

# Russia Reconsidered

## Another Look at the Revolution from Below

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In the highly compressed time in which we live, important events often transpire much too quickly for us to grasp their meaning promptly and to adjust our mental picture of the world appropriately. Nonetheless, when tectonic movements such as the worldwide collapse of communism occur, we have to divorce ourselves from the pains and excitement of daily politics and reconsider some of our basic geopolitical concepts.

Thus the time has come for us to reconsider Russia as a sociopolitical phenomenon—to scrutinize our perceptions and attitudes toward it. Perhaps we will be able to put to rest some of our most dire and irrational fears about this “riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma,” as Winston Churchill dubbed Russia.

The world community has always perceived Russia as a major factor of uncertainty in the international arena, and with good reason. In this century, Russia has twice betrayed the West’s expectations and inflicted enormous political upheavals and suffering on the world. In 1917, the Russian intelligentsia proclaimed the construction of a society based on equality, brotherhood, and harmony while its radical wing was erecting one of the most ruthless dictatorships in modern history. During World War II, after Hitler turned against Stalin, the Soviet Union allied itself with the Western democracies in the fight against fascism and Japanese imperialism, only later to subject a number of liberated countries to an even more insidious totalitarian regime. Then, for the next forty years the Soviet Union kept the world hostage to the fear of nuclear annihilation and promoted civil wars around the globe. Today the giant of Eurasia is on the move again, and the world braces itself for new surprises.

The West’s anxiety and suspicion about Russia rest on a solid theoretical foundation. Russia was an expanding empire for four centuries, until she exhausted

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herself and was defeated in the Cold War, stripped of her colonies and superpower status. The militarized and centralized regime collapsed overnight, and with it the Russian economy and socialist welfare system. Inflation skyrocketed, living standards plummeted, crime and corruption exploded, and social disparity widened to a level characteristic of underdeveloped countries. In addition to these social woes, the weakening of the central government led to the rise of nationalism and regional separatism that threatens the very integrity of Russia.

Because of this political and social disaster, the theory goes, the Russians have been deeply traumatized. They have lost their sense of identity, feel humiliated by the West, and are disillusioned with their leaders and newly acquired economic and political freedoms because they have brought them nothing but insecurity and hardship. Hence, like Germany between the two world wars, Russia is likely to abandon its brief flirtation with democracy and the free market, relapse into some form of authoritarianism or even dictatorship, and try to reassert her power over her former colonies, as she has done several times in the past. This will bring about a new confrontation with the West.

Although this theory appears to fit nicely the history, culture, and national character of Russia, its explanatory and predictive capacity has proved to be dismally poor. It has utterly failed to explain and predict the events of the last five years. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, subscribers to this theory predicted numerous sociopolitical calamities, such as social unrest escalating into a civil war, anti-Semitic pogroms, conflicts with other former Soviet republics, famine, massive unemployment, emigration, epidemics, man-made catastrophes, smuggling of nuclear weapons to rogue states, cancellation of parliamentary and presidential elections, and so on. Few if any of these predictions have proved correct. To be sure, there were disturbances in Moscow in 1993, there is an ongoing war in a tiny corner of the country, and organized crime and corruption are all but endemic, but no major calamity has yet occurred.

### **Cultural and Mental Shifts**

In my view, the main weaknesses of this reasoning originate in the failure to recognize and accommodate the profound cultural and mental shifts that have quietly occurred in the Soviet Union since Stalin's death, during *glasnost*, and, most importantly, since 1991. The half-century-long peace has eroded and undermined the pivotal elements of the totalitarian mentality: the fear, the sense of ever present danger, and the compulsion to fight and control human nature. This is where the roots can be found of the all-important fact that the transition has been surprisingly peaceful and rapid.

