

Is It Power or Principle?

A Footnote on the Talbott Doctrine

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As long as there are reformers in the Russian Federation and the other states leading the journey toward democracy's horizon, our strategy must be to support them. And our place must be at their side.

—President Bill Clinton, May 1993

Much has been written about the Clinton administration's excessive focus on Boris Yeltsin at the expense of other democratic figures in Russia.¹ That policy has been attributed to Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, the brainy former journalist who, under a succession of different titles, is the government official de facto in charge of Clinton's policy toward Russia and the other post-Soviet countries.²

Although the practice of putting Yeltsin and his interests first seems to have created generous and debatably warranted U.S. support for former prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and his successors, there is doubt that this policy was also extended to the other democratic forces that ceased to dominate Russian politics in late 1993. Yeltsin tacitly supported Russia's Choice as the preferred party to win the December 1993 elections for the Duma and carry out the reform agenda that the late Supreme Soviet had stalled. However, the failure of Russia's Choice and other reform-oriented parties in that election forced Yeltsin to change his strategy, once again relying on Chernomyrdin, his emerging "Party of Power," the industrial-military complex, the armed forces, and the KGB—to the detriment of the legislature and Russian democracy.³

The leaders of the Democratic Russia Movement, the coalition that pressed Mikhail Gorbachev to annul the communist monopoly on power in February 1990, that launched Yeltsin into the Russian presidency in June 1991, and that then gave birth to the Russia's Choice party, believe that Strobe Talbott did not support them in that crucial hour of need in late 1993. Democratic Russia's copresidents believe they could have done better in that election with a modicum of American assistance, which they directly requested of Talbott. They are also

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frustrated that Talbott never explained why he willfully chose to ignore them during that fateful election, which went to the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) and the Liberal Democratic Party of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. As I will later show, several American and Russian experts agree with Democratic Russia that the outcome of the election could have been different.

In this article I seek, first, to bring to light an incident that is indicative of an overall policy, and second, to cast doubt on the widely held assumption that Russia's Choice and Democratic Russia were overly complacent in campaigning for first Duma elections in late 1993.

Democratic Russia and its friends and supporters had devised a plan that many experts recognize could have changed the outcome of the 1993 elections. The plan was simple: an endorsement from two foreign actresses who enjoyed massive popular appeal in Russia at that time—Mexican soap opera stars Verónica Castro and Victoria Ruffo. Their soap operas *The Rich Also Cry* and *Simply María* were dubbed into Russian and provoked a phenomenon the *Guardian* termed “Castromania.” “It is hard to exaggerate the fervour” of their following.⁴ The *New York Times* called it “a kind of awe.”⁵ The *Houston Chronicle* called it “an adoring frenzy” and “a head-over-heels love affair,” adding that “finding a Russian who is not addicted to the Mexican drama is as hard as finding a capitalist in the Kremlin during the Cold War.”⁶ Even *Pravda*'s headlines beamed with approving expectation before Castro visited Russia.⁷ About two hundred thousand people waited at or near the airport in Moscow for her arrival at the end of 1992, causing “as much stir as if the Virgin Mary herself had descended from an aircraft.”⁸ Both audience and performers at the Bolshoi went into an autograph-seeking frenzy when they discovered that Castro was among them. She authored a book that became an instant bestseller in Russia.

In effect, these actresses were a cultural phenomenon in Russia. Russia's most renowned expert on public opinion, Tatyana Zaslavskaya, commented that the reason for their popularity is that “with their beauty, sincerity, love, and affluence, they take us away, at least temporarily, from this gray, difficult life.”⁹ Russians apparently also share the Mexican fixation with fatalism, tragic love, and unhappy endings.

