

# The Russian Diaspora in Central Asia: Russian Compatriots and Moscow's Foreign Policy

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**Abstract:** This article examines how Russians and the Russian government have conceptualized their compatriots living in Central Asia, examines the circumstances surrounding Russian immigration to and emigration from the region, discusses the role played by the Russian diaspora in Russian foreign policy and Central Asian politics, and outlines the Putin administration's approach to Russian compatriots abroad. President Putin has devoted considerable attention to promoting and defending the interests of Russian compatriots in Central Asia, and Russian foreign policy is slowly changing to utilize soft power more effectively in achieving Russia's goals in the near abroad. Russia's nationalist movement actively lobbies for greater attention to the diaspora in Russian foreign policy. A surge of patriotism resulting from terrorist attacks and the Chechnya conflict heightens Russians' sense of identity and could lead to greater pressures to "defend" Russians abroad. The Russian diaspora is now more important symbolically than it was under Yeltsin, yet traditional political and security considerations, a vigorous energy diplomacy, and participation in emerging regional organizations overshadow Russia's compatriots abroad as factors in Moscow's Central Asia policy.

**Key words:** Central Asia, compatriots, diaspora, foreign policy, Russians

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**D**iasporas can have a significant impact on the domestic and foreign policies of states. The American Jewish community, for example, constitutes a powerful voice within the United States in support of Israel, and shapes American policy toward the Middle East. For years, the Armenian community has influenced U.S. policy toward Turkey and the Caucasus, whereas Florida's Cubans have pressured Washington to maintain a hard line against Castro's regime. Ethnic Chinese living in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Taiwan have invested heavily in the PRC, contributing substantially to the mainland's phenomenal economic growth. When the Soviet Union collapsed, some twenty-five million ethnic Russians were living in the fourteen non-Russian republics, with several million more scattered around the globe. This article assesses the importance of ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in Central Asia (collectively termed "compatriots") for Russian foreign policy under Vladimir Putin.

The Russian diaspora issue was on Moscow's agenda only intermittently when Boris Yeltsin was in office. President Putin has emphasized restoring Russian power and influence in the world, particularly along the unstable southern border where ethnic Russians mix with peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Under Putin, Russian nationalism is becoming a stronger force in domestic politics and foreign policy. Given these developments, Russian foreign policy could become more assertive in defending the interests of Russians abroad, or at least in playing the diaspora card in international relations. Moscow's efforts to exert greater influence in the southern border regions, which pose the greatest security challenge to Russia, elevate the potential importance of the Russian diaspora as an instrument of statecraft.

This article addresses the following questions. First, how have Russians and the Russian government conceptualized their compatriots living in Central Asia? What are the circumstances surrounding Russian immigration to and emigration from the region? What role has the Russian diaspora played in Russian foreign policy and Central Asian politics since the collapse of the Soviet Union? Has Vladimir Putin's administration adopted a substantially different approach to Russian compatriots abroad than that of Boris Yeltsin? What has been Russia's ethnic strategy in the critical security region of Central Asia, and how does the ethnic factor fit into Russia's overall strategy toward the region?

My first task is to present some theoretical issues relevant to diaspora politics and foreign policy, outline the pattern of ethnic Russian settlement in Central Asia, and discuss the elusive concept of Russian identity outside the Russian Federation. Next, I discuss the situation facing Russian compatriots in Central Asia after independence, with reference to both Central Asian and Russian policies. In the last section, I concentrate on the compatriot issue in Russian foreign policy toward the Central Asian states.

### **Diaspora Politics, Russian Identity, and Russian Compatriots in Central Asia**

The relationship between diaspora politics and foreign policy is essentially a triangular one, consisting of the diaspora community in question, the host country,

and the homeland. However, the patterns of relations among these three actors vary widely. First is the question of how the diaspora community came to be located in the host country—was it a forced migration, voluntary relocation, or colonial remnant? The circumstances of resettlement influence how the attitudes of the diaspora population toward both the homeland and the host country are constructed.<sup>1</sup> A second question is how closely the diaspora is tied to the homeland. Does most of the diaspora population consist of recent émigrés, or are they several generations removed from the homeland? Have the traditions and language been preserved and nurtured (by communalist or autonomous strategies) or have they been assimilated or at least integrated into the host culture? The political regimes of the homeland and host countries are also important to consider—are they democratic or authoritarian?<sup>2</sup> Finally, what is the relationship between the homeland and the host country? Are they on friendly terms, or is the relationship marked by hostility and suspicion?<sup>3</sup>

The Russian settlement in Central Asia has a long, complex history, which has shaped the identity of Russians and of the indigenous peoples. Russians moved into Central Asia in various waves during the past four hundred years. The first settlers were Cossacks who moved to the region around the Ural and Irtysh rivers in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Freed landless serfs from Russia and Ukraine moved into northern Kazakhstan after the emancipation of 1861. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, Cossacks, peasants, and former officers and soldiers from the Turkish wars settled in Central Asia, largely in the towns. Another wave of Russians followed the 1917 revolution, the civil war, and the accompanying famine of 1921. More Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians were displaced by collectivization, industrialization, the terror of the 1930s, and World War II. Stalin's forced deportations included Russians and other Slavs, along with Koreans, Chechens, Ingush, Crimean Tatars, and others who were relocated to Central Asia. The last major influx occurred in the late 1950s, during Nikita Khrushchev's Virgin Lands project; the bulk of these agricultural workers settled in Kazakhstan.

In the Stalin and Khrushchev periods, the share of the Russian population in Central Asia increased, in part due to the influx of Russians and other nationalities, but also from repressions carried out against the native peoples. For example, collectivization is estimated to have caused the deaths of close to 40 percent of the Kazakh population, with the bulk coming in the famine of 1932–33. Kazakhs had become a minority within their own republic, according to the 1959 census. In that year, Russians accounted for 43 percent of Kazakhstan's population, and 30 percent of the population of Kyrgyzstan. However, by the 1960s and 1970s, the trend was slightly reversed, due to high Central Asian birth rates and some Slavic emigration. Table 1 outlines the growth and decline of Russians as a percentage of local populations in the Soviet period, based on census data.

During the Soviet era, Russians and other Slavs in Central Asia were concentrated in the cities and heavily overrepresented in the skilled labor force. Russians also constituted a large proportion of the population in the capitals, although their proportion declined steadily from 1959 to 1989. In 1989, the Russian population of Central Asia cities was 59 percent of Alma Ata, 56 percent of Bishkek, 32 per-

**TABLE 1. Russian Share of Population in Central Asian Republics, 1926–1989 (%)**

	1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989
Kazakhstan	20	40	43	42	41	38
Uzbekistan	5	12	14	13	11	8
Kyrgyzstan	12	21	30	29	26	22
Tajikistan	0.7	9	13	12	10	8
Turkmenistan	8	19	17	15	13	10

Source. S. I. Kuznetsova, *Russkie v Tsentral'noi Azii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Gumanitarii," 2002), 9.

cent of Ashgabad, 33 percent of Dushanbe, and 34 percent of Tashkent. Russian dominance in the capitals ensured that publishing, culture, sciences, and governance would all be dominated by the Russian language.<sup>4</sup> Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan had the largest proportion of rural Russians, but even in these countries the Russian population was largely urban. Throughout Central Asia, Russians dominated in the intelligentsia, the political and economic sectors, the education, and the military.

This migration pattern shaped Russian identities in Central Asia and in the Russian Federation. As Rogers Brubaker noted, in empires such as the Soviet/Russian and the Austro-Hungarian, where populations are ethnically mixed and certain populations are resistant to assimilation, the territorial-political and ethnocultural models of nationhood coexist uneasily.<sup>5</sup> In Central Asia, nationally based union republics helped construct identities that had been inchoate at best. For ethnic Russians, however, the supranational Soviet state experience gave them a sense of imperial ownership over Central Asia. The sense of boundaries was blurred for Russians who had a large and longstanding presence in the region and an expansive view of Russian political hegemony. Central Asians, whose borders had been artificially designed by Moscow and many of whom (such as the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz) were nomads, tended not to think in terms of territorial boundaries. In the post-Soviet period, these diffuse concepts of space and nationhood clashed with the sudden appearance of concrete boundaries of fully independent states.

