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## Russian Geopolitics at the Fin-de-siecle

VLADIMIR KOLOSSOV AND  
ROSTISLAV TUROVSKY

### Introduction

What is contemporary Russia? Is it a successor state of the Russian Empire, of 'historical' Russia? Is it the heir of the Soviet Union? Or perhaps it derives from both of them? Or maybe it is seeking a completely new and autonomous road of development? This discourse, generated in Russia by the crisis and then by the disintegration of the USSR, remains unsolved even a decade after the break up of the Soviet Union.

Foreign policy and, in a broader sense, geopolitics plays an important role in the formation of ethnic and political identity.<sup>2</sup> Numerous factors influence the contemporary geopolitical discourse in Russia. These include speculations about history, national symbols and other elements of iconography, as well as the status of Russian minorities in new independent countries. The discussion focuses on the essence and sources of external threats, relations with neighbors, actual and potential enemies and allies. In the post-Soviet period, the foreign policy and external geopolitical questions are closely related with important domestic issues.<sup>3</sup> The geopolitical debate is stimulated by the planned further enlargement of NATO to the east, considered by practically all social strata as an attempt to erect a new iron curtain, to isolate Russia from the outside world and to transform it into 'a problem country'.

The debates about Russian geopolitics in the country itself and abroad can be divided in three interdependent areas of discussion:

- the revisiting of the major paradigms that have existed in one form or another since before the revolution of 1917, or in the 1920s–1930s among Russian emigrants in Europe;
- an attempt to understand the relationship between geopolitics and Russian ethnic and political identity and the ways in which this relationship can be applied to *realpolitik*, and the liaison between 'high' and 'low' geopolitics;<sup>4</sup>
- the discussion around a new, 'constructive' and pragmatic geopolitics taking into account a *realpolitik* approach to the situation in Russia and in the world.

The first area is the most widely developed. The historical debate between slavophiles, Eurasians and Westernisers<sup>5</sup> has been discussed in a number of texts in Russia, Europe and the North.<sup>6</sup> In Russia, studies which had previously been forbidden have now been republished, serving as a basis for new theories (called neo-Eurasianist) which combine ideas developed by Russian classical geopolitical authors with elements of traditional Western geopolitics and the works of contemporary west European right-wingers.

The second area of discussion is grounded in numerous polls highlighting the relationship between contemporary territorial identities in Russia, state-building, iconography, social representations, and foreign policy and major geopolitical issues. These polls have displayed a relatively low priority accorded to foreign policy issues amongst the public, similar to that displayed in the US. The survey data also showed a split between issues of social cleavage separating 'winners' and 'losers' in economic reforms and issues of cultural-political cleavage between large cities and the rest of the country. Finally, and perhaps of most significance, the results show a large gap between widespread myths about the Russian population and reality. They share a belief, both abroad and in Russia itself, that most of the Russian population is guided by conservative, primordial, basically anti-Western ideas and stereotypes (such as 'brother Slavs', 'Orthodox adherents' and so on), ideas which do not conform with reality. Even if most Russian citizens are pessimistic about the short term future and the geopolitical situation of the country, and even if they fear real or imagined external military threats, hence maintaining a historically deep-rooted psychology of 'the besieged fortress', they do not aspire to a restoration of the borders existing prior to 1991, are not aggressive and hostile to the independence of former Soviet republics and are not prepared to sacrifice their own well-being or their private interests in favour of international political adventures.

The third area of discussion is less well known than the writings of the neo-Eurasianists. Published largely in professional journals by scholars and politicians, it tends to reject radical and idealist approaches.

The objective of this paper is two-fold. First, we analyse contemporary geopolitical discourse in Russia, paying special attention to the 'pragmatic' approaches not so often taken into consideration in Western publications. Second, we compare these concepts with the *realpolitik* geostrategic orientation of the country as mirrored by the territorial distribution of foreign political visits to and from Russia.

## Geopolitics in the Heartland

### *New Terms and Old Concepts*

The development of geopolitics as a separate discipline only started in Russia during the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the Soviet period, geopolitics was considered as a pseudo-science and associated with Nazism. However, Soviet military specialists, diplomats and academics actively worked on geostrategic problems in an attempt to interpret the significance of space, though, with only a few exceptions, they almost never used the term 'geopolitics'. It is enough to mention the so-called 'Brezhnev doctrine', according to which the USSR could not permit the creation of pro-Western regimes in neighbouring countries. This 'geostrategic' doctrine provoked the Soviet intervention in both Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan.

In the late 1970s, specialists began to discuss the need to work out a theoretical basis for an understanding of Soviet geopolitics. They focused on the geostrategy of leading world powers, their involvement in the affairs of different regions, the solidity of existing global and regional contacts and the relationship between the relevant economic, political and military factors.<sup>7</sup> They also suggested the fundamental principles of a new geopolitical world order related to the 'new political thinking', improving relations with the West, and developing alternative perspectives aimed at the joint solution of global problems. Theoretical works of Western authors were mostly unknown to Soviet scholars. By the eve of World War II, only two works of Mahan had been translated into Russian,<sup>8</sup> their publication coinciding with Soviet preparations to use the oceans as a means of strengthening their military power.

The term 'geopolitics' was introduced more widely ten years later, when the taboo on the use of 'bourgeois' theories in human sciences was removed. But these geopolitical ideas were soon confronted with new challenges, such as an analysis of the place of Russia in the contemporary world after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, as well as having to come to terms with the growing ideological and political conflicts within the Russian society and elite.

During the first decade after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, geopolitics in Russia was almost monopolised (or so public opinion would have us believe) by the so-called national-patriots and left-wing activists, who had been the most active in introducing its concepts and ideas. Leaders of a number of left-wing and national-patriotic political parties wrote a series of geopolitical books and manifestos, justifying their views on their perspectives of Russia. Geopolitical chapters were included in the books of the Communist Party leader G. Zuzanov.<sup>9</sup> He used geopolitical arguments to argue for a restoration of a common Eurasian state within the borders of

the former USSR, for anti-American and anti-Western positions, as well as the need to maintain close relations with the Balkans and the Arab world. Similar ideas were repeated in a book by the leader of the Russian All-People Union, S. Baburin (then a vice-speaker of the state Duma).<sup>10</sup>

