 February 1994.

³⁸ Larry Ryckman, 'Moscow scraps bid to halve army', Associated Press report, 29 December 1993; on the controversies over the size of the Russian armed forces see John Lepingwell, 'The military in Russian security policy: redeployment, doctrine, strategy', paper presented to the Conference of the International Institute for Strategic Studies on Russia and Regional Security, St Petersburg, Russia, 24–7 April 1994.

China, including missile guidance systems, S-300 surface-to-air missiles and SU-27 fighters. Among many other items of its large arsenal, it has also sold submarines, SU-24 and MiG-29 aircraft to Iran, and T-72 tanks to Syria.

In 1993 and early 1994, as part and parcel of the shift away from Atlanticism, the Russian government revised its attitudes towards NATO. In November 1993, a widely publicized study by the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service characterized NATO as the 'biggest military grouping in the world that possesses an enormous offensive potential'. It called the alliance an organization wedded 'to the stereotypes of bloc thinking'.³⁹ It also charged that NATO wanted to remain a 'defensive alliance' rather than embark on the 'creation of a mechanism for the support of international security'. The intelligence service's preference was clear: a system of 'collective security that would somehow range between NATO on the one hand and the CSCE and the United Nations on the other'.⁴⁰ The authors of the study were emphatic in their opposition to membership of NATO for central and east European countries. Furthermore, Yeltsin's press spokesman, reacting to Lithuania's official request for membership of NATO, even warned that the expansion of NATO into areas in 'direct proximity to the Russian border' would lead to a 'military-political destabilization in the region'.⁴¹ And in respect of its possible participation in the Partnership for Peace (PFP), Russia's stance was characterized by indecisiveness and ambiguity, and replete with contradictory statements.⁴² The crux of the matter was that Russia wanted a 'special status' in any security arrangement in Europe that would reflect its 'position in world and European affairs' and its 'military might and nuclear status'.⁴³

What, then, were the rationales and rationalizations for the move away from many aspects of the New Thinking paradigm, and who were its advocates?

Revision of the paradigm: the ideological basis

Western identification and categorization of the challenges to the New Thinking paradigm often begin with the familiar dichotomy in Russian history between 'Westernizers' and 'Slavophiles' or, in modern versions, between 'Atlanticists' and 'Eurasianists'.⁴⁴ But such a typology can only be a crude starting-point: the

³⁹ The text (30 pages) of the study was distributed to journalists at a press conference in Moscow and published in full or in excerpts in all the major national newspapers; quotes here are from 'Perspektivy rasshireniia NATO i interesy Rossii. Doklad sluzhby vneshnei razvedki', *Izvestiia*, 26 November 1993.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ ITAR-TASS, 5 January 1994.

⁴² On 31 March 1994, for instance, the President's press spokesman stated that Russia would not be ready to sign on to PFP for at least six or seven months. This was flatly denied the next day by Kozyrev who said that PFP would be signed later in the month. It was not, however; and, indeed, in April, after the NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb gun positions outside Gorazde, Kozyrev announced that Russia would not sign on to PFP after all. On these contradictory statements and attitudes see Interfax, 6 April 1994, and John Lloyd, 'Russian Government in State of Disarray', *Financial Times*, 8 April 1994.

⁴³ Interfax (Moscow), 6 April 1994.

⁴⁴ These two tendencies in Russian foreign policy were singled out by Stankevich, 'Derzhava v poiskakh sebii', and further systematized and described in the West by Alexander Rahr, "Atlanticists" versus "Eurasians" in Russian foreign policy', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1: 22, 29 May 1992, pp. 17-22.

political spectrum in Russia is too complicated and differentiated to allow for a simple division into two camps. One is probably better advised to recognize several political tendencies in addition to the 'Westernizing', 'Atlanticist' or New Thinking paradigm. Such attempts have been made by several analysts. Dawisha and Parrot, for instance, posit four additional 'schools of thought'.⁴⁵ The adherents to the first school, according to the authors, still want Russia to develop along essentially democratic and market-oriented lines and retain a multi-ethnic, secular, pluralist and cosmopolitan character but with a strong, if need be authoritarian, government and an activist and assertive 'great power' foreign policy, above all in the 'near abroad'. Leaders associated by the authors with such preferences are State Counsellor Sergei Stankevich; St Petersburg's mayor, Anatoly Sobchak (a questionable designation); Duma deputy Yevgeny Ambartsumov; the former ambassador to the United States and current head of the Duma foreign affairs committee, Vladimir Lukin; and the leader of the Democratic Party of Russia, Nikolai Travkin. In extension of these designations, one could add a member of the presidential council, Andranik Migranian, and the deputy head of the Institute on Europe at the Russian Academy of Sciences, Sergei Karaganov. Political parties that can be associated with this orientation are the Yabloko Bloc, led by Lukin, Grigory Yavlinsky and Yury Boldyrev, and sections of the Russian Party of Unity and Accord, with Sergei Shakhrai and Aleksandr Shokhin as the leading figures.⁴⁶

A second school of thought regards Russia as a great power but one resting on a more ethnically defined Russian base. Great Russia, in this view, should lay its emphasis on protecting the rights of the more than 25 million Russians and several million Russophones living outside the Russian Federation. Adherents of this school do not necessarily accept the current borders of Russia as final, and some of them advocate the reconstitution of empire. Mentioned by the authors as exponents of this view are former parliamentary speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov and ex vice-president Aleksandr Rutskoy. In institutional terms, one could include large sections of the Russian armed forces, the internal security services, the collective farms and the 'military-industrial complex'. Political parties and movements that could be associated with this tendency are Arkady Volsky's Civic Union and Sergei Baburin's Russian All-National Union.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot, *Russia and the new states of Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 199–203.

⁴⁶ Particularly prolific writers of this group are Sergei Stankevich, 'Derzhava v poiskakh sebia'; 'Rossiia voznikla ne vchera i ne konchitsia zavtra', *Izvestia*, 12 June 1992 and 'Formula stabilizatsii v "goriachikh tochkakh"', *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 28 July 1992; Evgenii Ambartsumov, "'Ostaiivat' interesy Rossii', *Narodnyi deputat*, 16, 1992; Andranik Migranian, 'Podlinnye i mnimye orientiry vo vneshnei politike', *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 4 August 1992, and 'Rossiia i blizhnoe zarubezh'e: Formirovanie novogo vneshno-politicheskogo kursa Rossiiskoi Federatsii', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 12 January, 1994; and Sergei Karaganov, who is one of the main authors of both the August 1992 and May 1994 'theses' of the Foreign and Defence Policy Council, *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 19 August 1992 and 27 May 1994.

⁴⁷ As one of the architects of the parliamentary group Rossiiskoe edinstvo in the Russian parliament before its dissolution, a faction linking communist and nationalist deputies, Baburin could also be 'allocated' to the fourth school of thought; this would also be warranted by his strident 'Mondializm i taina Rossii', *Elementy*, 2, 1992.

A third school of thought sees Russia as being in the midst of a spiritual rebirth and religious revival. Its innermost values and economic resources are interpreted as having been squandered in the previous periods of communist terror and global expansion. This group can be defined as Slavophile and isolationist, stressing self-made domestic reconstruction and spiritual revival. Its foremost representatives, according to the authors, are writers like Vasily Belov, Valentin Rasputin and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the mathematician Igor Shafarevich and segments of the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy.