Central Asia has often been described as a colonial appendage of Russia, and yet Soviet rule did bring benefits, particularly in the areas of literacy and education. On many indicators, Central Asians surpassed their brethren in neighboring states. However, Russian displaced the indigenous languages in government and education, and Russian cultural symbols and heroes supplanted those of the Central Asian peoples. Soviet developmental priorities skewed the economies of the republics. Uzbekistan became dependent on a single crop, cotton, whereas irrigation practices in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya basins created an environmental disaster with the shrinking of the great Aral Sea. In Kazakhstan, the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing

range and Baikonur cosmodrome poisoned huge regions of the steppe. The relationship was colonial, and despite Soviet censorship, was recognized as such and resented to varying degrees among the indigenous populations.

The pattern of migration and colonial practices under Soviet rule created a complex range of identities in the non-Russian republics. Some of the indigenous nationalities, particularly those who knew Russian fluently and studied or worked outside their republic, held dual identities—as both Soviets and nationals. Others, who were more rural and less than fluent in the Russian language, retained a stronger tie to the republic and the titular culture. Russians who migrated into Central Asia did not generally assimilate to Central Asian cultures, but over time many developed an attachment to

their adopted homeland, while retaining a sense of colonial superiority vis-à-vis the indigenous peoples. Non-Russian Slavs might be culturally closer to ethnic Russians, or hold a Soviet identity, but they also felt the pull of their original homelands. Those who were neither a member of the titular nationality nor Slavic, such as

Koreans, Chechens, Uighurs, and Tatars, constituted yet another set of identities.

How Russians in the Russian Federation conceptualize their ethnic brethren abroad is also instructive. Shared cultural characteristics tend to be more salient than primordial ethnic ties. The more nationalistic Russians focus on the term *Russkii*, which refers to an ethnic Russian. The term *Rossiane* is more politically correct in Russia, and is widely employed by government officials and others with an expansive view of Russian identity, generally to refer to all citizens of the Russian Federation. This term denotes someone who is a Russian speaker, or who has adopted Russian cultural habits, although they might be non-Russian in ethnic terms.<sup>6</sup> Thus Ukrainians, Tatars, Azeris, and others who live in Russia, speak fluent Russian, and are culturally Russified are *Rossiane*, and are accepted by most Russians as an integral part of Russia. Likewise, Ukrainians, Jews, Belarusians, or Poles who live in Central Asia or other republics of the former Soviet Union, but who are culturally Russified, are generally regarded, along with ethnic Russians, as compatriots (*sootechestvenniki*)—literally, “those who are with the fatherland.”

This is not to suggest that Russians are entirely free from racism or ethnic chauvinism—the Chechen imbroglio, for example, has heightened suspicions of peoples from the Caucasus, and may well have strengthened a sense of Russian distinctiveness. However, Russian migration patterns and contiguous imperial expansion led to the development of a Russian identity based more on linguistic, religious, and cultural factors than consanguinity. Russia’s 1999 Law on Compatriots Abroad states that “compatriots are people born in one state who are living or who have lived in it, and who possess general familiarity with the language,

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religion, cultural inheritance, traditions and customs, and also direct descendants of such people.”<sup>7</sup> The formation of organizations in Russia and in the former republics with “compatriot” in their titles also indicates a relatively inclusive approach to identity.

This culturally based identity for Russians living abroad suggests a differentiated response based on cultural nearness to, or distance from, the host country. Logically, all other factors being equal, Russians should feel culturally most comfortable in Slavic Ukraine or Belarus. Language, religion, and customs in those countries are closely aligned with the Russian experience, and indeed, Russian emigration from those countries has been relatively small. Cultural distance is greater in the Baltic states and the Caucasus, but it is most apparent in Central Asia, where Turkic languages and customs together with a resurgent Islam contribute to the isolation of the Russian diaspora. Central Asia has been the origin of about half of all migrants to Russia between 1989 and 2002.<sup>8</sup>

### **Russians in Central Asia, 1992 to the Present**

Russian ethnics felt especially vulnerable in the uncertain and unstable milieu of Central Asia following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The Russian government under Boris Yeltsin periodically asserted protection of compatriots abroad as a foreign policy priority, but its actions did not match the rhetoric. Virtually abandoned by Moscow, Russian national organizations emerged in the later stages of perestroika, in response to growing national awareness within the republics. In Central Asia, the Russian groups included Lad (Kazakhstan), the National Association of Russian Culture (Uzbekistan), Slavonic Diaspora and Slavonic Foundation (Kyrgyzstan), and the Russian Society (Tajikistan).<sup>9</sup> Perceptions of discrimination against Russians increased as Central Asian states began to adopt national constitutions and promote indigenous languages and cultures. With the exception of Turkmenistan, the new governments resisted pressure from Moscow to grant dual citizenship.

Perhaps the most tenuous situation for ethnic Russian existed in Tajikistan, which descended into a bloody civil war that lasted from 1992 to 1997. The Yeltsin administration backed Uzbek President Islam Karimov’s efforts to contain growing nationalism among Tajikistan’s elite, many of whom claimed Samarkand and Bukhara as historically Tajik (Persian) cities. Moscow’s participation in that conflict was also shaped by the presence of about three hundred and fifty thousand Russians living in Tajikistan, who were dissatisfied with Tajikistan’s language law, implemented two years before independence. Perhaps more important in Moscow’s decision to support the Kulobi Popular Front dominated by Soviet-era officials, however, was pressure from ethnic Russian officers of the 201st Motorized Rifle Brigade, many of whom had been born in Tajikistan and wished to remain in the country following independence.<sup>10</sup>

Tajikistan’s civil war resulted in some sixty thousand dead and hundreds of thousands displaced from their homes. S. I. Kuznetsova, of the Moscow Academy of Humanitarian Research, estimates that one hundred and sixty-one thousand Russians, nearly half of Tajikistan’s Russian population, emigrated during

the civil war (see table 2). By 2003, the U.S. State Department estimated the country's ethnic Russian population at 3.5 percent, down from 8 percent in 1989. At the same time, large numbers of non-Russians fled Tajikistan. Most of these emigrated to Russia, Ukraine, and other Central Asian countries. Although the situation was less drastic for Russians in the rest of Central Asia, large numbers left Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan in the first years of independence.

Table 2 presents data on the number of ethnic Russians departing Central Asia for the Russian Federation in the 1990s. Kazakhstan, which by far had the largest number of Russians in Central Asia, accounted for just more than half of the Russian emigrants during this period. Migration peaked during the mid-1990s, when language laws and indigenization policies began to take effect, and shortly after the Central Asian states adopted their own currencies. Most of the Central Asian states enacted new constitutions around this time, and the likelihood of the newly independent states reintegrating with Russia had begun to recede. Ethnic Russians were therefore faced with the choices identified by Albert Hirschman: to accept the newly independent states and demonstrate loyalty to these systems, to voice their complaints as new minorities and lobby to preserve as much as their privileged status as possible, or to leave the country for more welcoming environments.<sup>11</sup>

Each of these choices entailed certain costs. A loyalty choice (that is, pledging loyalty to the new state) would mean renouncing Russian citizenship (the exception was in Turkmenistan, until 2003), learning a difficult language (because only a fraction of Russians had learned the indigenous Central Asian languages), and mentally severing their identification with the homeland. For Russians long accustomed to acting as "big brother" in Central Asia, the reversal of roles must have been psychologically taxing. Many were reluctant to accept the titular nationality as politically and culturally dominant after so many years of treating Central Asians as inferiors.