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the leader of the extreme right Liberal-Democratic party (LDPR), also appealed to imagined geopolitical constraints. In his book *The Last Rush to the South*, he justified the need to 'break-through to warm seas'. After its success at the 1993 parliamentary elections, the LDPR succeeded in creating a special Committee on Geopolitics, the only such committee in the world, consisting almost entirely of party members. The chairman of this Committee, A. Mitrofanov, also published a book, entitled *Steps of New Geopolitics*.<sup>11</sup>

Geopolitics of left parties and of national-patriots was to a large extent based on the theoretical heritage of German and Anglo-Saxon geopolitics of the early twentieth century. Mackinder's heartland theory has been adopted by Russian geopoliticians, as they believed that it endowed Russia with a particular geopolitical role. Even since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia occupies the main part of the heartland, termed by Mackinder as constituting the geographical pivot of history, the control of which would enable ultimate control of the 'world island'.<sup>12</sup>

An uncritical perception of the heartland theory has resulted in the creation of a new set of stereotypes. First of all, the idea of Russia as the key to global stability and as the geographical focus of world politics has emerged. Not surprisingly, the thesis promoting Russia's specific and 'eternal' geopolitical role has been taken up by a large section of the Russian public, not least because it has served as a sort of psychological compensation for the dismantling of the empire and the rapid decline of the Cold War geopolitical status of the country. Using the heartland theory has enabled Russians to predict a return to great power status simply because of their geographical location, without a need for any major effort on their part. Contextually, some authors have suggested updating the Mackinder formula in the following way: 'who controls the heartland possesses an efficient means to command world politics, by maintaining the geopolitical balance and the balance of power in the world. Stable peace is unthinkable without it'.<sup>13</sup> Russian geopolitical publications in the 1990s were, to a great extent, based on an idealised image of Russia and its geopolitical mission as a 'keeper of a balance between the West and the East'.<sup>14</sup>

But many Russians have also begun to realise that it was possible to do without Russia in world affairs. Geographical determinism did not necessarily work, while a leading role of Russia in world politics was by no means eternal. A stereotype image of Russia as constituting a great Eurasian power with the ability to undertake territorial expansion was becoming obsolete.

Russia was being transformed from a core of Eurasia to its 'impasse'.<sup>15</sup> The heartland theory, even in its updated versions, proved to be an unrealistic scheme, divorced from the reality of regional and global politics.

#### *Temptations and Impasses of Neo-Eurasianism*

The development of Russian geopolitics was also stimulated by the disintegration of the Russian sphere of influence, coupled with the position held by 'pro-Western' groups who promoted the idea of 'the return to the civilised world'.

The neo-Eurasian school of geopolitics is discussed in the works of Russian 'Eurasians' – emerging in the milieu of the Russian emigrants of the 1920s–30s. According to their views, Eurasia represents a particular cultural world, which differs from Europe in the west, and Asia to the south. 'Eurasia' is to be found within the borders of the Russian empire, constituting an area integrated around common geopolitical and cultural-historical characteristics.

Contemporary neo-Eurasians significantly modified the Eurasian doctrine of the first half of the twentieth century. They based their ideas on a dogmatic understanding of the theories of both Mackinder and Haushofer, considering the rivalry of continental and maritime powers as an absolute and eternal element of the world geopolitical order. In this view, Russia is perceived as a leading continental power, called upon to fight against 'commercialised' maritime (Atlantist) civilisation led by the United States. Russia is destined to restore a great Eurasian empire. From this perspective, current contradictions with the West are perceived as being impossible to resolve.

Neo-Eurasians tried to create a theoretical foundation for understanding the conflict between Russia and the West and to transform geopolitics into a basis for the promotion of post-Soviet nationalism. They referred to geopolitical constants, especially the central location of Russia in Eurasia, arriving at the conclusion that the divergence between the respective economic and political models of the two protagonists (market economy vs autarchic and protectionist economy, liberal democracy vs empire) was unavoidable. According to one of the leading writers in this area, Dugin, the 'landlocked' and the maritime (Atlantist) civilisations are two principal types of world civilisations, each of which is endowed with its own methods of production and state-building. They are in a state of continuous 'great war of continents' between 'forces of land' and 'forces of sea'. Neo-Eurasians artificially reduce the world political process to a clash between adherents of 'Atlantism' and 'Continentalism'. They promote the idea that Russia should unleash a war against all forms of 'Atlantists' and, at the same time, demonise notions of globalisation and the new world order. The latter are, according to the neo-Eurasianists, interpreted as constituting an

incarnation of the American dream which promotes notions of world dominance and the ultimate subjugation of Russia. Their common theme is the unmasking of 'the mondialist complot'.<sup>16</sup>

However, neo-Eurasianists recognise the possibility of a strategic compromise with Europe, conditional on European countries taking a radical anti-American position. Japan is also perceived as constituting a natural ally for Russia in the east, as is Iran in the south. As a result, the trans-Eurasian geopolitical system should be shaped as a quadrangle, taking in Berlin–Moscow–Tokyo–Teheran (the Dugin version). Other geopolitical writers preferred an alliance with China, closer to Russia both historically and geographically, as a counter-balance to the US, also including India in the list of its natural allies.

Neo-Eurasians do not deal with concrete studies of contemporary global processes, of international relations, of the world economy and geography. Their works constitute a social construction rather than a scientific analysis of global affairs. They attempt to formulate the doctrine of the 'correct' behaviour of Russia in the world, based on speculation, creating a new set of dogmas that Russian foreign policy must follow, as part of a new 'great geopolitical project'.

Neo-Eurasian logical constructions find support in the traditional geopolitical dogmas of the 1920s–30s, accentuating the role of physical space, natural resources, military power and direct control over territory, as if nothing has changed in the world during the last 60 years and as if the countries of the world still remain isolated from each other by inaccessible barriers. It is still possible, according to this view, to defend national interests by building irreconcilable military-political blocs, rather than developing 'human capital' and a research-based, open economy. It is as though the world has been frozen in a Haushoferian time warp.

#### *The Russian Nationalist Response*

Not all of the opponents of liberalism and anti-Westerners became part of the neo-Eurasian discourse. Some of them believed that a geopolitical union with Turcic and Muslim countries was dangerous for the Russian people and that it would lead to the 'dissolution' of Russia in the Eurasian melting pot and to the loss of national identity. These groups created an alternative school of Russian nationalist geopolitical thinking based around the principles of isolationism, originally put forward during the nineteenth century by historian and writer N. Danilevsky.<sup>17</sup> The geostrategic underpinnings of the isolationist school focused on: the creation of a Russian nation-state with the dominance of the Orthodox Church; the reunification of Russia with the Ukraine and Belarus, that is, the restoration of the east Slavic geopolitical space from the Kievan Rus period; the

withdrawal of Russia from the Caucasus and from central Asia; and the promotion of the national revival of the Russian people and the struggle against Eurasianists and communists, both of whom are associated with anti-national forces responsible for the destruction of Russian identity.