A fourth school of thought considers the dissolution of the Soviet Union to have been the result of treachery and part of an international conspiracy. Their prime supporters are not very squeamish in the methods they advocate not only for the establishment of 'law and order' in Russia but also for the restoration of the Soviet Union and its influence in world affairs. They blame Russia's current predicament on Gorbachev and Yeltsin, foreigners, Jews, the Vatican and the Freemasons. Supporters are said by the two authors to include many leaders and members of the Russian Communist Party, as well as right-wing and pro-fascist groups, such as the National Salvation Assembly under ex-KGB general Aleksandr Sterligov. To be added to this 'red-brown' unholy alliance are General Makashov, Viktor Anpilov and other participants in the October 1993 insurrection; the Agrarian Union, led by Vasily Starodubtsev; the Party of National Unity, headed by Vladimir Danilov; and last but not least, the—decidedly illiberal and undemocratic—Liberal Democratic Party under Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.⁴⁸

Useful as this typology may be, one needs to be conscious of its several limitations. First, one should guard against the temptation of considering it as descriptive of well-defined groups with stable membership and clear concepts. It is more appropriate to picture the deviations from the New Thinking paradigm as lying on a continuum, with fluid transitions, from moderate to extreme, from authoritarian to fascist, from non-violent to coercive, and from multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilateralist to Russian nationalist, isolationist and xenophobic.

Second, it is necessary to make allowance for the fact that presumed adherents of a particular orientation will frequently mix ideas and images from various parts of the spectrum and thus defy categorization. It is for this very reason difficult and at times hopeless for Western analysts to try to discover the logical consistency and rationality of every strand of current thinking. Indeed, as one of the early critics of the New Thinking paradigm has disarmingly admitted, 'I would be very upset if a certain Russian variant of a strictly rational persuasion in foreign policy became predominant in Russian foreign policy.'⁴⁹

Third, it may be fruitless even to try to understand all the subtleties and nuances of great power advocacy, such as the difference between *Russkaia ideia*

⁴⁸ See, for instance, his book: Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, *Poslednyi brodok na iug* (Moscow: Liberal'no-demokraticheskaia partiia, 1993).

⁴⁹ Presidential adviser and state counsellor Sergei Stankevich, 'Derzhava v poiskakh sebia', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 28 March 1992.

(the Russian idea) and *ideia Rossii* (the idea of Russia);⁵⁰ between *messianstvo* (missionary zeal), presumably to be avoided in Russia's foreign policy, and *missiia* (mission), which any self-respecting country allegedly must have;⁵¹ and between bad, old-fashioned imperialism and the 'enlightened post-imperial role' Russia ought to play on the territory of the former Soviet Union.⁵²

Finally, advocacy of particular ideological tenets and policy positions is often divorced from genuine perception and political conviction but directly related to the rationalization of special interests and the exigencies of power struggle. Convictions often change with shifts in the constellation of power. Both Soviet and Russian foreign policy contain numerous examples of this fact of international affairs. It is essential to be aware of this because it conditions the analyst against unwarranted confidence that he has finally established the true philosophical origins and orientation of various participants in the Russian conceptual debate.

The impact of these participants, notably of the 'Eurasianist', nationalist, conservative, communist and fascist opposition, on the policies of the Russian government was noted in the previous section. To be added here is their impact on official and semi-official foreign policy guidelines and concepts. Kozyrev had initially tried to avoid being shackled by official foreign policy doctrines, which could pose constraints characteristic of the Soviet period, with its Party programmes, Central Committee resolutions and 'main tasks of foreign policy' to be derived from them.⁵³ He preferred pragmatic cooperation with the West. It was only in response to political pressure exerted by the opposition, notably by vociferous hard-line factions in the Congress of People's Deputies, that a draft document, 'Concerning the Basic Points of the Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation', was submitted to and discussed by the parliamentary foreign affairs committee in February 1992.⁵⁴ The draft document was amended and resubmitted, without major changes and with detailed explanatory notes, to the committee in April.⁵⁵ After further discussion, it was approved in October 1992⁵⁶ and published in early 1993.⁵⁷ In competition with the foreign ministry, the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy (CFDP)—a group of influential

⁵⁰ This is a nuance (or is it more than that?) that Sergei Stankevich discussed in an interview in *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 26 May 1992.

⁵¹ Stankevich, 'Derzhava v poiskakh sebia'.

⁵² Aleksander Vladislavlev and Sergei Karaganov, 'Tiashkii krest Rossii', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 17 November 1992; similarly, and not surprisingly given the membership of both of the authors in the Foreign Defence and Policy Council, the August 1992 report calls for an 'enlightened post-imperial integration course'; *ibid.*, 19 August 1992.

⁵³ Interviews conducted by this author with foreign ministry officials in Moscow, June 1993.

⁵⁴ Interfax (Moscow), 21 February 1992, reported the content of the document but did not explicitly say that the document had been issued by the foreign ministry; see Suzanne Crow, 'Russia debates its national interest', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 1: 28, 10 July 1992.

⁵⁵ The documents were entitled 'On basic directions of the foreign policy activities of Russia and the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation'; and 'On international relations and the foreign policy of Russia, report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to the Sixth Congress of People's Deputies of Russia' (both unpublished).

⁵⁶ 'Foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation' (mimeograph); on the background of the foreign policy concept's origins and content see *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 21 October 1992.

⁵⁷ *Diplomaticheskii vestnik* (January 1993).

political leaders, administrators, diplomats, military officers and foreign policy experts, established upon Karaganov's initiative—in August 1992 issued a foreign policy concept of its own, entitled 'Strategy for Russia'.⁵⁸ This effort in turn was superseded by an even more authoritative document than that of the foreign ministry or the CFDP—the 'Basic Principles of a Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation', agreed upon by all the major institutions directly involved in Russian foreign policy-making, including the foreign ministry, the ministry for foreign economic relations, the defence ministry, the intelligence services, the defence council, and the parliamentary committees on foreign affairs and foreign economic relations, and on defence and security.⁵⁹ Yury Skokov, the then secretary of the defence council, had overall responsibility for drafting the document.

There are several noteworthy features that distinguish the defence council's document (and also the CFDP's 'Strategy for Russia') from the foreign ministry's concept. First, the document displays a greater sense of self-confidence. This is evident, for instance, in its claim that Russia, 'despite the crisis which it is experiencing, remains one of the great powers because of its potential as well as its influence on the course of world events'. Second, it enumerates among the developments that would threaten Russia's vital interests infraction of the 'integrity of the Russian Federation'; 'obstruction of integration processes in the CIS'; 'violations of human rights and freedoms'; and 'military conflicts in neighboring countries'. Third, it reverses the relative priorities accorded to the United States and Europe, focusing less on the American orientation and more on Europe, advocating close cooperation with western Europe and positing the desirability of re-establishing Russian influence in central and eastern Europe.