Two generations of relative peace weakened the totalitarian regime Lenin and Stalin had built to carry out the mortal struggle with a hostile world. Industrialization, urbanization, and the technological race with the West forced the regime to abandon wholesale terror as the main motivational mechanism and instead rely on tolerable, albeit meager, living conditions and high educational standards. In time, an influential class of professionals emerged whose life credo was self-realization through the pursuit of excellence rather than political struggle. By the

1980s, the regime had essentially lost its grip on the hearts and minds of its subjects. First the intelligentsia and then society at large came to realize that between two competing systems, capitalism proved to be superior. It demonstrated its vitality and potential by delivering higher living standards and driving the technological revolution. Gorbachev's endeavor to invigorate the socialist system through the introduction of glasnost and perestroika only exposed its endemic problems and undermined the party's political power. The party's feeble attempt to reimpose its control over society in August 1991 led to the collapse of the entire structure.<sup>1</sup>

When a group of "Young Turks" representing the professional classes embarked on "building a society based on the laws of beauty, kindness, and freedom,"<sup>2</sup> many political scientists interpreted their plans as social experimentation. The observers thus implied that reforms can be terminated any time if the new system does not produce immediate material results. This view contains several logical flaws. First of all, the quick and practically bloodless character of the anti-Communist revolution suggests a strong societal consensus and mandate for a change of the sociopolitical system. Second, the sweeping institutional transformation that followed could not have been accomplished without massive civil participation. Finally, the population was probably sufficiently compensated for the material hardships and pains of the transition toward a market democracy if they repeatedly voted for its continuation.

### **Autonomous Powers and New Elites**

Let us first recap the institutional changes that have occurred in Russia since 1991. They began with events whose profound importance has not been fully appreciated. In the fall of 1991 when the Central Committee was shut down, the Russian Communist Party banned, the KGB headquarters sealed, and the Soviet Union abolished, the totalitarian system had suffered a mortal blow. Since that moment, fragments of the totalitarian power have been drifting apart and coalescing into autonomous forms of power—political, economic, cultural, and financial—and corresponding new elites.

Russia's economic reforms were the most important part of the transformation because they affected the lives of each and every individual. Indeed, the Soviet Union was one gigantic company run by decrees from a single center. Production quotas, allocation of resources, wages, and prices were all dictated by the party according to its well-known strategic objectives. The reforms substituted this system with a monetary mechanism.<sup>3</sup> Within a few years, all the basic institutions of a contemporary market economy had emerged: 2,500 insurance companies, 2,700 banks, 650 investment funds, 1,000 private pension funds, 93 stock and commodity exchanges, and so on.

Russia's leadership accomplished the largest and fastest privatization in the history of mankind. Seventy percent of all enterprises, including two-thirds of the military-industrial complex, were privatized. For example, in place of the infamous Aeroflot, there are now some four hundred air carriers. In place of the equally infamous Inturist agency, there are now about six thousand tourist companies. In 1996, 80 percent of Russia's industry fully or partially belonged to the private

sector, which is responsible for 89 percent of the nation's industrial production and employs more than 70 percent of the workforce—more than in any other European country.<sup>4</sup> The number of small enterprises quadrupled to more than one million,<sup>5</sup> and the overall number of enterprises grew from 214,000 in 1988 to 2.5 million in 1996.<sup>6</sup> Thus the nation's economic base has been immeasurably broadened and significantly de-monopolized; therefore, the economic structure itself has become more stable.

Simultaneously, the Russian government built the entire network of institutions essential for the functioning of a market economy. These include unemployment and taxation systems, custom services, a chamber of commerce, a central bank, the Agency of International Cooperation and Development, the State Investment Corporation, the Financial Corporation, and so on. In 1995, a new and very progressive Civil Code was adopted, establishing the legal framework of a market economy and a forum for combating economic crimes. The Supreme Arbitration Court began to settle corporate disputes.

The Russian economy has experienced a structural revolution, the essence of which was the dramatic shrinking of the military-industrial complex and the corresponding growth of the service sector. Three-quarters of the country's former defense enterprises are now receiving 80 percent of their revenues from the market and only 20 percent from government contracts.<sup>7</sup> They are now surviving by cranking out television sets, washing machines, and automotive spare parts instead of tanks, submarines, and strategic bombers. Thus the economy became much more humane; that is, oriented toward people's needs.