From this perspective, other Orthodox and eastern Christian peoples are considered as Russia's natural allies, similar to the pan-Slavic and pan-Orthodox ideas of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both 'classical' nationalists and neo-Eurasianists accentuated the need to defend Russian Orthodox identity and to transform the Russian Orthodox Church into the state religion. In reality, this means the restoration of the Russian nationalist conservatism of the nineteenth century.

The writings of the neo-Eurasianists and blatant nationalists have little in common with the realities of Russia's contemporary foreign policy. Moreover, surveys of public opinion and other academic studies have shown that these positions are shared only by a tiny minority of Russian citizens.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Westernism or Co-operation with the West?*

Nationalist concepts of Russian geopolitics were formulated largely as a reaction to the decrease of Russia's power status in the world. During the early 1990s, the politics of Russian leadership was grounded in Westernist geopolitical thinking. The postulates of this school of thought were actively diffused throughout Russian society in the late 1980s and early 1990s, during which period its adherents practically determined the country's foreign policy (the so called 'Kozyrev doctrine' named after the then Minister of Foreign Affairs). This policy was oriented to the strengthening of relations with the West at any price. It has been argued that adherence to this geostrategic policy resulted in the loss of Russia's political and economic power base in central eastern Europe, without gaining any significant concessions or compensation from the West.<sup>19</sup>

The theory of Russian Westernism is deeply rooted in Russian society. It was initially developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, becoming dominant amongst the Russian intelligentsia. It was based on two principles: first, on concessions to the West in exchange for supposed tolerance and assistance, corresponding to the dual interests of both Russia and the West. Second, it was rooted in the idealisation of the Western model of liberal democracy and market economy which, it was argued, should be rapidly and unequivocally adopted by Russia, thus guaranteeing an economic revival and attracting an inflow of foreign investment.

The 'Gorbachev doctrine' assumed a transition from the bipolar to a 'polarless' world, based on harmony and international entente, and without any hegemonic status within the system. This approach was seen as constituting a form of 'new thinking' in international relations. The key

notions were: a 'system of international security', 'the common European home', and 'economisation of foreign policy', which meant the rapid integration of Russia into the world economy. But 'the right to an autonomous way of development' remained a central part of Soviet foreign policy during this period. This was summed up by Gorbachev in his statement that, 'all peoples must maintain their right to choose their own way of development, the right to dispose of their destiny, their territory, their human and natural resources'.<sup>20</sup> This reflected remaining differences between the USSR and the West concerning Soviet ambitions to maintain its sphere of influence in the countries 'of socialist orientation'.

The 'Kozyrev doctrine' was dominant during the early Yeltzin years, during which period Russia was oriented to the West even more than in the late 1980s, largely for pragmatic, rather than ideological, reasons, desiring Western economic aid. The emphasis on 'the right to an own way of development' disappeared from the Kozyrev doctrine, with the Western political and economic model being recognised as the only realistic geopolitical model of behaviour for the country to follow.

#### *In Search of an Adequate Geostrategy*

While it proved to be much more difficult to shape a less radical and more 'academic' geopolitics, a new geopolitical model, shared by large sections of the political and intellectual elite, has emerged. Evolving during the latter part of the 1990s, this model combines an orientation towards geopolitical autonomy, realism and pragmatism, coupled with an efficient use of the means the country still possesses to influence the global situation. This geopolitics is less 'ideological', partly reflecting the decrease in the internal ideological discourse within the country, based not on abstract schemes, but on an analysis of the contemporary global situation and a *realpolitik* analysis. From neo-Eurasianism it borrows the idea of Russia's location between Europe and Asia, as well as its particularistic civilisational characteristics. From the Russian nationalist school, it borrows an orientation towards pragmatism, while from the Westernism school, it borrows a recognition of the importance of mutually beneficial relations with Western countries. But at the same time, it desists from positing any unilateral orientation (including a pro-Western one); neither does it promote a geopolitical model based on expansionism and/or revenge.

Amongst the political elite, there are many who perceive Russia as occupying a polar position in a multi-polar world. While adhering to their own 'civilisational uniqueness', Russia desires to take an active role in the creation of a new world geopolitical order.<sup>21</sup> As the director of the Institute of the US and of Canada of the Russian Academy of Sciences, S. Rogov points out, 'the Russian Federation, unlike the Soviet Union, cannot pretend to the role of a superpower. But due to the size of its territory and population,

of its military and scientific potential and as a great Eurasian power, it can become a leading participant in a multi-polar world, playing an active role in resolving problems in which it has an interest'.<sup>22</sup> In practice, this requires the adoption of a strategy balancing between the major global powers – the US, Europe and China – all of whom should, in turn, allow Russia to become actively involved in the processes shaping the world order.

This geostrategical position, replacing neo-Eurasianism as the dominant stream in Russian geopolitical thought, has recently been defined as a strategy through which 'equal distance from world leaders' is maintained. This strategy supposes: maximising Russia's influence on world politics; preventing the strengthening of separate geopolitical centres; exploiting the existing and potential contradictions within and between leading world powers and coalitions; and using the 'package' principle in foreign policy, namely that concessions are only possible when similar actions are undertaken by other countries.<sup>23</sup>

Most authors call for pragmatism in Russia's foreign policy, with an orientation on economic efficiency as part of foreign relations or, in the words of one recent writer, 'The efficiency of Russian foreign policy in all spheres must be estimated in terms of what it earns for the country'.<sup>24</sup> The 'pragmatic' geopolitical model can be summarised as follows:

1. Restoration of the Russian leadership in the post-Soviet space by economic means. Many writers see a historical dimension in the gradual transformation of the post-Soviet space into an economically and politically integrated union of states (like the 'United States of Europe') able to guarantee political and economic stability while, at the same time, being an inter-civilisational melting pot.<sup>25</sup> Notwithstanding, many of these authors tend to underestimate contemporary processes in the post-Soviet space which provoke their further separation from Russia.
2. A more efficient use of geopolitical resources inherited by Russia from the Soviet Union:
  - nuclear weapons as a factor of containment
  - using the vote in the United Nations Security Council
  - delivery of weapons, exportation and transit of Russian raw materials and some industrial goods (the interests of large corporations play an increasing role in foreign policy making)
  - Russian military bases abroad
  - re-animation of old relations and a return to the concept of traditional allies, such as the restoration of 'special' relations with countries which had been close to Russia prior to the revolution (Serbia, Armenia) and during the Soviet period (India, Cuba, Angola and some Arab countries).