The Democratic Russia strategy called for Castro and Ruffo to endorse not only the main party, Russia's Choice, alone, but also Yabloko and even the centrist Civic Union. The goal was mainly to deprive Zhirinovskiy and the Communists/Agrarians of some of their lead, since the Mexican actresses had mainstream appeal among their main constituencies: common folk and disenfranchised masses who tend to be swayed by emotional appeals from a charismatic leader. However, their plan ran into problems at the eleventh hour when the Mexican television monopoly refused to lend the actresses. This impediment could perhaps have been easily overcome had Washington requested it. Democratic Russia copresidents Lev Ponomarev and Father Gleb Yakunin repeatedly and through various means asked Strobe Talbott to help them overcome that last hurdle. But Talbott refused to offer them this help or even return their calls. Talbott later confided to a British journalist that he did indeed receive the calls and messages, but chose not to assist the Russian democrats because he did not, in his words, “freelance.”¹⁰

The Power of Myth

There was already a precedent for arguing that the broad appeal of these actresses could be translated into political power; the soap operas had already affected Russian politics and politicians. For example, the Chernomyrdin government was forced to accede in early 1994 to the demands of communication workers when they threatened to pull *The Rich Also Cry* from the air. The one-day stoppage of the show by the workers caused “a nation-wide outcry.”¹¹ When Castro visited Russia, *Newsday* reported that “powerful politicians [were] tripping over themselves to be photographed with her.” This included Russian cabinet ministers, who were “among the thousands pushing and shoving to meet her.”¹² Even Yeltsin could not miss the photo opportunity; he and his top officials held a dinner for Castro at the Kremlin—which was the top news story that night. The Russian president later commented that when the actresses appear on TV, “even the criminals stay home and watch them,” reducing the crime rate.¹³ *The Independent* reported that “the country grinds to a halt when the programme is screened.” They added that the soaps “have been a godsend to the Russian leader because they keep people in a trance while he imposes his painful economic shock therapy.”¹⁴

Another who benefited more directly by translating the mass appeal of these stars into political/financial power was Sergei Mavrodi, president of the notorious Russian MMM corporation, a pyramid financial scheme that collapsed, losing all the deposits. Mavrodi attracted ten million small investors, mainly pensioners and housewives, to invest in his pyramid scheme by using computer simulations to make it appear as if Victoria Ruffo had endorsed his scheme.¹⁵ He later ran for the Duma to escape legal persecution, including Ruffo’s threatened lawsuit.

At the time, Communist leaders such as Gennady Zyuganov and Viktor Anpilov routinely condemned the soap operas as the chief cause of the “apathy of the Russian masses” toward the Yeltsin government and the economic crisis.¹⁶ They blamed the soaps for the population’s failure to become politically active, presumably to carry out the calls for strikes and demonstrations organized by the CPRF and other “patriotic” organizations. In fact, while the Communist Party has largely failed in their repeated calls for work strikes, in 1992 Ostankino television was forced to change the programming schedule of the soaps since industrial output fell due to widespread worker absenteeism during their working-hours timeslot.¹⁷

This phenomenon extended beyond Russia. Georgian warring factions held a cease-fire at the time *The Rich Also Cry* was aired;¹⁸ the Ukrainian government was forced to exempt the soaps from energy-saving program cuts; Kyrgyz collective farms and factories emptied when the programs showed on television; and Estonia compromised in its feud with Ostankino television to ensure that the soaps would continue to show. In 1998, the government channel and the U.S. embassy in Moscow were swamped by angry citizens when the Russians announced they might have to stop showing another popular soap, *Santa Barbara*, because of financial problems. Russian Television rescinded its decision.¹⁹

The main parties competing in the 1996 Duma elections learned a lesson from 1993 and made wider use of popular artistic and sports figures in advertisements, for endorsements, and as candidates for office.²⁰ Chernomyrdin’s party even used

the American rapper M. C. Hammer. These popular figures help establish a party's image. To this day, most of Russia's parties center around personalities and not platforms, and they have yet to consolidate loyal, definable constituencies.