Finally, the document declares Russia's relationship with the countries of the former Soviet Union to be of crucial importance, on the grounds that Russia itself could not develop normally if the post-Soviet geopolitical house were not put in order. The structural features which the document envisages are based on such principles as the 'creation of an effective system of collective defence'; 'ensuring the status of Russia as the single nuclear power in the CIS';

⁵⁸ 'Strategiia dlia Rossii. Nekotorye tezisy dlia doklada Soveta po vneshnei i oboronnoi politike', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 19 August 1992. Nominally, foreign minister Kozyrev was one of the 37 members. Other members have included (positions listed are the most recent known to this author) deputy director of the Institute on Europe at the Russian Academy of Sciences Sergei Karaganov; deputy foreign minister Anatolii Adamyshin; Duma deputy Evgenii Ambartsumov; first deputy defence minister Andrei Kokoshin; chief of general staff of the Russian armed forces Col. Gen. Kolesnikov; Duma foreign affairs committee chairman Vladimir Lukin; Duma deputy and presidential adviser Sergei Stankevich; the chief of the Russian Counterintelligence Agency, Lt.-Gen. Stepashin; vice-premier Sergei Shakhrai; President of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Arkady Volsky; Duma deputy and Chairman of the Centre for Economic and Political Research Grigory Yavlinsky; and chairman of the Duma CIS Affairs Committee Konstantin Zatulin.

⁵⁹ The full title of the document is 'Basic principles of a foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation'. The only publicly available summary of its origins and content together with excerpts from the document is by Vladislav Chernov, 'Natsional'nye interesy Rossii i ugrozy dlia ee bezopasnosti', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 29 April 1993. The author is deputy head of the department for strategic security at the Russian Security Council.

'strengthening of the external borders of the Commonwealth'; 'maintaining its military infrastructure and installations'; and ensuring an 'integral system of military security for its members'. The document also advocates the further development of a 'peace-creating mechanism in the framework of a new integration with the participation of Russia and on the basis of a mandate by the UN or the CSCE'.

What about the role of the President in all of this? As far as is known, Yeltsin did not personally involve himself in the drafting of any of the official or semi-official documents. He did, however, sanction and encourage the shift to a more assertive stance. In the midst of the vigorous debate, he criticized the foreign ministry, charging that 'until now, the work of the Ministry has been lacking consistency and has suffered from too much ad hocism'. Decisions made in the past had been 'inconsistent' and 'solid analysis' had not been done.⁶⁰ He also declared that 'policy considerations in relation to other CIS countries have priority'—thus ignoring almost identical statements by Kozyrev and the foreign ministry.⁶¹ Yeltsin, furthermore, expressed 'a certain disappointment with the attitude of some Western countries, including the United States', deploring that the West 'sees Russia as a state that says only yes', apparently forgetting that 'Russia is a great power' whose difficulties are only 'temporary'. Russia, he lamented, had shied away from defending its own interests 'because of the apprehension that such actions would be criticized as imperialist. But the only ideology the Foreign Ministry should follow is the defence of Russia's interests and Russia's security.'⁶²

As shown, subsequent foreign policy documents and policies conformed to the spirit of this criticism—a fact of Russian political life that raises the question as to the reasons for the retreat from Atlanticism and the New Thinking paradigm.

Reasons for the new assertiveness

The first main reason for the changes in mood, concepts and policy in all likelihood lies in the failures of Russian economic development. In 1992 and 1993, Russia continued the downward economic slide which the Soviet Union had begun in 1989. Spectacular falls in production occurred in both years, by far exceeding the United States' experience in the Great Depression. Structural readjustment was painfully slow. The public international aid effort was high on figures and rhetoric but stingy on the disbursement of funds and thus ineffective;

⁶⁰ In an address to the Russian foreign ministry, Interfax (Moscow), 28 October 1992.

⁶¹ 'Russia's main foreign policy priority is relations with our partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States', Kozyrev wrote in 'Russia: chance for survival', *Foreign Affairs*, 71: 2, Spring 1992, pp. 1–16; the foreign ministry's draft document of 10 February 1992, 'Concerning the basic points of the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation', also contained a reference to that effect; see Komachi, 'Concept building in Russian diplomacy', p. 5. Kozyrev also was to state later that he devoted 'more than 70 per cent' of his time in office to CIS affairs; Andrei Kozyrev, 'Otkrovennaia diplomatiia', *Argumenti i fakti*, 23, June 1993 (interview with V. Starkov, chief editor of the journal).

⁶² Interfax (Moscow), 28 October 1992.

nevertheless, Russia's indebtedness rose to above \$80 billion. The volume of private international investment remained insignificant, given the bureaucratic confusion, political uncertainties and vicious power struggles in Moscow, and between Moscow and the regions. In short, Russia did not succeed in achieving its stated objective of integrating into the world economy and becoming a viable partner and member of the G7 rather than remaining an aid recipient. New ideas and inventions, educational opportunities and cultural achievements which other countries, such as the United States, France or Britain, have often been able to use effectively in their foreign policies, could not be utilized by Russia because of the internal disarray and the new narrow-minded nationalist mood in Moscow. All of these factors contributed to the restoration of the importance of that instrument of state policy that had been prominent in both Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union: military power.

The failures in the economic realm are particularly glaring when the crucial political and economic relationship between Russia and Germany is considered. Gorbachev's consent to united Germany's membership in NATO at the Soviet–German negotiations in Moscow and Arkhiz (northern Caucasus) in July 1990 was predicated on the idea of a fundamental change in the relations between Germans and Russians, and the conclusion of comprehensive agreements and treaties to formalize such a change.⁶³ It was obvious to all the participants in the negotiations that Germany would help reimburse the Soviet Union for expenditures directly connected with German unification, such as the obsolescence of the GDR's contractual obligations to the USSR; the hard-currency costs of the upkeep of the Soviet forces in eastern Germany until 1994; the withdrawal of these forces; and the resettlement of military officers in Russia. But there were also widely held assumptions on both sides that the Kohl government, grateful for Gorbachev's consent to unification, would generously help the Soviet Union's reform and modernization effort and take the lead in speeding the country's integration into the world economy. It was also thought that Bonn would, on a large scale, guarantee commodity credits to German export firms and persuade potential private investors to look for investment opportunities in the Soviet Union. On the basis of such perceptions, German experts estimated in 1990 that economic interaction with the eastern half of the European continent would rapidly rise and that the share of the east (*Ostanteil*) in overall German trade would increase from the 4.9 per cent then applying to 10.8 per cent after unification and ultimately, after a few years, to about 20 per cent.⁶⁴

⁶³ See the account by Chancellor Kohl's then foreign policy adviser, Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage: Innensichten der Einigung* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1991), p. 321; confirmed to this author in interviews with Teltschik on 26 July 1994, in Munich; with Anatolii S. Chernyaev, Gorbachev's foreign policy adviser, on 25 June 1993 and 29 April 1994, in Moscow; and Sergei P. Tarasenko, Shevardnadze's personal assistant, on 29 April 1994, also in Moscow. For details on the economic dimension in the Soviet consent to German unification see Hannes Adomeit, 'Gorbachev, German unification and the collapse of empire', *Post-Soviet Affairs* (Berkeley), 10: 3, July–September 1994, pp. 197–230.

⁶⁴ 'Brisante Studie aus Kohls Denkfabrik: Der Preis der Einheit', *Capital*, 4, 1990, pp. 110–12. The experts were Achim von Heynitz and Hanns Maull, both then affiliated with the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Ebenhausen.

