

6. The Post-Soviet Nations after Independence

IAN BREMMER

IN HIS INTRODUCTION to this volume, Lowell Barrington details potential fault lines within nationalist movements, grouped along issues of territory and membership. Nationalists may claim territory of neighboring states based on historical ties or former ownership, while ethnic minorities within the new state may demand their own territory. Nationalists may also dispute membership boundaries, differing about whether national identity is based on ethnicity, language, or shared experience. Ideas of nation change. Moreover, nationalists do not always seek sovereignty as an international state: territorial autonomy or degrees of independence within a federal framework may be sufficient.

The drive to independence often conceals these fault lines or provides insufficient opportunity for their expression. Pursuing independence, nationalist elites mobilize the masses based on shared ideas of nation, homeland, or historical identity and operate under the shared goal of liberation. Following independence, however, the elites of resurrected or recently formed nation-states face new rules, objectives, and constraints, which in turn require new responses. And although nationalist elites must mobilize the masses for nationalism to be successful, Barrington reminds us that “it is misleading to treat nationalists within a state (or within an ethnic group) as a unitary actor.” As this volume’s authors demonstrate in postcolonial and post-Soviet contexts, elites’ competing agendas in the often-unstable environment of new or restored nations generate a wide array of conflict, from social struggles over cultural identity to armed hostility.

Nationalism and Soviet Collapse

The twilight of the Soviet empire witnessed a process of nationalist awakenings that engendered ethnic-based conflict.¹ A large number of non-union-republic-based national groups voiced unequivocal demands for sovereignty, largely following union-republic declarations of sovereignty.² These demands sprung from regional movements in the Soviet Union that, due to the logic of Soviet ideas of nationality (*natsional'nost'*), became national in form, if not in content or even intention. Environmental groups in Uzbekistan, antinuclear groups in Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine, and workers' movements in non-Union republics within the RSFSR were assailed by Mikhail Gorbachev (and, indeed, Western scholars) as nationalist.³ In each of these cases it is unclear whether these organizations deserved this title. Suspicion of the Soviet central leadership about all but the most ritualistic manifestations of nationalism in the periphery, however, exacerbated the subjective sense of colonialization felt by local peoples. Additionally, "countermovements" of ethnic Russians in the peripheral autonomous republics, as well as Azeris in Armenia and Armenians in Azerbaijan, challenged the republic-level governments.

Yet despite irredentist Russian minorities, disenfranchised titular minorities, alienated titular elite groups, and an unstable Russian center, the Soviet Union's collapse did not ignite a nationalist powder keg. The myriad levels of nationality enshrined within the Soviet system did not engender the long-term bloody warfare of a Yugoslavia.⁴ Ten years ago such conflict was not absent from forecasts formed amidst the chaos and uncertainty of the USSR's disintegration.⁵ The massive inventory of the former Red Army, combined with a need for hard currency, for instance, was set to facilitate arms transfers to disenfranchised ethnic groups.

But the conflict never came. Instead, governing elites of the former republics' titular nationalities have hewn close to the Kremlin, with pragmatic civic nationalism trumping ethnic nationalist fervor. Ethnic nationalism, defined as the political ideology aspiring toward the congruency of ethnic group and center, particularly over the right to make decisions on issues perceived as important by the ethnic group, has ultimately not defined post-Soviet relations between Moscow and the former republics. The ongoing integration of the titular nationalities' elites with Moscow following the USSR's collapse has largely eclipsed the varying Soviet legacies

of the successor states, reflecting instead the post-Soviet realities of Russia as the most serious regional actor.

The newly independent states' governing elites have avoided ethnonationalist vehemence as a basis for dealings with Russia and foreign relations in general. Departure from civic nationalism incurs specific costs. Russia is the main supplier of energy to the former Soviet republics, the dominant export market and, in the majority of cases, a substantial creditor. The issue of energy supply has kept the titular nationalities of most of the former republics tightly integrated with Moscow. Central Asian republics and Armenia have relied on Russian military support to maintain territorial integrity. In the former republics' dealings with Moscow, economic and defense factors have prevailed upon elites to fashion broadly inclusive nations.

As the former republics downplay ethnic nationalism internationally, they also tend to discourage it domestically. Although ethnic nationalist politics and disputes have not disappeared from the post-Soviet space, they have been driven from the center of the political spectrum. Economic and strategic self-interest, shaped to a large extent by the actions of Moscow, has shaped elites' attitudes and provided constraints and incentives for their behavior.

Lithuania (& Estonia & Latvia)

The Baltic states demonstrate as well as any other former Soviet region the pivotal role of international relations in shaping nationalist attitudes and forms. Empowered by their relatively strong economic position following independence, the Baltic states' post-Soviet path—and their relations with Russia—was initially based on ethnic, exclusionary nationalism, particularly in Estonia and Latvia. Unlike the other cases discussed in this chapter, these states have had little need to cozy up to the Kremlin. Yet due to pressure from the international community regarding NATO and European Union (EU) membership qualification, the Baltic states have also largely moved to models of civic nationalism.

As Terry Clark states in chapter 7, "In the Lithuanian case nationalism has successfully been transformed from one concerned with territorial defense against internal threats to one largely focused on a strategy of building civic consciousness among all of the country's citizens." Although

elites in Lithuania granted citizenship to all individuals, regardless of ethnicity or language, anxieties about the national minorities persisted in the early years of independence. Clark notes that the political right represented nationalism in the political system, with the smaller parties more strident in manner, some operating under the slogan of "Lithuania for Lithuanians!"