A strategy of organizing and demanding group rights as Russians is not particularly effective, because all the Central Asian states have been authoritarian and, to varying degrees, have been hostile to civil society. Civic culture has been notoriously weak in postcommunist systems, and this lack of experience with civic activism is most pronounced in Central Asia. Central Asian regimes have been more wary of civil society following the "colored revolutions." Finally, for many Russians who were second or third generation residents, or who had spent a good part of their lives in Central Asia, relocating to Russia did not seem appealing. Official Russian policy did not encourage immigration, nor did the Russian government provide incentives or support services for migrants.

Central Asian leaders sought to avoid alienating the Russian population for several reasons. Russians made up a large part of the technical and scientific intelligentsia, and these new states could ill afford a massive brain drain. Overly nationalistic appeals could stimulate ethnic violence and, in the case of Kazakhstan, encourage Russian irredentist movements. Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev pursued a delicate balancing act. Although completely russified and, like his fellow Central Asian rulers, a long-time member of the Soviet nomenklatura,

TABLE 2. Net Migration of Russians to Russia ('000)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1990-1998
Kazakhstan	55	30	82	104	234	114	98	151	131	1,006
Uzbekistan	66	36	65	51	94	64	23	20	23	407
Kyrgyzstan	21	18	41	66	43	13	7	5	3	211
Tajikistan	40	18	47	41	26	22	15	10	7	215
Turkmenistan	5	5	11	7	13	12	14	10	6	82
Total	187	107	247	269	410	255	157	196	160	1,921

Source: S. I. Kuznetsova, *Russkie v Tsentral'noi Azii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Gumanitarii," 2002), 10.

Nazarbayev quickly joined the bandwagon of cultural and national revival. At the same time, he was careful to reassure Kazakhstan's large Russian community, and Moscow, that the new state would be multinational and would cooperate closely with Russia through the Commonwealth of Independent States and other organizations. The potential threat of the Russian diaspora in Kazakhstan may account for that country's progress toward a type of "Asian liberalism."<sup>12</sup>

Kazakh leaders were sensitive to the possibility that Russian nationalists in Kazakhstan and Russia might lobby for the return of the heavily Russian areas of the north to the Russian Federation (see figure 1). Nazarbayev's decision to move the capital to Astana was clearly an attempt to consolidate Kazakh political control over the northern regions. To make the move more palatable to the country's Russian minority (and to Moscow) the government stressed that earthquake danger was the primary factor in the decision to relocate from Almaty. But this is hardly a convincing reason to move the center of government from a cosmopolitan metropolis of 1.2 million to a town of 300,000 in the frozen steppe, spending at least \$400 million in the process.

Obviously, the Kazakh leadership was convinced that Russians in northern Kazakhstan constituted a sort of fifth column that might press for the region's reincorporation into Russia. Nationalists inside Russia, most prominently the novelist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, and the Eurasian activist Aleksandr Dygin, claimed that these territories

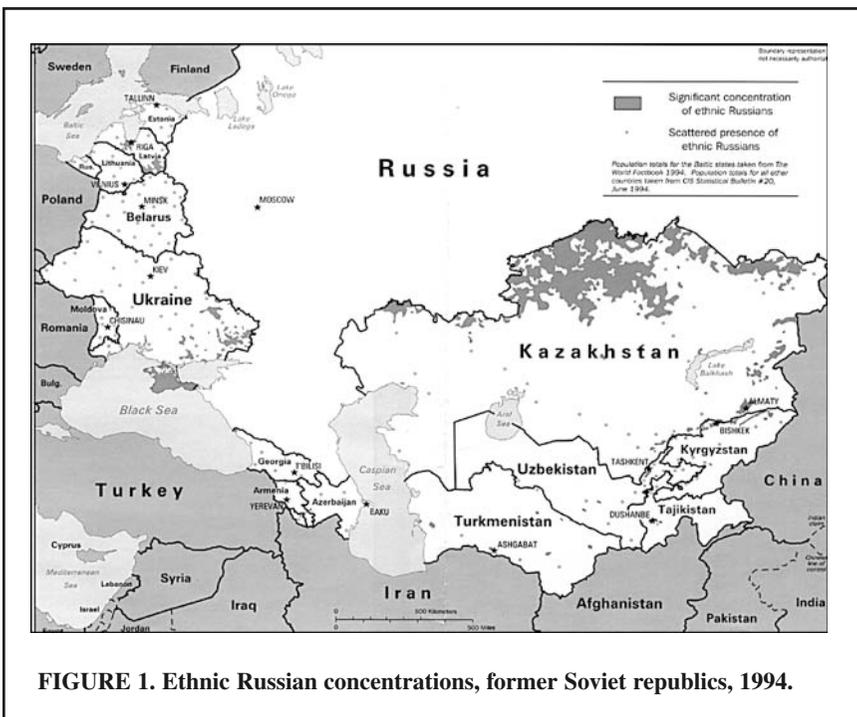


FIGURE 1. Ethnic Russian concentrations, former Soviet republics, 1994.

were historically Russian. The issue of Russian irredentism became more acute after Zhirinovskiy's nationalistic Liberal Democratic Party made a strong showing in the December 1993 parliamentary elections.

The hopes of Russian nationalists, and the fears of Central Asians, may be exaggerated. There is considerable evidence that many Russians in Central Asia (and more broadly in the former Soviet republics) do not seek a return to the motherland. For example, surveys conducted by the Center for Study of the Russian Minority in the Near Abroad in Kazakhstan 1994 indicated that 36 percent of Russians favored the northern regions remaining part of Kazakhstan. One-quarter wanted to integrate with Russia, and 14 percent indicated a preference for administrative autonomy.<sup>13</sup>

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Diaspora communities are seldom homogeneous, and this observation applies to Russians in Central Asia. Just as they differ in terms of how long they have lived in Central Asia, whether or not they were born there, and the circumstances that brought them there (voluntary or involuntary), so too their attitudes

toward hostland and homeland may vary considerably. It would be misleading to assume that all ethnic Russians in Central Asia identify closely with their Russian homeland. Nor should we assume that all Russians in northern Kazakhstan favor reunification with the Russian Federation. Identities, particularly those in the post-Soviet space, tend to be complex and difficult to categorize.<sup>14</sup>

Survey research conducted in the late 1990s by a team of American, Russian, and Ukrainian scholars found little support for the assumption that Russians living in the near abroad feel a strong identification with Russia. The researchers found that 58.7 percent of Russians living in Kazakhstan identified that country, or part of it, as their homeland, whereas only 22.4 percent identified Russia or a location in Russia as their homeland. Likewise, in Kyrgyzstan 60.8 percent of Russians living there named Kyrgyzstan or some part of it as their homeland, with 20.7 percent citing Russia as their homeland.<sup>15</sup> The same study found that Russians living in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan overwhelmingly considered themselves national minorities (59.3 percent and 67.0 percent respectively), whereas only a small proportion of those living in Ukraine and Belarus (18.8 percent and 9.2 percent, respectively) viewed themselves in this way.

This implies that a non-Slavic cultural environment heightens awareness of ethnic difference among Russian minorities, but they may nonetheless identify more closely with their country of residence than with mother Russia. Interestingly, the same study found that Russians who were not born in the republics but who identified with the republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Belarus) as their

homeland expressed higher levels of pride in their adopted country than did Russians who were born in the republic and who identified with it as their homeland.

An ongoing study conducted in Kazakhstan by Valentina Kurganskaya and Vladimir Dunaev of the Kazakh Academy of Science's Institute of Philosophy and Political Science found little support among the titular ethnic group for the formation of a mononational (that is, Kazakh) state. Surveys indicated that a majority of ethnic Kazakhs, and nearly three-fourths of Russians polled, preferred the formation of an inclusive state that would not grant privileges to any ethnic group. A little more than a third of Kazakh respondents indicated that they would prefer a multinational state that would single out Kazakhs for special privileges (see table 3). These data bode well for the continued stability of this key Central Asian country.