The German government lived up to some of these expectations. It honoured the GDR's contractual obligations to the USSR and, in the period from the end of 1990 to the beginning of 1993, supported the newly independent states with DM 81.2 billion.⁶⁵ However, this sum was inadequate (as probably almost any sum would have been) to prevent the collapse of the Soviet Union both as a political entity and as an economic organism. German industry shunned the risks associated with political instability and bureaucratic confusion in Russia. Many of the German–Russian joint ventures (1,141 in 1993) existed only on paper, and when they did function, they were equipped only with very small capital sums.⁶⁶ German direct private investment in the USSR and Russia in 1990–93 added up to a barely discernible blip on the computer screens of international economic transactions—DM 33 million in 1990 (in the USSR) and DM 15 million in 1991; DM 8 million in 1992 (in Russia); and DM 31 million in 1993.⁶⁷ Yet it was not only German private direct investment in Russia that was almost negligible: the cumulative foreign direct investment in the Soviet Union and Russia from *all* countries in the past six years amounts to only \$2.7 billion.⁶⁸ Such figures stand in stark contrast to international investment in China, which totalled \$15 billion in 1993.⁶⁹ As for trade, although Germany occupies first place among Russia's trading partners world-wide, the combined share for the countries of central, eastern and south-eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in German trade actually fell below the 4.9 per cent of trade with pre-unification West Germany.⁷⁰

What, then, were the political consequences of Russia's continuing economic decline? Most importantly, the disappointing developments in the economic realm undermined the foundation on which the New Thinking paradigm was constructed. They discredited the adherents of reform and international cooperation in Russia. They provided grist to the mill of the conservative opposition and its propagandist charges that the Western industrialized countries were unabashedly 'plundering' Russian resources and 'dictating' conditions. And they put the government on the defensive. 'This is a normal credit', Yeltsin was to assert regarding the US \$24 billion package of 1 April 1992, and the IMF conditions connected with it, 'and you cannot force us to our knees. Russia is a great country and it will not permit such a thing.'⁷¹ Some academic specialists turned *derzhavnik*, like Georgy A. Arbatov, Director of the USA and Canada

⁶⁵ German government figures as compiled by Fred Oldenburg, 'Germany's interest in Russian stability', Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, Cologne, *Berichte*, 3, 1993, p. 19. For approximate conversion of German marks to US \$ divide by 1.6.

⁶⁶ Figures according to *Finansovye Izvestia*, 1 July 1993.

⁶⁷ Figures provided to this author by Karl-Heinz Fink and Peter Danylow of the Eastern Committee (Ostausschuß) of the German Federation of Industry (BDI) in Cologne. For comparison, the last sum amounts to less than 0.4 per cent of German investment in France.

⁶⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report, Russia, 3rd quarter, 1994.

⁶⁹ Figures on China as provided by Peat Marwick Accountants, quoted by AFP, 24 January 1994.

⁷⁰ Oldenburg, 'Germany's interest in Russia's stability', p. 29; and Fink and Danylow of the Ostausschuß.

⁷¹ Reuters, from Moscow, 4 July 1992; Steven Erlanger, 'Yeltsin to seek more time to repay old Soviet debts', *New York Times*, 5 July 1992. Yeltsin made these comments in Moscow two days prior to his departure for the G7 Munich summit.

Institute, were to chime in and accuse Yeltsin and Gaidar of allowing the IMF 'to treat Russia like a third world country'.⁷²

The second major reason for the return to 'great power' rhetoric and policies rested in the reassertion of the power of the conservative institutions from the Soviet period: namely, the armed forces, the military-industrial complex, the gas and oil lobby, the collective farms and, last but not least, the KGB which, perhaps more than any other institution, had survived the transition from the USSR to the Russian Federation almost completely unscathed. The influence of these pillars of the Imperial and Ideological paradigm had progressively been whittled down following the introduction of the New Thinking in 1986. They had suffered one defeat and setback after another: loss of the external empire in the Third World; collapse of empire in central and eastern Europe, and of the Soviet Union itself; dissolution of the Warsaw Pact; German unification and united Germany's NATO membership; asymmetrical reductions in conventional and nuclear weapons; and economic and military sanctions against erstwhile allies such as Iraq, Libya and Yugoslavia. Their agitation in 1992 and 1993, therefore, can well be understood as a determined attempt at making a political comeback and regaining lost power positions. The President, sensitive to the realities of power, shifted position—a fact clearly demonstrated by his yielding to the pressures exerted by the Congress of People's Deputies, his abandonment of reformist premier Yegor Gaidar and the appointment of previous Soviet gas and oil minister Viktor Chernomyrdin as Gaidar's successor in December 1992.⁷³

One of the major instruments used by conservatives and hard-liners to promote their influence was the decline in Soviet and Russian arms sales. The volume of such sales had fallen sharply from a fairly stable \$12 billion a year in the 1980s to \$7.8 billion in 1991, \$3 billion in 1992 and \$2.5 billion in 1993.⁷⁴ The Soviet Union had always ranked as first or second in international arms sales—just ahead of or just behind the United States. Russia in 1993 ranked sixth. The conservative opposition thus charged that it was not only humiliating for Russia to be begging for hand-outs from the West and caving in to the dictates of the IMF but also economically counterproductive and socially disruptive. Participation in the sanctions against Iraq, Libya and former Yugoslavia alone had cost the country up to \$30 billion in lost contracts, it argued. Military technology was one important area in which Russia could very well compete with the West. Thus, rather than close down military plants and create unemployment, it was proper to modernize the arms industry and pursue a more aggressive arms export policy.⁷⁵ Furthermore, the 'Eurasianist' strand of

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ On the comeback of the conservative and hard-line opposition, see John B. Dunlop, *The rise of Russia and the fall of the Soviet empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 297–301.

⁷⁴ Interfax (Moscow), 18 November 1992; and John Lloyd, 'Russia boosts arms trade', *Financial Times*, 1 December 1993.

⁷⁵ As, for instance, Sergei Karaoglanov, chairman of the Russian government agency dealing with arms sales; see Fred Kaplan, 'Hard-pressed Russia seeks to revive global arms sales', *The Boston Globe*, 30 July 1992; one of the first to notice and deplore the pressures on the Russian government to increase arms exports even at the expense of political relations with the West was military expert P. Felgengauer, 'Vse v Rossii khatiat torgovat' oruzhiem', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 1 October 1992.

thinking—seeing Russia as a unique power straddling Europe and Asia—provided useful ideological underpinning for an expansion of military cooperation and arms exports to China, India and countries in the Near and Middle East. The agreements signed by Yeltsin in Beijing and New Delhi, in late December 1992 and early 1993 respectively, on arms trade and joint military production, are ample testimony to the impact of these rationalizations on policy.⁷⁶ This is true also of the Russian government's plans to establish an export–import bank and to use export credits to finance the sale of arms and expand arms sales to about \$9 billion a year.⁷⁷