The ethnonationalist mobilization that led Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia out of the Soviet Federation found expression in language laws and anti-Russian discriminatory politics as well. Russia has been involved in numerous disputes and protests with the Baltic governments regarding such laws, as well as the general disenfranchisement of ethnic Russian citizens. But these nationalist battles did not generally translate into actual sanctions from Russia, let alone the violent showdown that originally marked Lithuania's exit from Soviet rule. Latvia's treatment of ethnic Russians likely played into the Russian State Duma's refusal to ratify the border treaty signed in 1997, but the tangible consequences of the Baltic states' nationalism-based rejection of Russian channels have been few.

Instead, the blunting of Baltic nationalism, and the effective efforts at shaping Baltic policy provisions, came from the West.⁶ Latvia revised its stringent 1994 language law along the recommendations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1999, in a step toward reconciling with EU requirements and Russian requests. Candidates for local council and parliamentary deputies in Estonia had been required to demonstrate the ability to communicate in Estonian, but in November this language requirement was abolished by Estonia's parliament. When it becomes law, the change will allow Estonia to satisfy OSCE concerns and fulfill EU requirements.

In their relative economic prosperity, historic links to Europe, and progress toward membership in the EU and NATO, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are empowered to reject Russian ties on principle and integrate internationally. In addition to political will and sense of national identity, however, the Baltic states also have historic channels to reactivate: strong pre-Soviet links to Western Europe. The Baltic states not only exited the Soviet Federation on a strong wave of nationalist sentiment, therefore, but also had a destination, both historically and for the future. These circumstances enabled the Baltic states to persist in ethnic nationalism, despite Russian protests, until the middle to late 1990s, when the issue became a roadblock to NATO and EU membership. This international pressure from European states and organizations, much as Russia exerts throughout the

other former republics to similar effect, has resulted in a shift to more civic forms of nationalism.

Ukraine

In Ukraine, unlike the Baltic states but similar to the rest of the Eurasian region, the need to maintain connections with Moscow has muted ethnic nationalists. Kiev's integration with Moscow has remained strong, and civic nationalism has captured the political center. The ethnic nationalists of the preindependence Interparliamentary Assembly (IPA), based in western and central Ukraine, and the postindependence successor, the Ukrainian National Assembly (and associated parties), have not succeeded in defining the post-Soviet Ukrainian national discourse.

Ethnic nationalists directed Ukraine's drive to independence in 1989.⁷ The Chernobyl disaster radicalized sectors of the population against Moscow preceding the Soviet collapse, and following independence, Ukraine became a foreign policy priority for the West: the largest state in Europe in terms of surface area, fourth largest in population, and highly ranked in natural resources. Indeed, during the first Leonid Kuchma administration (1994–99), Ukraine detached itself from Russian influence and reached out to the West, receiving the fourth-largest amount of U.S. bilateral aid since 1994 and joining NATO's Partnership for Peace program. In addition, Ukraine joined other countries to form GUUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) in 1996, a strategic grouping pointedly excluding Russia.

The potential for destabilizing splits along territorial or membership lines was thus high following independence. A rapid and severe economic collapse, aggravated by then-president Leonid Kravchuk's reluctance to pursue structural reform, scuttled the polity-wide hopes for postindependence prosperity. Populations in Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine and Crimea—having originally voted in favor of independence—became alienated in the society-wide stress of economic collapse.⁸ Likewise, Ukrainian ethnonationalists increased their fervor. The Uniate Catholic and ethnonationalist population of western Ukraine sought integration with the West, while the industrialized and Russian-speaking east called for closer ties to Russia. The lack of economic empowerment following independence demanded that Ukraine pursue a closer relationship with Moscow. Uncertainty surrounding Moscow's intentions for Crimea, the Black Sea fleet,

and its headquarters at Sevastopol also led Ukraine to act cautiously, reflecting Moscow's dominance in the post-Soviet space. Ukraine has therefore balanced strengthening ties with the West with the necessity of engaging Russia and has been unmotivated by the ethnonationalist sentiment voiced by some Ukrainian groups.

As Taras Kuzio notes in chapter 8 the ethnic nationalists on the far right of Ukraine's political spectrum "could not convert the energy of the drive for independence into an effective use of the state for implementing ethnic nationalist policies." Ethnic nationalists on the far left, seeking a reunion with Russia and pan-Eastern Slav identity, also have fared poorly. Their interest in the Russia-Belarus union and their hostility to Ukrainian statehood have won few supporters. Ukraine's postindependence weakness determined the outward course of relations with Moscow; simultaneously, Russia's dominance discouraged elites from stirring ethnic nationalism or permitting its expression too systemically.

Ukraine is further constrained by the high level of debts for gas imports that have accrued. As in other former Soviet republics, this energy dependence presents one of Russia's most potent means of reasserting its economic and political control over its neighbors, leveraged more concertedly by the current Russian president, Vladimir Putin, than previously under Boris Yeltsin. And as Ukraine's privatization of state-held assets increased in the late 1990s, and liquidity among Russian enterprises improved, there has been a notable increase in Russian influence in key Ukrainian sectors such as energy and metals. This increased investment and involvement in Ukraine's economy reflects an openness to Russia, driven by both economic and political realities.