The Soviet economy was totally isolated from the world; it was a thing in itself. For example, nobody, not even prime minister Nikolay Ryzhkov, knew the exact dimensions of the defense expenditures; quality of life and living standards were elusive concepts because the dollar/ruble exchange rate was artificially set and goods and services were rationed. But now the Russian economy is open and quickly becoming compatible with leading economies of the West. It responds to macroeconomic indicators such as domestic and international demand, interest rates, the political climate, and so on. Today, objective measurement of the country's wealth, productivity, military expenditures, inflation, and quality of life are defined by the market allowing for accurate evaluation and correction of major economic imbalances and social distortions.

A similar massive redistribution of power, both vertically and horizontally, occurred in the political realm. Not only was central power split into executive, legislative, and judicial branches, but a great deal of it was transferred to the provinces. The security and intelligence services were split into seven independent institutions and no longer possess the KGB's ability to control the life of the nation. The mass media and civil society became guardians of the balance of power and the openness of the political process.

In sum, it would not be an exaggeration to say that from the institutional point of view Russia has become a new country radically different from both her communist mother and her imperial grandmother. Indeed, the pre-1917 Russia was a monarchy and an empire. Its main institutions included the Orthodox Church, pri-

vate ownership of land and the means of production, and a rigid class system. It was a nation of peasants ruled by a tiny class of nobles and an intelligentsia. The Soviet Union, by contrast, was an empire based on a universal ideology and was a nominally classless society. Institutions such as private ownership, independent media, a civil society, and organized religion were supplanted and replaced by a single, all-embracing institution: the Communist Party.

### **New Social Trends**

The new Russia is an urbanized, industrialized, relatively homogeneous, secular nation run by a multitude of autonomous elites. Its political system rests on a standard assortment of democratic institutions: president, bicameral parliament, executive branch, constitutional court, an independent judicial system, and an independent church. Russia's economic system is based on private property and a free market.

And yet, the irreversibility of the transformation remains the subject of heated debates. Many analysts and politicians argue that the new system has been slavishly copied from Western models and imposed on Russian society by a group of pro-Western zealots. It is therefore alien to Russian culture, they contend,<sup>8</sup> and can be easily dismantled by a forceful nationalist or communist leader. They insist that private property is concentrated in the hands of one million people, the old nomenklatura,<sup>9</sup> while "90 percent of the Russian population live below the poverty level."<sup>10</sup> These inequalities generate social envy and have explosive potential in the absence of a responsible and moderately conservative middle class.

Indeed, what are the social trends? Is the social base of the market democracy growing or shrinking? First of all, one notices that in place of a single communist elite, the nomenklatura, many new elites have emerged: political, financial, industrial, military, administrative, media, cultural, and so on. Although more than half of their members have come from the nomenklatura, the new elites reign in their own spheres and jealously guard them from incursions by the others. This makes a merger of elites into a single ruling oligarchy highly unlikely. Secondly, I contend that the middle class did appear in Russia and plays its usual role of social stabilizer.

It is true that the means of production are controlled, if not owned, by some one million individuals, and these individuals could well be classified as super rich. However, one should not overlook other important economic trends such as a transfer of significant wealth into tens of millions of private hands. Indeed, today about twenty million Russian families own their apartments and houses, twenty-six million urban families own private plots, approximately fifteen million of these own summer cottages or *dachas*, and forty-two million people own shares in companies.

Sales of big-ticket items such as cars, computers, refrigerators, color television sets, furniture, and so on are growing steadily and cannot be explained by a market of one million consumers. In fact, in 1994–1995, one-third of the nation's adult population bought at least two such expensive items.<sup>11</sup> There are approximately twelve million cars<sup>12</sup> and three million personal computers in private pos-

session. Private housing construction<sup>13</sup> and foreign tourism are booming, and 80 percent of the population has some level of savings.<sup>14</sup> This combined evidence seems to support the notion that a middle class—embracing as much as 35 percent of the population—already exists and grows.

However, not only elites and the middle class have vested interests in the preservation of the current regime. As the parliamentary and presidential elections have demonstrated, the social base of the new sociopolitical system is much broader, extending to as much as perhaps 60 percent of the population. This is because, along with hardships and suffering, the transition brought many other changes in lifestyle that are appreciated even by the poor.