3. A differentiated approach to relations with Western countries. Most writers argued that a pro-American bias in Russian foreign policy was not justified. Instead, Russia should pay more attention to relations with European countries for both historical and geographical reasons, while at the same time not placing the country in a situation of unilateral external dependence. US claims for world dominance are met with a negative reaction throughout the political establishment. Even radical neo-Eurasians do not deny the necessity to develop relations with European states. As for Westernisers, they see the long-term unification of Russia with Big Europe as corresponding to national interests. Even if Russia is not eventually perceived as constituting a major global power, similar to that of the United States or China, it can still remain one of the larger European countries whose economic potential and political influence is comparable with Germany, France, Italy and Great Britain. Such integration will help strengthen the European factor in global politics. Therefore, Westernism in Russia is being transformed. The political elite, including those who are oriented to the West, are not prepared to accept the formation of a monopolar world with American dominance or, for that matter, the dominance of any other single country. Contextually, a specific pro-European Westernism has emerged in Russia.
4. The development of an Asian connection in foreign policy has also been posited in an attempt to correct the disproportionate priority given to relations with the West. The formation of a multi-polar world is understood in terms of strengthening relations with alternative poles, including both China and India. 'In the field of international relations, Russia needs a coherent Asian policy similar to its European focus ... it is necessary to coordinate Russia's policy on China, as well as other countries in the Asian geoeconomic and geopolitical space, from Tokyo to Delhi, and from Astana to Jakarta, which is being shaped.'<sup>26</sup> This, therefore, assumes a more active involvement of Russia in the processes of integration, which are under way in the Asia-Pacific region (APR).
5. Exploiting Russia's transit infrastructure and opportunities. This requires the development of communications linking European countries with the APR. Using these opportunities to their full potential is seen, by some, as a means of restoring the country's geopolitical influence.<sup>27</sup>

#### Concepts and Reality: The Geography of Russian Foreign Policy at the End of the Century.

The end of the twentieth century was marked in Russia by the emergence of a number of alternative geopolitical models and scenarios for the country. But in placing the emphasis on historical destinies and the future of Russia,

many of these narratives failed to take account of a systematic 'objective' geopolitical analysis of regional and global *realpolitik*. In this respect, it is important to study the geographical pattern of the country's external contacts and foreign policy. An analysis of the 'real' situation will help determine the extent to which reality differs from utopianised geopolitical projects.

An analysis of the contemporary geopolitical situation takes account of a variety of quantifiable factors, such as the structure of international economic relations, as well as the number, the hierarchy and the geographical distribution of diplomatic and other missions abroad. The pattern of official visits of political leaders to foreign countries and foreign politicians to Russia can also serve as an indicator of the country's geopolitical codes. These patterns have changed in the past, even during the relatively short period of 1989–91.<sup>28</sup> The next section of this essay analyses the geography of foreign visits of heads of the states, prime ministers and their deputies, as well as foreign and defense ministers, as a means of determining the changing foreign policy orientations of the country and, more precisely, its place in the new world geopolitical order.

The data in Table 1 points to a number of major conclusions:

1. During 1991–94, sharp changes occurred in the country's foreign relations. During 1994–95, foreign activity significantly decreased against the background of the deep economic crisis and the instability of the political regime. The 'revival' of foreign policy is only evident from 1996.
2. The geographical distribution of foreign visits confirms that Russia has practically withdrawn from Africa, and has considerably diminished its activity in Latin America and in some parts of Asia. It is now more a Eurasian than a global state. However, Russia continued to claim a global role for itself. The West has promoted political integration with 'unpredictable' Russia, tending to avoid public declarations relating to the country's weakness which could have served as a pretext for increasing nationalism and self-isolation. The chance to participate in the discussion of global problems, not least the G7 discussions, has become an important element in Russian foreign policy.
3. A shift in Russian foreign policy occurred in early 1996 when Yevgeny Primakov replaced Kozyrev as foreign minister. This shift is related to a certain increase of contacts with Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. In 1999, CIS countries became the principal direction of political exchange (almost half of the total number of visits), but in 2000, under President Putin, their ratio decreased to 30 per cent. Moscow remains the major geopolitical focus in the post-Soviet space, as evidenced by the positive balance of visits with CIS countries (though

TABLE 1  
THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF POLITICAL LEADERS' VISITS IN 1991-2000

Visits from the USSR/Russia												
	Western Europe	Eastern Europe (post-communist)	South and South East Asia, F. East, Pacific	Middle East and Northern Africa	North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	West / East ratio	Subtotal ('near abroad' not incl.)	CIS and Baltic Repts	'Far abroad' / 'Near abroad' ratio	Total
1991	17	4	7	13	3	0	0	1.2	44	---	---	44
1992	28	8	7	11	4	3	2	2.2	63	23	2.7	86
1993	28	7	7	6	6	0	0	3.2	54	17	3.2	71
1994	20	4	5	15	3	0	1	1.4	48	11	4.4	59
1995	27	9	9	7	6	2	1	2.6	61	15	4.1	76
1996	23	6	9	12	3	3	0	1.5	56	22	2.5	78
1997	27	3	13	6	7	4	0	1.9	60	20	3	80
1998	31	7	9	1	2	1	1	4	52	21	2.5	73
1999	34	9	9	4	5	1	2	3.7	64	37	1.7	101
2000	19	3	13	16	4	2	0	0.9	57	15	3.8	72

Visits to the USSR/Russia												
	Western Europe	Eastern Europe (post-communist)	South and South East Asia, F. East, Pacific	Middle East and Northern Africa	North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	West / East ratio	Subtotal ('near abroad' not incl.)	CIS and Baltic Repts	'Far abroad' / 'Near abroad' ratio	Total
1991	29	16	11	17	7	3	5	1.9	88	---	---	88
1992	17	6	8	22	3	0	3	0.9	59	124	0.5	183
1993	22	10	5	10	6	1	2	2.5	56	89	0.6	145
1994	23	5	11	8	3	5	1	1.6	56	71	0.8	127
1995	14	10	6	7	3	1	1	2.1	42	69	0.6	111
1996	36	14	7	8	5	2	0	3.7	72	105	0.7	177
1997	31	7	9	15	5	4	1	1.8	72	86	0.8	158
1998	24	8	7	10	5	4	6	2.2	64	57	1.1	121
1999	18	4	6	15	1	1	3	1.1	48	64	0.8	112
2000	29	4	9	12	3	5	1	1.7	63	37	1.7	100

(cont.)