Kuchma's dramatic fall into scandal in late 1999 resulted in his isolation from the West, where disenchantment with Ukraine's corruption and institutional transparency reached unprecedented intensity. The Putin administration supported Kuchma through the scandal's fallout, and the appointment in Ukraine of a less pro-Western foreign minister in September 2000 is not unconnected. Additionally, the appointment of Viktor Chernomyrdin, a former Russian prime minister and head of Gazprom, as Russian ambassador to Ukraine signaled both the high levels of engagement between the two countries and the underpinning dependence of Ukraine on Russia's supply of energy. Russia has thus found accommodation among Ukraine's elites, rather than ethnic nationalist resistance to the old Soviet center.

In his chapter, Kuzio states that the far right nationalist groups in Ukraine were “important in framing the question of an independent state in the late Soviet period” but “their unwillingness to abandon ethnic nationalist ideas has left them marginalized and politically irrelevant since independence.” This adoption of the civic-nationalist model among the masses may be “a more drawn out process,” as Kuzio notes, but Russia’s ongoing dominance in post-Soviet affairs only increases the momentum of this development.

Armenia

Ethnonationalist fervor characterized late-Soviet Armenia and the years following independence, but as Razmik Panossian notes in chapter 9, it is no longer the basis of politics in Armenia. The elites’ pursuit of economic gains and security guarantees, not mass mobilization of the population on ethnic lines, has heralded the appearance of “postnationalist” politics. Although the nationalist movement following the February 1988 vote by the Nagorno-Karabakh oblast’s local soviet to transfer from the Azerbaijani SSR to the Armenian SSR became increasingly anti-Soviet, due to insufficient pro-Armenia sentiment from the Kremlin over Karabakh, following independence Armenia has remained Russia’s main ally in the Caucasus region. This ongoing alliance occurs as Armenia has adopted an increasingly civic-based model of nationalism.⁹

This is not to say that the strong ethnic component in Armenia’s postindependence nationalism disappeared quickly or quietly. Outside of dealings with Russia, ethnonationalist currents have defined Armenia’s foreign policy for much of the period from 1991 to the present. In addition to the ongoing Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan, tensions with Georgia have arisen from purported discrimination against ethnic Armenians in the Georgian region of Javakheti and concerns for the safety of ethnic Armenians in Abkhazia. Armenian nationalist groups regularly mobilize against Azerbaijan and Turkey, and there has been strong nationalist sentiment in government ranks.¹⁰ Moreover, Armenia also has a large, powerful diaspora in the United States, which has secured significant amounts of aid for Armenia.

Notwithstanding ethnonationalist mobilizations, diasporic groups, and extensive international ties, however, Armenia has remained close to the Kremlin in the past ten years. The essentially pro-Russian direction of Armenia’s foreign policy has only grown stronger in recent years. In mid-

September 2001 a ten-year program of economic cooperation was signed between the two countries. Russia has stemmed the security threat from Turkey and has armed Armenian forces in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Armenia has supported the continued presence of Russian troops at a base in Javakheti, despite Georgian opposition, based on concern for ethnic Armenians there. Heavily dependent on energy supply from Russia, and utilizing Russia's weight in the region to balance Azerbaijan and Turkey, Armenia has pursued both economic and political integration with Moscow.¹¹ Russia is the arbiter of success in the "postnationalist" politics of Armenia. As such, the pragmatism that Russia enforces in Yerevan's dealings with the Kremlin compels Armenia's elites to engage civic forms of nationalism over ethnic ones.

Ethnic mobilization in Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute drove tensions to new heights in the region. The conflict over the ethnically split Nagorno-Karabakh province was used on both sides to define respective nationhood in the disorder following independence and resulted in a de facto ethnic sorting, with nearly all Armenians exiting Azerbaijan and the Azeri population leaving the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh province. The already complex ethnic relations in the region were complicated by Turkey's support of Azerbaijan in the conflict, adding to Armenia's historical antipathy to the Turkish state, and Moscow's backing of Armenia.

The conflict proved Russia to be a necessary arbiter in maintaining stability in the former Soviet space. Based on a series of military defeats inflicted by Armenia, Azerbaijan realized that sustained fighting would lead to defeat, and sought Russian support in achieving a cease-fire. Secured in 1994, the cease-fire delivered indirect control of the province to Armenia, with Azerbaijan in no position to oppose the Russia-brokered outcome. Russia demonstrated its regional supremacy, transformed the ethnic hostilities into a showcase for Russian security guarantees, and enforced conciliatory stances in both Yerevan and Baku with respect to Moscow. Although ethnic tensions were not erased in such a manner, the elites in Azerbaijan and Armenia were compelled to adopt more civic means of defining their respective nations.

Georgia

Ethnic nationalism in the former Soviet republics did not disappear everywhere. Governing elites deploy exclusionary, ethnic-based nationalism

whenever useful, but it has a secondary, selective, and often intrastate role. Thus, where it has occurred, post-Soviet nationalist conflict has been primarily localized: ongoing Azeri-Armenian conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh; ethnic strife in the Fergana Valley in Central Asia; and fighting amidst the autonomies of the troubled North Caucasus—Abkhazia, Ossetia, and Chechnya. Only Chechnya has clashed directly with Russia, a confrontation more economic than ethnic in its origins, and nationalist only in its later manifestations. Ethnic nationalist conflict in former republics is limited largely to conflicts percolating below the titular group's collusion with Moscow: local language laws, vengeful rhetoric, and agitation in the media. Russia's dominance in economic and military affairs has compelled the former republics' elites to deploy ethnic nationalism—or, in turn, sanction its expression—only on the substate level or in conflicts with other former republics. When ethnic nationalism takes the fore in dealings with Moscow, however, or drives the former republic's path toward international integration, the costs can be severe, as the example of Georgia demonstrates.