The continuing economic downturn in 1992 and 1993 produced two more reasons for the new assertiveness in Russian foreign policy: the disenchantment of popular opinion with the reformist course, and the demoralization of the Atlanticists and their adaptation to new realities of power. Yeltsin's power base in the period after his election as Russian President in June 1991, reinforced by the August 1991 coup attempt, lay in popular legitimacy. The reformist course also depended on it. However, many factors combined to undermine support for the reformist course, including the hardship suffered by large segments of the population after the freeing of prices in January 1992 and soaring inflation in the following two years. Other socioeconomic factors were widespread job insecurity as a result of privatization, the absence of a social net to prevent people from sliding into abysmal poverty, and personal insecurity as a consequence of rising crime. Political factors also took their toll. This applies first and foremost to the unsavoury spectacle of vicious power struggles between the Supreme Soviet and the Congress of People's Deputies, on the one hand, and Yeltsin and the reformist camp, on the other. But the disunity and conflicting ambitions among the reformers themselves did not help either. Thus, while the electorate was still willing to give moral support to Yeltsin in the April 1993 referendum, it reacted largely with indifference to the violent confrontation between the executive and the legislature in October and finally provided the nationalist, conservative, communist and neo-fascist forces with a majority in the December parliamentary elections.⁷⁸

Constraints on the return to an Imperial paradigm

Although 'great power', 'Eurasianist', Slavophile, nationalist, orthodox religious and neo-fascist ideas and ideologies did emerge in the second half of 1992 and made an impact on foreign policy, it is important not to overstate the case. The

⁷⁶ 'Yeltsin sees military sales to China', *Los Angeles Times* report, *Boston Globe*, 18 December 1992; Sanjoy Hazarika, 'Despite US, Yeltsin backs rocket deal with India', *New York Times*, 30 January 1993.

⁷⁷ Alexander Shokhin, Russia's deputy prime minister for foreign economic relations, as reported by Lloyd, 'Russia boosts arms trade': Shokhin made these announcements after a trip by senior Russian officials to the United Arab Emirates, during which contracts were signed for arms exports, including the newest armoured personnel carriers.

⁷⁸ The electoral results were consistent with a poll conducted at the beginning of December 1993. Fifty-four per cent of the respondents were either sure or at least thought it possible that the West aimed at economically weakening Russia; see *Za rubezhom*, 5, 1994, p. 3.

record of Russia's foreign policy even in the period from the second half of 1992 to early 1994 was mixed. Moscow did indeed in several instances act unilaterally, apply military-political pressures and intervene as if it had a *droit de regard* in the former Soviet Union; but even in that period, the overall character of Russian external policies was not one of restoration of empire and abandonment of cooperation with the West.⁷⁹ Furthermore, as noted at the beginning of this article, the drift of Russian government attitudes and policies in a unilateralist, anti-Western direction has weakened since the spring of 1994. Thus, the following both general and specific observations about the limited character, scope and feasibility of a return to an Imperial and Ideological paradigm appear appropriate.

Empires in the past often collapsed after a series of catastrophic military defeats or civil war. In comparison, the dissolution of the Soviet external and internal empire and the emergence of 15 new states has occurred in an extraordinarily benign fashion. Hundreds of thousands of troops have been withdrawn from foreign soil and resettled; more than five million men under arms have been reduced, reorganized and recruited into new sovereign states; huge arsenals of conventional weapons were cut and redistributed; and control over the approximately 45,000 nuclear warheads was vested in a single state—all without a major conflagration. Most miraculous of all, the mainstay of empire—the Communist Party—also laid down arms without a serious fight.

Russia is still in the midst of a painful transformation process in four dimensions of policy. It is engaged simultaneously in a transition from a command economy and state ownership to a market economy and private property; from an authoritarian or totalitarian one-party regime to a state with a greater degree of pluralism, democratic procedures and the rule of law; from a unitary, centralized state to a federation with power to be devolved to ethnically non-Russian titular entities and Russian administrative units; and from imperial structures and consciousness to a more modest Russian identity. No one can expect this momentous transformation to take place without significant stress and strain.

The neo-imperialist bark has been worse than its bite; aggressiveness has been more a matter of words than deeds. This discrepancy is in all likelihood due to the fact that several of the *derzhavniki*, Kozyrev among them, are essentially sheep in wolves' clothing. They retain a fundamentally Western outlook but feel obliged to make verbal concessions and tactical adjustments to changes in popular mood and pressures exerted from within the political establishment.

To turn to specific policy issues, Russia has played a largely successful role in preventing the proliferation of the Soviet Union's huge arsenal of nuclear weapons. After the disintegration of the USSR, Moscow declared itself

⁷⁹ This argument was developed earlier by Hannes Adomeit in 'Russia: partner or risk factor in European security?', in *European security after the Cold War*, papers from the 35th Annual Conference of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Brussels, 9–12 September 1992, Adelphi Paper no. 285, February 1994, pp. 15–33.

responsible for the Soviet Union's nuclear legacy. By July 1992, it had completed the transfer of all tactical nuclear weapons without a single accident. In January 1994 it was one of the signatories of the Trilateral Agreement, providing for the transfer of Ukrainian strategic warheads to Russia, thereby opening the way to the ratification and implementation of the severe cuts in strategic nuclear weapons pursuant to the START II agreement. By 2003, if the proposed cuts are carried out, Russia's strategic nuclear arsenal will be reduced to 3,000 warheads and that of the United States to 3,500, roughly their levels in the 1960s before the advent of multiple-warhead missiles. Dissent among international theory 'realists', surrealists and structuralists notwithstanding, it would seem that these developments are to be welcomed.⁸⁰ It is also appropriate to credit the Russian government with making an honest effort at controlling trade in fissionable materials and discouraging the thousands of underpaid nuclear scientists and missile engineers employed by the military-industrial complex from concluding contracts for more lucrative work on nuclear weapons and missile projects abroad.⁸¹

Russia has also continued to contribute to a significant reduction in the level of conventional arms and armed forces in Europe. It has completed the withdrawal of its forces from central and eastern Europe and made further cuts in the size of its own armed forces. Concerning the controversy on force levels, the total discussed has ranged from 2.1 million to 1.5 million men (see above), with the government having now apparently committed itself to the figure on the lower end of the scale.⁸² Russia has also continued to carry out the provisions of the 1990 treaty on military forces and armaments in Europe and the supplementary July 1992 Vienna accord on maximum numbers of ground and air forces, and it has dismantled large numbers of conventional weapons. As for Moscow's requests for a revision of the treaty limits for equipment at the flanks, there is undeniable instability in the Caucasus, both north and south of the Russian border, and Russian military officers have expressed concern about possible security threats from Turkey and Iran.⁸³ In the north, the Kaliningrad region is gaining in importance now that Russian forces have been withdrawn from Germany and the Baltic states. However, the CFE flank limits include

⁸⁰ In the debate on the issue of nuclear proliferation, as exemplified by the question as to whether Ukraine should retain the nuclear weapons inherited from the Soviet Union, this author agrees with the arguments advanced by Steven E. Miller, 'The case against a Ukrainian nuclear deterrent', *Foreign Affairs*, 72: 3, Summer 1993, pp. 67–80, rather than John J. Mearsheimer, 'The case for a Ukrainian nuclear deterrent', *ibid.*, pp. 50–66.

⁸¹ See, for instance, the agreement reached after three days of talks in Moscow between top German and Russian security officials on bilateral cooperation in preventing the smuggling of nuclear materials, *Interfax (Moscow)*, 22 August 1994.