The 1999 Duma elections also followed this trend. The greatest vote-getter was Yedinstvo, a party formed only weeks prior to the elections, which had no political or economic platforms and whose only overt identity was support for Vladimir Putin, the popular prime minister. Therefore, the image that Russian parties convey on television can prove more crucial than in established democracies. This means that whoever has the slickest ad, appeals to emotions (such as Yedinstvo did with the war in Chechnya), and boasts the most charismatic personality often wins the vote.²¹ Some analysts explain Zhirinovsky's surprise success in the 1993 election by his adept use of symbolism and sleek soundbites. Others have partly attributed Yeltsin's victory in the June 1991 Russian presidential elections to wide use of popular symbolism, as advised by the Kriebel Institute of Washington.²²

The Experts Opine

Russian and American experts agree that the appeal of Castro and Ruffo could have translated into votes for democracy at the expense of the "red-brown" parties²³ (see table 1).

Tatyana Zaslavskaya's estimate is especially interesting, as she pioneered the science of public opinion in the USSR; her All-Union Center for the Study of Public Opinion became one of the main think tanks of perestroika.²⁴ Oleg Kalugin knows Russian psychology well from his days as an expert of disinformation and propaganda in the KGB. Blair Ruble is the director of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies in Washington, D.C. Marshall Goldman is deputy director of the Davis Center for Russian Studies at Harvard University. Andrew Kuchins at that time was the director of the Russia department at the MacArthur Foundation. The late Galina Starovoitova, Gleb Yakunin, and Lev Ponomarev were copresidents of the Democratic Russia Movement; Starovoitova was also

TABLE 1. "How many votes would the democratic parties have obtained with an endorsement from the Mexican actresses?"

Expert consulted	Estimated number of votes (in millions)
Galina Starovoitova	9
Tatyana Zaslavskaya	5
Lev Ponomarev	4
Gleb Yakunin	4
Andrew Kuchins	4
Blair Ruble	3.5
Robert Sharlet	3.5
Oleg Kalugin	3
Marshall Goldman	1.5
Average	4.2

former press spokesperson for Yeltsin. Robert Sharlet is an expert on Russian constitutions and elections at Union College in New York.

Michael McFaul, a leading expert on Russian elections affiliated with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Stanford University, commented that the plan “would have definitely made an impact”²⁵ in the 1993 elections, but did not give a figure.

Further Background

I was present with two of the three copresidents of the Democratic Russia movement, Ponomarev and Yakunin, the day in September 1993 when Yeltsin abolished

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the Supreme Soviet and called for new elections. We discussed the plan to involve Castro and Ruffo, and these two leaders became hopeful that it could be realized. I then met with Verónica Castro in Cancún, and she agreed to endorse the democratic parties in a television ad, but needed permission “from above,” as is the custom in Mexico. In that country,

actors sign an “exclusivity agreement” that prevents them from engaging in any activity other than that stipulated in their contract. The owner of that contract is the near-monopoly Televisa, whose president later refused to allow Castro to film the spot. Some sympathetic subordinates commented that he would comply if the request came from Mexican political authorities, as he has a strong symbiotic relationship with them.

The Mexican government has a policy of not intervening in the internal affairs of other states. However, if the request had come from the U.S. government, they would likely have bent this rule, particularly because NAFTA was being voted on in the U.S. Congress within weeks. Mexico’s political leadership was keen to secure the good-will of individual congressmen and U.S. officials. The Mexican government was breaking its own laws to secure individual votes (such as the nonextradition law, which the Mexican government broke to secure the vote of a Florida congressman). The Mexican government spent \$35 million to lobby Washington for the treaty’s ratification. So if Washington had cooperated, they likely could have convinced the Mexican authorities to allow Castro and Ruffo to endorse the democratic parties.