Georgia's Western-oriented path has brought considerable punishment from Moscow. Georgia's choices in fact demonstrate the costs associated with an ethnic nationalist-based foreign policy in dealings with Moscow, when pursued without the empowerment of economic gains seen in the Baltics. Georgia is the single former Soviet republic to develop ethnic nationalism in this manner, and it illustrates the incentives shaping the foreign policy of post-Soviet states.

Georgia began independence in April 1991 under the leadership of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a radical ethnonationalist and autocratic ruler who sought to limit Georgia's contact with Russia and the rest of the former Soviet Union. A violent coup in January 1992 ousted Gamsakhurdia and established a military council, which invited Eduard Shevardnadze to return to lead Georgia. Although Gamsakhurdia's policies rejected contact with Russia, isolating Georgia and leading to a proliferation of local militias running near-fiefdoms, Shevardnadze did not seek to reverse matters or reintegrate with Moscow and reconcile with neighboring states. As former Soviet foreign minister, Shevardnadze believed he had the background and will to integrate Georgia internationally, independent of Russia's channels.¹²

In response to Georgia's independent path, Russia has aggressively maintained military bases in Georgia, despite Georgian political protests and an OSCE-brokered agreement to vacate two installations. At a 1999 meeting of

the OSCE, Russia agreed to close two of the bases, although only one was closed by the deadline of July 2001. Russia has still not fully vacated the second base (at Gudauta), which is in the separatist region of Abkhazia, where Russian military aid has abetted the proautonomy movement. Russia's resistance to closing the bases is based on multiple geopolitical interests, among them a belief that Georgia tacitly supports Chechen rebels on its territory, which Georgia denies. Additionally, Russia has backed Abkhazia's rejection of Georgia's offer to establish limited autonomy for the territory and simultaneously resisted Abkhazia's request for "associate status" within Russia. By maintaining Abkhazia as an unresolved secessionist movement, Russia is able to exert control on political and defense matters within Georgia.

Among additional means of punishing Georgia, Russia imposed a visa regime upon Georgian citizens traveling to Russia, separate from persons originating in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia also accused Georgia of aiding Chechen rebels by allowing Chechen fighters to seek refuge in the Pankisi Gorge. The Georgian parliament in turn passed a resolution calling for Russia to remove the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeeping force that patrols the border with the breakaway region. Finally, in late 2000 Russia periodically shut off gas supplies to Georgia (partly due to Georgia's perceived softness on Chechnya and also due to failure to pay energy debts). Georgia's efforts at international integration have not brought economic prosperity, and its case demonstrates the explicit costs such a foreign policy incurs from Moscow, revealing incentives that maintain other former republics' pragmatic compliance with the Kremlin.

Stephen Jones observes in his chapter that "Georgian nationalism, despite European pressures and the new elite's pragmatism, will not adopt an integrationist civic model, largely because Georgia's own national minorities find this unacceptable." Making the case for a system that "recognizes and accommodates national group rights," Jones delineates the myths and realities of Georgian nationalism. Yet Russia's punishment of Georgia for its nationalist path in foreign affairs, and ethnic nationalism domestically, demonstrates the role that Moscow plays in the post-Soviet nationalist climate.

The Rest of the Post-Soviet National Legacy

Most successor states realized the need for strong cooperation with Moscow immediately upon independence. Armenia, Belarus, and Central

Asian states (except Turkmenistan) quickly restrained anti-Russian nationalist currents to the occasional rhetorical bluster, instead of a force defining foreign policy. Azerbaijan and Ukraine did so somewhat more slowly but have since stayed the civic course. The relative economic prosperity and strong political ties to Western Europe empowered the Baltic states to leave the Russian sphere. The Baltic states' unique circumstances, particularly pending NATO membership, restrained negative incentives from Moscow.

Even following the September 11 attacks on the United States, which placed the long-standing interest of Central Asian states in containing Islamic fundamentalism directly in line with U.S. foreign policy, the Central Asian states still required Putin's sanction before assisting the U.S.-led coalition. Instead of drifting beyond Moscow's sphere with the passing years of independence and embracing opportunities for new integration internationally and globalizing economic relations, the former republics have largely remained in accord with the Kremlin.

This dynamic has been nearly continuous, regardless of Kremlin leadership and foreign policy regimes. Indeed, Yeltsin's policy in the Russian "near abroad" was fragmented, with different factions of the Russian elite, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to LUKoil to defense interests, pursuing different agendas. Putin has consolidated these spheres, unifying Russia's foreign policy and concerting Russia's power in the former Soviet space. Yet under both Kremlin leaders, the former Soviet republics have remained in line with Moscow. As seen throughout the Caucasus (in terms of reward *and* punishment), the Western former republics (where Belarus actively pursues reintegration with Russia), and in the interesting, somewhat diversified foreign policy dynamics of the Baltics (where relative economic success and NATO's overtures adjust the rules), pragmatism in former republics' relations to Moscow persists in trumping nationalism and defining post-Soviet international relations.

Azerbaijan

The potential for instability across the Caucasus states of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia was a foregone conclusion upon independence from the USSR. Although conflict in the Caucasus region has filled the ten years of post-Soviet independence, with the Nagorno-Karabakh and Abkhazia conflicts unresolved, Iran and Turkey pursuing new regional interests, oil and the risk of religious fundamentalism pressuring the region's unsteady geopolitics, and each Caucasus state mythologizing its nationhood, the ten-

sion has not erupted into direct clashes with Russia. Even as strong nationalist trends characterize the region, they have not typified relations with Moscow. Despite no shortage of controversial, unresolved issues, a Russia tilt has largely defined foreign policy.