The total number of visits												
	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	South and South East Asia, F. East, Pacific	Middle East and Northern Africa	North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	West / East ratio	Subtotal ('near abroad' not incl.)	CIS and Baltic Repts	'Far abroad' / 'Near abroad' ratio	Total
1991	46 (34.8%)	20 (15.2%)	18 (13.6%)	30 (22.7%)	10 (7.6%)	3	5	1.6	132	---	---	132
1992	45 (36.9%)	14 (11.5%)	15 (12.3%)	33 (27%)	7 (5.7%)	3	5	2.1	122	147 (54.6%)	0.8	269
1993	50 (45.5%)	17 (15.5%)	12 (10.9%)	16 (14.5%)	12 (10.9%)	1	2	2.8	110	106 (46.9%)	1	226
1994	43 (41.3%)	9 (8.7%)	16 (15.4%)	23 (22.1%)	6 (5.8%)	5	2	1.5	104	82 (44.1%)	1.3	186
1995	41 (39.8%)	19 (18.4%)	15 (14.6%)	14 (13.6%)	9 (8.7%)	3	2	2.4	103	84 (44.9%)	1.2	187
1996	59 (45.7%)	20 (15.5%)	16 (12.4%)	20 (15.5%)	8 (6.8%)	5	0	2.4	129	127 (50.8%)	1	256
1997	58 (43.9%)	10 (7.6%)	22 (16.7%)	21 (15.9%)	12 (9.1%)	8 (6.1%)	1	1.9	132	106 (44.5%)	1.2	238
1998	55 (47.4%)	15 (12.9%)	16 (13.8%)	11 (9.5%)	7 (6%)	5	7 (6%)	2.9	116	78 (40.2%)	1.5	194
1999	52 (42.2%)	13 (10%)	15 (15.6%)	19 (21.1%)	6 (6.7%)	2	5	2.1	112	101 (47.4%)	1.2	213
2000	48 (40%)	7 (5.8%)	22 (18.3%)	28 (23.3%)	7 (5.8%)	7 (5.8%)	1	1.2	120	52 (30.2%)	2.3	172

The balance of visits												
	Western Europe	Eastern Europe (post-communist)	South and South East Asia, F. East, Pacific	Middle East and Northern Africa	North America	Latin America and Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	Subtotal ('near abroad' not incl.)	CIS and Baltic Repts	Total		
1991	12	12	4	4	4	3	5	44	---	44		
1992	-11	-2	1	11	-1	-3	1	-4	101	97		
1993	-6	3	-2	4	0	1	2	2	72	74		
1994	3	1	6	-7	0	5	0	8	60	68		
1995	-13	1	-3	0	-3	-1	0	-19	54	35		
1996	13	8	-2	-4	2	-1	0	16	83	99		
1997	4	4	-4	9	-2	0	1	12	66	78		
1998	-7	1	-2	9	3	3	5	12	36	48		
1999	-16	-5	-3	11	-4	0	1	-16	27	11		
2000	10	1	-4	-4	-1	3	1	6	22	28		

Eastern (Central) Europe includes only post-communist states. Greece and Cyprus included in Western Europe.

Middle East and Northern Africa include Muslim world from Morocco and Turkey to Pakistan and Israel as well.

Visits of several top politicians (like Prime Minister and Foreign Minister) at one time (or with difference in arrival/departure within two or three days) mean one visit.

Summits mean several visits according to the number of states represented.

In ratio calculation the West sums up Western Europe, Eastern Europe and North America, the East sums up South and South East Asia, Far East, Pacific, Middle East and Northern Africa.

- it is diminishing): their leaders travel to Moscow more often than do Russian leaders in the opposite direction.
4. East (central) Europe ceased to be a focus of Russia's foreign political activity outside the former borders of the USSR. In 1980, following the radical deterioration of relations between the East and the West as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and because of NATO's intentions to develop medium-range missiles in western Europe, the share of contacts with European socialist countries increased to 36 per cent, while by 1989–90, the figure had fallen to only 7–8 per cent. Since 1991, as a result of the establishment of relations with post-communist regimes in eastern Europe, the figure has stabilised around levels of 12–13 per cent. However, in 2000 it fell to less than 6 per cent.
  5. Western Europe has become the main direction for Russia's foreign political activity in the 'far abroad' category, accounting approximately for more than about 40 per cent of foreign visits. During detente this figure increased to 22–23 per cent, dropped to 13 per cent in 1980, and jumped to 34–36 per cent in 1989–91 – the most dramatic years of transition when, as a result of the disintegration of the socialist community and of the USSR itself, foreign policy was almost entirely determined by the relations with western European countries and the US.
  6. In more recent years, Russian foreign policy became more diversified, especially due to the development of contacts with Asian, Middle East and North Africa countries.
  7. In 1999, there was a reduction in the sphere of Russian foreign political activity, partially because of the events in Kosovo and also due to a relative deterioration of relations between Russia and the US. The intensity of relations with the West diminished, while at the same time the frequency of contacts with CIS countries increased. The number of visits to and from the 'near' and the 'far' abroad became almost equal.

#### *Russia and the 'Near Abroad'*

The most intensive diplomatic interaction is being experienced between Russia and Belarus, with the latter pursuing a policy of close integration with Russia. The treaty establishing the Union of Russia and Belarus was signed in December 1999 and ratified by both chambers of the Russian Parliament.

The 'Five', including Kazakhstan, Kirghizia and Tajikistan as well as Russia and Belarus, represents the second level of interaction. In March 1996, Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kirghizia signed the Treaty on the Community of Independent Republics, to be followed by a customs union. They were joined by Tajikistan in 1998. The inclusion of the politically unstable Tajikistan in the Russia-oriented geopolitical bloc is of great significance, enabling Russia to take an active part in the system of political

relations in both central Asia and the wider Islamic world, since the interests of many countries (Uzbekistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and so on) are represented in this state.