When the system based on scarcity, shortages, and rationing was replaced by a monetary system based on an abundance of consumer goods, competition, and choice, many new phenomena and concepts invaded the lives, vocabulary, and consciousness of the Russian people. According to social psychology, five years of a market system should have had a substantial impact on behavior and the very value system of society.

First, a gigantic change occurred in the role of money. Soviet citizens knew little about checks and “plastic money,” and all their transactions were conducted in cash. The socialist ruble, moreover, was a mysterious entity, a quasi-currency with several exchange rates—one for ordinary people, another for tourists, another for commercial transactions, and yet another for officials traveling abroad. There was also a real ruble, with its exchange rate established by the black market. The ordinary or “wooden” ruble was one-tenth the price of the “currency” ruble. What type of ruble one had access to depended on one’s place in the party-state hierarchy.

Today, the currency black market and the multitude of exchange rates are gone. There is only one ruble, a stable and internally convertible currency highly respected within the CIS. There are no limits on the accumulation and use of this ruble, and its buying power is as high as that of the U.S. dollar, in the sense that one can buy with rubles anything a dollar can buy. This year the ruble may become fully convertible.

Russians are growing accustomed to checking and savings accounts, stocks, government bonds, security deposits, and dividends, and they increasingly use credit cards and automated teller machines. They are discovering the convenience and burdens of automobile loans, life insurance, home mortgages, and other forms of credit, and they avidly follow the fluctuations of interest and currency exchange rates. Social status, living standards, and the quality of life are now defined by different gauges; different social problems, ills, and fears preoccupy people.

The second major change pertains to the relationship between the individual and the state. Under communism, all citizens were employees and clients of the government, and fulfillment of their basic needs was strictly regulated by the state. Individuals were powerless, their status and self-esteem defined by the location of their offices. In other words, the value system was established and enforced by the Communist Party on a political basis.

Today, as mentioned earlier, approximately 70 percent of the population do not rely on the government for jobs, food, residences, access to information, and the

like. As a result, they have grown accustomed to perceiving the government as a hired hand rather than a source of livelihood and status. True, some 30 percent of the Russian population are still largely dependent on the state, but even they enjoy the power of economic choice.

### **Political Trends**

The significance of political choice and related sense of power also cannot be neglected. Russian political life has graduated from the rudimentary street activism of mass rallies and protests characteristic of the late 1980s and early 1990s into a more orderly democratic process. In the April 1993 referendum, Russians voted for the continuation of reforms; in December 1993, they adopted a new constitution and elected their first parliament. They elected the second Duma in December 1995, the president in June 1996, and governors of provinces in the fall of 1996. The fact that some 65 percent of all eligible voters chose to exercise their political power—a stark contrast with the 49 percent participation of the American electorate—and the fact that no major violations of democratic procedures were registered indicate that society at large and most importantly the opposition have come to accept the democratic political process.

True, most Russian political parties were formed around charismatic personalities; however, they demonstrate responsiveness toward the electorate and are adapting their programs to address the needs and aspirations of particular social groups. The behavior and images of their leaders are changing accordingly. Observe, for example, how the leading presidential candidates have accommodated the needs and expectations of the electorate. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy tries to appear more civilized and respectable, Gennady Zyuganov presents himself as a social democrat, Boris Yeltsin cleanses his administration of “radicals” while having adopted a more socially oriented economic agenda.

At the same time, one can detect the growing power of institutional forces by observing how government officials conform to them. Thus, an old apparatchik like Viktor Chernomyrdin becomes prime minister yet continues the reforms. Kadannikov becomes deputy prime minister and soon abandons his protectionist philosophy. Communists Ivan Rybkin and Gennady Seleznyov become speakers of the Duma, yet conduct responsible, balanced, and pragmatic policies. This suggests that the institutional structure has apparently solidified enough to provide additional stability and continuity to the democratic process. This means that any attempt by even the most charismatic and forceful personality to implement a radically new policy is likely to encounter a growing institutional resistance. We have already witnessed this in case of Alexander Lebed. Whereas in 1993 Alexander Rutskoi was able to destabilize the system, in 1996 the system rejected a new zealot before he was able to do any significant damage.