Such a dominant position for Russia in regional issues is evident even in the case of Azerbaijan, a country that has been less openly hostile to Russia than Georgia but much more so than Armenia. Even with the cease-fire secured in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Russia moved to punish Azerbaijan for signing an oil deal with an international consortium headed by BP and Amoco, imposing a transport blockade of Azerbaijan in 1994. Moscow was displeased with Azerbaijan's move to develop oil prospects without concern for the Caspian Sea's legal status and pointedly retained control of the Gabala early-warning radar station, mirroring the policy of retaining Soviet military bases in Georgia.

In reply to Russian pressure, Azerbaijan acquiesced in October 1995 to transport some crude oil extracted by international companies via Russia. Although mobilizing nationalist sentiment domestically in the conflict with Armenia, Azerbaijan thus submitted to international security and economic interests, acquiescing to (belated) membership in the CIS in 1993, Russia's authority in establishing a cease-fire with Armenia, and Russia's imposition of limits on exploiting oil resources for the international market. The already-limited avenues pursued by Azerbaijan toward international integration, independent of Moscow's terms and motivated by nationalist aspirations, were blocked by Russia.

Moldova and Belarus

Although representing different degrees of pre-Soviet nationalist awakenings and statehoods and diverse experiences in the USSR, both Belarus and Moldova have avoided nationalism in post-Soviet dealings with Moscow. The degree of open cooperation with Moscow, or indeed desire to reintegrate politically with Russia, differs between these two states, yet throughout nationalism has been excluded from foreign policy dictums, in recognition of Russia's power in regional affairs. Indeed, Moldova's early-1990s overtures to closer integration with Romania, with the possibility of political union, and the subsequent action of Russia's Fourteenth Army in Transdnestr, is an illustrative exception proving the rule of Russia's role in the region.

Beyond being a founding member and proponent of the CIS in 1991,

and consistently supporting closer ties among post-Soviet states, Belarus has been at the forefront of reintegration with Russia. Thus during the first legislative election following independence, in May–December 1995, voters sanctioned a referendum that approved closer ties with Russia and envisioned increasingly close economic and political links, as well as eventual monetary union. Following this overture, Belarus signed the first Union Treaty with Russia in April 1996, and in May 1997 the two countries signed a Union Charter, aimed at encouraging greater integration and cooperation. A declaration on further unification was signed in December 1998, with all steps culminating in a second Union Treaty approved in December 1999.

This Union Treaty advances the creation of a supranational legislature, the Supreme State Council, and close cooperation on monetary policy, economic, and defense matters. The council is made up of leaders from each country, a joint Council of Ministers, and a union parliament. The parliament is divided into the House of the Union, formed by delegates from Belarusian and Russian legislative bodies, and the House of Representatives, whose delegates are directly elected. The Council of Ministers coordinates foreign and defense policy and is charged with the creation of shared economic space and synchronization of monetary, credit, and fiscal policy. Although the treaty excludes the full assimilation of Belarus into Russia, it provides Russia with use of Belarus's military infrastructure, enabling Russian troops to be stationed on NATO's new eastern border. The treaty allows for a joint military doctrine and armament program. Belarus, in turn, gains easy access to the Russian market for manufactured goods and discounted energy import prices. Implementation of some articles is not due until as late as 2005.¹³

This high level of integration and absence of nationalist rhetoric in foreign policy reflects not only Russia's importance for the economy of Belarus but also the political support that President Aleksandr Lukashenka of Belarus seeks in light of his regime's international isolation. In the ten years following independence, Belarus's foreign trade has continued to be focused on the CIS, with Russia alone comprising more than half of Belarus's export revenue and nearly two-thirds of import expenditure in 2000.¹⁴ This flexibility has allowed Lukashenka to remain in power, based on the economic security he offers citizens relative to other post-Soviet states and despite his regime's poor record on civil society issues. Even without the Lukashenka regime, a high degree of integration would tie

Belarus and Russia based on regional realities in economic and defense measures. However, given Lukashenka's political needs, he drives already close relations with Moscow to a formalized, unified level.

Moldova exited the Soviet Union based on ethnonationalist sentiment and an assertion of the titular group's native language, culture, and traditions, as occurred throughout most former Soviet republics. More unique, however, was that Moldova's ethnonationalism was tied to a neighboring state, Romania. The prospect of renewing historic cultural, linguistic, economic, and political ties maintained Moldova's ethnonationalist momentum longer than a merely anti-Soviet sentiment could achieve. Thus, through the 1990s, Moldova was an unenthusiastic member of the CIS, and although having signed the Almaty Agreement in December 1991 (establishing a wider CIS) and a treaty on economic union in 1993, Moldova's parliament did not authorize the country's membership until 1994. Resisting efforts at monetary integration or collective defense measures, Moldova's government instead emphasized closer ties with the EU, eyeing eventual integration. Moldova has also joined Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan to form GUUAM, an effort intended to balance the Russian-dominated CIS. Moldova's relations with Russia were thus initially defined by nationalism and the aspiration to integrate outside of Moscow's channels.