⁸² Defence minister Grachev criticized the government's decision to reduce the strength of the armed forces to 1.5 million troops, arguing that the nation would be better served by an army of 1.9 or 2.1 million men; *Radio Mayak*, 19 August 1994, as quoted by *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 158, 22 August 1994.

⁸³ See, for instance, chief of the general staff Mikhail Kolesnikov's comments on the Islamic threat and Turkish ambitions, *BTA*, 19 November 1993; defence minister Grachev's press conference on his return from Turkey, *Ostankino TV (Moscow)*, 17 May 1993; and *ITAR-TASS*, 14 May 1993, as quoted by Lepingwell, 'The military in Russian security policy', p. 4.

equipment in both the North Caucasus and Leningrad military districts, thereby constraining possible Russian redeployments in both geographical areas. A convincing argument can thus be made that it is not unreasonable for Russia to request modification or reinterpretation of the CFE provisions on its flanks and for the Western treaty partners to be accommodating to such requests.

Military-political pressures in the 'near abroad' have not added up to a comprehensive strategy of imperial restoration. Despite all the hue and cry about 'mass violations of human rights' in the Baltic states, Moscow completed its troop withdrawals from Lithuania in September 1993. Despite differences with Latvia and Estonia over citizenship rights and the treatment of the Russian minority in these countries, and occasional threats to suspend the troop withdrawals, Russia continued its pull-out and completed it at the end of August 1994. It also reached an amicable solution on the contentious issue of the radar station at Skrunda by placing it under civilian control for a maximum of four years with an additional eighteen months allowed for its dismantling.⁸⁴ In Ukraine, despite all the sparring with Kiev over nuclear weapons and the Black Sea fleet, Moscow has abstained from pursuing a blatant policy of destabilization. It has refused to mobilize and organize the Russian-speaking communities in eastern Ukraine and refrained from supporting a Crimean Russian, Ruthenian or any other separatist movement in Ukraine. If the country were to fall apart, or fall into Russia's lap, it would not be because of destabilization attempts from the outside but because of Kiev's inability to make the best of its independence.

It is an incontrovertible fact that Russia has special interests and responsibilities in its 'near abroad'. Russia is both a European and an Asian power and has retained many of the former Soviet connections in the Baltics, Transcaucasus, Black Sea area, Central Asia and the Far Eastern region. Objective conditions are also such that success in Russia's overall reform effort depends very much on progress in the other newly independent states. It would, therefore, be short-sighted from a Western perspective to applaud progress in west European integration and, at the same time, brand any attempt made by Russia at regional economic cooperation as 'neo-imperialist'. The *forms* of integration are the crucial point; that is, whether there is to be reintegration 'from above' or a new, market-based integration.

A similar reasoning applies to peacekeeping, peacemaking or 'peace creation' (*mirotvorchestvo*) in the former Soviet Union. Nationalist and ethnic conflicts on CIS territory ultimately affect Western security and other interests, for example in the creation of refugees. Reliable numbers for CIS refugees in Russia today are difficult to obtain but probably exceed the one million mark. They are a drain on Russian resources, diminish the chances of economic reform and could spill over the borders into central and eastern Europe. However, international institutions

⁸⁴ Dzintra Bungis, 'Russia agrees to withdraw troops from Latvia', *RFE/RL Research Report*, 3: 22, 3 June 1994, pp. 1-9.

such as the UN, CSCE, the EU or NATO have been unable or unwilling effectively to address such conflicts. Typical of this state of affairs are the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, the fighting between Abkhazia and Georgia, ethnic strife in the North Caucasus and border transgressions from Afghanistan into Tajikistan. The Russian role has varied in each and every one of these conflicts. However, given the unwillingness of Western countries to expose their soldiers to the risk of getting involved in ground combat in the former Yugoslavia—an area close to central and eastern Europe—it is almost inconceivable that European countries other than Russia would be willing to commit forces for enforcement action farther afield. Given the Western reluctance to commit significant forces and resources to CIS conflict management, yet the ease with which charges of Moscow's 'neo-imperialism' are made, Russian policy-makers may perhaps be forgiven for thinking that the West is somewhat hypocritical on the issue of CIS conflict management.

In its relations with Germany, the Russian government has refrained from helping the Draculas of the 'balance of power', geopolitics and military-strategic competition rise from the grave. At Germany's unification in 1990, the Western Group of Forces (WCF) stationed in eastern Germany comprised 338,000 soldiers and 207,400 civilians.⁸⁵ Domestic critics of the Soviet consent to German unification claimed that their withdrawal might take up to 19 years.⁸⁶ However, the withdrawal of the Russian military and civilian personnel was completed in three and a half years, that is, six months earlier than originally agreed upon, and it took place efficiently, quietly and amicably.⁸⁷ Today, even the advocates of 'great power' policies remain favourably inclined towards Russian-German cooperation. There are several issues that could have soured relations: the assertion of German support for the Baltic states in their controversies with Russia over the Russian troop presence and minority rights; the German desire to open a general consulate in Kaliningrad; grievances by ethnic Germans on Russian soil; German support for Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia in the Balkans; and the expansion of German economic and political influence in Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. None of these traditional geopolitical bones of contention has had a major negative impact on the relationship. This was clearly shown at the May 1994 Kohl-Yeltsin summit in Bonn. In a *quid pro quo*, the German Chancellor supported Russia's desire to participate in G7 decision-making, first on political matters and later on

⁸⁵ *The Week in Germany* (German Information Center, New York), 13 May 1994.

⁸⁶ Colonel Petrushenko, the head of the Soyuz parliamentary group in the Soviet parliament, in an interview with *Pravda*, 3 March 1991.

⁸⁷ The complaints voiced by Soviet officers about the process were not directed at the German authorities or population but at the Russian authorities; see, for instance, Aleksandr Polotskii, 'Germanskie problemy rossiiskikh voisk—kak ikh vidit glavnokomanduiushchii Zapadnoi gruppi voisk general-polkovnik Matvei Burlakov', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 14 January 1993. Agreement in principle on the time-scale (four years) for the withdrawal was reached at the Kohl-Gorbachev summit in Moscow and Arkhiz in July 1990 and codified in a corresponding treaty in October 1990; in December 1992, in talks between Kohl and Yeltsin in Moscow, the two leaders agreed to advance the date for the completion of the pullback of the WGF to 31 August 1994.

economic affairs, and called such participation a step that would lead 'to the G8', while the Russian President, in turn, supported Germany as a 'worthy candidate' for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.⁸⁸ Both leaders were confident that a long-delayed cooperation agreement between the EU and Russia would be signed after Germany's assumption of the European Union presidency in July 1994. In the event, the agreement was signed earlier, at the June 1994 Corfu EU summit.⁸⁹

Notwithstanding all the right-wing ranting and raving about the pernicious role of NATO, the official opposition to membership of the Visegrad countries in the Atlantic alliance and the declared preference for all-European institutions such as the CSCE, the Russian government entered a formal partnership with NATO in June 1994, acceding to the Partnership for Peace programme. The appointment of deputy foreign minister Vitaly Churkin as liaison official lends weight to the idea that Russia is intent on cooperating with NATO in a constructive spirit rather than attempting to play fox in the chicken coop. 'Russia', Kozyrev said in Brussels, stands by its choice of principle—the carrying out of national and state interests 'through cooperation rather than confrontation'.⁹⁰

If, then, the drift of Russian government attitudes and policies in a unilateralist, anti-Western direction has weakened since the spring of 1994, what are some of the reasons for this trend?