### **Psychological Change**

Much of our misunderstanding of the new Russia stems from the key question of all transitional societies: to what extent can people’s mentalities change? Many analysts operate on the assumption that the sociopolitical mentality of a mature

person remains basically the same throughout his life. Hence a Communist, and particularly an apparatchik, must ever remain hostile to reforms and dream of nothing but the restoration of the old system. According to social psychologists, however, traumatic experiences can drastically alter one's entire worldview, and Russians did live through very dramatic economic and social changes.

The monetarization of the economy introduced a totally new mechanism for the measurement and distribution of the value not only of goods, property, services, and labor, but also of each individual. Private property and economic choice tend to enhance one's sense of autonomy, self-esteem, and social status. Every Russian citizen has been subjected to audition by the market, and his individual worth was reevaluated. For most of them, this has been a very painful process. Those who have managed to acquire personal power, regardless of their social background, have gained self-esteem and social status. Those who have been left behind suffer the indignities of failure.

The creative intelligentsia has been especially humiliated and insulted by the marketization of Russian life. They detest the market's propensity to impose its value system on the arts, literature, and science and to promote popular culture instead of high art, and they resent its preference for applied research over free experimentation. This change and the dramatic lowering of the intelligentsia's living standards are the principal reasons so many of the original supporters of reform among the intelligentsia have turned into bitter critics of the current government and Russian capitalism in general. Some of these detractors long for the return of socialism with a human face; others yearn for a kinder and gentler capitalism.

The main source of psychological change originates in the personification of power that is taking place in the society. Personal power, either financial or political, enhances one's self-esteem, but it also entails new responsibilities and anxieties. The value system of that part of the nomenklatura that has acquired some form of personal power has changed significantly. They are now concerned not about their status within the party but with the preservation and growth of their personal assets, influence, and status within a specific social group. As a rule, they are vitally interested in sustaining the political and economic status quo rather than instigating a new redistribution of power. This explains why reforms have not been rolled back in the countries where Communists have made a political comeback. It would take an enormous amount of energy to gather up the new autonomous institutions of power and fuse them back into a single totalitarian one.

So, did the process of reform hurt the Russian people? Yes, very much, but not through the loss of their colonies and superpower status. They have been hurt by inflation, which wiped out their savings, by uncertainty and insecurity, and by fear of organized crime. Have they been humiliated? Yes, but not by other nations and defeat in the cold war. They were humiliated by the discovery of how miserable their living conditions were in comparison with those in other developed countries. Are they suffering an identity crisis? Yes, but not a crisis of national identity; Russians are suffering from the personal identity crisis that is inevitably generated by major social dislocations.



The collapse of totalitarian control untied the hands of the criminal class. Separatism threatened the country's territorial and political integrity. Inflation wiped out people's life savings. Vast quantities of state property suddenly became nobody's property and went up for grabs, which presented ample opportunity for unscrupulous officials to enrich themselves unfairly and spawned rampant corruption and thievery. In addition, the privatization process imposed major injustices on Russia's ordinary citizens. The equal distribution of privatization vouchers was an insult to the older people who had created the wealth, and it unduly rewarded the nomenklatura and black marketeers who had already profited nicely under the previous system.

### **The National Identity Question**

Demands to correct these social injustices are therefore perfectly understandable. Nonetheless, they should not be misconstrued as a desire to return property to the state and restore the apparatuses of central planning and distribution. People want property or just compensation, not the restoration of communism.

In sum, the undeniable pain and suffering of the Russian people have very little to do with their national identity and the humiliation of defeat in the cold war. To further clarify this point and the related question of latent Russian imperialism, it is important to distinguish between the imperial and cultural components of national identity and national pride.

Russian literature, music, movies, religion, and architecture are so clearly identifiable and distinguishable that it would be foolish to question Russians' cultural identity. It survived the onslaught of communist culture and—as the massive efforts toward restoration of churches and historic monuments and the return of old names and traditions testify—it flourishes today. Russians show no signs of being ashamed of their culture; on the contrary, the pride they take in it is obvious.