Nationalist tension came to the fore, however, when the large population of ethnic Russians and Ukrainians in the Transdnistr region perceived Moldovan independence to be a threatening step toward reunification with Romania and voted for autonomy in September 1990 and for independence in late 1991. Civil war resulted in January 1992. A cease-fire in July of that year ended armed conflict, but the political status of the area remains unsettled: Transdnistr is semi-independent, printing its own currency, maintaining a central bank and customs system, and utilizing the Cyrillic alphabet. Unable to settle the conflict militarily, despite Romanian backing, Moldova also perceived that reunification with Romania was increasingly unappealing, given the worsening economic situation there. These developments brought considerable pressure upon Moldova's nationalist groups. Meanwhile, Russia has maintained its Fourteenth Army in Transdnistr, despite 1999 OSCE-brokered promises to withdraw all troops and weaponry by 2002. The Fourteenth Army had sided with fellow Slavs against the Moldovan government and will likely remain stationed in the region. In a situation analogous to the Abkhazia conflict, Russia is the

only actor empowered to resolve the issue of autonomy, but it resists, since settlement would mean the withdrawal of troops and loss of influence.

Moldova remains a divided society but has made a dramatic return to Moscow's sphere, reestablishing relations built on pragmatic gain, not nationalist zeal. In February 2001 the renewed, pro-Russia Communist Party of Moldova (CPM) received more than one-half of the votes, marking Moldova as the first former Soviet republic to bring a communist party back to power. The success of the CPM culminated in the election by parliament of Vladimir Voronin as president. Voronin has expressed interest in joining the Russia-Belarus union, and his party plans on reinstating Russian as the official language and reintroducing its mandatory instruction in schools.

Voronin has not dismissed the possibility of joining the EU eventually but has suggested that Moldova would join only when other western CIS states do so also. He has furthermore rejected NATO membership based on the fact that Moldova is a constitutionally neutral state. Despite strong nationalist momentum upon and following independence, Moldova has been compelled to reorient its foreign policy toward the balance sheet of power and away from nationalist aspirations. With this development, Moldova joins Ukraine and Belarus in foreign policy orientation that remains prudently pro-Russian.

Central Asia

The five states of Central Asia are products of the Soviet division of the region in the 1920s into republics loosely correlating with ethnic divisions. Much of Central Asia was formerly a Russian tsarist protectorate, and some scattered nationalist resistance to Soviet rule occurred into the 1920s. Such movements were eliminated, however, and the region was subjected to Soviet modernization programs, large agriculture projects, and—most notably for nomadic tribes—forced collectivization and settlement. Previously lacking borders or statehood, the republics thus experienced modernization and a sense of national identity in strictly Soviet terms. Industrialization in the region brought Russian immigrants, and ethnic Russians dominated the region's political elite. The titular ethnic groups ascended in the Communist Party power structure only later in the Soviet era, generally following Stalin's death, gaining autonomy within strict limits of absolute loyalty to Moscow. Politicians from the titular nationalities obtained leadership in the 1960s and 1970s based on corrupt relations with the Kremlin.

As across regions in the USSR, perestroika brought unrest, demonstrations, and expressions of local discontent and nationalism. The Central Asian states largely gained independence, however, as a *de facto* development, not as a nationalist endeavor.

The Soviet-gerrymandered borders, designed to both unite and divide coethnics depending on political objectives, set the stage for ethnic conflict in the region. The largest conflagration of the post-Soviet era occurred in Tajikistan, with the substantial Tajik and Uzbek minorities mobilized by their respective governments, intent on asserting cultural rights. In 1992 civil war broke out between opposing regional and ideological groups and claimed as many as fifty thousand lives. Uzbek minorities in the south of Kyrgyzstan, centered around Osh, have been a source of instability for Bishkek, and the Uighur population in Kyrgyzstan compels close relations with Chinese authorities, as Kyrgyzstan cannot confront China.¹⁵ In addition to ethnic-based conflict, Islamic fundamentalism has added to volatility in the region. The armed Uzbek Islamist group the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), based in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, has been active throughout the Fergana Valley. In July 1999 the IMU attempted an attack on Uzbekistan. Although Uzbekistan supported the Tajik government in 1992, it also covertly supported an incursion of one thousand armed men, led by Colonel Mahmud Khudoiberdiyev, an ethnic Uzbek, into northern Tajikistan in 1998 through Uzbek territory. Dealing with separatist movements and border disputes, Central Asian governments have also pursued the creation of ethnonational myths in an attempt to craft pre-Soviet histories to prop up national identities today.

The rise of ethnonationalism, however, has not applied to relations with Moscow. Central Asian states, with the exception of Turkmenistan, have remained integrated with Russia following independence. Russia is the main guarantor of stability in the region and remains heavily involved in regional security and economic matters. With settlement of the civil war in Tajikistan in June 1997, Russian border guards and the 201st army division are based permanently in the country and along the Afghan frontier. Russia's military guarantees are important in easing individual national concerns for security, based on unrest in Afghanistan, Islamic fundamentalist groups (primarily the IMU), and instability in western China. The extent of the region's integration with Moscow was clear following September 11: Central Asian states foresaw the benefit of joining the U.S.-led coalition but needed to clear their cooperation with Moscow first.

Regional alliances among Central Asian states include Russia. In addition to the CIS, to which all Central Asian states have signed, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Russia (and Armenia) have formed a collective rapid reaction force (CRRF), headquartered in Bishkek. Allying Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, China, and Russia, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization pursues Central Asian security and antiterrorist action, as well as regional economic cooperation. This economic integration is largely based on energy supply, as well as Russia's control of the means of energy export.