Individual congressmen proved unhelpful, as they did not understand, not surprisingly, how Mexican soap operas could help Russian democracy. The only person in Washington who had the capacity to understand the value of this plan and who wielded sufficient power to achieve it was Strobe Talbott. Ponomarev, his assistant, and I tried to reach Talbott through numerous letters, faxes, contacts, calls to his office, and even messages left on his home answering machine, to no avail.

The one comment Talbott made about the 1993 elections actually served to humiliate the democratic forces. As McFaul wrote, Talbott's call for "'more therapy, less shock' articulated in the wake of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's surprising electoral victory in 1993 helped to undercut domestically the political position of reformers within the Russian government."²⁶

Numerous attempts to reach Talbott to interview him for this article proved futile. His spokesman at the State Department said that the issue of Democratic Russia and the Mexican actresses was not relevant enough to interrupt him.²⁷

The Broader Picture

"To survive, Russian democracy needs Russian democrats,"²⁸ McFaul reflected in an essay on U.S.–Russian relations. His thoughts mirror the wider opinion in the field on the legacy of Clinton's Russia policy:

U.S. government officials and nongovernmental organizations devoted less effort to assisting those seeking to foster democratic institutions. Instead, they devoted more time to whoever was in power. . . . Prime Minister Chernomyrdin's poor record on deepening economic reform underscores the negative consequences of engaging too closely with individuals not committed to radical reform. . . . American engagement policies should be directed first and foremost at those with proven democratic credentials.²⁹

However, I believe that Clinton and Talbott excessively engaged with Chernomyrdin—and his four equally undemocratic successors—to the detriment of democrats not in power at the time. For example, Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the Yabloko Party, urged the United States to simply "say the truth" about Yeltsin and his government.³⁰ In an editorial following President Clinton's praise for presidential candidate Vladimir Putin, the *Washington Post* accused Clinton of the "betrayal of those still fighting for democracy, human rights and a free press in Russia. . . . Perhaps seeing Putin as a reformer vindicates in Clinton's mind his past Russia policy, since Putin is Boris Yeltsin's political heir."³¹ Ponomarev, referring to the 1993 Duma elections, said "Talbott betrayed us."³² Starovoitova said the same to Michael Dobbs of the *Washington Post*.³³

The behavior of Talbott toward the Russian democrats in 1993 is not an isolated case, but rather is indicative of a pattern. The first U.S. ambassador in Belarus, David Swartz, resigned in protest in 1994 because Talbott refused to answer his cables warning that U.S. aid money was being diverted to the communists away from democracy-building projects. He accused Talbott of "encouraging those in Belarus who want restoration of the Soviet empire."³⁴ When Stanislav Shushkevich, then the reform-minded leader of Belarus, was about to be overthrown by the current president, Alexander Lukashenka, he asked, "If the United States wants to foster reform here, why do you keep on supporting the Communists?"³⁵ The Center for Security Policy published a collection of other similar incidents involving Talbott's tendency to support ex-Communists at the expense of their democratic opposition. They cite incidents in Hungary, Romania, and Serbia.³⁶ A top member of the Bulgarian Union of Democratic Forces accused Talbott and the U.S. ambassador in Sofia of similarly ignoring their request just prior to their loss of the 1994 elections

to the former Communists. What they had wanted was a photo-op with Clinton to give prestige to their campaign.³⁷

One reason often cited for the Clinton administration's lack of support in the early 1990s for the East European democrats is the belief, prevalent among academic circles in the West at the time, that some of the anticommunist parties might revert to ruling the region the way nationalist, fascist, and militaristic parties did during the interwar period. As Anne Applebaum wrote in *Foreign Affairs*,

Most believed that the potential for trouble in Central Europe lay elsewhere—in the resurgence of 1930s-style nationalist parties. . . . Western, particularly American, diplomats in Central Europe went out of their way to encourage politicians whom they perceived as antinationalist and to discourage “decommunization” programs. . . . Right-wing and conservative politicians in Central Europe failed to receive the official approval, invitations and fellowships given their left and center-left counterparts.³⁸