As to the imperial component of Russia's national identity, it is doubtful that this factor has ever been strong in the popular consciousness. Russia has voluntarily shed three layers of its empire: satellite states such as Afghanistan, Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea; the East European layer; and the inner layer, the former republics. It withdrew its forces from vast expanses of territory and decimated its conventional and strategic forces. This cannot be explained by the power of a few enlightened personalities or the revolt of the colonies. Had the Russians been truly reluctant to shed their colonies, they could have held on to at least some of them. The Russian people, however, were quite sympathetic toward other peoples' drives for independence. After all, it was the Congress of People's Deputies of Russia that signed the Soviet Union's death certificate, on 12 June 1990, when it unanimously adopted the declaration of Russia's sovereignty as a state. All this happened because Russians have never really believed that they benefited from the empire. Empires are simply too expensive, and the Russians have come to realize this, just as many European nations had done.

The Soviet empire served the messianic goal of the Communist Party and was a source of power, pride, and livelihood for the nomenklatura. It was the nomen-

klatura, then, who really suffered the humiliation of losing the Soviet empire and the superpower status associated with it. But even the nomenklatura is not uniformly bitter and angry; only those who have been unable to find a niche in the new Russia. Fortunately, their very lack of power prevents them from acting on this anger.

Russia has lived through a terrible disaster. The Russian people, however, have turned out to be more resourceful, resilient, and self-reliant than either the reformers or opposition gave them credit for. Contrary to all the apocalyptic predictions, the Russians used their liberated energy not for destruction, rage, and aggression. The “alarming scenarios have not come to pass,” as Richard Pipes has noted.<sup>15</sup>

### **Emerging Resurgence**

Today, the Russian social and political environment is immeasurably more stable than it was three years ago, particularly as the economy shows unquestionable signs of recovery. Inflation is down to a fraction of 1 percent per month, foreign trade is growing by 20 percent per year, and the foreign trade surplus is increasing, having reached \$30.9 billion in 1995.<sup>16</sup> In 1996, the average salary reached \$170 per month, while the income gap between the richest and the poorest declined. The Russian budget deficit as a proportion of gross national product—3.5 percent—is lower than in many European countries, and the level of officially registered unemployment—5.2 percent—would be considered full employment in the West.

None of this is to suggest that Russia’s troubles are over. After declining by 3 percent in 1994, the crime rate rose by 5 percent in 1995, and organized crime is growing even more quickly. The crisis in Chechnya will continue to plague Russia even if the organized military resistance subsides for good. Still, these problems are not likely to derail the economic recovery. GNP is projected to have grown in 1996 by 1 percent and is anticipated to grow by several percent in 1997. If these economic trends continue through the rest of the decade, as the World Bank forecasts, by the turn of the century Russia will have a one-trillion-dollar economy and \$200 billion in annual foreign trade. Russia will be the fifth-largest economic power in the world.

Should this resurgence of Russian power be a cause for concern? Some analysts who tend to perceive Russian political life as a zero-sum struggle between pro- and anti-Western cultural undercurrents argue that Russia can abandon its brief flirtation with market democracy any time. One American official even suggested that Russia might fall for “something worse” than communism—a “White Russian nationalism” based on “Orthodox Christianity, Slavic unity, and imperial expansion.”

I think that these fears and concerns stem from a poor understanding of cultural shifts in the new Russia. Indeed, two cultural trends are conspicuously evident. One is fueled by glorious aspects of the past, such as monarchy, nobility, Tolstoy, Tchaikovsky, and gold-domed cathedrals; another is fueled by the attractions of Western technology, efficiency, and the quality of life. The young Russians tend to adore Europe and idealize America. A few years ago, every analyt-

ical article contained references to American experience. Since opening up, Russia has eagerly adopted the entire package of attributes of popular Western culture: fast-food restaurants, talk shows, advertising, wrestling, casinos, striptease shows, and so on. In 1994, for example, more than 90 percent of all movies shown in Moscow cinemas were American.