Its relationships with other CIS countries are more complicated. Some of these countries have displayed a growing sympathy to other political blocs – to NATO (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, partly Armenia), to Turkey (Azerbaijan) – or they have adopted an independent policy in an attempt to strengthen their own geopolitical status (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan). The most intensive international contacts take place between Russia and the Ukraine. On the one hand, Ukraine has become increasingly estranged from Russia and has even attempted to create a geopolitical counterbalance within the post-Soviet space. At the same time, Ukraine and Russia have strong links as a result of both economic and historical-cultural ties. Visits of the leaders of both countries (with the exception of Yeltsin) continue, therefore, on a frequent basis.

The relationship between Russia and Uzbekistan has a special logic. Under president Karimov, Uzbekistan has attempted to become a regional power in central Asia (a kind of a 'central Asian tiger'). Its political relations with Russia weakened, only to be restored in 1998, when Russia contributed to the peaceful solution of internal problems in Tajikistan, which was extremely important for Uzbekistan. Russian interaction with Armenia, Moldova and Turkmenistan are more intensive than with Uzbekistan. All these states have a direct interest in Russia: Armenia because of traditional friendly relations and because of its political isolation in the Caucasus, Moldova because of its interest in settling the conflict with Transdnesteria and because it needs to keep markets in Russia for its traditional exports; and Turkmenistan because it needs to export its natural gas through the Russian pipeline system. Relations with Armenia and Moldova have been stable, although not intensive, in recent years. A CIS summit held in 1997 in Kishinev (usually summits are held in Moscow) was a significant and important event for Moldova.

Relations with Turkmenistan have worsened, and Turkmenistan is the first CIS state to have established visa regulations for Russians citizens. In effect, this means the secession of Turkmenistan from the post-Soviet geopolitical system. Russian relations with Georgia and Azerbaijan have been the most difficult. There have been major differences of opinion on the Chechen problem (Russia suspects that the North-Caucasian Islamists are supported via the territories of Azerbaijan and Georgia), on the problem of the Caspian oil transportation (Georgia and Azerbaijan support the projects to transport oil through Supsa and Djeikhan, but not through Novorossijsk), and on the means of settling the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In late 2000, Moscow initiated the establishment of visa

regulations with Georgia, affecting hundreds of thousands of Georgians working in Russia.

The Baltic states continue to demonstrate their firm pro-Western orientation and are not in a hurry to improve their cold political relations with the 'eastern neighbour'. At the same time, a great part of Russian oil and of other goods is exported via Latvian and Lithuanian ports. Relations with Lithuania are slightly better, partly because there are no serious problems with the Russian-speaking minority, and because Russia depends on Lithuania in its communications with Kaliningrad oblast – the Russian exclave on the Baltic.

Thus, Russian relations with the post-Soviet states are highly differentiated. The 'near abroad' is a region of primordial importance for Russian foreign policy. Russia can not disengage from this region, not least because the population of these neighboring countries, which for long periods of time were part of the same state, maintains close human and cultural contacts. Russia is able to affect the situation in such conflict areas as Transdnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, the Crimea and Nagorno-Karabakh, assuming the role of regional leader.

#### *Russia and East (Central) Europe*

The relations with east (central) Europe are partially determined by the relations of each with western Europe. Most of the former eastern European socialist countries are queuing for membership in both NATO and the EU. Their political elites stress the 'Europeanness' and European identities of their countries, arguing that their temporary separation from a 'big Europe' has been due to the intrigues of their barbarian eastern neighbour. Russia, associated with the communist Soviet Union, is perceived as the main source of troubles and instability. As Russian political scientist A. Miller wrote, 'The mentality of the people in central and eastern Europe is characterised by a collective existential fear of a real or imaginary threat of national destruction due to loss of independence, assimilation, deportation or genocide'.<sup>29</sup>

It is still not clear where the European borders are located in the east.<sup>30</sup> As a result, there are strong fears in Russia that the enlargement of NATO and of the EU will create a new iron curtain, cut off from 'big Europe', and that the Orthodox countries of the former Soviet Union will become a new geographic periphery. For its part, Russia focused on its own, rather complicated relations with the West and paid little attention to its former allies.

Russian attempts to 'go back to east Europe' are still weak. Since 1995–96, Russia has tried to protect its interests in the Balkans, as well as playing a role as mediator between the West and Yugoslavia. In 1998–99, Russia's intervention in the Balkans crisis was intensified. Prime Minister Primakov visited Belgrade, while in 1998, the presidents of Macedonia and Croatia visited the Russian capital.

This fitted the Russian strategy of promoting a multi-polar world. It cannot be explained by 'primordial' considerations – pan-Slavism and protectionism in respect to all Orthodox countries. Russia maintained good relations with both Greece and Cyprus, while there was no progress in improving contacts with Romania and Bulgaria.

#### *Russia and Western Countries*

During the 1990s, Russia paid a great deal of attention to improving relations with the West. Relations with the West were seriously affected, in 1999, by the decision to expand NATO eastward and to work out a new security system for Europe. This was explained in Russia as a result of the identity crisis of NATO, which lost its 'natural' enemy after the disintegration of the USSR and had to find a new purpose justifying its existence. The return to old geopolitical codes, which had been worked out throughout the Cold War period, coupled with the traditional opposition to the 'imperial aspirations' of Russia, intending to restore its control over the territory of the former USSR, was perceived as providing a justification for the continued existence of NATO.<sup>31</sup> Russia felt betrayed by Western promises given to Gorbachev and Shevardnadze that NATO would not expand beyond its Cold War limits, and by the attempt of some Western politicians to create a pseudo-bipolar world geopolitical order, in which a weakened Russia would continue to be perceived as opposing the united Western community. Within Russia, it accentuated fears of geopolitical solitude and of a new isolation. Moreover, the Western media began to create an image of new Russia as a country which is organically 'alien' to the West, is unable to come to grips with values of liberal democracy, is corrupt and does not respect human rights. Anti-Russian campaigns in the Western media in 1999 were perceived as intended to prove that Russia had lost the ability and the moral right to play a role in the process of decision making relating to problems of Europe, the world economy and global politics.

The wars in Kosovo and Chechnya further complicated relations between Russia and the West. For the first time in decades, direct involvement of Western countries in Russian affairs became a real possibility. Independent of these problems, contacts with Western countries, especially the USA, Germany and France, have benefited from priority status. In the early 1990s, relations with the US were intensive at all levels. However, the frequency of reciprocal visits decreased following the re-election of both Clinton and Yeltsin. The Kosovo crisis resulted in a relatively long pause in Russian–American top level contacts, although President Clinton visited Moscow a few months before leaving the White House.