The shift to the right in the preceding phase, as argued above, was driven by the interaction of four factors: (1) the determined attempt by supporters of the *ancien régime* to regain lost power positions; (2) the continuation of economic deterioration; (3) popular disillusionment with the reform process; and (4) demoralization of the reformist forces and their adaptation to new realities of power. The ebbing of the tidal wave of nationalism and unilateralism is in all likelihood due to changes in the strength and direction of the first two factors.

Concerning the first, political, factor, the push of the Soviet-era elite for greater access to power has to some extent been successful. But, perhaps paradoxically, this has produced the effect—as so often in Soviet times—that platforms and positions attacked in the struggle for power are being coopted and integrated into the policies of the new leaders. The results of the December 1993 parliamentary elections, the elevation of professional Communist Party bureaucrat Ivan Rybkin to the post of speaker of the State Duma and the resignation of then first deputy prime minister Gaidar, finance minister Boris Fyodorov and other committed reformers from the cabinet gave rise to widespread fears that the damaging stalemate and polarization between the President and the cabinet, on the one hand, and the State Duma, on the other, would even be worse than in the era of

⁸⁸ 'Kohl stellt Jelzin ein Kooperationsabkommen mit der Europäischen Union in Aussicht', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 May 1994.

⁸⁹ 'Corfu summit: EU agrees on expansion, cooperation with Russia', *The Week in Germany*, German Information Center (New York), 1 July 1994.

⁹⁰ Daniel Williams, 'Russia signs on with NATO in peace alliance', *International Herald Tribune*, 23 June 1994.

the Congress of People's Deputies and its recurrent impeachment attempts.⁹¹ Anxiety was also widespread that government policies, reeling under the shock of Zhirinovksy's electoral success, would drift even further in nationalist and neo-imperialist directions. Initial developments appeared to justify such sentiments.⁹² But the prevailing mood in Russian domestic politics in spring 1994 was one of exhaustion and aversion to political confrontation—sentiments that found expression in the April 1994 Accord on Social Unity concluded among major social and political forces and parties. Tenuous and superficial as the accord may be, it is nevertheless an indication of a general desire for a respite and reconciliation. Most importantly, despite the disappointing outcome of the elections and the make-up of parliament, Russia does finally have a constitution and a government that is able to function.

As for the second, economic, factor, the most important development until the autumn of 1994 were perceived tendencies of stabilization. According to one Western economic adviser to the Russian government, Russia by this time had turned into a 'market economy' and had become a 'success story'.⁹³ The reasons cited by this and other Western economists were that the government had conducted tight monetary policies, cut subsidies and the budget deficit, achieved a positive interest rate on savings, brought down the inflation rate to below 5 per cent per month in August, and stabilized the exchange rate of the rouble. Real income, retail sales and private consumption as a share of GDP had 'started rising'; shortages of goods had all but disappeared. The steep decline in production was 'not real'. As for basic structural trends, Russia had solved 'many basic institutional problems'. It had privatized '70 per cent of Russian industrial enterprises' and had successfully achieved 'conversion of the arms industry'. Private farms accounted for 36 per cent of agricultural production.⁹⁴ Another Western adviser also said in October 1994 that 'Russia is on the brink of moving beyond crisis management and could soon be a G8 country with low inflation, low inflationary expectations and low, medium-term interest rates'.⁹⁵ Perhaps surprisingly, even Russian reformers excluded from the inner circle of government decision-makers, such as Gaidar, Grigory Yavlinsky and Anatoly Sobchak, applauded Chernomyrdin's course and endorsed the idea that Russia was on the path of political and economic stabilization.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Gaidar had made a comeback in mid-September 1993, when Yeltsin appointed him one of three first deputy prime ministers and, at least nominally, put him in charge of economic policy.

⁹² In mid-January 1994, for instance, foreign minister Kozyrev delivered a speech on the need to keep Russian troops inside the former Soviet republics, a statement that especially alarmed the leaders of the Baltic states; Fred Kaplan, 'As reformers retreat, new Russia yields to old: Yeltsin is called "Lonely and Suffering"', *Boston Globe*, 28 January 1994.

⁹³ Anders Åslund, 'Russia's success story', *Foreign Affairs*, 73: 5, September/October 1994, pp. 58–71.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 65–6, 68.

⁹⁵ Jochen Wermuth, 'A case of cut and thrust', *Financial Times*, 18 October 1994. The author is identified by the paper as being affiliated with Balliol College, Oxford, and acting as adviser to the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation.

⁹⁶ The first in a lecture and discussion at Harvard University on 6 May 1994, the last two in remarks at the International Institute for Strategic Studies conference on regional security, St Petersburg, 23–27 April 1994 (author's notes).

However, the 'Black Tuesday' of October 1994, when the rouble lost 21.5 per cent of its value in one single day (later to recover), reinforced doubt as to whether the tendencies of stabilization were solid. Indeed, by the end of that month, double digit rates of inflation had returned. Some of the factors contributing to this reversal and lack of confidence in the economic reform process include: large shortfalls in budget revenue in the first half of 1994 because of widespread tax evasion by firms and regions; an estimated 120 trillion roubles in inter-enterprise debt; lack of reform in the energy and agricultural sector; hidden subsidies to powerful lobbies and enterprises; the failure to make enterprises bankrupt even when they are unprofitable and have no future; weakness or absence of viable institutions to make the market work; low rates of domestic savings; high external debts; the continuing net outflow of funds despite some return of capital; and the serious distortion of competition by corrupt state agencies and powerful mafia groups. Most importantly, perhaps, it is not at all clear whether the rigorous monetary and economic stabilization attempted in 1994 is socially sustainable. Firms have arbitrarily been withholding workers' wages totalling 3.9 trillion roubles (about \$1.3 billion), and there are probably limits to the degree to which impoverished workers and pensioners can be expected to tighten their belts even further.

What then are the foreign policy implications of economic stringencies and austerity policies? The new domestic political consensus, to the extent that it exists, is more cost-conscious. Almost repeating the experience of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the ruling political elite in Moscow has demonstrated heightened awareness of the 'costs of empire'. This applies to the likely costs of any forcible reintegration of the new independent states and reconstitution of the Soviet Union as to policies in the 'far abroad'.⁹⁷ Cost-consciousness could also be seen in action on the budget (adopted on 24 June and in force since 6 July 1994); it was particularly visible on the budget item of some relevance for 'great power' policies abroad—defence. In accordance with commitments made by the Russian government to the IMF, the planned overall budget deficit did not exceed 10 per cent of the gross domestic product. The defence ministry and the Duma committee for defence had supported defence allocations amounting to 55 trillion roubles—a sum testifying to significant self-restraint by the armed forces lobby since, allowing for inflation, this would have amounted to the same level of defence expenditures as in 1993.⁹⁸ Yeltsin, Chernomyrdin and the Federation Council had supported this figure.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁷ Thus, for instance, when deputy finance minister Andrei Kazmin, the official responsible for the negotiations with Belarus, was asked which CIS country would—after the conclusion of the agreement on economic and financial union with Belarus—be the next 'candidate' for economic union, he replied that Belarus would remain the *only* example. Author interview with Kazmin, Munich, 22 July 1994.