In Uzbekistan, by contrast, the regime has followed a policy of building a mononational state around Uzbek culture and history. They have emphasized the ancient roots of Uzbek culture, elevated Timur the Lame (Tamerlane) to a ubiquitous national hero, revised histories, and implemented an oppressive Uzbek language policy. Highly educated Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, and Jews left Uzbekistan, whereas Tajiks have suffered discrimination. Nongovernmental organizations promoting Russian language and culture were shut down, as the government moved to crush a nascent civil society. The Uzbek government tightened controls even further in the wake of the May 2005 uprising in Andizhan.

Even in contexts where Russian diasporas face few obstacles to organizing and promoting their interests, Russian national organizations have been small, weak, and poorly coordinated. Thus, one of the central goals of the June 2002 Congress of Russian Compatriots was the consolidation of Russia and the Russian diaspora and the formation of a unified "Russian world."<sup>16</sup> Constant infighting and schisms among and within Russian groups have caused them to lose authority and respect

**TABLE 3. What Sort of Policy Should Kazakhstan Follow in Relations among Nationalities during the Process of State Formation?**

	Kazakhs	Russians	Others
Formation of a state for all ethnic groups without any sort of privileges	53.4%	73.5%	76.1%
Formation of a multinational state with defined privileges for Kazakhs	36.2%	13.3%	12.5%
Formation of a mono-national Kazakh state	5.2%	3.1%	3.1%
Assimilation of representatives of all nationalities and formation of a unified nation	3.4%	10.2%	6.3%

Source: V. D. Kurganskaya and V. Iu. Dunaev, *Kazakhstanskaya model' mezhetnicheskoi integratsii* (Almaty: Tsentr gumanitarnykh issledovani, 2003), 78.

among the diaspora communities. They have not been effectively able to mobilize the local Russians, nor have they had any significant impact on Russian foreign policy toward the region.<sup>17</sup> In part, this may be due to the nature of the postcommunist transition, which left the Russian diaspora without clear ethnic boundaries comparable to the more cohesive Jewish or Armenian diasporas.<sup>18</sup>

There have been relatively few instances of overt Russian opposition in Central Asia. Clearly, the authoritarian nature of the regimes discourages most forms of political protest. Few are brave enough to openly confront Saparmurat Niyazov's Stalinist personality cult in Turkmenistan or Islam Karimov's repressive dictatorship. In addition, some of the states have constitutional bans against ethnically based political parties. Nonetheless, Uzbekistan, one of the most repressive Central Asian states, has a relatively vigorous religious opposition movement, which has taken violent and nonviolent forms. If Russian grievances were strong, we would expect to see more examples of overt national opposition.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are the most tolerant regimes in Central Asia. Russian nationalists have been allowed to form political movements in Kazakhstan, most notably Lad (Harmony) and organizations linked to Dmitry Rogozin's Congress of Russian Communities (KRO).<sup>19</sup> Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Web site lists twelve compatriot organizations registered in Kazakhstan and seventeen in Kyrgyzstan.<sup>20</sup> The Republican Slavic Movement Lad, founded in 1992, had fifteen regional branches (*filioli*) in Kazakhstan in 2002 and publishes a newspaper and lobbies for Slavic causes. Its stated goal is to preserve the ethnically distinct culture and language of Slavs; develop and strengthen democracy; and defend the political, social, and cultural interests of the Slavic population in Kazakhstan.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the relatively relaxed political environment in Kazakhstan, Russian national movements there have experienced difficulties. Kazakh law prohibits organizing political parties on an ethnic or religious basis. Although the constitution states that the Russian language may be used officially on an equal basis with Kazakhs in organizations and local government, in practice the government discriminates in favor of ethnic Kazakhs in employment.<sup>22</sup> Early on, the Russian government made strenuous efforts to persuade Nazarbayev to adopt a law on dual citizenship, but the Kazakh leader rejected the proposal. Russia and Kazakhstan did sign an agreement in 1995 making it easier to acquire citizenship and clarifying the legal status and property rights of Russians living in Kazakhstan.<sup>23</sup>

In Kyrgyzstan, President Askar Akayev followed a strategy similar to that of Nazarbayev. As a weak and poor country, Kyrgyzstan is vulnerable to powerful neighbors such as Russia and China and must tailor its policies accordingly. Kyrgyzstan's economy is also heavily dependent on Russians and Russian speakers. In 2000, Kyrgyzstan designated Russian an official state language in an attempt to dissuade skilled workers from leaving, and Akayev promised to protect ethnic Russians, who comprise approximately 15 percent of the population, from discrimination. Still, in early 2004, the parliament passed a bill mandating government officials to learn Kyrgyz, and Akayev signed the bill into law in April.<sup>24</sup> Among those who voiced concern about the measure were

the leader of the Slavonic Fund of Kyrgyzstan, and Moscow's ambassador to Bishkek, Evgeny Shmagin.<sup>25</sup>

Although Kyrgyzstan was gradually moving to strengthen its cultural identity, Akayev continuously reassured Moscow of his country's support for Russian language and culture, and attention to Russia's foreign policy goals. On a September 2004 visit to Moscow, Akayev described relations with Russia as occupying a "special role" in Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy, which he described as multivectored diplomacy (*multivektornoï diplomatii*, the same term used by Nazarbayev to describe Kazakhstan's foreign policy). The Kyrgyz president assured a group of listeners at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Academy that "Russians (*Rossiane*) should not be troubled over the fate of their compatriots in Kyrgyzstan."<sup>26</sup>

The so-called Tulip Revolution of March 2005, unlike earlier revolts in Georgia and Ukraine, does not appear to have reduced Russian influence in favor of liberal democratic, Western ideas. The most prominent new leaders—President Kurmanbek Bakiyev and Prime Minister Feliks Kulov—have sought to restore order and to reassure Russians, and Moscow, that Kyrgyzstan will maintain, and even strengthen, its close relationship with Russia. Kyrgyz leaders are continuing to follow an independent, multivectored foreign policy, and have even proposed that Russia establish a second military base at Osh, in the turbulent Fergana Valley. Nonetheless, large numbers of Russians reportedly emigrated from Kyrgyzstan in the wake of the upheavals.<sup>27</sup>

There has been only one prominent case of potentially violent Russian opposition to Central Asian rule. In 1999, the Kazakh government announced the arrest of twenty-two Russians (twelve of whom were Russian Federation citizens) in the town of Ust Kamenogorsk in northeastern Kazakhstan, a heavily Russified area, on charges of planning to overthrow the oblast leadership and establish a Russian Altai republic. Despite the intervention of a Russian delegation of parliamentarians including Duma Speaker Gennadi Seleznev and CIS Affairs Committee Chairman Boris Pastukhov, the plotters were sentenced to lengthy prison terms.<sup>28</sup> Nationalists in Russia criticized the trials' outcomes, but they appeared to have no discernable effect on official Russian policy.

### **Moscow's Policy toward the Russian Question in Central Asia**

Diasporas may affect the strategic and the economic interests of states. Strategically, diasporas may present a threat for the host country if they constitute a substantial and disaffected minority within a vulnerable state, as is the case of Russians in Kazakhstan, Latvia, and Estonia. Influential minorities within a powerful state, such as Cuban émigrés in the United States, can present a significant threat to homeland governments. Diaspora communities may also present unique opportunities in homeland foreign policies through their political influence and cultural connections. Remittances from diaspora populations are a significant source of income for many states, and business links between émigré communities and the homeland contribute to economic development. The Russian diaspora presents modest opportunities for Moscow's foreign policy, minimal threats to host countries (with the

possible exception of Kazakhstan), and largely unrealized economic benefits to the Russian state.