Yale political scientist Bruce Ackerman wrote in 1992, “It will be more than satisfactory if most East Europeans—through leadership, luck and popular support—manage to muddle their way toward liberal democracy, avoiding the worst excesses of xenophobic nationalism that might serve as a cover for new authoritarianisms.”³⁹

Berkeley political scientist Ken Jowitt, writing in 1992, was even more direct:

What is likely to happen? [Václav] Klaus's economic reforms will fail. What would it take to succeed? A Giovanni Giolitti, not a Havel, as president; a Giolitti with a *dominant* parliamentary faction able to draw on strategically placed and privileged voting constituency, with a tacit but evident support from the Czechoslovak military and Catholic Church.

He continues, “In this setting it will be demagogues, priests and colonels more than democrats and capitalists that will shape Eastern Europe's general institutional identity.”⁴⁰

French political scientist Jacques Rupnik also labeled as “radical” (and even antiliberal) the type of decommunization procedures advocated by Galina Starovoitova in Russia and carried out successfully in the Czech Republic and East Germany by former dissidents Jaroslav Bašta and Joachim Gauck, respectively. Rupnik wrote,

Conversely, is it possible to create the conditions for democratic pluralism by employing authoritarian methods? On the one hand, liberals, encouraged by Western advice, insist upon respect for the rule of law, and thus on constitutional continuity. Radicals, on the other hand, invoke revolutionary legitimacy and ask how change can be secured while the law remains something inherited from a system designed to control and manipulate society.⁴¹

The aforementioned incidents of shunning anticommunists as a matter of policy occurred before Madeleine Albright became secretary of state. Albright, a Czech native who helped Czech and Slovak dissidents during communism, may have been less inclined at that time to believe the aforementioned hypothesis about the dangers of decommunization—a hypothesis that in retrospect seems absurd. In fact, scholars are now writing that the opposite may have occurred. The post-communist countries where former communist elites remained in power (Russia,

Serbia, Belarus, Slovakia under Vladimír Mečiar, Romania under Ion Iliescu, Bulgaria between 1994 and 1998) are more prone to authoritarianism, xenophobia, corruption, and anti-Western rhetoric. However, the countries where former communist elites participate the least seem to be the most democratic as well as the most tolerant toward minorities. The Czech Republic is the country where the decommunization programs were carried to the fullest, and yet Applebaum says, "No dangerous nationalist rhetoric of any significance has been used in Czech politics."⁴² In fact, Galina Starovoitova, whom Talbott later went out of his way to continue shunning,⁴³ was the only non-Jewish member of the All-Russian Jewish Committee. Her last public pronouncement before her assassination in November 1998 was to condemn Communist deputy Albert Makashev's anti-Semitic remarks in the Duma.

Conclusion

A former colleague of Talbott's mentioned that Talbott could not help the Russian democrats in 1993 because that would be intervening in the internal affairs of another state, which could backfire on the United States. However valid this argument may be in other situations, in this case President Clinton and Talbott had already made it clear that they backed Yeltsin, and Yeltsin tacitly backed Russia's Choice as the favorite to win the Duma elections. Support for Russia's Choice and the other democrats would have been consistent with the stated U.S. support for Yeltsin. Talbott did not need to intervene on behalf of the Russian democrats directly. He could have contacted any Senate or congressional leader on whom the Mexicans depended to push NAFTA through. As is known, the behavior and opinions of members of Congress are not often considered abroad as mirror reflections of U.S. administration policy. Further, the actresses were to endorse not only pro-Yeltsin parties, but *all* the democratic and centrist parties, including those opposed to Yeltsin—Yabloko, the Party of Russian Unity and Concord of Sergei Shakhrai, and the centrist Civic Union of Arkady Volsky, among others.