Five years after the beginning of the American cultural offensive, however, one can detect sobering voices even among dedicated Russian westernizers. We don't have to blindly copy both the good and ugly of the West, they say. However, these statements should not be interpreted as a cooling of Russia's sentiments toward the West.

In my view, two cultural trends compete in Russia just as they do in all other countries going through rapid modernization. But it is far from clear that they are incompatible. Russia's indigenous cultural tradition is simply too powerful for her to fall blindly for all the trappings of American civilization. Recovery from the terrible ordeal of communism and the renaissance of Russia's indigenous culture will most certainly strengthen Russian skepticism toward American popular culture. However, such a reaction should not be misconstrued as "White Russian nationalism."

The overwhelming majority of Russians are tired of the long and exhaustive confrontation with the West that made them pariahs of the world. Russian elites are educated and pragmatic enough to learn perhaps the most important lesson of this century: greatness based on raw power and violence does not pay. Twenty-first-century Russia is being shaped by technologically minded professionals, not ethnic or religious fanatics. They strive for excellence through technology, culture, and economic expansion, not conquest or subjugation.

### **Conclusion**

Russia has undergone a genuine revolution from below. The reformers did not impose an alien model on an ambivalent society. On the contrary, they removed artificial restraints from grass-roots forces which are now reshaping Russia according to deep societal aspirations. Like nuclear fission, the splitting of totalitarian power liberated a huge amount of energy which drives a self-perpetuating transformation when societal aspirations bring institutional changes that in turn affect the lifestyle and alter social structure. This leads to new institutional modifications. Ultimately the value system, the political mentality, and the very culture evolve. It is a very rapid but nevertheless organic evolutionary process driven by the instinct of survival rather than some ideology, doctrine, or mission. This is why Russia is not going to explode in a civil war, disintegrate, or lapse into some form of dictatorship. Neither is she going to try to recapture the colonies or embark on a new crusade against the West. Russia is striving to become a market democracy and a civilized member of the world community.

The West should put its suspicion and fear of Russia at rest and treat it as a prodigal son rather than a defeated and humiliated enemy harboring *revanche*. The West should delicately facilitate her transformation into a benign giant, a peacekeeper, and an economic powerhouse. Russia is bound to remain one of the

world's most important countries, a key player on the Eurasian continent, where four major civilizations—Western, Islamic, Hindu, and Confucian—meet and sometimes collide.<sup>17</sup> By embracing Russia, European culture will reunite with this important branch as it previously did with America. Thus Western civilization will extend its presence throughout the entire northern cap of the globe.

#### NOTES

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3. Anders Aslund, *How Russia Became a Market Economy* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1995).
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5. *Delovoi Mir*, 20 February 1996, 1.
6. *A Study of the Soviet Economy* 2 (February 1991): 37; *Business in Russia* 59 (1995): 9.
7. Viktor Glukhikh, chairman of the Duma Committee for Defense Industry, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 18 August 1994, 1, 2.
8. Anatoly Lukyanov, former chairman of the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union, interview in David Pryce-Jones, *The Strange Death of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), 425.
9. Fyodor Burlatsky, "The Late Yeltsin: Where to Lead Russia?" *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 17 February 1995, 3. See also, G. Vodolazov and Yu. Burtin, "Russian Nomenklatura Democracy Was Built," *Izvestiya*, 1 June 1994, 1.
10. David E. Powell, "Free from Communism, Russia rushes toward catastrophe," *Insight*, 25 July 1994, 37. See also Walter Laqueur, *The Dream That Failed* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), viii.
11. Zhanna Trofimova, "Anything You Want," *Segodnya*, 23 August 1995, 12.
12. In 1995 authorities registered 1.3 million additional automobiles. *Izvestiya*, 20 February 1996.
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14. Vladimir Pankov, *Delovoi Mir*, 2 December 1994, 1.
15. Richard Pipes, "The Good That Yeltsin Has Done," *Wall Street Journal*, 27 September 1994, A14.
16. Goskomstat, *Segodnya*, 25 January 1996, 2.