Moscow has four sources of leverage in Central Asia, and President Putin has proved quite skillful at using them to reassert Russia's influence. The first lever is the military, which has been employed primarily in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Granted, Russia's armed forces are weak and beset with problems, but in the context of the even weaker Central Asian states and militaries, the Russian army can be an effective means of maintaining a Russian presence. A second, very effective source of leverage is energy and economics. Russia has lost much economic influence during the past decade, but recent moves by Gazprom and other Russian agencies to tie Central Asia into a regional energy infrastructure have met with success.<sup>29</sup>

Third, Russian participation in regional organizations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the emerging concept of a unified economic space among Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus, demonstrate a pragmatic willingness to work with neighboring states, turning Russia's weakness into a form of diplomatic strength.<sup>30</sup> Developing regional cooperation strengthens Moscow's tenuous influence in Central Asia and constrains American options. At the 2005 Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit, Russia, China, and the Central Asian states called for a timetable for American forces to withdraw from the region. Moscow was clearly pleased with Karimov's subsequent decision to close down the American base at Karshi-Khanabad.<sup>31</sup>

Less effective but still important is the ethnic lever, the presence of millions of Russian expatriates in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, and their ties to mother Russia.<sup>32</sup> The actual impact on Russian politics, however, has been more apparent in the domestic sphere than in foreign policy, with the Kremlin adopting largely symbolic policies supporting the human rights of Russians abroad. Under Boris Yeltsin, there was a brief flurry of activity in the mid-1990s, as the government responded to nationalist pressures within Russia by adopting several laws and decrees. When Vladimir Putin became president, Moscow more actively promoted the cause of Russians abroad, allocating limited funds to promote Russian culture and language and creating new departments to support Russian compatriots.

The fate of Russian compatriots in Central Asia was of sporadic interest to Moscow during the Yeltsin administration. Russia focused on Europe and the United States and neglected ties with the former republics. Within a year, however, the nationalist backlash against the Yeltsin-Kozyrev Western orientation shifted attention more toward the "near abroad," with the goal of restoring Russian influence in the border regions and protecting Russian nationals in the former republics.

One of the problems the new Russian government faced (and still has not resolved) was how to conceptualize Russians outside the borders, as discussed earlier. This confusion, reflected in the varying terminology (*Russkii*, *Rossiane*, *russkoiazychnye*, *grazhdane*, *sootchestvenniki*), indicates that Russian identity is still in transition. Russian attitudes toward their own country and toward compatriots living abroad are shaped to varying degrees by ethnonational, civic, and imperial identities coexisting uneasily within the culture. Russia's

identity crisis has made it difficult to formulate a consistent policy toward the Russian diaspora.

Legislation relating to Russians living abroad focused largely on promoting their rights within the host country, particularly those relating to language, culture, and citizenship. In November 1992, Yeltsin issued a decree “On Protecting the Rights and Interests of Russian Citizens Outside the Russian Federation.” In 1994, the Yeltsin government adopted “Basic Directions of State Policy of the Russian Federation in Relation to Compatriots Living Abroad.” The following year saw the founding congress of representatives of Russian societies, centers, and organizations from countries of the near abroad.<sup>33</sup> In 1999, the Russian parliament adopted a “State Policy of the Russian Federation toward Compatriots Abroad,” a law later described by Russian officials as seriously flawed in its definition of compatriots.<sup>34</sup>

The general principles of these documents were embodied in the 2000 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, which claims that the government is committed

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***“The Russian diaspora presents modest opportunities for Moscow’s foreign policy, minimal threats to host countries (with the possible exception of Kazakhstan), and largely unrealized economic benefits to the Russian state.”***

to protect the rights and interests of Russian citizens and compatriots abroad on the basis of international law and operative bilateral agreements. The Russian Federation will seek to obtain adequate guarantees for the rights and freedoms of compatriots in states where they permanently reside and to maintain and develop comprehensive ties with them and their organizations.<sup>35</sup>

Russian foreign policy, as reflected in these documents, declared political discrimination against Russian compatriots was unacceptable and outlined the limited assistance Russia was willing to provide.<sup>36</sup>

For the most part, the Yeltsin administration devoted neither attention nor resources to the issue of Russian compatriots abroad, nor did it seek to make them a factor in Russian foreign policy. Moscow’s goals for stability in Central Asia coincided with those of the regional leaders. A serious Russian national opposition movement (for instance, in Kazakhstan) could have further destabilized the southern arc. Given all the problems in that part of the world—the Taliban’s extremist regime in Afghanistan, Tajikistan’s civil war, Chechnya and the various Caucasus conflicts, and the rapid penetration of the oil-rich Caspian region by Western oil companies—Moscow did not need the additional distraction of having to choose between supporting Russian diaspora movements and its Central Asian partners.

Vladimir Putin’s foreign policy strategy seeks to enhance Russia’s presence in Central Asia. Putin has called for increased centralization and authoritarianism domestically, while restoring Russia’s status as a great power internationally. A pragmatist, Putin recognized that a nationalistic defense of Russians abroad can

be one means of enhancing Russian influence in the CIS and Baltic states. Putin took a greater interest in the welfare of the Russian diaspora in Central Asia than did Yeltsin. Russia under Putin is more willing to challenge U.S., European, Israeli, and Turkish efforts at cultural expansion into the post-Soviet space, while preserving friendly state-to-state relations.<sup>37</sup>

During his visit to Astana in October 2000, Vladimir Putin became the first Russian leader to meet with representatives of Kazakhstan's Russian community. He has also worked assiduously to integrate those former republics with the largest Russian diasporas—Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus—into a Moscow-dominated confederation. Putin represents the Russian mentality that resists conceding “ownership” of Central Asian territories. In his 2005 address to the Federal Assembly, Putin described the collapse of the Soviet Union as “a major geopolitical disaster of the century” that left tens of millions of co-citizens and compatriots stranded outside Russian territory.<sup>38</sup> In terms of policy, Putin moved aggressively to use all the levers at his disposal to reassert Moscow's influence in the former republics.

The strategy seems to have paid off in Central Asia, although it seems to be less effective in the Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia, toward which the strongest language was directed.<sup>39</sup> Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev, for example, has skillfully shaped his country's foreign policy to coincide with Russian foreign policy interests. Nazarbayev has been one of the strongest proponents of a renewed union of post-Soviet states, and Kazakhstan has been a prominent backer of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which brings together Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in an effort to stabilize Central Asia, stem terrorism, separatism, and drug trafficking, and limit American influence in the region.

Promoting these organizations serves several purposes—reassuring Moscow that Kazakhstan is attuned to its national interests and its position as a great power in the region, demonstrating to Russia and to Russian nationalists that the Kazakh leadership (if not the people) continue to identify with the Slavic community, and assuring ethnic Russians in Kazakhstan that the country's future is tied to that of its Slavic neighbors. Kazakhstan's large Russian population is one reason that Nazarbayev has pursued a pragmatic foreign policy. He has stated that the multi-ethnic character of Kazakhstan and its geopolitical situation has made political rather than military means dominant in ensuring the country's national security.<sup>40</sup>

Nazarbayev, like Kyrgyzstan's Askar Akayev, followed a multivectoral foreign policy of good relations with the country's immediate neighbors, such as Turkey and China, and with other more distant powers, including the United States, Germany, and South Korea. Nazarbayev's pragmatism gives him the advantage of having a unique relationship with Russia among Central Asian states, while keeping the door open to other countries and appearing statesman-like. Many Kazakh intellectuals, however, are concerned that Nazarbayev is too close to Russia, and is playing into Putin's hands.

At one point early in Putin's tenure, courting ethnic Russians and encouraging them to return to the motherland was seen as a means of dealing with Rus-

sia's demographic decline. Speaking in Novosibirsk in November 2000, Putin encouraged workers from the FSU to migrate to Russia, particularly Siberia and the Russian far east, which were losing population, rather than to Moscow or the Black Sea coast, where there were housing shortages. But, not surprisingly, it seems this strategy had limited appeal to Russians living abroad, most of whom realized that conditions in Magadan were far harsher than those in Almaty.<sup>41</sup> It soon became evident that even a large immigration could not revitalize Siberia and the Russian far east, much less the entire Russian Federation, where the population is expected to decline to approximately one hundred million by 2050.<sup>42</sup> Many of the migrants who flooded into Russia in the 1990s were poor and had difficulty finding employment and housing.