No amount of U.S. diplomacy could have appeased or changed the paranoid and aggressive perceptions that the "red-brown" parties had of the United States and its intentions. Vladimir Zhirinovskiy had already made his position clear, and so had the leaders of the Communist Party and other "patriotic" groupings running in that election. They were running an anti-Western campaign as much as an anti-Yeltsin campaign. Ignoring the appeals of Russian democrats to appease the anti-Western parties of Russia could not have been expected to achieve any tangible results.

In 1998, Talbott did acknowledge the importance of supporting democratic forces in the region.⁴⁴ However, the administration has continued to receive criticism for acting otherwise.

NOTES

1. See for example, Matt Bivens and Jonas Bernstein, "The Russia You Never Met," *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 4 (1998): 613–47, and Ariel Cohen, "The Watershed in U.S.–

Russia Relations: Beyond 'Strategic' Partnership," *Heritage Foundation Backgrounder*, 17 February 1999, www.heritage.org/library/backgrounder/bg1252.html.

2. In Washington, policy toward Russia and the Soviet Union has traditionally been created primarily by the State Department and the National Security Council. However, under Clinton, the NSC officials in charge of Russia have had little or no specific knowledge of Russia at the time of their appointments. This contrasts with Reagan's appointments to the NSC, when Richard Pipes, John Lenczowski, Paula Dobriansky, and other erudites of Russia held the important posts. Clinton's appointments, including Tobi Goti, Carlos Pascual, and Nicholas Burns, had little if any professional experience with the former USSR. This suggests that Talbot holds unusual sway in Washington's policy toward Russia because of both his close personal friendship with the president and his superior expertise of the region vis-à-vis other relevant top government officials.

3. For the consequences of the Duma loss of the democratic forces, see, for example, Peter Lentini, ed., *Elections and Political Order in Russia: The Implications of the 1993 Elections to the Federal Assembly* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1995). For the correlation between the failure of the democratic forces and the ascendancy of the former KGB's power and influence over the Russian government and presidency, see Amy Knight, "The Security Services and the Decline of Democracy in Russia: 1996-1999," *The Donald W. Treadgold Papers*, in *Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies* 23 (October 1999).

4. James Meek, "Latin Soap Opera Stars Take Russia by Storm," *Guardian*, 30 April 1994, 13.

5. Alessandra Stanley, "Russians Find Their Heroes in Mexican TV Soap Operas," *New York Times*, 20 March 1994, 1.

6. T. Elaine Carey, "Mexican Soap Opera Enthralls Russia," *Houston Chronicle*, 14 September 1992, 7.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Helen Womack, "Mexican Soap Washes Away Russian Woes," *Independent*, 8 September 1992, 1.

9. Telephone conversation with Tatyana Zaslavskaya, November 1994.

10. Telephone conversation with Martin Walker, Washington bureau chief of the *Manchester and London Guardian*, October 1995.

11. Stanley, "Russians Find Their Heroes," 1; and Leonid Bagdatyev and Vadim Polyakov in *ITAR-TASS*, 4 March 1994.

12. Sophia Kishkovsky, "Weeping Beauty; Soap Starlet Has Russia in a Lather," *Newsday*, 12 September 1992, and Carey, "Mexican Soap Opera Enthralls Russia," 7.

13. Interview on Russian television.

14. Womack, "Mexican Soap Washes," 1.

15. ORT public television executive Badri Sh. Patakartshvili, personal conversation with author, April 1997.

16. I would like to thank Professor Erich Goldhagen of the Davis Center for Russian Studies at Harvard University, an expert on Russian antidemocratic and xenophobic movements and ideologies, for pointing this out.

17. Lee Hockstader, "Moscow Police Seize Failed Fund's Boss," *Washington Post*, 5 August 1994, A26.

18. Also reported in Carey, "Mexican Soap Opera Enthralls Russia," 7.

19. *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, 5 November 1998.