Some observers notice that problems in Russian–American relations were partially compensated for by an increase in diplomatic activity

between Russia and western Europe. This activity was specifically designed to promote relations with France and Germany, Russia's main creditor and foreign trade partner. In March 1998, Chancellor Kohl and President Chirac met with Yeltsin in Moscow to discuss European security. In Russia, the privileged relations with Germany and France was seen as a way of moving towards eventual integration with the EU and the creation of a new regional balance of power. However, the resignation of Yeltsin and the defeat of Kohl put an end to these plans, while it has taken time for President Putin to restore this level of relationship with France and Germany.

#### *Russia and Asia*

The Soviet leadership tried to maintain 'special' relations with the Arab states and with India, all of whom were considered as geopolitical allies of the country struggling against 'imperialism'. Russia's Asian policy has undergone major change in recent years. It is seen as a way of overcoming too strong a dependence on the West, restoring Russian geopolitical autonomy, and contributing to the creation of a multi-polar world opposed to *Pax Americana*.

Relations with China became the main geopolitical factor in Russia's Asia policy. Russian-Chinese summits, where Russia proclaimed its adherence to the ideas of a multi-polar world, were seen as providing evidence for an independent foreign policy. Yeltsin visited China four times during the 1990s. President Jiang Zemin of the People's Republic of China (PRC) visited Moscow twice. Contacts at the level of foreign ministers and other officials were more frequent. In August 1999, the summit of the 'Asian Five' consisting of Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was held in Bishkek.

Surprisingly, Russian foreign policy of the 1990s has paid more attention to China than to India, despite the fact that India was the most important Soviet partner in Asia. This is perhaps the most important difference between Soviet and Russian policy towards Asia. Notwithstanding, on his visit to India in 1998, Prime Minister Primakov proposed the creation of a Moscow-Delhi-Peking axis as a counterbalance to US geopolitical ambitions. Tactically, Russia acted the same way in Asia as in Europe. First, it selected an important country (Germany in Europe, China in Asia), with whom it tried to develop privileged relations, following which it looked for another strong state (France in Europe, India in Asia) in order to form a stable 'triangle' and enable it to maintain a balance between two centers of power.

Since Gorbachev, Russia has attempted to participate in integration processes in the Asia-Pacific region. While it does not have the opportunity to be a leading Pacific power, it tries to declare its interest and participation

in these processes. It was Gorbachev who declared in his speech in Vladivostok that the Soviet Union was 'also an Asian country'. Gorbachev was also the first Soviet leader to visit South Korea (in April 1991). Since the disintegration of the USSR, Russian foreign ministers have participated in ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) forums. Putin, then Prime Minister, visited the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Council) forum in October 1999 in Auckland, although the ASEAN countries do not share a reciprocal interest in Russia.

In the Middle East, Russia has a group of 'traditional' partners including Syria, Iraq and partly Egypt. Since the disintegration of the USSR, Russia has made some efforts to participate in the solution of the Middle East conflict. Yeltsin participated in the international conference on the Middle East conflict in March 1996, while Russian ministers of foreign affairs have made annual visits to the region, including Israel. Some Arab leaders perceived Russia as a potential mediator in the conflict, not least because of its improved relations with both the West and with Israel itself. Russia has also tried to play the role of mediator between the West and Iraq, with visits of Iraqi leaders to Moscow taking place despite the international embargo. Finally, Russia has also tried to restore good relations with its traditional partners in Asia (such as Mongolia and Vietnam).

#### **The Contemporary Geopolitical Situation of Russia**

The geopolitical structure of the post-Soviet space is being transformed. It is losing its initial 'Russia-centrism'. From within, the CIS is extremely inefficient, while from without, European states (especially Germany), Turkey, China, the US and other countries actively co-operate with the former Soviet republics. The Ukraine and Uzbekistan are attempting to assume the role of new regional powers. The Ukraine is often seen by Western geostrategists as a natural counterbalance to Russia and its 'imperial ambitions' in the post-Soviet space.<sup>32</sup>

Post-Soviet states participate in the numerous geopolitical unions that have come into being as an alternative to the CIS. The countries of central Asia actively co-operate with each other through a number of alternative unions, such as the Central Asian Union, institutions of the Turcic integration (summits of the Turcic states), or the amalgamation of the Muslim states of the region within the Islamic Conference Organisation. The creation of the union between Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova – GUAM (later to be joined by Uzbekistan and renamed GUUAM) – is another regional bloc which has formed as a geopolitical counterbalance to the Russian influence in the post-Soviet space.

The CIS states have also overcome their dependence on Russia as a

transit territory. The central-Asian states 'are cutting through' a window on the Indian Ocean. The Tedjen–Seraks–Meshkhed railway connects Turkmenia with Iran, offering access to the Indian Ocean for Turkmenia and other countries of the region. The construction of another transportation axis connecting Turkmenia and Uzbekistan via Afghanistan and Pakistan is also being considered.

The transit role of Russia as a bridge between Europe and Asia is also doubtful. International communications now bypass Russia; the Trans-Eurasian corridor, or the Great Silk Road (GSR) is being restored, and the implementation of the 'Europe–Caucasus–Central Asia' (TRASECA) corridor has been started. This decision was taken at the 1993 Brussels summit, attended by the heads of eight states of the Caucasus and central Asia region. This project, supported by Japan, China and the European Union, was later joined by additional countries – Mongolia, the Ukraine and Moldova.

Theoretically, the implementation of its 'northern' variant via Belarus or Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan (with a corridor to the Indian Ocean via Turkmenia and Iran) is still possible. This also requires fewer border crossings. However, Western states support the route bypassing Russia, preferring that their relationships with the APR will not become dependent on an unstable Russia (despite the fact that the internal political stability of the GSR states is even more doubtful).

Thus, 'a new rimland', surrounding the 'Eurasian heartland', is evolving in the southern regions of the post-Soviet space and in south eastern Europe. As such, Russia is in danger of becoming transformed into a peripheral north eastern area of Eurasia, located outside the main trade routes. The potential of the existing communication networks, such as the Trans-Siberian railway, is not being realised. Russia has not succeeded in bringing to fruition its 'triple' geopolitical potential as a possible core of Eurasian integration, a gateway state, and a developed economic centre.