In economic terms, Russian compatriots abroad were less of a drain on the state budget if they stayed put. Ideally, the diaspora community could best contribute to Russia's revitalization by providing business contacts, investment capital, and remittances. A number of Russian scholars have pointed to the economic benefits Chinese, Armenian, Mexican, and Jewish émigrés have conferred on their respective homelands. Because of language, better personal contacts, and professional skills, Russians should be better positioned than Central Asian ethnics to conduct interstate business.<sup>43</sup> Through commercial ties, these specialists contend, Russians in Central Asia can maintain and strengthen economic interdependence with the Russian Federation, advancing the larger foreign policy goal of economic integration between Russia and the former republics. But substantial foreign investment, if it is to come from Russians abroad, will have to come from those in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, or Australia. Most Russians in Central Asia simply do not have much capital to invest in the Russian Federation.

The Russian ethnic factor is also apparent in attempts to develop a broader Siberian regional entity, which would strengthen Moscow's position in northern Central Asia. Cossack organizations in the Eastern Kazakh oblast have been actively trying to establish a Siberian Cossack Union to link northeast Kazakhstan's Russian communities with Russian Siberia. Kazakhstan has three major Cossack organizations—the Semirechye Cossacks in the south and central regions, the Ural Union of Cossacks in the west, and the Union of Cossacks of the Gorki line in the northern and eastern regions. These groups have close ties to the Cossack organizations in Russian Siberia and constitute a strong separatist movement. They have not been successful, though, in garnering official support from Moscow for their goals.<sup>44</sup>

Promoting the interests of Russians abroad is popular among a political elite and a population that is increasingly nationalistic, although there is far more rhetoric than action. The Russia-Turkmenistan gas deal of 2003 is one example where economics and politics trumped national solidarity. As part of Putin's and Gazprom's plan to tie Central Asia more tightly into the Russian energy grid, in April 2003, Putin and Turkmen President Saparmurat Niyazov concluded a twenty-five-year agreement providing natural gas on terms highly favorable to Russia. Niyazov then abruptly declared that he would abrogate Turkmenistan's dual citizenship law within two months, forcing the one hundred thousand ethnic Russians who held Rus-

sian and Turkmen passports to decide whether to stay in the repressive dictatorship or leave for an uncertain future in Russia.

Many Russians within Turkmenistan and Russia saw the gas deal as a sellout by President Putin.<sup>45</sup> Duma member and KRO head Dmitry Rogozin criticized Turkmenistan a month after the deal for drug trafficking, supporting terrorist groups, and abusing the human rights of ethnic Russians.<sup>46</sup> Turkmenistan's government assured Moscow that local Russians would be protected. But the situation for ethnic Russians was already worsening before the gas agreement. Numerous Russian-language schools had been closed down, and although twenty-two newspapers are published in Turkmen, as of 2003 there was only one Russian paper. By 2003, the Turkmen government had cut off deliveries of all Russian language newspapers into the country, although the population could still receive restricted satellite TV broadcasts from Russia.<sup>47</sup> Faced with a difficult choice, approximately fifteen hundred Russians per month left Turkmenistan from April 2003 through February 2004, according to Russia's deputy foreign minister, Alexei Fedotov.

Additional evidence that Moscow's concern for Russian compatriots in Turkmenistan is tactical can be gleaned from the February 2004 visit to Ashgabad by Valentina Matviyenko, governor of St. Petersburg and a close associate of Putin. During her visit, Matviyenko fawned over Niyazov's accomplishments, describing his *Rukhnama* (a spiritual handbook) as a serious philosophical work. Governor Matviyenko signed an agreement covering cooperation in the fishing, mining, and gas industries, but she ignored the ethnic question entirely.<sup>48</sup>

The Russian government has allocated only modest resources toward supporting compatriots abroad. Government financial support for the Russian diaspora has increased in recent years, but remains modest. In November 2002, the Russian Federation government created a budget line for support of Russian compatriots abroad, allocating a total of two hundred and ten million rubles for 2003. The budget was increased to two hundred and fifty-two million rubles in 2004, three hundred and three million in 2005, and five hundred million for 2006.<sup>49</sup> Compatriot organizations do not receive the money directly; instead, the funds are distributed through the Russian embassies and are reserved for particular projects. Assuming most of the support goes to the seventeen million Russian compatriots in the near abroad, it works out to an average of one U.S. dollar per Russian compatriot in 2006.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that most Russian support organizations receive little, if any, direct financial assistance from Moscow.<sup>50</sup> Nor have Russian government institutions developed close working relations with Russian national groups abroad. Although there are sixty-two Russian science and cultural centers in the far abroad—in Malta, Mumbai, Gdansk, and Washington, DC, among others—there are no such centers operating in the former Soviet republics.<sup>51</sup>

Institutional support for the Russian diaspora has been slow to develop and is dispersed among a number of ministries and agencies. Legislative structures in the Duma include a Committee on CIS Affairs and Compatriots Abroad and a State Duma Council of Compatriots. The first chairman of the Duma Committee,

Konstantin Zatulin, subsequently founded the Institute of the CIS Countries and created the Web site “Materik” (Continent) advocating an expansive Russia and providing information to Russian compatriots.<sup>52</sup> Andrei Kokoshin, a specialist on security issues and foreign policy and a former member of the Security Council, assumed the CIS committee chairmanship in 2003. Kokoshin has focused more on strategic issues and ties with the great powers than on defending Russian compatriots. At the federal level, the Russian Federation Ministry of Education has responsibility for meeting the education demands of compatriots abroad. In addition to the federal government, a number of regions, including Pskov, Tatarstan, Dagestan, Altai krai, Kaliningrad, Omsk, and Rostov oblast, have been active in promoting links with Russian compatriots abroad.

In many respects, the Moscow city government under Yurii Luzhkov has taken a more active role in supporting the compatriot cause than any other level of government in Russia. The Center for Humanitarian and Business Cooperation with Compatriots Abroad (Moskovskii Dom sootchesvennika, or MDS) organizes various activities,<sup>53</sup> including roundtables, conferences, and Victory Day celebrations with veterans in Central Asia, as well as sponsors Russian culture days in the near and far abroad, promotes Russian language study, and provides support for Russian cultural, artistic, and educational programs in foreign countries. Representatives to the 2005 Congress of Russian Compatriots Abroad, sponsored by Moscow’s city government, elected Luzhkov honorary chairman of the new International Council of Russian Compatriots in recognition of his support for the Russian diaspora.<sup>54</sup>

Chief responsibility for Russian émigrés at the federal level rests with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, specifically the Department of International Humanitarian Cooperation and Human Rights and, more recently, the Department for Work with Compatriots Abroad, established by a presidential decree in November 2005. This new office is an attempt to coordinate and centralize policy toward the Russian diaspora. Prior to 2002, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was given the responsibility for coordinating federal activities toward compatriots abroad, virtually nothing of substance had been done.<sup>55</sup> Legislation that went into effect the beginning of 2005 attempted to centralize and coordinate planning on compatriot issues, keeping with Putin’s tendency toward strengthening the central organs of state authority.

Russia’s diaspora policy is strongly cultural in orientation. Documents from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stress the importance of preserving the Russian language and culture and providing support for education about Russian life and traditions. Business and economic considerations are barely mentioned.<sup>56</sup> Monies are supposedly allocated to diaspora communities for celebrating holidays and significant cultural days, for festivities marking the Great Fatherland War, for purchasing Russian language books for schools, and for purchasing art and reference literature for libraries and social organizations. Funds are also supposed to be used for training teachers, promoting Russian theaters, protecting children’s and veterans’ health, staging Olympiads in Russian language and literature, and providing children’s centers.<sup>57</sup>

The political appeal of Russian nationalism and the ethnic factor were evident in the December 2003 Duma elections and the March 2004 presidential contest. Of the four parties that surmounted the 5 percent barrier to make it into the Duma, three—United Russia (Edinaya Rossiya), Motherland (Rodina), and Zhirinovskiy's Liberal Democratic Party—advocated nationalistic positions, in particular the rights of Russian nationals abroad. The two democratic parties—the Union of Right Forces and Yabloko—devoted virtually no attention to the question of Russian compatriots and failed to make the cutoff. The leaders of the postelection factions—Dmitry Rogozin, Sergei Glazyev, and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy—have been among the strongest proponents of Russian rights in the former republics. But it remains to be seen whether nationalists holding key positions in the parliament can shape a more active policy toward the Russian diaspora.