20. Apparently so did the U.S. government. The American actor Peter Falk, whose TV program "Columbo" was a runaway hit in Romania, mentioned that the U.S. government had requested him to tape an appeal in Romanian urging peace and civil calm. However, neither the Romania desk at the State Department, the U.S. embassy in Bucharest, nor the East European section of USAID had any comment. Falk was unreachable and his agents would not comment. Falk announced this on *Late Night with David Letterman*, 1 March 1994.

21. Michael McFaul, quoted in Alessandra Stanley, "Russians Vie for Votes, and Anything

Goes," *New York Times*, 16 November 1995, A1. McFaul also conveyed this idea in his talk "Life After Yeltsin," Davis Center for Russian Studies, Harvard University, 27 April 1998.

22. Michael Urban, "Boris El'tsin, Democratic Russia and the Campaign for the Russian Presidency," *Soviet Studies* 44, no. 2 (1992): 188.

23. The experts gave these estimates in personal conversation with the author.

24. Zaslavskaya pointed out that the housewives that follow these soaps actually had a higher-than-average absenteeism rate the day of the vote. She suggested that "get out the vote" ads could have also been made featuring the same actresses, which would have targeted this precise audience. Only then could the five million votes have been achieved, according to the public opinion expert.

25. Michael McFaul, telephone conversation, December 1995.

26. Michael McFaul, "Refocusing American Policy Toward Russia: Theory and Practice," *Demokratizatsiya* 6, no. 2 (1998): 341. Talbott was referring to the policy of "shock therapy," which was the economic reform strategy associated with the democratic forces.

27. Kent Pekel, press secretary for the deputy secretary of State, telephone conversation with author, 18 October 1998.

28. McFaul, "Refocusing American Policy," 341.

29. *Ibid.*, 341.

30. In Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting the National Interest," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2000): 58.

31. "Mr. Clinton Endorses," *Washington Post*, 17 February 2000, A30.

32. Lev Ponomarev, conversation with author, Moscow, June 1996.

33. Michael Dobbs, telephone conversation with author, 18 October 1998. Dobbs did not print her comments in a story he wrote about Talbott for *Washington Post Magazine*. The reason he gave me was that the situation "was too complicated to explain in a few sentences."

34. The source, a senior leader from the Bulgarian Union of Democratic Forces, spoke to me on condition of anonymity.

35. For both quotes see Swartz's article in *Washington Times*, 3 June 1997, cited in *Russia Reform Monitor* (American Foreign Policy Council) 282, 17 June 1997, <http://www.afpc.org>. See also David H. Swartz, "Problems in American Assistance Policy Toward the Former Soviet Union: The Belarus Prism," *Demokratizatsiya* 4, no. 1 (1996): 97–108.

36. See Center for Security Policy, "Coming Home to Roost: Clinton's Policies Put the United States on the Wrong Side—Again," Transition Brief No. 96–T 121, <http://www.security-policy.org/papers/1996/96-T121.html>.

37. The source, a senior leader from the Bulgarian Union of Democratic Forces, spoke to me on condition of anonymity.

38. Anne Applebaum, "The Fall and Rise of the Communists," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 1994).

39. Bruce Ackerman, *The Future of Liberal Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992). Reprinted in *The Revolutions of 1989*, ed. Vladimir Tismaneanu (London: Routledge, 1999), 206.

40. Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). Reprinted in Tismaneanu, *Revolutions*, 223, 225–26.

41. Jacques Rupnik, "The Post-Totalitarian Blues," *Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 2 (1995). Reprinted in Tismaneanu, *Revolutions*, 234–35.

42. Applebaum, "The Fall and Rise."

43. Galina Starovoitova mentioned that Talbott was "rude and standoffish" to her at a Moscow event in 1997, and that he had shunned other attempts of hers to communicate after the late 1993 incident. Galina Starovoitova, Ludmila Shtern, and Victor Shtern, conversation with author, Boston, Massachusetts, 21 November 1997.

44. Strobe Talbott, "Countering a Communist Comeback," *Washington Post*, 13 April 1998, A23.