The treatment of Russian minorities in Central Asia has not been a source of conflict with Moscow. Russian nationalist groups have only surfaced in Kazakhstan, where ethnic Russians comprised 30 percent of the population in 2001. These groups have been defused by the Kazakh security apparatus, however, and do not represent a serious threat or a Russian foreign policy prerogative. There has been considerable emigration, and Russian minorities remain mostly in urban areas only. Many have left based on a perceived lack of opportunities for ethnic Russians, real instances of discrimination, and the fundamental fact that the rules in the national power structure have changed.

Turkmenistan has been the notable exception in Central Asia to integration with Russia. In March 1991, then–secretary general of the Turkmen Communist Party Saparmurad Niyazov ensured a 95 percent vote in support of preserving the Soviet Union. This referendum, although marked by fraud, indicated the fear of losing Russia's economic support. When the Soviet Federation collapsed, Turkmenistan was forced into independence, which Niyazov has pursued on a nationalist, one-party platform. Under Niyazov, Turkmenistan has isolated itself from other Central Asian states, reintroducing visa regulations for CIS visitors similar to those of the Soviet era and taking little role in the CIS or regional organizations. Turkmenistan pulled out of a border protection treaty signed with Russia in 1993 and has persistently taken contrary positions on the future use of the Caspian Sea. Niyazov's relations with Moscow have been distant since he hedged his bets on the 1996 Russian presidential election. Finally, in 1997 Gazprom effectively cut off Turkmenistan's gas exports.

Niyazov has defined foreign policy largely in terms of energy resources and largely seeks national self-sufficiency and isolation in other matters. He has thus integrated Turkmenistan with Iran, the UAE, and Turkey. Iran has been particularly appealing, as it offers one of the few possible gas export

routes not crossing Russian territory. Turkmenistan's alienation of Russia, however, has brought punishment from Moscow upon Turkmenistan's priority sector—gas exports. As the main gas pipeline currently runs to Russia through Kazakhstan, and is controlled by the Russian gas monopoly Gazprom, Turkmenistan's access to Western markets is at Russia's whim. With Niyazov's power based on revenue from gas export and hard-currency inflows, the success of his economic plan and thus control of the country is subject to shocks from Russian energy export decisions.

Conclusion

A dominant theme in the shaping of nationalism after independence in the post-Soviet states has been the "Russia factor." Throughout the region—Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and most of the Central Asian republics—incipient independence movements that appeared exclusivist and ethnonationalist in content shifted to a more inclusive, civic nationalism as the necessity of a strong relationship with Russia came home to roost.

Notable exceptions were the Baltic states, whose relative lack of economic dependence upon Russia and potential for integration into European and trans-Atlantic security and economic architecture allowed leaders initially to shape a more ethnic nationalist path. In these cases, civic nationalism also emerged, though this time largely due to pressure from the European organizations in which the Baltic states so coveted membership. Criticism from Russia had, at best, an indirect effect on the civic tendencies of countries such as Estonia and Latvia, by getting the attention of Europe.¹⁶ Georgia is the only other country that has made strong efforts to define a more exclusionary national track vis-à-vis Russia, a difference that has only been exacerbated since the 2004 election of President Mikheil Saakashvili. In response, it has been punished severely by Russia, both through economic leverage and implicit military threat.

The policy approaches consistent with civic nationalism have been shaped in large measure by the realities of dependence upon Russia, irrespective of the type of nationalism developed in Russia itself. Many observers express concern that the new Russian minorities—who represent significant percentages of non-Russian populations in all but Armenia—might rise up in revolt against their new governments.¹⁷ Not only were many in the Russian communities from Crimea to northern Kazakhstan

uninterested in being the fifth column but many feared they would be.¹⁸ But those Russians who did desire the reestablishment of a union in the Eurasian region were disappointed to find there was little support in Moscow for their cause. Indeed, through much of the Yeltsin era, a power vacuum led to little coordinated action in the “near abroad”—muddled by competing visions of a more exclusivist, Eurasianist bent of the security wing alongside the more civic approach of economic reformers. The more consolidated approach that has developed under President Putin will undoubtedly increase the pressure on some of these states.¹⁹ But whatever the regime in Moscow, Russian economic and strategic influence on the post-Soviet states will continue to have a great impact on the course of their respective nationalisms.

NOTES

1. See Lubomyr Hajda and Mark Beissinger, eds., *The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990); Nadia Diuk and Adrian Karatnycky, *The Hidden Nations: The People Challenge the Soviet Union* (New York: Morrow, 1990); Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds., *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Stuart J. Kaufman, “Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova’s Civil War,” *International Security* 21, no. 1 (autumn 1996): 108–38; and Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Conflict in and after the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997).

2. Including the Chechen-Ingush, Chuvash, Karelian, Komi, Mari, Tatar, and Udmurt ASSRs and autonomous regions and areas including Adigei, Chukchi, Gorno-Altai, Karachai, Komi-Permyak, and Koryak. That this nationalist awakening came as a surprise to Soviet citizens and Sovietologists alike is an understatement. The emergence and primacy of nationalist movements in achieving independence for the Soviet titular republics has been well documented since. See Diuk and Karatnycky, *The Hidden Nations*; Geoffrey Hosking, Jonathan Aves, and Peter J. S. Duncan, *The Road to Post-Communism: Independent Political Movements in the Soviet Union, 1985–1991* (New York: Pinter Publishers, 1992); Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); and Peter Rutland, “Democracy and Nationalism in Armenia,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 1 (1994): 47–68.

3. John B. Dunlop, “Russia: Confronting a Loss of Empire, 1987–1991,” *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 4 (winter 1993–94): 603–34.