#### *'Primakov's Doctrine' – A Breakthrough in Russian Geopolitics?*

The vector of Russian foreign policy underwent considerable change following the replacement of Kozyrev by Primakov as Minister of Foreign Affairs in January 1996.<sup>33</sup> Primakov increased foreign relations activity, developing a new foreign policy based on the following principles:

1. Relations with the Western states became more Europe-oriented, around a Russia–Germany–France axis.
2. The Asian policy was actively developed to avoid a Western bias. This focused on creating a common position with China about the need to build a multi-polar world geopolitical order, as well as nurturing

relations with India and the Islamic world.

3. Contacts with the former Soviet republics became more stable.
4. Russia took an active role in the processes of conflict resolution in former Yugoslavia, Iraq, the Middle East, and Tajikistan.
5. Through Primakov, the Russian foreign ministry demonstrated a 'geopolitical' approach to its foreign policy, by promoting regional systems of power balance.
6. Attempts were made to extend diplomatic activity to other world regions as a means of building political bridgeheads for the future when, so it was believed, the country could return to the status of a global power. In this respect, Primakov's tour in the states of Latin America was very symbolic.

The multi-polar doctrine of Primakov has been described as: 'To develop and promote relations with the West, at the same time playing an independent game in other fields: China, south Asia, Far East'. Seen this way, the doctrine presents a 'third way' avoiding the extremes of 'Kozyrev's doctrine' (a junior partner of America who agrees to almost everything) and the nationalist doctrine (leaving Europe and the West and providing an independent focus for countries whose relationships with the West are rather tense – from Bosnian Serbs to Iranians). After Primakov's resignation in 1999, his successor as foreign minister, Ivanov, more or less continued the same policy, as it fits the ambitions and aspirations of Russia's new political class.

#### *Towards the Putin Doctrine?*

Contemporary Russian geostrategy differs significantly from the Soviet one, although it is based on many traditions formed during both the imperial and the Soviet periods. On the one hand, it is ambitious. The Putin administration is going to play the role of a world power and is not prepared to reconcile itself with a diminishing global status. At the same time, the new administration has declared its pragmatic approach and is unlikely to become involved in any adventurist actions.

The European orientation still remains a key strategy in Russian foreign policy, corresponding to centuries-old relationships and traditions, and constituting an important component of national identity. At the same time, the new administration actively attempts to play 'the Asian card' in order to confirm and to justify its special role in the world, and to establish special relationships with the West. It must be remembered that, 'due to historical reasons and to its' geographical location, Russians developed the most intimate contacts with the Asian world among all Europeans'.<sup>34</sup> This is the reason for Russia's preference for a multi-polar world, with Russia as one of the poles, since Russia fears for its future and its identity in a world in

which there is a single power hegemony. In July 2000, President Putin signed a document entitled 'The Concept of the Russian Federation's Foreign Policy', in which the following statement appears: 'Russia will obtain the formation of a multi-polar system of international relations, reflecting the real diversity of the contemporary world. ... A special feature of Russian foreign policy is its balanced character. It is determined by the geopolitical situation of Russia as the largest Eurasian country, requiring an optimal combination of efforts in all directions.'<sup>35</sup>

The ability to influence the situation in regions of conflict and geopolitical shatter-belts remains an important means of participation in world politics. This principle concerns both 'new' rifts which have emerged as a result of the collapse of the USSR (such as the Caucasus, central Asia, Tajikistan), as well as the old hot points (the Balkans, the Middle East). Since Putin's rise to power in 2000, we can make some initial conclusions concerning the direction of Russian foreign policy:

1. Russian foreign policy has become considerably more active. Though the number of Russian leaders' foreign visits remained almost the same, there were more visits of foreign politicians to Moscow. However, this is partly explained by global interest in the new President, and by the increased frequency of missions undertaken by CIS leaders.
2. The activity of Russia in the Asian arena has also increased.
3. Foreign policy became more complicated and diverse. Thus, in Europe the new administration actively developed contacts with Great Britain, which had not previously been a preferred partner for Russia, while in the east, the visits of Putin to North Korea, India and Mongolia are significant, pointing to a desire of restoring relations with traditional allies who had been neglected for many years. The same logic underlined Putin's visit to Cuba. And in an attempt to diversify Russia's contacts in North America, the new president also made a visit to Canada.

Russia lacks the necessary economic and financial resources to back an ambitious foreign policy. Moreover, such a policy is mainly destined for domestic use, and the country's leaders must prove to the electorate that they are guided by national interests. Realists in Russia realise that restoration of its position as a global power will take many, if not dozens, of years. Russia is attempting to lay the foundations for the future, by marking the presence of country in key geopolitical areas, and by formulating its positions on the most important international issues. This is the only way for Russia to find its place in the swiftly developing world order of the twenty-first century.

## NOTES

1. This paper is a translated and updated summary of two chapters of the book V. Kolossov (ed.) *Geopoliticheskoe polozenie Rossii. Predstavleniia i relanost' (The Geopolitical Situation of Russia: Representations and Reality)*, (Moscow: Art-Courrier 2000.). The authors are grateful to the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation for their sponsorship of this project.
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## Abstracts

### Will Europe Ever Be 'Round and Whole'? Reflections on Economic Boundaries and EU Enlargement after the Collapse of Communism

George Blazycza

This article focuses on the difficulties encountered after 1989 in taking forward the idea of European *economic* integration, probing the boundaries of 'Europe' in the sense of economics, economic performance and EU enlargement. It summarises some of the main features and legacies of integration in the post-war period in west and east. The 1990s, the first decade of post-communist transformation, is discussed and some of the dimensions of economic performance that help locate countries in the new economic orbits they have followed since 1989 are explored. While some countries (especially Hungary, Estonia and Slovenia) could easily be quickly 'mapped' into an enlarged EU, we concur with the widely held view that the politics of the enlargement process clearly dominates the economics. Finally, some comments are offered on the EU accession process highlighting well-known barriers to enlargement, pointing to some new dangers and hopes for the future.

### The Post-Socialist States in the World Economy: Transformation Trajectories

Michael Bradshaw

This article presents an analysis of the 'progress' made by the 27 transition economies in their transformation towards some form of market economic system. A world-systems framework is employed to position these economies within a global economic context. Three elements of economic transition are then assessed: recovery from transitional recession, institutional reform as assessed by the EBRD and the EU, and patterns of FDI. In conclusion, the analysis reveals a clear 'East-West' divide between East-Central Europe (ECE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and a 'North-South' divide between the northern states of ECE and the southern Balkan states and between the Slavic states of the CIS and the states of the Caucasus and Central Asia. It is also concluded that both the global scope and dynamic nature of world-systems analysis makes it a particularly useful framework for analysing the transformation process.