The outcome of the 2003 parliamentary elections may be an indication that Russia's voting public is becoming increasingly disillusioned with the more democratic political forces and more nationalistic. The rise of nationalism seems to be linked to frustration arising from Russia's lack of influence on world politics, including in the unstable southern arc. Moreover, Russian nationalism may be fueled by terrorist actions in the Islamic areas of Central Asia and the Caucasus, such as the Beslan massacre in September 2004. President Putin's cautious embrace of nationalism, his hard-line approach to terrorism and instability on Russia's borders, and his pledge to defend the interests of Russians abroad resonate with a large segment of the population.

What is most striking about Russian foreign policy and Russian compatriots abroad, however, is the weakness of both the state and the diaspora communities. Unlike other diaspora communities, such as Jews, Armenians, or Cubans, Russians in the near abroad are only marginally relevant to Russian foreign policy, and it is questionable whether they should be considered significant international actors, notwithstanding their large numbers.<sup>58</sup> Neither the Russian state nor the compatriot movement is sufficiently powerful to be genuinely useful to the other. At the same time, the relative weakness of each is reassuring to the newly independent host countries. The Russian diaspora communities are too weak and fragmented to constitute influential lobbies in the Central Asian societies, whereas the Russian state is not in a position to advance irredentist claims. Asserting a role as protector of compatriots abroad gives Moscow limited influence in Central Asia and the other CIS and Baltic states, but security and energy interests overshadow diaspora issues in Russian foreign policy.

### Conclusion

Of the four sources of leverage that are employed in Russia's Central Asian policy—the political-military, energy and economics, regional organizations, and Russians abroad—the diaspora factor, although important, remains largely symbolic. Putin is more attuned to the demands of Russia's nationalist movement than Yeltsin was, and has devoted considerable attention to promoting and defending the interests of Russian compatriots in Central Asia. Moscow's foreign policy

elites, including the president, are increasingly cognizant of the effectiveness of soft power in achieving their goals in the near abroad. Promoting Russian language, education, and culture may prove to be a potent instrument of Russian statecraft over the long term.<sup>59</sup> But Russia's leaders will need to devote more attention and resources to their diaspora if it is to become an effective tool in their foreign policy repertoire.

Russian security is now focused on the threat of terrorism and Islamic extremism in the unstable southern arc of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Russia's nationalist movement continues to lobby for more attention to the diaspora in Russian foreign policy. The strong showing of nationalist parties in recent parliamentary elections and the surge of patriotism resulting from terrorist attacks and the Chechnya conflict heightens Russians' sense of identity and may lead to greater pressures to "defend" Russians abroad. A triggering event linked to the interests of Russian compatriots would be more likely to occur in Kazakhstan than in other Central Asian countries. However, Russian and Central Asian leaders, following the upheavals in Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, are well aware of the potential for social unrest. Because extreme nationalism could contribute to political instability and bloodshed, they have been justifiably cautious about playing the ethnic card in foreign relations.

## NOTES

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1. For example, diasporas that result from voluntary migration or colonization could be hypothesized to be more favorably disposed to the homeland regime than those who were forced from their homes by an existing regime. Colonial diasporas who were once members of a ruling imperial power may be less willing to accept the sovereignty of newly independent states.

2. Presumably, diaspora populations tend to be more critical of the homeland regime if it is authoritarian and less critical if it is democratic. Likewise, we should expect that diasporas are more willing to integrate or assimilate to host cultures that are democratic and pluralistic. However, the recent experience with Muslim populations in Britain and Western Europe introduces a note of caution here.

3. The most useful study of diasporas in relation to foreign policy is Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

4. See Mikhail Guboglo, "Demography and Language in the Capitals of the Union Republics," *Soviet Nationalities Papers* 4 (1990–91): 1–42.

5. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 32–35.

6. An even more neutral or technical term is *russkoiazychnye*, "Russian speaker."

7. "Sootchestvenniki v stranakh SNG I Baltii," *Rossiiskii Vektor—2003* 1, no. 14, <http://www.riss.ru/library/vektor1-2003.pdf>.

8. Timothy Heleniak, "Migration of the Russian Diaspora After the Breakup of the Soviet Union," *Journal of International Affairs* 57 (2004): 103.

9. Pål Kolstø, "Ethnicity and Subregional Relations: The Role of Russian Diasporas," in *Building Security in the New States of Eurasia: Subregional Cooperation in the Former Soviet Space*, ed. Renata Dwan and Oleksandr Pavliuk, 225, n. 38 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000).

10. Sergei Gretskey, "Civil War in Tajikistan: Causes, Developments, and Prospects for Peace," Eisenhower Institute, [http://www.eisenhowerinstitute.org/programs/global\\_partnerships/securityandterrorism/coalition/regionalrelations/ConflictBook/Gretskey.htm](http://www.eisenhowerinstitute.org/programs/global_partnerships/securityandterrorism/coalition/regionalrelations/ConflictBook/Gretskey.htm); Shahram Akbarzadeh, "Why Did Nationalism Fail in Tajikistan?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 48 (1996): 1105–29.

11. Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

12. The term is used by Gregory Gleason, "Prospects for Kazakhstan's Asian Liberalism," *Demokratizatsiya* 5, no. 3 (1997): 376–85. However, another knowledgeable observer of Kazakhstan, Martha Olcott, is far more critical of that country's prospects for democracy. Martha Brill Olcott, *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2002).

13. Cited in S. I. Kuznetsova, *Russkie v Tsentral'noi Azii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Gumanitarii," 2002), 29.

14. Pål Kolstø argues that there are effectively fourteen different Russian diasporas influenced by various factors, including size (absolute and relative), ethnic cohesion, social composition, cultural distinctiveness, compactness of settlement, and rootedness in the area. Kolstø, "Ethnicity and Subregional Relations."

15. Lowell W. Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver, "The Motherland is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad," *World Politics* 55 (2003): 290–313.

16. Oleg Popov, "Na puti k konsolidatsii Rossiiskoi natsii (razmushleniia s Kongressa sootchestvennikov)," *Materik*, <http://www.materik.ru/index.php?section=analitics&bulid=14&bulsectionid=918> (accessed June 15, 2002).

17. Kolstø, "Ethnicity and Subregional Relations," 219.

18. See T. Poloskova, "Diasporas and Foreign Policy," *International Affairs* 1 (2000): 125–35.

19. The KRO, formed in 1993, advocated protecting the rights of Russians abroad and rebuilding Russia in its historical borders. Former General Aleksandr Lebed, chief defender of the Trans-Dniestr Russians in Moldova, was one of the more prominent figures. KRO's current leader, Dmitry Rogozin, heads the Rodina faction in the Duma and served as chairman of the Duma International Relations Committee. He has been a vocal advocate of the rights of Russians abroad. For more information on KRO, see Alan Ingram, "'A Nation Split into Fragments': The Congress of Russian Communities and Russian Nationalist Ideology," *Europe-Asia Studies* 51 (1999): 687–704.

20. Organizatsii sootchestvennikov za rubezhom, <http://www.ln.mid.ru/nsdgpch.nsf/org>. Not all of the organizations are purely Slavic. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, there is the Chechen Culture Center "Bart" and the Association of Peoples of Dagestan "Sadara."

21. A. Ponamarev, "10 let 'Lad,'" *Lad* 9 (2002).

22. U.S. Department of State, *Human Rights Report—Kazakhstan 2003*, <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27845.htm>.