4. “The myriad levels of nationality enshrined within the Soviet system” is from Lenin’s dictum of “national in form, socialist in content” (*korenizatsia*, or nativization) and the Stalinist “merging of nations” (*sliyanie*), to the Brezhnevite “creation of a new historical society—the Soviet people” (*sovetsky narod*) and institutions such as the Soviet passport’s designation of a citizen’s *national’nost’*.

5. Ted Hopf, “Managing Soviet Disintegration: A Demand for Behavioral Regimes,” *International Security* 17, no. 1 (summer 1992): 44–75.

6. For a discussion of the role of European organizations in the evolution of Baltic citizenship laws, see Lowell W. Barrington, "Understanding Citizenship Policy in the Baltic States," in *From Migrants to Citizens: Membership in a Changing World*, ed. T. Alexander Alienikoff and Douglas Klusmeyer (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000).

7. Ethnonationalist sentiment continues to be well grounded in Galicia in particular and western Ukraine in general. These areas in fact resemble the Baltic republics, except for the absence of "interfronts" within the population—largely because Russians accounted for only 5 percent of the population of western Ukraine.

8. Ian Bremmer, "The Politics of Ethnicity: Russians in the New Ukraine," *Europe-Asia Studies* 46, no. 2 (1994): 261–83; Alexander Motyl and Bohdan Krawchenko, "Ukraine from Empire to Statehood," in *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*, ed. Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine under Kuchma: Political Reform, Economic Transformation and Security Policy in Independent Ukraine* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); and Roman Szporluk, *Russia, Ukraine, and the Breakup of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2000).

9. This model did not emerge immediately following independence and instead reflects the interplay of incentives from Moscow regarding Armenia's relations with the Kremlin, selective deployments and expressions of ethnic nationalism domestically, and diminishing hostilities with Azerbaijan. Yet these factors are shaped by the constraints and incentives that the Kremlin has dealt Armenia following independence.

10. For example, when President Levon Ter-Petrossian appeared to accept the OSCE resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in January 1998, which provided for the return of conquered Azerbaijani land preceding any agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh's status, he was ultimately forced to resign: the Nagorno-Karabakh leadership and Armenia's prime minister, defense minister, and interior and national security minister were against the deal, leaving Ter-Petrossian without a government.

11. Russia maintains a fighter squadron in Armenia and in 1995 established two full military bases in Armenia as well. Russia has secured a twenty-five-year agreement to base Russian troops in Armenia, which has been an enthusiastic member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) upon its founding in 1991.

12. Georgia joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program in 1994, for instance, and has leveraged its potential as a transit route for oil and gas exports from the Caspian region, gaining substantial U.S. economic aid. Shevardnadze has actively engaged Turkey as a trade partner, displacing Russian ties.

13. Aleksandr Lukashenka's success in achieving the current level of union with Russia did not occur in a complete absence of nationalist sentiment. As elsewhere in the USSR, nationalism propelled the country's exit, with the Belarusian Popular Front (BPF) appearing in 1988 under the leadership of Zyanon Paznyak and winning 10 percent of the three hundred available seats in the election for the Belarusian Supreme Soviet in 1990 and successfully backing Stanislau Shushkevich as speaker of the Supreme Soviet in 1991. Much of the early nationalist movement was based on dissent stemming from the Chernobyl accident, from which 70 percent of the radioactive fallout landed on Belarus. The nationalist movement quickly lost cohesion in the early 1990s, however, revealing its relative weakness (compared to the Baltics or Ukraine, for example) and fragility when faced with severe economic downturns troubling other former republics. The July 1994 presidential election of Lukashenka set Belarus on a res-

olutely pro-Russian course, with nationalist sentiment largely constrained to the urban intelligentsia and with some strands of disenfranchised opposition groups calling for greater independence from Russia. The BPF has successfully organized demonstrations against Lukashenka and the Union Treaty, but Paznyak's exile in 1996 led to a crisis in leadership and decline in power. Not only is nationalism absent from Belarus's foreign policy with Russia but steps toward reintegration have relegated any sense of nation to tropes utilized by Lukashenka against the West or the hallmark of antiregime groups.

14. Russia is the main supplier of electricity and gas to Belarus and—unlike with other former republics—has regularly accepted Belarus's energy payment problems, allowing write-offs and refinancing of Belarus's energy debt.

15. See Richard Walsh, "China and the New Geopolitics of Central Asia," *Asian Survey* 33, no. 3 (1993): 272–84; Yongjin Zhang and Rouben Azizian, eds., *Ethnic Challenges beyond Borders: Chinese and Russian Perspectives on the Central Asian Conundrum* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); and Anara Tabyshalieva, *The Challenge of Regional Cooperation in Central Asia: Preventing Ethnic Conflict in the Fergana Valley* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1999).

16. Barrington, "Understanding Citizenship Policy in the Baltic States."

17. See Graham Smith and Andrew Wilson, "Rethinking Russia's Post-Soviet Diaspora: The Potential for Political Mobilisation in Eastern Ukraine and North-East Estonia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 5 (July 1997): 845–65; Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Vladimir Shlapentokh, Munir Sendich, and Emil Payin, *The New Diaspora: Russian Minorities in the Former Soviet Republics* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994).

18. See Lowell W. Barrington, Erik S. Herron, and Brian D. Silver, "The Motherland Is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad" (unpublished manuscript).

19. Though, ultimately, this approach may be diluted by the increasing internationalization of the region through the war against terror. Particularly in the Caucasus and Central Asia, America's expanding role could mitigate some of the influence of coordinated Russian influence.