⁹⁸ Sergei Parkhomenko, 'Duma namerena zashchitit' biudzhnet of Soveta Federatsii', *Segodnia*, 7 June 1994; Vladislav Fridman, 'Gosbiudzhnet nakonets-to doduman', *Moskovskie novosti*, 24, 12–19 June 1994.

⁹⁹ The presidential and government support, however, may only have been lukewarm. They supported the 55 trillion rouble figure between the first and second reading of the bill but failed to table and defend a corresponding motion when the bill was voted; see *Moskovskie novosti*, 12 June 1994.

spending authority ultimately approved by the Duma, however, was only 40.6 trillion roubles.¹⁰⁰ Equally important for an assessment of trends concerning the likely use of military power for foreign policy purposes is the fact that, whereas the share of operating costs in the total budget in the period from 1989 to 1994 more than doubled (from 26.1 per cent to 54.4 per cent), the share of procurement was cut in half (from 42.2 per cent to 20.8 per cent) and that of research and development by more than two-thirds (from 19.8 to 6 per cent).¹⁰¹ Such trends bode ill for an effective modernization of the Russian armed forces.

Heightened awareness of the costs of imperial restoration, and a swing back to greater restraint and cooperative approaches in foreign policy, are also reflected in the current drift of conceptual discussion. As noted above, one of the more important semi-official attacks on the Atlanticist orientation and the New Thinking had been launched by the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy in its 'theses' on a Strategy for Russia, published in August 1992.¹⁰² In their May 1994 sequel, 'Strategy for Russia (2)', they explain that their criticism almost two years earlier 'was prompted by the concern the CFDP members felt over the fact that the leadership of this country lacked any coherent understanding of Russia's interests and objectives in the foreign policy sphere' and by 'apprehensions' about a 'lopsided pro-Western orientation'. They also profess satisfaction with the changes put into effect since then.¹⁰³ In a reversal of positions very much resembling time-honoured Soviet practices of warning against becoming 'dizzy with success' and replacing 'revisionism' by 'dogmatism' as the main danger in Soviet foreign policy, they now deplore that the necessary change in 1992 from the 'unilateral pro-Western orientation towards the advocacy of real national interests' had lately been 'accompanied by "great power" rhetoric spouted by high officials'.¹⁰⁴ This created a danger of Russia distancing itself, becoming suspicious of the outside world and displaying 'arrogance of force'.¹⁰⁵ But any 'new isolation' of Russia today 'would be far more unwelcome than the one faced by the USSR during the first Cold War'—and unnecessary, at that, since conflicts of interest between Russia and the major Western countries are 'minor', there are 'no profound reasons for relations to become more strained'.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ 'Federal'nyi zakon o Federal'nom biudzhete na 1994g.', *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 6 July 1994.

¹⁰¹ See the detailed analysis by Nicola A. Mögel, 'Das russische Wehrbudget: Schwierige Balance zwischen politischen Interessen und ökonomischen Möglichkeiten', Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, Cologne, *Aktuelle Analysen*, 46, August 1993, pp. 1–6.

¹⁰² 'Strategiia dlia Rossii. Nekotorye tezisy dlia doklada Soveta po vneshnei i oboronnoi politike', *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 19 August 1992.

¹⁰³ 'Strategiia dlia Rossii (2)'.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, thesis 1.1.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, theses 1.4 and 1.5.

Conclusion

The problems raised by the new 'theses' and the present article are essentially the same: on what should Russia base 'greatness' in world affairs, and how is it to be achieved? Should 'greatness' be realized within the context of a neo-realist, geopolitically oriented Imperial paradigm with ideological overtones, or a New Thinking paradigm, with the emphasis on political and economic cooperation? This is also the question Shevardnadze asked after his resignation from the post of foreign minister in December 1990. Very much like his 'conservative critics', he wrote, he had 'a deep-rooted belief that we are a great country and must be respected'. But, he asked, 'What makes us great? Territory? Size of population? The number of weapons?' If so, what about all 'the national disasters? The lack of human rights? The disorder of life? What do we have to be proud of if our infant mortality is almost the highest on the planet?'¹⁰⁷

Indeed, conservative and more extreme critics of Atlanticism have often confused greatness with the ability to threaten or use force and the possession of nuclear weapons.¹⁰⁸ They prefer to ignore the fact that a nation's status and power in contemporary international affairs depend 'above all, on technological resources and achievements, and the availability of "soft power", that is, the ability to exert influence ... through "persuasion", without the use of force'.¹⁰⁹ As Yeltsin told *his* critics, even without nuclear weapons Russia would be a great power: 'Russia is rightfully a great power by virtue of its history, of its place in the world, and of its material and spiritual potential'.¹¹⁰

Such ideas of Russia's identity, dominant in the conceptual debate and in government policies immediately before and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but under attack in the period from the autumn of 1992 until early 1994, have made a comeback. The assertive 'great power' rhetoric to a great extent served the function of helping members of the traditional elite regain lost power positions. Now that their purpose has at least to some extent been achieved, policies of internal reform and voices advocating reason and restraint in international affairs have returned to centre stage. Such tendencies are likely to continue for some time: Russia, despite some economic stabilization at present, is still in the initial stages of the necessary restructuring and modernization of the economy. It needs to attract international investment; create a whole new set of financial and economic institutions; strengthen the weak legal system and eradicate organized crime; reorder the relations between the centre and the ethnically based and Russian administrative regions; develop new forms of market-based integration and cooperation with the new independent states; and cope with the challenges of military reform and

¹⁰⁷ Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, p. 211.

¹⁰⁸ This was a point made early on in the debate in a commentary in *Izvestia*, 21 February 1992.

¹⁰⁹ This is the realization expressed in the most recent report by the Institute of Europe at the Russian Academy of Sciences, *Novaia geopoliticheskaia situatsiia v Evrope, pozitsiia Zapada i interesi bezopasnosti Rossii* (Moscow: Institute of Europe, 1994), p. 67. The report is a collective work; its authors are Dmitrii Danilov, Sergei Karaganov (chief editor), Igor Maxymichev, Boris Pichugin and Pavel Podlesnyi.

¹¹⁰ Speech to the Sixth Congress of People's Deputies, 7 April 1992, *Rossiiskaia Gazeta*, 8 April 1992.

conversion. International cooperation, it would seem, is needed to achieve any of these tasks, but is difficult to obtain in an isolationist or neo-imperialist framework.¹¹¹ The New Thinking that was an entirely appropriate response to the conceptual and practical political crisis of the late 1970s to the mid-1980s would still seem to be the appropriate framework to cope with the challenges.

¹¹¹ This analysis coincides with the conclusions of Alexei G. Arbatov, 'Russian foreign policy priorities in the 1990s', in Teresa Pelton Johnson and Steven E. Miller, eds, *Russian security after the Cold War: seven views from Moscow*, CSIA Studies in International Security (Washington: Brassey's, 1994), pp. 1-41.