23. Vitaly V. Naumkin, "Russian Policy toward Kazakhstan," in *Thinking Strategically: The Major Powers, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian Nexus*, ed. Robert Legvold, 39–66 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

24. AP March 4, 2004 and BBC Monitoring Central Asia Unit April 2, 2004.

25. *Financial Times*, February 19, 2004, and *Global News Wire—Asia Africa Intelligence Wire*, February 29, 2004.

26. Rossiana mogut ne bespokoit'sia za sud'bu svoikh sootchestvennikov v Kirgizstane," *Obshchestvenno-pravovaia ezhenedel'naia gazeta 'Delo No. 25,'* <http://delo.to.kg/2004/25/01.shtml>.

27. Igor Torbakov, "Kyrgyz, Russian Officials Mull Military Base Possibility in Southern Kyrgyzstan," <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav060205.shtml>, June 2, 2005; "Kyrgyzstan: Tulip Revolution Drives Russians Out," ANSA English News Service, May 11, 2005; Kadyr Toktogulov, "Kyrgyzstan's New President Promises Independent Foreign Policy," Associated Press, August 14, 2005.

28. Sergei Blagov, "Russian 'Separatists' Highlight Ethnic Tensions," *Asia Times Online*, <http://www.atimes.com/c-asia/BF16Ag01.html> (accessed January 16, 2000); Liz Fuller, "Trial of 'Separatists' Highlights Plight of Kazakhstan's Russians," RFE/RL Analysis, <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/kazakhstan/hypermail/200005/0013.html>.

29. For a discussion of Putin's use of political, economic, and military levers in Central Asia, see Roland Dannreuther, "Can Russia Sustain Its Dominance in Central Asia?" *Security Dialogue* 32 (2001): 245–58; and Jeronim Perovic, "From Disengagement to Active Economic Competition: Russia's Return to the South Caucasus and Central Asia," *Demokratizatsiya* 13, no. 1 (2005): 61–85.

30. This foreign policy strategy is patterned after that of Aleksandr Gorchakov, Aleksandr II's foreign minister, who directed a skillful diplomacy after Russia had been weakened by the Crimean War and was trying to retain its great power status in a tumultuous reform period. See Igor S. Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), 26–28.

31. Although the public explanation from Uzbekistan was that the Afghanistan campaign was over and the base no longer needed, the real reason was Tashkent's displeasure over American support for refugees from the Andizhan uprising.

32. The foreign policy aspect of Russian ethnicity has been least important in Uzbekistan, given Karimov's stubborn resistance to Russian encroachment and the small proportion of Russians in that country.

33. Popov, "Na puti k konsolidatsii Rossiiskoi natsii."

34. "O Gosudarstvennoi Politike Rossiiskoi Federatsii v Otnoshenii Sootchestvennikov za Rubezhom," May 24, 1999, N 99-F3.

35. "The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation," reprinted in Igor S. Ivanov, *The New Russian Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2002), 175.

36. Kolstø, "Interstate Integration in the Post-Soviet Space," 209.

37. Remarks by V. A. Gustov, chairman of the Committee of the Federation Council on CIS Affairs, in "Zashchita prav i interesov sootchestvennikov, prozhivaiushchikh za rubezhom," no. 20 (272), part 1 (October 2005). Putin's presidential Web site has a page devoted to compatriots, headed by the following quote: "We consider international support for the respect of the rights of Russians abroad an issue of major importance, one that cannot be the subject of political and diplomatic bargaining. We hope that the new members of NATO and the European Union in the post-Soviet area will show their respect for human rights, including the rights of ethnic minorities, through their actions. Countries that do not respect and cannot guarantee human rights themselves do not have the right to demand that others respect these same rights."

38. President Vladimir Putin, Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, April 25, 2005, [http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2005/04/25/2031\\_type70029\\_87086.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029_87086.shtml).

39. In December 2005, deputy foreign minister Grigory Karasin announced that violations of compatriots' rights could be grounds for Russia to revise its policies toward those states. InfoRos News Agency, <http://www.inforos.com/?id=9822>.

40. Sally Cummings, "Eurasian Bridge or Murky Waters between East and West: Ideas: Identity and Output in Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 19 (2003): 142.

41. Paul Goble, "Compounding a Demographic Disaster," RFE/RL, November 20, 2000.

42. Anatoly Vishnevsky, "The Specter of Immigration," *Russia in Global Affairs* 2 (April–June 2005), <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/11/915.html>. Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy have persuasively argued that much of Siberia and the Russian Far East is overpopulated, and that many of the artificial settlements created during the Soviet era should

be abandoned if Russia is to succeed as a market economy. Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, *The Siberian Curse: How Communist Planners Left Russia Out in the Cold* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003).

43. Kolstø, "Interstate Integration in the Post-Soviet Space."

44. Zharmukhamed Zardykhan, "Russians in Kazakhstan and Demographic Change: Imperial Legacy and the Kazakh Ways of Nation Building," *Asian Ethnicity* 5 (2004): 70–72.

45. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, IRIN, <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=34862> (accessed June 19, 2003).

46. Some cynical Russian experts suggested that Rogozin's remarks may have been part of a coordinated effort to convince the Russian public that the government was concerned about the plight of their compatriots prior to the December 2003 Duma elections and the March 2004 presidential contest. See Farangis Najibullah, "Russia/Turkmenistan: Are Tensions Growing between Moscow and Ashgabat?" RFE/RL, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2003/05/mil-030530-rfel-160000.htm> (accessed May 30, 2003).

47. U.S. State Department, *Human Rights Report—Turkmenistan, 2003*; and BBC News, July 9, 2003.

48. Sergei Blagov, "Russia Acts Aggressively to Enhance Energy Position in Turkmenistan," *Eurasianet.org*, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav022604.shtml> (accessed February 26, 2004).

49. ITAR-TASS, September 25, 2003; Baltic News Service, November 18, 2005.

50. In Latvia, where the government is frequently condemned by Moscow and Russian nationalist leaders for discrimination against ethnic Russians, heads of several prominent Russian organizations claim to have received no support from Russia. Riga Telegraf, *BBC Monitoring International Reports*, November 22, 2005.

51. Remarks by Sergei Mironov, chairman of the Federation Council, in "Zashchita prav i interesov sootchestvennikov, prozhivaiushchikh za rubezhom."

52. The Web sites are, respectively, <http://www.zatulin.ru/institute/sbornik/> and <http://www.materik.ru/>.

53. For a discussion of Moscow city activities in support of compatriots abroad, see remarks by Iu I. Kaplun, director of the Moscow House of Compatriots, in "Zashchita prav i interesov sootchestvennikov, prozhivaiushchikh za rubezhom," no. 20 (272), part 1 (October 2005).

54. Tatiana Kamoza, "How to Attract the Russian Diaspora," *New Times*, 2005, [http://www.newtimes.ru/eng/detail.asp?art\\_id=641](http://www.newtimes.ru/eng/detail.asp?art_id=641).

55. Sergei Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in "Zashchita prav i interesov sootchestvennikov, prozhivaiushchikh za rubezhom."

56. "Podderzhka Rossiei sootchestvennikov za rubezhom," <http://www.ln.mid.ru/nsdgpch.nsf/aa259d77f08b8f4543256da40037b908/432569ee00522d3cc325704300315465?OpenDocument>.

57. "Osnovnye napravleniia podderzhki sootchestvennikov," Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs Web site, <http://www.ln.mid.ru/ns-dgpch.nsf/podd/>.

58. Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth describe the Jewish and Armenian diasporas as strong, well-organized and influential, particularly in the U.S. context, raising the interesting theoretical question of what accounts for varying diasporic strength. Yossi Shain and Aharon Barth, "Diasporas and International Relations Theory," *International Organization* 57 (2003): 449–79.

59. Francesca Mereu, "Trading Hard Power for Soft Power," *Moscow Times*, March 24, 2005. In Ukraine, for example, the West's investment in building civil society proved to be more successful than Moscow's heavy-handed support for authoritarian forces. See Adrian Karatnycky, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution," *Foreign Affairs* 84 (2005): 35–52.